

To Work Together or Not? Examining Public-Public Program Collaboration Between Head Start
and the Virginia Preschool Initiative

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates public-public program collaboration (PPPC) between Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative and asks why and how, and to what extent PPPC occurs between these preschool programs. To frame an understanding of PPPC, the dissertation assays collaborative process dimensions, collaborative management techniques, and degrees of collaborative activity. In-depth interviews with Head Start and VPI administrators result in the analysis of 16 Head Start-VPI dyadic relationships and places the focus of this research on the micro-level actions of the program administrators. Each Head Start-VPI dyad is assigned a degree of collaborative activity along a continuum ranging from no relationship (one dyad), cooperation (four dyads), coordination (six dyads), or collaboration (five dyads), and is assessed in terms of the presence or absence of the collaborative process dimensions of governance, administration, organizational autonomy, norms of trust, and mutuality. Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) is used to identify the underlying process dimensions that comprise collaboration at the varying degrees of collaborative activity. Collaborating dyads generally are found to exhibit all of the process dimensions, where the no relationship and cooperating dyads exhibit relatively few of the process dimensions. Coordinating dyads typically have strong structural dimensions but weak mutuality, or strong social capital dimensions, but weak administration. The dissertation shows how public administrators engage the collaborative management techniques of activating, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing, and finds variation in management techniques across types of collaborative activities. It also argues for activation activity to include “history of collaboration” stories and identifies six framing types that intersect at being collaborative or non-collaborative in focus and mature or immature. The dissertation concludes with recommendations for current preschool administrators and future scholarship.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, including the family I had the good fortune to be born into, and the family that I am lucky enough to have created. To my parents, Judy and Junior Sedgwick, I cannot thank you enough for the too short but amazing upbringing you gave me; to my mom for being one of the greatest champions of education that I know, and to my dad for being one of the best men I have ever known. To my brother Bill for being a great friend, role model, and for giving me the phrase, “you don’t have to like it, it just has to get done,” during my first year of college at Miami University, that somehow propelled me through all three higher education degrees.

To my family that I have helped create, I dedicate this dissertation to my daughter, Gwen, who is honestly one of the kindest, bravest, and funniest people I know. I hope you know that although this dissertation is certainly my proudest accomplishment, you are by far my greatest work. Finally, to my husband Jim, words cannot express how much your love and support has meant to me through this journey. Thank you for being my best friend and biggest fan.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In his 2013 State of the Union address, President Barack Obama discussed the importance of early childhood education. Noting that children who attend high quality preschool programs are more likely to read and do math on grade level, graduate from high school, attain employment, and form stable families of their own, Obama urged that such programs be made available to all American children. He proposed that the U.S. government work with the states to achieve this goal.

Federal-state collaboration in preschool provision is already occurring in a number of states, with local service providers working to bridge the federally funded Head Start program and standalone state pre-kindergarten programs. Not all communities collaborate, however, and the intensity of the relationship between those that do collaborate varies. The President's push for a new intergovernmental partnership emphasizes the need to understand federal-state collaboration in early childhood education where it is already occurring. Before spending additional tax dollars on another federal-state partnership, perhaps we should examine more closely the micro-level processes required to convene and maintain collaboration, and to understand why collaboration takes the shape it does.

This study examines collaboration (or the lack thereof) between the federally funded Head Start program and the state funded Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI). Its goal is to study how and why, and to what extent, collaboration occurs between these programs. I set out to examine what prompts some early childhood education administrators in Virginia to engage in collaborative activities while others do not, and to assay the different degrees of collaboration in which Head Start and VPI providers engage.

Certainly early childhood education is just one of many examples where public collaboration occurs and is expected. Both everyday and scholarly accounts provide a multitude of examples of both public partnerships and public-private partnerships. Focusing on important topics such as providing mental health services, reducing community crime, developing local economic opportunities, and ensuring food safety, collaborating with others is often seen as the gold-standard to tackling large social issues. Why early childhood education stands out as a distinctive lens through which we might glean more understanding about collaboration is that, unlike the networks in the aforementioned fields that typically include members from complementary fields in an effort to provide a holistic service or approach that could not be achieved by any single member, partnerships between Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative are neither mandated nor even necessary for either program to be operational. In other words, each of the two preschool programs examined in this study provide complete, standalone educational and socio-developmental services that could run on their own. This potential collaboration between these federally and state funded programs allows us to examine many understudied elements of collaboration, such as what motivates public administrators to collaborate in more atypical situations, how administrators negotiate regulatory barriers between standalone programs, and why program administrators participate in varying degrees of collaborative activity.

The Commonwealth of Virginia provides a rich environment for this project. Looking at Head Start-VPI relationships in a single state (holding state-level influences constant) permits examination of the impact of factors such as program content and regulations that may foster or limit collaboration. Virginia also features a continuum of relationships between Head Start and VPI providers ranging from no collaboration to deep programmatic entwinement. According to a

recent Virginia Head Start State Collaboration Project analysis, almost 30% of Virginia Head Start agencies are not collaborating at the highest possible degree with other publicly funded preschools in their service areas (see <http://headstartva.org/about/colloffice.php>). While this statistic is worthy of investigation, so too is investigating better some of the 70% that do collaborate at a high degree, and understanding why and how they develop collaboration between programs.

Myriad studies focus on both public and private collaboration and networks. Generally speaking, studies support that networks and collaboration develop from social exchange, resource dependency, and institutional norms that promote working together as a better approach to address public issues (Blau, 1964; Cook, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Kickert, Klijn, & Koppenjan, 1997; Levine & White, 1969; Mullin & Daley, 2010; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Rethemeyer & Hatmaker, 2008). Also, many scholars focus on the outcomes of networks to underscore what can be achieved by working together (O'Toole & Meier, 2003; Provan & Millward, 1995). Others have begun to work on understanding the underlying processes of what comprises collaboration—in other words, how we know it when we see it—but generally agree that how these processes are developed and maintained are not as well understood as both their antecedents and outcomes (Thomson & Perry, 2006; Thomson, Perry, & Miller, 2007; Wood and Gray, 1991). This research attempts to fill this gap by focusing on collaborative processes and the management techniques used to initiate, manage, and sustain collaboration. Examining collaboration between the Head Start and Virginia Preschool Initiative programs provides a rich landscape for this investigation.

The basic building block of all public networks or public-private partnerships is the dyadic relationship between pairs of member entities. This study examines dyadic relationships between

Head Start directors and Virginia Preschool Initiative administrators in order to probe what it takes to create a solid foundation for collaboration. By framing an understanding of collaboration as an intersection of process dimensions, management techniques, and collaborative activities, I offer deep insight to why and how collaboration occurs, and to what degree partners agree to interact with one another.

Undertaking this examination adds to our understanding of collaboration in four important ways. It highlights a distinct type of collaboration that occurs between standalone public programs; it focuses on the micro-level processes needed to manage and sustain collaboration; it provides an opportunity to build theory regarding collaborative processes and collaborative management techniques; and it contributes to an understanding of the recursive nature between collaborative outcomes (collaborative activities), collaborative processes, and management techniques.

Focus on Public-Public Program Collaboration (PPPC)

This research offers an opportunity to gain additional insight to another important type of collaboration that occurs in the public realm: public-public program collaboration (PPPC). I examine collaboration that occurs between two publicly funded preschool programs; one at the federal level and one at the state level. While the players that navigate these programs may vary and range from publicly funded employees to nonprofit employees, the focus here is on managing regulatory boundaries between established public preschool programs. Regardless of who employs the administrators, the persons who work with the Head Start or VPI programs must be familiar with the regulations that surround both of these programs when they attempt to

collaborate. This focus offers additional insight to various types of collaborative opportunities in the public sector and how public administrators undertake these tasks.

Focus on Micro-level Collaborative Techniques

By examining in depth the dyadic partners that undertake PPC to varying degrees, this research emphasizes micro-level processes and techniques that comprise collaboration. This focus highlights the specific interactions that occur (or do not occur) between pairs of program administrators by investigating the types of activities they pursue together, how they manage collaboration between programs, and how they build collaborative dimensions, such as governance, administration, organizational autonomy, norms of trust, and mutuality (Thomson & Perry, 2006; Thomson, Perry, & Miller, 2007). By giving public administrators a voice and delving into rich details of how they interact with each other to initiate and engage collaboration, this research has much to offer in how collaboration that is envisioned becomes a working reality for program managers.

Opportunity to Build Theory about Collaborative Process Dimensions and Collaborative Management Techniques

To offer a lens through which to examine collaborative processes and management, I build upon two separate theoretical approaches: collaborative process dimensions as discussed by Thomson and Perry (2006) and Thomson, Perry, and Miller (2007) and collaborative management techniques as envisioned by Agranoff and McGuire (2001) and McGuire and Agranoff (2014). Thomson et al. (2007) find evidence to support five separate process dimensions of collaboration: governance, administration, norms of trust, mutuality, and organizational autonomy. With this study, I provide an opportunity to further define and test

these dimensions that underscore collaboration; moreover, I add to our understanding of collaboration by testing if there are differences in combinations of process dimensions that comprise collaborative dyads undertaking different degrees of collaborative activity. While Keast and Hampson (2007) and McGuire and Agranoff (2014) further specify the four collaborative management techniques of activating, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing, by examining micro-level interactions and techniques, I add to the specification of these techniques and agree that they are distinct activities undertaken by public administrators when collaborating. I offer unique insight into how collaborative management techniques vary given the degree of collaborative activities that program administrators pursue.

Examination of Recursive Relationship between the Collaborative Management Techniques, Collaborative Process Dimensions, and Degree of Collaborative Activities

By bridging a relationship between collaborative management techniques, process dimensions, and activities, I illuminate the recursive nature between them. This research is an investigation to the types of techniques that managers engage to create collaborative opportunities and how they discuss their shared understanding of what comprises PPC. I argue that both collaborative management techniques and collaborative process dimension are essential to building collaboration and establishing collaborative activities. Moreover, this research shines a light not only on how collaborative management techniques build collaborative process dimensions, but also on how process dimensions contribute to the management techniques that administrators pursue. Additionally, while collaborative activities are envisioned as the outcome of both management techniques and underlying process dimensions, when enacted they become part of the dynamic that shapes ongoing process dimensions and how administrators continue to manage collaboration between program partners.

Organization of this Dissertation

To investigate how, why, and to what extent Head Start directors and VPI administrators collaborate with one another, I conduct multiple case study research in Virginia. Five cases are examined, each including one regional Head Start program and the multiple VPI programs that reside within the respective Head Start region. The study nests inside a rich historical and theoretical context. Chapter Two describes the rise of the Head Start program, including its rich history of rising out of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War Against Poverty campaign and strong tie to Community Action Agencies (CAA). The chapter also covers the rise of state-funded preschools, and specifically the rise of the Virginia Preschool Initiative. Importantly, in this chapter, I lay out compelling arguments, supported by historical accounts, as to why separation between Head Start and state-funded preschool has been more of a push than efforts to create collaborative opportunities, and why this separation adds to a contextual understanding of how and why collaboration occurs between Head Start and the VPI programs.

Chapter Three provides the scholarly backdrop that grounds this research. I review literature that helps frame an understanding of the main research questions for this project, and provide an overview of various definitions of collaboration in the literature and distinguish it from networks. Part of understanding what collaboration is includes delving into the collaborative process dimensions as described by Thomson et al. (2007). Importantly, I include scholarship that investigates different types of collaboration, and tap definitions developed by Mattesich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001) to frame the degrees of collaborative activity continuum for this study. I review literature that examines why collaboration occurs: in other words, what prompts

organizations to engage with one another, focusing on explanations such as research dependency, social exchange, and institutional theories to offer a frame for understanding. Finally, I include literature about managing collaboration and review the collaborative management techniques of activation, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing as discussed by Agranoff and McGuire (2001) and McGuire and Agranoff (2014).

Chapter Four contains the research design and methods used for investigation in this study. I include details about the multiple case study design, including how cases were selected. I describe the method of inquiry as semi-structured interviews of both Head Start directors and VPI administrators that comprise the dyadic partnerships under investigation. I provide details regarding how the collaborative process dimensions and management techniques are tapped by specific interview questions, and I explain how I learned about collaborative activities for each dyad under study. Finally, I describe code creation, and I discuss how thematic coding took both a deductive and inductive approach in this research.

Chapter Five includes a narrative description of each of the five cases and the dyads that reside in those cases. I use this chapter to describe the types of collaborative activities that each dyadic partnership undertakes and label each dyad as participating in “no relationship,” cooperation, coordination, or collaboration, ranging respectively from the least to the most involvement with one another. This chapter allows me to investigate “to what extent” each of these dyads engage with one another. I also delve into why each of these dyads undertake collaboration and begin to address another one of the main research questions of this study: why does collaboration occur (or not occur) between the Head Start and VPI programs.

In Chapter Six, I use Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to examine the association between the five collaborative process dimensions and the degree of collaborative activity. QCA

is a technique that uses Boolean minimization techniques to find combinations of conditions that link to an outcome. It provides an opportunity to investigate both necessary and sufficient conditions for the identified outcome. In this study, the first outcome is deemed as undertaking in more involved collaborative activities. Then, in turn, I use QCA to investigate each degree of collaborative activity, including collaboration, coordination, and cooperation/no relationship. The QCA analysis provides one part of gaining an understanding of “how” administrators engage collaboration, it investigates the association between dyads that present various process dimensions compared to those who lack process dimensions and how these link to having more or lesser degrees of collaborative activity.

Chapter Seven provides a detailed qualitative analysis of how public administrators describe various collaborative management techniques (activating, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing). These discussions are grouped by the degree of collaborative activity to assay the similarities and differences between how administrators at varying degrees describe management techniques. I also attempt to link the management activities to building specific collaborative process dimensions. This analysis provides the administrators a voice by using segments of interview text to support how they discuss managing collaboration. For part of the analysis, I identify useful categorizations of several of the collaborative management techniques.

I conclude this study in Chapter Eight. I revisit the main research questions for this study and summarize what examining the dyadic partnerships between the Head Start and VPI program offers as a means of explanation. I review the main reasons why programs collaborate and link these to a theoretical approach. I revisit the findings from the QCA and illuminate how the management techniques discussed in Chapter Seven can offer insight to how the collaborative process dimensions take the shape they do. I spend time discussing what this study

adds to theoretical understandings of the collaborative process dimensions and management techniques, including offering additional specificity for the conceptual definitions. I argue why bridging a connection between collaborative management techniques and process dimensions provides deep insight to how collaboration is initiated, managed, and sustained. I review the limitations of this study, and finally, I provide suggestions for public administrators that engage collaboration for how to build and sustain different degrees of collaborative activity.

Now we turn to Chapter Two, which investigates the historical context of the rise of the Head Start program and Virginia Preschool Initiative.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF HEAD START & THE VIRGINIA PRESCHOOL INITIATIVE

The level of collaborative activity that occurs between Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative is steeped in historical context. How and why these programs developed frames our understanding of why collaboration between these programs is not always an easy path. Layers of program differences, including intergovernmental funding and regulatory differences, cultural and pedagogical differences in approaches to early childhood, and teacher credentialing and pay discrepancies create seemingly insurmountable barriers between the programs. In this chapter, I explore the historical development of Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) and why they developed as they did. I seek to answer several questions that will aid in my exploration of collaboration between Head Start and VPI. First, why did Head Start develop as a holistic child development program instead of a purely academic venture? Second, while other aspects of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 were dismantled, how did Head Start survive? Third, what is the historical importance of Head Start currently being housed in the Department of Health and Human Services? Fourth, why did states begin investing in separate publicly funded preschool programs, and why are they typically more academic-focused? Finally, what are the underlying historical causes of the separation between these programs, and does this separation continue today?

History of Head Start

Head Start was enacted in 1965 as one of Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society programs that provided monies to local communities in an effort to solve society's ills. It grew out of the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act's (EOA) Community Action Program (CAP) model that envisioned

impoverished communities organizing their poor to combat local poverty issues (Zigler and Muenchow, 1992; Vinovskis, 2005; Zigler and Styfco, 2010). It was intended to provide poor children with preschool opportunities that would increase their readiness for public elementary education (Harmon, 2004). Head Start also was seen as a vehicle to provide employment for impoverished children's family members by becoming teachers and aides in the classrooms. It was to be both a comprehensive child development program and a civically empowering opportunity for poor parents, who participated in the governance of the program in policy councils (Bruch, Ferree, and Soss, 2010). Ultimately, despite the breadth of goals that planning members envisioned, an early main selling point and accountability measure was the claim that early intervention could raise the IQ scores for impoverished children. The original planners set out to accomplish all of this with an eight-week summer program. Perhaps to no surprise given the multiple and competing goals listed above, Head Start fell short on raising IQ scores and spent years having to rebuild its legitimacy as a premier child development program (Zigler and Muenchow, 1992, Zigler and Styfco, 2010).

That Head Start developed as a comprehensive child development program is not surprising given the cast of visionaries involved in its creation. Sargent Shriver was tapped by President Johnson to lead the War on Poverty. As the policy and program components of the Economic Opportunity Act unfolded, Shriver had a personal interest in early childhood interventions for the mentally disabled due to his wife's family background (Shriver was married to Eunice Kennedy, who had a mentally disabled older sister). During the time when administrators and planning committee members began working on the Head Start program, there were several key studies that indicated that early intervention could have positive effect on IQ scores for mentally retarded children (Vinovskis, 2005). Although Head Start's purpose was to intervene in the lives

of impoverished children's and not those of the mentally retarded, Shriver and committee members framed the cultural deprivation from growing up poor as a form of retardation that would detrimentally effect success in public schools.

The original planning committee was comprised of mostly physicians and psychologists, with little representation from the education field (Hymes, Jr., 1979; Zigler and Styfco, 2010). These professionals put into place the health, nutritional, and socio-developmental aspects of the Head Start program that still set it apart today. They felt strongly that any strides made to promote success in school would have to be accomplished through attending to the whole child, not just academics. Not only were the majority of these planning committee members not educators, but according to multiple scholars, many of the planning committee seemed opposed to linking Head Start to the education system, a system that they viewed as having failed impoverished children historically (Hymes, Jr., 1979; Vinovskis, 2005). Edward Zigler, a member of the original Head Start planning committee and the first Director of the newly established Office of Children from 1970-72, recently has rejected this view, arguing that the "anti-educational" position suggested by some does not reflect the attitude of the planning committee (Zigler and Styfco, 2010).

An important part of Head Start's history for this study is its story of survival and its long history of battling attempts to house it in the Department (or former Office) of Education. Early evaluations of Head Start did not report favorable findings, but Head Start was still largely deemed a successful program, and seen as one of the most successful ventures of the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA). Thus, although Shriver had valid political reasons to keep Head Start in the Office of Economic Opportunity and tied to the community action agencies, concern over program quality prompted discussions of moving the program as early as the Johnson

administration (Vinovskis, 2005). Long term, the EOA required programs created under its auspices to be housed permanently in other Federal departments (Zigler and Styfco, 2010). Some republican politicians called for the program to be moved to the Office of Education, but Shriver responded negatively to this suggestion, arguing that the Office of Education would quell the comprehensive and child development nature of the program, and would not be able to manage the community-based (non-school setting) programs. To address some of these quality issues, Head Start was increased to a nine-month half day program by 1966 (Kalifeh et al., 2011).

Where Head Start would reside continued to be an ongoing debate (and will be discussed in more detail below), but its founders and early directors also feared that the program would be altogether discontinued. Many components of the Office of Economic Opportunity were eventually dismantled, but Head Start remained intact (Zigler and Muenchow, 1992; Zigler and Styfco, 2010). The strength of the Head Start parents as a constituency is one reason for its survival; others also suggest that it survived because Zigler separated Head Start from the Community Action Agency (CAA) agenda, particularly when he stopped allowing Head Start funds to be used for community activism in the early 1970s (Zigler and Styfco, 2010). From its inception, the Community Action approach, which favored empowering poor communities to bring about systemic changes, was despised by many politicians. Thus, although Zigler was criticized by some for reducing overarching changes that could be made by CAAs once Head Start was mostly carved out, Zigler believed strongly that Head Start would only survive by prioritizing quality improvement and programming geared towards child development over community activism (Zigler and Muenchow, 1992; Zigler and Styfco, 2010).

The other ongoing battle over Head Start had to do with where it would be housed long term. Head Start administrative staff members were not the only ones who raised concerns with a

potential move to the Office of Education. Local leaders of CAAs, the National Head Start Association, and parents also fought this transfer. Particularly in southern states, local leaders and parents raised concerns of handing over preschoolers to the education system, a system that they viewed as having largely failed these impoverished, and primarily black, children (Zigler, 1992; Rose, 2010; Vinovskis, 2005). They too appreciated the comprehensive and parental involvement approach that Head Start championed and feared that this approach would disappear if educational bureaucrats provided the oversight. Later historical accounts of some of the founding planners of Head Start reveals that although many generally supported keeping Head Start separated, some did worry about the long-term success and longevity of a preschool program that was carved out of the educational system (Hymes, Jr., 1979; Rose, 2010).

During the Nixon administration, Head Start was moved from the Office of Economic Opportunity, but it was placed in the U.S. Office of Child Development and not the Office of Education. It was during this timeframe (1975) that the Head Start Performance Standards were established, a series of guidelines that began standardizing program objectives and establishing accountability (Kalifeh et al., 2011). President Carter also attempted to move Head Start from the Office of Child Development to the newly created Department of Education. According to Rose (2010), this was more as an attempt to link a philosophy towards education as holistic than an attempt to reduce Head Start to strictly academic activities, although this notion is disputed by some (see Kalifeh, et al., 2011). Similar to the backlash during earlier attempts, the National Head Start Association fought successfully to retain the oversight for Head Start in the newly created Department of Health and Human Services; however, now Head Start would find its home in Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (Kalifeh et al., 2011).

Under President Reagan's "New Federalism," an attempt was made to turn Head Start funding into block grants that would increase state involvement in program administration. It was under Reagan's presidency that many of the aspects of the EOA were indeed dismantled; however, his attempt to devolve Head Start was not successful (Zigler and Muenchow, 1992; Zigler and Styfco, 2010). And although Zigler touts in several works that Head Start actually increased in strength during the Reagan administration, Kalifeh et al. (2011) note that monies to ensure monitoring and adherence to the Head Start Performance Standards was reduced during this time, resulting in reduced program quality.

The next attempt at transferring Head Start came under George W. Bush. Following in line with the administration's No Child Left Behind policy, the second Bush administration also attempted to transfer Head Start to the Department of Education, but yet again, the move did not happen (Fuller, 2007, Kalifeh et al., 2011, Bassok, 2012). The Office of Head Start remained housed in the Department of Health and Human Services, and that is where it still remains in 2015.

The purposeful decision to retain the Head Start program in the Department of Health and Human Services and not transfer it to the Department of Education creates the contextual backdrop for collaboration between state-funded preschool and the Head Start program to occur. Although the No Child Left Behind Act federalized education in a way not before seen, elementary and secondary education is still primarily a function of local governments with much state oversight. By contrast, Head Start remains a locally run program with much federal oversight, but little state intervention. Thus, not only does a history of separation offer some insight to why collaboration between state-funded preschools and Head Start may be

challenging, but differences in how these programs reside in a federal system also add to potential organizational barriers.

Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007

President George W. Bush signed into law the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (also referred to as the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007). This reauthorization brought about some important changes in Head Start relevant to this study's focus. First and foremost, the law mandated better coordination between Head Start programs and other publicly funded preschool programs located within the Head Start program's service area. As part of this requirement, grant funds were made available to states to continue Head Start State Collaboration Offices (established in 1990). Another mandate required the establishment of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) about coordination between the Head Start program and the entity (or entities) providing other publicly funded preschool within the same service area. Each MOU must include plans for the following: educational activities, public information dissemination, selection priorities for eligible children, service areas, staff training, program technical assistance, provision of additional services, communication to parent outreach for transition to kindergarten, use of facilities, transportation, and other elements (Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007, 42 U.S.C. 9837 Sec. 642(5)). Although these MOUs are required and signify, at least symbolically, a commitment to collaboration between Head Start and other publicly funded preschool programs, not all Head Start programs have signed agreements with the other public preschools in their service areas, and there exists wide variation in degree of collaboration and coordination (Bassok, 2012; personal communication with informants).

Although history reflects a determined effort by Head Start administrators to keep the Head Start program separated from the U.S. Department of Education, and the official mandate for coordination and collaboration between Head Start and other publicly funded preschools (typically run by state and local education authorities) did not occur until the 2007 reauthorization, it is inaccurate to depict collaboration between programs as absent prior to this mandate. For example, Rose (2010) reports that the rise of universal pre-kindergarten in Oklahoma, beginning in the early 1990s, always included collaboration between the state education department, Head Start, and childcare programs in the development of program standards (p. 189). A 2007 evaluation of a pilot program of the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) revealed that collaboration occurred between Head Start and the VPI program in some localities to the point of blending and braiding program funding, and that this type of collaboration had been undertaken in Virginia several years (Bradburn et al., 2007).

Two other changes that occurred under the Head Start Reauthorization of 2007 are noteworthy for this study due to their relationship to quality. First, by 2013, fifty percent of all lead Head Start teachers nationally were to have a bachelor's degree, and all teacher assistants must have a CDA (Child Development Associate¹). As of 2014, a Head Start program fact sheet reports that 71% of lead teachers in center-based programs meet this requirement (OHS). Secondly, re-competition occurs every five years for grantees that are not deemed as high quality (www.caplaw.org). The regulations developed to meet this aspect of the law have been deemed

¹ The CDA is an entry-level early child educator credential and was developed in 1971 to provide training for preschool teachers and teacher aides. It requires 120 hours of early childhood education from college coursework, training, or some combination of the two (Heisner and Lederberg, 2011).

² Re-competition occurs when an existing Head Start grantee will not be automatically renewed for grant funding, but must compete with other potential early childhood education providers to receive the funds. The program must resubmit their grant application.

³ Some school districts do not participate because they are not eligible due to the number of Head Start slots meeting or exceeding the total number of projected at-risk preschoolers for the

quite controversial by some, including a mandated 25% of programs to come up for renewal and a mandated trigger of falling in the lowest ten percent of observed classrooms based upon an early childhood classroom assessment tool (CLASS – Classroom Assessment Scoring System) as resulting in a program deficiency, thus throwing the program into re-competition² (Letter from NHSA to Sec. Kathleen Sebelius, July 29th, 2013).

The most recent major hurdle that Head Start has faced is the effect of the 2013 sequestration as a result of the Budget Control Act of 2011. The sequestration resulted in \$85 billion dollars in across-the-board spending cuts in both domestic and military programs (Weisman, 2013). Some programs found reprieve and flexibility in handling the mandatory five percent cuts, while others, such as Head Start, did not (Cook, 2013). A 2013 report from the Head Start association reported over 57,000 children losing Head Start services due to sequestration. Head Start programs nationwide had to reduce budgets by reducing days of service, student slots (and the accompanying personnel), transportation, or other program services (Samuels, 2013). As of January 2014, a bipartisan budget deal increased Head Start funding and reduced the effects of the sequestration (Desjardins, 2014). A 2014 Head Start Program Instruction, dated February 2014, informed Head Start grantees that the appropriations act restored the 5.27% cuts made due to 2013 sequestration and would include a cost of living increase to restore the funding to pre-sequestration levels (Office of Head Start, 2014).

Head Start: Oversight and Program Features

In 2015, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services continues to provide the oversight for the program, with administration for the program provided by the Office of Head

² Re-competition occurs when an existing Head Start grantee will not be automatically renewed for grant funding, but must compete with other potential early childhood education providers to receive the funds. The program must resubmit their grant application.

Start located in the Administration for Children and Families. As discussed earlier, the program continues to emphasize a comprehensive approach to early childhood development, including health, mental health, nutrition and family involvement along with the educational component (Stebbins & Scott, 2007). Edward Zigler (2010) discusses trying to capture this comprehensive approach in an overall program objective as being challenging; ultimately, it was discussed as “social competence.” The term social competence officially was changed to “school readiness” as the main goal for Head Start in 1998 (p. 148). This overall goal and comprehensive approach are still reflected today in its program purpose:

Head Start is a national program that promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families (Office of Head Start, 2009).

Local Head Start grantees, which include local school districts, community action agencies, or other local governmental agencies, directly receive funds from the federal government to operate their programs (GAO, 2000). In 2014, the federal government allocated \$7.8 billion dollars to provide services for over 927,000 children from birth to age five (Head Start Program Facts Sheet). Head Start classrooms are located in various settings, including community-based centers, churches and public schools. To be eligible for Head Start, a child must be aged zero to five years old and his or her family must be at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level; however, other eligible children include those who are homeless, in foster care, and/or are part of families receiving Temporary Aid for Needy Families. In addition, programs may petition to enroll up to ten percent of children whose family incomes are above the poverty threshold (Office of Head Start, 2012). This allowance dates back to the program’s inception when Edward Zigler pushed (mostly unsuccessfully) for the inclusion of both middle-class and impoverished

children to reside together in a preschool program based upon child development research that supported this type of inclusion as having positive outcomes for all children (Zigler and Styfco, 2010).

Head Start & Quality

Although a detailed discussion of program quality is beyond the scope of this dissertation, the issue of program quality historically has been a part of the policy discussion and may help to explain how and why state-level preschool programs developed independently and separate from the federal Head Start program. The above discussion focused mainly on potential reasons why Head Start advocates and administrators fought to keep the program from being enveloped by the education institution. However, another aspect of the story involves why state educators may have desired to develop standalone preschool services, rather than simply to expand the Head Start program: the ongoing struggle Head Start has had in proving itself as a quality preschool program.

Multiple histories of the beginning of the Head Start program paint a similar portrait. Once the decision to develop a childcare program for the impoverished as part of the EOA was given the go-ahead and planners were brought together, attempts to take a conservative pilot approach with the program failed. Instead, the academic planners who pushed for a small beginning to test the approaches were told to balloon the program to accommodate over 500,000 children. The initial task force literally had weeks to read the first grant proposals to get the program up and running. To these initial planners, there was little surprise that the original program lacked quality given the rushed timeframe (Vinovskis, 2005; Zigler and Muenchow, 1992; Zigler and Styfco, 2010).

Head Start faced scrutiny not long after being established. The famous Westinghouse report, conducted in 1969, suggested that Head Start was largely ineffective with respect to long-term gains. Although multiple critiques of that initial evaluation showed the methodology to be severely flawed, the Head Start program suffered a significant blow to its perceived ability to provide quality instruction. However, flawed methodology was not the only issue raised by many critics of the evaluation. First, the expediency with which the first evaluation was conducted did not give the Head Start program much time to work on quality and weed out non-performing programs. Second, although Head Start was designed as a comprehensive program, early success indicators placed emphasis on academic outcomes and less on the overall comprehensive approach taken in program design (Zigler and Muenchow, 1992; Fischer, 1995; Zigler and Styfco, 2010).

Lascarides and Hinitz (2011) point out that the Head Start program has vacillated in its perceived potential to help children, moving from early notions of over-optimism into an overly pessimistic phase (after the release of the Westinghouse report), and then back toward a more realistic outlook about what the program can accomplish. Much of the perceived lack of quality can be attributed to the program's early reliance on, and advocacy for, parents serving as classroom aides and assistant teachers. As pointed out above, the parent involvement piece is a crowning-achievement of the Head Start program, but that involvement has been understood to come at the detriment of quality as outsiders challenged how parents lacking in a college teaching degree could provide quality instruction. Professional development for these parents, including the development of the Child Development Associate (CDA) attempted to address these concerns with providing competency-based training (Zigler and Styfco, 2010), and more

recent changes in Head Start policy call for increases in teachers that hold bachelor's degrees; however, the stigma of Head Start lacking quality-trained teachers remains.

The most recent Head Start evaluation, the Head Start Impact Study (HHS, 2010), provides a large-scale, methodologically rigorous study that compared test (children placed in Head Start programs) to control groups (children placed in no preschool or non-Head Start preschool experiences). The evaluation showed significant positive gains for Head Start children while enrolled in the program, but minimal significant longer-term positive effects (by 1st grade). Although Head Start has contended with the “dreaded fade-out effect” (Zigler and Muenchow, 1992; Zigler and Styfco, 2010) during its entire existence, a research director at the original Office of Child Development noted that no other social program (education, social services, or otherwise) has had to justify its existence based upon long-term benefits (Rose, 2009, p. 83). In an independent follow up to the study, Gelber and Isen (2013) did find significant positive short-term and long-term benefits for Head Start children in terms of parental involvement, arguing that Head Start has indeed been successful in achieving this long-held goal.

Head Start in Virginia

In the 2012-13 school year, seven percent of Virginian four-year olds enrolled in Head Start, with an average federal spending of \$7,400 per child annually (Barnett et al., 2013). Sixty-eight Head Start programs (including Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant/Seasonal programs) exist in Virginia and serve over 14,000 children (FY2011, VA Head Start Association). Most programs are housed in Community Action Agencies (25), followed closely by local education authorities (LEAs) (20), private/public non-profit agencies (17), and other government agencies

(6). The Virginia Head Start 2011 annual report estimates over 20,000 volunteers and over 4,000 jobs created by the program annually.

In addition to the comprehensive programmatic features of Head Start discussed above, some important regulatory features should be noted for their potential effects on collaboration in Virginia between Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), a state-funded preschool program. Generally speaking, Head Start's regulations are considered to be more prescriptive than VPI's given its requirement for home visits, assessments, and dental and health screenings. They are also generally considered more stringent. For example, Head Start's transportation requirements are beyond what the state expects for preschoolers enrolled in the VPI program, and unlike the elementary or preschool classrooms that are part of the local education authority's (LEA) oversight, Head Start classrooms have to meet the state child care licensure standards.

One area in which Head Start is less stringent than VPI is teacher certification. Although the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 requires 50% of teachers to have a bachelor's degree by 2013, teachers are not required to be certified by the state in which they reside. If VPI classrooms are located within a school setting, then VPI teachers are required to meet the same certification requirements as other elementary school teachers; however, if the VPI classroom is located in a community setting, then the teacher is required to have a CDA (Rose, 2009).

State-funded Preschools

The story of collaboration, by definition, involves more than one entity. Thus, the first part of this historical account described in detail the rise of Head Start, one of the two main players studied in this dissertation. The second player that is the focus of this study is the Virginia

Preschool Initiative (VPI), a state-funded preschool program that was inaugurated in 1996. Specific details of how VPI came into existence will be discussed below, but first, a more general account of the rise of state-funded preschools will be provided to continue to establish the contextual framework that enshrouds any collaboration that occurs between these public preschool programs. This section will provide additional evidence about *why* state-funded preschools developed as standalone entities, separate from the Head Start program, and why they are typically considered to be more academic in focus. Also, although I have begun weaving a picture of why Head Start and state-funded preschool programs were kept mostly separate, I will also discuss early childhood education research that delves into when and why collaboration may occur between Head Start and state-funded preschool programs.

The Rise of State-funded Preschools

During the 1970s only seven states provided public preschool (JLARC, 2007); however, by the end of the 1980s, 31 states had established some type of preschool program (Rose, 2009, p. 91). This dramatic increase raises the question of why states began to invest in preschool. Historical accounts offer two main explanations. First, large scale concerns about educational quality in America trickled its way down to the preschool population in the early 1980s. Secondly, the longitudinal Perry Preschool Program report (almost the anti-venom to the infamously negative Westinghouse Report on Head Start) was also released in the early 1980s.

Rose (2009) argues that rising concerns over educational quality in the United States in the early 1980s opened the door for a focus on preschool education. In her view, the release of the *Nation at Risk* report in 1983 incited state governors to take action with regard to how to improve educational quality. This report sounded the alarm that the national economy was at

stake, and linked economic recession to faltering public education in the United States (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). In particular the report highlighted that 25% of high school students dropped out of high school, and that more than ten percent of them could be considered functionally illiterate (Rose, 2009, p. 88). Many state task forces arose in response to the report and began developing new legislation to address these concerns, particularly for high school seniors. At the same time, however, publicity surrounding the promising long-term outcomes of the Preschool Perry Project, a preschool program in Michigan for disadvantaged children, highlighted that quality preschool investment at an early age could decrease drop-out rates and promote school readiness (Rose, 2009).

Other researchers, such as Blank and Mitchell (2001), concur with these findings, noting the historical evolution of addressing the preschool problem, first in the 1970s focusing on low income students and the even playing ground that Head Start would provide, next focusing on educational reform and the outcomes of such preschool projects as Michigan's Perry Preschool Project, and finally the insurmountable amount of evidence supporting the importance of early development on brain processes. Bushouse (2009) surmises that the rise of public preschool involved the development of a "causal story" that defined public education as a problem and investment in preschool education as the solution (p. 55). By linking an educational problem to a potential educational solution, states developed the justification for primarily housing pre-kindergarten education in their state departments of education, and taking a decidedly academic approach.

Other factors may have contributed to state investment in public preschool and why the preschools developed separately from federal Head Start. First, President Nixon's veto of the Comprehensive Child Development Act of 1971 diminished federal government involvement in

early childhood care and education and paved the way for the multipronged approach to service delivery for preschoolers that we still have today (Kagan, 1991; Karch, 2014; Zigler and Muenchow, 1992; Bushouse, 2009; Rose, 2009; Zigler and Styfco, 2010). Part of the failure to pass this act mirrors the ongoing tensions between federally funded, but locally controlled Head Start compared to state-funded and controlled pre-kindergartens; that is, controversy grew over who would oversee these proposed federally funded childcare centers, with liberal politicians pushing for a similar model to the Community Action Agency and conservatives arguing for some room for state intervention. Ultimately, administrative and philosophical concerns eroded the positive momentum for federal investment in early childhood education and care (Zigler and Styfco, 2010).

Another factor contributing to the increase in state investment was the need for more types of childcare options as mothers entered the workforce in greater numbers than ever before (Cohen, 1996; GAO, 2004). Moreover, the federal-to-local funding mechanism that is the centerpiece of the Head Start program offered little incentive for states to invest directly in the program, when they would have little to no control over how the dollars were spent.

Historically, state-funded preschools resided under the supervision of state Departments of Education. The majority of classrooms were situated within public schools, but some classrooms also existed in community agencies, private preschool settings, and Head Start centers (Gilliam & Ripple, 2004). Overall, state-funded preschools do not provide services that are as comprehensive as their Head Start counterparts'; however, teacher qualifications for state preschool teachers are typically higher than for Head Start (Gilliam & Ripple, 2004).

During the 2012-2013 school year, forty states and the District of Columbia provided state-funded preschool to twenty-eight percent of the nation's four-year-olds. Thirty-one states

included an income requirement as part of their eligibility criteria (Barnett et al., 2013), although other states (Virginia included) allowed for locally defined risk criteria to determine eligibility and generally were considered more lenient than Head Start eligibility requirements (Gilliam & Ripple, 2004). Karch (2010) identified forty-one states (including the District of Columbia) that invest in preschool in some form, but notes that the type of investment varies, with thirty states investing in state-funded preschool only (such as Virginia), one state investing money in federal Head Start only, and ten states investing in some combination of the two. These distinct funding streams, in states such as Virginia, are an important contextual consideration when investigating public collaboration between preschool programs.

Many states, like Virginia, created programs focused on filling the gap between public programs geared strictly towards impoverished children, such as Head Start, and private programs geared towards paying, middle class families. Some states, however, such as Oklahoma and Georgia, developed universal preschool programs that made some form of publicly funded preschool available to all children (Rose, 2009). In states such as these, the Head Start program still exists and serves as one of the prongs to create universal access to their state's children (Bushouse, 2009; Rose, 2009). As President Obama continues to focus on investment in early childhood education and universal preschool access (2013 State of the Union Address), a continued examination of how Head Start and state preschool programs work together is warranted.

Recent scholarship and policy briefs that focus on early childhood education and care have begun to address why collaboration occurs between Head Start and state prekindergarten, or other early childcare more broadly. Generally speaking, this literature contains two themes. First, collaboration occurs as localities focus specifically on issues of standards and quality for early

childhood education (Wat and Gayl, 2009; Sowa, 2009). Sowa (2009) discusses these types of enhancements to service delivery networks as “people changing,” although her assertions arise from her observations about why childcare centers may wish to collaborate with Head Start or state prekindergarten; she does not study collaboration between Head Start and state prekindergarten per se. The focus on quality involves issues of equity as well, as localities want to ensure that all children are ready for school regardless of which program they attend.

The second theme apparent in the early childhood education and care literature involves extending access to preschool services or maximizing resources. Bassok (2012) discusses the variation in the states’ approaches in providing public preschool, and notes that some localities decide to combine their Head Start and state prekindergarten programs in order to increase access to services for more community children. Collaboration sometimes occurs to increase access to a full day of childcare for community children resulting in Head Start or state prekindergarten programs engaging in collaboration with other childcare facilities (Sowa, 2009).

After discussing the historical rise of state prekindergarten more broadly, I now address specifically the development of the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

The Virginia Preschool Initiative

The topic of preschool became a prominent one in Virginia in the late 1980s, with the development of several pilot preschool programs across the state (JLARC, 2007). In response to Joint Resolution Number 38, the Virginia General Assembly in 1993 received a report about educational attainment and students living in poverty (Virginia Department of Education, 1993). The report highlighted the findings of the Children’s Defense Fund that attempted to shatter the stereotypes of the poor, noting that the “typical poor person” is actually a child under five, not

necessarily living with a single mother. In addition, the report provided state-specific evidence that linked poverty to poor student outcomes, noting however that the link often disappears at the individual level (giving support to the image of the child who rises out of her impoverished neighborhood to accomplish great things). These findings supported the rationale that all at-risk students can benefit from additional support, not just the poor. The report also described early childhood investment as sound fiscal policy by explaining that the money spent for preschool-aged children can save money spent later by taxpayers on welfare and prisons (ibid.). To provide support to such claims, this report also referenced the positive outcomes of the famous Perry Preschool Project. Interestingly, although an entire chapter was devoted to “Improving the Educational Outcomes of Poor Children” and referenced other state programs (the before-mentioned Michigan program), the report failed to discuss the relevance of Head Start in addressing these outcome disparities.

Another 1993 report delivered to the Virginia General Assembly specifically addressed programs serving at-risk four year olds. It detailed that “an estimated 21,222 Virginian four-year-olds were defined as “at risk,” with approximately half of them being served under existing federal programs, leaving slightly over fifty percent not being served” (JLARC, 2007, p. 6). In addition, the report noted the lack of understanding or tracking of all of the funding streams and demographic information for this group of children.

Section 22.1-199.1 of the Code of Virginia established the state-funded preschool program that became known as the Virginia Preschool Initiative. The code clearly established its relationship with Head Start, stating that “the General Assembly hereby establishes a grant program to be disbursed by the Department of Education to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds *who are unserved*

by *Head Start programs* and for at-risk five-year-olds who are not eligible to attend kindergarten” (Code of Virginia, 22.1-199.1, emphasis added). The Virginia General Assembly enacted the program legislation in 1995, which made the first year of funding available in FY96 (JLARC, 2007). The General Assembly appropriated 10.3 million dollars for the inaugural year (Latham, 2013), and the program initially targeted thirty percent of the eligible unserved children. The numbers increased to sixty percent in FY97, ninety percent in FY05, and 100% in FY06 (VDOE, 2014). By 2013, appropriated funds for the program reached over \$90 million dollars (Latham, 2013).

VPI enrollment over the years reflects these increases. For example, by 2005 the number of Virginian four-year-olds enrolled in VPI surpassed those enrolled in Head Start for the first time (JLARC, 2007). In 2013, over 17,000 four-year-olds participated in VPI, and a 2011 report estimated ninety percent of Virginia school districts offered the state-funded preschool program in 2012 (Virginia Board of Education, 2011, 2013). However, it is important to note that although the state appropriated over 90 million to cover 100% of the eligible four-year-olds unserved by Head Start, all Virginian at-risk children are not being served. Reasons vary for this provision gap, but include the lack of a local funding match mandated by the legislation, a lack of classroom space, or a lack of a critical mass of children in a locality to support an entire classroom³ (Bradburn et al., 2007; JLARC, 2007; Latham, 2013; Start Strong Council, 2007). Latham (2013) identifies funding as a barrier for some communities who could provide the local match, but still lack the necessary funds to provide preschool in their communities with the combined state and local funds.

³ Some school districts do not participate because they are not eligible due to the number of Head Start slots meeting or exceeding the total number of projected at-risk preschoolers for the community (JLARC, 2007).

The funding for VPI is a per pupil grant directed from the Virginia Department of Education to participating localities with a required local funding match based upon local ability to pay⁴ (JLARC, 2007). The majority of the grantees for the VPI program are local education authorities (LEAs); however, some exceptions do exist. For example, in Richmond County, Virginia the grantee is the county administration and the program is provided at the Family Development Center, and in Fairfax County, the grantee is the Office for Children with the program delivered in various settings across the county, including public schools and child care centers (Bradburn et al., 2007). Interestingly, when VPI began in 1996, its annual per pupil funding of \$5,400 exceeded Head Start's per pupil funding by 20%; however, in 2013, with a per pupil funding of \$5,892, Head Start's per pupil funding of \$7,437 surpassed VPI's by slightly more than 26% (JLARC, 2007; Barnett et al., 2013).

VPI and Quality

In 2007, the Virginia Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC), a nonpartisan oversight agency of the Virginia General Assembly, was directed to conduct a study about the Virginia Preschool Initiative implementation and its impacts (JLARC, 2007). The study reports that school districts implementing the VPI program mostly are adhering to program standards and regulations, and that VPI participants outperformed non-participants in gaining pre-literacy skills during their preschool year as well as during kindergarten (ibid). A more recent study finds similar results, with VPI participants being less likely to repeat kindergarten and more likely to have literacy gains (Huang, Invernizzi, and Drake, 2012). Similar to the Head

⁴ Ability to pay is a sliding scale that is determined by locality property values, income, and taxable income; however, in 2010, local per pupil contribution was capped at 50%, reducing the funding burden for some of the wealthier localities (Latham, 2013).

Start Impact Study discussed earlier, Huang et al. (2012) find that the gains identified for the VPI participants fade by the end of first year, but discuss that the merging of literacy scores for VPI participants and nonparticipants may have more to do with nonparticipants “catching up” instead of true fade out effects of preschool.

After establishing a historical context for a study of collaboration between Head Start and VPI, I now turn to situating the main research questions within existing scholarship.

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this dissertation is to study public-public program collaboration⁵ (PPPC) that occurs between Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative. This research attempts to uncover why, how, and to what extent relationships develop between these two standalone preschool programs. Its focus is on the dyadic relationships that develop between programs and program administrators as they choose to collaborate or not. This point is made to clarify the vantage point of this study. Although these dyadic relationships nest within public programs overseen by specific regulatory requirements, and within varying organizations and differing communities, this study focuses upon how public managers envision, establish, negotiate, and maintain collaborative activities. To that end, it offers additional insight to the micro-level processes of collaborating.

Understanding these processes in depth will contribute to theory building for the collaboration, collaborative management, and network literatures⁶ that often discuss the antecedents and outcomes of collaboration without examining the specific processes that comprise collaborative relationships (Wood and Gray, 1991; Thomson and Perry, 2006).

Although existing scholarship has enlightened our understanding of contextual and

⁵ PPPC denotes collaboration between two publicly funded programs, such as Head Start and VPI. In some cases, the administrators that run these programs are publicly funded personnel, such as school district personnel; however, it is also the case that persons administering these programs work for nonprofits, such as a Community Action Agency (CAA). These organizational differences are considered to be part of the context that affects the potential for PPPC to occur.

⁶ For the purposes of this review, literature on networks will also be reviewed in addition to literature on collaboration given they are often treated similarly in discussions of antecedents, challenges, and management issues. Also, some form of collaboration may be considered the basic building block of networked relationships.

organizational factors that contribute to the rise of networks and has revealed challenges that face public network managers, my research focuses on the building blocks of networks by examining dyadic relationships. Provan and Lemaire (2012) contend that not all organizations in a network collaborate, and in fact argue that too much collaboration is inefficient; yet, the complete absence of collaboration within a network would result in its demise. Thus, an essential component of assessing the structure and outcomes of public networks is to understand the underlying dyadic relationships that occur between the multiple pairs of individual entities in a network. This study also adds to our knowledge of intergovernmental relations by examining how collaboration develops and is maintained between state and federal programs geared to serving at-risk preschoolers.⁷

To offer a frame of understanding for this study, several bodies of literature will be reviewed. The main questions that I attempt to discover with this research all deserve to be grounded in a solid understanding of collaboration. What is meant in the public sphere when we use the term collaboration? Why does collaboration occur, and what does it look like when it does occur? How does collaboration begin and how is it managed and maintained? Although these are seemingly discrete questions, attempting to answer them is not always straightforward. Some scholars suggest that “why” collaborating occurs and “how” it is managed is directly linked to “what it looks like.” For the purposes of this review, I will attempt to organize a discussion of these topics in distinct sections; however, the reader will note that sometimes overlap does occur.

⁷ While it is true that these programs are funded at different levels within the federal system, they do not interact in typical federal-state dynamics given the standalone nature of each program. In other words, in Virginia, these programs have completely independent funding streams and lines of authority.

Defining collaboration

An important launching point for this study is to define collaboration generally, and then lead to a specific understanding of PPPC. Moreover, although much overlap occurs in literature that discusses collaboration, networks, and interorganizational relationships, it is necessary to elucidate what each framework has to offer for this study and what each framework lacks. This task is not without its challenges given that within one framework, such as networks, scholars have emphasized different distinguishing features as essential in establishing meaning. For example, a whole network approach emphasizes that three or more organizations are involved in an exchange (Provan and LeMaire, 2012), whereas Powell (1990) uses the term “network” to denote a type of interaction based upon mutual exchange and reciprocity. By placing emphasis on network as a type of interaction, these mutual exchanges differ from other forms of exchange, such as market or hierarchal relationships (O’Toole, 1997; O’Toole & Meier, 1999; Phillips et al., 2000; Powell, 1990).

Berry et al. (2004) argue that how networks are defined has a strong disciplinary bias, with sociology placing emphasis on the structure of network relationships, political science viewing networked relationships as a lens for understanding policy formation, and public management investigating how networked structures affect the delivery of public services. In sociology, much of the network scholarship arose from a long history of organizational and interorganizational relations studies that emphasized issues of power and exchange (Benson, 1975; Cook, 1977). In other words, much of the early scholarship on interorganizational relations developed out of the recognition that organizations rarely exist in a vacuum, and they develop multiple types of exchange relationships to produce products or provide services.

Moreover, environmental factors and external relationships do much to shape the internal functioning of the organization (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Thompson, 1967).

Another typical feature of the public administration/management scholarship that studies networks is to also include what prompts multiple organizations to work together in the first place. That is, these scholars highlight why networks and collaboration occur, suggesting that many problems are beyond the scope of one organization (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; Nowel, 2010) and that public agencies attempt to increase public value by working together (Bardach, 1998).

For the purposes of this study, I concur with the whole network approach that a network includes three or more organizations working towards a common goal (Provan and LeMaire, 2012). I distinguish this specific structural arrangement from collaboration, which is the active back-and-forth, give-and-take relationship that occurs when at least two people, groups, or organizations try to work together. Thus, I emphasize collaboration as specific type of relationship, similar to network exchange as defined by Powell (1990) and different from collaborative governance as defined by Ansell and Gash (2007) that narrowly emphasizes the inclusion of non-state stakeholders and collective decision-making. Indeed, collaboration as defined in this research may be the interaction between a state and non-state actor, but since I am ultimately concerned with collaborative activities between two publicly funded preschool programs, whether the administrators happen to both be state employees or not does not negate that the relationship that they participate in is collaborative. In this study, my main focus lies in understanding the processes of collaboration, but in some of the studied cases, a whole network has evolved that includes the regional Head Start program and the multiple VPI programs within

the region. Table 3.1 describes both the collaborative and networked relationships in the cases studied.

Table 3.1: Total Number of Collaborative⁸ Dyads and Presence or Absence of Networked Relationships

	Southwestern Valley	Small Central City	Urban Tidewater	Northwestern Valley	Rural East Shore
Number of collaborative dyadic relationships between regional Head Start & VPI programs	4	3	5	7	2
Does the regional Head Start & the VPI programs meet together as a network?	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

Generally speaking, two important elements are needed for an activity to be considered collaboration. First, more than one entity is involved. Secondly, some type of interaction or exchange occurs between those entities. Given that the focus of this research is on two publicly funded preschools, I also choose to add a third element to be included: that the entities interacting with one another are public ones or at least act on the behalf of a publicly funded program. What is contested in some of the literature is whether the entities interacting with one another collaborate by simply engaging with each other or if they collaborate when they identify and achieve (or work towards) mutually identified goals (Bardach, 1998; Cook, 1977; Imperial, 2005; Mandell, 2014; McGuire, Agranoff, and Silvia, 2011). In this study, while I lean more

⁸ I use collaborative to distinguish that the focus is on the micro-level relationships that occur between public preschool administrators; however, it should be noted that it is not always the cases that collaboration, or any form of collaborative activity, occurs between programs. This will be explored as part of this research project.

towards the latter approach that looks at collaborative activities as an outcome of collaborative processes, by creating a continuum I allow for program administrators that simply interact with one another and exchange information to be a more shallow form compared with deeper forms of collaborating that may include creating joint processes or new organizational forms (Altar and Hage, 1993; Mattesich, Murray-Close, and Monsey, 2001; Seldon, Sowa, and Sandfort, 2006; Sowa, 2008). By using a continuum, this also allows me to tap into different forms of interacting that may produce different degrees of collaborative activity, such as cooperation and coordination.

Building upon work by Wood and Gray (1991) and Bardach (1998), I define public-public program collaboration (PPPC) as two or more publicly funded program service providers interacting, and developing rules and shared norms, in order to address a particular problem domain and to increase public value. Although collaboration and networks can exist within communities or expand across different geographies (Fountain, 1998), for the purposes of this paper, I focus on public-public partnerships established within local communities. This distinction is important because local cultures may influence the collaborative process (Phillips et al, 2000). In addition, Head Start and VPI's target population include community preschoolers meaning that actors representing both programs consider the preschoolers in their respective service areas when deciding whether to engage in collaborative activities with each other.

Part of defining collaboration involves understanding it when you see it, identifying the processes that comprise collaboration as a way of distinguishing this type of interaction from other types of exchange, such as markets and hierarchies (Powell, 1990). Although the characteristics of networks have been well documented in the literature, the process of

collaboration, which is the building block of networks, are less well defined (Wood and Gray, 1991; Thomson and Perry, 2006). In other words, collaboration between entities implies a conscious intention to engage one another, not simply a chance exchange, and it has a particular set of identifying processes that embody it.

Thomson and Perry (2006) and Thomson, Perry, and Miller (2007) identify five distinct dimensions of collaboration. These five dimensions include two structural dimensions, governance and administration; two social capital dimensions, mutuality and norms of trust; and one organizational dimension, autonomy. These dimensions will be considered below.

Structural Dimensions of Collaboration

Thomson and Perry (2006) and Thomson et al. (2007) find support for two structural dimensions of collaboration. The first of these, the governance dimension, includes serious consideration of each partner as a collaborator, setting up decision-making processes, and participating in group-brainstorming sessions; in other words, this dimension describes the structural framework required for collaboration to occur. The second, the administration dimension, includes more of the nuts and bolts of collaborating, or getting the work done. Thomson et al. identify members knowing their roles and responsibilities, agreeing on goals, and coordinating efforts to be essential components of the administration dimension. They conceive of structure in line with Bardach's (1998) assertions that behaviors and processes underlie collaboration. Thus, following Thomson et al.'s (2007) definition, the structural elements of collaboration are less about reformulating or changing organizational boundaries than about setting the stage for ongoing interaction. As the structure develops between collaborative partners, rules and norms develop (Wood and Gray, 1991; McGuire, 2006).

Many scholars assert that how collaborative members approach a collaboration shapes its chances of success (Agranoff, 2007; Mattesich, Murray-Close, and Monsey, 2001), and the governance dimension captures this by seeing how seriously members take each other as partners and whether they participate in group brainstorming activities. For collaboration between entities to exist and sustain, organizations have to acknowledge that their partners are important and belong in the collaboration. Otherwise, the collaborative may have symbolic importance, but lack members engaging to problem solve or achieve collaborative advantage (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). Underlying Thomson et al.'s (2007) assumptions lie an attitudinal approach to collaborative structure; that is, the approach to collaboration, whether deemed as serious or an unimportant activity, does much to shape the future of collaborative interaction.

Another important aspect of the governance dimension of collaboration is setting up collaborative decision making processes. How will decisions be made in the collaboration? Will all decisions be made collectively, or will some involve independent approaches? Part of establishing collaborative decision making speaks to how formal or informal a collaboration is; in other words, do all collective decisions become formalized in memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between partners, or are there spoken agreements regarding how to proceed within the collaborative without the formality of writing down the agreements? Again, establishing the decision-making process sets in motion how collaborative members interact with one another. However, many acknowledge that these processes can and do evolve over time (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Powell, 1990).

The second of Thomson et al.'s (2007) structural dimensions of collaboration is administration. Whereas both governance and administration provide frameworks for collaborative interaction, the former addresses how members approach collaboration and set up

decision-making processes, while the latter establishes how the work will be done within a collaborative setting. Thus, once governance decisions are made for the collaborative, part of establishing and maintaining collaboration is acting upon those decisions. Elements of administration include understanding roles and responsibilities and coordination of activities.

Another element that grouped within the administration dimension in Thomson et al.'s (2007) analysis is agreeing on goals. Although logically it makes sense that goals must align before collaborative work can be undertaken, much scholarship suggests that achieving goal consensus is a typical challenge that many collaborations face (Huxam and Vangen, 2005; Nowel, 2010; Ospina and Saz-Carranza, 2010; Sedgwick, 2014; Vangen and Huxam, 2014). Whether this challenge arises due to an out of synch collaboration member (Nowell 2010) or the push and pull of being members of an organization and collaboration simultaneously (Sedgwick, 2014), some type of goal congruency is necessary for the collaboration to sustain without resulting in collaborative inertia (Huxham and Vangen 2005; and Vangen and Huxham, 2014). How these goals come to be aligned is less clear, however, as some suggest that achieving early collaborative victories can create a positive feeling among members that helps ease collaborative goal consensus, while others suggest that collaborations may have to agree to let go of certain conflicting topics or risk dissolving the collaboration (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Ospina and Saz-Carranza, 2010; Vangen and Huxham, 2014).

Beyond the work of Thompson et al., there are other factors that also affect collaboration structure that have been well documented in the scholarship, including network size (Agranoff and McGuire, 1998; Kenis and Provan, 2006); composition, or who comprises membership (Agranoff and McGuire, 1998); multiplexity or intensity of linkages (Provan and Milward, 1995; Provan and Sebastian, 1998; Mandell and Steelman, 2003); centrality (Provan and Milward,

1995, 2001; McGuire, 2006); transitivity (Granovetter, 1973, 1983); network purpose and goal commitment (Mandell and Steelman, 2003); and network activities (Agranoff and McGuire, 1998). These factors also contribute in framing the interaction that occurs between collaborative partners, but the interaction between partners also continually reinforces or modifies the collaborative structure (Crosby and Bryson, 2010; Powell, 1990). The relationship is recursive. For purposes of this research, the activities undertaken by collaborative partners are considered to be the outcome of ongoing interactions and collaborative management decisions, but I place them in the discussion of collaborative structure to highlight that once they are undertaken, they become part of the structure that continues to shape future interactions. For this reason, this research takes a decidedly structurationist approach (Crosby and Bryson, 2010; Giddens, 1984; Sydow and Windeler, 1998), meaning that structure and action are co-produced.

Many of these factors contribute to the operational reality for collaborative members and will be further explicated for how they affect the structure of collaboration, especially in relation to this specific project. Although the focus of this project is on the dyadic partnership between pairs of collaborators implementing public preschool programs, network size still bears consideration. Network size matters because it affects the ability to undertake group decision-making, communication flow (both in terms of time investment and effectiveness), and the amount and availability of collaborative resources. For this project, I consider “network size” to reflect the total number of dyadic relationships within a region. The Head Start programs studied cover a regional area; thus they interact with multiple VPI programs within their jurisdiction. Some of the cases studied are small, so there may only be two dyadic relationships of interest (one Head Start program and two VPI programs), but some are larger and include seven dyadic relationships (one Head Start program and seven VPI programs). Thus, although my focus is on

the interaction of each dyad, a structural factor is certainly how many dyads comprise the focal region. Also, as noted above, in several of the focal regions, the Head Start program and all of the VPI programs interact in a larger network while also interacting at the dyadic level.

Two of these factors capture the organizational context for collaboration to occur. Composition includes which organizations make up the collaboration. Agranoff and McGuire (1998) find that who comprises collaboration matters for the strategic aim of a network. Although for this study both of the main collaborative actors run public preschools, thus their strategic goals are more or less defined; variation in which organization runs the preschool (a community action agency or LEA) could influence the specific collaborative activities that the partners undertake. Transitivity is another important collaborative structural element. This concept denotes two entities being connected to a mutual third party. This mutual connection can aid in familiarity between the two other parties, which in turn could ease interaction and promote collaboration (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). For this project, the Head Start and VPI programs are overseen by either completely separate entities, or they both reside under the auspices of the public school system, thus having a transitive connection.

What is clear from the ongoing discussion of the structural framework of collaboration and networks is that these elements are essential components and combine to shape the types and nature of the interaction that occur between collaborative members. What is less clear in the studies of the structural dimensions of collaboration and networks is *who* initiates the discussions about the framework or helps to coordinate collaborative activities. Powell (1990) argues that once networks are established it makes more sense to voice problems rather than exit the network (p. 302), but the underlying processes that it takes to maintain that type of commitment to the network are uncertain. Although public administration scholarship tends to focus on the rise

and existence of networks with public managers at the hub of activity (McGuire, 2006), we need to examine the collaborative processes for convening collaboration when two public programs are involved, especially when the dyadic relationship is not mandated by regulation. This study explores these elements.

Social Capital Dimensions of Collaboration

Although various definitions exist, scholars generally agree that social capital is a form of capital (similar to financial, physical and human capital) that develops in or across a network of relationships between human actors. This capital benefits the actors (or organizations) through instilling trust and norms of reciprocity that affect information flow and cohesiveness and aid in the obtainment of a multitude of desirable outcomes (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993; Fountain, 1998; Burt, 2000; Ostrom, 2000). The social capital literature portrays the direction and the nature of the relationship between social capital and network structure as ambiguous, although most scholars would concur to the existence of a relationship *between* social capital and structure. For the purposes of this project, and adhering to the dimensions as described by Thomson et al. (2007), while social capital admittedly shapes the structure of collaboration, it is considered a distinct feature of collaboration, separate from structural dimensions.

From this standpoint, then, if governance and administration frame interaction, social capital develops out of the relationships and interactions that occur between collaborative members. Different scholars place emphasis on the importance of how tightly or loosely linked these relationships are (Coleman, 1988, Putnam, 1993; Burt, 2000), or if the relationships and interactions pre-exist at the community-level compared to developing among organizations when required to work together (Ostrom, 2003; Fountain, 1998). The underlying logic of these

assertions suggests that public agencies that attempt collaborative activities can both benefit from and be constrained by ongoing and past interactions, with potential gain from both bonding and bridging capital (Adler and Kwon, 2002).

Although the importance of social capital variables is well documented in the collaboration literature, many scholars suggest that we still have a lot to learn about their role in collaboration and network development (Mattessich, Monsey, and Murray-Close, 2002; Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; Provan and Milward, 2001). Thomson and Perry (2006) and Thomson et al. (2007) find empirical support for two distinct social capital variables that comprise collaboration. The first dimension is mutuality, and in many respects, this reflects the “capital” part of social capital. As discussed earlier, the concept of social capital typically refers to networks of relationships that aid in communication and information flow. Thomson et al. (2007) find sharing information and resources, and achieving goals better to be aspects of the mutuality dimension. The second social capital dimension that Thomson identifies is norms and reflects trust and norms of reciprocity that develop between collaborative partners. These norms develop among continued relationships where partners learn to count on each and develop mutual commitments.

The mechanisms for how social capital aids in developing mutuality, or sharing information and achieving goals better, is somewhat contested in the scholarship. The crux of the argument lies in the nature of relationship between individuals, whether they are tightly knit relationships compared to loosely linked ones. Coleman (1988) epitomizes those scholars who place emphasis on tightly-knit personal networks, called closure, and found these to be effective means to decreasing drop-out rates among high school students at Catholic, public, and other private schools. Conversely, Burt (2000) finds that personal performance, measured in terms of

manager performance evaluations, are higher among managers with networks comprised of loose links, or structural holes. Provan and Sebastian (1998) contribute to our understanding of these contradictory findings by suggesting that both types of linkages (closure and structural holes) may be important components of effective public networks. Putnam (1993) also contributes to our understanding of both weak and close ties by arguing that it is not only civic engagement that contributes to overall government performance, but also the interconnectedness, or networks, of the people participating in multiple civic activities that allows governments to more effectively accomplish what they intend to accomplish.

Fountain (1998) argues that government-initiated networks that are loosely linked allow for information to be distributed efficiently and effectively. Her study is especially relevant to this paper because she argues that investing government grant monies to build networks can result in the building of social capital that enhances overall performance. Others counter this argument, suggesting that government-sponsored programs can also diminish existing community social capital (Ostrom, 2000). Whether collaboration is more successful with close-knit or loosely linked relationships, or imposed versus “naturally occurring” networks of relationships, the mutuality aspect captures the essence of collaborative purpose because much of collaborative engagement involves information exchange and achieving goals (Agranoff, 2007; Imperial, 2005; Isset et al., 2011; Powell, 1990). Agranoff (2007) emphasizes this role by arguing that “knowledge management” is the biggest accomplishment of networks. For public networks, the mutuality dimension is vital to increasing public value by working together.

The second social capital dimension identified by Thompson et al. is called norms, and it reflects the development of trust and norms of reciprocity among collaborative partners. These elements are very important because they may act as a social lubricant that enhances mutuality.

Thompson's analysis supports mutuality and norms as unique dimensions, but these two are arguably highly reciprocal and continually aid in the support or demise of each other. Trust developing among members eases the flow of information, and open lines of communication and information aid in the development of collaborative trust. Vangen and Huxham (2003) discuss this occurrence as a "trust-building loop" (p. 8) and Ansell and Gash (2007) enfold these two dimensions in their discussion of the collaborative process as an iterative, non-linear progression of trust building, communication, commitment, and outcomes.

Underlying the majority of the literature on networks and collaboration is a discussion of the importance of trust (Gazley, 2010); however, how trust is developed and maintained is often challenging and not well understood (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Vangen and Huxham, 2003; 2014). Vangen and Huxham (2003, 2014) argue that trust is not always present when collaborative action is first undertaken, but along with others, acknowledge that the long-term sustainability for a collaboration that lacks trust is doubtful (McGuire, 2006). It is the underlying trust among collaborative and network members that distinguishes these types of relationships from hierarchies or market exchange; although trust indeed may come to be part of relationships within hierarchies or markets, it is not essential for the exchange to occur. Within collaboration, it is equated with the glue that binds the relationship (Agranoff, 2012, p. 178).

Thomas (1998) identifies three types of trust, including fiduciary, mutual, and social trust. Fiduciary trust is the trust placed in professionals to act in their capacity. Although Thomas argues that it is a more shallow form of trust than mutual or social, it is this type of generalized trust (Putnam, 1993) that underlies social exchange between unfamiliar persons. As interactions between persons increase, mutual trust occurs between them if the other can be counted on to fulfill promised expectations and act in a manner that is non-harmful to the person (Vangen and

Huxham, 2003). It is through these types of exchanges that the norms of reciprocity develop, or the belief that each person is obligated to reciprocate the behavior, information, or service that is offered to him or her by the other person (Blau, 1964). These feelings of mutual obligation that underlie a trusting relationship are different than simple cooperation, as Thomas suggests that while trust eases cooperation, cooperation between agencies on its own does not imply a trusting relationship. Cooperative arrangements, however, can be a first step in the development of mutual trust, as interactions and consistent behavior build belief in the actions of the other. Finally, Thomas argues that social trust is larger, institutionalized trust, that becomes part of a system of relationships over time as mutual trust grows.

Another aspect of trust includes its precarious relationship to power. Sedgwick (2014) argues that part of the challenges in collaborative relationships lies in the paradoxical nature between minimizing power differences between collaborative partners to build trust while simultaneously maximizing power difference between collaborative partners to obtain collaborative advantage (Huxham and Vangen, 2005, 2014). Sometimes collaborative members deem placing trust in other members as too risky, particularly if they sense power imbalances among members (Ansell and Gash, 2007; Vangen and Huxham, 2003). Resource imbalances between members can result in power differences, but the members with the most resources are not always the most powerful in the collaboration (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). The problem is that these initial imbalances can breed distrust and fear that the less powerful organizations will be swallowed up by the more powerful organizations that will in turn hijack the mission of the collaboration for their own organizational purposes. O'Toole and Meier (2004) offer support for this fear with their research findings on co-optation in networks and the tendency for networks to “respond to the most influential part of the network (p. 690).”

Finally, an important consideration about trust is that simply because it develops between collaborative members does not guarantee its permanence (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004). Nurturing collaborative relationships (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Vangen and Huxham, 2003; 2014) or managing interactions (Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan, 1997) are deemed as important to maintain the functioning of the collaboration, and trust is the centerpiece of these relationship management concerns (Gazley, 2010). Huxham and Vangen (2005) contend that it is the dynamic nature of collaboration and part of the trust-cycle loop that places trust between collaborative members as vulnerable with potential to wane. Particularly in an era of diminishing funds for public programs, trust between collaborative partners can be tested when issues of turf, such as competing for program participants, are brought to the forefront of collaborative relationships (Bardach, 1998; Sedgwick, 2014).

Similar to the structural dimensions, although social capital variables comprise collaboration, initiating them needs to be better understood. When no existing relationships exist, forging ahead with new relationships involves a leap of faith to begin the trust building cycle (Vangen and Huxham, 2003), but investigating what prompts partners to take this leap of faith will add to our understanding of how the social capital dimension of collaboration begins. Also, although many scholars identify that relationship management is essential to build and sustain trust; the processes for doing this are not well articulated.

Organizational Autonomy Dimension

One final dimension that Thomson and Perry (2006) and Thomson, Perry, and Miller (2007) discuss is the organizational dimension, which they label as autonomy. This dimension reflects the tension that can occur between juggling organizational and collaborative identities. When

collaboration occurs, organizations must contend with fulfilling both organizational and collaborative goals. Galaskiewicz (1985) explains the tension as organizations wanting to maintain autonomous control while recognizing that they need to collaborate with other organizations for survival. Thomson et al. acknowledge that this dimension is the least understood of the five dimensions, which perhaps explains why Fleishman (2009) does not find empirical support for concern over lack of autonomy in her exploratory research of EPA estuary networks. Sedgwick (2014) offers support for the tensions between balancing both identities in her exploratory research between publicly funded preschool programs that must balance far reaching collaborative goals of school readiness for all community children while at the same time protecting narrower program goals, such as safeguarding program enrollment. In particular, this dimension may become heightened when collaborative partners could potentially supplant rather than complement each other in their collaborative arrangement.

More understanding about the dimension of organizational autonomy needs to be developed to see how this affects collaborative decision-making and issues of trust. Specific to this study, where both programs must adhere to their individual regulations while attempting a collaborative relationship, the balancing act of being both good stewards of the individual programs and productive collaborative partners could be especially challenging. This study will furthermore assess the interplay between organizational autonomy and the other collaborative processes.

Summary of Collaborative Process Dimensions

Thomson and Perry (2006) and Thomson, Perry, and Miller (2007) set out to better identify the dimensions that comprise collaboration. In doing so, they identified five unique dimensions, including governance, administration, mutuality, norms, and autonomy. These dimensions

comprise the approach collaborative members take to the collaboration itself, the coordination and dividing of collaborative work, the development of trust and norms of reciprocity, the exchange of information and achieving goals better, and finally, the balancing act of simultaneously being collaborative and organizational members. These structural, social capital, and organizational dimensions have been further explored and offer the lens for exploring the underlying processes that comprise collaboration between the Head Start and VPI programs.

Although this framework offers a useful lens, it is not without limitations that need to be further explored. As mentioned above, initiating collaborative processes between members needs to be better examined as well as why some members may approach the collaboration differently than others. Also, a deeper understanding of the trust-building loop between partners needs to be investigated. This research focuses on collaborative activities (in providing preschool services) resulting from to what degree these collaborative processes exist. From this perspective, this project adheres to the “Agranoff” or “Provan” schools that identify networks (or collaboration) as tools for public service provision (Isset et al., 2011).

After reviewing what collaboration is and the dimensions that comprise it, this literature review now focuses on variation in collaborative forms.

Variation in Collaborative Forms

After reviewing definitions of collaboration and discussing the underlying process dimensions that comprise it, I now turn my attention to variation in collaborative forms. Scholars argue that another important aspect of understanding collaboration and networks is the recognition that a wide variety of forms exist and these forms matter in terms of shaping member interactions and reaching collaborative goals (Agranoff, 2007; Agranoff & McGuire, 1998; Alter

and Hage, 1993; Mandell and Steelman, 2003; Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey, 2001; Seldon, Sowa, and Sandefort, 2006; Sowa, 2008; Thomson and Perry, 2006; Thomson, Perry, and Miller, 2007). For example, Alter and Hage (1993) identify a range of collaborative arrangements in both decision-making and task operations. They observed that while many groups may call what they do collaborating, distinct differences occur across groups in terms of how integrated decision-making and task operations are. Their research helps frame an understanding of the variation in collaborative activity between Head Start and VPI because collaboration between the programs involves both integration of tasks and decision-making.

Some authors discuss the continuum of collaborative structures more broadly. Mandell and Steelman (2003) identify a continuum of collaborative forms ranging from intermittent commitment to network structure, suggesting that the forms reflect variation in time commitment and the nature of the goal to be accomplished. They argue that broader long-range goals lend themselves to the development of the highest level of collaboration, the network structure. In Virginia localities where Head Start and VPI providers engage in a broader network that focuses on school readiness, the long-term goals of the network suggests deeper investment of time and commitment. Sowa (2008) contends that service delivery collaboration ranges from shallow to deep integration, arguing that the deepest form creates value beyond the program clients to the community as a whole. Although Sowa argues that simple financial contracts between agencies may reflect shallow collaboration, my research suggests a more nuanced interpretation given the level of collaboration needed between Head Start and VPI administrators in order to integrate federal and state regulations when attempting to blend or braid program funds in their localities.

Whereas Mandell and Steelman (2003) attempt to identify all variations of innovative inter-organizational forms, Mattessich, Murry-Close, and Monsey (2001) offer a simplified continuum

of collaboration from the least to the most integrated. With the focus of this study on collaborative dyadic relationships, this continuum provides a particularly useful lens for examining the nature of the relationship between Head Start and VPI administrators. Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001) define the degrees along the continuum as cooperation, coordination, and collaboration, respectively. Each step up along the continuum involves greater integration of missions and tasks, risks and rewards, and authority and accountability (p. 61) (See Figure 3.1).

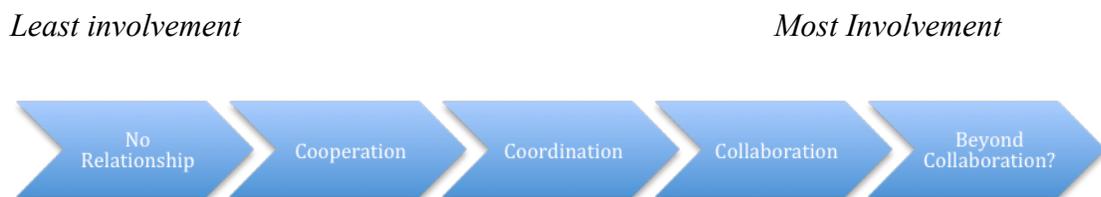
In some ways, much overlap exists in the forms identified by Mandell and Steelman and the continuum defined by Mattessich et al.; however, there are advantages to employing the Mattessich et al. continuum as a lens for this project. Because this study adheres to a whole network approach that recommends using the term network for three or more organizations, using “collaboration” as the most integrated relationship works well for the study of collaborative dyads. Also, Mandell and Steelman place much emphasis on network structures having broad missions, and while it indeed may be the case that a Head Start program and a VPI program may focus on broader missions when they engage in the most integrated type of relationship, their focus on preschool education for impoverished or at-risk children is probably not what Mandell and Steelman envisioned as a broad-based goal. Finally, the Matessich et al. continuum has been built upon and used by other scholars who focus on collaborative service provision, particularly for early childhood education (Seldon, Sowa, and Sandfort 2006; Sowa, 2008).

According to Mattessich et al. (2001), *cooperation* includes informal relationships with minimal risk assumed or reward gained among the partners. Cooperation takes place in the exchange of information and is similar to Agranoff’s (2007) “information” network. With

coordination comes some increased risk and resource exchange among partners; however, each partner still maintains independent authority. Finally, *collaboration* is the most integrated form of collaborative activity and includes comprehensive planning and often a distinct collaborative governance structure separate from the individual organizations that comprise it, which may be, but is not necessarily, a network.

Seldon, Sowa, and Sandfort (2006) build upon Mattesich’s continuum in their scholarship that focuses on public collaboration in early childhood education. Their findings suggest that higher levels of collaborative integration results in favorable performance outcomes for these programs. My research argues that the continuum of collaboration in early childhood education deserves attention, albeit for a different reason than Seldon, Sowa, and Sandfort. Rather, I wish to investigate what variation in collaborative activity looks like between Head Start and VPI to see how collaborative process dimensions and collaborative management techniques contribute to the variation. In addition, I intend to investigate why Head Start and VPI directors engage in varying degrees of collaborative activity.

Figure 3.1: Degrees of Collaborative Activity Continuum⁹
(Adapted from Mattesich et al., 2001)



⁹ This continuum was developed based upon Mattesich et al that envisioned the most involved form of working together as “collaboration.” I acknowledge that by investigating the degree of collaborative activities undertaken by pairs of collaborators, I may discover a form more involved and integrated than as envisioned by Mattesich et al, including but not limited to cooptation or merger.

To distinguish my research from other scholarship on collaboration in early childhood education and care, my research differs in what aspect of early childhood education collaboration to focus upon. Seldon, Sowa, and Sandfort (2006) and Sowa (2008) emphasize the degree of service delivery collaboration between Head Start, state prekindergarten, and Department of Social Service for the purpose of providing a full-day of care for impoverished and at-risk children; whereas, my research specifically focuses on programmatic collaboration between Head Start and VPI that typically occurs for the purposes of increasing overall access to preschool, maximizing resources, or standardizing quality instruction in a locality.

After reviewing what collaboration is and the various forms it can take on, I now turn to a discussion of what draws collaborators together.

Why Collaborate?

A large body of literature identifies and explains the rise of networks or collaboration that occurs in public administration (for some examples, see Agranoff and McGuire, 1998, 2001; Kettl, 2006; O'Toole, 1997; McGuire, 2006;). Although scholars vary on their explanations for its rise, from transformation of governance to institutionalism isomorphism (Kettl, 2000; Frumkin and Galaskiewicz, 2004), an important component of the collaborative puzzle is developing an understanding for why it occurs. Wood and Gray (1991) observe that existing theories do not adequately address why organizations or programs collaborate when in doing so they increase complexity, or, in other words, what prompts collaboration to occur in seemingly irrational circumstances. Another gap that exists in the literature is an explanation of how to convene collaboration once it is deemed as a desirable strategy (Thomson, et al., 2007), especially when collaboration between public agencies is not mandated. In this section, I explore

underlying theories of explanation for the rise of collaboration at organizational, programmatic, and managerial levels.

Organizational Factors: Classic Organizational, Resource Dependency, and Exchange Theories

Forces both inside and outside of an organization influence why collaboration occurs.

Classic organizational theorists laid the groundwork for establishing the importance of considering the environmental context when theorizing how and why organizations take on the look that they do, and these considerations are relevant for both single organizations and collaborations. Contingency theory (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967) illuminates the fact that organizations exist in open systems and are affected by environmental context. From this perspective, the environmental context can set the stage for why organizations may collaborate. Thompson (1967) posits his administrative theory to explain organizational behavior and also considers forces outside of the organization as essential to determining organization structure; however, he also emphasizes the role of task environment. In other words, Thompson argues that the nature of the task to be completed affects how the organization is shaped. Scholars such as Alter and Hage (1993) and O'Toole and Montjoy (1984) build upon Thompson's theory to construct how task variation affects interorganizational relationships. However, I investigate if the opposite can occur also; that is, whether collaborative relationships that develop and emerge shape the type of collaborative activities undertaken by collaborative partners.

Underlying most explanations for collaboration are social exchange and resource dependency theories (Blau, 1964; Cook, 1977; Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenajan, 1997; Levine and White, 1969; Mullin and Daley, 2010; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Rethemeyer and Hatmaker, 2008). These theoretical approaches suggest that organizations seek exchange relationships with other

organizations in order to fulfill deficiencies in resource needs and to reduce environmental uncertainty (Galiskiewicz, 1985). These arguments have been further specified to propose the types of exchange that will occur between organizations based upon whether the organizations share similar organizational domains (Levine and White, 1969), have access to external resources beyond the interorganizational relationship (Levine and White, 1969), share similar positions of organizational power (Cook, 1977), or share a positive evaluation of one another (Benson, 1975). From these theoretical standpoints, two programs, such as Head Start and VPI that share similar organizational domains in terms of services rendered and population served would be more likely to engage in competitive exchange rather than cooperate, although Cook (1977) proposes that in certain resource scarce situations less powerful organizations may opt to cooperate to access necessary resources.

It is worth taking a moment to consider Head Start and VPI specifically from the lens of resource dependency and exchange theories. While they offer a rather straightforward explanation to why these programs may opt to collaborate, unraveling whether the programs are in need of each other's resources and/or whether working together reduces environmental uncertainty needs to be further explored. On one hand, these preschool programs are legally independent programs that do not need each other to complete their missions. Unlike other network studies that look at exchange among healthcare entities (Levine and White, 1969), mental health networks (Provan and Milward, 1995), or economic development networks (Agranoff and McGuire, 1998) that bring together organizations with varying functions to fulfill the overall goals of the network, there is no reason to argue that one standalone preschool program (such as Head Start) needs another standalone preschool program (such as VPI) to complete the mission of school readiness for a community's children. On the other hand, taking

the preschoolers as clients and primary resources of the programs, when these resources fall on either end of the spectrum of being scarce or abundant, it may prompt exchange between the programs to ensure filling respective program grant slots under the former conditions, or ensuring that maximum coverage of placements for community children in terms of the latter conditions. Alter and Hage (1993) offer support that resource abundance can also lead to collaboration and suggest that when organizations develop slack resources, they may feel freer to experiment with collaborative forms.

Another factor that differentiates Head Start and VPI's organizational domains is that the programs, at least by statute, serve distinct populations of preschool children. Head Start serves preschoolers and their families who meet a strict income eligibility requirement, whereas VPI serves locally defined risk populations that could or could not include income as a risk factor. Thus, aligning strictly with their written target populations, Head Start and VPI, having similar goals but differing functions (in terms of service population), may be well positioned as collaborators (Hudson et al., 1999). However, based upon the scarcity of the preschool population for a community, these distinctions between target populations can become more or less meaningful because if the number of preschoolers in a community is fairly limited, then both programs may be attempting to attract the same group of preschoolers to meet their program enrollment numbers. Thus, the environmental context likely contributes to whether these programs' organizational domains overlap or not, and when they do so, may place each other more in competition for community preschoolers. When limited preschool populations exist within a community and prompt Head Start and VPI to have similar organizational domains, while traditional resource dependency would view each other as competitors for resources, it is possible that both programs' reliance on the same pool of community preschoolers could also

prompt them to collaborate (Cook, 1977; Galaskiewicz, 1985). If scarcity of resources could prompt competitive or collaborative behavior among these programs, it becomes necessary to explore other factors that affect the type of exchange that occurs between programs.

Another oft cited reason for exchange to occur between organizations is reducing environmental uncertainty (Galaskiewicz, 1985). The logic behind this argument is that organizations exist in environments where they lack perfect information about many elements necessary for their survival so they enter in exchange relationships with other organizations to reduce the unknown and increase chances of survival. In the case of the relationship between Head Start and VPI, the ability to increase knowledge about the likelihood of filling program slots by knowing whom each program is enrolling may be an alluring reason to collaborate and exchange information. Also, as Head Start's teacher credential requirements continue to increase and align more with VPI's requirements, sharing applicant information between programs could eliminate concerns over finding appropriate preschool personnel.

On the other end of the spectrum, however, while collaboration between Head Start and VPI may reduce some aspects of program uncertainty, engaging with each other could in fact increase uncertainty, or at least, complexity. As Head Start is a heavily regulated federal program, changes to safety and personnel requirements happen with some frequency; thus, if a VPI program chooses to collaborate with a Head Start program, they too could feel the effects of these unanticipated regulatory changes. Also, the regulations surrounding each program differ, with Head Start having much more stringent regulatory requirements compared to VPI in most areas (the teacher credentialing area being one notable exception). For programs to adequately share information, create joint processes, or potentially blend programs, each has to take on a working understanding of the program eligibility, enrollment, and standards of the other program

to collaborate successfully. In the case of Head Start, with the performance standards alone being over a 200-page document that cover the educational assessment requirements, safety and health regulations, family involvement components, and governance requirements, asking VPI to undertake this knowledge while simultaneously providing its own program may be an arduous task. Once again, understanding whether uncertainty and complexity would help or hinder collaborative relationships requires further investigation to what underscores collaborative intent.

Organizational Factors: Other Interorganizational Theories

Many scholars who study interorganizational collaboration build upon the classic organizational theories discussed above and attempt to expand our understanding of why collaboration occurs. (Alter and Hage, 1993; Bardach, 1998; O'Toole & Montjoy, 1984; O'Toole and Meier, 1999; McGuire and Silvia, 2010a; Provan and LeMaire, 2012; Thompson and Perry, 2006; Sowa, 2008; 2009). Some scholars emphasize antecedents to collaboration, such as willingness to collaborate, regulatory mandates, or prior history in working with other organizations (Alter and Hage, 1993; Matessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey; 2001; Thompson and Perry, 2006). Some consider the specific goal or problem area that the organizations are attempting to address, and recognize that collaboration arises when there are complex problems beyond the scope of any one organization, organizations in similar service delivery arenas (homophily), or in complementary service areas (heterophily) (O'Toole and Meier, 1999; Bardach, 1998; Kettl, 2006; Provan and LeMaire, 2012). Organizations often want to maximize effective program reach and implementation by pooling scarce resources among likely partners. Bardach (1998) argues that interagency collaboration arises from the opportunities to create

public value and new funding opportunities, and to carve out new turf that single agencies cannot create alone.

Some scholars discuss organizational capacity as a factor that could promote or inhibit collaboration. Organizational capacity includes attitudinal attributes such as buy-in to the value of collaboration from top management, but can also include structural type factors such as agencies managing single programs compared to multiple programs and prior organizational experience in collaborating (McGuire and Silvia, 2010a). McGuire and Silvia offer empirical support for the structural arguments that agencies that manage single programs have more capacity to collaborate than agencies that manage multiple programs, and that a strong predictor of current collaboration is past collaborative experience. Bardach (1998) identifies organizational “confidence” as a predictor of collaboration (p. 180).

The 2007 Head Start Reauthorization Act initiated explicit support for collaboration by requiring all Head Start programs to sign memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the other publicly funded preschools in their service area. Although many Head Start directors report engaging in some form of collaboration before the 2007 Reauthorization Act, some anticipated the forthcoming mandate and understood the importance being placed on collaboration. Another relevant structural factor for the Head Start and VPI programs is the difference between Head Start being a single-focus managed program compared to VPI, which is typically one of many programs that the person identified as the VPI administrator is running. In other words, if McGuire and Silvia’s (2010a) assertions are correct, then it may be easier for Head Start directors to initiate collaboration because of solely focusing on the Head Program, compared to the person who is the VPI administrator, who may also run curriculum and instructional programs for all of the elementary schools in their school district.

At the beginning of this section, it was mentioned that resource dependency and exchange theories, while offering rational explanations for undertaking collaboration, do not offer adequate explanations for why collaboration occurs in seemingly irrational circumstances. Institutional isomorphism refers to organizations mimicking each other due to coercive, mimetic, or normative pressures and offers insight for collaborative relationships occurring when resource dependency theory might predict otherwise (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Coercive forces, such as regulation, sometimes require agencies receiving funds to collaborate. An example of this is a pilot preschool program initiative in Virginia during the Kaine administration that required localities to maintain or create a local preschool collaborative in order to receive grant funds (Bradburn et al., 2007). New employees often carry ideas from their former employment; thus, an example of mimetic forces that prompt preschool collaboration could be a new Head Start or VPI administrator who has experience collaborating from their former situation. However, although helping to explain transference of ideas, this approach lacks causal explanatory power of how collaboration arises in the first place. Finally, normative pressures include professional pressures about what is “right and proper,” and arguably many early childhood experts contend that collaboration between programs is a valuable venture in which programs should participate (Wat and Gayl, 2009).

Closely related to the underlying ideas of institutional isomorphism, especially the mimetic and normative pressures that affect organizations, is the argument that interorganizational relationships develop out of a quest for organizational legitimacy (Galaskiewicz, 1985; Wood and Gray, 1991). Organizations may choose to engage other organizations in a quest for social positioning and to boost reputation. This argument is particularly relevant as a potential explanation for the attraction between Head Start and VPI as collaborative partners. The VPI

program falls under the auspices of the Virginia Department of Education and is typically run by the local education authority (LEA) in a community. From this standpoint, the VPI program has the legitimacy of the public education system supporting it. In addition, ultimately most of the preschoolers in both the Head Start and VPI programs enter into the public school system when entering kindergarten. As discussed in the previous chapter, throughout its longevity, the quality of the Head Start program has been called into question multiple times over the course of its history; thus, there may be a push for Head Start to engage VPI as a collaborative partner to boost the reputation of the Head Start program. Conversely, while Head Start has been questioned on educational quality throughout the years, its leadership in providing parent involvement, health and screening services, and socio-emotional development for preschoolers is generally acknowledged by the community at large, and this may be an attractive draw for VPI to tap into when attempting to increase its legitimacy in these dimensions of preschool provision.

All of these organizational level theories and concepts will be explored as to possible explanations for why Head Start and VPI engage collaboration or not. As pointed out, while these theories offer explanations for the draw to each other as partners, they fail to include an explanation for how collaboration is convened and maintained. Also, although they offer insight into why variation may exist in whether or not to engage collaboration, they offer little insight as to why the degree of collaborative activity may vary when holding other factors, such as programs, constant.

Managerial Factors that Drive Collaboration

Now we turn to some additional explanations for why collaboration occurs at a smaller unit of analysis, public managers. These explanations begin to bridge the shortcomings of the

organizational theories that downplay the micro-level processes of collaboration. Managerial collaborative capacity is a manager's ability to engage in or initiate collaboration (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; McGuire and Silvia, 2010b). Many scholars consider leadership as an essential component of network effectiveness, but it is also important to consider a manager's ability to initiate collaboration (O'Leary et al., 2009). Research supports that a manager's prior experience with collaboration helps predict future collaborative endeavors (Gazley, 2010), and that personnel evaluations for managers that assess building collaboration also predict the likelihood to engage in collaboration (Mullin and Daley, 2010). Bardach (1998) identifies three types of managerial behaviors that can prompt or prevent a manager from pursuing collaborative relationships in public administration: careerist, bureaucratic, and value-oriented. Careerist behavior is the pursuit of collaboration to enhance the manager's career. While Bardach argues that bureaucratic behavior can prompt a manager to protect his or her turf, he also suggests that this approach could prompt a manager to pursue collaboration to seek out agency resources. Ostensibly, this type of behavior could be the managerial enactment of resource dependency theory. Finally, Bardach argues that value-oriented behavior is when manager's collaborate with other agencies because they want to increase public value; however, he does note that this behavior too can at times deter collaboration if a manager believes strongly in their agency mission and fears that it will be lost when collaborating with another agency.

If institutional isomorphism may offer insight to organizations engaging collaboration in seemingly irrational circumstances, how managers socially construct their policy targets may offer insight to why public managers seek collaborative relationships when doing so may bring about greater difficulties and complexities in their day-to-day activities. Schneider and Ingram (1993) argue that how policy targets are socially constructed affects policy decisions, the choice

of policy tools, and the distribution of benefits and burdens among targets. From Schneider and Ingram's perspective, children are constructed as dependents, meaning they are positively constructed, but lack political power as an interest group. They argue that while politicians want to be shown as supporting policies that favor children due to their positive social construction, they will be more likely to do so with symbolic policies rather than investing significant funds in policies geared towards this group. For Head Start and VPI preschool directors and administrators, undertaking collaboration with the other program could be deemed as a significant symbolic gesture of helping community preschool children, especially those who are disadvantage or at-risk, without significant resource investment. However, while still suggesting that the positive social construction affects manager's willingness to engage collaboration, a less cynical argument could be that these types of agencies exhibit a "mission mystique" (Goodsell, 2011) with preschool directors and administrators as "craftsman" (Bardach, 1998) and "citizen agents" (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003) willing to undertake collaborative relationships with each other to do all they can for this worthy population of clients. Huxham and Vangen (2005) also assert that one reason for collaboration occurring between organizations is to tackle social problems deemed morally important. For needy preschoolers, directors may be prompted to push programs to the edge of their intentions in order to maximize enrollees and services provided, but this is not a foregone conclusion.

After reviewing theories and frameworks that offer a lens to why collaboration occurs, some contextual factors that frame collaboration will be reviewed.

Factors that Frame Collaboration

After reviewing what collaboration is, various forms it takes on, and why it occurs, I will give some consideration to additional factors that frame collaboration. Multiple factors frame the *context* that Head Start-VPI relationships develop in. Although these contextual factors do not drive this study's theoretical approach or main research question, they must be identified since they potentially affect public-public program collaboration (PPPC) in this policy sphere. First, the intergovernmental nature of the relationship between Head Start and VPI creates potential boundaries to collaboration (Kettl, 2006). In addition, multiple community geographic and demographic factors, including population density, local economic strength, and racial composition, may facilitate or constrain collaboration (Alter and Hage, 1993; Agranoff and McGuire, 1998; Condrón, 2009; Banks, 2013; Mandell and Steelman, 2003; McGuire and Silvia, 2010a; Soss, Fording, and Schram, 2008; Thomson and Perry, 2006).

The local economy sets the context for publicly funded preschool programs. As public programs, Head Start and VPI's organizational funds directly relates to the local tax base and the economic strength of the community. When a Head Start grant is awarded, the number of slots reflects the number of children at or below the poverty level within the given region. For VPI, the state identifies the number of children in the localities who could be served by a VPI program. The state awards funding based upon how many children (of the total possible slots) that the locality agrees to support in a mandated funding match. Most communities acknowledge that the Head Start and VPI formulas underestimate the possible children to be served.

Since both Head Start and VPI are client-based programs, preschool children are another form of program resources and thus, population density could affect potential collaboration

between Head Start and VPI. On both ends of the spectrum, the least dense and the densest, opportunities for collaboration could be higher. For rural communities in Virginia, collaboration may be more likely because small communities simply cannot support separate Head Start and VPI classrooms. At the other extreme, urban areas with higher populations could promote collaboration due to large waiting lists of children to receive public preschool, which may promote maximizing funds. Also, urban areas typically have more service and other nonprofit organizations, which may have a history of collaboration. Although I argue that higher population density could increase the likelihood to collaborate, McGuire and Silvia (2010a) do not find support for this; in fact, they find urban areas support less collaboration among emergency management systems. As discussed above, the interplay between scarcity or abundance of resources (whether capital or human) and whether this drives or hinders collaboration is not straightforward, yet they are still an important factor to take into consideration for this research.

Another contextual factor includes how community racial composition may affect the willingness to collaborate. Developing the logic underlying this proposition, I draw upon Soss, Fording, and Schram (2008), who argue that race is a significant explanatory variable in state decisions to devolve welfare policy to local agency authority, and find empirical support to suggest that minority populations, in particular African Americans, may interact with “distinctive welfare institutions” that enact tougher rules at the local level based upon racial stereotypes of welfare use. Building on their findings, I also suggest that local racial composition can affect policy decisions, and expand their ideas to include willingness to collaborate between the Head Start and VPI service providers. As mentioned above, Head Start children are more impoverished than their VPI counterparts. Given the high correlation between poverty and

minority status, I suggest that Head Start and VPI programs nested in communities with larger minority populations may be less likely to bridge these programs at higher degrees of collaboration (attempt to braid funding or blend classrooms) due to underlying issues of de facto segregation (Condrón, 2009; Banks, 2013).

Why Not Collaborate? An Overview of Collaborative Challenges

Thus far, this chapter's emphasis has been on understanding what collaboration is, the various forms it takes on, and the underlying causes that initiate it. In this section, I will examine why collaboration does not occur, elucidating some of the typical challenges of collaboration that have been identified in the literature (Gazley, 2010). Many challenges and barriers to collaboration exist (Agranoff 2007; Bardach, 1998; Huxam and Vangen, 2005; Sedgwick, 2014), and importantly some of the overarching ones underscore the main collaborative process dimensions as defined by Thompson et al. In other words, although defined by Thompson et al. (2007) as necessary for collaboration, developing collaborative governance and decision-making, building trust, balancing power imbalances, and managing being simultaneous organization and collaborative members often present challenges that prove detrimental to collaboration and result in collaborative inertia (Bardach, 1998; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Sedgwick, 2014).

Other collaborative challenges include issues of agency or program turf (Agranoff, 2012; Bardach, 1998; Imperial, 2005); time constraints (Agranoff, 2007; Bardach, 1998); policy and bureaucratic barriers (Agranoff, 2007; Mullin and Daley, 2010); and developing agreed upon collaborative goals (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Vangen and Huxham, 2014). Huxham (2003) emphasizes the reality of collaborative challenges by advising against collaborating "unless you have to" (p. 420-21).

An additional challenge that may be particularly relevant to studying Head Start and VPI are differences in organizational culture or the inability for agencies to “embrace each other’s world views” (Bardach, 1998, p. 131). The programmatic features of Head Start and VPI are key elements of the context for collaboration.¹⁰ Similar to organizational culture (Palinkas et al., 2012), program culture consists of the norms, values, shared language, and “ways of doing” (Cooke and Rousseau, 1988) that distinguish one program from another. These factors can influence whether collaboration is perceived as a program norm, but they can also create a worldview about the “proper and right” way of educating preschool children that may create cultural barriers when attempting to collaborate with another program. Moreover, Bardach (1998) contends that public agency collaboration is often hindered by public administrators’ fear that their agency mission will be subsumed by it.

Summary of Explanations for Collaborating

The theories presented above all offer insight to why collaboration occurs between organizations. Resource dependency and exchange theories offer an understanding based upon the quest for organizational resources and power. Institutional theory provides insight to organizations taking on collaborative relationships due to normative pressures that networks are the ideal way to tackle wicked problems, even if doing so may increase complexity for organizations. Similarly, the framework of organizational legitimacy offers an explanation for why an organization may wish to engage another organization in a collaborative agreement if they deem that organization as bearing more legitimacy than they currently possess. At a smaller unit of analysis, ideas about managerial capacity begin to fill in the gaps that the larger

¹⁰ A brief history of Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative is located in Chapter 2.

organizational theories miss, by suggesting that part of an organization's willingness and ability to collaborate is determined by the manager's collaborative capacity. How policy targets are socially constructed offers another explanation to what compels public managers to initiate collaboration when doing so is not mandated and can be very challenging. Finally, I presented some additional factors that frame the collaborative context between programs.

I also gave consideration to some of the challenges and barriers that may constrain collaboration. As noted above, when Head Start and VPI attempt collaboration, doing so often brings about increased complexities and may not always be predicated upon resource sharing. Thus, the formidable barriers that exist, including negotiating complex and cumbersome regulations and potential cultural differences, may act to prevent collaboration from occurring, or at least keep the collaboration that does occur at a relatively shallow degree of involvement.

As noted at the beginning of this section, understanding why collaboration occurs is part of deciphering the puzzle that comprises the relationships between Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative; however, exploring this facet alone provides an incomplete picture to collaboration. Exploring the underlying process of collaboration and how collaboration is initiated, maintained, and managed will build an understanding of the building blocks of interorganizational relationships. It is one thing to envision why collaboration may be a good strategy for a program, it is another to actually have it materialize and bring about positive outcomes. Finally, exploring why some public managers tackle and negotiate the challenges that collaboration may present while others do not will add to our theoretical understanding of building collaboration.

Theories of Managing Collaboration & Networks

At the heart of this study of micro-level processes of collaboration is collaborative management.¹¹ As discussed above, this research focuses on how and why collaboration is convened and maintained; thus, the behaviors and actions of the administrators of the Head Start and VPI programs is of particular interest as they decide whether or not to undertake collaborative activities. Scholars have long lamented the challenges involved in managing collaboration and networks (Bardach, 1998; Huxham, 2003). Much of these issues arise from attempting to manage processes and achieve goals across multiple organizations. Moreover, various forms of collaboration and networks exist, and these differences give rise to different types of management behavior to drive successful outcomes (O'Toole and Meier, 1999). To this point, Imperial (2005) asserts that “collaboration is an exercise in advanced governance” (p. 308), and Hudson et al. (1999) also discuss the importance of the collaborative manager or “individuals who are skilled at mapping and developing policy networks” (p. 251).

Upon reviewing main contributors to the collaborative management scholarship, several recurring themes emerge. First, when collaboration is not mandated, convening collaboration requires boundary spanners, champions, or policy entrepreneurs to begin the collaborative process (Williams, 2002, Crosby and Bryson, 2010; Kingdon, 2003). Even when collaboration is mandated, *someone* has to initiate the process or seize an opportunity for collaboration.

Secondly, relationship building is essential, and it involves both formal and informal relationships (Crosby and Bryson, 2010; McGuire, 2006; Ospina and Saz-Carranza, 2010; Williams, 2002;). It also includes creating a shared vision for collaboration or creating an

¹¹ For the purpose of this study, the term collaborative management is being used to describe managing collaboration. It does not imply that more than one person or organization takes on managing collaboration or a collective partaking in collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2007); however, it could be the case that this does indeed occur.

understanding of why “going it together” is better than “going it alone.” Some scholars note that a collaborative mission does not have to be completely agreed upon for collaboration to occur, but partners do have to buy into the benefit of collaborative activity (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; Huxham, 2003; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Ospina and Saz-Carranza, 2010).

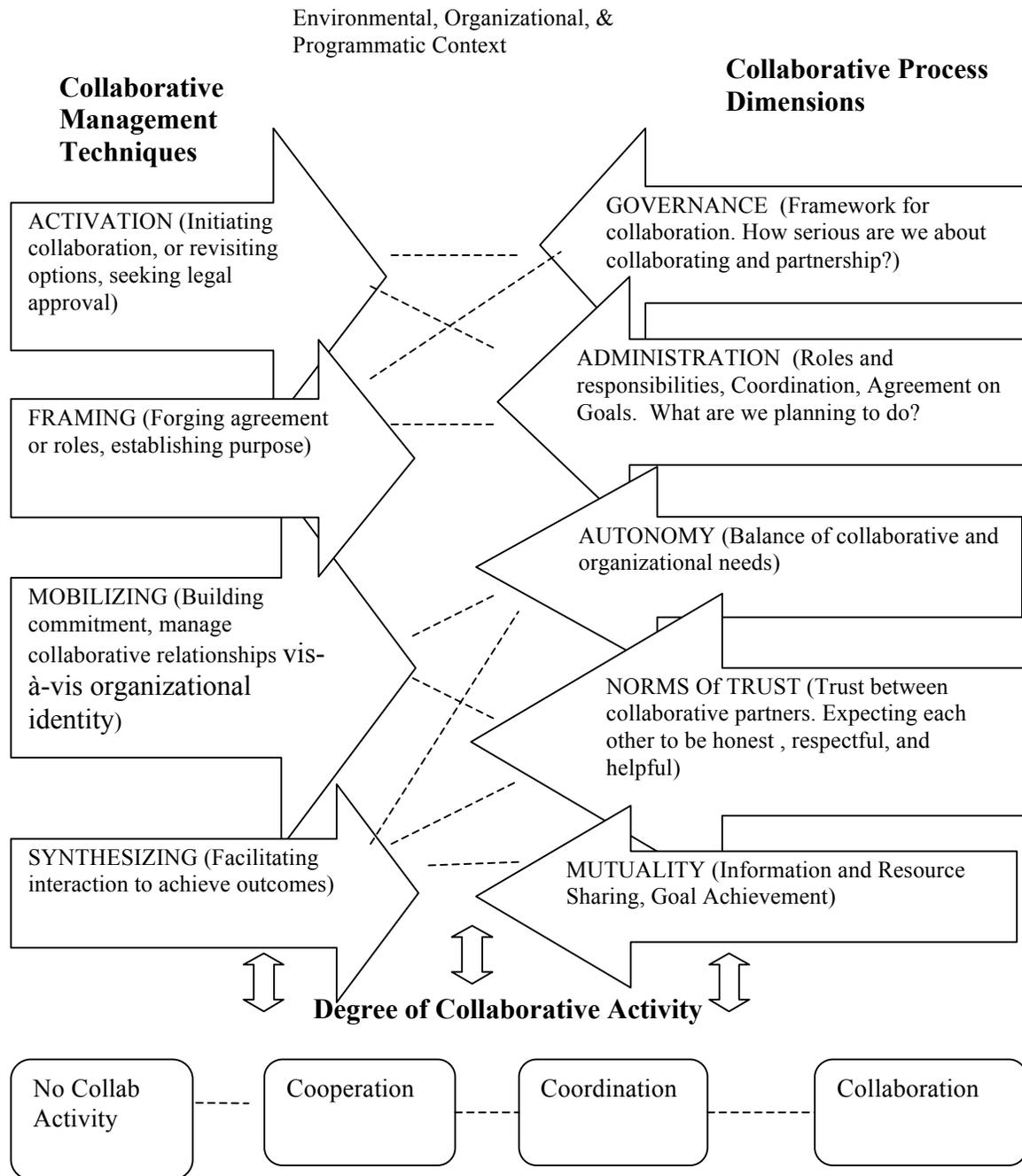
A third recurring theme is that communication is key and includes oral and written skills and the ability to listen to collaborative partners (Mattessich et al., 2001; Williams, 2002; McGuire, 2006; Huxham and Vangen, 2005). Closely related to communication, but with important distinctions, a fourth focus in the literature is on trust. Trust is essential and manifests itself in personal attributes of collaborators, dependable information sharing, and consistent and predictable actions of collaborative partners (Agranoff, 2007; Bardach, 1998; Huxham, 2003; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; McGuire and Siliva, 2010b; Vangen and Huxham, 2003; Williams, 2002). Scholars note two important caveats: partnerships can begin when no established trust exists, but maintaining collaboration depends on establishing and building trust between partners (Huxham and Vangen, 2005), and, as McGuire (2006) notes, “the management of trust is problematic” (p. 38).

Fifthly, collaborative management scholars recognize the importance of experience, noting that public managers can evolve into better collaborators over time and participate more readily in new collaborative experiences when having prior collaborative experience (McGuire and Silvia, 2010a). Finally, a few additional skills have been noted as vital in collaborative management. They include power sharing, negotiation, mediation, conflict management, and innovation (Williams, 2002).

In the case of PPPC between Head Start and VPI, the role of collaborative manager resides in the Head Start regional directors and VPI administrators. Many of the above-mentioned

themes are reflected in Agranoff and McGuire's (2001) and McGuire and Agranoff (2014) discussion of network management activities as activating, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing. These activities also overlap generally with the five dimensions of collaboration process identified by Thomson et al. (2007), but they provide insight to how collaborative managers actively engage in the process. (See Figure 3.2.)

Figure 3.2: The Relationship between Collaborative Management Techniques & Collaborative Process Dimensions



Agranoff and McGuire refer to the activation process as the selection of appropriate members; however, Keast and Hampson (2007) further designate additional activities as gaining buy in of time and resources from members, setting up the structural arrangements of the network, and ongoing adjustments to membership (p. 368). I consider activation to be the act of convening collaboration, since in this study membership is limited to only Head Start and VPI service providers. It can include making initial connections between program administrators and obtaining the necessary permissions from governing bodies for both Head Start and VPI. I propose that activation is linked highly to the governance and administration dimensions because it establishes the framework of collaboration. Having conversations about working together involves coming to terms with how serious each entity is about pursuing collaborative activities together, and it also begins conversations about collaborative roles and goal alignment.

Framing includes forging agreement on leadership and administrative roles. Collaborative managers use framing techniques to establish the structural dimensions, governance and administration, defined by Thomson et al (2007). Keast and Hampton (2007) suggest that framing activities include establishing and influencing rules, values, and norms to frame network engagement, altering member perceptions through new information and ideas, understanding and examining perspectives of other members, and agreeing to work together (p. 369). Framing aligns with both structural dimensions, but aligns closely with Thomson et al.'s (2007) vision of the administrative dimension that includes establishing coordination and task delegation among collaborative partners. Keast and Hampton also envision that framing activities include some of the beginning social capital work, such as establishing values and norms of the network.

Although I argue that more of this function occurs during mobilizing and synthesizing activities,

I acknowledge the recursive nature of structure and social capital allows for some overlap between these functions.

Another activity includes mobilizing, when collaborative managers create commitment to collaboration through building interpersonal relationships and establishing trust (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; McGuire and Agranoff, 2014). Keast and Hampson (2007) include these relationship-building activities as part of mobilizing techniques. While they also suggest this function includes creating a common vision (p. 369), I concur with Thompson et al. that this activity is more administrative and thus consider it a framing activity. Keast and Hampson argue that mobilizing also includes agreement on the scope of activity, which is an important determinant for this project in how managers envision the degree of collaborative activity to take on. Agranoff and McGuire also discuss how collaborative managers negotiate collaborative relationships vis-à-vis their home organization; thus the mobilizing function includes both elements of social capital dimensions and autonomy (Thomson and Perry, 2006; Thomson et al, 2007).

Finally, synthesizing includes engendering productive interactions that maintains collaboration. Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan (1997) discuss this type of behavior as “facilitating interaction processes between actors” (p. 11) and follow up with a description of the network manager as “stimulator of interactions” (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004, p. 11). Keast and Hampson (2007) further define synthesizing by including activities that all reflect these interactive skills. Synthesizing also reflects the social capital dimensions put forth by Thomson et al. (2007), both the mutuality dimension of sharing information, resources, and the recognition of better goal obtainment by working together as well as the norms dimension by building trust through productive interactions. Although both of Thomson et al. and Agranoff and McGuire include

these interactive type behaviors as part of the underlying processes of collaboration and collaborative management, I argue that these types of processes engender the outcomes of collaboration and envision synthesizing as important steps in developing the degree of collaborative activity between programs.

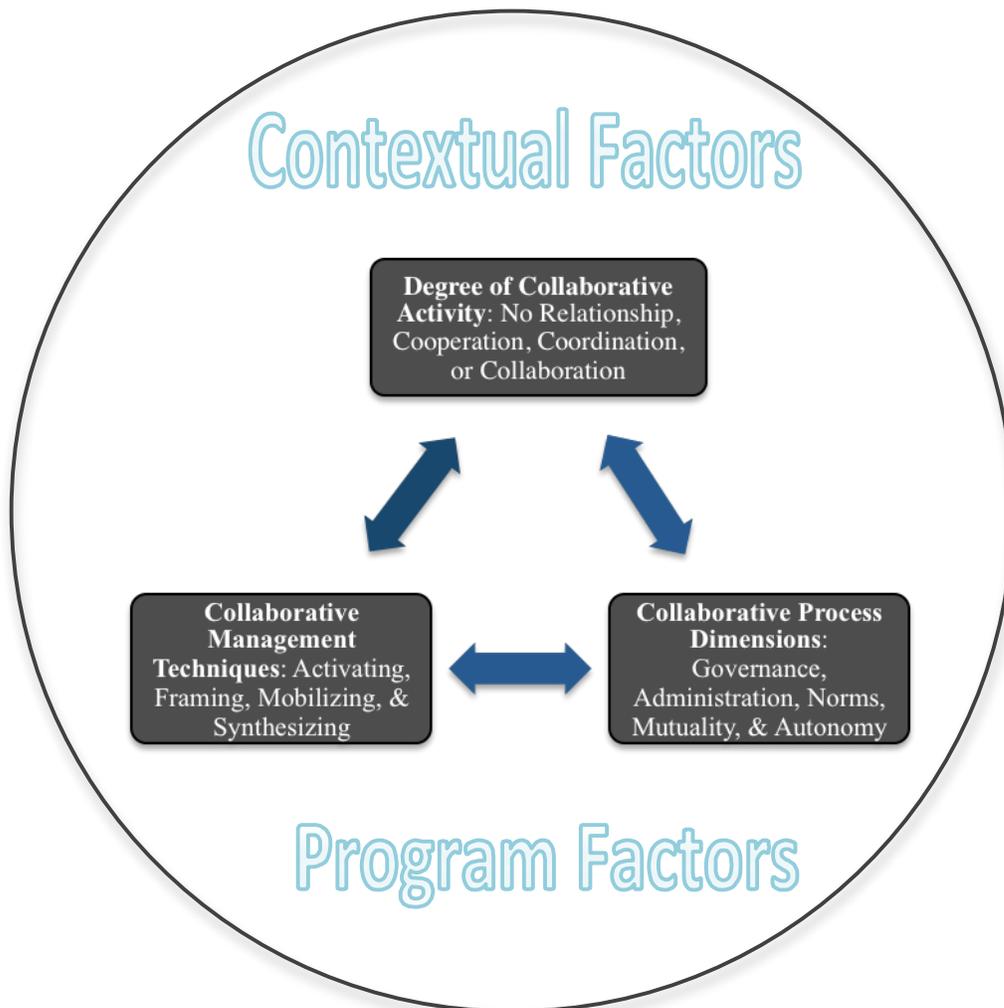
Framework for this Study

Existing theories of collaboration and collaborative management offer insight to how collaborative processes begin and how they are maintained, yet gaps in our understanding remain. The role of boundary spanner and what sparks seeking out PPC are not well understood when collaboration is not mandated. In particular, when program service providers deliver the same two preschool programs (Head Start and VPI) across Virginia, what prompts some public managers to pursue a relationship and undertake collaborative activities while others do not? Furthermore, even if not the boundary spanner, what prompts another public manager to accept an invitation to collaborate? And finally, how do collaboration processes and collaborative management techniques affect the degree of collaborative activity that Head Start and VPI service providers engage in?

This research focuses on how collaboration between publicly funded programs arises through the negotiation of public managers, and how their actions shape the underlying collaborative processes that frame their chances for undertaking collaborative activities. The following figure encapsulates the interactive relationship between collaborative process dimensions, collaborative management techniques, and the degree of collaborative activity that provides the framework for this study (See Figure 3.3). While collaboration has been abundantly studied in the literature, and we are beginning to gain better insight to what comprises it, how

management interactions shape and forms the collaborative processes that result in collaborative activities still need to be better understood. Moreover, as Figure 3.3 suggests, when entities take on specific collaborative activities together, these continue to add to and build the underlying collaborative processes in a recursive manner.

Figure 3.3: Collaborative Activity Framework



CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODS

Study Design and Case Selection

I conducted a study of public-public program collaboration (PPPC) in Virginia for several reasons. First, as a doctoral student at Virginia Tech, I had proximity to Virginia preschool service providers. Secondly, Virginia Tech is a respected public land-grant university; given the strong research emphasis of both Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), my affiliation served me well in soliciting the participation of informants. That I gained familiarity with the VPI and Head Start programs in prior grant-funded work enhanced my ability to reconnect with two informants and provided me with a solid point of departure from which to delve into this research project. Finally, of the 41 states that invest in public preschool, 30 states have created their own freestanding programs; Virginia is one of them (Karch, 2010). This made it an excellent setting for elucidating the dynamics of public-public program collaboration between the federal Head Start program and state sponsored early childhood education.

To study variation in collaborative activity and the collaborative processes and management techniques that affected it, I conducted a multiple case study (Yin, 2009; Stake, 2006). This approach allowed me to study collaboration processes situated in various contextual settings across Virginia in depth while holding both the federal and state policy contexts constant (because I only studied PPPC that occurs between federally funded Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative). I began by examining the Head Start regions in Virginia for evidence of collaboration between Head Start and VPI, and selected five regions based upon variation among them with respect to collaborative activity and the contextual factors that may frame collaboration. I conducted seven exploratory interviews that helped me identify degrees of

collaborative activity occurring within all five regions. The contextual variables that informed case selection included population density, percent African American population, percent below poverty line, and whether the VPI and Head Start service providers share the same grantee (see Table 4.1). All cases are defined with general geographic nomenclature to reduce identification of specific regions or dyads.

Table 4.1: Case Selection Summary by Contextual Variables¹²

	Southwestern Valley	Northwestern Valley	Rural East Shore	Small Central City	Urban Tidewater
Population Density	Low	Mixed	Low	Mixed	High
Percent below Poverty Line	Mixed	Mixed	High	Mixed	Mixed
Percent Black	Low	Low	High	Mixed	High
Same grantee for HS & VPI? ¹³	No	Mixed	No	No	No
Variation in Collaborative Activity w/in Service Area?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Dyads in Service Area?	4	7	2	3	5

The nature of my study allows for the analysis of *within* case variation as well as *cross-case comparison*. Although I do not fully heed Yin’s (2009) advice that a multiple case study should

¹² The rankings of low, high, or mixed were given based upon a comparison to the Commonwealth of Virginia’s overall demographics for the specific indicator. A ranking of “Mixed” indicates that some of the localities of interest within the region are over the state average and some are below.

¹³ Having the same or different grantee informed the case selection criteria. However, due to constraints imposed by non-response, only one case included an example of Head Start and VPI sharing the same grantee. This factor is still worthy of discussion given its potential effect it has on PPPC; however, some caution is warranted in interpreting this factor’s effects due to the limited number of cases examined.

include two cases per contextual area of interest, Table 4.1 shows that on every contextual variable of interest, at least two regions share similar values, keeping in mind that a “Mixed” region scored both high and low on that particular demographic characteristic. In addition, I concur with Collier, Mahoney, and Seawright (2004) and Ragin (2004) that the in-depth approach of a within-case study should compensate for lack of contextual controls and allow for comparisons across cases that are meaningful to theory building. Table 4.1 summarizes the regions based on the selection variables.

Because I am particularly interested in assaying what public-public collaboration between one Head Start program and one VPI program looks like, my unit of analysis is their dyadic relationship. In the five Head Start Service regions that I studied there are 21 dyadic relationships because each of the five Head Start agencies serves multiple local education authorities (LEAs), and therefore multiple VPI service providers, in their respective area. There are twenty-one VPI service providers.¹⁴ (See Table 4.2.)

¹⁴ Upon conducting the interviews, I learned that one of the preschool providers within the Northwestern Valley region and one in the Urban Tidewater area did not run the VPI program, but locally funded their preschool program. Since my main questions are about the processes and techniques that shape collaboration, I chose to still consider them as part of potential studied dyads.

Table 4.2: Dyadic Relationships: Head Start Agencies & VPI Service Providers

Distinct Head Start Agency	Dyadic Relationships
Head Start 1: Southwestern Valley	VPI 1 – VPI 4
Head Start 2: Northwestern Valley	VPI 5 – VPI 11
Head Start 3: Rural East Shore	VPI 12 – VPI 13
Head Start 4: Small Central City	VPI 14 - 16
Head Start 5: Urban Tidewater	VPI 17 – VPI 21

Methods

To gain an understanding of the micro-level processes necessary to initiate and maintain collaboration, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the public managers who run Head Start and VPI programs in the five selected regions in Virginia. I chose a case study approach using interviews as the main method of inquiry because my questions about collaboration focused on developing an in-depth understanding of *why* these public preschool administrators collaborate and *how* they develop and maintain collaborative processes by using underlying management techniques. These types of in-depth “how and why” questions are better suited to the interview process, when the interviewer can tease out the details and ask follow up questions (Yin, 2009). In addition, these groups of administrators, particularly the Head Start administrators, are often asked to complete surveys and other assessments, so I had concern about their willingness to complete an additional survey instrument. While interviews are a time consuming process in their collection, data processing (transcribing), and analysis techniques,

which reduces the amount of informants included in the study, I argue that the richness of the information obtained justifies this as a sound methodological choice for my research questions.

I conducted seven interviews with six Head Start directors¹⁵ and seventeen interviews with twenty VPI administrators or related personnel,¹⁶ for a total of 24 interviews.¹⁷ Thus, although the unit of analysis is the dyadic relationship between the programs, the unit of observation is the individual administrators for Head Start and VPI¹⁸. For each dyadic relationship, my goal was to attain accounts from both the Head Start and the VPI perspective. The interviews took place between fall 2011 and April 2014. They ranged in length from 36 to 113 minutes with an average length of 75 minutes, or one hour fifteen minutes. Twelve of the interviews were conducted in person and twelve were conducted via telephone.

I contacted the informants via email to explain the research project and invite them to participate. All nonresponses from informants were followed up with at least two additional emails and a telephone call before being removed from the interview pool¹⁹. Overall, I was able

¹⁵ During the course of this study, I interviewed one Head Start director as an exploratory interview and due to his availability was able to conduct a follow up interview. One Head Start director who I interviewed early on in the process passed away. I conducted a second interview with her replacement, thus making a total of seven interviews for five regional Head Start director positions.

¹⁶ Sixteen of the twenty-one possible LEAs participated in the interview process. In one LEA, the VPI administrator recently retired so I interviewed the recent retiree and the replacement, totaling seventeen interviews. In three interviews, two representatives of the LEA participated, which accounts for twenty individuals interviewed overall.

¹⁷ One VPI program agreed to complete the survey rubric about collaborative activities but did not complete an interview. Their activities are discussed to triangulate what was reported from Head Start, but completing the rubric is not reflected in the overall interview count.

¹⁸ Head Start and VPI administrators' perceptions of their respective dyadic partnerships are used to assay their collaborative relationship at administrative and programmatic levels. For smaller preschool programs, their discussions arguably represent well the layers of programmatic collaboration. For larger programs, their assessment of programmatic collaboration may be somewhat limited due to layers of administrative staff that could undertake collaboration between Head Start and VPI in different ways than captured by these interviews.

¹⁹ Non-response bias could be an issue with these data. Given the full range of collaborative interaction that occurred between these partners; however, the interviews I conducted do offer insight to collaborative process dimensions, management techniques, and activities. All non-responders were VPI administrators because my research protocol required a case to be removed if the Head Start director

to include 16 of the potential 21 dyads in this study, although I did receive partial information for one additional dyad in the Southwestern Valley. In only one case (Urban Tidewater) I lacked a majority of the LEAs in the Head Start service area participating in the study. Table 4.3 displays the total interviews and informants by case study area.

Table 4.3: Completed Interviews Per Case Study Area

	Southwestern Valley	Northwestern Valley	Rural East Shore	Small Central City	Urban Tidewater
Total Head Start Programs	1	1	1	1	1
Total Head Start Interviews Completed	2	2	1	1	1
Total LEAs	4	7	2	3	5
Total LEA Interviews Completed	4 ²⁰	7	2	2	2

All informants agreed to be audio-recorded. A hired transcriptionist and I transcribed all of the interviews, resulting in over 450 pages of typed transcribed material. In addition to transcribing interviews, I wrote detailed field notes after each interview to capture initial findings, my impressions, and information that stood out to me upon reflection (Scott and Garner, 2013). These notes and the transcribed interviews provide the basis for the coding

would not participate (thus eliminating the opportunity to examine at a minimum one Head Start-VPI dyadic partnership). Based upon feedback from Head Start administrators, the dyadic relationships missing from the study include coordinators and cooperators. While collaborators may be “over-represented” in this sample, a statewide survey suggests that 70% of Head Start programs are interacting with other publicly funded preschools in their region to a high degree (Partnership for People with Disabilities, 2011); thus, it seems that the non-response in this study did not bias the findings to a great extent.

²⁰ The 4 interviews completed reflect 3 LEAs for the New River case study.

analysis (described below)²¹. Informants typically reflected upon the recent history of collaboration between programs, but if appropriate, they were asked to reflect upon the history of collaboration between programs, which in some cases covered a fifteen-year period.

I collected other information for each case as well. As mentioned above, I used interviews as the main data collection technique; however, to ease and standardize my understanding of the dyads' degree of collaborative activity, I created a short rubric that asked informants to check all of the activities that they undertook with each other (the VPI administrator reflecting upon the activities with the Head Start program, and the Head Start administrator reflecting up the activities with the individual VPI programs in their region). Informants were sent both the interview schedule and the rubric in advance, and we reviewed the document during the interview. I also obtained copies of the MOUs between the Head Start Agencies and the LEAs for four of the five cases. I am focusing on the dyadic relationships between Head Start and VPI administrators; however, in two of the cases the dyads nest within a larger network of relationships between the regional Head Start and the area VPI program personnel.²² For these two cases, I observed a minimum of one collaboration meeting for each of the larger Head Start-VPI networks and reviewed past meeting minutes.

De-identifying all direct quotes protected informants' identities. Also, I changed the name of the geographic region to a generic title and do not use informants' names to ensure

²¹ A couple of the interviews were conducted before the fine-tuning of the interview schedule. IRB approved protocol allowed for informants to be contacted again for follow up questions. In two cases, additional theoretically relevant information was needed; these informants were contacted via email with follow up questions. The informants' responses were also included in the coding analysis.

²² Almost all of the VPI and Head Start programs participate in the Smart Beginnings project (<http://www.vecf.org/home.aspx>), a public-private network dedicated to school readiness for area children. These networks are broader in concern than collaboration between Head Start and VPI, so for the purpose of this study, I am not including them as part of the larger network of relationships that may develop within a Head Start region between the two programs.

confidentiality. The Virginia Tech Institution Review Board approved the protocol for this research project. A copy of the approval letter is included in Appendix A.

Survey Instrument and Measures

I conducted interviews to ascertain information about the degree of collaborative activity, collaborative process dimensions, and collaborative management techniques. After the exploratory interviews, the interview instrument was fine-tuned and sent to an informant for review and input. These recommendations were incorporated into the final instrument.²³

My outcome variable is the degree of collaborative activity between Head Start and VPI. I build on a collaboration continuum created by Mattessich et al. (2001) and expanded by Seldon, Sowa, and Sandfort (2006) that classifies the intensity of a dyadic relationship from “no relationship” through “collaboration.” A 2011 report produced by Virginia Commonwealth University for the Virginia Head Start State Collaboration Department surveyed Head Start administrators and asked them to rate the degree of their relationships with publicly funded preschool in their services areas (Partnership for People with Disabilities, 2011). They also used the Mattessich et al. continuum when they asked the Head Start directors to self-assess their current relationship. The findings were anonymous, so it was not possible to link their findings to the current study; however, the findings did help substantiate variation in collaboration across Virginia. The report also sparked the idea to use the continuum for this study, but I changed it by taking inventory of the specific collaborative activities that dyadic partners undertake and assigning a specific degree along the continuum rather than using a self-assessment.

²³ A full copy of the interview questions is available in Appendix B.

Degree of collaborative activity focuses on the activity itself and the relative extent of involvement between partners it takes to engage in the activity. “No relationship” represents no attempts at collaborative activity between Head Start and VPI beyond the signing of a MOU as required by the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007, or lacking a MOU but participating in only one minimal collaborative activity. “Cooperation” reflects a degree of collaborative activity requiring minimal communication and involvement, such as exchange of programmatic information and upcoming professional development opportunities.

“Coordination” reflects the degree of collaborative activity in which participation is a joint process requiring a moderate amount of interaction to facilitate. One example of a joint process is setting up a single application form for publicly funded preschool in a community and joint decision making in placing children in either Head Start or VPI. Another example would be joint provision of professional development. Finally, “collaboration” reflects a degree of collaborative activity that involves blending resources and creating new structural forms. An example of this is when Head Start and VPI attempt to blend or braid funds, often culminating in a classroom that contains both Head Start and VPI funded children. As will be discussed in the analysis chapter, while the four degrees were taken as a reference point to describe activities, some dyads held aspects of multiple degrees.

To operationalize these variables, I used the rubric described above to collect information about collaborative activities undertaken by the dyad, allowing space for additional activities not listed. I then placed each dyadic relationship along the degree of collaborative activity continuum, labeling the relationship by the highest degree of activity that the program service providers engage in (tracking any multiple collaborative activities within one dyad as a second-

level analysis)²⁴. Both VPI administrators and Head Start administrators were asked about the collaborative activities. This triangulation allowed me to verify the degree of collaborative activities. Any discrepancies were followed up with additional questions.

As discussed above, two theoretical frameworks guided my investigation of micro-level relational processes between Head Start and VPI: the five process dimensions of collaboration elaborated by Thomson and Perry (2006) and Thomson, Perry, and Miller's (2007), and the collaborative management techniques posited by Agranoff and McGuire (2001).

I asked the informants questions about the collaboration process dimensions. Based upon Thomson, Perry, and Miller (2007) seventeen of their original 56 indicators captured the five collaborative processes. Given this study's qualitative design, I loosely based questions about the five dimensions on these seventeen indicators. I inquired about taking each other seriously as partners, conducting group brainstorming sessions, and building formal and informal relationships to tap the "governance" dimension. Regarding "administration," I asked informants whether they clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and if they or someone else coordinated collaborative meetings and communication. I also asked if administrators agreed on goals.

I tapped the "autonomy" dimension by looking into tension between individual program goals and collaborative goals, and if they believed their program goals were affected by working with the other preschool program. For the "mutuality" dimension, I focused on aspects of achieving goals better and feeling as if the other program director appreciates what their program

²⁴ In most cases, the dyad was assigned to the "highest" degree of collaborative activity for which they reported an activity; however, occasionally while the programs may have participated in one or two of the activities that were identified in a higher degree of collaborative activity, I assigned them to the lower degree based upon either the "newness" of the dyadic relationship and activity; lack of participating in many collaborative activities at the degree lower than the one indicated for the dyad; and/or given contradictory information given from both sides of the dyadic relationship that indicated a lack of collaborative communication among the partners.

brings to the dyadic relationship²⁵. Finally, I assessed the “norms” dimension by asking about trusting and relying on each other, and mutual commitment to the collaborative relationship.

To investigate “how” respondents created their collaboration process dimensions, I built upon Agranoff and McGuire’s (2001) collaborative management techniques of activating, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing. To assess “activating,” I asked both Head Start and VPI directors to discuss how their respective dyadic relationship was initiated. I also asked them to report any organizational history related to establishing a relationship. To tap “framing,” which involves establishing roles and other structural dimensions of the relationship, I asked how roles and coordination of activities are divided between the program service providers, and how this was decided.

For the mobilizing technique, I asked if and how they developed trust in their relationships, and whether and why they believe that the relationship is trustworthy. If no relationship currently exists, I asked about the role that trust played (if any) in keeping the program service providers separated, and whether and how they intend to begin building trust between program service providers. If Head Start and VPI participate in a degree of collaborative activity above “no relationship,” I asked how they developed commitment to the dyadic relationship and how they negotiated program goals with collaborative goals.

Finally, synthesizing refers to creating opportunities for sharing information and resources and achieving shared goals that maintain collaboration. I inquired how Head Start and VPI administrators worked towards achieving common goals if they partake in a degree of collaborative activity of cooperation or higher. In particular, to capture synthesizing, I asked the

²⁵ Thomson et al (2007) also include sharing of resources as one of the indicators of mutuality, but I did not include it as part of this dimension since the dependent variable is the degree to which they partake in collaborative activities and sharing resources is one possible activities.

administrators for specific examples of developing procedures to enact their shared collaborative activities. If no relationship currently exists, I asked informants if they wished to pursue higher degrees of collaborative activity in the future and how they planned to pursue this venture.

Although I used the collaboration process dimensions and collaborative management techniques as starting points for my inquiry in how degrees of collaborative activity are convened and maintained, this is an exploratory study. I left open the possibility of discovering additional dimensions or collaborative management techniques that were not previously defined or other reoccurring issues relevant to collaboration. The pre-defined codes as well as emerging ones will be discussed in detail below.

Coding and Data Analysis

I used thematic parsing of interview texts to explicate the conceptual definitions described above (see Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Creswell 2009; May 2001). Using QSR NVivo 10 software to manage the text materials as digital files, I created structural codes (Saldana, 2009) to represent the questions that attempted to tap into collaborative activities, process dimensions, and management techniques. Structural coding is a useful tool for deductive data analysis; in this case, I developed questions and codes based upon specific theoretical arguments developed by Thomson, Perry, and Miller (2007) and Agranoff and McGurie (2001) about collaborative process dimensions and collaborative management techniques, respectively. I captured responses made to the specific questions and assigned them to the corresponding codes that allowed me to compare across informants, dyads, and ultimately cases to underlying trends regarding the specific aspects of the theoretical arguments. I developed other structural codes to

address core research questions of this project, including why administrators engage in collaborative activities and the benefits and challenges of doing so.

I found creating detailed codes of repeating ideas to be a useful way to organize and analyze data. For example, under the category of “collaborative challenges,” I created detailed sub-codes of regulation issues, changing leadership, communication issues, different schedules, gaining support from the top, lack of respect, personalities, program differences, resource issues, and time issues. This allowed me to assign text to these detailed codes that linked up to a larger category of “challenges.”

I also created additional codes that emerged from the interviews that added to an understanding of the collaboration story between the two programs.²⁶ By including emergent codes as part of the analysis, I also include a more inductive, or grounded theory approach to this research project (Charmaz, 2006). I entered into the research with a specific theoretical lens to frame an understanding of collaboration, but I allowed for unexpected or additional aspects to emerge that offer additional inside to our knowledge about collaborating.

I conducted first round coding by going through all of the interviews and assigning segments of text to various codes. If a segment fit more than one code, it was coded multiple times (Saldana, 2009). Next, I conducted a within case analysis by pulling out all of the segments of coded text for one case and comparing responses for the various structural codes among dyads within the same region (case). It was during this step that I was able to assign an initial degree of collaborative activity to each dyad, and also to begin comparing and contrasting why administrators chose to engage collaboration or not. This initial analysis forms the basis for Chapter Five, a descriptive narrative of activity for each dyad.

²⁶ A complete listing of structural and emergent codes appears in Appendix C.

Next, I focused my attention on the relationship between underlying collaborative processes and collaborative activities. I attempted to uncover what processes were present at each end of the collaborative activities spectrum, as well as grouping dyadic case processes by each individual collaborative activity degree. A more detailed explanation of this comparison is discussed in the section on Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) below, and in Chapter Six. Next, I grouped cases by their degree of collaborative activity and related collaborative processes and examined collaborative management techniques discussed by informants. This in-depth qualitative analysis comprises Chapter Seven.

To assess the validity and reliability of the thematic coding, I reviewed my codes with several of my committee members and both a Head Start and VPI informant for review (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Saldana, 2009). All of these individuals were asked to assess if the structural coding made sense and generally reflected the theories and questions that were asked or other information generated during the interview. These individuals agreed that the codes made sense, which added to my confidence in the analyses.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Upon completing the thematic coding analysis, I used crisp set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to compare within and between case findings. QCA is a technique that uses Boolean minimization processes and logic to find patterns of conditions that contribute to an outcome variable in case study research (Ragin, 1987; Rihoux and Ragin, 2009). In particular, I used QCA to explore the potential recipes of collaborative process conditions that lead to more involved collaborative activities compared to minimal or no collaborative activity. I also used the technique to explore what combination of collaborative process conditions leads to each degree

of collaborative activity. QCA is appropriate when attempting to discern patterns in a multiple case study and useful for small n studies. (Ragin, 1987). The details of this analysis are discussed in Chapter Six.

I now turn to Chapter Five, the first part of the findings of this study. I provide a detailed descriptive analysis of the dyadic partnerships and an overall review of each case.

CHAPTER 5

DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVE OF HEAD START AND VPI COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

For this study, I begin with an analysis of the individual dyads that reside within each case. A case is comprised of a regional Head Start program and the Virginia Preschool Initiative programs that reside within the respective Head Start service area. Independent LEAs run each of the VPI programs; thus, the cases in this study range from one Head Start program engaged with two VPI programs up to a Head Start program engaged with seven VPI programs. Individual dyads include the relationship or connection between one Head Start program and one VPI program; specifically, I focus on the types (if any) of collaborative activities undertaken by these two programs and the relationship (if any) that occurs between the Head Start and VPI administrators. The smallest case in this study is comprised of two dyads; the largest includes seven dyads. Table 5.1 labels the regions and identifies the Head Start program, VPI programs, and dyads included in this study.

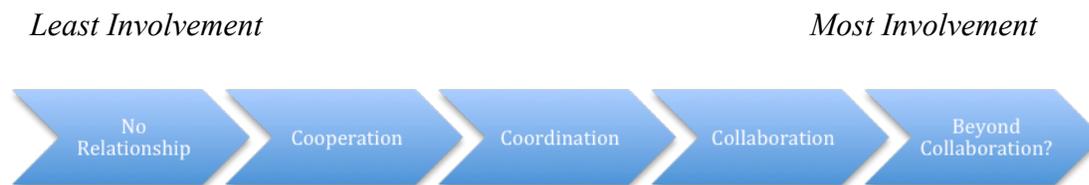
Table 5.1. Regions, Head Start Programs, VPI Programs, and Dyads in this Study

Region	Head Start Program ²⁷	VPI Programs ²⁸	Dyads ²⁹
Region 1, Southwestern Valley	R1Head Start	VPI-1, VPI-2, VPI-3, VPI-4	R1-1, R1-2, R1-3, R1-4
Region 2, Northwestern Valley	R2Head Start	VPI-5, VPI-6, VPI-7, VPI-8, VPI-9, VPI-10, VPI-11	R2-5, R2-6, R2-7, R2-8, R2-9, R2-10, R2-11
Region 3, Rural East Shore	R3Head Start	VPI-12, VPI-13	R3-12, R3-13
Region 4, Small Central City	R4Head Start	VPI-14, VPI-15	R4-14, R4-15
Region 5, Urban Tidewater	R5Head Start	VPI-16, VPI-17	R5-16, R5-17

In the following narrative, I describe the Head Start and VPI programs within each case and the types of activities in which the programs engage. I identify the collaborative activities as being more involved or lesser involved depending on the degree of interaction needed to engage the activity, and label the dyads as no relationship, cooperation, coordination, or collaboration.

Figure 1 identifies the continuum.

Figure 5.1: Degrees of Collaborative Activity Continuum
(Adapted from Mattessich et al., 2001)



²⁷ Each Head Start program will be referred to by a region number, R1...R5.

²⁸ Every VPI program in the study has been given a unique identifier, VPI-1...VPI-17.

²⁹ Each dyad will be referred to by the Head Start Region Number (R1...R5) and the VPI number (1...7).

After discussing collaborative activities at the dyadic level, I then step up the analysis to the case level to discuss general trends regarding reasons given for collaborating with each other. I then begin to link these reasons to various theoretical frameworks that offer an explanation for collaboration to occur.

Case I: Southwestern Valley³⁰, Region 1 Head Start and Four VPI Programs

This case is comprised of a regional Head Start program located in the Southwestern Valley (SWV) Region of Virginia. R1Head Start serves over 300 children, operating fifteen classrooms, including both full-time and part-time classrooms, in four counties and one city area. The Head Start program is housed in a community action agency. Of the five localities in which Head Start classrooms are located, only the four counties operate VPI programs. VPI-1 has 10 classrooms and is the largest school district in the region. VPI-2 has five classrooms, and VPI-3 has 2.5 classrooms, including one blended classroom with the Head Start. VPI- 4 has one classroom.

The R1Head Start director pursued a grant to establish a larger collaborative network between themselves and the area VPI programs starting in 2007. The grant provided funds to hire a consultant, a former Head Start family service worker, to do the legwork of meeting with area VPI programs to establish MOUs and build initial interest in collaborating. The grant was a one-time funding opportunity; however, the larger collaborative network has continued between the Head Start program and three of the VPI programs. VPI-4 was only established in the last couple of years so they were not involved in the early collaborative network. In 2012, VPI-4 was very minimally involved in the larger collaborative. The larger collaborative meets monthly and discusses collaborative issues such as updating and tweaking the single preschool application

³⁰ Each region in this study has been given a pseudonym to protect the confidentiality of informants.

that Head Start and all of the VPI programs share, aligning curriculum, and enrollment processes.

Another important dimension of this case is that the R1Head Start director who started the larger collaborative network passed away in the spring of 2013. Her replacement started in the fall of 2013. Also, there is a new VPI administrator in VPI-1, so for this dyadic relationship, there are new players on both sides. In Chapter Seven, I investigate the collaborative management techniques used by the various dyadic partners and changing collaborative players can potentially affect how and when these materialize.

Collaborative Activities

R1-1 engages in coordination degree of collaborative activity. They discuss applicants for placement in their respective programs, have developed a single application, share assessment data, have a signed MOU, and share information about professional development opportunities. It seems that jointly developing and participating in each other's professional development opportunities is the least developed activity. Although both R1Head Start and VPI-1 administrators discuss occasions when they have shared information with each other about professional development, only on one occasion did they seem to identify and put together a training session. Also, due to different school day schedules and a lack of planning days for the Head Start teachers, attending each other's professional development opportunities proves challenging.

Due to the Federal budget sequestration of 2012, R1HS had to close at least one classroom in the school district, so they have added to their MOU an agreement that VPI-1 will take the four year olds that would have attended the Head Start classroom. VPI-1 does actively

participate in the collaborative network by sending either the VPI-1 administrator and/or the Family Service Specialist (FSS) to the meetings. I also learned that when a couple of new elementary schools were built in this district the regional Head Start director inquired with the school district about sharing space or blending classrooms. The VPI-1 administrator shared that this did not happen because her supervisor looked into these types of relationships and was given advice to “not do it.” She was unsure of all of the reasons, but suggested that a big one was the issue of the Head Start teachers not being certified.

Table 5.2: Current and Former Collaborative Activities for Region 1, Southwestern Valley

	R1-1		R1-2		R1-3		R1-4	
	Current	Former	Current	Former	Current	Former	Current	Former
Least Involved	No activity							
	MOU	X		X		X		X
	Share applicant info.	X		X		X		X
	Share professional development info.	X		X		X		
	Share assessment info.	X				X		
	Discuss applicants for program placement	X		X		X		X
	Single application	X		X		X		
	SPOE ³¹				X	X		X
	Share building space				X	X		
	Create joint professional development							
Most Involved	Share transportation					X		
	Separate classrooms, but align standards							
	Hire together							
	Share home visits/FSS/FSW duties ³²							
	Blend Classrooms					X		

³¹ SPOE stands for Single Point of Entry, a term used in discussion preschool enrollment that means that parents go to a single location to enroll their child for a public preschool program, in this case being Head Start or Virginia Preschool Initiative.

³² FSS/FSW stands for Family Support Specialist or Family Service Worker, terms used by VPI and Head Start to denote the program occupation responsible for working with program family in a social support or social worker type role.

R1-2 also engages in coordination degree of collaborative activity. Similar to R1-1, they too discuss applicants for placement, use a single application, have a signed MOU, and share information about professional development opportunities, although for this dyad, it seems that they have never successfully participated in each other's opportunities. In the past, R1-2 shared building space (R1Head Start used space in a school district owned building where the program was housed), but this ended when the school district declared the building unsafe and moved all of the VPI programs to the area elementary schools, and Head Start had to rent an alternate space. Also, on several occasions in the past R1HS and VPI-2 did attempt to hold joint parent workshops, but due to low parent participation, they stopped these joint ventures. The VPI-2 coordinator suggested that part of the problems in trying to collaborate on joint professional development is that the VPI teachers have to follow the school district-wide yearly criteria for educator professional development, which often is not applicable to preschool education.

R1-3 participates in collaboration degree of collaborative activity. Since the 2010-2011 school year they have created a blended Head Start and VPI classroom that is located in one of the LEA's elementary schools. The blended classroom began when the roof collapsed due to snow on a building housing the local Head Start classroom. In need of space, the R1Head Start Director contacted the local school district about the possibility of sharing space or possibly blending a classroom. The school district was amenable because they wanted to relocate one of their VPI classrooms to another elementary school in the county. By working with Head Start, they were able to add more VPI children and keep two preschool classrooms in the main "town" elementary school in the county, while opening a new VPI classroom in an "out-of-town" elementary school.

The two entities spent a year planning for the blended classroom. The local school board approved the blended classroom, and R1Head Start obtained some necessary waivers, such as one for transportation that allowed Head Start children to ride on school buses without seatbelt restraints or monitors. R1Head Start pays for the teacher and the teacher's aide for the blended classroom, and they agreed to hire a certified teacher for the start of the second year. This decision mattered because if the teacher was not certified, then the school district could not count the VPI-3 children residing in that classroom or receive state funding (the children would have been supported by local funding instead).

Prior to blending the classroom, the VPI-3 administrator and R1-Head Start personnel would discuss applications for program placement. They also have a single application, SPOE, and share professional development opportunities. The first year of the blending was a bit rough due to working through program differences and some teacher conflicts between the VPI teacher and the Head Start teacher. However, they seem to have worked out the kinks of the regulations and the new Head Start teacher and the VPI teacher get along much better. There was one slight mishap in recent history when a new principal at the elementary school where the blended classroom is housed decided to make the classroom move due to needing space for a kindergarten class, but once the principal realized that the class housed both Head Start *and* VPI students, she agreed to keep the blended classroom. As of 2014, R1-HS was considering opening an additional classroom in new space in the county, but still planned to maintain the blended opportunity.

R1-4 engages in the coordination degree of collaborative activity; however, it is being newly formed, and is not as involved a relationship as the other coordinated relationships. R1-4 share application information and discuss applicants for program placement. The new R1Head Start

director worked closely with the VPI-4 administrator in her former role as a Head Start site administrator for the county, so she believes that a relationship will continue to grow between these programs. The VPI-4 person did not participate in the interview process for this research; however, they did complete and return the collaborative activities rubric. I learned from both programs that VPI-4 and R1Head Start did discuss a blended classroom opportunity, but due to the sequestration and school budget cuts, opted not to pursue it. VPI-4 has been minimally involved in the larger collaborative network.

Memorandum of Understanding, Region 1

For this region, R1Head Start has created two different documents that jointly serve the purpose of the MOU between R1Head Start and VPIs 1-4. MOU-1 document spells out the different mutual obligations between R1Head Start and VPI-1 – VPI-3. Interestingly, while VPI-4 is listed on the MOU title, they are not listed as a region in which any of the MOU agreements take place, which may explain the discrepancy in answers I received about whether a MOU is on file for this VPI program.

MOU-1 is arranged in a table format and has column headings that include: requirements,³³ implementation, frequency, region (LEA), and responsible person(s). The table is grouped by area requirements, and the types of requirements include: curriculum coordination; public information dissemination (preschool access); selection/enrollment priorities for eligible children; identification of service areas; staff development/training coordination; provision of services for working parents; communication with parents/transition to kindergarten; provision

³³ The requirement categories match those listed in section 642(e)(5)(A) of the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization Act.

and use of facilities, transportation, and other program elements; and other elements as agreed by parties.

The implementation column provides specific actions linked to the requirement categories. The frequency ranges from “annual” to “ongoing.” The region column identifies which Head Start/VPI dyad(s) adhere to the specific implementation actions; and finally, the responsible person(s) category identifies the person or persons responsible for the action. As an example, under the requirement category of “selection/enrollment priorities for eligible children,” one of the implementation actions is “appropriate referrals will be made between each program from the waiting list.” The frequency is listed as “ongoing,” and the regions (LEAs) identified are VPI-1 through VPI-3. Finally, the responsible person(s) identified is “VPI and Head Start Staff.”

The second document is a supplemental MOU, MOU-2, and specifically defines the obligations of both R1Head Start and VPI-3 for their blended classroom situation. It includes general agreements, such as each program agrees to serve as many preschool children in the county as possible and provide high quality preschool programming. It also includes more specific details such as Head Start providing the teacher and teaching assistant for the blended classroom and VPI-3 agreeing to provide substitute teachers for the Head Start teachers in the blended classroom.

MOU-1 serves as an action plan for this group, but interviews with informants suggests that some implementation actions are fulfilled more than others. As mentioned above, while many detailed action steps are in place to safeguard enrollment, interviews suggest that the dyads continue to hold each other accountable to and work on processes to improve enrollment practices. Also, while staff development and training included multiple steps, this appears to be a

goal that these programs are striving to meet as in reality few joint opportunities have been made available in this region.

Why Collaborate?

Overall, collaboration for this group was jumpstarted by the regional Head Start director; from all accounts, she is the identified boundary spanner (Williams, 2002) for the group. She took the initiative to build relationships with local VPI administrators even when she had learned that relationships between the programs were somewhat shaky in the past. She pursued opportunities to collaborate, including obtaining a grant to start a collaborative network and pursuing a blended classroom opportunity with VPI-3. She also tried to build deeper degrees of collaboration with two of the VPI programs, VPI-1 and VPI-4, without success. When asking the VPI administrators (those that worked with her) about the history of collaboration between the programs, they all very clearly mention her as the impetus. When interviewed, she said that she had prior experiences working with the state-funded preschools in another state that she worked in as a Head Start director. Also she said that she could “read the writing on the wall” with the collaboration (MOU) mandates of the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007; thus, she initiated these relationships to make sure that they would meet the requirement.

She discussed that her past experiences and future outlook were only part of her motivation for collaboration. She shared that it is better for these Head Start children to have an early relationship with the school because these are the “kids on the fringes.” Also, I learned from the VPI-1 administrator that she was open to suggestions and “taking on” the VPI way of doing things. The VPI-1 retired administrator shared with me that when the former R1HS director

learned about the PALS³⁴ assessment test that were given to all VPI preschoolers, the R1HS director stated that they should be doing these too.

It seems that for some of this group collaboration has become what is expected of them in their roles as public preschool administrators and coordinators. VPI-2 coordinator discussed how her job is to follow the MOUs, which means working with Head Start. The new FSS in VPI-1 also mentioned that her job is to collaborate. VPI-3 administrator did not talk as much about her job duty being to collaborate, but she did allude to the fact that in today's budgetary climate, no one can "go it alone."

There also seems to be a drive for both R1Head Start and VPI-1 and VPI-3 to work together to increase access for kids. Another component, particularly for VPI-2 to work with R1Head Start, was to make sure that these kids also become familiar with the school system. For all three VPI programs, there is some discussion that ultimately these Head Start children are "our children" (the school districts') so they want to work together and ensure that the kids are ready when they enter public elementary schools.

Early assessment of Region 1 findings suggests that resource dependency theory and exchange theories do offer a lens to frame why collaboration occurs between these entities, although the explanation is incomplete. Both R1Head Start and two of the three responding VPI programs suggested that increasing access for kids was a main drive for collaboration; in other words, by working together they were able to increase service delivery to area children, which they could not achieve alone. However, the drive for these exchanges is not for survival per se, but to focus on helping this population of children. Several interviewees, including both R1Head Start interviewees and 2 of the 3 VPI program administrators, talked about collaborating for the

³⁴ Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening, an assessment tool given to all Virginia Preschool Initiative enrollees and self-selected Head Start programs.

good of the children or to help this needy population be prepared for school. Interestingly, there seems to be this larger goal of school readiness, larger than individual programs, that bridges these programs boundaries and inspires collaboration.

But these programs are not immune from individualistic organizational goals driving some of their desire to collaborate. All of the programs discussed some story or instance of a preschooler enrolled in one program (typically Head Start 3-year old program) who then switches to the “other” program. This situation is discussed as the “stealing kids” phenomenon. They all generally agreed that program switching was not due to an attempt to “steal kids,” but typically miscommunication, lack of adequate processes in place, or parents not being truthful. Here we see also see various aspects of resource dependency theory playing out because another driving force for working together is to reduce the uncertainty of having a program slot that is filled being emptied because a child has been “stolen” by the other program.

Finally, all three elements of institutional theory offer some explanatory power for collaboration in this case. First, the mimetic forces discussed in institutional theory seem to offer some explanatory power for this case because the main impetus for collaboration in this case is the former R1Head Start director. Upon questioning, she came to this regional Head Start area with past experience of collaborating between Head Start and the state preschool program where she worked, so she had gained necessary experiences from her prior workplace to feel confident in forging opportunities. Secondly, as discussed above, one of the reasons that the R1Head Start director felt compelled or “coerced” to bridge collaboration was the forthcoming directive in the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007. Finally, most of these informants revealed that collaboration was something they “should” be doing in their jobs, reflecting normative mechanisms (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983).

Case 2: Northwestern Valley, Region 2 Head Start and Seven VPI Programs

This case consists of a regional Head Start program (R2Head Start) that covers seven school districts in the Northwestern Valley (NWV) of Virginia. The grantee for the Head Start program is one of the school districts. The seven school districts include four counties and three city LEAs, they are labeled VPI-5 through VPI-11. R2Head Start serves over 250 children in the region in 32 blended and non-blended classrooms. In a couple of the school districts that blend, VPI and Head Start children reside together in all of the classrooms, although the funding streams are separated.

VPI-5 has seventeen blended classrooms where they are funded for 74 Head Start children and 149 VPI, but serve over 260 because they also supplement with local dollars. VPI-6 has six blended classrooms, and one regional special education preschool classroom. VPI-7 has eleven VPI classrooms and three HS classrooms. VPI-8 has fifteen VPI classrooms and one Head Start classroom. VPI-9 has five VPI classrooms and two Head Start classrooms. VPI-10 is a unique dyad for this study because although the school district actively collaborates with the regional Head Start, the school district locally funds the remaining preschool program without accepting VPI funds (which it could). Finally, VPI-11 has one blended classroom for both VPI and HS children where they are funded for twelve Head Start children, and three VPI children, and locally fund the rest.

Region 2 includes a regional preschool consortium consisting of the Head Start program and the seven school districts. The consortium was established in the early 2000s. Prior to this approach, R2Head Start managed both Head Start and the VPI programs when the school districts first obtained VPI grant monies in the late 1990s. Given that Head Start was already affiliated with the one of the school districts since it was the program grantee (since 1990), when

VPI funds became available, the superintendent thought it made the most sense for Head Start to manage both programs. Since the R2-HS program was already regional, and many of the superintendents knew each other, they agreed to let the R2-Head Start administration manage their VPI programs also.

In 2001, at a state Head Start director's meeting, Office of Head Start (OHS) decided that for the Head Start program to continue managing a state preschool program, such as VPI, that the schools would have to pay, in cash, an administrative fee to Head Start. The schools did not have those funds available so they pulled their VPI programs out of the combined Head Start-VPI system. All seven school districts began managing their own VPI programs, but they created a consortium with Head Start, since they had a historic relationship of working together. Part of this long history of working together involves a more streamlined registration process (SPOE); thus, due to Head Start regulation, all preschool applications are sent to the R2Head Start main office to be scored and to first determine who is eligible for Head Start funding.

There are several issues that the consortium has dealt with in the past several years that warrant attention. First, while the LEAs refused to pay the mandated administrative fee to R2Head Start to completely run their programs, as costs increased through the years, for a while they did agree to pay a fee to R2Head Start to accommodate their expenses that ran over the federal allotment per child. However, due to school budget cuts, several schools raised the issue that they could no longer afford to pay the extra fee. The Head Start director was willing to cut their expenses, including reducing their administrative staff to get their expenses within the federal allotment of funds.

Another issue that has currently presented itself is a debate over whether to reserve preschool mainly for four year olds within the region (and thus having school districts with fewer

four year olds “lend” their Head Start slots to another district who has a waiting list of 4 year olds who they cannot fit into a preschool classrooms), or to allow a school district to enroll three year olds even if another district has four year olds on a long waiting list. Historically, the district had placed priority on 4 year olds, but now, they agreed to revert back to each LEA having their own say and enrolling local three year olds in their programs.

Another important aspect of the relationship between R2Head Start and the regional VPI programs is that the programs have generally agreed that across the board they will “adhere to the higher program standard”³⁵ (whether it be Head Start or VPI) when deciding how to run their preschool classrooms. This decision applies more to the blended situations, but some of the non-blended situations have agreed to follow the more stringent standards (which Head Start typically has) for most things (although they may decide to opt out of some of the more costly standards.)

Collaborative Activities

Based upon the data collected, R2-5’s degree of interaction is assessed as collaboration. This program is school-based, with classrooms located in every elementary school in the county. An important distinction of this dyad is that VPI-5 and R2Head Start share the same grantee; that is, the school district is both the grantee for the regional Head Start program and the VPI program. They have a signed MOU, share application information, discuss applicants for program placement, have a joint application and SPOE, share and create joint professional development, blend classrooms, and hire together.

³⁵ This language is the typical language used in blended program situations to describe how operating and management decisions will be made about how to run the preschool classrooms. The default rule is to see whether Head Start or VPI has the “higher standard” on a certain issue and then to follow the “higher standard” guidelines when implementing the program.

There was a time when R2HS and VPI-5 were not blended and there were separate Head Start and VPI classrooms. The county spans a large geographic area, so the preschoolers were typically placed at their local elementary school in either a Head Start or VPI classroom.

Table 5.3: Current and Former Collaborative Activities for Region 2, Northwestern Valley

	R2-5		R2-6		R2-7		R2-8		R2-9		R2-10		R2-11	
	Cur.	Form.	Cur.	Form.	Cur.	Form.								
Least Involved														
No activity														
MOU	X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
Share applicant info.	X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
Share professional development info	X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
Share assessment info.	X		X		X				X		X		X	
Discuss applicants for program placement	X		X		X				X		X		X	
Single application	X		X		X				X		X		X	
SPOE	X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
Share building space	X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
Create joint professional development	X		X		X				X		X		X	
Share transportation	X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
Separate classrooms, but align standards					X				X					
Hire together	X		X		X		*		*				X	
Share home visits/FSS/FSW duties	X		X						*		X		X	
Blend Classrooms	X		X							X	X		X	

* Indicates “Partial” participation in collaborative activity

Blending began after an incident occurred when a local child whose family did not meet the strict income eligibility for Head Start could not be placed in the already filled VPI classroom in the local school. This instance struck the VPI-5 director as a reason to combine funds so that classrooms would have flexibility for enrollment, and all children would be treated equally.

For preschool families in this school district, there is virtually little indication about whether their child is a Head Start- or VPI-funded child, although some aspects of Head Start do force some carving out of the Head Start-funded families as they have to be notified about and participate in various mandated Head Start policy councils. However, the R2HS director did create a structure that would allow some non-Head Start funded parents to participate in the policy council; it rotates through the 7 school districts. Also, with the federal sequestration of 2012, the county was obligated to let the teachers know whether or not they were funded by Head Start (prior to the sequestration the teachers were not aware of who funded their salary), as the county lost HS funding for a classroom that was then covered by the local school district.

In this community with a blended program situation, both R2HS and VPI-5 have agreed to adhere to the “higher program standard;” however, since the school district (VPI-5) provides all of the direct wraparound services³⁶ to the preschool children, Head Start expressed concerns of having a more limited role in the provision of services. This concern was driven by them having to meet stringent Head Start regulations, and the amount of reliance they had to place upon the LEA to meet the standards.

Head Start provides funding for four Head Start teachers and assistants for the county; however, since Head Start funded children reside throughout all the preschool classrooms, R2-5

³⁶ Wraparound services refer to additional services beyond classroom learning, including medical and dental screenings, family involvement programming, and socio-emotional screenings and services.

have to meet the health and screening requirements for all of the county children. The Head Start director expressed concern about this current situation because of a lack of direct accountability that they have in this district. Also, a recent change in procedure eliminated Head Start administrative staff's direct contact with Head Start teachers in the classrooms because the VPI-5 director felt that it was too overwhelming for the teachers to have too many people to answer to. The VPI-5 director seems to be very vocal about her likes and dislikes of the Head Start regulation (she used to work for Head Start) and is willing to express it to Head Start. They seem to have a very honest working relationship, although the Head Start director expresses lament over the lack of control over accountability issues; his main concern is having to show that all of the R2Head Start students in LEA-5 meet the stringent performance standards when R2Head Start staff is not performing the services directly. The VPI-5 director expressed that blending classrooms ensures equity and consistency for the school district children.

Based upon the data collected, R2-6's degree of interaction is assessed as collaboration. This program is center-based, meaning that all preschool classrooms are located in one building, separated from other elementary school classrooms. They have a signed MOU, share applicant information and discuss applicants for placement, but basically to ensure that children who will eventually go the same elementary school are in the same class so that they can begin building friendships. They also share information about and create joint professional development. They blend classrooms, and they hire together. Similar to VPI-5, they kept their classrooms separated, but in approximately 2007 they began to blend with Head Start. The VPI-6 director explains that it was a better approach to blend than having silos of children and educators who were not working together, but were essentially "doing the same thing."

Also in this district, R2Head Start staff does not provide direct wraparound services; they too are relying upon LEA staff to follow through and meet the requirements of the Head Start grant. The VPI-6 director stated that the beginning of blending classrooms for their school district stemmed from a conversation with the VPI-5 director, who convinced her to give it a try. She stated that blending took a full year to plan, and that they included the preschool teachers in the planning process. She too is very vocal about her likes and dislikes of Head Start regulation and questions the interpretation of a regulation by the R2Head Start administrative team at times. This R2-6 relationship also appears to be a very honest, vocal relationship, and the VPI-6 director expresses a great sense of collaboration between programs. However, the R2Head Start director does express remorse over the lack of control he feels about accountability issues for Head Start regulation; here, too, he raises concern of having to provide evidence to OHS that Head Start-funded children are meeting the required performance standards when Head Start staff does not provide the wraparound services directly. Similar to VPI-5, the VPI-6 director shared that blended Head Start and VPI classrooms allow them to provide equity and consistency for school district children.

Based upon the data collected, R2-7's degree of interaction is assessed as coordination. This program is school based. R2HS and VPI-7 have a signed MOU; share applicant information and discuss applicants for program placement; share information about and create joint profession development; share building space (in schools); and they hire together. They do not blend classrooms, but VPI-7 voluntarily follows most of the Head Start regulations for their VPI program. The VPI-7 director informed me that they considered blending classrooms with R2-Head Start, but they were concerned about the long-term repercussions of this option, such that if one or both grant funds were lost then they would have a problem with the programs and funds

being so heavily intertwined. She also discussed issues of Head Start regulation interpretation, and that the interpretation is based upon the person, not inherent in the regulation.

The VPI-7 director appreciates many aspects of the Head Start program, especially the comprehensive approach to preschool education that by working together has broadened the typical academically focused VPI method. The VPI-7 director did say that she is glad that the programs are together but separated so that they do not have to follow stringent regulations for all of their classrooms.

The VPI-7 director expresses concern over the amount of turnover that has occurred at the Head Start office over the past years and feels that it hinders their ability to effectively collaborate at times. She thinks that by working together they have increased access for community children and they have brought best practices to the education of young children.

Based upon the data collected, R2-8's degree of interaction is assessed as coordination. This district only has one Head Start classroom located in one of the public elementary schools that also houses a VPI classroom. They have a signed MOU, share applicant info for the one school where both HS and VPI classrooms are located. They do not have a joint application, but they do have a SPOE at the one school where both VPI and Head start reside. The VPI-8 director also stated that they do not discuss applicants for program placement since Head Start scores the applicants, the students are simply placed according to income eligibility and the rest are placed in VPI. They do share information about professional development, but she states that they do not create joint professional development together. They do share building space at one of the schools. She also states that they somewhat hire together because the school principal does have some say in the hiring of the Head Start teacher.

In this locality, the programs are run very separately, although they do share transportation. Interestingly, in an interview the R2Head Start director called this relationship a great cooperative relationship, and indeed compared to other dyads in Region 2, they are less coordinated and more cooperative; however, I still label them “coordination” compared to other dyads across cases. There seems to be a mutual appreciation of each other’s programs; albeit, the relationship is kept more at a distance compared to others within this case. However, this district is an active participant in the consortium, and they are committed to an ongoing relationship with R2Head Start. The R2Head Start director seems to really appreciate and admire this relationship, and the VPI-8 director does the same. The VPI-director informed me that they collaborate with R2Head Start for the idea exchange about preschool.

Based upon the data collected, R2-9’s degree of interaction is assessed as coordination. They are a center-based program with both Head Start and VPI classrooms. They have a signed MOU, and they share information about and discuss applicants for program placement. They share information about and create joint professional development. They share building space, and they hire together for the Head Start teachers but not for the VPI teachers. They attempted blending for a couple of years but separated it due to a fairly new Head Start regulation that mandated that the teaching assistants all have a Child Development Associate (CDA). The school district felt that this regulation was cost prohibitive and did not want to invest the money for the certification. This program voluntarily adheres to most of the more stringent standards of Head Start, even though they do not blend classrooms any longer. This VPI-9 administrator expressed that she had considered blended classrooms to be the “way to go,” and worked towards it, but simply could not justify the expense when the Head Start teaching assistant regulation changed.

The VPI-9 director actively participates in the consortium. She thinks that her school district is committed to an ongoing relationship with Head Start. When they were blending, this dyad was one of the relationships that the R2HS director referred to as being more or less a funding stream without direct wraparound service; however, now that has changed since they have split apart. The VPI-9 director discussed the sharing of resources and services as a reason to collaborate with one another.

Based upon the data collected, R2-10's degree of interaction is assessed as collaboration. This case is unique because the locality does not accept any VPI funds from the state, even though they are eligible for them, so collaboration that occurs is really between a preschool program funded by local school district dollars and R2Head Start. In this locality, they have a signed MOU; they have a joint application; and they share and discuss applicants for placement. They create joint professional development opportunities, although it mainly involves attending Head Start trainings. They only have two preschool classrooms in the county, and they both are blended. They do not hire together, even though Head Start provides the funding for one Head Start teacher and one teaching assistant.

This dyad presents one of two dyads in this case where the school system essentially adopts the Head Start program and simply adds local school or VPI funding to it to increase access (specifically to this case, they add local dollars only). They are not really concurrently running two preschool programs together, but just one program with multiple funding streams. I found it interesting that the VPI-10 director does all of the hiring for this school system, even though R2Head Start funds the teachers for one of their classrooms. They are committed to this relationship with Head Start because of the limited availability of other preschool options; although the preschool administrator indicates that they may be able to sustain with local funds.

Finally, it is unclear why they have refused the VPI dollars, although with a long history of locally funded preschool, they may have wished to limit additional regulations from the state.

Based upon the data collected, R2-11's degree of interaction is assessed as collaboration. They have a signed MOU. They have a joint application and SPOE, and they share information about and discuss applicants for funding decisions. They discuss and create joint professional development. They have a blended classroom (only one classroom in the county), and they hire together. Similar to VPI-11, this school district has more or less adopted the Head Start program and simply adds VPI dollars (and some local funds) to increase access.

VPI-11 feels strongly about continuing their relationship with R2Head Start because there are no other preschool options (private) in their county. Since they run the Head Start program, they too, are not really concurrently running two programs, but rather, are just managing funding streams for the Head Start program. There are still issues that have to be negotiated since Head Start is running within a school building, so as regulations change, they have to figure out how to handle those; however, it is not to the extent of running two programs simultaneously. For VPI-11, they exemplify a resource dependency model of interaction given the lack of other preschool opportunities in their county.

Memorandum of Understanding, Region 2

The MOUs for Region 2 are by far the most complex across all of the cases under study. Whereas in Region 1 requirement categories were sectioned off within one document, for Region 2, each requirement category has been pulled out and placed into individual working agreement documents. Each dyad has 10-12 working agreements in place based upon the type of collaborative relationship that occurs between the programs; thus, R2Head Start is managing, on

average, 70 working agreements. Also in comparing the MOUs for Region 1 and Region 2, the MOU documents share common threads, but little concrete characteristics with each other. For example, for the blended classroom situation in R1-3 compared to R2-11, whereas the former includes general information about working together and providing services, one of the working agreements for R2-11 spells out sixteen specific steps linked to R2Head Start monitoring the blended classroom. In other words, the working agreements for Region 2 are highly detailed and attempt to cover all possible interactions between programs.

While specific working agreements cover many of the interactions for Region 2, each dyad also has in place a general “collaborative agreement” document that spells out the type of collaboration that occurs between R2Head Start and the specific VPI (or local) program. The documents range in size and detail. For example, for R2-11, where VPI-11 has adopted the Head Start program, the collaborative agreement is a half page long and simply states that VPI-11 agrees to adopt the Head Start program. For R2-7, where the dyad engages in coordination degree of collaborative activity, a four-page document overviews having separate Head Start and VPI classrooms located in elementary schools throughout the county. The R2-7 MOU exemplifies the general nature of this region, by spelling out that VPI-7 agrees to adhere to the Head Start performance standards of health services, but also shows that what distinguishes R2-7 from the blended (collaboration degree) situations in Region 2 is that *only* the Head Start children are required to be input into the Head Start assessment data system.

Generally speaking, all informants in Case 2 refer to the MOU working agreements as highly meaningful documents that guide interactions for dyadic relationships. This consortium continually reviews these working agreements and modifies them as needed, for example, the change made to eligibility priority for four-year olds as discussed above. The VPI administrators

refer to their trust in R2Head Head to interpret Head Start performance standards and translate them into the working agreements; occasionally they have challenged the interpretation and asked to review together. However, all parties agree that these documents structure the relationship and are living documents that change, as consortium needs change.

Additional Region 2 Background Information

This case is by far the most complex of the cases studied, while there are only two “declared” degrees of collaborative activity, there are potentially 4-6 types of relationships in this case. For example, while four dyads are labeled as “collaboration,” there are distinctions among each worthy for discussion. First, as noted above, while the type of blending that occurs is similar between R2-5 and R2-6 there may be an important difference in that R2HS and VPI-5 share the same grantee, the school district. Also, the type of blending that occurs in R2-5 and R2-6 is very school-centered, with the school taking the lead in the collaboration process, and while adhering to the higher standards between the Head Start and VPI programs, the Head Start administration feels somewhat distanced from service provision and accountability.

Comparatively, the blending that occurs for R2-10 and R2-11 is very Head Start-centered; with Head Start taking the lead with the collaboration process, the school districts more or less supplement funds to the Head Start program that is running in their schools. Another important point is that there indeed could be some distinctions between R2-10 and R2-11 because whereas VPI-10 does not accept VPI funds in their school district, VPI-11 does.

Next, two of the dyads labeled as coordination (R2-7 and R2-9) have very similar type relationships as both districts share space with Head Start in buildings (either center- or school-based) where they also have VPI classrooms, and they run the programs concurrently. In both of

these districts, they more or less run the programs the same, with some notable exceptions to certain regulations that they do not follow due to fiscal constraints. Again, there may be an important distinction between them because R2-9 did blend HS and VPI for a couple of years before separating the programs.

Finally, R2-8 strikes me as another unique relationship, and while they are still labeled as “coordination,” they are by far the “least collaborated” in this region. Most likely this is because they only have one Head Start classroom in their county, so they run the two programs as distinct entities and do not follow many of the Head Start guidelines for their VPI program.

Why Collaborate?

In understanding why these school districts collaborate with the regional Head Start program, and why the degree of collaborative activity takes on the look that it does, resource dependency and exchange theories do seem to offer a general explanation for most of these dyadic relationships. Most of the VPI administrators stated that by working together they have increased access for community children to attend preschool, with VPI-11 asserting that without Head Start, they would not have a preschool program at all.

For the four districts that blend, and thus partake in collaboration degree, I see two distinct explanations. In the first two cases, the school-centered approach, I heard much discussion of providing equity of experience for all community children along with increasing access and opportunity. The thought is that preschoolers who will ultimately be coming into the school system should all have the same preschool experience to ensure school readiness. For the other two districts that also engage in collaboration, I heard more of a purely access, or resource dependency reason given that they both lack a critical mass of students in their respective

counties to legitimately run multiple programs in parallel. However, when asked a bit more, the VPI-10 director did discuss that she felt good about adopting the Head Start approach given the legitimacy of the program, so perhaps organizational legitimacy also offers some insight.

The programs that do not engage in collaboration report to happily work together without the need to blend programs. Two of the programs that engage in coordination both report resource-related reasons, such as increased access for children or additional resources for children (for example, since the classrooms are in the same building, VPI-9 reports that the Head Start Mental Health provider also provides services occasionally for the non-Head Start students). For R2-8, the other dyad labeled as coordination, they do not report increasing access as a main driver for collaboration, but does discuss sharing ideas and information as a reason to work together.

Given the history of interaction between R2HS and these VPI programs, I assert that institutional theory may also offer a lens for explanation for why these programs work together. For this region, Head Start and VPI programs began their relationship being managed by the R2Head Start director; then they were separated so that the VPIs began being managed by each LEA; then they began their preschool consortium that focuses on working together. For this region, it seems there is substantial normative pressure to collaborate because that is the way that public preschool has always been provided.

What is lacking in some of these explanations is what prompts some of the school districts to pursue a deeper degree of collaborative activity, collaboration, while others do not. For example, two of the school districts that engage in coordination and two of the schools that engage in collaboration all discuss access as a reason to work together, but what pushed two of these schools to pursue a deeper level of involvement, while the others did not? For one school

district, they did attempt blending, but then had to return to coordinating due to regulation changes that prompted fiscal constraints. For the other coordinated program, VPI-7's fear of untangling a highly blended program if grant moneys diminish seems to limit their willingness to blend. However, grant money diminishing is a real threat for the other collaborating programs, yet they leaped into blending. And an even more detailed comparison is that for one of the blended schools and one coordinated school, both of the VPI administrators were former Head Start employees; so whereas one was prompted to pursue blending, the other one was not and has happily maintained coordination degree of collaborative activity.

For two of the collaboration schools, I did hear discussion of equity of experience for preschoolers; so this perhaps does offer some additional insight to why they delved into a deeper level of involvement; however, as mentioned above, in two of the coordinated experiences, they run the VPI and Head Start programs parallel, but virtually the same, so they too attempt to offer their students the same experience.

Another thing I will note, which seems important for overall comparison between these cases, is that whereas in Region I, I heard a discussion of "stealing kids" as something going on between these programs, I did not hear of this issue arising at all in Region 2. It seems that their long-term relationship and smoothing out enrollment processes has eliminated a concern for filling slots correctly, and instead they focus on issues of regulation interpretation and tweaking enrollment processes (for example focusing on prioritizing 4 year olds over 3 year olds.)

Case 3: Rural East Shore, Region 3 Head Start and Two VPI Programs

Case 3 consists of one regional Head Start program that covers a two-county area in eastern Virginia, the Rural East Shore (RES) region. The grantee for the R3HS is a community action

agency. The two-county area includes two county LEAs. R3HS has thirteen Head Start preschool classrooms across the two counties, providing services for 236 Head Start children. VPI-12 has nine preschool classrooms, seven of which are funded by VPI funds and two are funded by local school district funds. VPI-13 has six classrooms, of which five are funded by VPI and one is locally funded.

The R2HS director reports a history of shallow interaction between the Head Start and VPI programs; in fact, she reports that they invited the Head Start State Collaboration Office director to come and talk to the area VPI programs about why the Head Start program is required to collaborate with other publicly funded preschools (based upon the requirements of the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization Act). The R3HS director informed me that she had contacted the school districts prior to this meeting, and that one of the school districts, VPI-12 was somewhat receptive to beginning some collaborative activities together, specifically focused on program enrollment issues. The other school district, VPI-13, has not generally been interested in a collaborative relationship. The interviews reveal that both sides report little collaborative interaction initiated from either side, and the interaction that does occur is mostly as follow up when a current Head Start student has been enrolled in the VPI program (the “stealing kids” issue).

Collaborative Activities

Based upon the data collected, R3-12’s degree of interaction is assessed as cooperation. The programs share applicant information and do sit down annually to review applicant lists to discuss placement. While discussing applicants is a more coordinated level of interaction, given the lack of many cooperative collaborative activities, I am labeling this dyad as cooperation. Interviews with both the R3HS and VPI-12 director reveal that the placement conversations

mostly revolve around ensuring that current Head Start students (who were enrolled as three-year olds) are not enrolled by the VPI program when they become four-year olds. There appears to be agreement among the directors that this activity is beneficial because they can maximize access to preschool for area children by making sure that Head Start enrolls the more economically disadvantaged, which is required by their statute, and VPI enrolls other at-risk children who may be of a higher income level. The VPI-12 director acknowledges the role of parental choice, and will not turn away specific parental requests to move a child from the Head Start program to the VPI program; however, she informed me that in recent years she has become more comfortable assuring parents who have a current Head Start-enrolled child, but inquire about VPI, that they are receiving a quality program at Head Start.

Table 5.4: Current and Former Collaborative Activities for Region 3, Rural East Shore

	R3-12		R3-13	
	Current	Former	Current	Former
Least Involved	No activity			
	MOU		X	
	Share applicant info	X		X
	Share professional development info	*		
	Share assessment Info			
	Discuss applicants for program placement	X		
	Single application			
	SPOE			
	Share building space			
	Create joint professional development			
Most Involved	Share transportation			
	Separate classrooms, but align standards			
	Hire together			
	Share home visits/FSS/FSW duties			
	Blend Classrooms			

* Indicates “Partial” participation in collaborative activity

The interview with the R3HS director took place during the school year prior to the school year when I conducted an interview with the VPI-12 director. Interestingly, this time gap proved to be meaningful because when I talked to R3HS director she indicated that a MOU was on file for this dyad; however, upon talking to the VPI-12 director, she indicated that she did not sign an MOU for the school year because upon further review, she felt it to be unnecessary. After a follow up inquiry, the R3HS director confirmed that they do not have an updated MOU on file for this dyad. The R3HS director mentioned that their former MOU also included that they will share information about professional development opportunities between programs, but she acknowledges that this has never really occurred. The VPI-12 director confirmed that there has been virtually no exchange of information about professional development opportunities.

One final observation about this dyad is that I noticed that while the interview with VPI-12 started off with her sharing some of the positives of the relationship with R3HS, it seemed that as I asked more questions about collaborative processes her view became more cynical about the lack of collaboration that goes on between the programs. On several occasions she noted that she felt that Head Start rarely contacted her or attempted to engage collaboration, and only contacted her when her VPI program had “stolen” a child; otherwise, she felt that she initiated contact. Both R3HS and VPI-12 mention increasing access as a main driver for collaboration between programs, but both sides share issues of Head Start’s concern over losing preschool students to VPI without working together.

R3-13 engages in such “shallow cooperation” that this relationship is labeled as “no relationship.” They exchange application information, including names and number of enrollees, but do not sit down together to discuss applicant placement. This dyad does not have an MOU on file regarding the relationship between the Head Start and the VPI program; interestingly, they

do have one on file for the Head Start Migrant Program, which is a separate program specific to the migrant working population. Another interesting discrepancy in types of collaboration that occurs between R3HS and this LEA is that they have a successful collaboration when it comes to working with the special needs population, and also have an MOU on file for this situation. This arrangement entails a special needs child who may attend Head Start in the morning, but then attends a public school in the afternoon. However, I should note that this dual-enrolled arrangement is between Head Start and the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program, and not with VPI-13.

I did learn of a recent situation that prompted some collaborative dialogue between the programs when a non-special needs child's parent approached both programs about having her child dual-enrolled in both the Head Start and VPI programs. This situation involved coordinating transportation for the child, including the Head Start bus delivering the child to the public school, and then public school buses taking the child home for the day. The VPI-13 director is new to this position, and the R3HS director expressed hope that between this and the installation of a new superintendent that some progress may be made towards a more collaborative relationship.

I do note that the VPI-13 director expressed little knowledge about who the Head Start director is and indicates that she has very minimal interaction with her; the VPI-13 director also expresses very little knowledge about the Head Start program. She does say that she has trust in R3Head Start's commitment to their goals (without actually trusting the person who runs Head Start). Another thing I observed is that many of the questions about collaborative processes that were asked of all informants made little sense to the VPI-13 director because they did not fit the relationship between R3HS and VPI-13 at all.

Memorandum of Understanding, Region 3

As mentioned above, currently, neither R3-12 nor R3-13 have an MOU on file; however, I was able to examine the older MOU for R3-12. This MOU is very simplistic, one page total, and simply lists the ten requirements as stated in Section 642(e)(5)(A) of the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007. Unlike Region 1 that also includes these ten requirements, but then includes implementation actions to complete these requirements, there are no additional details to explain how these requirements will be met by R3-12. Overall, compared to Region 1, and certainly compared to Region 2, this MOU is simplistic, lacking details, and appears to simply be a way to meet the mandate of the Head Start Reauthorization Act.

Why Collaborate

The degree of collaborative activity between R3Head Start and both VPI programs in this case is very shallow. For this particular case, the drive to collaborate, at a very minimal level, seems to be resource driven; that is, what I was mostly told is that the drive to interact and exchange applicant information is to reduce uncertainty about filling program slots and to maximize the odds of placing income eligible preschool students in Head Start, which frees up additional slots for VPI.

I did learn that the lack of communication and collaboration between R3HS and VPI-13 has resulted in several losses for the Head Start program. For example, R3HS had to close a classroom in this county because VPI-13 opened an additional locally funded universal preschool classroom. This classroom does not have the VPI requirements of serving an at-risk population, so this means that VPI-13 was perhaps now pulling from the same pool of children as Head Start to fill their other VPI classrooms. This was a sore spot with the R3HS director, who observed

that in reality probably all of the classrooms could be filled, but it would take working together to ensure that Head Start had access to the most economically disadvantaged, as their statute mandates.

Another lost opportunity is a grant that R3HS wished to pursue to place an additional classroom in this county (before the universal class was opened), but it required obtaining space from the school system. The R3HS director stated that they were going to allow the school district to hire the teacher (using Head Start funds), but they would be required to follow the Head Start Performance Standards. The school district refused. Thus, while on one hand limited resources (preschool applicants, funds) has driven a bit of connectivity between R3HS and VPI-12 to manage the efficient and effective placement of children into the respective preschool programs, on the other hand, limited preschool applicants (as resources) seems to place R3HS and VPI-13 into competition with each other for a similar pool of children.

While I think the stronger drive to collaborate is to protect program slots and funds, both R3HS and VPI-12 did indicate that another factor prompting collaboration is opening access to preschool for community children. Interestingly, the VPI-12 indicated that their VPI slots are filled; so working with Head Start does ensure that more children are served.

The R3HS director did indicate that she would like to have stronger collaboration with these VPI programs, and both VPI-12 and VPI-13 directors could see the benefits to collaboration, although none of the directors had a solid plan for how to make this happen nor did they express the inevitability of collaboration happening. What I noticed most about this case as compared to others, is how separated these programs really seem to be, and really appear to be not much more than parallel programs. They have very little working knowledge of each other's programs or regulations, and have little relationship to the point that it is hard for them to predict each other's

commitment. While the VPI-12 director states that she trusts her HS counterpart, the VPI-13 director does not think trust is relevant to the interaction that occurs between them. The R3HS director is hesitant about the trust she has for VPI-12, and agrees that trust has not developed with VPI-13.

Case 4: Small Central City, Region 4 Head Start and Two VPI Programs

This case consists of a regional Head Start, R4HS, which covers three areas, including two county school districts and a city school district located near the Small Central City (SCC) region in Virginia. For the purposes of this study, I will only be discussing one of the county LEAs, VPI-14, and the city LEA, VPI-15. The grantee for R4HS is a community action program. R4Head Start operates 25 classrooms and serves 452 children. VPI-14 has nine VPI classrooms in its county, and VPI-15 operates 18 VPI classrooms. The R4HS director is new to the position of director for this Head Start program, although she has worked for the program for over twenty years (as a family service worker). The R4HS director states that collaboration has occurred between the Head Start program and the school district for over 20 years, in particular working together for a kindergarten transition. More deliberative collaborative activities between these programs have occurred in more recent years, in particular with the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007. A very interesting finding for this case is that new opportunities for collaboration have begun between R4HS and VPI-15 due to an influx of new players on all sides of the relationships (new HS director, new VPI director, new Director of Instruction for the school district, and new school district Superintendent).

Collaborative Activities

Based upon the data collected, R4-14's degree of interaction is assessed as coordination. The programs have a signed MOU and share applicant information and professional development information. While these programs have participated in professional development opportunities, it primarily includes one program inviting the other program to take part in the opportunity. It does not involve both programs' directors or administrative team working together to create joint opportunities or together deciding the best professional opportunities to bring to their teachers. They share building space in several elementary schools in the district, where independent Head Start and VPI classrooms reside in the same school. For this county, the Head Start classrooms are located only in elementary schools, in five of the county schools. VPI classrooms reside in eight elementary schools in the county.

The programs discuss applicant placement, but only for the Head Start and VPI students who reside in the same elementary school buildings. In other words, while program placement depends upon specific eligibility for each program, geographic location is a priority, so students who live within the respective elementary school zone are considered to be appropriate candidates for the Head Start or VPI program for that specific elementary school. Also, there is not an overall preschool single point of entry for this county, but again, for students who would attend an elementary school that houses both HS and VPI programs, a single point does partially exist. However, this process is not without kinks because their enrollment dates do not completely align.

These programs also share transportation at some sites meaning that the Head start students ride the public school buses. To accommodate the rigorous Head Start regulation, Head Start provides seatbelt restraints and bus monitors for the buses that Head Start students ride.

Table 5.5: Current and Former Collaborative Activities for Region 4, Small Central City

	R4-14		R4-15	
	Current	Former	Current	Former
Least Involved	No activity			
	MOU	X	X	
	Share applicant info	X	X	
	Share professional development info	X	X	
	Share assessment Info	*	*	
	Discuss applicants for program placement	X		
	Single application	*	*	
	SPOE	*		
	Share building space	X		X
	Create joint professional development			
Most Involved	Share transportation	*		
	Separate classrooms, but align standards			
	Hire together			
	Share home visits/FSS/FSW duties			
	Blend Classrooms			

* Indicates partial participation in a collaborative activity

Based upon the data collected, R4-15’s degree of interaction is assessed as cooperation. The programs have a signed MOU and share applicant information and professional development information. They have a joint brochure that acts as an initial step in a separate application process; parents indicate their interest in applying to Head Start or VPI by checking a checkbox next to the respective program, or programs, and returning the brochure to one of the preschool centers. The brochure is then forwarded to the appropriate program. While current collaboration between R4HS and VPI-15 is fairly minimal, they have recently begun investigating additional collaborative activities they could potentially undertake. This development includes a couple of recent brainstorming sessions where they discussed ideas, as well as agreeing to visit other regions that have a more involved collaboration, such as Region 2 of this study.

An interesting feature of this case is the two extreme portraits I received about the relationship with the R4Head Start director. The VPI-14 director presented a picture of a Head Start director not as committed to the children or to a preschool program as she is, and questioned her willingness to “do what it takes” to get as many children enrolled. On the other hand, the VPI-15 director paints a completely different story of a Head Start director eager to work together with VPI to figure out new opportunities for collaboration. Interestingly, R4HS and VPI-14 had investigated collaborative opportunities, but they seemed to get stuck in figuring out how to blend/braid the different funding streams together. The VPI-14 director seemed to think that it would only be possible if the CAP would relinquish the Head Start funds to the school system to run, and she presented that they were unwilling to do this.

Memorandum of Understanding, Region 4

The two dyads understudy in this region, R4-14 and R4-15, both have MOUs on file with R4Head Start. These MOUs are somewhat similar to Region 1; they contain more details than the simplistic MOU of Region 3, but not nearly as many as Region 2. Unlike Region 1, however, both R4-14 and R4-15 have an individual MOU document. They range in length from 5 pages for the former and 4 pages for the latter; the difference being the inclusion of details about sharing building space and transportation for R4-14.

The categories included in both MOUs include recruitment, curriculum, transitional services, and other collaboration considerations. The other collaboration considerations category includes joint staff training and data tracking for both R-14 and R-15. For R-14, additional “other considerations” include transportation, operations, meals, and staffing. Under each category

several bulleted items contain specific actions taken by R4Head Start and/or the respective VPI program (LEA) to fulfill the requirement.

Similar to Region 1, some of the categories are followed more closely than others, or perhaps left purposely vague. For example, for the recruitment category for the R4-14 MOU discusses eligibility for each program as “based upon each program’s criteria,” but it is not spelled out very specifically about how program enrollment will be negotiated between the two programs. For R4-15, while some specific joint training opportunities are listed in the MOU, interviews reveal that in recent years these have not been acted upon (although as noted above, R4-15 is investing future collaborative possibilities, so this certainly could change.)

Why Collaborate?

Tapping into the underlying drive to collaborate for this group, a strong theme of increasing access for community children emerges. In particular, for R4-14, much emphasis has been placed upon working together on recruitment to eliminate VPI recruiting Head Start students who began the Head Start program as a three year old. Thus, resource dependency theory offers a lens to view this type of collaboration; in particular for R4Head Start, we see a strong motivator of making sure not to lose the valuable resource of program enrollees and reducing environmental uncertainty by working with VPI-14. Typically, this type of collaboration falls under a larger argument to increase access for all children by ensuring that Head start can fill their slots (since they are more restrictive).

Another resource that R4HS has been able to tap into by working with LEA-14 (and ultimately VPI-14) is obtaining classroom space, and in some cases, sharing public preschool transportation. However, this is not the only reason given for working together as R4HS sees a

positive to working with LEA-14 (VPI) since these children will become part of the school district, and they can make sure that the Head Start program is preparing children as the school district would like. From this standpoint, the organizational legitimacy of the public school system seems to be a compelling the R4HS director to want to work together.

Similarly, VPI-14 expressed an interest in continuing a relationship with R4HS to work on ensuring quality preschool for all community children, as she expressed some concerns over quality in some of the Head Start classrooms. In response, the R4HS director suggests another side of the story in that the VPI and school district personnel apply a negative stigma to the Head Start program and assume that the Head Start teachers are less qualified.

Finally, I also heard some discussion about “collaboration being required” (part of the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization Act). Thus, institutional theory may offer some insight that the requirements of the act coercively prompt collaboration in this region.

While R4-15 shared classroom space historically, they no longer do so, and have maintained a relatively minimal cooperative relationship. Interestingly, there seems to be renewed interest to figure out how to work together more collaboratively. Similar to above, the reason given for working together is to increase access for community children by ensuring that recruitment and enrollment are working effectively. Also, it sounds as if they are interested to investigate the possibility of blending or braiding funds to see if they could maximize funds and increase the number of children that both programs serve.

Case 5: Urban Tidewater, Region 5 Head Start and Two VPI Programs

This case is comprised of a regional Head Start program that oversees five city areas; however, for the purposes of this study, the focus is on the regional Head Start program and two

of the city LEAs that they cover. This region is by far the largest in this study, with the Head Start program comprising 90 classrooms and serving over 1,400 children. The Head Start program resides in a community action program. Of the five city areas that encompass this Head Start region, only four of them run VPI programs; the fifth runs a locally funded preschool program. VPI-16 operates 100 VPI classrooms and serves over 1,800 children. VPI-17 runs 19 classrooms, serving over 300 children.

An important feature of R5Head Start is that it recently, within three years ago, took over a defunded Head Start grant from another area community action program that was running three of the five now included city areas. Thus, several of these dyadic relationships are very new and overcoming some of the issues of former mismanagement of the Head Start program that caused the other community action programs to lose their grant. Interestingly, the two LEAs that agreed to participate in this research are both new to the Head Start region under study.

Collaborative Activities

R5-16 presented some research challenges. As mentioned above, the relationship is newer since the Head Start program under study took over the Head Start grant (and classrooms) in this city area within the last three years. However, relationships did exist between the prior Head Start grantee and VPI-16. While the R5Head Start director clearly discussed the newness of these relationships, it became apparent that the VPI-16 directors mainly reflected upon past relationships with the former Head Start administration, although they did discuss some aspects of the new personnel. This interview revealed an additional grant that LEA-16 had received to work on professional development for both VPI and Head Start teachers; however, the grant funding had just ended at the time of our interview.

Upon sending the R5Head Start director follow up questions to clarify a few specific theoretical questions, I learned that the relationship with VPI-16 shifted dramatically in the last year (2013-2014). A recent change in preschool administration personnel for the LEA has thwarted communication between R5Head Start and VPI-16, and while historically this dyad has a signed MOU, the Head Start director informed me that as of fall 2014, no MOU is on file. Thus, while early analysis of this dyad indicated that the degree of collaborative activity was coordination, more updated information about the current situation leads this dyad to be labeled as cooperation.

R5-17 is similar to R5-16 in that this dyadic relationship is very new since another grantee was running the Head Start program in this city. A very distinctive aspect of VPI-17 is that the LEA does not manage the VPI program, but contracts its management to a third party, a local YMCA. Thus, I interviewed the LEA school administrator in charge of the VPI program, but she was much more familiar with collaboration with the YMCA, and not as familiar with the Head Start personnel, not only due to the recent change, but also due to being removed from the firsthand management of the VPI program.³⁷ This dyad took a different turn than R5-16; more recent information from the Head Start revealed that relationships for R5-17 have improved. Based upon information gathered from both Head Start and VPI administrators, this dyad partakes in cooperation degree of collaborative activity.

³⁷ Several attempts were made to interview the YMCA director; however, this person did not participate in the research.

Table 5.6: Current and Former Collaborative Activities for Region 5, Urban Tidewater

	R5-16 ³⁸		R5-17	
	Current	Former	Current	Former
Least Involved	No activity			
	MOU	X	X	X
	Share applicant info	X	X	X
	Share professional development info	X	X	X
	Share assessment Info	X	X	
	Discuss applicants for program placement			
	Single application			
	SPOE			
	Share building space	*		*
	Create joint professional development	X	X	
Most Involved	Share transportation			
	Separate classrooms, but align standards			
	Hire together			
	Share home visits/FSS/FSW duties			
	Blend Classrooms			

* Indicates partial participation in this collaborative activity.

Memorandum of Understanding, Region 5

I was unable to examine the MOUs for this region for the reasons stated above.

Why Collaborate?

Similar themes emerged during conversations with administrators from Region 5 about why collaboration occurs between programs. The strongest discussion revolved around these children

³⁸ Information for this dyad reflected two very different relationships, with earlier information showing a more coordinated connected dyad, and more recent up-to-date information reflecting a dramatic change in the collaborative relationships. The double X attempt to reflect the change during the course of this research; that is, within the course of the this research, activities were identified as both “current” and then became “former.”

becoming part of their respective LEAs when they progressed into elementary school, so establishing a relationship and ensuring quality for all preschool programs was presented as paramount. Also, all interviewees discussed the ease of transition from Head Start to elementary school by working with the LEAs and VPI programs. The R5Head Start administrator discussed tapping into school resources to help improve overall Head Start program quality, including computer-training resources that the school has. Thus, from this standpoint a more traditional resource dependency argument is supported. VPI-16 had participated in a grant that provided professional development opportunities for both VPI and Head Start teachers; thus showing their commitment to quality for all preschool children in their school district; however, recently a change in personnel has brought about a stark contrast to working together, so the future for this type of collaboration is unclear.

This case is a large populous area with an abundance of needy preschool children; originally, the dyads did not present much discussion about the children as “program resources” that had to be carefully monitored to ensure filling program slots to retain program funding. After following up with the Head Start director a year later, she discussed the change in the relationship and how the little contact and cooperation with VPI-16 resulted in R5Head Start having to enroll some home-based program children in order to fill all the slots for one Head Start program center. This particular city has a high poverty rate and she has heard the school superintendent discuss long preschool waiting lists, so from her viewpoint, lack of potential eligible preschoolers is not the cause of their challenges in reaching enrollment figures. Thus, although this case is substantially different from others studied in being a heavily populated area, it was not immune from some of the issues faced by other areas of working together to minimize uncertainty to ensure filling program slots.

One final reason that prompted these programs to begin working together was coercive forces as presented in institutional theory. The R5 Head Start director, who had worked with the Head Start program for many years before becoming the director, observed little collaboration between Head Start and the VPI programs before she took over in the mid-2000s. Given her active participation in statewide conferences, she was very aware of the oncoming changes in 2007 with the Head Start Reauthorization Act, which included Head Start working with publicly funded preschools. Anticipating these changes, she began building relationships with area VPI administrators.

Discussion

The five regions under study and the sixteen³⁹ dyads that nest within them present a full range of collaborative relationships from the least to the most connected. In every dyad, some interaction occurs between the Head Start and the VPI programs, but the degree of involvement ranges from little knowledge about the respective personnel to deep professional relationships that have spanned over fifteen years. To summarize, one dyad under study is labeled as no relationship, four dyads are labeled cooperation, six dyads are labeled coordination, and five are labeled as collaboration. This study purposes to uncover how, why, and to what extent these collaborative relationships exist as they do, and this narrative description begins to unravel part of the puzzle.

By far, the overwhelming reason expressed by all dyads for participating in any degree of collaborative relationship is linked to issues of increasing access to preschool for community

³⁹ While information about seventeen dyads was collected regarding the type of collaborative activities that the pair undertook, given the lack of additional information from VPI-4 about collaboration with R1Head Start, R1-4 has been removed from additional analyses.

children. Informants generally express that by working together, Head Start and VPI can maximize enrollment for community children. Reaching this goal comes about in different forms for the dyads, either by streamlining enrollment processes by exchanging applicant information or having a single application; sitting together to discuss program placements (making sure that Head Start receives the most economically disadvantaged and freeing up more slots for VPI enrollees); or by combining resources and creating blended classrooms that may serve more children than they could serve alone. In two dyads in this study, Head Start and VPI (or LEA) working together is clearly the only way to provide access to preschool in their counties, as in both localities a sparse population and minimal preschool-aged children limit funds from any one program to justify preschool investment.

While seemingly altruistic, the “access” argument has a program self-interested aspect to it as well. In four dyads discussion of access includes creating more opportunities for all community children, but it also includes protecting access to their specific programs. In particular four Head Start programs express issues of losing Head Start-enrolled children to VPI programs, so working together and establishing enrollment processes helped to safeguard their program slots. As discussed above, the “stealing” kids phenomenon is not solely located in the less populated regions where a population of preschool children is limited, as it occurs in both less populated as well as more populated areas. Having a large population of children at hand does not guarantee filling program slots; in many cases, lack of communication between Head Start and VPI programs and/or lack of referrals to other program results in decreased program enrollment.

Other reasons given to explain why programs collaborate also held this dual-sided characteristic of being collaborative (community) focused or program focused (see Table 5.7).

For example, working together to create a quality preschool experience for community children is presented at times as a quest for equity to assure that all children received a high-quality experience, while other times presented as a way to ensure that the “other” program’s quality is what it should be. In other words, one side of the quality argument presents programs relinquishing control to establish experiential equity for children, which involves combining different elements of both Head Start and VPI programs. The other side of the quality argument shows programs exerting control by expressing concern over quality issues with the other (whether Head Start or VPI) program; an underlying suggestion that their “way of doing preschool” is the correct way compared to the “other,” lesser quality approach.

A somewhat related argument to building quality preschool is Head Start and VPI working together so that all community children and their families have an opportunity to build relationships with their local elementary school, keeping in mind that the VPI programs tend to be located in and operated by the local school district. While many of the Head Start and VPI administrators express the importance of children becoming familiarized with their future elementary schools, at times, the VPI administrators express an almost “ownership” aspect of community children by arguing that a reason for them to work with Head Start is because ultimately these children are “their” children. Again, issues of control appear even when discussing overall community-wide goals.

Table 5.7. Dual-Focused Thematic Reasons for Collaboration Between Head Start and VPI

	Program-Focused	Collaborative (or Community)-Focused
<i>Increasing Access to Preschool</i>	Ensuring access to specific preschool program is not reduced due to other program “stealing” students.	Ensuring preschool access for all community children is maximized by creating effective enrollment and sharing resources.
<i>Working on Preschool Quality</i>	Ensuring other program’s quality is what is <i>should</i> be.	Ensuring all community children receive equitable quality preschool.
<i>Sharing Resources</i>	Ensuring a specific program has access to a resource that the other program has, such as materials or teacher training.	Ensuring that all community children receive equitable preschool resources.
<i>Developing Relationships with Local Elementary School</i>	Ensuring that school districts (VPI programs) have contact with all (including Head Start) “their” children.	Ensuring that all community children have an opportunity to build relationships with local elementary schools.
<i>Sharing Ideas and Experiences about Preschool</i>	Ensuring that each program is influencing the other with their ways of doing preschool.	Ensuring that the best ideas from each program come together to build a strong preschool for community children.
<i>Tapping into Organizational Legitimacy of the Other Program</i>	Ensuring that Head Start programs let community families know they work with school districts (VPI) to build organizational legitimacy, or vice versa.	Ensuring that community families know about the strengths, or organizational legitimacy, of both programs.

While not mentioned as often as other reasons, sharing resources was another reason given for Head Start and VPI working together. In many regions, the Head Start classrooms operate in school district owned space, whether located in a preschool center or elementary school. In some localities, the school district provides bus transportation for Head Start students. Although not shrouded in issues of control as much as other reasons, some tension does exist between focusing on program-related reasons for sharing resources compared to collaborative-reasons. For

example, some programs express working together to gain needed program resources for themselves, while others express working together to ensure equal access to resources for all community children.

Similar to sharing resources, exchanging ideas and sharing experiences about preschool is another reason mentioned by some informants for working together. In particular, some Head Start administrators discuss adjusting their preschool programs based upon feedback from the schools and VPI programs about having children sit more and work more on academic worksheets. Some VPI administrators also discuss the influence of Head Start program features on them, including adding family service workers and parent programming based upon conversations with their Head Start counterparts. Similar to the discussion of quality preschool, sharing ideas also exhibits similar tensions between being collaborative-focused or program-focused in nature. At times, informants discuss idea exchange as a means to expand and improve both programs for community children, while other times they discuss idea exchange as a way to influence a program-specific style of preschool on the other program.

Finally, another reason for program collaboration that was mentioned by some informants is tapping into the legitimacy of the other program to promote their own legitimacy. For example, several VPI informants mentioned the longevity of Head Start and their premiere approach to parent and child relationships as a reason to work together. From the Head Start perspective, many of the Head Start directors recognize that by working with VPI they are accessing the legitimacy of the public school system. For example, several Head Start directors discuss the importance of parents knowing that they work with the school system, and the VPI program, so that parents realize that Head Start is not existing in a vacuum.

Many of these reasons discussed by Head Start and VPI administrators nest within the insight offered by resource dependency and exchange theories. In particular, sharing program resources, exchanging ideas about preschool, and increasing preschool access are classic arguments about why collaboration occurs. For Head Start or VPI programs that lack funds to secure all of their desired, or in some cases, necessary resources for running a preschool program, they can expand the resources they have to offer community children by pooling limited resources and working together. It also provides a boost to what an individual program can offer, which in turn increases the perceived quality of the individual program. Exchanging ideas about preschool also fits under the classic exchange theory approach as programs develop relationships to learn about methods different than their own.

Increasing access, by far the most discussed reason for Head Start and VPI working together, turns out to represent many of the competing aspects of resource dependency theory as suspected. For most of the cases studied, collaborating is an act of both stewardship and self preservation as Head Start and VPI administrators work together to increase access overall for community children while simultaneously safeguarding their own enrollment numbers. From this standpoint, the increasing access argument captures both sides of collaboration for these programs: the ability to maximize scarce resources and create additional opportunities for more children to attend preschool and the ability to reduce uncertainty of enrollment by communicating effectively and creating processes to streamline and safeguard program enrollment.

What is unanswered by resource dependency and exchange theories is when similar arguments are made about why these programs collaborate, why does *how* they collaborate vary to such an extent? In some localities, the drive to increase access, whether simply to safeguard

program enrollment numbers or to ensure the maximum amount of preschool participants for the community, pushes localities to exchange applicant information or sit down to discuss program placements. In other localities, the drive to increase access prompts administrators to blend their resources to the point that the program boundaries between Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative are unclear, not only to parents, but also often to the preschool teachers who work for these programs.

While I observed this tension between working together to increase access from either collaborative or program-focused perspectives, deeper analysis of informants' discussion across cases reveals some differences worthy for consideration in unraveling the mystery of different degrees of collaborative activity. First, in the most involved case in this study, Region 2, where four of the seven dyads interact at the "collaboration" degree of collaborative activity, and the other three are labeled as "coordination," not one informant discussed any issues of the "stealing kids" phenomenon or concerns that kids who should be enrolled in Head Start were being enrolled in VPI. Thus for informants in this case, when mentioning "increasing access" for preschool children, they did so solely mentioning the ability to increase the number of total community children to have access to preschool, and did not also discuss the importance of working together to safeguard individual program enrollment. Conversely, in the other four regions, there was at least some mention by the Head Start directors or some of the VPI administrators about issues of retaining Head Start children in the Head Start program and not being enrolled in the VPI program.

Not all of the dyadic relationships within a region face the stealing kids phenomenon, but those that do land on two ends of a spectrum. On one hand, programmatic relationships between Head Start and VPI are so separated that while issues of stealing kids emerged, the programs

have not yet reached an agreement or they simply have not considered working together to address the issue. On the other hand, in some dyads, administrators develop new processes to deal with enrollment issues, or the Head Start or VPI engage in collaboration by blending their program resources, which limits enrollment tension. Table 5.8 displays the relationship between the “stealing kids” phenomenon by the degree of collaborative activity, grouping collaboration and coordination and comparing them to those dyads labeled as cooperation and no relationship.

Table 5.8. “Stealing Kids” Phenomenon by Degree of Collaborative Activity

	Collaboration/Coordination	Cooperation/No Relationship
Discuss “Steal Kids”	3 (27%)	3 (60%)
Do not Discuss “Steal Kids”	8 (73%)	2 (40%)
Total Dyads	11 (100%)	5 (100%)

Table 5.8 shows that 60 percent of dyads labeled as cooperation or no relationship report some issues of “stealing kids,” meaning that informants discuss some issues of losing program enrollees to the other program. Conversely, only 27 percent of those labeled as collaboration or coordination also report the stealing kids issue. We see the reverse trend for those dyads not discussing any issues of stealing kids, with 73 percent of dyads labeled as collaboration or coordination *not* discussing any preschool enrollees being stolen by the other program, compared to only 40 percent of those dyads labeled as cooperation or no relationship. While these numbers suggest an interesting connection between how involved dyads are with one another and issues of safeguarding program enrollment, a true causal relationship cannot be stated. It is unclear if programs develop more involved collaborative activities to address these concerns or if a byproduct of interacting at a greater degree of collaborative activity includes a reduction in

safeguarding program enrollment. What is clear is that by working together at a higher degree of collaboration, programs tend to focus on more collaborative-focused goals of increasing access compared to focusing on their own program enrollment.

Interview information offers much insight into why Head Start and VPI administrators choose to engage collaboration and highlights some variation in those dyads that are more involved than others, but the MOUs also offer some understanding. When investigating the MOUs for four of the five cases, we see support for the variations in degree of collaborative activity mirrored in the complexity and specificity of the MOU documents. For the cases where MOUs are examined, the least involved case, Region 3, where one dyad is labeled cooperation and the other dyad as “no relationship,” we find the most simplistic MOU that recites the necessary mandates as laid out in the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007, but nothing more. Conversely, for Region 2, the most involved case in this study, examination reveals highly specified MOUs covering all types of interactions and totaling over 70 documents for this one region. Regions 1 and 4 fall between the extremes and reflect this in their MOUs that do not share the complexity of Region 2, nor the complete lack of details of Region 3. Similar to the discussion above, while a true causal relationship cannot be stated, the correlation between MOU complexity and degree of collaborative involvement is clear; it seems that the structure of the formal documents does come to represent what goes on between these dyads.

Features of the institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) also offer insight to why programs collaborate at different degrees of collaborative activity. While most cases (in particular Head Start administrators) discuss the coercive forces of the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization Act or the mandates of the VPI grant that require public preschool collaboration, it is only in those cases where discussion also includes aspects of normative or mimetic forces

where deeper degrees of collaborative activity occur. For example, in Region 1, where all informants indicate that the R1Head Start director was a true boundary spanner who forged relationships with all of the VPI administrators when little to no relationships existed before, the R1Head Start director had plenty of prior experience with public preschool collaboration in the state where she worked before moving to Virginia. Seeing how collaboration worked in her prior work experience seemed to compel her to mimic these relationships in her current one. These findings also support other research that suggests that a manager's past experience with collaboration predicts future experience (Gazley, 2010). Interestingly, for Region 1, once the R1Head Start director forged these collaborative opportunities, many of VPI administrators expressed a normative expectation that collaboration was what was expected from them.

In Region 2, the most involved case in this study, long-term collaborative relationships between Head Start and the LEAs that started from the onset of accepting VPI grant dollars created an environment where public preschool collaboration was the norm. For this particular case, a transitive relationship (Granovetter, 1973, 1983) between R2Head Start and VPI-5 both being connected to LEA-5 as the grantee, created early opportunities for program collaboration that became the normative expectation in this region. In fact, at one point R2Head Start actively managed all VPI programs in the region along with running Head Start, but even after the single-managed program was dismantled, a strong sense of public preschool collaboration emerged in the development of the regional preschool consortium that still exists today. There is a clear normative expectation among the public preschool administrators in this region that collaboration between Head Start and VPI is the best approach, although even with this expectation we still find some degree of variation between coordination or collaboration degrees of collaborative activity. Table 5.9 displays institutional forces by degree of collaborative

activity with an “X” indicating that for the specific collaborative activity degree, at least one (or in many cases more) Head Start or VPI administrator mentioned or referred to the specific type of force in the interview.

Table 5.9. Type of Institutional Force by Degree of Collaborative Activity

	Coercive Forces <i>We have to collaborate</i>	Mimetic Forces <i>We know how to collaborate based upon past experience</i>	Normative Forces <i>We should collaborate</i>
No Relationship	X		
Cooperation	X		*
Coordination	X	X	X
Collaboration	X	X	X

* In two of the cases where new collaborative relationships are unfolding, the dyads currently are labeled as “cooperation,” but a sense of “we should be doing this” is propelling investigation to additional collaborative activities that may result in a more involved degree of collaborative activity.

Conclusion

This first level analysis of the five cases and sixteen dyads nested within them reveals much about an understanding of public-public program collaboration (PPPC) between Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative. Information gathered during interviews supports tenets from resource dependency theory and exchange theories that programs engage to maximize resources, reduce uncertainty, tap into organizational legitimacy, and exchange ideas about preschool. For most informants, the ultimate goal in working together is to increase access to preschool for community children, but whether this goal is an act of stewardship or self-preservation varies by case. Moreover, some initial analysis suggests that more involved collaborators tend to focus more on community-focused access, compared to lesser-involved collaborators who tend to focus on more program-focused access issues.

While resource dependency and exchange theories help explicate why these program administrators opt to engage collaboration, they offer little to our understanding of why the degree of collaboration activity varies among dyads, even when most administrators offer very similar explanations to *why* they choose to interact and collaborate with each other. The variation in collaborative involvement in the cases is also reflected in the MOUs between the Head Start and VPI programs, with the most involved case having a highly complex and specific MOU compared to the least involved case, where only one dyad has an MOU, albeit now invalid, that is very simplistic and lacking much detail. Formal structural elements of collaboration (Agranoff and McGuire, 2003; Thomson and Perry, 2006; Thomson et al., 2007) may do much to fortify more involved degrees of collaborative activity; at a minimum, they certainly represent what is going on between programs in these cases.

Different institutional forces, coercive, mimetic, and normative (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), also begin to offer some understanding as to why variation in degree of collaborative activity may occur. While most of the informants, particularly the Head Start administrators, refer to the coercive forces of the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 as a prime motivator for some degree of collaboration between public preschool programs, it is only in those regions where administrators either had past experience with collaboration or felt strong normative pressures to initiate and sustain collaboration where more involved degrees occur. Learning how to “do” collaboration from a prior experience and mimicking this approach, or adhering to long-term pressures of collaboration as the “right way” to do preschool does much to prompt deeper involvement between programs.

The insights offered from institutional theory, while beginning to offer an understanding of why degree of collaboration may vary, still fall short. Even within cases with strong mimetic or

normative pressures, some degree of variation occurs, with some dyads undertaking the most involved degree of activity, collaboration, while others continue on with the coordination degree. Moreover, *how* these different dyads collaborate, the processes that underscore collaboration, could pinpoint more why some dyads interact very minimally, while others undertake deep involvement and blend the programs to the point that they lack distinction. Finally, how to initiate and manage these collaborative processes could offer insight to achieving a desired degree of involvement, or highlight what is missing from dyadic collaboration when involvement falls short of a desired level. The next chapters address these gaps.

CHAPTER 6

QUALITATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: COLLABORATIVE PROCESS DIMENSIONS AND COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Introduction

After developing a detailed understanding of the dyadic relationships within and between cases, I now move to examining whether patterns exist between underlying collaborative process dimensions and the degree of collaborative activity undertaken by the dyad. To conduct this examination, I use Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), a technique that uses Boolean minimization processes to link causal conditions to an outcome. For this analysis, the degree of collaborative activity is considered the outcome and the collaborative process dimensions are examined as potential causal conditions.

QCA is well suited for multiple case studies where the researcher is attempting to assess within case as well as cross-case comparisons. It provides an analytical tool to examine small-n studies and allows researchers to consider the case as a whole, rather than simply assuming an outcome as a sum of factors (Ragin, 1987). Moreover it allows for examination of equifinality, or when different combinations of conditions can lead to the same outcome (Rhioux and Ragin, 2009). Finally, the technique is useful for theory building given its ability to handle causal complexity and its focus on comparing subset relationships between conditions and an outcome.

QCA offers researchers an analysis that combines both qualitative richness and quantitative rigor; however, it is necessary to translate the qualitative themes and codes into quantifiable measures that can ultimately be calibrated into the presence or absence of the conditions and outcome. While translating qualitative codes into operational condition thresholds proved to be challenging overall, I decided against using the QCA technique as a way to investigate how

collaborative management techniques also affect the degree of collaborative activity. Three reasons prompted this decision.

First, while several attempts have been made by scholars to better define the collaborative management techniques of activating, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing (Keast and Hampton, 2007; McGuire and Agranoff, 2014), the nature of asking administrators “how” they forged relationships, established trust, and negotiated roles and coordination did not lend itself well to the needed operationalization of presence or absence of each technique for QCA. Secondly, adding the management techniques into an overall model with the collaborative process dimensions to investigate collaborative activities creates additional issues of limited diversity. In other words, with only 16 dyads in the model, reducing nine conditions to solution terms can lead to many issues of logical remainders, or potential patterns of causal recipes for which there are no empirical observations (Rihoux and Ragin, 2009; Schneider and Wagemann, 2010).

Finally, the purpose of conducting in depth interviews with administrators to ask them *how* they create, manage, and sustain collaborative process dimensions and activities is to tap similarities and differences in these approaches based upon how little or much involved the dyadic partners are. Conducting the QCA provides an excellent way to identify similarities and differences in collaborative process dimensions for dyads at varying degrees of collaborative activity. Then, closely parsing the interview texts for a description of the collaborative management techniques offers detailed insight to why collaboration takes on various forms for these dyadic partnerships. Chapter Seven addresses the collaborative management techniques in detail.

I use fsQCA software (Ragin, Dress, and Davey, 2006) to perform one of the types of QCA analysis, a crisp-set analysis. For crisp set, conditions and the outcome are dichotomized into “presence” or “absence” to conform to a “0” or “1” coding necessary for Boolean logic. I did investigate using fuzzy-set QCA, which is a technique that uses similar minimization logic, but the conditions and outcome are based upon a continuum. Given how the degree of collaborative activities outcome is set up as a continuum, this study seemed well suited for a fuzzy-set analysis. However upon running several models, the crisp set yielded identical results as the fuzzy-set, and given that the crisp set is a simpler technique to understand and explain, I chose to use crisp set QCA.

QCA Measures

In Chapter Four, I discuss how collaborative activities and dimensions were tapped by specific questions asked of all informants. In Chapter Five, while describing the detail narratives of the cases, I also identify the degree of collaborative activity for each dyad. These operational definitions provide the basis for developing the QCA measures for the outcome and conditions for the sixteen dyadic partnerships in this study.

For the original collaborative activities outcome variable⁴⁰ (see Table 6.1), I determined that dyads would be broken into two categories, those with more involved collaborative activities and those with minimal to no collaborative activities. Those dyads that partake in coordinating or collaborating degrees of collaborative activity are labeled as “strong collaborative activities” and coded as “1.” Cooperating and no relationship dyads are coded as “not strong collaborative

⁴⁰ I ran several QCAs to assess differences in collaborative process conditions by degree of collaborative activity that required adjusting the coding of the outcome variable. These changes are discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

activities” and coded as “0.” Eleven dyads comprise the “strong collaborative activities,” and five comprise “not strong collaborative activities” (see Table 6.2).

To translate each collaborative process dimension to a QCA condition was a multi-step endeavor. The process dimensions are complex concepts tapped by multiple indicators (questions), thus operationalizing them in some ways is similar to scale creation for quantitative studies. Most dimensions had a minimum of two questions that tapped the dimension; some had more. The QCA analysis was conducted after all transcribing and thematic coding had taken place; therefore my familiarity with the cases had more fully developed in comparison to writing the interview questions pre-study to tap Thomson et al.’s (2007) collaborative process dimensions of governance, administration, norms, mutuality, and organizational autonomy. Based upon my knowledge, I added two additional indicators, one for the autonomy dimension and one for the norms dimension.

For the organizational autonomy dimension, in addition to asking questions about tension between balancing both program and collaborative goals (VPI and/or Head Start goals with the other respective program goals) and if and how program goals were affected by the other program, I also added the “stealing kids” phenomenon as an indicator of organizational autonomy.⁴¹ In other words, I reasoned that the concern raised by many administrators about kids being “stolen” from one program and placed in another is a concern about preserving individual program enrollment and reflects a focus on organizational concerns as raised by Thomson et al. (2007) with the autonomy dimension. All dyads were asked questions about enrollment processes and if they discussed issues of students being stolen from one program and placed in

⁴¹ The “stealing kids” phenomenon is discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

the other, they were identified as having the “stealing kids issue.” This consideration was added to the other two indicators that make up the autonomy dimension scale.

For the norms dimension, which taps trust and commitment to each other, I argue that positive discussion or comments about the dyadic relationship also reflects the normative dimension. In other words, often, without prompting, when asked about trust and commitment to each other, informants would go on to discuss the relationship with their administrative counterparts. They would often add comments such as “we have a great relationship,” or they would provide examples of trust between partners by offering how their “relationship” could tackle a challenging issue based upon the deep connection between partners. Other dyads lacked this type of discussion and often shared that they had a minimal relationship with their counterpart. As a consequence, I added an indicator for the norms dimension that reflected the degree of connectedness, or how informants referred to the relationship with their administrative counterpart. It seemed part of, but distinct from, specific questions about trust and commitment, but it also reflected the normative dimension that Thomson et al. (2007) attempted to capture.

While the original coding process involved pulling out segments of text that could be assigned to the structural and emergent themes, the process of operationalizing each collaborative dimension as a QCA condition involved a judgment call on whether each dyad exhibited the respective indicator or not. Some were by design easier than others; for example, it was much easier to affirm whether dyads had participated in brainstorming sessions, and thus showed one indicator of the governance dimension, compared to interpreting whether dyads agreed that that they faced challenges balancing both program and collaborative goals as an indicator of organizational autonomy. I found this to be so because while some extremely connected dyads expressed balancing goals as challenging, they would go on to say that the

challenges were not insurmountable, and with dialogue usually worked out. Conversely, some of the least connected dyads suggested that balancing both program goals was not challenging at all because their lack of connectedness to the other program did not provide a platform for which their goals intermingled much. Thus, while those with the most “balancing challenges” may have been intended to reflect higher organizational autonomy, I did not find this to always be the case. This finding is perhaps not surprising given Thomson et al.’s (2007) discussion that autonomy remains a challenging dimension to operationalize. This is where my familiarity with the cases, as advised by best practice guides to QCA (Rihoux and Ragin, 2009; Schneider and Wagemann, 2010), is useful, because with contextual understanding, I could assign a dyad to an accurate level of organizational autonomy.

Table 6.1. Collaboration Process Dimensions and Collaborative Activities: QCA Condition Thresholds

Condition or Outcome	Indicators	Decision Logic	Indicator Attributes	QCA Condition Threshold
Governance	1. Take Serious as Partners?	If yes to all 4, Governance =	Strong	1
	2. Brainstorm Together?	If yes to 3, Governance =	Medium-Strong	1
	3. Formal Aspects?	If yes to 2, Governance =	Medium-Weak	0
	4. Informal Aspects?	If yes to 1 or less, Governance =	Weak	0
Administration	1. Have clearly defined roles and responsibilities?	If yes to all 3, Administration =	Strong	1
	2. Have clear coordination/coordinator of efforts?	If yes to 2, Administration =	Medium-Strong	1
	3. Agree on goals?	If yes to 1, Administration =	Medium-Weak	0
		If yes to 0, Administration =	Weak	0
Norms	1. Trust your HS or VPI counterpart?	Deep relationship connectedness and yes to 1 & 2, Norms =	Strong	1
	2. Are you committed/or is partner committed to collaboration?	Deep relationship connectedness and yes to 1 OR 2, Norms =	Medium-Strong	1
	3. Relationship connectedness	Weak relationship connectedness and yes to 1 OR 2, Norms =	Medium-Weak	0
		Weak relationship connectedness and yes to 0, Norms=	Weak	0
Mutuality	1. Achieve goals better by working together?	If yes to 2, Mutuality =	Strong	1
	2. Other program appreciates what your program brings to collaboration?	If yes to 1, Mutuality =	Medium	0
		If yes to 0, Mutuality =	Weak	0

Table 6.1. Collaboration Process Dimensions and Collaborative Activities: QCA Condition Thresholds

Condition or Outcome	Indicators	Decision Logic	Indicator Attributes	QCA Condition Threshold
Autonomy	1. Challenging to balance both organizational and collaborative goals? Tension between goals?	Steal Kids Issue and yes to 0, Autonomy =	Strong	1
	2. Does working together affect your program's goals?	Steal Kids Issue and yes to 1 OR 2, Autonomy =	Medium-Strong	1
	3. Discussion of "steal kids" phenomenon.	Steal Kids Issue OR yes to 1 and/or 2, Autonomy =	Medium-Weak	0
		No Steal Kids Issue and no to 1 and yes to 2, Autonomy =	Weak	0
Collaborative Activities	See Chapter 5 for breakdown of activities from lesser involved to more involved.	Collaboration =	Strong collaborative Activity	1
		Coordination =	Strong collaborative activity	1
		Cooperation =	Not strong collaborative activity	0
		No Relationship =	Not strong collaborative activity	0

Once I developed all of the indicators that reflected the collaborative process dimensions, I next had to develop the threshold by which a dyad either had “presence” of the dimension, or condition, or the “absence” of the condition. For example, for governance, four indicators tapped this dimension including taking each other serious as partners, brainstorming with each other, and the existence of formal (regular set meetings) as well as informal aspects (telephone calls or email exchanges). I denoted a dyad as having “strong” governance if they exhibited all four indicators, “medium-strong” if they exhibited three indicators, “medium-weak” if they exhibited two indicators, and “weak” if they exhibited one or less indicator. Table 6.1 depicts all of the conditions and outcome and the decision logic that connects to establishing the final thresholds for each.

After this step, the next was to create the threshold by which a dyad was assigned as having strong governance “present” versus “absent.” For this particular dimension, I assigned dyads that exhibited “strong” or “medium-strong” governance as having strong governance “present”; those falling below this were deemed as “absent.” In general, the cutoff line to assign a dimension as “present” was between medium strong and medium weak for the four dimensions that included four indicators (governance, administration, organizational autonomy, and norms). With mutuality having three indicators, the cutoff point was assigned between strong and medium for that dimension.

The reader should note that while “stronger” or “presence” of governance, administration, norms, and mutuality are hypothesized to be part of the outcome set for dyads with higher degrees of collaborative activity, “stronger” or the “presence” of organizational autonomy is hypothesized to be part of the outcome set for dyads with lesser degrees of collaborative activity

given that strong organizational self-interest potentially reduces deep collaboration. Table 6.1 shows all of the condition indicators and the threshold values, where “1” indicates the presence of the condition and “0” indicates the absence.

I calibrated the other dimensions using similar logic to governance as discussed above. For administration, three indicators comprise this dimension: if dyadic partners agree there are clearly defined roles, if they agree there is clear coordination of efforts (or identifies a collaborative coordinator), and if the partners agree on goals. For dyadic partners to exhibit the “presence” of strong administration, they have to agree to at least two of the three indicators. Answering in the affirmative for two of the three administration indicators denotes them as medium strong or higher and having the presence of strong administration; answering in the affirmative for one or less of the indicators denotes them as having medium weak or lower and having the absence of strong administration.

Three indicators comprise the norms dimension. Trusting each other, committing to each other, and having relationship connectedness indicate whether dyadic partners exhibit the normative dimension. For dyads to be considered having the presence of strong norms, they had to have medium strong or higher strength on the dimension, meaning that they exhibited strong relationship connectedness and answered in the affirmative to at least one of the other two indicators (trust and commitment). For dyads to be considering having an absence of strong norms, they did not exhibit strong relationship connectedness, and answered in the affirmative to one or less of the other two indicators.

For the mutuality dimension, two indicators tap the dimension: belief that one’s own program goals can be better achieved by working together and belief that the other program appreciates what your program brings to the collaboration. Dyads that answer in the affirmative

for both indicators are deemed as “strong” and considered to display the presence of strong mutuality. Dyads that answer in the affirmative to one or less of the indicators are deemed as medium strength or less and are considered to exhibit the absence of strong mutuality.

Finally, for organizational autonomy, three indicators capture this dimension, keeping in mind that having “strong” organizational autonomy indicates that a dyadic partner mostly focuses on his or her own program interest with relatively little focus on overall collaborative interests. The three indicators include partners finding it challenging to balance both programs’ goals, a partner expressing that their goals are affected (or changed) by working with the other program, and partners expressing concerns over current preschool enrollees being enrolled (or “stolen”) by the other program. To be considered having the presence of strong organizational autonomy, the dyads have to exhibit medium strong or higher autonomy. Dyads that expressed having the “stealing kids” issue *and* answer in the affirmative to one or less of the other two indicators are denoted as medium strong or higher.⁴² Dyads that express having the “stealing kids” issue *or* answer yes to one of the two indicators are designated as having medium weak organizational autonomy. Finally, dyads that did not express having the “stealing kids” issue but answered that organizational goals were affected by the other program were labeled as weak.⁴³

⁴² As discussed above, while my interpretation of the responses to these questions about organizational autonomy may not comport with Thomson et al (2007), I found that the most separated, and thus, most organizationally autonomous dyads were those that did not find balancing program goals to be problematic or that their own program goals shifted due to working together. However, often these same dyads reported the “stealing kids” phenomenon. In these cases, programs were so separated that they did not face the push and pull of being both collaborative partners and program administrators; however, they did feel the “threat” of the other program potentially stealing program participants.

⁴³ When asked, some of the dyadic partners did discuss having their programs changed due to working with the other program, but this was frequently not expressed as problematic; rather it was seen as a positive influence on each other’s goals.

By translating the interview text into operational indicators and setting condition thresholds, I create an “in-set” and “out-set” for each condition and outcome. Simply put, an in-set is the number of dyads that have the conditions or outcome present; the out-set has the conditions or outcome absent. Table 6.2 relays this information.

Table 6.2. QCA Causal Conditions and Outcome

	QCA Variable	Number In-Set Code = 1	Number Out-Set Code = 0
Degree of Collaborative Activity	Strong Collaborative Activity SCOLLABACT	11	5
Governance	Strong Governance SGOV	11	5
Administration	Strong Administration SADMIN	10	6
Autonomy	Strong Autonomy SAUTO	4	12
Norms	Strong Norms SNORM	10	6
Mutuality	Strong Mutuality SMUTUAL	7	9

The in-set and out-set numbers illuminate some characteristics about these dyads before conducting the QCA. The majority of the dyads exhibit strong governance, strong administration, strong norms and a strong degree of collaborative activity. Conversely, the majority of the dyads exhibited weak organizational autonomy and weak mutuality. Relaying these descriptors back to the underlying meanings tells us that generally speaking, these dyads take each other seriously as partners, brainstorm together, and/or have some formal and informal aspects in place; they understand their roles, coordinate with each other and/or agree on goals; and generally they trust each other and commit to the collaboration between programs. On the other hand, only four dyads exhibit strong organizational autonomy and less than half of the dyads display the mutuality dimension, indicating that more dyads report not achieving goals

better by working together and do not believe that the “other” program appreciates what their program brings to the collaboration.

Analysis

QCA uses Boolean logical minimization to identify patterns of causal combinations that meet the sufficiency criteria. In other words, fsQCA helps to identify those causal combinations that whenever are present among the cases observed, the outcome variable is also present (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012). That said, many experts recommend that one tests for necessary conditions as a first step, since simply running the QCA could obscure existing necessary conditions (Ragin, 2000; Rihoux and Ragin, 2009; Schneider and Wagemann, 2010; 2012). Necessary conditions are those conditions that when one identifies all cases where the outcome is present (“1”), the condition is also present.

Before discussing necessary conditions, the reader should also note that two analyses are run when conducting a QCA. First, the analysis is run for when the outcome variable is present. Secondly, the analysis is run for when the outcome variable is absent, or set negated (Ragin, 1987). This allows the researcher to gain understanding of causal combinations that underlie those cases that present the outcome variable, but it also offers additional insight into causal combinations for cases where the outcome variable is absent.

To identify necessary conditions, I ran crosstabular analyses between the outcome variable, strong collaborative activity (SCOLLABACT), and each condition variable separately. A two-by-two table is produced for each relationship; in this case, with five condition variables, I created five tables. For necessary conditions, one looks for the cell that is the crosstabulation between outcome is “present” and condition is “absent” to be zero. In other words, for a

condition to be considered necessary there can be no cases when the outcome is present *and* the condition is absent. Table 6.3 displays this in tabular example.

Table 6.3. Identifying Necessary Conditions

	Condition	
Outcome	<i>Absent (0)</i>	<i>Present (1)</i>
<i>Present (1)</i>	MUST BE ZERO	MORE THAN ZERO
<i>Absent (0)</i>	Not Relevant	Not Relevant

Table adapted from Schneider and Wagemann (2012)

For this first analysis of strong collaborative activity, I identified two necessary conditions, strong governance and weak organizational autonomy. This finding suggests that dyads that partake in collaboration or coordination degree of collaborative activities all report having strong governance and weak organizational autonomy. For not strong collaborative activity, I found three necessary conditions: weak governance, weak administration, and weak norms. This finding suggests for those dyads that cooperate or have no relationship, they all report having weak governance, weak administration, and weak norms.

After checking for necessary conditions, I ran the truth table analysis. Once one selects the conditions and outcome variable to be included in the analysis, fsQCA produces a “truth” table. A truth table is all possible combinations of conditions. For crisp set QCA all of the conditions are dichotomized; thus, the total possible combinations is two raised to the total number of conditions (2^x). However, just because a combination of conditions is theoretically possible does not mean that any empirically observed cases (dyads) fit the combination. For this first analysis, which includes five conditions, fsQCA produces 32 possible combinations of conditions (2^5) in a truth table, of which only six combinations contained observed cases for strong collaborative activity. For not strong collaborative activity, the same held true, with only six causal

combinations containing observed cases. These “unobserved” patterns are also called logical reminders. The logical reminders were removed from the final analysis. Appendix D contains all of the truth tables for the QCA in this chapter.

The next step is for the researcher to identify which combination of conditions will be used to generate the possible causal recipes. This decision is based upon assessing the number of observed cases (dyads) per each combination of conditions and the “consistency” of the combination. Consistency is the measurement of sufficiency, or the percentage of observed cases that have the combination of conditions *and* have the outcome variable present. Perfect consistency (100 per cent) indicates that the combination of conditions is perfectly sufficient; there are no cases where the same combinations of conditions do not produce the outcome variable. Best practice guidelines for QCA (Schneider and Wagemann, 2010) suggest a consistency cutoff point of .75 for including condition combinations in the logical minimization process. Once one selects the condition combinations to be included, fsQCA conducts a logical minimization to produce causal recipes for the outcome variable.

The fsQCA software produces three different solution recipes after running the analysis: parsimonious, complex, and intermediate. The parsimonious solution is the most simplified solution, and it includes both the logical reminders and the empirically observed combinations when configuring the solution. The complex solution includes the most detailed condition combinations, which are derived from the empirically observed combinations only. The intermediate solution falls between these two extremes, trying to reduce complexity while still maintaining meaningful details. It includes any theoretical assumptions that the researcher builds into the analysis. For this study, I included the assumptions mentioned above, including that strong governance, strong administration, strong mutuality, strong norms, and weak

organizational autonomy would be present in the outcome sets of those dyads with strong collaborative activity present. As recommended by Ragin (2000), I use the intermediate solution created by fsQCA to identify recipes for both Strong Collaborative Activities and Not Strong Collaborative Activities.⁴⁴

Findings

For the first analysis, looking at the five collaborative process dimensions as causal conditions for strong collaborative activity, the solutions have both strong consistency and coverage. These measures are important in assessing the parameter of fit of the overall causal recipes; in other words, they indicate to a researcher how well the causal recipes explain the outcome variable. *Solution consistency* indicates the percentage of cases that display the outcome when the causal recipes are present. For this first analysis, a solution consistency of 100 percent denotes that the outcome (of Strong Collaborative Activity) is always present for the cases that display the two recipes. *Recipe consistency* measures for each recipe the percentage of cases that display the outcome variable when the recipe is present; for this first analysis, both recipes produced individual consistency scores of 1.0.

Solution coverage indicates the percentage of cases with Strong Collaborative Activity that are explained by the recipes provided. For this first analysis, solution coverage of 100% denotes that having Strong Collaborative Activity present is completely “explained” by the two recipes.

Unique coverage identifies how much of the outcome variable is uniquely explained by each recipe. Higher unique coverage scores indicate less overlap between recipes; lower unique

⁴⁴ For Not Strong Collaborative Activities, the built in assumptions to produce the intermediate solution are the opposite: weak governance, weak administration, weak mutuality, weak norms, and strong organizational autonomy.

coverage scores indicate more overlap between recipes. Table 6.4 displays the results of the first analysis.

Table 6.4. Causal Combinations – Strong Collaborative Activity

Causal Recipe	Interpretation	Unique Coverage	Consistency	Cases
sauto*SADMIN*SGOV	Dyads with strong administration and strong governance and weak ⁴⁵ organizational autonomy	.454545	1.0	10/10
SMUTUAL*SNORM*sauto*SGOV	Dyads with strong mutuality, strong norms, and strong governance, and weak organizational autonomy	.090909	1.0	6/6
Solution Coverage	1.0 (11/11 Cases)			
Solution Consistency	1.0			
Consistent with QCA best practices, uppercase letters indicate presence of a condition and lowercase indicates absence of a condition. Model: SCOLLABACT = f(smatural, snorm, sauto, sadmin, sgov) Consistency Cutoff: 1 Assumptions: smatural (present), snorm (present), sauto (absent), sadmin (present), sgov (present)				

The results for the first analysis that examines strong collaborative activity yield two separate recipes. First, those dyads with strong governance and strong administration, but weak organizational autonomy have strong collaborative activity. This recipe is perfectly consistent, with all ten of the dyads that display this combination of conditions also displaying strong collaborative activity. The recipe uniquely explains 45 percent of those dyads that have strong collaborative activity present; this score indicates that 55 percent of the dyads that have this causal recipe also share the second causal recipe.

⁴⁵ For simplistic nomenclature that comports with how these variables were defined, the absence of the condition will be discussed as “weak.”

The second recipe shows that those dyads that have strong norms, strong mutuality, and strong governance, but weak organizational autonomy also have strong collaborative activity. As with the first recipe, this second one is also perfectly consistent: all six dyads that display this combination of conditions also display strong collaborative activity. This recipe uniquely explains nine percent of the dyads that have strong collaborative activity indicating that 91 percent of those dyads with strong collaborative activity also display the first causal recipe.

As discussed above, initial examination of necessary conditions reveal that strong governance and weak organization autonomy are both necessary for strong collaborative activity. This finding is reflected in the two recipes that both include these two conditions. Thus, the overall recipe for strong collaborative activity can be rewritten as:

$SGOV*sauto (SADMIN + SMUTUAL*SNORMS)^{46} \rightarrow SCOLLABACT$

This new recipe suggests that dyads have to exhibit strong governance and weak organizational autonomy *and* either strong administration *or* strong mutuality combined with strong norms to also display strong collaborative activity.

The second analysis examines not strong collaborative activity, or scollabact. For this analysis, one recipe is produced, and the overall solution coverage and solution consistency are very strong, both at 100 percent. These findings indicate that whenever the recipe is present the outcome is also present, and the reverse also, that is whenever the outcome is present, the causal recipe is also present.

⁴⁶ Following Boolean logic language, logical AND is written with a “*” and logical OR is written with a “+”.

Table 6.5. Causal Combinations – Not Strong Collaborative Activity

Causal Recipe	Interpretation	Unique Coverage	Consistency	Cases
snorms*sadmin*sgov	Dyads with weak norms, weak administration, and weak governance.	1.0	1.0	5/5
Solution Coverage	1.0 (5/5) Cases)			
Solution Consistency	1.0			
Consistent with QCA best practices, uppercase letters indicate presence of a condition and lowercase indicates absence of a condition. Model: ~scollabact = f(smutual, snorm, sauto, sadmin, sgov) Consistency Cutoff: 1 Assumptions: smutual (absent), snorm (absent), sauto (present), sadmin (absent), sgov (absent)				

As mentioned earlier, the same three conditions are identified as necessary. Thus, for the five dyads that do not have strong collaborative activity, the conditions weak norms, weak administration, and weak governance are necessary and when combined in a causal recipe, are also sufficient. Since there is only one recipe for not strong collaborative activity, the unique coverage and consistency match the overall solution coverage and consistency at 100 percent.

The findings from these two analyses bring additional insight to the collaborative process dimensions as envisioned by Thomson and Perry (2006) and Thomson et al. (2007). For these particular sixteen dyads, to land on the higher end of the collaborative activity continuum, collaboration or coordination, the dyad has to exhibit strong governance and weak organizational autonomy. This suggests that one of the structural dimensions and the organizational autonomy dimension are necessary ingredients for strong collaborative activity. Dyadic partners who take each other seriously, brainstorm on collaborative issues, and/or have informal and formal aspects in place are more likely to engage in strong collaborative activity than those that do not. Also, when partners are less focused on organizational issues (such as the “stealing kids” phenomenon)

and more focused on overall collaboration issues they tend to engage in deeper collaboration than those dyads with strong organizational autonomy.

When strong governance and weak organizational autonomy are in place, two paths present themselves for strong collaborative activity to occur. First, dyads could exhibit the other structural dimension, strong administration. Those dyads that have clearly defined roles, coordinate with one another and/or agree on goals along with having strong governance combined with weak autonomy engage in more involved collaborative activities. The second recipe includes dyads displaying strong norms combined with strong mutuality along with strong governance and weak organizational autonomy. Dyads that trust each other, commit to each other, appreciate each other, and believe that goals are achieved better by working together also engage in stronger collaboration.

It should be noted that these paths are not mutually exclusive, meaning that many dyads exhibit both of these patterns. This characteristic reflects in the unique coverage scores for the recipes. The first pattern, SGOV*sauto (SADMIN), uniquely covers, or explains, 45 percent of those dyads with strong collaborative activity. This suggests that 55 percent of the cases that have strong collaborative activity also display the other pattern, SGOV*sauto (SMUTUAL*SNORMS). Conversely, the second pattern, SGOV*sauto (SMUTUAL*SNORMS) uniquely covers, or explains, a much smaller percentage, with nine percent explained. This percentage suggests that 91 percent of the cases that have strong collaborative activity also have the first recipe conditions. To interpret this further, this would suggest that while all cases with strong collaborative activity have strong governance and weak organizational autonomy, slightly more than half of the cases also display the other three collaborative dimensions, strong administration, strong mutuality, and strong norms. These

distinct recipes suggest substitutability to the combinations of dimensions that dyads with strong collaborative activity can exhibit; however, the unique coverage scores suggest that these dimensions tend to mostly present together.

Dyads that do not engage in strong collaborative activity display weak structural dimensions, governance and administration, and weak norms. When dyads lack the structural framework that comes with taking each other seriously as partners, brainstorming together and clearly defining roles and coordination, and they fail to develop trusting relationships and commit to each other, then they are more likely to engage in weaker degrees of collaborative activity.

These first two analyses offer insight and support for the importance of the collaborative process dimensions. In particular, strong governance and weak autonomy are necessary building blocks for dyads to host stronger collaborative activity involvement. However, a dyad need not exhibit strong tendencies on all three of the other remaining dimensions to engage in deeper collaborative activity involvement. They could build up the other structural dimension of administration, or they could work on the social capital dimensions of norms and mutuality. Conversely, dyads that lack strong governance, strong administration, and strong norms seem to lack the underlying processes to engage in deeper degrees of collaborative activity.

Additional Analyses

While these first two analyses provide support that the underlying process dimensions, or that lack thereof, matter in the degree of collaborative activity, they shed little insight to some important differences in underlying processes that may occur in the respective degrees of collaborative activity. In other words, are there differences in underlying process dimensions for

dyads that exhibit collaboration compared to all other degrees? What about for those dyads that engage coordination or cooperation? The next part of the analysis addresses these issues.

To conduct this analysis and all of the additional ones on individual degrees of collaborative activity, I first had to redefine the in-set for each outcome variable. Each collaborative activity, in turn, was run with those dyads presenting the collaborative activity coded as a “1” and all other collaborative activities set as “0.” This created four opportunities to examine the underlying conditions for the respective collaborative activities.

To compare collaborating dyads to all of the less-involved dyads in the study, collaborators are coded as a “1” and all others coded as a “0.” For coordination degree of collaborative activity, I ran the analysis twice, once removing collaborating dyads from the analysis and comparing coordinating dyads with those lesser-involved dyads. The second analysis of coordination was to remove the lesser-involved dyads and compare the coordinating dyads to the collaborating dyads. Finally, for the last analysis, I combined cooperating dyads with “no relationship” and coded them with a “1” and compared them to the more involved dyads, coded as a “0.” Table 6.6 displays these new in-set definitions for the outcome variables. No changes were made to the causal conditions as discussed in Table 6.2 above. Appendix D contains the truth tables for the additional analyses.

Table 6.6. QCA with Each Degree of Collaborative Activity Defined as the In-Set

	QCA Outcome Variable	Number In-Set Code = 1	Number Out-Set Code = 0
Collaboration	collab	5	11
Coordination I	coord1	6	5
Coordination II	coord2	6	5
Cooperation & No Relationship ⁴⁷	coopno	5	11

⁴⁷ When analyzing the lowest degrees on the continuum, I decided to combine cooperation and no relationship into one grouping. This allowed for five total dyads to be examined. Also, I did

Collaboration

First, I analyze collaboration degree of collaborative activity. These are the dyads that engage the most with each other; specifically, they blend their programs to the point that Head Start and VPI preschool students sit in the same classroom together. Similar to the earlier analyses, I also checked for necessary conditions with the outcome variable set as collaboration. I found strong governance, strong administration, strong norms, and weak organizational autonomy to be necessary conditions. The only collaborative process dimension not deemed as necessary is mutuality.

For the analysis of collaboration, or COLLAB, the overall solution consistency is not overly strong, at 60 percent. While this could raise a flag, upon looking at the individual dyad conditions and outcomes, an important factor contributes to this lower consistency. Keeping in mind that solution consistency expresses the percentage of cases that display the outcome when the recipe is present, the low solution consistency stems from two dyads that engage at coordination degree of collaborative activity (so for this analysis “Not COLLAB”) also sharing the same conditions as three dyads that engage at collaboration. They all have strong governance, strong administration, strong norms, strong mutuality, and weak organizational autonomy. For my purposes, since I am aware of what causes the lower inconsistency, I chose to use 60 percent as the cutoff point. Table 6.7 displays the causal combinations for collaboration outcome.

check the QCA for removing the one dyad that was “no relationship,” but I found the recipe to be identical with leaving it in.

Table 6.7. Causal Combinations – Collaboration Degree of Collaborative Activity

Causal Recipe	Interpretation	Unique Coverage	Consistency	Cases
SGOV*SADMIN*sauto* SNORMS*SMUTUAL	Dyads with strong governance, strong administration, strong norms, strong mutuality, and weak organizational autonomy	.60	.60	3/5
Solution Coverage	.60 (3/5) Cases)			
Solution Consistency	.60			
Consistent with QCA best practices, uppercase letters indicate presence of a condition and lowercase indicates absence of a condition. Model: collab = f(smutual, snorm, sauto, sadmin, sgov) Consistency Cutoff: .60 Assumptions: smutual (present), snorm (present), sauto (absent), sadmin (present), sgov (present)				

The analysis of collaboration yields one recipe. Typically, dyads that engage at the collaboration degree of collaborative activity are strong on both the structural and social capital dimensions, and weak on organizational autonomy. Three of the five dyads that engage collaboration share these features, and is reflected in the solution coverage score of .60. The other two only lack strong mutuality. However, two additional dyads that coordinate also share the recipe listed above. For this degree of collaborative activity, perhaps the necessary conditions are more telling since all five collaborators share four of the five dimensions (minus mutuality). However, what prompts someone to engage in a deeper degree of collaborative activity by blending programs is not completely explained by these collaborative process dimensions since two dyads that also have these features opt to engage in coordination. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven when I examine collaborative management techniques, some of the

coordinating dyads seem to lack upper administration support to pursue a blended classroom situation.

When analyzing collaboration negated, or collab, the recipe solutions do not suffer from the low consistency as discussed above.⁴⁸ In fact, the solution consistency for collaboration negated is 100 percent, indicating that all dyads that contain these combinations of conditions do not engage at the collaboration degree of collaborative activity. The overall solution coverage is 64% indicating that of those dyads that do not engage collaboration, the two generated recipes cover, or explain, 64 percent of them.

This lower solution coverage suggests some variation among the non-collaborators. In fact four of the eleven non-collaborators are not covered by these recipes; all four of them have strong administration and strong norms. These four are coordinating dyads and reside within the same regions as the collaborators (Region 1 and 2) so it is perhaps not surprising to learn that they share some of the same ingredients as the collaborators. What they lack will be discussed in more detail below as well as examined in more detail in Chapter Seven. Table 6.8 displays the causal conditions for collaboration negated.

⁴⁸ Upon checking, no necessary conditions exist for collaboration negated.

Table 6.8. Causal Combinations – Collaboration Negated

Causal Recipe	Interpretation	Unique Coverage	Consistency	Cases
sadmin	Dyads with weak administration.	.181818	1.0	6/6
smutual*snorm	Dyads with weak mutuality and weak norms.	.090909	1.0	5/5
Solution Coverage	.63634 (7/11) Cases)			
Solution Consistency	1.0			
Consistent with QCA best practices, uppercase letters indicate presence of a condition and lowercase indicates absence of a condition. Model: ~scollab = f(smutual, snorm, sauto, sadmin, sgov) Consistency Cutoff: 1 Assumptions: smutual (absent), snorm (absent), sauto (present), sadmin (absent), sgov (absent)				

The first causal recipe identifies weak administration as linked to not engaging collaboration. The recipe is perfectly consistent at 100 percent and uniquely explains 18 percent of those dyads not engaging in collaboration. The second recipe highlights that not having strong social capital dimensions also result in dyads not engaging in collaboration. This recipe is also perfectly consistent and uniquely covers nine percent.

Coordination

To analyze the coordination degree of collaborative activity I chose to run the analysis twice. First, I compared those dyads with coordination to those with cooperation and no relationship, and removed collaborating dyads from the analysis. For the second analysis, I compared those dyads with coordination degree of collaborative activity to only those dyads with collaboration and then removed the rest from the analysis. I decided to run the analyses this way because it seemed that to group those that are the “most” involved (collaboration) with those that

are the “least” involved (cooperation and no relationship) into one solidified “negated” group does not reflect a logical ordering.

For the first testing of coordination, or COORD1, I checked for necessary conditions and found two: strong governance and weak organizational autonomy. The QCA produced two recipes, with perfect solution coverage and consistency at one hundred percent. Table 9 displays the causal combinations for coordination I.

Table 6.9. Causal Combinations – Coordination I

Causal Recipe	Interpretation	Unique Coverage	Consistency	Cases
SGOV*SADMIN*sauto	Dyads with strong governance and strong administration and weak organizational autonomy	.50	1.0	5/5
SGOV*sauto*SNORM*SMUTUAL	Dyads with strong governance, strong norms, strong mutuality, and weak organizational autonomy.	.166667	1.0	3/3
Solution Coverage	1.0 (6/6) Cases			
Solution Consistency	1.0			
Consistent with QCA best practices, uppercase letters indicate presence of a condition and lowercase indicates absence of a condition. Model: coord1 = f(smutual, snorm, sauto, sadmin, sgov) Consistency Cutoff: 1 Assumptions: smutual (present), snorm (present), sauto (absent), sadmin (present), sgov (present)				

The first recipe for coordination indicates that dyads with strong governance, strong administration, and weak organizational autonomy engage at this degree of collaborative activity. This recipe is perfectly consistent and uniquely covers 50 percent of those dyads that coordinate. The second recipe indicates that dyads with strong governance, strong norms, strong mutuality, and weak organizational autonomy engage in coordination. This recipe is also

perfectly consistent and uniquely covers, or explains, approximately 17 percent of those dyads that engage in coordination. Given that strong governance and weak autonomy are identified as necessary conditions for coordination, the recipes above can be simplified into the following recipe:

$SGOV*sauto (SADMIN + SNORM*SMUTUAL) \rightarrow COORD1$

This recipe is identical to the very first analysis that grouped both collaboration and coordination as strong collaborative activity and compared it to dyads that engage cooperation or have no relationship. This is perhaps not overly surprising and tells us that those coordinating dyads resemble collaborating dyads to the degree that even when separated out, the recipe produced still finds that coordinating dyads compared to lesser involved dyads share the same causal conditions. It seems that for this group of dyads, having strong governance and lacking organizational autonomy with either strong administration *or* strong norms combined with strong mutuality underlie coordination.

Now that we recognize that comparing coordination to lesser-involved dyads shows us how similar coordination and collaboration may be with respect to collaborative process dimensions, it is now time to turn to how they may differ. For the second analysis I compare coordination degree to collaboration degree only. The recipe has a solution consistency and coverage of 67%. This is not surprising given the same issues as discussed above that there are several dyads at the coordination and collaboration degree that share identical conditions; however, this test will allow us to uncover what differences may exist. Table 6.10 displays the causal combinations for the second analysis of coordination, or COORD2.

Table 6.10. Causal Combinations – Coordination II

Causal Recipe	Interpretation	Unique Coverage	Consistency	Cases
smutual*sauto*SADMIN*SGOV	Dyads with strong governance, strong administration, weak mutuality, and weak organizational autonomy	.50	.60	3/5
SMUTUAL*SNORM*sauto*sadmin*SGOV	Dyads with strong mutuality, strong norms, strong governance, weak administration, and weak organizational autonomy	.166667	1.0	1/1
Solution Coverage	.666667 (4/6) Cases			
Solution Consistency	.666667			
Consistent with QCA best practices, uppercase letters indicate presence of a condition and lowercase indicates absence of a condition. Model: coord1 = f(smutual, snorm, sauto, sadmin, sgov) Consistency Cutoff: .50 Assumptions: smutual (present), snorm (present), sauto (absent), sadmin (present), sgov (present)				

The first recipe for coordination compared to collaboration shows that dyads with strong administration and strong governance, but weak organizational autonomy and weak mutuality links to the coordination degree of collaborative activity. This suggests that those dyads that have the structural dimensions in place (as well as focus on collaborative issues compared to organizational ones), but fail to see how the programs achieve goals better by working together or fail to appreciate each other tend to coordinate. This recipe is 60 percent consistent and uniquely explains fifty percent of those cases at the coordination degree of collaborative activity.

The second recipe shows that strong governance, strong norms, and strong mutuality, but weak organizational autonomy and weak administration can also lead to coordination compared

to collaboration. This suggests that the social capital dimensions may be in place for a dyad, along with the necessary conditions of strong governance and weak organizational autonomy, but that a dyad lacks strong administration. This causal recipe suggests that a dyad may trust each other and see the benefit of working together, but lack a clear understanding of roles or fail to coordinate with each other and thus, tend to coordinate. This recipe is consistent at 100 percent, keeping in mind that it reflects one coordinating dyad (however, there are only six coordinating cases overall.)

Again, given the necessary conditions of strong governance and weak organizational autonomy for dyads at the coordination degree of collaborative activity, the above recipes can be simplified as:

SGOV*sauto (smutual*SADMIN + SMUTUAL*SNORM*sadmin) → COORD2

This recipe suggests that when comparing coordinating dyads to collaborating dyads, coordinators share similar features of having both strong governance and weak organizational autonomy as necessary conditions. They differ from collaborators in that they generally have weak mutuality but have strong administration *or* they have strong mutuality combined with strong norms, but have weak administration. This finding suggests that coordinating dyads need not have both strong social capital dimensions and strong structural dimensions in place to engage in coordination between programs. Once they have met the necessary conditions of strong governance and weak autonomy, they can have strong administration if they fail to achieve mutuality. Another path is that if they have weak administration, they can establish strong social capital dimensions. There is more than one path to take for coordinating dyads with workable substitutes of dimensions.

While I found it theoretically compelling to conduct the collaboration negated model for these secondary analyses, I did not investigate coordination I or coordination II negated. It did not seem to be a useful analytical tool to conduct the QCA to compare the lesser-involved dyads to only the coordinators, nor to compare collaborators to only coordinators in a separate analysis.

Cooperation and No Relationship

The next analysis was to revisit those dyads at the lower end of the collaborative activity continuum, cooperation and no relationship.⁴⁹ However upon examining this test, pulling out cooperation and no relationship and comparing it to collaboration and coordination is the logical inverse of the very first analysis conducted for this QCA—the presence and negation of strong collaborative activity. I did run the analysis to confirm, and indeed did find that the first analysis produced the same necessary conditions: weak governance, weak administration, and weak norms. These were the same conditions produced in the QCA causal recipe, thus showing that these conditions are necessary, and when combined, sufficient for those dyads that cooperate or have no relationship. This relationship yielded 100 percent coverage and consistency for five cases that cooperate or have no relationship. The takeaway from this analysis is that those dyads lack the two structural dimensions, governance and administration, and do not trust or commit to each other.

snorm*sadmin*sgov → COOPNO

⁴⁹ I chose to group cooperation and no relationship together since only one dyad in this study exhibited “no relationship.” I did run the QCA removing “no relationship” from cooperation; however, the results yielded the same recipe, so I decided to examine them together.

Limitations

Some comments should be made about limitations with conducting the QCA. First, some challenges did arise with assigning the collaborative process dimensions as QCA conditions. First, given the nature of semi-structured interviews as a data collection process, while I have attempted to objectively create operational definitions and the logic criteria for assigning a dyad to a specific attribute, these assignments are understandably subjective. However, I identified and linked segments of text that support the decision-making process for attribute assignment to each indicator to add to the construct validity and build an argument for how a dyad is assigned.

Secondly, given that knowledge about the dyads was based upon information gained from both the Head Start and VPI administrators who comprise the dyad, the information is arguably biased towards the VPI administrator's perception of these dimensions. The VPI administrators were sharing information about their individual relationship with their respective Head Start program, whereas the Head Start administrator was asked to discuss his or her relationship with *all* of the VPI programs within his or her region. While I asked follow up questions to Head Start directors to ascertain specific elements of each of the relationships, it was often challenging for the Head Start informant to always reflect on each specific relationship. When possible, I followed up with Head Start directors with emails when specific process dimensions questions were lacking for a specific dyad.

Thirdly, and similar to the second issue, due to the nature of building an understanding of collaborative processes and activities from two different perspectives, occasionally I would receive contradictory information about a specific indicator, or in one case, the dyadic relationship shifted during the course of the study and follow up information revealed contradictory evidence to earlier information obtained. In these cases, I erred on the side of being

conservative and assigned an “average” attribute that fell between the extremes of the contradictory information. However, I will note for the reader that contradictory evidence was not the norm of this study, and generally speaking, I found the information obtained from both Head Start and VPI administrators to support each other.

Discussion

The seven analyses produce various causal recipes that help identify how collaborative process dimensions link to the degree of collaborative activities. Table 6.11 summarizes the recipes produced by the seven analyses.

Table 6.11. Summary of Causal Recipes

Strong Collaborative Activity	Present	STRONG GOVERNANCE * weak organizational autonomy (STRONG ADMINISTRATION + STRONG NORMS * STRONG MUTUALITY)
	Absent	weak norms * weak administration * weak governance
Collaboration	Present	STRONG GOVERNANCE * STRONG ADMINISTRATION * weak organizational autonomy * STRONG NORMS (STRONG MUTUALITY)
	Absent	weak administration + weak mutuality * weak norms
Coordination I	Present	STRONG GOVERNANCE * weak organizational autonomy (STRONG ADMINISTRATION + STRONG NORMS * STRONG MUTUALITY)
Coordination II	Present	STRONG GOVERNANCE * weak organizational autonomy (weak mutuality * STRONG ADMINISTRATION + STRONG MUTUALITY * STRONG NORMS * weak administration)
Cooperation/No Relationship	Present	weak norms * weak administration * weak governance
	Absent	STRONG GOVERNANCE * weak organizational autonomy (STRONG ADMINISTRATION + STRONG NORMS * STRONG MUTUALITY)

Conducting the QCA proved fruitful for gaining an understanding of how collaborative process dimensions link to the degree of collaborative activity. In particular, the logical minimization process that is the heart of QCA identifies those collaborative process dimensions that present for dyads at various degrees of activity. For this particular study, certain dimensions stood out for various degrees and will be discussed below.

When looking overall at strong collaborative activity, strong governance and weak organizational autonomy stand out as necessary conditions. Strong governance epitomizes the approach that partners take towards collaborating with each other and allows the framework for deep collaboration to flourish (Agranoff, 2007; Mattesich, Murray-Close, and Monsey, 2001; Thomson and Perry, 2006; Thomson et al., 2007). While having these conditions in place are necessary for more involved collaborative activity, they are not sufficient. Dyads that display these conditions tend to also have two different additional combination of process dimensions: they either also possess strong administration or they have developed strong norms and mutuality within their dyad. Put another way, dyads need not have all of the dimensions in place to collaborate in more involved ways; they can either put energy (or have the requisite skills set) into administrative aspects, or they can work on the social capital dimensions.

At the other end of the continuum, dyads that engage in less involved collaborative activity do not have strong governance, strong administration, or strong norms. These dyads tend not to brainstorm with each other about collaborative issues and have little formal or informal structure in place. They also are typically unclear about their roles and coordination between partners. Finally, they tend not to trust their partner and have uncertain commitment to collaboration. Like other scholars, these findings support the importance of structural dimensions, but also highlight the importance of trust to developing deep collaborative relationships (McGuire, 2006; Vangen and Huxham, 2003; 2014).

While these first analyses add to our knowledge about how the presence or absence of conditions link to more or less involved collaboration, they do not offer us specific insight to how processes link to specific degrees of collaborative activity. Running the analyses that created specific in-sets for each degree helps to illuminate the linkages.

For those dyads that are the most involved, collaborators, four of the collaborative process dimensions prove to be necessary conditions: strong governance, strong administration, strong norms, and weak organizational autonomy. For the causal recipe, strong mutuality also is included. These dyads have strong structural dimensions and strong social capital dimensions. They focus more on collaborative issues than organizational ones when working together. This analysis supports that deep collaboration requires the underlying collaborative process dimension as envisioned by Thomson et al. (2007).

While mutuality was not deemed necessary, the majority of the collaborators exhibited this condition also. Similar to Thomson et al. (2007), the mutuality dimension in this study is the most varied and may be a challenging concept to tap. Particularly for this set of dyadic partners, the questions to tap mutuality may not adequately reflect feelings of reciprocity for one another. Informants were asked if they achieved their goals better by working together and if they felt a sense of appreciation. For some, the standalone nature of their individual programs, Head Start and VPI respectively, downplayed the necessity of working together to achieve programs goals. In other words, while some of them found working together as a way to improve preschool provision in their community, others dismissed this as a good, but unessential, way to meet their goals.

Those dyads that do not engage at collaboration degree of collaborative activity have weak administration *or* they have weak norms combined with weak mutuality. For some lesser-involved dyads, lack of clear roles and coordination keep them engaged somewhat minimally with each other. For others, not trusting or committing to each other combined with not building a sense of mutual benefit by working together result in engaging in less involved activities. For

these dyadic partners, many failed to develop tight linkages, or closure, that aid in the development of shared mutual benefit (Coleman, 1988).

An interesting outcome of the QCA was comparing coordinating dyads to lesser-involved dyads and finding that the coordinators share the same causal recipes as strong collaborative activity overall. Six of the eleven cases that comprised the in-set for strong collaboration activity included those dyads that coordinate, so perhaps this drove the similarity. Two possible causal recipes show that coordinated groups with strong governance and weak organizational autonomy either have strong administration *or* they have strong norms combined with strong mutuality. Coordinated groups, compared to lesser-involved groups, either build up a requisite amount of administration *or* they build a trusting relationship with mutual appreciation of each other.

Eleven of the sixteen dyads examined in this study engage at the coordination *or* collaboration degree of collaborative activity; thus, while comparing these more involved partners to lesser-involved partners is important, differences between these two strong collaborative relationships is particularly illuminating. We know that both collaborators and coordinators have strong governance and weak organizational autonomy as necessary conditions. But how do they differ? Pulling out the causal recipe for coordinators compared to collaborators reveals that two paths lead to coordination assuming the necessary conditions are in place: coordinated dyads have either strong administration combined with weak mutuality *or* strong norms combined with strong mutuality combined with weak administration. To interpret this further, we find that coordinated dyads tend to develop clear roles and coordination but lack the belief that working together enhances goal achievement. Other coordinated groups develop trusting relationships and do believe that working together will help to accomplish their goals better, but they lack the requisite coordination and understanding of their roles.

These causal recipes present interesting takeaway knowledge for public-public program collaboration (PPPC). What may keep a dyadic partnership at the coordination degree are strong structural dimensions but lack of belief that working together is beneficial. For others, there exists strong social capital and deep connections between partners, but an unclear administrative path for deep collaboration. Coordination between Head Start and VPI consists of coordinated communication activities, sharing space, or transportation; sometimes it includes developing joint professional development opportunities together. To participate in these types of activities, dyads need not have all of the collaborative process dimensions in place; they can still achieve these types of activities if they have strong governance and weak autonomy *and* either strong administration or strong social capital dimensions.

These analyses offer much insight to how process dimensions link to collaborative activity, but there is still some things that we should investigate further. How are these processes established, maintained, and managed? Perhaps by studying how these processes are managed, we can gain insight to why some dyads share similar processes but engage at varying degrees of collaborative activity. To explore these ideas further, we now turn to Chapter 7, where I investigate differences in management techniques of activating, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing for different groupings of dyads.

CHAPTER 7

MANAGING COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES AND DEGREES OF COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY: UNCOVERING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN ACTIVATION, FRAMING, MOBILIZING, AND SYNTHESIZING

Introduction

In the forgoing chapters, this dissertation revealed important differences between dyadic partners partaking in varying degrees of collaborative activity and the underlying collaborative process dimensions that comprise them. The most involved groups tend to exhibit most of the expected processes of governance, administration, norms, and mutuality, and tend to lack strong organizational autonomy. Conversely, the least involved groups exhibit weak governance, weak administration, and weak norms. While the QCA illuminates these differences, it does not explain why these processes have developed as they have, or how administrators establish and maintain these relationships. The goal with the next part of the analysis is to use the findings from the QCA and combine them with insights from the administrator interviews to unravel how collaboration is managed. To achieve this goal, I pull excerpts of text from the administrator interviews to create a narrative of management techniques. I also reveal the dyadic partners exact collaborative process dimension strength based upon the number of indicators they meet as part of the operational definitions for the collaborative process dimensions as described in Table 6.1 of Chapter Six.

To offer a lens through which to examine managing collaboration, I have tapped Agranoff and McGuire's (2001) and McGuire and Agranoff (2014) collaborative management techniques of activation, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing. Agranoff and McGuire argue that managing collaboration involves distinctive techniques separate from other organizational management techniques; McGuire and Silvia (2010b) offer support that public managers use different skills

when managing networks compared to individual agencies. The techniques as envisioned by Agranoff and McGuire encompass the full cycle of engaging, maintaining, and producing outcomes when working among networks or collaborative partners. McGuire and Agranoff (2014) conduct action research to further define these techniques and find support for distinct activities that comprise collaborative management techniques. They also argue that all four techniques are ongoing and downplay the linear progression of one management technique ending and another beginning. They also find support that different people in the network lead the techniques, suggesting that one collaborative manager does not typically manage all of these activities.

While McGuire and Agranoff (2014) along with others (Keast and Hampson, 2007) have attempted to further define the activities linked to these management techniques, the distinctions between them are still somewhat ill defined. Yet, they do capture the different types of activities undertaken by collaborative partners. If we envision that these activities are the means by which collaborative processes develop, we can begin to link *how* and *why* collaboration develops with *what* collaboration looks like.

Activation is the beginning phase of collaboration, bringing programs and partners together to work. It is during this phase that partners survey resources that each other has to offer, and it sets up the approach for working together. Although this technique initiates collaboration, it can reappear through the lifecycle of collaborating as partners, resources, or mandates change. I argue that activation links to the structural dimensions of governance and administration as described by Thomson et al. (2007). How collaboration begins, or the “history of collaboration” story that each collaborative partnership develops, does much to set up the seriousness with which partners approach working together, or governance. It is also during activation that initial

administrative processes begin to form, including early conversations to assess whether goals are aligned and to establish collaborative roles.

McGuire (2002) argues that *framing* includes “framing the network structure” (p. 603); it sets the stage for work to be completed for collaborative partners. It also affects the structural dimensions by including more in depth conversations or actions taken by partners to establish coordination of activities and schedules, to set up clearly defined roles, and to engage techniques such as brainstorming to address collaborative issues and make decisions.

Scholars agree that *mobilizing* includes building commitment to the network or partnership; establishing how commitment occurs involves relationship building techniques and solidifying buy-in to collaborative purpose (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; 2014; McGuire, 2002; Keast and Hampson, 2007). In addition, partners mobilize by contending with tensions between organizational and collaborative goals and objectives. Thus, mobilizing builds the norms dimension through establishing trust and building relationships. It also contributes to the dimension of organizational autonomy—building collaborative relationships either contributes to refocusing on collaborative goals, or lack of relationship building can diminish buy-in to collaborative purpose and retain organizational priorities.

Synthesizing involves engendering productive outcomes for the collaborative partners. While Keast and Hampson (2007) and McGuire and Agranoff (2014) place emphasis on “creating an environment for productive interaction,” I distinguish this type of relationship building from mobilizing by emphasizing that synthesis creates collaborative outcomes. For the purposes of this study, synthesis includes the detailed conversations that administrators have to develop procedures in order to envision, create, and implement collaborative activities. When envisioning what collaborative outcomes could look like, administrators build the mutuality

dimension by deciding whether working together with a partner improves their chances of reaching their own goals. It can be during these types of discussions that partners influence each other to the point that new goals are created beyond the needs of their standalone organizations. These types of discussion can also add to the norms dimension by continuing to build up or tear down trust; and depending on what type of processes collaborative partners take focus on, could also help to establish collaborative focus or reinforce organizational interests.

This chapter will proceed as follows. Data collected from administrators on each of the collaborative management techniques reviewed above will be considered, grouping dyadic partnerships by their degree of collaborative activity. While the focus of this chapter is on discerning similarities and differences in management techniques, I will also address how administrators' use of these techniques can help explain similarities and differences in the underlying strength of the collaborative process dimensions. Perhaps there are differences in the approaches that build these underlying collaborative processes or perhaps the differences in collaborative processes occur for reasons that are beyond program directors' control.

Activation

Activating collaboration involves initiating network members, or, as in the case of this study, the "history of collaboration" story that the administrators share, or the story of their attempt to initiate collaboration, even if it does not work out. In some cases, the beginnings have a long history beyond the history of the VPI program; in other cases, there has been very little in the way of initiation.

Collaborators

The collaborators in this study are those dyadic partnerships that participate in highly involved collaborative activities, including having at least one blended classroom between them. Five dyads collaborate; these five dyads are located within two separate Head Start Regions. Four of the collaborators reside in the northwestern valley region, and one resides in the southwestern valley.

For the northwestern valley (NWV) region, the beginning of Head Start and VPI working together extends beyond the lifespan of the VPI program to long held relationships between Head Start and the area LEAs from the beginning of the Head Start grant in the region. As discussed in detail in Chapter Five, since LEA-5 oversees the Head Start grant in NWV (although a standalone Head Start office runs and implements the program), early discussions between school superintendents began as a regional approach to providing public preschool in the NWV region. Not long after inaugurating Head Start in the area, the grant included all seven LEAs that still reside within the region today.

The NWV Head Start director discusses how one of the LEAs came to oversee the Head Start grant and how relationships between area superintendents helped to establish a regional preschool concept:

That was the beginning of the story so-to-speak. And [LEA 6] and [LEA 9], and [LEA 5], and the superintendent of [LEA 7] used to be the assistant superintendent in [LEA 5]; they all knew each other. And the superintendent in [LEA 8] knew the superintendent in [LEA 5] and the superintendent in [LEA 7]. So the five divisions said, we will go after this as a regional program...And the feds [*sic*] realized that [LEA 5], and their partners, had the wherewithal, all of the ingredients. So, they started throwing money at this new grantee, from that point forward. [R2HS Director, NWV Region]

When the LEAs sought VPI funds that became available in the late 1990s, they all agreed to let the Head Start office run the VPI program since they were familiar with the director and believed it a waste to recreate the established structure. By the early 2000s, the Office of Head Start (OHS) informed R2Head Start that the LEAs would have to pay the R2Head Start office a cash administrative fee for running the VPI programs. The LEAs did not have these dollars available, so they pulled out of the combined system. All but one LEA in NWV currently runs their individual VPI grant (although the 7th runs a locally run preschool); however, after dismantling the combined system, they quickly established a regional preschool consortium.

While the Head Start director discusses this generalized “creation” story for the entire consortium, not all of the LEAs engage at the collaboration degree of collaborative activity. This story serves as the backdrop, the launching pad for where the different dyadic partnerships land in their involvement with each other. The director discusses this foundation story with pride, but he notes that the complex regional concept is not without its issues. Later in his discussion of how the consortium came to be, he reflects on its uniqueness and applicability for today.

Yes, our management design and model is fairly unique. To put it in harsh terms, if we were to try and apply today as a brand new grant, using the kind of structure we are talking about, and doing exactly what we are doing today, OHS is not sure they would approve this design and management. Because it is complicated, it is labor-intense, and it really depends on a human element that you can't guarantee day-in, day-out from year to year [R2HS Director, NWV region].

Two different themes seem to be a strong part of the activation stories for the collaborators in the NWV region. First, for two of the collaborators, a theme of equity is a strong reason for them to activate, or reactivate. I discuss their beginning of blending as “reactivation” because neither of these LEAs began their consortium relationship with R2Head Start as blending; in both school districts, the Head Start and VPI programs ran distinctly for a period of time. For VPI-5, when the Head Start and VPI classrooms were segregated, one of the schools in their

district only had a Head Start classroom. A little boy who had multiple risk factors, but was from a family whose income was well over the Head Start income threshold, was not permitted to the classroom. The family was upset by this ruling that left their child with no preschool to attend, and contacted the governor's office. The VPI-5 director shares that this was a changing moment for her and how she viewed preschool:

[A]nd at that point was when I started to realize that this isn't right. Because the way that we did enrollment, and he didn't get in because there were no VPI slots at that school [*sic*]. And that's when we started to talk about, isn't there a way that we could just braid our funding? [VPI-5 Administrator, NWV region]

The VPI-6 director shares similar sentiment, although she did not have a single incident with a single child that pushed her towards blending classrooms.

Well, what happened is that all of the preschool classes were in elementary schools, and they [Head Start and VPI] were all separated. And I started thinking, you know, this is dumb. All of these kids 2, 3, 4 and they're not that different, why are we doing this? [VPI-6 Administrator, NWV region]

For both of these directors, they sensed a lack of fairness, or equity, for the preschool population in their community and wished to offer a uniform preschool. The R2Head Start Director concurs with this recollection of how blending was activated (he also comments on LEA 9 who also attempted blending but then stopped):

The interesting part of it though, in all of those situations, they were in control of their VPI, and didn't want to give that up. Head Start was in control of its requirements, as far as the regional program, but they didn't know how to put it together. So in LEA 6, LEA 9, and LEA 5, they basically run preschool, and we monitor the federal requirements, and they agree to meet the higher standard. Because the superintendents have said, I don't want differences in classrooms or in my division. The public deserves the same kind of standards, so you meet those standards. [R2Head Start Director, NWV Region]

Another dimension to these two dyads is an element of familiarity with the Head Start program regulations, and the two VPI administrators know each other well. The VPI-5

administrator worked for R2Head Start before being employed with the LEA-5 school district; it was during this time that she was instrumental in persuading the VPI-6 administrator to trying blending funds with Head Start.

And then [name of VPI-5 administrator] was in the Head Start position at the time, and we began talking and she said, “Hey, we could braid and blend funding.” And naively, I said, “Sure.” [laughs]. [VPI-6 Administrator, NWV region].

For the other two dyads that collaborate in this region, VPI-10 and VPI-11, a second theme emerges. Issues of limited resources prompted a willingness to work with the R2Head Start program early on. Both of these school districts are very rural, with limited amounts of preschool population. LEA-10 historically invested money in their own preschool program, but when Head Start approached them about working together and housing the Head Start program it allowed them to create a more formal preschool program. LEA-11 did not have the resources to wholly sponsor a local preschool; they were thrilled when Head Start asked them to join the regional consortium one year after commencing. The VPI-11 director discusses the early years when asked what year they joined the consortium:

It was maybe 1994, 1995, somewhere in there. The consortium started, and then the next year, [name of R2Head Start Director] came here and talked to us and also to [LEA 10], and we wanted to join the consortium. We met the following year with them, and there was no turning back [VPI-11 Director, NWV Region].

When VPI grant dollars became available in the mid 2000s,⁵⁰ LEA-11 fed them into their existing program with Head Start. LEA-10 hesitated in taking VPI grant dollars, and only did so for a short time in the mid 2000s when a pilot preschool program initiated by the Virginia DOE infused LEA-10 with some VPI dollars due to their current collaboration with Head Start

⁵⁰ The VPI program began in 1996, but LEA-11 did not become eligible for VPI funds until mid 2000s due to limited preschool population.

(Bradburn et al., 2006). After the pilot ended, LEA-10 stopped the VPI grant in their community (although they are still eligible for them) and simply supplies local dollars to their blended situation with Head Start.

While these four VPI programs in the NWV region have been simply labeled as “blending,” it became clear upon conversations with the R2Head Start director and the VPI administrators that there are two distinctive styles of blending occurring in this region. The first type occurs between R2Head Start and VPI-5 and VPI-6. In both of these cases the LEAs initiated conversations about deeper involvement, or blending, and while there is give and take and a blended form of preschool that reflects both VPI and Head Start approaches, the approach seems to be more school district driven.

The second type occurs between R2Head Start and VPI-10 and VPI-11. In both of these cases, the R2Head Start director approached the respective LEAs about joining the preschool consortium. Given their limited resources, they more or less agreed to adopt the Head Start program as the “school district” program; even after the start of VPI they continue to run the Head Start program as intended, and more or less use the VPI dollars (in the case of VPI-11) as an additional revenue source. In these two cases, the activation history of building the consortium coincides with the beginning of blending programs (or really, blending administrative units of Head Start and the LEAs since VPI had not been developed yet). Compared to the other two collaborators in this region, while both Head Start and VPI administrators talk about the other as a serious partner, the approach seems to be more Head Start driven.

The fifth collaborating dyad in this study resides in a separate region, the Southwestern Valley (SWV) region, and occurs between R1Head Start and VPI-3. For the SWV, the R1Head

Start director drove the activation story for all of the area LEAs; the relationship with VPI-3 is not an exception. The R1Head Start director began working in the SWV region in 2004. With the oncoming changes to the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization grant that required signed MOUs between publicly funded preschool programs within a Head Start region, she sought a grant from Head Start to help initiate collaboration between themselves and the area VPI programs; specifically, the grant was focused on collaboration between R1Head Start and the surrounding VPI programs to develop a single preschool application form.

The R1-3 relationship somewhat reactivated when two changes occurred. First, the current VPI administrator, who is also the assistant superintendent for the small rural community of LEA-3, began in her role in 2009 and began interacting with the R1Head Start Director. Second, in the winter of 2009-2010, the roof collapsed on the building where the Head Start classroom resided in the school district. The R1Head Start director approached the VPI-3 administrator about providing space for the Head Start classroom. It is during these conversations that they broached the subject of having a blended classroom in one of the LEA's three elementary schools, the school within the town limits. The school district was amenable because it allowed them to move one of their VPI classrooms out of the town elementary school and out to one of the more rural county schools. For this group, while Head Start initiated the conversation about sharing space and blending, the preschool classrooms seems to be a true combination of the Head Start and VPI programs.

While the collapsed roof helped reactivate the conversation, the R1Head Start Director expresses a similar theme of equity as discussed for some of the LEAs above when she was asked about the motivation for pursuing a blended classroom with LEA-3:

Well, number one, we think it would benefit the children. And then parents don't feel this need, like I gotta (*sic*) pick this one. See, we wanted to change public

perception. We didn't want anyone to think, "Well, because it's school it's better, or because it's Head Start, you're poor." You know, when you are in a small town and you are in a close-knit community like [LEA 3], not that there's anything to be ashamed of being lower income, or anything like that, but it takes the stigma off the families. Everybody goes in the same school building, everybody has the same teacher. We don't go into the classroom and all of the Head Start children have on little red shirts, it's just all the children. We say Head Start or VPI so we can keep the funding straight. But in smaller communities, it's real important for the children and their families... So when Head Start was over here and VPI was over there, it was like, "ok, here's where the poor folks go," you know. So we started because we wanted to change that public perception. (R1Head Start Director, Interviewee 1, SWV Region)

One final note about the R1-3 relationship is that a new R1Head Start administrator adds another element of reactivation as the collaborative relationship adjusts to the change of personnel. The new R1Head Start director was very positive about the existing R1-3 relationship, but given the newness of her role as a Regional Head Start Administrator, discussed how she had a lot to do to figure out her role:

Interviewer: What do you see as your role in that? [Asking about inheriting the collaboration between R1Head Start and VPI in the SWV.]

R1Head Start Director (Interviewee 2): I'm not really sure yet. I think that if I give the role that I felt that [name of first R1 Head Start Director] had in the collaboration; she sort of, she more or less directed. She was like the facilitator of the collaboration. But, from the meetings that I attended, I still feel like it was sort of one way. I would like more input from the VPI. What do they want to see out of this? This is not just Head Start... [SWV Region]

Another activity that resides in the activation phase of collaborative management is obtaining appropriate permissions from those higher in command about engaging the collaborative activity. Once the informants shared that they had at least one blended classroom in their dyadic relationship, they were asked about the type of permission they had to obtain. This type of permission is different than working through detailed processes and regulations that

comes later in the synthesizing phase, and instead reflects simply an initial buy-in from higher authority that pursuing collaboration between Head Start and VPI is acceptable.

For the LEAs, I asked them what type of permission they had to obtain. None of the five LEAs reported having to get full approval from the local school board in order to proceed with blending classrooms, although some did mention that their LEA superintendent did communicate the blending opportunity to their respective school boards. The three smaller rural LEAs of the five collaborators, LEA-3, LEA-10, and LEA-11, discussed the opportunity with their respective superintendents and received support. LEA-5 and LEA-6 are larger school districts with additional layers of school administration. In both of these cases the VPI administrators obtained permission from their direct supervisor, a person at the assistant superintendent level. For the Head Start directors, they felt freedom to pursue blending programs that they knew would be followed up with detailed assessments and processes necessary to meet the Head Start regulations.

I argue that these activation stories link to the beginning structural elements of the governance and administration collaborative process dimensions. For the purposes of the QCA, all of these dyadic partnerships exhibited strong governance and strong administration; however, a more detailed assessment of these dyads is available based upon the number of indicators they met for each dimension⁵¹. The following table breaks down a more detailed assessment of each dyad and the strength of the governance and administration.

⁵¹ Chapter Six includes a detailed discussion about the operational definitions of each collaborative process dimension, including the indicators that comprise the definition. Strength is based upon the number of indicators (or in some cases combinations of indicators) that the dyadic partnership exhibits. Table 6.1 describes the definitions of strength in detail. For the crisp set QCA, I developed a threshold by which each dyadic partnership was identified (on each dimension) as being “strong” or “not strong;” however, the actual strength included a gradated amount including the possibilities of “weak,” “medium weak,” “medium strong,” or “strong.” In

Table 7.1. Collaborators' Governance and Administration Strength

Dyad	Governance	Administration
R1-3	Strong	Medium Strong
R2-5	Strong	Medium Strong
R2-6	Strong	Strong
R2-10	Medium Strong	Strong
R2-11	Strong	Strong

While Table 7.1 shows there to be some variation in the governance and administration collaborative process dimension for collaborating dyads, we find that on the whole, they rank very strong on these dimensions. For R1-3, a medium strong administration reflects the newness of the R1Head Start director as she admittedly feels out what her role is in the collaboration; however, R1-3 retained strong governance because it was very clear that these partners take the relationship very seriously, brainstorm together and retain elements of both formal and informal structure.

Issues not directly related to activation or reactivation may explain the other medium-strong rankings. For R2-10, they received medium-strong governance because when asked, the VPI-10 Director reported “no,” they do not participate in brainstorming with Head Start. Comparatively, the three other NWV collaborators all received strong governance, indicating that they did affirm that they brain storm with Head Start. It could simply be a difference of interpretation by the VPI-10 administrator about what brain storming entails and that brainstorming does occur between the R2-10 partners.

Finally, for R2-5, they received a medium-strong on administration for two reasons. First because the VPI-5 director indicated that while roles are clear, they have been changing recently and are still developing (and the R2-Head Start director indicated an unclear sense of Head

the case of the mutuality dimension, the possibilities included only “weak,” “medium,” or “strong.”

Start's role with this changing relationship). Secondly, the VPI-5 Administrator shared that while they agree on larger program goals, she feels that the dyad could do a better job of creating collaborative goals together. If we take these issues as part of the activation or reactivation techniques, then it may not only be changing personnel, mandates, or resources that reactivate collaboration between dyads, but also a desire to readjust boundaries and change roles. In turn, when reactivated this way, the balance of administration could change as partners realign and try to understand their roles. However, it could be that these changes reflect more of a framing issue for the dyad that will be discussed in more detail below.

While the NWV region has a much longer history of collaboration compared to the SWV region, they do share a similarity that may be a telling part of activating collaboration for these regions. Out of the five cases studied, these two cases are the only ones that have a larger network of Head Start-VPI relationships comprised of the regional dyadic partnerships. In other words, in addition to the dyadic relationship that occurs between the Regional Head Start director and the respective VPI administrators, in these two regions, all of the VPI administrators and the respective regional Head Start directors meet on a regular or semi-regular basis to discuss preschool issues. For these regions, activation not only included establishing one-on-one relationships between dyadic partners, but also establishing a more formalized structure that includes meeting in a larger group. For both of these regions, the Head Start administrators were instrumental in building the larger collaborative network.

To summarize, the collaborators' activating and reactivating activities do share some commonalities. In both regions, the Head Start administrators initiated the larger collaborative network to formalize regular meetings between themselves and their respective VPI program administrators. The group is split on who initiated the blending classroom opportunities that

identify this group as the most involved in the study. However, two strong themes emerge for activating this type of activity: in two of the dyads issues of equity for community children prompt blending, in another two dyads issues of limited resources (including limited population of preschool children) prompt programs blending. Finally, in one dyadic partnership (R1-3), both of these themes emerge. A collapsed roof provided the final push to activate blending that was deemed as a way to eliminate VPI and Head Start programmatic differences that could help reduce the stigma of Head Start being geared towards the most impoverished children in a community.

We now turn to a discussion of the activation and reactivation stories of the next most involved group, the coordinators.

Coordination

Six dyadic partnerships comprise the coordination degree of collaborative activity and reflect three different regions in this study. Coordinators engage in collaborative activities that reflect coordinating applications, schedules or processes to streamline enrollment, sharing building space or transportation, or planning joint professional opportunities. Three are from the NWV region, two are from SWV region, and one is from the small central city (SCC) region. I conducted the QCA for this group twice, once comparing them to lesser-involved dyadic partnerships, and one time comparing them to the collaborators. Generally speaking, the findings from the QCA report that coordinators also have strong governance, but not all coordinators have strong administration.

For these groups, the overall activation stories for the beginning of collaboration in the NWV and SWV regions are the same, while differences emerge in the individual dyadic

activation stories. For example, for R1-2, part of the motivation shared by the R1Head Start Director for initiating collaboration with VPI-2 was to overcome stories she was told of negative opinions of Head Start held by VPI-2 personnel and to repair past bad relationships. She explains that at one time Head Start classrooms shared space in a building that also housed VPI classrooms in the LEA-2 school district; it was during this time that she heard of the negative opinions of R1Head Start.

I heard some very negative feedback about Head Start, and I was like, they don't really understand stuff, you know? They were saying that, "we weren't structured enough," that "the children were rowdy," that "there were behavior problems." They didn't feel the teachers were qualified, or whatever. [R1Head Start Director, First Interviewee, SWV Region]

From this, the R1-Head Start director made a point to investigate why these opinions exist and to find a way to move forward. She continues:

...It started to come out slowly but surely that the last Head Start director had a very adversarial relationship with some of the VPI people. And I said, "Oh my goodness, that is going to be really difficult for me to overcome." But you know, I was just really confident and I said, "Look, this is me", and I attempted to have a sincere and genuine approach to say what I wanted. And I set up a meeting, and in [LEA-2] is where I started because I knew that was going to be the hardest nut to crack. And I set up a meeting, and I introduced myself, and I brought materials from Head Start. You know, what I said to them was that "I want to wipe the slate clean. And I want to invite you sit in on our classroom, to meet with our teachers," and so I really started telling her about Head Start, and why Head Start existed, and why these children needed special things. And why maybe what they were seeing or what they were hearing was not about the children being unruly, it was about sharing our philosophy in terms of what we wanted for families and what we want for children. [R1Head Start Director, First Interviewee, SWV Region]

The activation of R4-14 also involves some issues of negative opinions of Head Start. Similar to the NWV region, this dyad also has a history of collaboration between R4Head Start and LEA-14 before the start of the VPI program; in this community, due to space needs, the Head Start program shared building space in a local elementary school long before the VPI

program began. The VPI-14 administrator shares some concerns over the Head Start quality in their community:

...[T]he quality wasn't there...their teachers weren't as qualified as the VPI teachers. They didn't seem to have the—they may have the funding, but they didn't have the flexibility in their funding, maybe, as much. I think it was very top heavy. You know, so parents were seeing that we're taking field trips and experiences and doing all these things, and then their children were missing out on all of that. [VPI-14 Administrator, SCC Region]

The VPI-14 Administrator goes on to discuss when she perceived collaboration beginning between the VPI program and Head Start. Like many dyads in this study, and although beyond the focus of this research, she discusses early collaboration that occurred between LEA-14 and R4Head Start with early childhood special education (ECSE) programming.⁵² The VPI-14 administrator discusses these early interactions between ECSE and Head Start, and then the activation of R4Head Start with the VPI-14 program, which from her vantage point was forced due to the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007:

We had started out doing collaboration with ECSE...And we do, the children go back and forth, or we team up activities with them, field trips and things of that nature and do a lot of joint things. So that's what started the collaboration, and then once Head Start, they contacted us, because of that whole reauthorization grant. I think they were nervous. They were nervous that, if they didn't do it [attempt to collaborate], they were going to be almost null and void, or that they would get rid of them. So it was kind of forced for them I think, and they were very open to doing it, but I think it's because they knew they had to do it. So they were trying to do whatever we were willing to do with them. [VPI-14 Administrator, SCC Region]

For the coordinators of the NWV region, overcoming negative opinions of each other does not seem to be an issue, although the VPI-7 director does mention that the changing players at

⁵² Often children with special needs are supported with funds from the LEA that provide them services and early schooling experiences; however, they often attend Head Start preschool also. These children are often referred to as “dual-enrolled” students.

the R2Head Start office do raise concerns for her in terms of feeling confident that partners understand clearly defined roles. From her perspective as new Head Start personnel are activated, she is not always assured that they clearly understand their roles. She comments on this situation:

...[T]here's been multiple staff turnover changes there. So that makes it really hard to really build that partnership when you have, every year or two you have to build that relationship. So you need more collaboration because you still haven't got to that partnership because you don't know that person, they don't know you that well yet. So I think there's an ebb and flow there that makes it a little less natural, because there's still a lot of turnover. [VPI-7 Administrator, NWV Region]

When asked about how the R2-7 programs work together and the decisions on how to collaborate, the VPI-7 administrator offers insight to why R2-7 has remained at the coordination degree of collaborative activity:

No we never tried to blend funds. We just made the decision that the Head Start is a grant, and VPI is a grant. Neither is guaranteed, though it is very stable and been around for a good while, neither is guaranteed. We just felt like it was easier to keep them separate so that if there ever was a change in funding based on administration at the federal level or whatever, it wouldn't hurt us. I mean, so we would be ready to function without it. [VPI-7 Administrator, NWV Region]

Like the VPI-5 administrator, the VPI-7 administrator was also once a Head Start employee, so she has a long-range view of activation between Head Start and the LEAs. She offers interesting insight to what she thought that the start of the VPI program brought to the Head Start and LEA relationship in the NWV region. She observes that with the onset of a formalized program like VPI, she saw a greater investment in preschool education by the public schools:

You know, it did create a little bit of tension, I think, for Head Start in that, "oh now you have this other set of rules." And then, it also—the positive part that I thought was it created more of a buy in from the school division, the public. They were running Head Start before at basically no cost; with VPI, they had to match funds. And so they now were putting in money, and of course, now that money is involved the people will start paying more attention to things. And so it became

very much more involved. More school systems wanted to have a say, and so that creates that need for collaboration or partnership. [VPI-7 Administrator, NWV region]

The VPI-8 Administrator also expresses a history of togetherness with Head Start, but a clear decision to maintain the VPI and Head Start programs as distinct, separate entities. For this school district, a slightly higher income level for the county limits the number of Head Start eligible children in the community. Thus, she explains the beginning for the only Head Start classroom in the community:

As the VPI program was growing over the years, we did not have a program at [name] elementary school and we wanted one there. It had a high enough percentage of free and reduced students that Head Start felt they could get enough children to fit their criteria. So they became the preschool program at that school until we could get enough money to add a VPI program. [VPI-8 Administrator, NWV Region]

Eventually, LEA-8 received additional VPI funds to support a VPI classroom in the same building as the Head Start classroom. She goes on to explain that the VPI and Head Start classrooms run as separate entities in the elementary school that solidifies a clear intention of remaining program distinction:

There are some differences between the programs as far as federal funding, federal regulations like family style meals, things like that. Uh, the other preschool classroom does not do that. So it—they're just, they're totally separate. Which allows their program to do what is expected from the federal point, and the VPI program to do what's expected from the state and local point. [VPI-8 Administrator, NWV Region]

The R2-9 dyad is unique in this study because in this relationship, they attempted to blend classrooms, or collaborate, for a couple of years. However, due to changes in a Head Start regulation that required a specific type of credentialing for teacher's aides in the classroom, the additional funds needed to support this change prompted a decision by LEA-9 to return to coordinating. The VPI-9 administrator was new to LEA-9 and discusses her excitement to

attempt blending when the space needs the elementary school prompted the school district to move all of the VPI and Head Start classrooms to an old elementary school building:

The prompting to bring them together in one center was that our elementary schools were over crowded...When we went together, it has always been my desire to blend the classrooms. So when we moved to the center, I blended all the classrooms—we had Head Start in all of the classrooms. And then financially we needed to make decisions to un-blend them. [VPI-9 Administrator, NWV Region]

For the last coordinating dyad of this study, R1-1, the activation story also begins with the charismatic R1Head Start Director who initiated conversations with the VPI-1 director. The now retired VPI-1 administrator recalled how the relationship with Head Start was activated:

Interviewer: Ok, so go back and if you can remember, how did that start? Was it a phone call?

VPI-1, First Interviewee: It was a phone call from [R1Head Start Director]. I think she was new to her position. She came from Baltimore. And she called and said, “I would like to meet with you.” ...And we just had a wonderful meeting. We talked a lot about Head Start because I didn’t know anything about Head Start because we had never done anything with Head Start. I don’t think she knew a lot about VPI. I think I may have been one of the first VPI people for her to meet with. I think so because of the questions she asked. I had been in the role for a couple of years so I maybe had a bit of an idea about what we were doing. And we just set down and talked. [VPI-1 Administrator, First Interviewee, SWV Region]

Another dimension of activation for R1-1 is that this dyad reactivated possibilities about blending classrooms when LEA-1 built two new elementary schools in its district. Blending did not occur; as the VPI-1 administrator explained, the R1Head Start director went to the LEA administration to discuss opportunities, but upon investigation, LEA-1 declined to blend classrooms with Head Start. Although the VPI-1 director did not know all of the details (R1Head Start director met with an Assistant Superintendent in the LEA), she heard that the LEA-1 was given the advice of “not to do it” by some LEA contacts who do/or have blended with Head Start.

When looking at the more detailed descriptions of governance and administration process dimensions for the coordinators, some important differences emerge compared to the collaborators. Compared to their more involved counterparts, the majority of coordinators exhibit medium strong governance and medium strong administration. This finding reveals that, generally speaking, coordinators only met three of the four indicators for governance and two of the three administration indicators. Table 7.2 displays the dimension attributes.

Table 7.2. Coordinators' Governance and Administration Strength

Dyad	Governance	Administration
R1-1	Medium Strong	Medium Strong
R1-2	Medium Strong	Medium Weak
R2-7	Medium Strong	Medium Strong
R2-8	Medium Strong	Medium Strong
R2-9	Strong	Medium Strong
R4-14	Medium Strong	Medium Strong

For these dimensions, there are several factors that affect why the coordinators received the strength that they did. Table 7.3 describes these for each dyad:

Table 7.3. Factors Affecting Coordinators’ Governance and Administration Strength

Dyad	Governance	Administration
R1-1	R1Head Start Director (Second Interviewee) gives qualified “maybe” to VPI-1 as serious partner	Recent changes for both R1Head Start director and VPI-1 administrator leaves roles to be re-worked out (although historically strong); and some differences in ideas about school readiness (goals).
R1-2	LEA-2 administration does not see Head Start as “serious partner” ⁵³	VPI-2 does not have a strong sense of collaborative role; differences in ideas about school readiness (goals).
R2-7	VPI-7 reports much turnover of R2Head Start staff limits ability to be serious partners	VPI-7 reports much turnover of R2Head Start staff limits understanding or roles.
R2-8	VPI-8 reports no brainstorming on collaborative issues	No real collaborative role defined; VPI-8 sees role in terms of VPI only.
R2-9	Strong	VPI-9 reports slight confusion on role in the consortium (VPI-9 relatively new in role); also discusses some differences in program strategies/goals.
R4-14	VPI-14 believes R4 Head Start could be a more serious partner in the relationship; R4Head Start Director is relatively new in her role	VPI-14 suggests differences in goals/quality standards between VPI and Head Start.

While individual details vary across these coordinating dyads, reviewing the activating and reactivating stories of these dyads and reviewing the factors affecting governance and administration strength begin to reveal some commonalities among these dyads. First, for four of

⁵³ This opinion was shared by the VPI-2 Director about LEA-2’s perspective.

the six coordinating dyads, one of the partners expresses that the partnership between programs is lacking or could be taken more seriously by their counterpart. For R2-7, the personnel changes at Region 2 Head Start have raised concerns for maintaining a serious partnership. For R1-2, VPI-2 expresses an opinion that while she may take the interaction with Head Start as a serious partnership, she doubts seriously that the upper administration of LEA-2 does. As discussed earlier, the perception of how serious partners are about working together does much to set up the structure of the collaborative relationship (Agranoff, 2007; Mattesich, Murray-Close, and Monsey, 2001; Thomson and Perry, 2006; Thomson et al., 2007), and this is a clear distinction from collaborators who all report taking the dyadic partnership seriously.

The issue of upper administrative support and buy-in is another theme emerging from the activation and reactivation stories. As mentioned, R1-2 expresses an opinion that the LEA upper-administration does not see Head Start as a serious partner. R2-7 portrays an administration focused on potential issues with grant funds disappearing and an unwillingness to support blending Head Start and VPI classrooms. Also, in two cases, R1-1 and R2-9, LEA administration explicitly refused support for blended classrooms, in a proposed situation in the former and an existing situation in the latter. Comparatively, collaborators expressed much more buy-in and support from the upper-administration in their respective LEAs for activating blended classroom situations.

Another theme relates to changing personnel or at least the perception of changing personnel on structural elements. Five of the six coordinators have had changes in personnel in one or both programs. For R2-7, she senses these changes in Head Start as affecting clarity of roles and coordination. For R1-1, new administrators for both Head Start and VPI have reduced role clarity and opened up new (but unclear) coordination efforts. Interestingly, while the R1 Head Start

director is also “new” for the R1-3 collaboration, she seems to give this relationship a serious nod given her knowledge of the blended relationship, but raises concerns about partnerships for the other dyads. It seems as if the depth of involvement for R1-3 has created a positive carry over that she wishes to continue; she has concerns but leaves open possibilities for deep involvement for R1-1 and R1-2. For R2-8 and R4-14, at least one administrator of the dyad is relatively new in their role and reduces their sense of role clarity.

Finally, four of the six coordinators discuss lack of goal consensus and strategies between VPI and Head Start. For the SWV region, both R1Head Start administrators and VPI-1 and VPI-2 discuss some differences in definitions of school readiness. These highlight some of the programmatic differences discussed in Chapter Two about Head Start’s more socio-developmental approach to preschool compared to VPI’s more pre-academic approach. For R4-14, VPI-14 expresses some concerns that differences in ideas about quality education keep Head Start and VPI goals from being aligned; however, while there indeed may be some legitimate quality issues, it could be that these stated differences reflect not so much difference in quality as difference with respect to the approach to preschool education. Compared to the coordinators, only one collaborator discussed any goal disagreement and this was more about creating collaborative goals together rather than a disagreement on overall goals.

Now that we have reviewed the activation stories for the coordinators and the link to governance and administration degrees of collaborative process dimensions, we now turn the lesser-involved dyads, the cooperators and the non-involved.

Cooperation & No Relationship

Five dyads are labeled as cooperation or no relationship in this research. Cooperators engage in collaborative activities by sharing enrollment lists or making referrals. They also may sit down together to discuss applicants, but do little else together. Dyads with “no relationship” have little interaction beyond having a MOU on file, which may or may not be the situation. These five dyads represent three regions in this study. Two are from the Rural East Shore (RES), two are from Urban Tidewater (UT), and one is from Small Central City (SCC). The “no relationship” dyad resides in RES.

R3Head Start reports a stormy history of relationships between themselves and the two LEAs that reside in the RES. The R3Head Start Director reports that while collaboration between Head Start and the school systems has occurred for years for ECSE children (similar to the SCC region), they have very little relationship development in terms of collaboration between R3Head Start and the VPI programs. She shares that they attempted conversations a few years prior to the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization grant because the R3Head Start program noticed issues with filling classroom slots. Her perception of the situation was that students enrolled in Head Start were being recruited by the RES VPI programs when they turned four-years old. She discusses that in addition to attempting conversations, they also brought in the liaison from the Head Start State Collaboration Office to talk to the school districts. She explains that their approach to these conversations was to explain the issue with enrollment and the potential threat to their Head Start grant:

[W]e tried to share with the school system that if we can't fill our classrooms, then that means we will lose some of our grant money. And once you lose that money, that money doesn't come back to the county. And it would be beneficial to us if we worked together. [R3Head Start Director, RES Region]

For R3-12, these initial conversations did activate some collaborative activity between R3Head Start and VPI-12. The VPI-12 administrator concurs with the activation of any collaborative activity being around the same time as the 2007 Reauthorization Act; however, she does not share a clear sense that the activation began with a visit from the R3Head Start administrator. When asked how collaborative activity began between programs, she recalls:

You know, I'm not sure. I do remember attending some Smart Beginnings⁵⁴ meetings in the Tidewater area. And I don't know if that's where we heard about the braiding and blending and, you know, there was a lot of conversation regionally about working collaboratively with the Head Start... I would say my impression after hearing what some others were doing, was more like maybe we should be doing it [working together in some way]. [VPI-12 Administrator, RES Region]

Similar to the VPI-14 administrator of the SCC region, VPI-12 also discusses some issues of the public (and school administration) perceiving the Head Start program as lacking quality. She clarifies that this *was* the perception, but feels it has been changing since the interaction between VPI-12 and R3Head Start began:

We have kind of a history on the [RES] where we have, up until probably about 8 or 10 years ago, the Head Start program really wasn't—the perception in the community was that it wasn't as strong as the public school program. I would beg to differ right now, because they have talked to us enough, so that they're aware of, you know, the state foundation blocks, and they are aware—they even adopted the core program that we had previously used. [VPI-12 Administrator, RES Region]

For R3-13, these initiated conversations did not activate much collaborative activity between the programs. The R3Head Start Director shares that she sensed a lack of openness to Head

⁵⁴ Smart Beginnings is a public-private partnership sponsored by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundations to create community networks focused on early childhood education and care issues. It often includes both Head Start and VPI personnel on the network along with private daycare agencies and other business leaders. Its purpose and scope is broader in nature and considered to be beyond the focus of this study.

Start's concerns about enrolled Head Start children being "stolen" by the VPI-13 program in these initial conversations:

[B]ut it was difficult for us in [LEA-13] because they dug their heels in, even at the meeting with their supervisors, [they would say] that parents have a choice. And that is true, parents do have a choice, but that choice is that I want to get the most "bang for my buck," and if Head Start is currently providing services to, let's say 74, children in [LEA 13]. Well, I want those children enrolled, to stay where they currently are, so that [name of] school can go on and serve however many *additional* children. [R3Head Start Director, RES Region]

The current VPI-13 administrator is very new to her position but shared that she was aware of some of this disconnect between programs. Similar to the R3Head Start director who felt that she continues to try to reactivate a relationship, the VPI-13 administrator too notes that there is room for lines of communication between programs to open. She does go on to share a specific "activation" story of a recent student who is dual-enrolled in R3Head Start and VPI-13, but is not a special needs student. The student was enrolled in R3Head Start, but receiving some services from the school district, and his parent approached the school about attending both Head Start and VPI programs. VPI-13 discusses making contact with R3Head Start:

The parent came—yeah, I had to ask the question at a meeting at the school, so I had to approach Head Start and we had a conversation about implementing that and it wasn't—you know, it was basically all brand new. We explored transportation between the agencies, so you know, it really wasn't an issue. [VPI-13 Administrator, RES Region]

In this instance, this more detailed discussion might reflect synthesizing in another region, or taking steps to bring about collaborative activities; however, for this dyad, it seems that an opportunity to create a collaborative activity is an example of activation for them. The VPI-13 administrator goes on to note that there is not a model for this type of interaction, but notes that both programs were amenable to making it work for the student.

For Region 5, Urban Tidewater (UT), a distinctive history exists between the R5Head Start program and the two participating VPI programs in this study. Both R5-16 and R5-17 are new relationships because the Head Start grantee that was overseeing the regional Head Start program in LEAs 16-17 was defunded and the replacement grant was rewarded to a neighboring Head Start grantee, R5Head Start, who has been operating the Head Start program for years within the wider geographical area. Also, compared to the other cases in this study, R5Head Start and the VPI programs are by far much larger preschool programs and thus, have additional layers of administration on both sides that may add some challenges to identifying collaborative partners.

For R5-16, two different activation stories emerge. From the VPI-16 administrator's standpoint, they shared a story of former relationships with the prior Head Start grantee that spanned back more than ten years to programs initiated by LEA-16 to pair VPI teachers to Head Start teachers for professional development. Then, in aligning with a citywide strategic plan that had included focusing on providing quality early childhood education in their city, in 2010 LEA-16 received an early literacy grant that included training opportunities for both VPI and Head Start teachers. At the time of the interview for this study, the grant had just ended. Next, with the new R5Head Start administration, it appeared that while the grant ended, a coordinated relationship for R5-16 would continue; however, more recent information revealed that the early childhood administrative staff of LEA-16 no longer work with the school district and R5Head Start has been unable to make a connection to keep this relationship going. So far, LEA-16 has not been responsive to R5Head Start's attempt to reactivate. The R5Head Start Director explains:

Surprisingly, [LEA-16] lost their Early Childhood leaders including the one who worked so closely with us at the beginning of the summer in 2013. During the past program year, we were unable to find out our contact or receive a response from the superintendent's office. Once he called our Executive Director [of the CAA] and said he would set up a meeting, but never did. We met with his

assistant in October, but did not receive the follow up promised. [R5Head Start Director, UT Region]

For R5-17, a relatively new relationship between R5Head Start and a cumbersome structure of preschool relationships limit the activation between R5Head Start and VPI-17. In this locality, LEA-17 does not manage the VPI-17 program; rather, it is contracted out to a local YMCA program to manage. For VPI-17, the LEA administrator who oversees the VPI-17 program is much more comfortable discussing collaboration with the local YMCA program and less knowledgeable about what occurs with R5Head Start. Also when asked about the R5Head Start personnel, she was unclear of the name of the R5Head Start director, again indicating a lack of clarity of activation between programs. The VPI-17 administrator discusses her perception of the grantee transition:

But I will tell you, while I think that they are delightful, because of the reorganization that they've been going through; it's been a very rocky transition. Just because I think they're trying to find their way—not because I think they don't want to be involved, I just think that they're trying to find their way. [VPI-17 Administrator, UT Region]

On a more recent follow up, when discussing collaboration that occurs between programs, the R5Head Start program reports some positive strides made with this group to establish a connection; so it does seem that some activation may have begun.

Finally, for the last cooperator, R4-15, a host of new players seems to have reactivated possibilities for this dyadic partnership. The interim VPI-15 administrator shared that the former, and now deceased, VPI-15 administrator had been ill for some time. In addition, as discussed earlier, the R4Head Start administrator is relatively new in her role as regional director; thus it seems that not much exchange has occurred between programs for a while. At one time, Head Start did share some space in a LEA-15 preschool owned building, but that is no longer the case. Also, informants shared that like many other dyads in this study, while LEA-15 has an

established history of Head Start and LEA-15’s ECSE program working together, there has been much less activation of relationships between VPI-15 and R4Head Start. According to the VPI-15 interim director, however, it seems that recent reactivation may be underway. She explains when asked what sparked investigating new possibilities between R4Head Start and VPI-15:

I think what’s happened, and that’s where, I’m sorry I can’t give you more details, there’s a whole new group. The executive director, now of Head Start, has only been there—this is her 2nd year of doing that. So it’s a whole new group of people working and we’re analyzing, you know, what is our vision, what is our needs. What we need to do together, what we can do together so that we’re best serving all of the children. I think it’s that perfect storm in that there’s all these new people...So we’re all trying to figure out what’s going on and how we can, at the very least, support each other in being the very best we could possibly be.
[VPI-15 Interim Administrator, SCC Region]

For these cooperators and the non-involved dyad, they fall on the low end of governance and administration. It is here that we illuminate how the lack of a clear and concrete activation story reduces the likelihood of building strong structural dimensions of collaboration. Whether due to a large amount of administrative turnover with little institutional history to support the changes, or lack of a clear beginning, these fuzzy activations seem to diminish building governance, and seem to undercut the beginning of strong administration. Table 7.4 describes the strength of the cooperators’ and non-involved’ governance and administration.

Table 7.4. Cooperator & No Relationship’s Governance and Administration Strength

Dyad	Governance	Administration
R3-12	Medium Weak	Medium Weak
R3-13	Weak	Medium Weak
R4-15	Medium Weak	Medium Weak
R5-16	Medium Weak	Medium Weak
R5-17	Medium Weak	Medium Weak

The four cooperators have all been labeled as medium weak governance, indicating that they met one indicator (or perhaps partially met two indicators) of the governance dimension. The

cooperators all acknowledge a very limited view of themselves as partners with their programmatic counterpart. For R3-12, both administrators expressed having a limited partnership that mainly focuses on retaining individual program enrollment. For R4-15, R5-16, and R5-17 changes to the administrative players greatly reduce the seriousness of the partnership, either due to the newness of the attempts to activate relationships or the diminishing of activation between partners. For example, the R5Head Start administrator notes that while the relationship with VPI-17 is very new and developing, she feels that they are making some strides in working together.

The “no relationship” dyad, R3-13, has weak governance; for this dyad, while they do not completely dismiss the term partnership between the programs, in discussions it becomes clear that they view each other as fulfilling their own individual program missions and in that way support the other without having to create a collaborative opportunity together. VPI-13 explains when asked about being a partner with the R3Head Start program:

It’s just that they’re a part of the community that offers a service to the students that you know, if they’re—we’re not working collaboratively to serve the same students, there are students that are going to come to us [enter LEA kindergarten] from their program and so they’re a critical part to their education and just the support of the students that we serve. [VPI-13 Administrator, RES Region]

For these lesser-involved dyads, certain indicators of governance are lacking for all of them. Three of the five indicate no brainstorming activity between programs on collaborative issues. For two of the five, R4-15 and R5-16, limited brainstorming occurs, for the former very recent meetings to brainstorm possibilities of “how” they may collaborate and for the latter, former brainstorming that did occur between programs, but that has altogether disappeared. It seems that activation and brainstorming may be highly related activities. When partners cannot create or recall a shared story of how collaboration begins, it limits their willingness to invest energies in brainstorming about collaborative issues and possibilities.

All of these lesser-involved dyads report medium weak administration. Similar to governance, these dyads typically report meeting one of the indicators. Consistently, all of these dyads report lack of clear coordination and roles; however, all report that they do think that overall the programs do have similar goals. The VPI-15 administrator does note that while they agree overall on goals there maybe some differences to how they approach preschool. The reasons vary for the lack of clarity of roles and coordination, but generally include the newness of reactivating, lack of activating a relationship, or diminishing a once activated relationship.

A commonality emerges when reviewing these activation and reactivation stories compared to the more involved dyads. Unlike the collaborators and coordinators who have clearly defined and articulated activations stories, even if they vary in the content or newness of the stories, the activation stories of the lesser-involved include ill-defined, fuzzy activation that either cannot be agreed upon, is too new to be deemed the “final” agreed upon story, or diminished to the point that the original activation story no longer has meaning. Results from this study support that activation is an important phase of building collaboration; in particular, it appears to be a building block to establishing the structural dimension of governance and the beginning phases of administration. Table 7.5 groups the dyads by degree of collaborative activity, shows their strength of governance and administration, and describes their activation story as nonexistent, beginning, fuzzy, established (with or without qualifying information), or diminished.

Table 7.5. Examining Governance and Administration by Activation Story Category

Degree of Collab Activity	Dyad	Governance	Administration	Activation/Reactivation
Collaboration	R1-3	Strong	Medium Strong	Established, but with some new players
Collaboration	R2-5	Strong	Medium Strong	Established
Collaboration	R2-6	Strong	Strong	Established
Collaboration	R2-10	Medium Strong	Strong	Established, but with some new players
Collaboration	R2-11	Strong	Strong	Established
Coordination	R1-1	Medium Strong	Medium Strong	Established, but with new players
Coordination	R1-2	Medium Strong	Medium Weak	Established, but with some new players
Coordination	R2-7	Medium Strong	Medium Strong	Established, with some new players
Coordination	R2-8	Medium Strong	Medium Strong	Established
Coordination	R2-9	Strong	Medium Strong	Established, with some new players
Coordination	R4-14	Medium Strong	Medium Strong	Established, with some new players
Cooperation	R3-12	Medium Weak	Medium Weak	Fuzzy
Cooperation	R4-15	Medium Weak	Medium Weak	Beginning
Cooperation	R5-16	Medium Weak	Medium Weak	Diminished
Cooperation	R5-17	Medium Weak	Medium Weak	Fuzzy & Beginning
No Relationship	R3-13	Weak	Medium Weak	Nonexistent

Framing

Once activation or reactivation occurs, framing activities include those conversations and actions that help develop the administration dimensions of collaborative activity. Specifically,

these are the steps taken to establish collaborative roles, coordination, and to begin tackling goal alignment.

Collaborators

The majority of collaborators express building a strong administration dimension, meaning that they feel they have clearly defined roles, can articulate clear coordination between the partners, and agree on overall program goals. Two of the collaborators reveal medium strong administration. As discussed with activation, these may reflect upheaval in changing partners; however, during this phase of analyzing management techniques, we will examine if differing framing techniques also affect the strength of the underlying dimension. We will also examine how the administrators discuss establishing an understanding of roles and coordination.

The collaborators primarily fall in the NWV region, but one collaborator also resides in the SWV region. It may not be coincidence that these two regions reflect the only two in this research that have a larger network between the Head Start program and all of the LEAs/VPI programs in their respective regions; establishing and maintaining a targeted network of collaborative relationships indeed may do much to support opportunities for blending classrooms within individual dyadic partnerships. For our purposes, the larger network is highlighted because when asking VPI and Head Start administrators about roles and coordination, they were asked to reflect upon their dyadic partnership and the overall networked relationships.

For both the SWV and NWV regions, the informants shared that the Head Start administrators coordinate and run the larger network. The Head Start administrative staff sets up the meeting times, makes the copies, and sends the reminders. One of the NWV region

administrators, VPI-6, discusses how she views R2Head Start as leading the preschool consortium and their ability to interact with all seven LEAs individually:

The Head Start office in this consortium, they're really the master organized planners because they meld all seven of us under a big umbrella, each one of us is a great big rain drop that they operate with a little bit differently. [VPI-6 Administrator, NWV Region]

VPI-11 offers a similar sentiment about R2Head Start as leading the preschool consortium:

They [R2Head Start] probably manage it more in terms of calling all of the meetings, making all of the copies, and setting up the monthly meetings. They are also the ones who manage all of the Head Start compliance issues. [VPI-11 Administrator, NWV Region]

For NWV, the preschool consortium has been in place for a long time, and all players seem comfortable with Head Start as running or leading the consortium. The former R1Head Start Director acknowledges her role in coordinating the SWV Head Start/VPI network, but she discusses a sense that others may not be willing to step in to lead or coordinate the relationships.

Well, the biggest challenge is...I can't pass off the leadership thing. See, I always call the meetings together, I establish the agenda. I know as much about the Department of Education and what is going on there as the VPI people because they don't have a mechanism for communication all the way to the top. Whereas Head Start does. [R1Head Start Director, First Interviewee, SWV Region]

She was then asked her opinion about whether it might be easier for R1Head Start to lead the consortium given their regional perspective compared to the LEAs who are focused on their individual school districts. She offers this insight:

That could be the case. But, I think that it is the Head Start families that have the most to lose. So, I think that Head Start is more invested because there is nobody else fighting for these parents. [R1Head Start Director, First Interviewee, SWV Region]

As discussed above, the new R1Head Start Director discusses how she hopes to change the role of R1Head Start as the only leader and coordinator of the preschool collaboration; however, how this plays out has yet to be seen.

While the R2Head Start director does not express a similar sentiment as the former R1Head Start director about hesitating to always be the leader of the consortium, he does express some concern about Head Start's role with some of the collaborators in the NWV region. In particular, he expresses concern about the lack of accountability he feels in R2-5 and R2-6 where R2Head Start does not provide direct services and instead relies upon the respective LEAs to meet the Head Start performance standards. In contrast, he shows great comfort in his and R2Head Start's role in the other two collaborating dyads in the NWV region, R2-10 and R2-11. In these cases where the LEAs have mostly adopted the Head Start program, conversations reveal that he has a clear sense of Head Start's role in the school district, and perhaps more importantly, he can attest to upholding the Head Start performance standards.

For these collaborators, establishing role clarity and coordination comes out of ongoing conversations that these dyadic partners have had throughout their history of interaction. For R2-5, recent conversations aimed at reestablishing roles have revealed some issues of disconnect that explains one of the reasons this dyad has a medium strong administration. The VPI-5 administrator explains that while she thinks roles are clarified now, she sensed too many players on the scene for the VPI-HS blended classrooms in her school district due to strict classroom and service monitoring that Head Start regulation requires. She requested that all Head Start administrative and monitoring personnel come directly through her rather than having direct contact with the Head Start classrooms, teachers, or schools in LEA-5. She comments about this when asked about clarity of roles:

I think they're clearly defined now. I think there was a good chunk of time when they were not, they were very nebulous, and very "who's doing what", you know? And it was out of necessity that we said, "we're not—[going to keep doing this]." And that came about from different [people's reactions], like—the principals reacted to there being so many different people. And the principals react so that's what made the teachers react. You know, and so, that's kind of how we came to this, we're going to have one person we're going to go through. And that took a long time for everybody to work up to, even this year. [VPI-5 Administrator, NWV Region]

She goes on to discuss how she approached changing these role dynamics with R2Head Start.

She expresses that she first garnered support from the upper administration at LEA-5 before contacting R2Head Start via email to discuss the situation. She told me that she had learned through the years to approach issues facing the dyad in this manner; to garner internal support first before approaching R2Head Start. This may be due to the fact that R2Head Start shares the same grantee as VPI-5.

While not recent conversations, the VPI-6 administrator also recalls some challenging conversations to work through clarifying roles. For her program, she remembers that coming to agreement on how the special needs population would be handled for the blended classroom was particularly challenging. She acknowledges that this was most likely due to her specialization in special education, which gave her a strong sense of ownership over the process for the blended preschool program:

Disabilities is probably a harder one because Head Start wants to define all of the referrals and evaluations and helping parents understand their rights, and as a Director of Special Education, I am not going to let Head Start tell parents their rights, I am going to do that. So those were harder conversations. They were like, "no, we [Head Start] need to do that." And I would say, "Look, this kid is 2 or 3 years old. At most you are going to have a relationship with this kid for 2 years, we have a relationship until they are 22 years old. You don't need to have the relationship with them, we do." So those are harder things to hash out about who has responsibility for it, and then how you do it jointly. [VPI-6 Administrator, NWV Region]

While both of these examples show that conflict occurs while partners hash out role dynamics, an important takeaway is the willingness of one partner to acquiesce. In both instances, the R2Head Start program agreed to the conditions requested by their partner. However, it would be inaccurate to say that these challenging conversations and relinquishing control over certain roles are completely agreeable to the R2Head Start director. He comments on changes to roles for these partnerships and their working agreement (MOUs) when asked to clarify what aspects of changing roles is challenging:

Changing the working agreements so that you are so dramatically different from the rest of the [preschool] consortium that you are running a program totally different in that division. Having to go through a [VPI] filter to speak to a parent, a family, a staff member who is Head Start. Not having access to any of the vital information of students. [R2Head Start Director, NWV Region]

For R1-3, they too discuss much ongoing interaction to establish roles and coordination of the blended classroom. Both the VPI-3 Administrator and the former R1Head Start director looked to the other as the expert on their respective knowledge base: public school regulations for the former and Head Start standards for the latter. They each brought to bear this knowledge base in establishing their collaborative roles; in other words, by acknowledging each other's expertise and supporting with regulation, they created opportunities to show the other that they could be counted on to work through regulatory differences. For this dyad, synthesizing and framing may go hand in hand; as these partners synthesized the opportunity for a blended classroom, they also developed and shaped ongoing roles for this relationship. Compared to the collaborators in the NWV region, the newness of this blended situation seems to accentuate collaborative decision-making, as the administrators reveal give and take when setting up the blended situation. R1-3 is labeled as "medium strong" administration, but only because a brand

new R1Head Start director discusses a bit of uncertainty in her role with collaborating throughout her region.

For most of the collaborators, in addition to ongoing interaction to negotiate and establish roles, they also pinpoint the MOU as helping to clarify roles. Moreover, the specific Head Start administrative titles (e.g., Education Coordinator, Mental Health Coordinator, etc.) were identified as being very helpful for the VPI partners in understanding their counterparts' roles. The VPI-6 administrators refer to these MOUs and titles, when asked how these clearly defined roles came into existence:

Interviewer: And how do you think those came to be defined?

VPI-6 Administrator: That's a really good question. I don't know. I guess the Head Start people in the office all have these titles. And then with the MOUs, we figure out how to support each other in each of those areas. [NWV Region]

For the VPI-10 administrator, she mentions that conversations to clarify her role as the decision maker for her LEA's preschool program along with the Head Start job titles has really solidified an understanding of roles:

We have definitely clear and defined roles and responsibilities...I mean everyone has—they know that I am in charge when making decisions about who goes into the program—not the principals. They, I think Head Start knows that I will call [the appropriate Head Start staff]...I mean I think everyone knows there's a certain person I'll call—everyone has a defined place and defined job description, what they do. [VPI-10 Administrator, NWV Region]

Finally, all of these collaborators discuss the alignment of their overall program goals, and while some of the collaborators acknowledge some differences in strategies or approaches, they seem to generally agree that they are the same. The VPI-5 administrator does suggest that R2-5 might do a better job of collaboratively creating individual student or program goals; she mentions the sense that at times R2Head Start creates goals that then she is held accountable to

meet. Interestingly, the R2Head Start director shares a similar sentiment for this partnership—that R2Head Start has to show accountability for the Head Start funded students in the blended classrooms when they (Head Start staff) are not interacting with the students directly. For this dyad, a bit of role confusion and reshuffling of roles, and some disconnect between goal alignment between partners prompts this dyad to be labeled as “medium strong,” however; compared to lesser-involved dyads, we see a continued willingness by both parties to participate in challenging conversations to build a shared sense of the administration dimension.

For VPI administrators of R1-3 and R2-6, they both express closer alignment of goals that occurs with collaboration. They both share that by blending classrooms and continuing to learn more about the other program, they are able to establish collaborative goals and “be on the same page.” From this, we see an interaction between the outcomes of collaboration and development of the collaboration processes themselves. In building consensus about overall program goals, these dyads could envision the most involved collaborative activities that then, in turn, aided in more closely aligning their future goals.

In summary, three general takeaways emerge about how collaborators use framing techniques for developing the administration dimension of collaboration. First, they partake in ongoing, continued conversations to clarify their roles and to establish coordination processes. Importantly, they express a willingness to engage in challenging conversations when they question existing roles or wish to open up opportunities for new roles. They acknowledge give and take in acceptance of changing roles, with one partner having to at times acquiesce to the wishes of the other. Secondly, for these collaborators, clear job titles for the Head Start staff and detailed MOUs help to clarify roles and coordination of efforts. The MOUs help to remind

partners what role each other plays in the provision of preschool. Thirdly, they rely on each other's respective regulatory knowledge base as a starting point for collaborative engagement.

Finally, most of the collaborators acknowledge overall goal alignment between programs, and even the one dyad that has a bit of disconnect, acknowledges that overall the programs have the same goals. Generally speaking these goals become more aligned by their deep involvement with each other that allows an even deeper knowledge of one another's programs to occur.

Coordinators

For coordinators, an important observation is that none of these dyads have "strong" administration; five of the dyads are labeled as "medium strong," and one is labeled as "medium weak." We now examine how this group discusses framing techniques of establishing clear roles, setting up coordination, and aligning goals.

Two coordinating dyads reside in the SWV region. Both R1-1 and R1-2 discuss the former R1Head Start director as an essential part of establishing collaborative roles; after she activated collaboration with the LEAs, she was also instrumental in helping her administrative counterparts build an understanding of their roles. The former VPI-1 administrator explains when asked how roles and coordination developed for their partnership and collaborative network:

That was a [name of R1HS director]. [She] did that. She wanted us to all get together. And at that time, we [VPI-1] didn't have a family support specialist, so all of the teachers were doing home visits. So it was just me. So I felt it was my role to listen to the Head Start people and [name of R1HS director], and to take that back to the VPI teachers when we were meeting. [VPI-1 Administrator, First Interviewee, SWV Region]

She goes on to note that the R1Head Start director was instrumental in helping to envision these roles and to take a lead in coordination. She suggests that the R1Head Start director may have been inspired to start collaboration in their region due to her past experience with collaborating in her former state of employment. The VPI-2 coordinator concurs with this revelation that the former R1Head Start director helped to define roles and coordinate the collaborative network. The perspective that these administrators offer is that they learned how to “do” collaboration and what their roles should be through their ongoing interaction with the former R1Head Start director.

One of the ways in which the former R1Head Start director helped to clarify roles was by leveraging knowledge about the Head Start program. She envisioned collaborative roles developing out of increased understanding of each other’s programs. Similar to the collaborative dyad in this region, R1-3, the coordinating dyads also express that their roles involve bringing expertise and connections to the table regarding the VPI and Head Start programs and relaying pertinent information when planning collaborative activities. In particular, helping Head Start to connect to the respective LEA elementary school principals as an outreach effort has been identified as a new role for all of the local VPI administrators in the region. The new VPI-1 administrator observes when asked about what she envisions as her role in the Head Start-VPI collaboration:

Maybe because a lot of us were new, but I came out with a direction and a feeling that we are going to do some collaborating. We are going to get our [school] principals on board, and get our teachers on board. And at least have a meeting and bring an understanding to them of this is what Head Start is and hopefully the Head Start people felt like, oh that is what the school piece looks like. [VPI-1 Administrator, Second Interviewee, SWV Region]

For all of the dyads of SWV region, including both the coordinating and collaborating dyads, all partners mention overall goal agreement, but acknowledge some differences in ideas about what “school readiness” is. For both VPI and Head Start, school readiness is the stated overall goal for what preschool tries to do; however, what is meant by school readiness is a somewhat debated concept between programs.⁵⁵ For this region, part of the framing process includes ongoing conversations about creating a shared vision of school readiness. I observed two larger collaborative meetings for the SWV region, and developing a shared sense of school readiness was something that they wanted to discuss and revisit. Comparatively, for the NWV region, while some VPI administrators mention some differences in regulation and approaches, they generally agreed a shared sense of school readiness had developed between members. Since both of these regions have a larger collaborative network, it seems that some aspects of framing develop between partners, while other aspects seem to carry over from larger collaborative network meetings. For the NWV region, with the long history of their preschool consortium compared to the SWV, they had already framed an overall sense of school readiness.

For the NWV, all of the coordinators report some issues with role clarity. However, mostly we find that this is highly linked to reactivation issues as discussed above in that the VPI-7 administrator discusses turnover at R2Head Start affecting role clarity, and the VPI-9 administrator’s newness in her role affects her comfort level with her collaborative role. At this point, it is probably important to note that while four of the seven VPI (or local preschool) administrators that engage with R2Head Start mentioned the issue of turnover for the R2Head Start staff, the VPI-7 administrator is the only one who consistently highlighted the issue in terms of collaboration between the programs. It could be that this was fresh in her mind during

⁵⁵ See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of differences in definition of school readiness between Head Start and VPI.

our interview because an issue had occurred when the Head Start program bought books for the Head Start classrooms located in one of LEA-7's school building, but not for the VPI classrooms. She felt that this was not something that would have happened in the past and placed "blame" on a lack of role clarity between the newer Head Start staff and her. That said, while indeed this issue was causing some concern for her dyadic partnership, it may not be indicative of a larger scale issue going on within the region.

For R2-9, the VPI-9 administrator identified conversations with the Assistant Head Start director for the NWV region as very helpful in framing her understanding of her collaborative role. For R2-8, she identifies having many conversations with the R2Head Start director, but for her, she does not see a separate collaborative role from her role as VPI administrator. In this regard, the framing that has occurred historically for this dyad is to carve out a separate and different approach to preschool in that school district, but one that both parties seem happy with. The R2Head Start Director explains that both programs are comfortable with these rather "non" collaborative roles:

This one [Head Start] is run this way, and that one [VPI] is run that way, and they're different, and they're perfectly happy. And they're looked at differently, and they're managed differently, and no one cares or is offended. You go about your business and no one is concerned. It [R2-8] is a good cooperative relationship. [R2Head Start Director, NWV Region]

For R4-14, the final coordinating dyad in this study, both the R4Head Start director and the VPI-14 administrator acknowledge some differences between programs, although they are not aligned on what those differences are. The R4-14 Head Start director identifies some of the big differences to be with the population of parents with which the programs engage; for the VPI-14 administrator, she stresses some differences in program quality that keep these programs separated. Moreover, the VPI-14 administrator suggests that while she sees the dyad as having

clearly defined roles, she is hesitant to agree that the roles that she sees written down on the mandated Head Start MOU are really the roles that play out in the day-to-day interactions of the dyad. In other words, she somewhat suggests a “symbolic” aspect to these mandated roles that she is not convinced happen. The R4Head Start director does not present the relationship this way; so it appears that some incomplete framing exists for this dyad.

Several interesting takeaways emerge in examining framing techniques for the coordinating dyads. Activation seems to be linked strongly to framing opportunities for these dyads; that is, new players added to either side of the dyad can affect the abilities to frame an understanding of roles and coordination. Using framing as analogous to building a structural framework for collaboration to occur, issues of framing linked to new players may be seen as *remodeling*, that is, having to revisit role clarity and coordination.

It is not true to assume that all framing opportunities—involving discussions of roles and interaction between partners—result in highly involved collaborative roles. We find that some of the clearest roles for these coordinators involve a decision to *not* have a collaborative role; in other words, for at least one coordinating dyad the decision to remain relatively separated in their collaborative role seems to be mutually agreeable. In this instance, *non-collaborative framing* activities reveal establishing two separate, but equal structures that are happy to interact and coordinate at a distance.

In another coordinating dyad, the framing that has occurred is viewed as somewhat *symbolic*, so it still leaves an unclear sense of what roles really do exist. In some cases framing activities are still materializing so a clear understanding of overall collaborative goals is not yet reached. For these dyads, we find the players drafting *blueprints* for what collaborative goals will look like. For some cooperating dyads, discussed more below, *single-issue framing* entails

creating roles primarily around a single issue, which for these dyads is typically the issue of enrollment. Finally, many of the collaborators engage in ongoing, longstanding *collaborative framing* activities that focus on their collaborative roles and overall goals. These six types of framing occur at the intersection of collaborative focus and degree of mature framing. Table 7.6 lays out these different framing levels. These types can be applied to the collaborators, coordinators, and cooperators in this study.

Table 7.6. Framing Types

	Mature Framing	Immature Framing
Collaborative Focus	Collaborative Framing	Blueprints (early framing) OR Remodeling (new players or roles)
Non-collaborative Focus	Non-collaborative Framing	Symbolic Framing OR Single-issue Framing

Finally, similar to the earlier discussion of collaborators, when coordinators do express having clearly defined roles or agreement of goals, they too identify ongoing communications and conversations specific to spelling out what their program does, and then ultimately investigating what they might do (or not do) together. Well-written MOUs also serve to reinforce roles. When these conversations are unclear or MOUs are seen as merely symbolic, framing activities do not develop to the point to create clearly articulated roles or goal agreement.

We now move on to investigating the framing techniques of the cooperators and non-involved dyads.

Cooperators & No Relationship

Generally speaking, the cooperators and non-involved have very limited framing activities. None of the five dyads acknowledge having a clearly defined collaborative role, and unlike R2-8, discussed above, who had framed an understanding of relatively separated roles, these dyads have engaged in minimal conversations about what their roles should be.

Out of these five dyads, R3-12 has the most ongoing interaction, and perhaps, has somewhat framed an understanding, although limited, of their roles. For this dyad, both administrators discuss coming together to discuss program applicants, but this seems to be the only role they see in each other. For both sides, this role is shrouded in a concern for protecting program slots; while the R3Head Start director argues that protecting Head Start slots opens up opportunities for more children in their community to attend preschool, a shared agreement of why and how they interact has not developed. They also did not agree on who coordinated the effort between them; they both felt that their program typically initiated interaction with the other program. Importantly, while this dyad historically had a signed MOU, recently this too has lapsed.

The R5-16 dyad has also undergone recent changes that have left this once developing dyad with little to no interaction. With the R5Head Start program taking over the Head Start grant that put the former Head Start program and VPI-16 in contact with each other, developing relationships between R5-16 came to a halt recently as the VPI-16 staff were dismissed, leaving R5Head Start an unclear sense who they contact about collaborative activities, and moreover, who to contact to have their MOU signed. Prior to this occurring, the VPI-16 administrator discussed previous interactions with the former Head Start program that focused around a grant, and had a specified grant coordinator to engage the parties. With the ending of the grant and the

subsequent dismissal of the VPI-16 staff, the framing activities that had begun for R5-15 have ended.

The R3-13 dyad has such minimal interaction that it is challenging to identify any framing activities that have occurred. Any roles that were mentioned by the respective administrators reflected recognition of separated programs and assumptions that the other program is doing what it is supposed to be doing. The R3Head Start director discusses attempts to engage VPI-13 in discussions about working together and establishing roles, but senses a hesitation on the side of the LEA-13 administration. The VPI-13 administrator, who is very new in her role, also discusses a lack of interaction, but does not deem it as problematic. She does mention some opportunity for improvement regarding communication between programs, but feels that both programs continue to do their part to provide preschool in their community, on a very separated basis. The VPI-13 administrator explains when asked if there are clearly defined roles between VPI and Head Start:

VPI-13: Do I think that there's clearly defined roles between the two?

Interviewer: Yes.

VPI-13: You know, I don't know that I've ever analyzed it to that degree. I think we worked—we understand what our responsibility is and they understand what their responsibility is...[VPI-13 Administrator, RES Region]

Moreover, upon asking specific questions about contact between administrators, it becomes clear that the R3Head Start director and the VPI-13 administrator have had relatively little interaction, and that mainly the VPI-13 reflects upon interaction with Migrant Head Start program in the area, which is a completely separated program from R3Head Start.

Finally, two of the cooperating dyads seem positioned to undergo framing activities, although they are currently very minimal. R4-15 has recently begun conversations to investigate

opportunities for collaboration between VPI-15 and R4Head Start. When asking the VPI-15 interim administrator about who initiated and coordinated these beginning conversations, she identified herself as the instigator. She explains, acknowledging support from her supervisor:

Interviewer: Who made the phone call and said, “Hey let’s get together and sit down and talk about that”?

VPI-15: I did. With the support and actually, you know, I did it with the Director of Instruction’s support, in saying, “yes, I want you to do that.” So you know, I didn’t do it rogue-ly [*sic*]. [SCC Region]

R5Head Start also reports a continued developing relationship with VPI-17. Similar to R5-16, this dyadic partnership is also fairly new given the transition of Head Start programs. Also, as discussed above, this relationship nests inside a cumbersome array of collaborative relationships since LEA-17 outsources the management of its VPI program to a local YMCA. This became apparent in conversations with the VPI-17 administrator, who upon questioning had little knowledge about who the R5Head Start administrator is. However, in follow up questioning, the R5Head Start administrator reports that conversations have started between entities, and they have a signed MOU on file.

The commonality among these lesser-involved dyads is how little time they have invested in framing opportunities. Even for the one dyad, R3-12, that interacts more than the others in this grouping, they have spent little time conversing about their roles or spelling out coordination. For two dyads, it seems that they may continue to develop these opportunities, but at the time of this study they had not progressed along enough to confidently discuss roles or coordination.

Interestingly, among these lesser-involved dyads, they report sharing overall goal alignment with each other. At least in discussion, while they lack overt discussions about roles, coordination, and goals, they do express fiduciary trust (Thomas, 1998) in their administrative counterpart that both programs are working towards similar goals.

Now that we have reviewed framing activities for all of the dyads, we now move on to mobilizing activities.

Mobilizing

Mobilizing captures the relationship building aspects of collaboration and some of the ongoing negotiations between organizational and collaborative goals/needs. It is an important feature of building the social capital dimension of norms of trust, as collaborative members converse and engage with each other they work on developing a sense of collegiality. As they meet obligations set forth by the partnership and retain confidences, they establish trust between each other. Conversely, relationship building may not always result in building trust and commitment if personalities clash, a partner senses insincerity from the other or doubts the other partner's professional abilities. For this study, I argue that mobilizing captures "how" trust and commitment are established between Head Start and VPI. It also captures how a relationship develops among partners. Finally, as relationships develop between partners, they negotiate program and collaborative goals and discuss program issues, such as program enrollment concerns ("stealing kids" phenomenon).

Collaborators

All five collaborators are labeled as "strong" or "medium strong" on the norms dimension. Generally speaking, they have built trust and commitment between partners. Also, they have invested in developing mutual relationships to undertake collaborative activities together. They have mostly developed a shared focus on collaborative interests with little competing clash of organizational goals.

R2-10 and R2-11 both report strong norms and weak organizational autonomy. For both of these dyads a strong sense of relationship has developed through ongoing communication between VPI administrators and Head Start staff. The VPI-10 administrator explains that she gained a sense of connection to the Head Start staff by ongoing conversations with the Region 2 Assistant Head Start Director and by observing their willingness to come to her site when issues or questions arise with particular children. The VPI-11 administrator also discusses communication and willingness to help each other as part of relationship building with R2Head Start:

VPI-11 Administrator: I feel that we have a good relationship. I can call them if I have questions, or if I need help. Or anything we might need. I think we have a good working relationship.

Interviewer: Ok. How do you think that relationship was established?

VPI-11 Administrator: By effective communication... [NWV Region]

While both of these VPI administrators discuss communication as key, they also point out that part of relationship building is being able to question their counterparts when they misunderstand, or when communication breaks down. The VPI-10 administrator shares an instance of communication breakdown between her and the R2-Assistant Head Start Director:

I'd say my biggest thing with communication with her is email stuff. And you know I get so many emails. Just trying to make sure I know what's going on. And that I know what's going on first, before my teachers know what's going on. And that's happened a lot this year. My teachers will know before I do. I'm like "[name of Asst. Head Start Director], I need to know before they know!" [VPI-10 Administrator, NWV Region]

The VPI-10 administrator goes on to point out that while instances like these can be frustrating; she still trusts the R2Head Start staff. She recognizes that these issues are process issues that can be smoothed over; she does not interpret it as a purposeful intent by the R2-

Assistant Director to bypass her authority. The VPI-11 administrator similarly discusses a mutual ability between herself and R2Head Start administration to raise questions to each other if a misunderstanding occurs and how this sense ties into trust of one another:

So if we don't understand each other on something, we're quick to say, "now wait a minute, here's what I hear you saying," And you say, "No, here's what I meant." But you have to trust a person to be able to do that, and I think we are there. Telling the other, "wait minute, did you really mean to say that?" Oh no, I mean this...[VPI-11 Administrator, NWV Region]

The VPI-11 administrator also points out that another important aspect to managing relationships is continually working on communication processes. She shares an example:

I don't know, we here tend to think that we always need to be working on communication, and you can't stress that enough. And even this year, [the Asst. R2Head Start Director] sent something different to try and help improve communication. By giving a list of in-services well in advance so you can't say you didn't know about a meeting, those kinds of things. So I think we are always working on it [communication]. [VPI-11 Administrator, NWV Region]

These two dyads of Region 2 are unique because they both have basically adopted the Head Start program as *their* LEA's preschool program and because they have such limited alternate preschool programs in their respective counties. For this reason, they both feel a solid sense of commitment from R2Head Start to continue to work with them to provide preschool in their communities, although the VPI-10 administrator does acknowledge some concern about federal funding for the Head Start program. Interestingly, the R2Head Start director discusses both of these blended classroom situations in a very positive light, and discusses his comfort level in picking up a phone to discuss issues with the VPI and LEA administrators of both LEAs 10 and 11. Given the seamless adoption of the Head Start program by these LEAs, they have been labeled as weak organizational autonomy.

For the other two collaboration dyads in the NWV region, R2-5 and R2-6, we see a more blended program situation, but as discussed above, the feel of these preschool programs tends to be more school district driven. The VPI-6 administrator spends a lot of time discussing the back and forth conversations to meld these programs together; she presents a positive takeaway from hammering through differences and the ability to take on challenging situations. She describes a specific incident when VPI-6 and R2Head Start had to work through a guidance counselor requirement as an example of trust in their relationship.

And Head Start really wanted a guidance counselor. And I said, “You can’t have a guidance counselor. We can’t afford it.” And so we changed it that one of our school psychologists provides that service weekly. So we changed our MOU to reflect it. So our MOU looks slightly different than everyone else’s MOU. And we really had to hammer that out. And that probably took [name of R2-Assistant Director] and I two months of going back and forth to figure it out with the “wordsmithing.” But we both trusted that we were going to get there even though we didn’t agree on it at the time. [VPI-6 Administrator, NWV Region]

The VPI-5 administrator also discusses communication as an essential building block to the relationship, and moreover, the symbolic importance of going out of your way to keep your collaborative partner in the loop. She discusses how she makes a conscious decision to cc the R2-Assistant Head Start director on every email she sends to the preschool teachers in LEA-5. She tells me she does this to make it clear to R2Head Start that she sees them as a partner in the delivery of preschool in their community.

While VPI-5 and VPI-6 administrators present their situations as challenging at times, they both take obvious pride in what they have accomplished with R2Head Start. The R2Head Start director, while acknowledging their overall commitment to R2Head Start, reveals that these constant challenges and tweaks to the Head Start regulations sometimes weigh on his feelings of mutual trust. He also takes issue with the lack of direct involvement that Head Start has in those

blended classrooms situations. At the heart of his unease seems to be an underlying concern of adherence to the Head Start Performance Standards. He discusses:

Well, when you lose direct involvement so I mean, it is going to be very difficult for the federal government to understand how they are funding 72 children in [LEA-5] or 40 in [LEA-6], and are being held to same level of accountability in comparison to what we *know* [emphasis added] we are doing in the other counties. I guess the best way to say it is that we just don't know what is being done. I know something is being done, and we look at the [assessment] scores, and they are good, so we know something is going on, but we don't know what it is. And when you ask it is offensive because "don't you trust us?" I would say, "Doesn't the federal government trust us?" Because every 3 years, I guess the answer would be "no" they don't trust us, because they come to verify... [R2Head Start Director, NWV Region]

In his discussion, we find an interesting interplay between synthesizing activities and mobilizing; that is, while detailed discussions of collaborative activities encompass synthesizing activities, we see that how these play out can affect collaborative relationships.

When asking these administrators about trusting each other, a couple of themes emerge that also merge issues of synthesizing and mobilizing. Several of the NWV region VPI administrators, including some of the collaborators, discuss how they "trust" their R2Head Start counterparts to interpret the standards correctly and also to oversee the "scoring of applicants"⁵⁶ for enrollment purposes. The VPI-6 administrator discusses her frustration with some of the overly cumbersome Head Start regulations, but she acknowledges that trusting her R2Head Start counterpart to interpret those is part of being a collaborative partner:

So there are times when I just have to take a deep breath when they are saying things like "Oh, you know blah blah blah, let's check the bleach solution," and

⁵⁶ Typical practice for enrolling preschool applicants in either Head Start or VPI includes creating a scoring sheet that is filled out for applicants that ranks them on multiple risk factors including income, English a second language (ESL), family composition, etc. In a blended classroom situation, typically the most at-risk applicants that meet the poverty threshold are assigned to Head Start, then VPI slots are filled in reverse risk order until all slots are filled. In many LEAS, the programs leave several slots unfilled upon early enrollment to allow for a "high risk" child who moves into the community later to have access to public preschool.

I'm like, "Are you kidding me?" But really, it is about trusting the other person, and trusting that they are interpreting those Head Start standards correctly. And then do they trust me to make it work in a school. [VPI-6 Administrator, NWV Region]

As discussed above, sometimes the R2Head Start director has raised concerns with having to place so much trust on VPI-5 and VPI-6 administrators that they are complying with the standards, but at times, VPI-5 expresses some concern with trusting the interpretation of the regulation by the current Head Start staff. She recognizes that calling into question R2Head Start's interpretation about a standard could affect the relationship. She explains:

[T]hey have this book of standards, they're often insisting that it be a certain way. So, a lot of times, it's, I find it's harder for them to collaborate, because their job is to interpret those standards. So if you're asking them to change that interpretation, that's personal, you know what I mean? [VPI-5 Administrator, NWV Region]

Both VPI-5 and VPI-6 administrators discuss trusting R2Head Start with the application process. For the NWV region, all preschool applications are sent to the R2Head Start main office for processing and scoring. Both of these VPI administrators explain trusting their R2Head Start counterpart:

[T]hey're [applications are] scored at the Head Start office, because that's their guideline, they have to do that. So they score them, I trust—you know, there's a whole lot of trust going on here. [VPI-5 Administrator, NWV Region]

Well they [applications] are coming into that central point, and some of it is that you have to trust the person doing it, and I trust [R2Head Start] to do it. [VPI-6 Administrator, NWV Region]

These collaborative dyads of the NWV region illustrate negotiation as part of relationship building along with communication and trust. Through ongoing conversations, they have created a safe space for negotiating challenging differences in opinion and approaches to preschool provision. Several recognized that recent changes in R2Head Start staff increase the need for

continued negotiation, either with differing interpretations of Head Start standards or differing “ways of doing” in a particular school districts. The VPI-11 administrator suggests that part of negotiation with the recently appointed Assistant Head Start director was to explain to her the ins-and-outs of preschool in LEA-11, but also for the Assistant Head Start director to become comfortable in her role. She recognized that relationship building and negotiating processes improved between them as the Assistant Head Start director became more comfortable in her new role.

For R1-3, much relationship building and trust developed during the course of negotiating the blended classroom situation. Here again we see much interaction between synthesizing and mobilizing activities. While features of these activities may be distinct (Agranoff and McGuire, 2014), for these collaborators it appears that relationship building consists of providing information and keeping confidences, but it also builds as they tackle weaving these differing preschool programs together. However, working through challenging situations does not always guarantee relationship building. The VPI-3 administrator observes that part of collaborative relationship building is being open to new ideas and change.

All of the collaborators reside in regions that have larger preschool network relationships beyond the dyadic partnerships. When discussing relationship building for them, it becomes clear that this additional layer adds to their understanding of what it means to be in a collaborative relationship, and in some ways adds to the legitimacy and accountability aspects of the relationship. It provides another opportunity for them to negotiate important aspects of collaboration, including developing shared meanings of school readiness, tackle changes in Head Start regulation, and to develop shared preschool processes. The VPI-11 administrator discusses

how attending the Region 2 (NWV) preschool consortium meetings solidifies her commitment to R2Head Start:

[Head Start] may go down a list of things [they] found in buildings that weren't in compliance. Well, since I am there [at the consortium meeting], I do not want my name on that list. Especially if it was something silly that wasn't taken care of and it should have been. You know I just think that having the meetings and becoming involved helps to create those relationships. [VPI-11 Administrator, NWV Region]

On the whole, the collaborators are very committed to each other, although some variation does exist. As mentioned above, VPI-10 and VPI-11 sense a strong level of commitment from R2Head Start and are also very committed to them, although the VPI-10 administrator did express some concerns about the continuation of Head Start funding. R2-5 and R2-6 are also highly committed to each other, although some differences are worth mentioning. Both of them are committed to maintaining the blended situation, with or without Head Start funding; however, it seems that the VPI-6 administrator is slightly more committed to retaining the Head Start funding. The R2Head Start director is highly committed to all of these LEAs, but he does express concern about whether Head Start funding will continue in the more school district focused blending if the OHS administration cannot attest to the accountability measures put forth by the LEA-5 and LEA-6. Finally, the R1-3 partnership also shows a strong level of commitment; in fact, in a recent example, the LEA-3 elementary school principal almost removed the blended classroom due to space needs for kindergarten classrooms, but retracted the plan once she learned that the classroom contained both VPI and Head Start students. In this case the blended scenario helped to ensure continued commitment from LEA-3.

Also, generally speaking, these collaborators have very weak organizational autonomy. Through relationship building and negotiating preschool processes and regulations, they have shown the ability to compromise and let go of a singular focus on their own programmatic

concerns. For the NWV in particular, they have long-time enrollment processes in place, led by R2Head Start, that instill trust in the NWV collaborators that everyone's program interests are taken into consideration when filling program slots; not one NWV member discussed the "stealing kids" phenomenon. For the SWV region, the VPI-3 administrator discusses that some of the concerns about stealing a Head Start child and placing him or her in the VPI program did exist previously, but from the more involved relationship that developed between her and the R1Head Start administrator and staff, this issue has more or less disappeared.

Some organizational autonomy tension does seem to exist for the R2-5 dyad; in particular as the VPI administrator has reduced the Head Start staff's direct access to the blended classrooms in the school district. The R2Head Start director responds to some of these changes by asserting that Head Start is more than a funding source, it is a program. However, the willingness for these dyadic partners to continually come back to the table to talk through these issues prompts this dyad to be labeled as medium weak organizational autonomy. Also, a very recent development for this dyad is that R2Head Start will again have some direct service in LEA-5; again, this shows a continued give and take among partners.

Overall, the collaborators have developed deep relationships with each other based upon back and forth communication, negotiation, and compromise. While even for this deeply involved group the level of trust between partners varies, they all generally attest to some degree of trust in their partner. They illustrate trust by retaining confidences, meeting obligations, and creating safe spaces in which challenging situations or disagreements can be addressed. They have mechanisms in place to ensure ongoing communication, but if communication does break down they feel secure enough to raise the issues with their partner to get back on track. All of the

collaborators nest within a larger network, which adds an additional level of accountability and legitimacy to their collaborative relationships.

I asserted that mobilizing techniques would add to the norms and autonomy dimensions through relationship building and building trust and commitment within partnerships. I found this to be true, but I also observed collaborative partners building trust and relationships through working through detailed processes of collaborative activities, or synthesizing techniques. This substantiates a recursive relationship between the processes that support the outcomes of collaboration between Head Start and VPI, and the relationship building techniques that support the willingness to tackle more involved collaborative activities. Three of the five collaborators (R1-3, R2-5, and R2-6) had developed a relationship and worked together at a lesser degree of collaborative activity (R2-10 and R2-11 began their relationship with the Head Start program as blended situations), and through these interactions and an openness to change, launched into a more involved collaboration.

Coordinators

For the coordinators, the majority of them report medium strong or weaker norms, although two dyads do report strong norms. Compared to the collaborators, who fell short of overall strong norms due to some trust issues raised by the R2Head Start director about the school district focused collaborators, we find less commitment among coordinators. Also, additional trust issues are raised by some of the dyadic partners, and these relationships, while in general are still strong, are not as deep as the collaborators. Certainly these administrative partners also mobilize their relationship, but we find some important differences compared to the collaborators.

Building trust for most of the coordinators is very similar to the collaborators. Coordinators report communicating between partners as a key way that trust develops. Some differences do occur, however, as three of the coordinators identify the specific people in place as essential to trust building. For example, when asking VPI-1 and VPI-2 administrators about how trust developed in their respective dyadic partnerships with R1Head Start, they both immediately named the former R1Head Start director as the main impetus. That a new R1Head Start administrator is now in place raises slight concerns about what the future of these relationships looks like. Both the R2Head Start director and the VPI-8 administrator acknowledge each other as the cornerstone of the trusting relationship between them. Both of these administrators have known each other a long time, and this was reflected in the obvious admiration that they hold for one another. The VPI-8 administrator mentions the R2Head Start director when asked how trust developed for their partnership:

Just listening to him [R2Head Start Director] and watching him work and how dedicated he is and how uptight he gets when things could possibly go wrong. And how he just worries himself to death to make sure everything's all right and keeps us out of trouble. [VPI-8 Administrator, NWV Region]

However, trust does not always exist for the coordinators. For R4-14, the VPI-14 administrator raised concerns of not trusting the R4Head Start director to follow through on referrals she makes to their R4Head Start program. The R4Head Start director raised issues of the VPI-14 program enrolling students who were already in the Head Start program—the stealing kids phenomenon. The R4Head Start director also raised some concerns about the VPI-14 program having misperceptions about the credentials of the Head Start teachers. Indeed, the VPI-14 administrator did discuss concerns about the quality of the Head Start classrooms.

Compared to the other coordinators, it is clear that minimal relationship development has occurred between these two administrators.

To a lesser extreme, the VPI-7 administrator also raised some concerns with the strength of the dyadic relationship and trust due to the recent staff turnover at R2Head Start. Similar to some issues raised by the collaborators, for her it is not an issue of personal trust for the R2Head Start administrative staff, but rather their ability to interpret the Head Start regulation correctly. Like the VPI-5 administrator, she too worked for R2Head Start prior to her role at VPI-5, so she is more familiar than most with the Head Start performance standards. She discusses some issues with changes to regulation interpretation when asked about trusting her R2Head Start counterparts:

Here's what I trust. I trust that they're doing what they believe to be best. I don't always trust that they know what the standards are, because of the staff turnover. Sometimes I question—they might be acting on what they believe to be correct, but their interpretation, I'll think—I was in education, I was an enrollment coordinator and family service coordinator when I was there. And did the standard change? No? But this is how we interpret now. And I'm thinking "we're interpreting it now, it should be the same." It's just a different opinion. [VPI-7 Administrator, NWV Region]

Another important distinction between collaborators and coordinators is a difference in commitment between partners. Whereas only one collaborator raised any issue with commitment, several of the coordinators discuss their respective commitments as hinged upon funding or other factors. Two of the NWV VPI administrators discuss fiscal concerns with committing wholeheartedly to their dyadic partner, recognizing on one hand the concern that Head Start funding will diminish or on the other that the LEA is willing to commit to a partnership with R2Head Start as long as the cost benefit analysis shows working together to be favorable. For VPI-7, the decision to remain a coordinator and not attempt blending seems to be

tied into the ability to separate out VPI from Head Start; if the programs no longer partnered, they would probably be able to pick up the children in additional VPI classrooms within a few years. This practicality seems quite different than the “committed to blending through thick and thin” approach discussed by most of the collaborators. The VPI-9 administrator, when asked, discusses commitment to R2Head Start; however, in recent history this program had to “unblend” their classrooms when a change in Head Start regulation prompted fiscal concerns to supersede the blended approach.

Related to the concerns of quality raised by the VPI-14 administrator, this also limits her willingness to outright commit to a long-term relationship with R4Head Start; however, the R4Head Start director attested to continuing to collaborate with VPI-14. This disconnect in how committed they are to each other seems yet another example of some underlying relationship issues for this dyadic partnership.

The two coordinating dyads of the SWV region both spoke of being committed to each other, but given big changes to both R1Head Start administration for both dyads and VPI administration for R1-1, it could be interesting to see what the future holds. However, the longtime VPI-2 administrator seems well positioned to continue in her collaboration efforts with Head Start, and the VPI-1 has now employed a former long time Head Start Family Services Worker who was instrumental in setting up the original preschool collaboration in the SWV region, so they appear to have a good chance of continuing forward.

Generally speaking the collaborators had very weak organization autonomy, whereas the coordinators, while still relatively low, display medium weak organizational autonomy. A variety of factors affect this, but some common themes do appear. For two of the coordinating dyads, R1-1 and R4-14, ongoing issues of “stealing kids” between programs assert that organizational

interests do come into play in these partnerships. Interestingly, in both of these situations, partners discuss attempts to build mutual enrollment processes to reduce these issues. For R1-1, both partners discuss multiple years of trial and error to establish processes and admit that they have not reached a set practice yet. For R4-14, the process they have developed does not yet seem satisfactory on either side as concerns are still raised by R4Head Start about children transferring out of Head Start to VPI. These enrollment process issues for some of the coordinators are very different from the collaborators, who have created in depth processes and participated in ongoing interaction that seem to have all but diminished enrollment issues.

For three of the coordinating dyads, the respective VPI administrators discuss some of the challenges of having to balance both VPI and Head Start goals, or similarly, just the added burden of taking Head Start into consideration when enrolling students. In all cases, they followed up this discussion about the burdens of balancing or juggling both programs with a comment about it, “being challenging, but being the right thing to do.”

One slightly different factor affecting organization autonomy did occur for R2-8, the most programmatically separated dyad operating in the NWV region (while the R2Head Start administrator and VPI-8 administrator engage in a high trust and solid relationship). Given the separation of programs within this school district the VPI-8 administrator discussed there being virtually no issue with balancing program goals; in other words, the lack of challenges is not an issue of having to balance both when collaborating but rather reflects an ease due to being highly separated programs. For this reason, this dyad is labeled as medium-weak on organizational autonomy. For this dyad, we see both the VPI-8 and the R2Head Start administrator as very comfortable with this more separated management of programs.

Now that we have reviewed the coordinators, we move on to mobilizing issues for the cooperating and no relationship dyads.

Cooperators & No Relationship Dyads

Compared to the more involved dyads, little or relatively new mobilizing activities take place for the partners. The five dyads can be broken into three groups: one with a very minimal relationship; those with a former relationship that is diminishing; and those with a new and growing relationship.

For R3-13, little to no relationship has developed between these dyadic partners; however, this is not deemed as overly problematic by either side. The R3Head Start director expresses frustration on her part from attempts to initiate and establish a relationship with LEA-13, and tells me she has seen little in the way of receptiveness on the part of her administrative counterparts. On the contrary, the VPI-13 administrator, while acknowledging that she thinks both sides could do a better job of communicating with each other, expresses no issues with the programs running separately and having little interaction with each other. From her perspective, the term “trust” does not make sense to describe the relationship between she and her R3Head Start counterpart, although she does go on to say that she “trusts” the program and for the R3Head Start staff to run their program effectively. She calls forth fiduciary trust when mutual trust does not seem relevant to the current relationship. She explains:

Interviewer: Do you trust your Head Start counterpart?

VPI-13: I’m not sure—that’s kind of a heavy word. I’m comfortable with the relationship between the agencies. I trust their mission and their purpose, sure.
[VPI-13 Administrator, RES Region]

For the R3Head Start director, lack of communication and trust between programs create problems that she feels could be avoided. She describes an occurrence in recent history when the R3Head Start program had to close a classroom in the LEA-13 community due to the opening of an additional universal preschool classroom by LEA-13. Given examples like these, and ongoing issues of R3Head Start children being enrolled in VPI-13, this dyad is labeled as strong organizational autonomy. She discusses the closed Head Start classroom:

We try to work on a local level, and it is improving, but for [LEA 13], it is difficult for them to see the impact they are having. We closed a classroom because they [LEA-13] opened another class. [R3Head Start Administrator, RES Region]

For the R3-13 dyad, some of the issue for these partners may lie in not knowing who the collaborative players are. Upon engaging conversations with the relatively new VPI-13 administrator, it became clear that when asking her about the R3Head Start program, she mostly referred to interaction with the Migrant Head Start program, a completely separated program in operation in the RES region. However, as discussed above, a very recent situation did arise for these programs to engage with each other in order to place a student in both the VPI and Head Start programs, so while there is not a consistent or stable relationship between these programs, they do show the ability to engage with one another for the benefit of a specific student.

For other dyads, relationship development seems to have thwarted, either due to drastic changes in collaborative members or lack of commitment to collaboration. For R5-16, what appeared to be a relationship on track for continued interaction with each other has faltered, most likely due to drastic changes on both sides of collaboration: the recent defunding of a former Head Start program followed by R5Head Start taking over collaborative relationships in LEA-16, and the recent dismissal of the early childhood administrative staff linked to VPI-16. These changes have led to confusion, and for the R5Head Start administrator, frustration in trying to

reestablish a relationship. Given that formerly a solid relationship was developing for this dyad, I labeled the normative dimension for this dyad as medium weak. Also, the distinct separation of programs and communication after having once being pretty connected has prompted me to label the organizational autonomy for this dyad as medium strong.

For R3-12, both administrators discuss relationship building between them over the last several years; however, it seems that in recent history, some of the relationship building has lapsed. The R3Head Start Director discusses attempts to build processes to safeguard and streamline enrollment processes for R3-12; her argument being that by working together they should be able to maximize enrollment for their community so that Head Start takes those economically eligible and opens up more slots for eligible children for the VPI program. However, she still raises concerns with students being stolen from Head Start and enrolled in VPI-12, so it seems that these processes have not been completely established. In the interview, the VPI-12 administrator addresses the interplay between enrollment and trust; she knows it is a sensitive topic for their partnership:

I know that the few times that we have admitted students to our program, you know, unknowingly, that they were former Head Start students. I know that they get frustrated when that happens, but it's never been intentional. And I would hope that they would understand that. It's just a glitch in the system, or the process and um. You know, I can't speak for them. I trust them. I don't think they're out there trying to steal any of our kids or bad mouth our program or anything. [VPI-12 Administrator, RES Region]

Moreover, both administrators express attempts to increase communication between them, but note that they do not feel that solid communication lines have been established. The VPI-12 administrator comments that she senses that the only time she is contacted by R3Head Start is when an issue arises with a "stolen child." She suggests that she has tried to reach out for other reasons, but "doesn't see them [Head Start] reaching out either." In an email follow up, the

R3Head Start director noted that while she considers LEA-12 more of a partner than LEA-13, she still feels that there is not a real collaborative spirit among them and that the VPI-12 program continues to look out for their own interest. The breakdown of the relationship and the ongoing struggle with program enrollments has prompted this dyad to be labeled on the norms and autonomy dimension as medium weak and medium strong, respectively.

There are two cooperative relationships in this study that appear to be developing for the better. For both R4-14 and R5-17, informants respond that steps are being taken to develop lines of communication and beginning levels of trust. The VPI-14 administrator discusses new opportunities for working together, and mentions her familiarity with the R4Head Start administrator from working together on ECSE related issues. She suggests a positive holdover feeling from working together with her in the past that she thinks will remain with the start of collaborative opportunities between VPI-14 and R4Head Start. The newness of the relationship and trust development situates this dyad as medium-weak on the norms dimension, and the present separateness of programs lands them as medium-high on organizational autonomy.

For R5-17, the R5Head Start mentions that they have made strides in establishing a relationship with VPI-17; however, it is worth noting that this relationship nests within rather complex organizational structure given the outsource of managing the preschool program to a local YMCA. The VPI-17 administrator does mention some willingness to adjust VPI goals to accommodate Head Start parent meeting requirement, so unlike their other cooperative counterparts, they are labeled as medium weak on organizational autonomy. The newness of relationship development prompts them to also be labeled as medium weak on the norms dimension.

These lesser-involved dyads have invested much less time and energy to relationship development, which lessens their trust and commitment to each other. They either are currently trying to build a collaborative relationship, have had a relationship falter due to drastic changes of personnel or minimal communication, or engage in relatively minimal relationship building whatsoever.

In summary, mobilizing techniques do much to build the underlying normative dimension of collaboration. Important distinctions between the most involved in this study, the collaborators, and the least involved, the cooperators and non-involved, show that collaborators have spent a great deal of time engaged in relationship building activities, such as communicating, negotiating, and compromise, compared to the lesser-involved groups who have little to no (or just beginning) interaction. While there seems to be a pretty strong association between relationship building and degree of collaborative activity, it is not perfect, which suggests that while it seems to be a very important part of collaborating, other collaborative dimensions may account for norms of trust. For example, in the NWV region, R2-8 has one of the strongest relationships in this study, but both the R2Head Start and VPI-8 administrator seem very happy to keep the programs at a coordination degree of collaborative activity. Moreover, R4-14 demonstrates some underlying relationship challenges, yet also engages in coordination.

The mobilizing techniques to build trust come about in different forms for these dyadic partners. Agranoff (2012) discusses trust as the glue that binds networks (and in this case collaborative partnerships) together. Collaborators state that trust building occurs through tackling challenging collaborative situations, clarifying meanings between partners to create shared understandings, and being counted on to show up and do what is expected of one another. While continued challenges can wear on trust, these collaborators show the wherewithal to keep

coming back to the collaborative table to work through issues. They also express trust in letting go of certain hallowed processes, like enrollment, and also have to trust each other in interpreting or following through on regulations.

Coordinators share many of these mobilizing techniques, but typically have not built processes as solid as those of their collaborating counterparts that can aid in trust building among partners and alleviate concerns about enrollment that can then give partners the leeway to break into additional collaborative opportunities. Moreover, half of the coordinators give credit to a specific collaborating administrator as the instigator of trust for the partnership. While personality and personal interaction skills certainly add much to the ability to work with others, this could raise concern for how these dyads will move forward since in all three situations one or both partners of the dyad has changed.

Finally, for cooperators and the noninvolved, little to no mobilizing activities occur that build normative dimensions of trust and commitment. Some attempts have been made by one or both sides of the partnerships to engage with each other, but relationship building to the extent that partners feel they can commit to working together and/or trust each other has not yet been achieved. Table 7.7 highlights some differences in trust/relationship building for the dyads based upon their degree of collaborative activity.

Table 7.7. Trust building and breaking techniques by Degree of Collaborative Activity

	Collaborators	Coordinators	Cooperators or No Relationship
Trust/relationship building techniques/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Developing detailed processes for enrollment -Communicating with high frequency among partners -Tackling challenging issues --Compromising and taking conciliatory actions --Creating “safe space” to raise communication concerns --Making explicit the willingness to keep partners “in the know” on collaborative issues --Responding to partner’s issues by helping out/giving a hand --Belonging to larger preschool consortium or network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Developing detailed processes for program enrollment (for 3 dyads) --Attempting to develop processes for enrollment issues (for 3 dyads) --Crediting trust building to single administrator --Belonging to larger preschool consortium or network (for 5 of six dyads) --Communicating with frequency among partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Attempting to develop processes for enrollment issues --Starting conversations about future collaborative possibilities
Trust/relationship breaking techniques/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Tackling challenging issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --High staff/personnel turnover --Not following 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Little to no ongoing communication --No processes in

Table 7.7. Trust building and breaking techniques by Degree of Collaborative Activity

	Collaborators	Coordinators	Cooperators or No Relationship
		processes set up to reduce enrollment issues --Raising issues of quality about the other program	place to reduce enrollment issue or not following processes in place to reduce enrollment issues --Drastic changes to personnel

Synthesizing

Synthesizing techniques include collaborative interaction to develop detailed processes for engendering collaborative outcomes. In this study, I mainly focus on examples of processes and procedures that Head Start and VPI develop to partake in collaborative activities. While the amount and degree vary between collaborators, coordinators, cooperators, and the noninvolved, at a minimum, most of the dyadic partnerships in this study have at least discussed enrollment processes, while others have developed very detailed processes that cover a whole host of activities.

I argue that synthesizing activities can build (or reduce) several collaborative dimensions, including organizational autonomy, norms of trust, and mutuality. As processes are negotiated, programs either have to let go or preserve program interests. They also build (or tear down) trust and personal relationships by working through details that can be very time consuming and take compromise. Finally, for mutuality, as they negotiate the processes that frame collaborative activity, they can build mutual appreciation for each other and how working together can aid in their own program goals; conversely, incomplete processes or processes that are not followed

through on by one or both partners could reduce a shared sense that working together aids in achieving program goals.

We now turn to a discussion of synthesizing behaviors by degree of collaboration.

Collaborators

The collaborators engage in the most involved collaborative activities of this study; in addition to many collaborative activities such as sharing applications, sharing transportation, and sharing professional development, they also have managed to blend Head Start and VPI funds to the point that children funded by either grant sit in classrooms together. While simply stated, this is no small task, as will be revealed through this section that other non-collaborating dyads have considered blending but found too many regulatory and bureaucratic barriers to keep them from successfully blending funds.

Compared to all other dyads in this study, collaborators engage in the most involved synthesizing behaviors to work through all of the details of blending funds. A starting point, however, for both the SWV and NWV regions (the regions that house the collaborators of this study) is the agreement to “adhere to the highest standard.” This agreement means that partners compare the regulations of both the VPI and Head Start programs and agree that for the blended situation, the regulations that is the “highest,” or most stringent, is the one that will be followed.

Sometimes this takes a year or so to enact in practice. For example, in the blended classroom for the R1-3 partnership, while teacher certification (a LEA, and thus VPI requirement) is the higher standard between Head Start and VPI, at first the teacher that taught in the blended classroom (whose salary is paid for by R1Head Start) was not certified. After the first year, both programs agreed to place a certified teacher in the program (still paid for by R1Head Start)

because this meets the higher standard, and it allows VPI-3 to be reimbursed for the children that reside in the blended classroom. Without a certified teacher in the classroom, the state VPI program will not reimburse the grant funds to LEA-3.

Once agreeing to meet the highest standard, the partners still have a lot of details to work out. For example, the former R1HS director discusses sitting down with her VPI-3 counterpart to take assessment of how the blended classroom was working. She discusses having to work with the Head Start teacher to become “part” of the elementary school where the blended classroom is located:

We had some bumpy spots in the road because it had to do with the requirement for teaching. Like ok, we agreed that the Head Start staff in that school would follow the standards for whatever the principal of that school dictated for the school. So that means that person had to attend faculty meetings, that person had to do professional development. And then they had what they called “team meetings.” And the Head Start team wasn’t going. So one of the things we did this year was say, “Look, you have to participate in the teacher activities.”
[R1Head Start Director, First Interviewee, SWV Region]

We find collaborators having to engage with each other to negotiate collaborative processes, but as above with R1Head Start, also having to manage their own program aspects, including managing internal program staff to align with the envisioned collaborative activity. The VPI-6 administrator shares a detailed account of the yearlong process it took to set up HS-VPI blended classrooms in her community and how difficult it was for some of her teachers to get on board with the blended concept. Ultimately, she explains that she had to “lay down” the collaborative ultimatum to them, saying, “this is where we are going (blended classrooms), and you can either get on board or not, but we think it will be better for everyone involved.” The VPI-10 administrator shares a similar experience in having to “protect” the collaborative enrollment process that R2Head Start has overseen for a long time in the region by explaining to a new

principal at one of LEA-10's local elementary schools that the principal does not have the power to tell a family that their child will have a spot in the local preschool classroom for the upcoming year. While principals tend to hold the power for all elementary school children, she had to explain that within the preschool consortium, preschool placement follows a set collaborative process that is overseen by R2Head Start.

These collaborators face challenges working with their internal employees at times, but the collaborative partners also encounter challenging situations that they have to work through to move forward. Often, it seems that for the NWV collaborators, these challenges arise from changes to the Head Start regulation that now have to be reworked by the partners. Also, tightening budgets on both sides of the partnerships bring about challenges, and in general, issues of control emerge as themes for some of the collaborators.

A recent example of working through financial issues was when LEA-6 had budgetary shortfalls. This calls to question some long-held assumptions of the NWV consortium that collaborative partners will meet the highest regulatory standard, which in most cases involves meeting the Head Start regulation. The VPI-6 administrator recalls raising challenging questions to R2Head Start:

When we began really losing money in [LEA-6] schools, the immediate reaction was 'oh my gosh' and that is when we closed that elementary school. I started going back [to R2Head Start] saying, tell me what we *have* (emphasis added) to do and the costs associated with it. I know we have done some things that are best practice, but I don't care about best practice right now. What is the bottom line to be compliant? I need to know that cost; otherwise, I have to decide whether Head Start is worth it to the division at some point. That was a good example of going back and really talking through each of those regulations and talking about best practices versus being minimally compliant. [VPI-6 Administrator, NWV Region]

These collaborators generally acknowledge that working through challenges comes at a cost; as mentioned above, it can wear on longstanding relationships. However, they also acknowledge

that raising challenging questions and developing new processes includes responsibility on both sides. That is, the “winner” of the collaborative debate has obligations to the side that acquiesced; there have to be conciliatory actions taken to keep collaboration going. The VPI-5 administrator discusses changes made recently in the R2-5 blended classroom situation where she has limited access of R2Head Staff to the classrooms and limited interaction between R2Head Start administrative staff and the teachers. As discussed above, the VPI-5 administrator initiated these procedural changes because she felt that too many people involved in monitoring the classrooms created unnecessary confusion and cumbersome communication. She admits though, that part of pushing for these changes includes trying to assure R2Head Start that they will still receive the information they need by being a solid collaborative partner:

[T]he big part of that is not me just saying we’re going to have one seamless [communication process that flows through VPI-5]—the big part was that I will give [R2Head Start] access to whatever they need. It was not just “this is how this is going to be.” It was a “we’re going to flow the information through me, and needs and requests, so that we’re not confusing people, and I can assure that you get what you need.” So, and it’s worked. At least from my perspective [*sic*]. And there has been nothing that they’ve [R2Head Start] asked for or needed that I haven’t gotten. So there’s two sides to that. You can’t just say—put your foot down and say “we’re going to do this my way.” You have to be willing to give, because [R2Head Start] does, they have to have the information. So when our principals evaluate the teachers, a copy of that evaluation goes to [R2-Assist. Head Start Director] for the Head Start staff, because she has to have that. [VPI-5 Administrator, NWV Region]

Working through challenging situations for collaborators often includes a belief that even though the pending issues are daunting, they are not insurmountable. In other words, collaborators tend to afford each other the belief that they will find a workable solution. A recent change to the Head Start regulations has mandated that staff who interact with Head Start funded children have to have a tuberculosis (TB) test. During the time of this study, this issue was still being discussed among NWV partners, including how to interpret the mandate. When asked

about this issue, the VPI-11 administrator explained that much of the issue has to do with how the change will be paid for by the consortium. Ultimately, she suggests that many of these issues revolve around who will be fiscally accountable for changes to Head Start regulation in the blended classroom situation. She states firmly, however, a strong belief that while this issue presents yet another challenge for the consortium, a workable solution will be found.

While these collaborators show the ability to tackle and work through challenging procedures, next, we look at how this translates into affecting the mutuality, norms, and organizational autonomy dimensions of collaboration. Table 7.8 depicts the strength of the collaborators on those dimensions:

Table 7.8. Collaborators’ Mutuality, Norms, and Organizational Autonomy Strength

Dyad	Mutuality	Norms	Org. Autonomy
R1-3	Strong	Strong	Weak
R2-5	Medium	Medium-Strong	Medium-Weak
R2-6	Medium	Medium-Strong	Weak
R2-10	Strong	Strong	Weak
R2-11	Strong	Strong	Weak

Similar to the discussion above about linking synthesizing activities to mobilizing, or relationship building activities, we do see evidence that some of the continual challenging conversations to work through collaborative activity processes can lead to lesser strength for mutuality for both the R2-5 and R2-6 dyads. Both the VPI-5 and VPI-6 administrators acknowledge that working with Head Start makes their programs better and improves their chances of reaching their own program goals. They each make comments about this fact:

I think that our ability to work together even when we don’t all agree makes us better. It is hard. In some ways it is a lot easier though. It is hard to make sure that everyone has what they need to make sure the regulations are met. That’s not hard, but you have to pay attention to it. You can’t let it slip. But I can’t imagine doing it any other way now. I mean if someone came in and said, you have to do it separate now, you have to unbraid, I would fight tooth and nail for it. I mean for

however frustrated I am with, or how ridiculous I think some of the reg[ulations] are, or with Head Start's seeming desire to change rules midstream, I would not want to change ever. I think the teachers are better; we are more consistent. Families come to school, and they've had the same exact preschool experience. Principals, kindergarten teachers, everyone, knows where these kids are coming from. It is just better. [VPI-6 Administrator, NWV Region]

So, the advantage is that we all have resources, and when you pool your resources, it's better. You know, we all think differently, so I believe when you can get people around the table, it's better, and it's stronger. I think it's cohesive for our community and our parents to see this is one program and children aren't getting different things if you live in different parts of the community. You know, one of the big reasons that we had this big discussion about, should we really have Head Start funding in 17 rooms? Because that's 17 places. However, that also means that the entire county community has access to resources that they wouldn't have if we just said "okay we're just going to do this in certain rooms"... I certainly believe, since I'm sitting here with a collaborative program, that it is far better for everybody. It is. It's worth the pain. It's worth the hard work. I believe...if you put the child and family in the middle of the table, and we put our differences aside, we'll come up with good solutions. [VPI-5 Administrator, NWV Region]

However, the R2Head Start director, while clearly willing to continue to come to the table and work through these collaborative challenges, expresses the weight of continually having to "bend and stretch" Head Start regulations. When he was asked if he thought that working together improves R2Head Start's chances of reaching goals, he comments that he thinks that Head Start could certainly operate without VPI, but that in today's time it is not realistic to think about Head Start existing in a vacuum. Moreover, all three of these parties express some concerns about another indicator of mutuality—appreciating each other. The R2Head Start director expresses multiple times that for some of these blended relationships, in particular R2-5 and R2-6, he senses that they see Head Start as simply a funding mechanism for their growing programs and not a full "preschool program" as it is intended. Moreover, the VPI-6 good-naturedly laughs and responds "most days" when asked if she thinks that R2Head Start

appreciates what VPI-6 brings to the relationship. The VPI-5 administrator takes it a little further and comments on the lack of appreciation she feels from R2Head Start at times during larger consortium or Policy Council meetings, when she notices the lack of acknowledgement by R2Head Start for LEA-5's contribution to all of the blended classrooms, for example buying classroom Smart boards for all rooms. However, she follows up the comment with a statement that she doesn't think it is intentional on R2Head Start's behalf; she thinks they have to be so focused on Head Start regulation that they sometimes lack the ability to place their focus elsewhere. Again, the takeaway from these comments is the recognition that while they work hard to collaborate with each other, sometimes the challenging conversations take a toll.

For the other three collaborating dyads of this study, while they too work through challenges, they have built mutual appreciation of each other and a belief that working together is beneficial for both individual program and overall goal achievement. Both the VPI-10 and VPI-11 stated specific interactions with the R2Head Start director or assistant director that gave them a feeling of being appreciated by their collaborative counterpart. VPI-10 discusses a conversation with the R2Head Start assistant director about funding issues and how the assistant director clearly expressed that they would try to protect any cuts from affecting VPI-10; the VPI-10 administrator interpreted this as meaning they were an important part of the consortium. And when asked, the VPI-11 stated that the R2Head Start director told her verbatim that R2Head Start appreciates the VPI-11 program. Moreover, both of these VPI administrators give a nod to the appreciation they feel for R2Head Start, without which they would both have limited to no preschool program in their respective communities. The differences between these relationships and R2-5 and R2-6 could be the observation mentioned several times through this study: for R2-

5 and R2-6 the blended classrooms are more school district focused compared to R2-10 and R2-11, where the blended classrooms are more Head Start focused.

For R1-3, the blended classroom takes on more of a true “blended” feel of Head Start and school district as both partners express much give and take in trying to accommodate LEA and Head Start regulations. In addition to the R1Head Start personnel having to adjust to elementary school rules, the former R1Head Start director had to seek a waiver from the Department of Education so that the blended classroom children could eat in their classrooms to accommodate the “family style dining” mandate of Head Start regulation. The following year, with the change in Head Start teachers, they switched back to the cafeteria and included some family style dining activities as part of the cafeteria experience. This give in take and willingness to work together solidified the respective administrators appreciation of each other’s programs, and moreover the benefits they see from working together. The former R1Head Start director discussed that having Head Start children working with the school system in a blended situation gave them early familiarity with the public school and eased transition. For the VPI-3 administrator, she likes breaking down the barriers between the programs by working together and expresses a sense of pride in placing more community children in publicly funded preschool by creating their blended classroom.

While somewhat varied in how synthesizing activities affect some dimensions of collaborative processes, generally speaking, detailed conversations to work through how to run and manage collaborative activities aid in the development of trust and commitment and reduce sole organizational focus. Also, all collaborators acknowledge that by collaborating, or blending classrooms, they have been able to achieve their goals better than by working alone. Continual challenging conversations seems to have an impact on reducing some aspects of mutuality; in

particular, some of the collaborators report feeling a lack of appreciation from their collaborative counterpart. For three of the collaborators, working through detailed collaborative activity processes solidifies a mutual appreciation of each and the ability to obtain programmatic goals.

Coordinators

Coordinators also have to develop (or attempt to develop) detailed processes to synthesize their coordinated activities. The difference between them and collaborators includes the activities they synthesize. Whereas a blended classroom drastically reduces conversations to set up enrollment processes since the students are entering the same blended classroom; most of the coordinating dyads mention during the interview having to work through aligning enrollment dates or establishing processes to reduce enrolling current Head Start students into the VPI program.

Five of the six coordinating dyads discuss working on enrollment processes, in particular working on some issue linked to recruitment dates. For R2-7 and R2-9, they both discuss having to make changes to their VPI enrollment to allow for higher risk children to have slots if they apply for the programs later in the year. All of the applications, both for VPI and Head Start programs in the NWW region, are sent to the R2Head Start office to be “scored.” This allows the most economically at risk children to be assigned to the Head Start classroom(s) in the respective LEAs, and then once filled, the remaining students are assigned to VPI classrooms, with those with the highest risk scores assigned first. However, to allow for late applications or migration into the respective LEA communities that may include families with risk factors, including low income or other risks, not every program slot is filled in the first round; they stagger enrollment. VPI-7 and VPI-9 changed their VPI enrollment cycle to this staggered approach to allow for four

waves of applicants to be enrolled for the upcoming school year. The VPI-9 administrator explains why they work together on enrollment and allow R2Head Start to have the first round of applicants:

I think that it's important that, since we're a regional program, that we all do— every person in the region tries to do their best to make Head Start, not look good at the federal review, but that they are meeting all of their requirements [and filling their enrollment]. [VPI-9 Administrator, NWV Region]

For both R1-1 and R1-2, early synthesizing involved aligning enrollment dates. Aligning dates allows for the dyads to coordinate with each other about enrolling applicants; they cannot sit down and discuss placing applicants in their respective programs if they are not recruiting at the same time. The former R1Head Start director explains how discussions within the R1-2 dyad led to her changing the recruitment date to match all of the LEA preschool recruitment dates in the SWV region:

So we get to the single issue of “how do we begin to not step on each other's territory? How do we begin to meet with one another to improve our recruitment thing?” And they would say, well, the Head Start recruitment dates are off. And so we matched up our recruitment period with all of the recruitment periods within the school system. And so Head Start in [the LEA-2 school district] recruitment dates match the VPI-2 recruitment dates. And so that's something we could easily do. Just change the time in which we recruited. That allowed us to meet with them and to go over our list and our application. [R1Head Start Director, First Interviewee, SWV Region]

While aligning enrollment dates was a relatively easy “fix,” the enrollment process in R1-1 is far from perfect, and these administrators continue to work on and synthesize how to best coordinate their efforts. Similar to the collaborators, some of synthesizing between programs is not only an issue of working with collaborative partners, but also getting internal program employees on board with collaborative preschool policies. This internal synthesizing may

include explaining to the employees “why” the programs are working together for recruitment and also includes trying to get internal enrollment procedures (across elementary schools with VPI classrooms in the school district) consistent. The former VPI-1 administrator expresses that she thinks part of the challenges with aligning recruitment with R1Head Start is that her own teachers do not understand *why* they are collaborating:

I said, I don't think my teachers understand, so let me try and explain why we are doing what we're doing or why they're doing what they're doing. You know just get...well that is why I think that collaboration equals communication...We just needed to communicate more; they needed to delve deeper into what is going on and meet with them. [VPI-1 Administrator, First Interviewee, SWV Region]

The current VPI-1 administrator discusses her plan to work on enrollment processes with R1Head Start by ensuring internal consistency in her school district:

[W]hat I am trying to put in place is making sure the forms [application and intake forms] are correct, that we are all doing the same thing. You get a program, much like a child, where it is. Then you move it forward. We are just trying to have consistency in the county. The way we select children and the forms we use. [VPI-1 Administrator, Second Interviewee, SWV Region]

For R4-14, they too sit down and review applications together. Similar to R1-1, it is clear that the processes deemed as either incomplete or lack of follow through on one or both sides leave both R4-14 partners with a sense that enrollment does not always run smoothly. The R4Head Start administrator still expresses some concerns about current R4Head Start children being enrolled in the VPI-14 program, and the VPI-14 administrator expresses concerns about referrals that she makes to R4Head Start not getting slots in the program. She discusses a frustrating experience that shows lack of synthesizing on the enrollment process:

I said, “These are the kids you're telling me you're taking.” I said to the [R4Head Start Enrollment Coordinator]. I said, “What cannot happen, is that you're now telling me you're taking them, and then I find out later that you're not taking them. Because I won't have a spot for them. This is very important.” They assured me that that would not happen. But when we started getting those calls

and such [about children not getting in the Head Start program], all those people [R4Head Start staff] were gone for the summer. [VPI-14 Administrator, SCC Region]

Part of synthesizing techniques for both collaborators and coordinators includes tweaking processes and assessing what works and what does not. In many ways for these program administrators, synthesizing involves interpreting the regulations (or trusting their administrative counterpart to interpret) and translating those regulations into workable procedures and policies. Several coordinators shared some examples of discontinuing or tweaking a collaborative activity among partners; for R1-2 this included discontinuing an attempt to hold a joint parenting class between programs that was ill attended.

For R2-9, they discuss working through how family style dining will occur for the VPI-9 programs. The NWV region is unique in many ways, but one of the more important differences is that many of the non-blended relationships also adhere to the higher standards of the Head Start guidelines. This fact means that many of the NWV dyads have to figure out how to have family style dining within school settings. The VPI-9 administrator discusses the ideal set forth in the regulation, but then discusses the reality of shaping the regulation into a workable policy:

I could say that actually family style dining was one of those. There's an idea of what it should look like and then there's what are the possibilities of how it can be handled in our building. I mean we were, if you look at the way you want to do it, how many chairs do you need in the cafeteria and how many do we have? How long does lunch need to take and does it fit into the schedule? So they have, I find that they [R2Head Start] have the ways that they perfectly would like to see it happen. And then we [NWV VPI administrators] put all of the things on the table that, I don't want to say are barriers or prevent it from happening, but things that affect how it happens. And then we talk them through until we get it as close to acceptable as we can. [VPI-9 Administrator, NWV Region]

Most of the coordinators participate in detailed discussions to synthesize their collaborative activities; however, for half of them, R-1, R1-2, and R4-14, these conversations are relatively

limited and focused mostly on enrollment issues. In fact, while these same three dyads also discussed opportunities and attempts to create joint professional development opportunities, rarely did the activity materialize.

We now turn to investigating how these synthesizing activities affect the process dimensions of mutuality, norms, and organizational autonomy for the coordinators.

Table 7.9. Coordinators’ Mutuality, Norms, and Organizational Autonomy Strength

Dyad	Mutuality	Norms	Org Autonomy
R1-1	Medium	Strong	Medium-Weak
R1-2	Strong	Strong	Medium-Weak
R2-7	Strong	Medium-Strong	Weak
R2-8	Strong	Medium-Strong	Medium-Weak
R2-9	Medium	Medium-Strong	Medium-Weak
R4-14	Medium	Medium-Weak	Medium-Weak

Half of the coordinators report strong mutuality and half report medium mutuality. For R1-1 and R4-14, the dyads reveal at least one partner who states that they are not convinced that the other partner appreciates their program. For R1-1, the VPI-1 administrative staff reports that they perceive that the R1Head Start staff takes a defensive stance towards them—assuming that the VPI staff members look down upon the “lesser-credentialed” Head Start staff. For R4-14, the VPI-4 administrator shares that she thinks that the perception of “stealing kids” that R4Head Start seems to have towards VPI-14 lessens her belief that R4Head Start appreciates the VPI-14 program. For R2-9, the VPI-9 administrator reveals that she is not convinced that working together helps her achieve her goals more because she suggests that the Head Start regulations “force” an abundance of goal setting that she does not believe is overly helpful for the VPI program.

While not captured in the measure of mutuality as designed, I would note that while three of the coordinators did agree that by working with their collaborative counterpart did help them to

obtain their own program goals better, several of them did qualify this with follow up statements. The VPI-7 administrator agreed that working together helped to provide more access and helped VPI to adopt more of the socio-developmental aspects of Head Start, but she then went on to say that she thought the VPI program would be fine without Head Start. The VPI-2 administrator discussed that working together helped to streamline enrollment and ease of transition for kids, but then went on to say that her workload would be easier without having to consider R1Head Start. Finally, the VPI-8 administrator acknowledged that the single Head Start classroom in her school district added to overall preschool access in her community, but then went on to say that she was a bit neutral if working together helped VPI achieve its goals better. In short, while all of these were captured as a “strong” mutuality, we find that digging into the qualitative data allows for more nuanced read that indicates that while these coordinators attest to the benefits of working together, they lack some of the gusto that was portrayed by the collaborators.

Certainly the interplay between synthesizing and the norms dimension is formidable. The direction of the relationship cannot be assumed about discussing detailed procedures to produce collaborative activities at the coordination degree of collaborative activity and developing norms. It could be, on the one hand, that detailed discussions about current collaborative activities do not instill trust and commitment among collaborative partners; on the other hand, it could be that lack of trust and commitment keep synthesizing activities relatively limited. Given the recursive nature of process and interaction put forth in this study, it is most likely a bit of both.

For most of the coordinators, synthesizing, in particular developing enrollment processes, keeps their organizational autonomy fairly low, but not completely depleted as some of the coordinators continually revisit enrollment issues to appease the issue of “stealing kids” between programs. For other coordinated dyads, their more separated approach keeps them from seeing

how their own goals are changed by working together, so while some synthesizing behaviors occur; they are somewhat limited.

Finally, one additional point is relevant when considering synthesizing activities for the coordinators. Several of the coordinators have attempted or investigated blending classrooms, but due to different circumstances the blending ended or the discussion about attempting blended ended. For R2-9, the blended classroom situation ended after a change in Head Start regulation was deemed as not fiscally feasible to accommodate in the blended HS-VPI program in LEA-9. The former R1 Head Start director investigated the possibilities of establishing blended classrooms in new elementary school space in the LEA-1 school district, but the LEA-1 administration did not pursue the opportunity. Finally, the R4-14 partnership did investigate the possibility of blending—they together visited several other regional Head Start programs where blending occurs to discuss how it works in practice. The VPI-14 administrator suggests that the investigation was thwarted because LEA-14 proposed that to blend they would need to be in charge of the Head Start grant funds and the local CAA was unwilling to relinquish the funds (however, as a note, for the R1-3 blended classroom situation the Head Start grants funds are still run by a local CAA also). These thwarted scenarios suggest that higher administrative buy in seems essential to establish higher degrees of collaborative activity, but they may also suggest that lack of synthesizing detailed procedures at lower level may reduce confidence in taking the collaborative relationship to the next level.

Cooperators and No Relationship Dyads

For the cooperators and noninvolved, minimal synthesizing activities occur or in some cases, synthesizing activities seem to have come to a halt. Reviewing interview conversations

with these lesser-involved dyads reveal that compared to the more involved dyads, cooperators and non-involved dyads partake in far less programmatic modifications to accommodate the other preschool program.

Three of the lesser-involved dyads mention that differing recruitment dates keep attempts to align enrollment processes relatively limited. For R5-16 and R5-17, the R5Head Start director discusses that different enrollment dates has limited their attempts to align enrollment processes more. In the past, both of the these dyads have at least shared enrollee lists to keep the other program apprised of their current enrollees so as not to “steal” them from the other program. This activity differs from more coordinated efforts to align dates so that collaborative partners can sit down and review applicants together. This process still takes place for R5-17, but since the current upheaval in LEA-16 Early Childhood Education administrative staff, this collaborative activity has disappeared for R5-16. For R3-12, in the past the programs have sat down together to review enrollment lists, but the VPI-12 administrator also mentions the differences in registration dates as limiting joint recruitment efforts. She states:

We’ve met—we meet in the spring and the summer, and usually early fall. And I meet with the [R3Head Start] director, and one of her staff members that has anything to do with the enrollment process. We’ve never been able to conduct a joint enrollment, and that’s primarily because their date requirements precede ours. [VPI-12 Administrator, RES Region]

A noticeable difference between these administrators and their more involved counterparts is the interpretation that registration dates are set in stone and cannot be modified to work with the other program.

While the partners of R3-12 have synthesized their process for meeting to share enrollment lists, both parties admit that the process does not always work. The VPI-12 administrator discusses time constraints on her end (she is the elementary education and curriculum

coordinator for the entire LEA-12 in addition to overseeing VPI) that result in failing to contact R3Head Start of late applications/enrollees when the start of a new school year begins. R3Head Start notes that while they have made strides, they have not established a process that completely safeguards the Head Start enrollment. Another example of diminished synthesizing for this dyadic partnership is that the VPI-12 administrator did not sign the MOU between Head Start and VPI for the year. She explains that she read the details of the grant (for VPI) and felt that since there are no Head Start classrooms in any public elementary schools in LEA-12, it was unnecessary. The R3Head Start administrator expressed concern about not having a MOU on file for this partnership; this demonstrates that these partners have not engaged in detailed dialogue to explore the reasons why an MOU between them is beneficial.

R3-13 and R5-16 currently engage in the least synthesizing activities among all of the dyads studied for this research. As discussed above, the R3Head Start administrator suggests that lack of mobilizing a relationship with VPI-13 leads to a lack of any synthesis on enrollment processes; she feels strongly that the R3Head Start grant is at times threatened due to the lack of collaborative efforts. When asked about enrollment issues, the VPI-13 administrator acknowledges the disconnect and suggests that further discussions about processes might be beneficial to both programs:

I think it's something that still needs to be addressed. You know, like I said, I've been in this position for a little over a year. It's something I kind of heard initially, and hearing about it now as we're getting ready for enrollment—April starts our registration timeframe. So, I'm getting bits and pieces from some providers and parents about messages they'd gotten from Head Start. And you know, a part of it you have to take with—not a grain of salt, but you have to take in mind what they heard, what was said, maybe it was a misunderstanding, and—so there needs to be, I think there needs to be more further discussion and dialogue in terms of our communication to parents and how we're communicating the differences in services and their right to choose, you know, what's the most appropriate for their child. [VPI-13 Administrator, RES Region]

Two of the cooperating dyads, R4-15 and R5-17, have limited but growing opportunities for synthesis between programs to occur. The R5-17 relationship is fairly minimal, including some exchange of enrollment lists and transition to kindergarten programs; however, the R5Head Start director comments that this relationship continues to grow. For R4-15, recent attempts to activate opportunities stimulate some ideas for the interim VPI-15 administrator about possible synthesis activities:

Well, we first talked about the selection process [program enrollment]. So that's why, when you talk about it, I think there has been collaboration with the selection process. But it hadn't been a real "let's sit down and figure it out" kind of thing. It's been "here's your kids, here's my kids" kind of thing. So the selection process was talked about, and we're working on that. [VPI-15 Administrator, SCC Region]

For most of the cooperators and noninvolved, the lack of synthesizing activities has kept the programs mainly focused on their own interests and minimizes the belief that mutual appreciation exists between programs or that working together increases goal obtainment for the preschool programs. The one exception to lesser strength on the mutuality dimension is for the R5-17 dyad; with current reactivation to mobilize and synthesize collaborative opportunities, the partners recognized the mutual benefit of working together and expressed an appreciation for their collaborative partner. Table 7.10 displays the cooperators strength on mutuality, norms, and organizational autonomy.

Table 7.10. Cooperators and No Relationship's Dyad's Mutuality, Norms, and Organizational Autonomy Strength

Dyad	Mutuality	Norms	Org Autonomy
R3-12	Medium	Medium-Weak	Medium-Strong
R3-13	Weak	Weak	Strong
R4-15	Medium	Medium-Weak	Medium-Strong
R5-16	Medium	Medium-Weak	Medium-Strong
R5-17	Strong	Medium-Weak	Medium-Strong

For R3-12, R4-15, and R5-16, different circumstances, many linked to synthesizing issues, prompt medium strength of the mutuality dimension for the dyads. For R3-12, synthesizing activities solely focused on the single issue of enrollment that have not resulted in the desired results—safeguarding enrollment—have prompted a mutual feeling of lack of appreciation on both sides of the dyadic partnership. For R5-16, drastic changes to synthesizing activities that used to take place—contacting each other to exchange enrollment lists and updating MOUs—has also reduced a sense of mutual appreciation and goal obtainment. Due to the recent change to a longstanding relationship, I felt that medium strength represented the mutuality correctly. Finally, for R4-15, recent attempts to reactivate the relationship promote an exciting opportunity, but the newness of the situation has not resulted in many synthesizing behaviors to occur yet between partners and downplayed the knowledge that goals could be obtained easier by working together.

Results from these interviews indicate that synthesizing is a highly important activity that affects many aspects of collaborative process dimensions, but it also affects other collaborative management techniques. As dyadic partners undertake detailed conversations to negotiate the procedures to bring about a collaborative activity, they also mobilize (or break down) relationships and at times, frame (or reframe) an understanding of collaborative roles. At times synthesizing activities are not successful for partners and they fail to produce the desired outcome of working together. At other times, long standing synthesis is questioned and partners have to renegotiate how they will work together. Finally, for some partners synthesized activities have disappeared altogether.

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter was to shine a light on why and how collaborative process dimensions develop as they do for the varying dyads. I also set out to uncover similarities and differences in the collaborative management techniques of activation, framing, mobilizing and synthesizing for dyadic partners at the varying degrees of collaborative activities. Results from the QCA conducted in Chapter 6 highlighted some important distinctions between the underlying collaborative process dimensions that comprise the collaborators, coordinators, cooperators, and non-involved dyads, and delving into the interview data to assess “how” the administrators created these dimensions led to some illuminating findings.

Along with Keast and Hampson (2007) and Agranoff and McGuire (2014), my findings support distinct activities for the four collaborative management techniques of activating, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing, at least for the more involved dyads. I found, particularly for the most involved dyads, “history of collaboration” stories that activated the preschool programs working together. I also found distinct ways that roles and coordination developed during the framing phase—some of these were through conversations about how to work together and other examples included taking cues from administrative job titles and detailed MOUs. Numerous activities occurred during mobilizing, or relationship building, including ones such as tackling challenging collaborative issues, carving out safe space to discuss communication issues, and establishing processes to safeguard sensitive enrollment issues. Finally, synthesizing includes detailed conversations about how to enact the collaborative activities, negotiating and compromising to settle procedures that guide the activities.

Importantly, I argue that these activities do much to develop and create the collaborative process dimensions of governance, administration, norms, and mutuality, and they can

potentially reduce the pull of organizational autonomy. What I found with the interviews is that some of the collaborative management techniques that I assumed would build specific process dimensions did indeed occur—framing techniques that included conversations about roles and at times “guidance” from more longtime members certainly added to the administrative dimension of clearly establishing roles, coordination, and overall goal agreement. However, while I envisioned the start of collaboration, or activation, as building a solid foundation of governance, I also saw these “stories of collaboration” develop into affective narratives that did much for the relationship building, or norms dimension. Moreover, while I envisioned a strong link between synthesizing and the mutuality dimension, I found that synthesizing, or working through the detailed procedures of enacting the collaborative activities, aids in the development of virtually every dimension—brainstorming about processes (governance); clarifying roles when establishing procedures (administration); emphasizing (or de-emphasizing) collaborative interests (organizational autonomy); building relationships through tackling challenging procedural issues (norms); and developing (or not) procedures that aid in the mutual benefit of goal obtainment for both programs (mutuality).

I certainly find evidence to support a recursive relationship between both collaborative process dimensions and management techniques. If collaborative process dimensions capture tangible elements that people can envision and point to when they discuss their collaboration, then the management techniques are the actions taken to initiate, support, and maintain those elements. However, once in place, these process dimensions become part of the dynamic that contribute to the management technique. For example, several more involved dyadic partners mentioned MOUs as solidifying collaborative roles. Also, a new Head Start director approached a relationship with a collaborating VPI partner assuming underlying norms of trust (based upon

her knowledge of the relationship between the former Head Start director and VPI administrator) and planned to continue mobilizing the relationship based upon that trust. In other words, assumed norms of trust aided in her confidence that mobilizing the relationship would come with great ease.

While the recursive nature between process dimensions and management techniques can support each other positively, they can also break down or fail to build each other in dyads where both run short. For primarily the lesser-involved dyads, they do not tend to create solid process dimensions that can serve as a “collaborative bank” that partners can pull from when engaging one of the collaborative management techniques. Unclear roles, lack of seeing each other as partners, and certainly a shortage of established trust undercuts efforts to reactivate, frame, mobilize, and synthesize opportunities to work together. Moreover, limited, unclear, or shallow attempts to engage in the management techniques reduce the ability to create clearly defined collaborative process dimensions.

Additional important findings include the knowledge that some important similarities and differences in collaborative management techniques emerge among the collaborators, coordinators, and cooperators/noninvolved. Collaborators and coordinators share some important similarities, including well defined and called upon activation stories that provide a clear picture of how and why any collaborative activity began between programs. Conversely, two important differences emerge between them: some of the collaborators clearly evoke the importance of equity in programming to explain why they launched into a blended situation together, and many of the coordinators (compared to none of the collaborators) discuss higher administration concerns about funding or regulatory burdens that keep the dyadic partners engaging in coordination degree of collaborative activity. Moreover, compared to their more involved

counterparts, the lesser-involved dyads mainly lacked clear activation stories either due to fuzzy details of who started it and how it began, disappearing activation, or new beginnings that have not yet settled down into an agreed upon understanding.

Another important distinction is that in two regions, SWV and NWV, larger networks between the respective regional Head Start program and all of the local VPIs have been activated. In both of these cases, we find only collaborators and coordinators. It could be an important association that adding the structure of a larger collaborative network aids in the possibilities of more involved collaborative activities.

Investigating framing activities also brought about some interesting similarities and distinctions. I developed a typology based on framing activities that intersects at being either collaborative or non-collaborative focused and mature or immature in nature. From these I identified six types of framing including, collaborative framing, non-collaborative framing, blueprints, remodeling, symbolic framing, and single-issue framing. Most of the collaborators fall under collaborative framing, given ongoing mature framing activities (dialogues and established MOUs) that help to clearly define roles and coordination. However, some times collaborating partners pursue drastic enough changes to existing roles to fall under remodeling activities that shake up understandings of “who does what” and involves reworking by partners.

I find the coordinators to be a good mix of these framing types; however, they seem to be more affected by activation (and reactivation) activities that bring on new players, so many of them fall under the remodeling type. Two of the coordinators fall under the non-collaborative focus: in one case, long term (mature collaborative) discussions have clearly defined partners as “happily separated;” in the other case, lack of dialogue (immature collaborative) about roles or disbelief about the sincerity of roles has landed this dyad in the symbolic category.

Finally, I find the cooperators and non-involved to lack much framing activities. In at least one dyad, they may focus a bit on a single-issue framing of enrollment issues. In two other dyads, the newness of reactivating some collaborative activities has left framing activities too immature at this time to analyze; for these, “blueprints” framing is an accurate depiction of current framing activities. Finally, for the final two dyads, the partners interact so little to include framing as a meaningful activity.

Mobilizing also highlights some important similarities and distinctions. The coordinators and collaborators mostly have developed strong relationships that have deep trust, although some issues are worth noting. For collaborators, continuous challenging conversations about regulatory and process issues can weigh on mutual trust; however, we still see partners compromising with each other and continuing to come back to the collaborative table. For coordinators, staff turnover and lack of following through on established processes can diminish trust between partners. Moreover, compared to collaborators, coordinators are far more likely to credit trust building in a relationship to a single person; this raises some concerns since both of these identified persons are no longer a part of the respective dyads. Finally, cooperators and noninvolved engage in relatively few mobilizing behaviors, either due to being very new developing relationships, the lack of developing relationships, or the breakdown of existing relationships. Some of the reasons seem to be concerns about following through on important enrollment processes and the drastic turnover of existing early childhood education staff.

Finally, synthesizing shares some elements for all dyads that engage in at least some degree of collaborative activity; that is, partners do have to engage with each other to establish procedures from the least-involved activity (sharing enrollment lists) to the most involved (creating a blended classroom situation). However, some very important distinctions do stand

out. First, the collaborators, by far, engage in the most detailed and time-consuming efforts to align policies and procedures to blend a classroom. Moreover, I find that these procedures do not become set in stone, but rather are often revisited and assessed for their functionality. Many of the coordinators also report having to revisit processes, often due to concerns raised by a collaborative partner that enrollment issues still occur between them that need to be addressed. However, a similarity that we find for these two types of more involved dyads is the willingness to adjust regulations or alter enrollment dates: the collaborators and coordinators seem less concerned about regulatory constraints. Conversely, many of the cooperators or non-involved discussed differences in enrollment dates and regulations as barriers that seemed formidable, and they engaged in very little to no ongoing conversations about procedures and policies to enact collaborative activities.

In sum, examining these dyadic partnerships to understand why and how, and to what extent they engage collaboratively with each other has illuminated some important understandings about how to build (and break down) collaboration. The interplay between collaborative management techniques and process dimensions cannot be overstated: administrators engage in collaborative management techniques to build process dimensions which in turn affect their future collaborative management techniques. These techniques and dimensions lend themselves to the willingness to engage in certain degrees of collaborative activity that then go on to reinforce the underlying dimensions and techniques. These techniques and process dimensions are fluid constructs that cannot be taken for granted by collaborative partners; if they fail to attend to them, they can indeed see them fall apart.

We do find that some activities may be more important than others, as not all more involved collaborators report continued and ongoing trust between them, yet they continue to engage in

higher degrees of collaborative activities. With collaborative focus and an approach of seriousness of working together, sometimes dyads may be able to overcome some normative shortcomings, at least in the short run; for some, the future investment between partners was not clear. What is clear is that failing to engage in these collaborative techniques and process dimensions leaves partners at very shallow involvement with one another.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to discover how and why, and to what extent, collaboration occurs between two publicly funded preschool programs: Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative. It is a situation that I came across more than eight years ago when I was part of a grant team that received a Virginia Department of Education grant to evaluate innovative ways that communities attempt to bring additional preschool opportunities to local community children. Upon conducting our evaluation, we came across a few communities in which local Head Start and VPI service providers worked together to maximize preschool access and resources, sometimes to the extent that the boundaries between the two programs were blurred. It struck us as unique then, but after I entered a doctoral program in public administration, I came to recognize that this type of relationship—what I ultimately decided to label public-public program collaboration (PPPC)—was an atypical form of collaboration occurring in the public sector.

What drove me to keep investigating this case was a desire to learn more about “why” these public administrators collaborate. While the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 mandates at least minimal relationships between Head Start programs and the other publicly funded preschools in their service areas, I witnessed (during my time on the grant team) communities working together long before the reauthorization act; moreover, many communities were going above and beyond what the regulation called for. I knew that Head Start regulation is cumbersome, so why some public administrators would strive to marry two standalone programs like Head Start and VPI remained a mystery.

Once I delved deeper into this case, more aspects of it grabbed my attention and suggested that it was worthy of a case study on lesser-known ingredients of collaboration. My intuition was

affirmed when I looked more closely at HS-VPI collaborations and saw that they were not simply black-white categorizations of either “yes” or “no” to collaboration between programs, but rather, featured a wide variety of activities that extended a range of involvement between dyadic partners. My research question thus expanded from “why do Head Start and VPI administrators collaborate” to “why do they collaborate to greater or lesser degrees of involvement?” This expansion opened up the possibilities of this topic being worthy of a public administration dissertation, and I committed to examining the underlying reasons.

To frame an understanding of this puzzle, I focused on how Head Start directors and VPI administrators, in practice, make any degree of collaboration between them a reality. While investigating “why do they collaborate to a more or lesser degree,” I raised an equally important question, which is, “how do they go about the business of collaboration?” This investigation is timely given recent interest expressed by President Obama in investing federal monies into additional preschool experiences to be implemented through federal-state partnerships. I also identified a gap in the public administration collaboration and network literatures about how public administrators initiate, manage, and sustain collaboration. Also, while scholars such as Thomson and Perry (2006) and Thomson et al. (2007) began to pinpoint the underlying processes that comprise collaboration, we know less about how to create and sustain those processes and how they may vary dependent upon the degree to which partners engage collaborative activities.

To investigate these research questions, I designed and implemented a multiple case study in Virginia, conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with both regional Head Start directors and VPI administrators. I used the one-on-one interview with the public program administrators as my unit of observation to create a holistic understanding of my ultimate unit of analysis: the

dyadic partnership between program administrators. From these interviews, I gained deep insight to the type of collaborative activities these programs undertake together, why they collaborate, and how they collaborate. These findings were presented in three separate chapters that make up the heart of this dissertation. I combined classic qualitative analyses that provided rich text support for thematic findings with a Qualitative Comparative Analysis that underscored the similarities and differences in process dimensions for dyads grouped at varying degrees of collaborative activity. I now turn to a discussion of the main takeaways from these analyses.

Lessons Learned about Public-Public Program Collaboration

In Chapter 1, I argued that this research is important for four main reasons, one reason being to illuminate a distinctive type of collaboration in the public sector: public-public program collaboration (PPPC). I asserted that public-public program collaboration is two publicly funded service providers interacting and creating shared norms and rules in order to address a specific problem domain and increase public value. This form of collaboration intersects at two standalone publicly funded programs that may be run by different organizations, such as local education authorities or community action agencies, but that ultimately result in publicly funded administrators negotiating exchanges at the edge of program regulatory boundaries. I argued that PPPC varies from other typical forms of collaborative networks that build relationships based upon filling complementary roles to provide holistic services; for the programs in this study, they need not collaborate to run their preschool programs.

During the course of this study, by focusing on program collaboration between Head Start and the VPI, I identified important underlying characteristics of PPPC; three important ones emerged. First, the administrators engaged in potential PPPC can vary from one case to another;

in other words, while the Head Start regional director position was relatively uniform, the person overseeing the VPI program varied greatly in their job titles and span of authority. Secondly, wide variation existed in the degree of PPPC that these programs undertake with one another. For example, in this study, one dyad has basically no involvement with each other, compared to several other dyads that interact deeply and frequently, some to the point that they blend classrooms that blur program lines. Thirdly, even in a supposedly simplistic form of collaboration between two public programs (held constant by looking at *only* the same two programs, i.e., Head Start and VPI), confusion existed at times about *who* administrates the programs due to layers of administration, similar programs in existence within the same region, or outsourcing program management to a third party.

While PPPC provided a useful lens to view the relationship between publicly funded preschools, it may also be a useful lens for assaying other similar types of collaborative relationships. For example, police departments in close jurisdiction to each other (for example, city and county police departments, or town and university police departments) developing varying types of collaborative agreements may be worthy of future investigation using the PPPC framework.

Lessons Learned about Collaborative Activities, Collaborative Process Dimensions, and Collaborative Management Techniques

In this research, I took a decidedly outcomes-based approach to the study of collaboration. In other words, while some scholars study collaboration as interaction, I focused my attention on how collaborative management techniques and process dimensions create opportunities for program administrators to engage in varying degrees of collaborative activities. By approaching this research project in this manner, I am able to separate three important elements for

consideration: collaborative activities, collaborative process dimensions, and collaborative management techniques. Arguably, and as will be discussed in more detail below, there is a recursive relationship between all of these elements, but I first reflect upon what this research adds to a discussion of each of these elements independently.

Collaborative Activities

Similar to Bardach (1998), I too focused on the joint activity as reflecting program collaboration. I built upon a continuum of collaboration that includes cooperation, coordination, and collaboration (Mattessich, Murry-Close, and Monsey, 2001; Seldon, Sowa, and Sandfort, 2006). I decided to create a degree of collaborative activities continuum that links identified activities undertaken by HS-VPI dyads as falling somewhere along the continuum. I added “no relationship” to cover the whole range of possibilities. Figure 8.1 displays the continuum.

Figure 8.1: Degrees of Collaborative Activity Continuum
(Adapted from Mattessich et al, 2001)

Least involvement

Most Involvement



This research contributed to the collaboration literature by offering a framework for identifying joint activities, or collaborative activities, and placing them on a continuum from the least to the most involved. This allows researchers to ask questions about tangible activities that programs, departments, or agencies undertake together and to assess them along the continuum. While this continuum fit well the typical activities undertaken by pairs of preschool administrators, it is reasonable to think that research exploring other possible types of collaborative partnerships in the public sector, such as police departments, academic departments

at state universities, and local hospitals, could also use a similar degree of collaborative activities framework.

For this study, dyadic activities that mainly involve information exchange with minimal activities were labeled as cooperation. Coordinating dyads included those dyads that undertake activities requiring a fair amount of interaction between partners, such as discussing applicants for program placement and creating joint professional development. Collaborating dyads included those dyads that undertake a blended classroom situation. While these partners keep their funding streams separated, they created a blended program situation where many of the program boundaries blurred to create almost a different, or separated program from both the original programs.

Information gathered from this study raised some issues with operationalizing collaborative activities in this manner, which may be useful for future studies. First, additional sub-categorization may be a smart addition. For the blended classrooms, several unexpected styles of “blending” emerged during the study and have been discussed in great detail throughout this dissertation, including “school centered” blending, “Head Start centered” blending, and another type that was a combination of both. I also found a wide variety of coordinators; that is, some coordinators were much more involved with each other than others.

Another operational definition issue is that while I expected dyadic partners who undertake more involved activities to also partake in many of the “lesser involved” activities on the continuum, this was not always the case. Fortunately, due to my deep knowledge of each partnership, I could adjust assignment of “degree” to fit the intention of the continuum; however, this is something that may need adjusted for future research.

Collaborative Process Dimensions

Thomson et al. (2007) tested and refined five dimensions of collaborative processes including governance, administration, norms of trust, mutuality, and organizational autonomy. This research applied these dimensions to an in-depth case study that provided an opportunity to expand an understanding of the dimensions based upon varying degrees of collaborative activities and examining how public administrators initiated, managed, and sustained them. From building an interview schedule generally based upon their questions that tapped these dimensions, I learned valuable insight about how to gain understanding of the dimensions.

Similar to Thomson et al. (2007), I find organizational autonomy to be a challenging concept to tap, mainly due to differences in how much or little dyadic partners are involved with each other. This difference changed the way that interviewees interpreted the questions about organizational autonomy. For example, one of the questions asked administrators if they found it challenging to balance both Head Start and VPI goals when working together. This question was supposed to ascertain higher organizational autonomy in dyads that report high challenges in trying to balance goals; in other words, dyads dealing with the push and pull of being both collaborative members and internal program employees would reveal that balancing both goals was challenging. However, sometimes I found that the least involved dyadic partners answered that balancing both programs' goals was not challenging at all. They were so separated that trying to balance program goals was not an issue. Ostensibly, it is hard to imagine being more organizationally autonomous than being so separated that you do not have to attempt to balance goals. Fortunately for this research, I developed the "stealing kids" indicator as an additional measure of organizational autonomy to add validity to assigning dyads to this dimension; however, future research may have to reconsider the wording of some questions to better tap this

dimension. Another option may be to use a combined measure that ascertains self-assessed degree of involvement and then asks questions about balancing both programs' goals.

I also added an additional indicator for the norms of trust dimension. I found that during interviews, mostly without prompting, interviewees made statements about the quality of their relationship with one another. I added this "quality of relationship" indicator to add to the validity of the norms measure. This addition helped in some cases where a frustrating situation may have just occurred, or when challenging conversations downplay "trust" between partners, but was typically followed up with, "but generally we have a great relationship." It allowed me to ascertain a better reflection of the norms of trust dimension.

A major takeaway from this study, which will be discussed in great detail below, was the finding that underlying collaborative process dimensions indeed do vary based upon degree of collaborative activity. This finding built our theoretical understanding of collaborative process dimensions to include for possibilities of different combinations of dimensions associated with different degrees of collaborative involvement. While Thomson et al. (2007) may have developed the collaborative process dimensions envisioning more involved collaboration (such as the "collaborators" in this study), this research suggested that it provides a meaningful lens for a whole range of collaborative interactions. I found that not all collaborative dimensions are needed to engage in some degrees of collaborative activity; however, administrators interested in trying to develop the most involved exchanges may wish to invest time in building governance, administration, norms of trust, and mutuality, and reducing organizational autonomy.

Collaborative Management Techniques

Agranoff and McGuire (2001) identified four techniques used by public managers to manage networks: activation, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing. These techniques cover a full range of activities from initiating collaborative involvement, establishing roles, building relationships, and setting the stage for productive interactions. In more recent research, McGuire and Agranoff (2014) found support for these techniques as mutually exclusive, ongoing, and often undertaken by more than one “collaborative manager.” I built upon these techniques by applying them to collaboration between dyadic partnerships to underscore how Head Start directors and VPI administrators initiated, managed, and sustained collaboration. Based upon this research, I offered three important insights to operational definitions for theoretical development.

By focusing my research on the same two public programs, I offered additional conceptual understanding of the activating technique. While Agranoff and McGuire (2001), McGuire and Agranoff (2014), and Keast and Hampson (2007) emphasized activating as a selection of network partners, this focus was downplayed in a study that focused on only two pre-established collaborative partners. Thus, I added to activation activities by including initiating (or attempting to initiate) collaborative interaction between dyadic partners. In many ways, this built upon ideas of boundary spanning (Williams, 2002) as it often included one public manager initiating a meeting with a potential collaborative partner to begin a dialogue of possible collaboration. I found in some regions long standing, shared narratives of how their collaboration “came to be,” and I termed these “history of collaboration” stories. As discussed below, they became an important backdrop for collaboration to flourish, or in some cases, flounder.

Framing included activities that help to establish collaborative roles. McGuire and Agranoff (2014) connected framing activities to building the structure of the network, and I argued that these same ideas were applicable to a dyadic partnership. Findings from this research enhanced an understanding of framing by including job titles, MOUs, and even larger networked relationships that encompass dyadic partnerships as helping to clarify collaborative roles, coordination, and collaborative goals. I found important differences in framing among collaborative partners that illuminated how much time has been invested in framing activities combined with how collaborative or non-collaborative the focus of framing activities are. From these differences, I created a typology for framing that is an important takeaway from this research: I argued that framing techniques can be categorized by creating a 2X2 table at the intersection of having mature/immature framing *and* having a collaborative/non-collaborative focus. These four combinations led to six different framing types: collaborative framing, non-collaborative framing, blueprints, remodeling, symbolic framing, and single-issue framing.

Finally, I spent time envisioning how to distinguish synthesizing activities from mobilizing activities. As originally designed by Agranoff and McGuire, mobilizing included the relationship building aspects of network formation to build commitment to the network, whereas synthesizing was described as creating an environment for productive interaction. In practice, these two techniques can seem remarkably similar. While there is still arguably overlap between these activities, I created a distinction by focusing mobilizing on communication techniques, such as negotiation and compromise, and also examples of administrators using clarifying language to bring about shared meanings. For synthesizing, I focused on creating specific detailed processes and procedures to enact a collaborative activity. Moreover, when defined this way, I found synthesizing activities to overlap with almost every other collaborative management technique.

For example, in some dyads, an opportunity to bring about a specific collaborative activity served as “activation” for the dyad. Also, when working through detailed procedures for a collaborative activity, collaborative roles were often further clarified. Finally, working through challenging processes did much to enhance or breakdown relationship mobilization.

I now turn to the main takeaways for the main research questions of this study: examining why and how Head Start directors and VPI administrators collaborate.

Lessons Learned about Why Programs Collaborate

In Chapter 5, I provided a detailed discussion of each dyadic partnership, including the types of collaborative activities undertaken by partners and why the partners engaged in (any) collaboration with one another. Overwhelmingly, dyadic partners supplied reasons that comport with resource dependency and social exchange theories. Head Start directors and VPI administrators often discussed their ability to: maximize access to preschool for community children by streamlining enrollment processes, increase classroom resources (both academic and support services) by working together, and exchange beneficial ideas between programs to enhance overall preschool provision. Bringing classic organizational theories into a frame that comports with focusing on managerial behavior, this study offered much support for Bardach’s (1998) bureaucratic behavior of public managers.

Bardach found that some managers initiated collaboration between agencies to seek out resources, and I found similar type behavior for many of the Head Start and VPI administrators. Many of the preschool administrators discussed their ability to assure smooth preschool enrollment by working together to streamline processes. Recognizing that a main resource for these publicly funded preschool programs is an accessible pool of preschool-aged children; many

administrators attested that they can reduce uncertainty of enrollment by working together. Interestingly, often these same behaviors to secure resources also showed signs of another one of Bardach's (1998) managerial behaviors: being value-oriented. Indeed, many of the administrators also purported to collaborate with each other to maximize both programs' resources in order to increase overall preschool access: in other words, to bring additional opportunities for pre-schooling in their community that would not exist by working in a vacuum. Like Bardach (1998), I too found that many of these administrators strove to create public value for community members.

Some informants tapped organizational legitimacy as a resource to be gained by working with the other program. Some VPI administrators mentioned the benefit of working with the Head Start program due to its reputation as a premier program that considers holistic aspects of preschool provision. Also, several Head Start directors mentioned that engaging with VPI and its relationship to the public school system was beneficial for their Head Start students (to make a connection before they begin public schooling), but also as a reputation booster for their own program. These examples too reflect public administrators seeking out resources for their programs.

A major finding for this research was the ongoing competing narratives that administrators expressed about why they collaborate. At times, administrators shared examples of maximizing preschool access and tapping organizational legitimacy for altruistic, value-oriented (Bardach, 1998), and citizen-agent style (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003) reasons while simultaneously expressing very program-centered reasons. The multiple reasons expressed by both the VPI and Head Start administrators for why collaboration occurs often included both the push of being community or collaborative in focus and the pull of having to protect and promote

program interests. Several administrators emphasized working together to increase access for all community children while simultaneously recognizing the need to work together to protect individual program enrollment. Similarly, some program administrators discussed the value in working together to exchange ideas about best practice in preschool, while others emphasized that working together helped ensure that students would become appropriately “school ready.”

Here we began to see an interesting interplay between the reasons why public administrators collaborated and one of the underlying process dimensions as defined by Thomson et al (2007): organizational autonomy. Thomson et al. (2007) contended and found empirical support for the existence of organizational autonomy as a distinct dimension of collaboration. They argued that the push and pull of being both organizational and collaborative members is akin to collaboration itself, and suggested that these competing factors underlie all collaboration. For the collaborative members in this study, the push and pull was most evident in their discussions about why they wanted to work together. From the most involved to the least involved, dyadic partners revealed that while creating public value certainly was part of why they wanted to bridge the divide between programs, so too was maintaining some elements of programmatic control.

I reviewed literature that suggested that part of the explanation for the more altruistic reasons given for collaboration to occur between Head Start and VPI was the “dependent” social construction of program (policy) targets (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). I argued that this positive construction compelled some program administrators to act as citizen-agents (Maynard-Mooney & Musheno, 2003) and push program guidelines to creative limits to help out this most at-risk, vulnerable population of children. I found some support for this assertion, particularly from some of the Head Start directors who recognized that they work with the most economically disadvantaged group of children and, as stated by the former RI Head Start director, were often

“the only ones fighting for these kids.” However, I did not hear the overabundance of comments like these that I was expecting from this group of administrators. For the most involved dyads—the collaborators—I heard some discussion about creating equity of opportunity for all community preschoolers; but even these comments, at times, were couched in some issues of control. Some school district-employed VPI administrators revealed that they viewed both Head Start and VPI preschoolers as all of “their” (school district) children; thus, blending the Head Start and VPI programs ensured that all preschoolers had quality experiences to ensure school readiness.

I found an interesting connection between the degree of collaborative activity and one of the most telling examples of the push and pull of organizational autonomy, the “stealing kids phenomenon.” Several administrators (primarily Head Start) discussed that a reason they collaborated with each other was to safeguard program enrollment due to concerns of currently enrolled children leaving the program and being enrolled by the other publicly funded preschool; in the words of several informants, the concern that the other program was “stealing their kids.” This situation exemplified program administrators focusing on program-specific concerns over other more community-specific reasons for focusing on program enrollment—working together to bring more overall access to preschool for all community children. Comparing the more involved dyads (collaborators and coordinators) to the lesser-involved dyads (cooperators and non-involved), I found that the lesser-involved dyads were more likely, when comparing percentages, to report the “stealing kids” phenomenon than the more involved dyads. While I cannot speak to the time ordering of the relationship, the relationship suggested that more involved dyads tend to focus less on at least one of these more program-centric concerns and to set their sight on increasing access for more community-centric reasons. The lesser-involved

dyads were more likely to offer a more programmatic reason for engaging in collaboration with their dyadic counterparts.

I also discovered that institutional theory offered some explanatory power for why programs collaborated. Certainly the coercive forces of the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 pushed Head Start administrators to pursue at least minimal compliance with the mandate of having a signed MOU between themselves and their VPI partners (although not always successfully). Even those who began collaboration a few years prior to the act mentioned that they anticipated this “collaboration mandate” coming down from OHS, so they began to work on their collaborative practices. What becomes very telling again was when I presented a tabular discussion of the varying institutional forces, coercive, mimetic, and normative as contingent upon degree of collaborative activity. I found that only dyads that are involved at the coordination and collaboration degree (the more involved dyads) reported mimetic (having an administrator with past experiences of program collaboration) and/or normative (pressure from upper administration, job descriptions, or long-term history) pressures that compelled them to engage with their dyadic partners. Interestingly, some newer possibilities for a couple of the cooperating dyads in this study revealed that they are investigating collaboration between programs because it is something they think they “should” do; perhaps normative pressure can jump start the creation of more involved collaborative activities.

Some other observations are worthy of mention also. Several themes in the public collaboration/network literature discussed managerial or organizational capacity to collaborate as a potential underlying reason why some public agencies collaborate compared to others. Evidence from this research supported McGuire and Silvia’s (2010a) findings that public agencies managing single programs may have more capacity to collaborate than those that

manage multiple agencies; indeed, I found that in the two regions that also include a larger network of relationships between the regional Head Start and the local VPI programs, the Head Start directors (a program with a single focus) initiated and managed the network. Also, in several of the lesser-involved dyads, I heard more accounts of the Head Start director attempting to initiate some contact with the VPI administrator (typically an administrator who also oversees multiple elementary school district programs); and, I also observed discussion of time constraints (as a challenge to pursuing more involved collaboration) more often from the VPI administrators.

Bardach (1998) argues that organizational “confidence” can be a predictor of collaboration, and I certainly found support for this, or at least a similar finding. I discussed Region 2’s deeply entwined collaboration as hinged upon long-time normative pressures that collaboration between the Head Start and VPI programs is the way preschool “should” be provided in the region, but I argue there could be something more prompting their deep collaboration. I found a strong sense of pride expressed by all of the Region 2 preschool administrators about what they have accomplished by working together. I think a sense of creating something of value—collaboration—with each other created a positive cycle that propels them to keep coming back to the collaborative table. I think it is no mistake that all seven VPI administrators agreed to talk to me for this study, and that the R2Head Start director agreed to be interviewed twice. When they heard my study was about preschool collaboration, they were eager to share their collaboration story because they felt strongly that they have created something worthy of discussion.

Overall, I found that preschool administrators contended with issues of organizational autonomy when framing their understanding of why they collaborate with each other. I found that more involved dyads seemed to assuage the pull of their organizational interests more than their lesser-involved counterparts and reported more community-focused reasons for

engagement. I also found that while coercive forces can propel most dyadic partners into at least minimal involvement with one another, it was only those dyads that reported normative and mimetic forces that landed in more involved collaborative activities. Finally, I found support that program confidence, or pride, can provide a strong motivation to keep collaborators continually working together.

I now turn to a discussion of the additional analyses of this project: to understand what PPPC looks like and how dyadic partners created PPPC by investigating variation in collaborative activities, underlying collaborative process dimensions, and management techniques. Understanding “why” shed much understanding about what prompted PPPC between partners, but was limited in offering insight to why and how partners collaborate at varying degrees of involvement.

Understanding Collaborative Process Dimensions and Management Techniques for Each Type of Dyadic Partnership

The primary analyses for this research identified variations in the underlying collaborative process dimensions (governance, administration, norms of trust, mutuality, and organizational autonomy) for groups of dyadic partners that engaged in varying degrees of collaborative activity. Next, pulling out rich text from the interviews to offer administrators a voice for how they manage collaboration, I investigated the collaborative management techniques of activating, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing and connected them to building the collaborative process dimensions. Here I review the main findings for each of the groups of dyadic partners: collaborators, coordinators, and cooperators/noninvolved.

Collaborators

The collaborators were those dyadic partnerships that engaged in the most involved collaborative activities. A distinguishing factor was that they created a blended classroom situation, meaning that both Head Start-funded and VPI-funded children sit in the same classroom together. Five of the sixteen dyadic partnerships in this study engaged in collaboration, and resided in Regions 1 and 2.

When pulling out the collaborators and comparing them to all other dyads, the QCA revealed that collaborators generally have strong governance, strong administration, strong norms, and strong mutuality. They also have weak organizational autonomy. These findings supported Thomson et al.'s (2007) assertions that these five dimensions comprise collaboration. In fact, all of the dimensions except for mutuality were found to be necessary conditions, meaning that all of collaborating dyads present four of the five conditions discussed above. These program partners brainstormed together, took each other seriously as partners, had clearly defined roles and coordination, and trusted and committed to each other. They also set aside organizational interests in favor of community or collaborative interests. Not every collaborating dyad attested to mutuality, or the sense that their collaborative partner appreciates them.

How they created these process dimensions was revealed through an analysis of the collaborative management techniques they used. These partners established clear *activation*, or “history of collaboration” stories that included one of the administrators acting in the role of boundary spanner to discuss opportunities for blending programs. Reasons for diving into the deepest involvement vary some, but I found a combination of wanting to bring equitable experiences to community preschoolers, limited preschool opportunities without blending, or a combination of the two. Having a clear beginning “story” seemed to serve collaborators well for

taking each other seriously as partners and beginning goal alignment. Identifying how collaborators activated (and in some case reactivated) collaboration revealed an unexpected finding of this study: a sub-categorization of blending between partners where some partners seemed to lean towards a more school-focused approach, some towards a more Head Start approach, and then one that seemed more a true combination of programs.

Also, compared to all other partners in this study, collaborators appeared to have the most upper administration support for attempting and sustaining deep involvement with one another. This finding supports McGuire and Silvia's (2010a) assertions that organizations with more upper administration support have great organizational capacity to collaborate.

The interviews uncovered that having substantial formalized structure did much to help *frame* an understanding of collaborative roles and coordination for the collaborators. This framing did much to establish strong administration for the collaborators. Four of the five collaborators resided in Region 2, the region with by far the most detailed and complex MOUs. Most of the administrators pointed to these detailed documents as helping clarify roles and coordination among partners. They also referred to Head Start job titles and the larger collaborative network as providing additional reinforcement. These more formalized factors opened up opportunities for collaborators to engage in ongoing dialogue with each other, either to look to each other to bring their regulatory knowledge to the table, or engage in challenging conversations if one partner wanted to change or clarify existing roles. These collaborators were not immune to challenging and frustrating conversations to align roles and goals, but a difference for them was their continued willingness to engage with one another. Compared to all other dyadic partners, all of the collaborators engaged in collaborative-focused framing activities.

Most of them had mature, established “collaborative framing,” but were still willing to undertake “remodeling” when necessary to realign collaborative roles.

Generally speaking, collaborators successfully *mobilized* relationships with one another. They successfully built the norms dimension and broke down organizational autonomy through communication, negotiation, and compromise. They carved out safe space in which to raise challenging issues or to clarify meanings with one another. Occasionally, these challenging conversations took a toll, but more often than not, collaborators built up a requisite amount of “collaborative trust” to see them through challenging issues. Similar to the discussion of framing, these administrators pointed to some of the more formalized structure, such as participating in a larger collaborative network, as reinforcing a positive relationship. Also, I found a strong link between synthesizing behaviors and mobilizing; that is, much relationship building occurred for these collaborators as they worked through the detailed processes of blending programs. Finally, collaborators discussed trusting their partners in terms of being able to count on one another and to maintain confidences, but they also revealed that much trust in each other builds from counting on their partner to interpret program regulation correctly and to follow through on established processes.

Synthesizing activities, or those activities geared towards detailed discussion of establishing processes to engage collaborative activities, turned out to be an essential activity for collaborators. They spent much time engaging with one another to work out how to blend their classrooms; however, I learned that a good portion of their work also involved gaining buy-in from internal employees to promote PPPC. Tackling processes took negotiation and wherewithal, as collaborators revealed having to revisit processes that they deemed as unsuccessful and in need of tweaking. Interestingly, for a minority of the collaborators, these

detailed negotiations did not build as strong of mutuality dimension as expected, but mainly because some of the challenging conversations seemed to take a toll on whether mutual appreciation existed between partners. For most collaborators, however, these detailed conversations built mutuality as expected.

Coordinators

Coordinators were those dyads that engaged in many collaborative activities that took coordinating efforts between Head Start and VPI administrators to enact, such as sitting down to discuss program placement for preschool applicants and jointly creating professional development opportunities. They differed in activity from collaborators in not undertaking a blended classroom situation. Six dyads in this study were identified as coordinators, and they resided in Regions 1, 2, and 3.

When conducting the QCA, I ran the analysis for coordinators twice: once comparing them to lesser-involved dyads and then again comparing them only to the collaborators. For both cases, two necessary conditions appeared: strong governance and weak organizational autonomy. When comparing coordinators to lesser-involved dyads, they either also had strong administration or they had strong social capital dimensions: strong norms and strong mutuality. It seemed that compared to their lesser-involved counterparts, coordinators either excelled at the structural dimensions or they built up requisite social capital in addition to the necessary conditions.

When comparing coordinators to collaborators, two different recipes identifying the collaborative process dimensions that comprise coordinators emerged, while still revealing the necessary conditions of strong governance and weak autonomy. In comparison to the most

involved dyads, the coordinators revealed two possible recipe conditions in addition to the necessary conditions: they either had strong administration combined with weak mutuality *or* strong norms and strong mutuality combined with weak administration.

This finding began to reveal some important distinctions between collaborators and coordinators and illuminated a major contribution of this research to the collaboration literature: whereas collaborators exhibited strong structural and social capital dimensions and weak organizational autonomy, coordinators need not have all of these in place to participate in coordinating activities. They engaged in coordination if they had the necessary conditions in place along with strong administration and weak mutuality, meaning that they took each other seriously as partners, put aside organizational interests, had clearly defined roles and coordination, but lacked a viewpoint that they can accomplish their goals better or sensed a lack of mutual appreciation. Conversely, another conceivable path for coordinators was to have the necessary conditions in place and to build strong social capital dimensions, but lack strong administration. This path suggested that dyads still engaged in coordination if they built up strong trust, commitment, and mutual appreciation, but lacked clearly articulated roles and coordination.

While I argued that *activation* as part of managing PPPC was primarily about identifying the initiation of collaborative involvement between dyadic partners, it certainly also included the changing of personnel for the preschool administrators and staff involved in collaboration with one another. Most of the coordinators shared aspects of their activation story with the collaborators (related primarily to the beginning of the larger HS-VPI network in their respective regions); however, differences emerged when investigating the amount of fairly new personnel on one or both sides of coordinating dyads compared to their collaborative counterparts. The

onset of these new relationships downplayed some administrators' view of their dyadic partner as a "serious partner," and it at times undermined clarity of roles. Coordinators often had established "history of collaboration" stories, but often with the addition of new players. Also, compared to their collaborating counterparts, some of the coordinating dyads activated, or began interactions, shrouded in some negative opinions about one or the other program.

Another important difference between coordinators and collaborators was the lack of upper administration buy-in for the coordinating dyads. Some preschool administrators discussed this lack of upper administration support when discussing why they did not view their preschool partner as serious; they reflected an opinion that they had about their upper administration not taking the other public preschool program as a serious partner. For other coordinating preschool administrators (VPI), they revealed that their upper administration was comfortable with the dyadic relationship between programs remaining as coordinators; they lacked the belief that a blended classroom situation would be supported by their supervisors.

Investigating *framing* techniques for coordinators also revealed some important similarities and distinctions between collaborators and coordinators. Like collaborators, coordinators also tapped into formalized structures and engaged in dialogues to help understand role clarity, but as noted in the discussion above of coordinators' process dimensions, not all coordinators had strong administration. In fact, a more nuanced analysis of administration reveals that none of the coordinators reported meeting all of the indicators of the strongest administration; they primarily had medium strong administration, and one dyad reported medium weak administration. An unexpected finding of this study was the strong link between activation (in terms of personnel turnover) and framing activities: simply said, frequent turnover or newness in administrative positions often left coordinators with an unclear sense of collaborative roles and coordination.

Compared to collaborators who mainly undertake “collaborative framing” and “remodeling,” coordinators also partake in “collaborative framing,” but also equally as much in “remodeling,” “non-collaborative framing,” and “symbolic framing.” In some coordinating dyads, staff turnover results in revisiting and remodeling roles; in one dyad, partners are happy to keep roles relatively apart or non-collaborative, and one dyad participates in more symbolic attempts to frame an understanding of roles (in other words, one of the partners feels the framing of roles does not reflect actual roles in practice).

Mobilizing for coordinators also shared quite a few similarities with collaborators, but also some important differences. Building relationships for coordinators included communication and negotiation, but took on a bit of a different feel as several of the coordinators credited the established trust between them to their specific dyadic partner. This approach placed much emphasis on the quality of the relationship in the hands of a single person. It begged the question about what happens to the quality of the dyadic relationship if personnel turnover occurs. (In fact, in the three dyads where the a specific administrator is credited with trust-building, the two specifically named administrators are no longer working for their respective programs.)

Trust and commitment did not always exist between the coordinators. One dyad indeed reported a lack of trust between partners. For that particular dyad, concerns about program quality and lack of process follow through diminished a trusting relationship. Other coordinators expressed less commitment to the dyadic partnership than collaborators. While coordinators have generally low organizational autonomy, some coordinators expressed a challenge of balancing both programs’ goals and another coordinating dyad expressed separateness between them that revealed a bit more organizational autonomy.

Coordinators also engaged in fairly detailed *synthesizing* activities, although perhaps not to the extent as the collaborators. Moreover, for at least half of the coordinators, developing detailed processes to guide collaborative activities mainly revolved around the issues of preschool enrollment; they did not focus on multiple processes covering a variety of collaborative activities. For these coordinators, the processes were a work in progress as issues of “stealing kids” still arose for some of them. These issues were part of the reason that some of the coordinators had slightly higher organizational autonomy than collaborators. For other coordinators being very separated from their dyadic counterparts increased their organizational focus.

An unanticipated finding was the extent to which a couple of the Region 2 coordinators engaged in many synthesizing conversations since they have more or less agreed to a run the VPI and Head Programs similarly (with a few regulatory exceptions), while still maintaining separated (non-blended) classrooms. For these coordinators, they also engaged in many synthesizing activities to more or less align the VPI and Head Start programs; however, they had not committed fully to having programs blended to the point that boundary lines blur together. In fact, these more separated synthesizing activities seemed to reduce coordinators’ commitment to each other overall.

For the coordinators, synthesizing activities only linked to building strong mutuality about half of the time. Several reasons prompted this situation. For a couple of dyads, processes that were not followed through on or deemed to be single-focus in nature reduced a sense of mutual appreciation. For another coordinating dyad, working through detailed processes of aligning Head Start and VPI objectives left an administrator doubting that working together increased VPI goal obtainment.

Coordinators interacted frequently and attempted to engage each other's programs in their decision-making, but not to the extent as collaborators. A major finding for this research was to shine a light on coordinating as a main type of PPPC, and importantly to carve out how these types of dyads differed from the more involved collaborators. Table 8.1 compares the collaborators and coordinators and summarizes important factors that link the collaborative management techniques to the underlying process dimensions to accentuate the main similarities and differences between these two more involved types of dyadic partnerships.

Table 8.1: Collaborators and Coordinators: Comparing Collaborative Management Techniques to Build Collaborative Process Dimensions

	Governance		Administration		Organizational Autonomy		Norms of Trust		Mutuality	
	Collaborators	Coordinators	Collaborators	Coordinators	Collaborators	Coordinators	Collaborators	Coordinators	Collaborators	Coordinators
Activating	--Established history of collaboration (HOC) stories & strong upper administration create opportunities for taking each other seriously as partners.	--Established HOC stories with quite a bit of personnel turnover & limited upper administration support create some opportunities for taking each other seriously as partners.	--Established HOC with limited staff turnover set up dyads for role clarity and goal consensus.	--Established HOC with much personnel turnover sets up dyads for some, but limited role clarity and goal consensus.	--Established HOC stories creates strong normative sense of collaboration as the way to “do preschool”	--Established HOC stories creates a strong normative sense of collaboration as the way to “do preschool” for some, but not all dyads	--Established HOC stories with limited staff turnover & strong upper admin. support adds to sense of pride and strong relationship building; helps to create “collaborative bank trust;” also creates strong sense of commitment	--Established HOC stories with much staff turnover and limited upper administration buy-in can deter some trust building and sense of commitment	N/A	N/A
Framing	--Formal structures, such as larger networks and MOUs set stage for taking each other seriously as partners and brainstorming opportunities	--Formal structures (for most but not all dyads) sets up some dyads for taking each other seriously as partners and brainstorming --Separated roles does limit some dyads to see each other seriously as partners or to engage in brainstorming	--Formal structures and conversations set up dyads for collaborative role clarity and coordination --For a couple of dyads revisiting roles creates some role confusion --Most dyads partake in collaborative framing, but some remodeling of roles	--Some formal structures framing sets up some dyads for role clarity and coordination --One dyad has non-collaborative framing; happily kept somewhat separated --One dyad has symbolic framing; belief that MOU is mainly for symbolic purposes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 8.1: Collaborators and Coordinators: Comparing Collaborative Management Techniques to Build Collaborative Process Dimensions

	Governance		Administration		Organizational Autonomy		Norms of Trust		Mutuality	
	Collaborators	Coordinators	Collaborators	Coordinators	Collaborators	Coordinators	Collaborators	Coordinators	Collaborators	Coordinators
Mobilizing	Ongoing relationship building can promote taking each other serious as partners	Much administrative turnover emphasizes need for new relationship building; currently as is, reduces perspective that serious as partners for some dyads	N/A	N/A	Ongoing relationship building to clarify meanings and create safe space for challenging conversations can increase collaborative focus	--Ongoing relationship building can increase collaborative focus for some --For others, some concerns of relationship (communication) quality reduces collaborative focus somewhat	-Frequent ongoing conversations allow for deep relationship building, which includes freedom for negotiation and compromise -Well-established processes build trust --Challenging conversations can build relationships, but can also wear on them if deemed as too often	-Frequent ongoing conversations for most dyads allow for deep relationship building -Processes well developed for some, but not all dyads; when they break down can wear on trust -Emphasize single-person aspects of trust building (place faith in specific administrator)	N/A	N/A
Synthesizing	Developing detailed processes often leads to brainstorming between partners	Some detailed processes can lead to brainstorming for some dyads; for others, more separated processes limits brainstorming	--Working through details of wide-range of collaborative activities leads to role clarity and coordination. --Following through on processes keeps roles clarified	--Working through details of wide range of collaborative activities, for some dyads, leads to role clarity --Working through process on single-focused activity of enrollment, for some dyads, can downplay goal alignment.	--Working through blended classroom processes diminishes organizational focus for most dyads --For one dyad, issues of control of blended classroom processes promotes slight organizational focus	--Working through single-focused processes of enrollment promotes organizational focus for some dyads	--Establishing processes that work and followed through builds trust and commitment --For a couple of dyads, continuing to tweak processes and challenging discussions about processes can reduce sense of trust --Call upon "collaborative trust bank" to discuss processes	--More separated processes can reduce overall sense of commitment --Processes breaking down or not followed through can reduce trust for some dyads --Concerns of quality of individual program reduces trust for one dyad	--Creating collaborative processes increases sense of goal achievement and mutual appreciation for most dyads --Tweaking processes to reduce control of one partner can break down sense of mutual appreciation for a couple of dyads	-Working processes create sense of goal achieve. for some dyads -Processes breaking down can reduce mutual appreciation for a couple of dyads -For one dyad, burdensome HS goals reduces sense of goal achievement

Cooperators and Noninvolved Dyads

Cooperators and the “no relationships” (noninvolved) dyad were those lesser-involved dyads examined in this study. They generally had few, if any, collaborative activities in place, and the ones that they did have in place took relatively minimal interaction between dyadic partners to enact. Four cooperators and one noninvolved dyad were included in this study and resided in Regions 3, 4, and 5.

Upon running the QCA for cooperators and non-involved, I identified one causal recipe. Cooperators and the noninvolved lacked strong norms, strong administration, and strong governance. These process dimensions turned out to be necessary conditions, and when combined, sufficient for comprising these lesser-involved dyads. Generally speaking, these dyads tended to not trust or commit to each other; they lacked role clarity and coordination; and they tended to not brainstorm together or take each other seriously as partners.

Reviewing *activation* for these lesser-involved dyads illuminated a major finding from this study. When reviewing these dyads “history of collaboration” stories, they differed in stark contrast to the established, well-defined stories of the collaborators and coordinators. I created a typology of activation “stories” that included the categories of: established, established with some new players, beginning, fuzzy, fuzzy and beginning, diminished, and non-existent. As mentioned above, the collaborators and coordinators fell in the first two categories, whereas the lesser-involved dyads covered the last five. Generally speaking, dyadic partners either had “fuzzy” history of collaboration stories, meaning the “how,” “who,” and “when,” details were lacking when asking administrators about their beginning interaction with each other, or they may be so new that the final agreed upon details had not emerged yet. For a couple of dyads, the shared story of collaborative history had diminished to the point that it no longer offered a frame

of understanding for partners; and finally, for the noninvolved dyad, a “collaborative beginning” was non-existent. I argued that lacking clear activation stories seemed to deter taking each other seriously as a partner and downplayed beginning role clarity and coordination.

Cooperators and the noninvolved dyad participated in minimal *framing* activities, which could explain their relatively weak administration and governance dimensions. For this reason, a couple of the dyads were not categorized on the framing typology; framing was simply nonexistent. These administrators acknowledged little, if any, ongoing dialogue to discuss collaborative roles or coordination of activities. In a couple of the cooperating dyads, relatively new, developing relationships had left little time for framing activities to take place. These two were categorized as blueprints (for the dyads with developing relationship). Finally, one dyad was identified as single-focus framing since their understanding of roles and coordination seemed to solely focus on preschool enrollment.

Perhaps most telling was that three of the five cooperators/noninvolved did not have a signed MOU on file, even though the Head Start Reauthorization Act mandates this action for all Head Start programs with other publicly funded preschool programs in their service region. In comparison to the collaborators who mostly have highly detailed MOUs and have a larger formal network structure to lend guidance to framing roles and coordination, cooperators/non-involved had not developed this basic formal structure to define their collaborative roles.

Generally speaking, *mobilizing* activities were also very limited between cooperators and the noninvolved. Findings from this study revealed that these lesser-involved dyads mobilized (or not) at varying stages: one dyad with minimal to no relationship building, two dyads with diminished relationships, and two with newly forming relationships. Compared to the more involved dyads in this study, most of the cooperators and noninvolved negotiated and

compromised to a minimal extent, and tended not to create many opportunities to help each other. While several administrators did acknowledge fiduciary trust (Thomas, 1998) for their dyadic counterpart, most of these lesser-involved dyads did not build much mutual trust between them. In fact, one dyadic partner shared during her interview that she thought “trust” was a strong word to use (and question to ask) with respect to her relationship with her dyadic counterpart.

Perhaps it is not surprising that collaborators and noninvolved dyads did not undertake *synthesizing* activities as much as more involved dyads given the limited amount of collaborative activities in which they engage. However, what was an unexpected finding was how little they interacted to build processes for the activities that they do claim to participate in. Any opportunities they did create to synthesize activities focused around enrollment issues (due to the “stealing kids” phenomenon), and often, due to little interaction, these processes often did not work as planned, which diminished any trust that had been established between programs. A couple of the cooperating dyads did show some signs of future synthesis; in particular, one of the dyads had begun looking into how to streamline enrollment. The future will tell how these synthesizing activities proceed.

Overall, this analysis addresses three of the four main reasons for conducting this study. It focused on micro-level techniques that public administrators use to build collaboration, and by linking collaborative process dimensions and management techniques, it created an opportunity to expand a theoretical understanding of these frameworks. It also offered a lens to examine the recursive relationship between collaborative activities, collaborative process dimensions, and collaborative management techniques. I now turn to my attention to this last point.

Lessons Learned about the Recursive Relationships Between Collaborative Activities, Collaborative Process Dimensions, and Collaborative Management Techniques

A theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984) includes the interplay between interactions and structures that continually feed each other to create an understanding of the world around us. It allows for actors engaging in interactions to have input on how structures (or patterns of behaviors that become almost tangible in nature) are created; in turn, it assumes that once structures come into being, they feed continually back into the interactions.

The findings from this study supported this type of feedback cycle. Collaborative activities and the process dimensions that comprise collaboration took on a tangible, structural feel to them. Head Start and VPI directors, particularly those of the more involved dyads, clearly could discuss the tangible joint activities that they undertake; however, they could often talk about their “collaboration” as a tangible entity that existed outside of their ongoing interactions. It is the process dimensions that comprised one component of the “tangible” idea of collaboration; moreover, administrators then continued interacting with each based upon these structures that they created. The same held true for collaborative activities. The success (or failure) of creating the collaborative activities contributed to these public administrators’ understanding of what it means to “collaborate” between programs. Administrators called upon their collaborative activity experiences each time they interacted with their dyadic counterpart.

A great example of this interplay was the highly developed enrollment process of Region 2. This was a clear collaborative activity that the Head Start director and the VPI administrators could discuss at length. This activity became a trust-building exercise because the VPI administrators had to trust the Head Start staff to score the children fairly and then assign children to their Head Start and VPI slots. The activity came to exemplify the norms of trust dimension and overall “collaboration” that these dyadic partners had between them. They

approached other collaborative activities and interactions with the built up trust between them, and they re-enacted the trust each time the applications were scored and assigned. It became challenging to figure out where this trust cycle starts and ends.

Similarly, collaborative management techniques included specific actions (often through interacting with each other) that public administrators took to manage collaboration and enact the collaborative activities; however, these too became part of the process-structure-process cycle that comprises collaboration for these dyadic partners. When partners attempted to reactivate roles or take on new collaborative activities, they often did so with the knowledge of past collaborative activities framing their approach to reactivation. An example of the interplay between collaborative process dimensions and collaborative management techniques was in Region 1. The new Head Start director came into her position knowing of the blended classroom of R1-3 and the norms of trust that existed between the former R1 Head Start director and the VPI-3 administrator. She expressed that mobilizing this relationship with VPI-3 would go smoothly based upon her knowledge of the existing trust.

Overall, this research attempted to illustrate a linkage between actions taken to manage collaboration (collaborative management techniques), the underlying dimensions that make up an image of a “tangible collaboration” (collaborative process dimensions), and the potential outcomes of these actions and processes, collaborative activities. By studying dyadic partnerships in depth, I supported a highly recursive relationship between them, but also highlighted the independent importance of each of these collaborative elements.

We now turn to a discussion of this study’s limitations.

Study Limitations

While I carefully designed this study to capture an understanding of how and why PPPC occurs between the Head Start and VPI programs, there were certainly several limitations. First, similar to most small-n, multiple case study designs, trying to generalize these findings too broadly should be undertaken with caution. I studied in depth sixteen dyadic partnerships situated in Virginia focusing on two specific public programs, Head Start and VPI. I examined five of the possible 48 Head Start programs located in Virginia and captured sixteen of possible twenty-one dyadic partnerships located within the five Head Start regions. These Head Start regions (which established the case boundaries) were selected on a variety of factors to attempt to elucidate PPPC under multiple conditions. Dyadic partnerships existed in a variety of settings, including highly rural to small city to urban communities that varied economically and ranged from low percent minority populations to high percent minority populations. Thus, while attempting to generalize findings to all Head Start and state-funded preschools across the country should be undertaken with caution, using these findings as a snapshot of what is occurring between all Head Start and VPI programs in Virginia can be undertaken with some degree of confidence.

Moreover, the intention of this research was not to produce findings that are generalizable, but instead to use an in-depth, multiple case study design to observe within and cross-case findings that are meaningful for theory building (Collier, Mahoney, and Seawright, 2004; Ragin, 2004). I suggested that the richness of the interview text gained from discussions with Head Start directors and VPI administrators allowed for a more developed understanding of why collaboration occurs, and it allowed me to expand the theoretical frameworks of collaborative process dimensions and collaborative management techniques. Also, by focusing on the micro-

level interactions comprising management techniques that contribute to building process dimensions for collaborative dyads, I argued that I do tap generalized activities and processes that most likely make up many different types of collaborative relationships. In other words, the basic building blocks of collaboration studied in this research are probably highly similar to the basic building blocks that underscore a whole host of other collaborative relationships.

Another limitation was the inability to discuss time ordering between collaborative management techniques and collaborative process dimensions as causing collaborative activities to occur. To simplify the research process and to build a solid understanding of these mechanisms, I set up the research process by discussing collaborative activities as the “outcome” variable. However, there was much logic involved in assuming that some aspects of the management techniques (in particular activation) would always occur before a collaborative activity takes place (i.e, simply making a phone call to exchange a list of preschool enrollees still involves someone initiating or “activating” the collaborative activity). In addition, many of the findings from this research supported this type of logical ordering: The RIHS director clearly activated relationships in Region 1 and set about doing much work of building collaborative processes and undertaking the other collaborative management techniques. The R1-3 blended dyad was a textbook example of collaborative interaction growing with the creation of underlying process dimensions, and when an opportunity occurred (reactivation), these administrators agreed to delve into a more involved degree of collaborative activity. However, this does not always happen. Sometimes, the attempt to undertake a collaborative activity came first, and as program administrators planned it, implemented it, and managed it, the collaborative process dimensions potentially developed (as well as other collaborative management techniques).

As discussed above, while this limitation reduced the ability to establish a theoretical framework in terms of cause and effect, it did not affect the overall ability to expand these theoretical frameworks in terms of conceptualization of dimensions and activities, and to argue for linkage between them, regardless of the causal ordering. Moreover, this study found several important linkages between differences in collaborative process dimensions and management techniques for the dyads at varying degrees of involvement. These relationships between the collaborative activities, collaborative process dimensions, and collaborative management techniques became much like a web; it became very challenging to figure out where one strand began and another ended.

One final limitation involved collecting information about and operationalizing these theoretical frameworks. First, like many exploratory research projects, I learned much as I went along in the research project; thus, later interviews may include more pertinent information than earlier ones, as I asked more productive follow up questions. To lessen the chances of this happening, I did follow up with emails to several of the informants I interviewed earlier if an important concept was unclear upon thematic coding. Secondly, as discussed in detail in Chapter 6, some of these findings were arguably biased towards the VPI vantage point given that they were asked to only discuss their one dyadic relationship (with Head Start), whereas the Head Start administrators were asked to discuss all of the dyadic relationships in which they participated (in Region 2, this included seven dyads). However, I did ask follow up questions about individual dyads to these Head Start personnel. Finally, as mentioned above, several concepts were somewhat challenging to tap, and thus I created additional indicators to strengthen the validity, or suggest another way to ask the questions for future researchers.

While this study has limitations, it certainly added to our understanding of the micro-level processes involved in PPPC. From this standpoint, it leads to several suggestions for both future practice and scholarship. These will be discussed below.

Recommendations for Future Practice & Scholarship

For Head Start & VPI Policy Makers & Administrators

1. Encourage program administrators to be boundary spanners. Describe how to initiate a conversation with other preschool administrators, take information to counterparts, and invite them to observe classes. Encourage administrators to start collaboration with something all administrators can agree on—“let’s enroll the most kids we can!”

Findings from this research supported that someone does have to take a leap of faith and initiate a conversation about working together. Opportunities for this could include administrative turnover, or an unexpected opportunity to collaborate for a single experience that could be built upon. Administrators from this research seemed more open to working together when they were approached for reasons such as program education, establishing a relationship, and opportunities for working together on specific activities rather than blame or concern about specific incidents.

2. Put together best practices for streamlining enrollment, but allow for parent choice.

Highly linked to recommendation 1 above, a recurring theme of challenges between the VPI and Head Start programs included the struggle with competitive enrollment for community preschoolers. Some of the lesser-involved dyads in this study were not aware that they could change enrollment dates to work together. In this study, the most established process that alleviated concerns of “stealing students,” included the Region 2 dyadic partners who sent their applications to R2Head Start for scoring and

placement first. This approach took much trust between partners, so identifying additional processes that work should be studied. Any listing of best practices for fair enrollment between programs should also include a parental choice component. Finally, if partners can find an enrollment process that works, it could potentially pave the way for additional types of collaborative activities.

3. Promote building a larger network of Head Start-VPI relationships.

Findings from this study indicated that those dyadic partnerships housed in a larger network of Head Start-VPI relationships participated in the most involved collaborative activities. If policy makers truly support collaboration between preschools as best practice, encouraging them to establish monthly or bi-monthly meetings between the Regional Head Start and all of the VPI programs may help to launch more involved collaborative activities. The network provides an opportunity to discuss important early childhood education issues, establish relationships, and clarify roles.

4. Promote buy-in to support Head Start and VPI collaboration at all levels of administration and staff through communication and education materials.

Findings from this research indicated that the most involved collaborative activity, blending a classroom, does not occur without having deep support from upper LEA administration. While the Head Start directors who undertook blending seemed more confident in their support from OHS, other directors seemed less confident in the steps needed to create a blended situation, such as aligning dates and receiving waivers for various mandates. Communication efforts should increase between state-level and regional OHS administration and LEA administration to explain the

benefits of working together, and education materials discussing the benefits of collaboration and practical guidelines should be made available for all levels of involved players, including preschool administrators and teachers, family service workers, and school principals.

5. Support all levels of collaborative involvement because some dyads are happily partaking in coordination: the most involved level, collaboration, is not always best. However, administrators also need to encourage dyadic partners to follow through on their collaborative activities, even if minimally involved, to build collaborative process dimensions—or a shared sense that we are “collaborating” with each other.

Findings from this study suggested that the most involved collaboration is not always necessary, and that many productive levels of collaborative activities occur for many dyads. Promoting any degree of collaborative activity as beneficial can build relationships without the concern that it is “all or nothing.” Promote dyadic partners to take any degree of collaborative involvement seriously, as lack of follow through on established collaborative activity can break down a sense of collaboration.

6. Encourage dyadic partners to pursue collaborative activities even if they sense that some aspects (collaborative dimensions) of being collaborative partners is lacking.

If dyadic partners pursue coordination, administrators first need to encourage them to approach a collaborative relationship seriously and with a collaborative spirit (setting aside some organizational interests). Then, encourage them to build social capital dimensions (trust, commitment, and mutual benefit) or encourage them to set up very clear collaborative roles and coordination. Findings from this research supported that coordinating activities can be undertaken if dyads have some, but not all, collaborative process dimensions in place.

7. Recommend meaningful MOUs, perhaps not 70 working documents, but realistic steps to be included (do not just cut and paste from Section 642(e)(5)(A) of the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007).

Findings from this study identified detailed, meaningful MOUs positively support collaborative activities between Head Start and VPI. The more-involved dyadic partners had established more meaningful MOUs to guide their behaviors. Moreover, multiple administrators referred to these MOUs as helping to clarify roles and coordination. While this was the case mostly for the more-involved dyads, encouraging cooperators to establish a meaningful MOU for exchanging enrollment lists, sharing information about professional development, or potentially aligning enrollment dates could be a very useful step in increasing odds to follow through on processes.

8. Verbally acknowledge appreciation of your partner.

Finally, the mutuality dimension in this study was the most varied among all dyads participating at varied degrees of involvement. It may be surprising what a bit of thoughtful relationship management can bring to a collaborative partnership. In a couple of the dyads, administrators were able to recall exact statements made to them by their dyadic counterpart about how they were appreciated for collaborating. Their relationships were some of the strongest relationships studied. Challenging situations will no doubt arise when collaboration occurs between Head Start and VPI, but making a conscious effort to verbally acknowledge the importance of your dyadic counterpart may do much to build relationships.

Suggested Future Scholarship

In addition to practical suggestions, the findings from this research open the door for a rich field of future studies. First, as already discussed above, the framework for studying PPPC using the degree of collaborative activities framework could be applied to multiple settings. Moreover, tweaking operational definitions for some of the indicators of collaborative process dimensions could be further investigated in future studies. Finally, this exploratory study identified multiple behaviors linked to each of the collaborative management techniques that could be further specified in future research.

To increase the validity of assertions that collaborative management techniques help to build collaborative process dimensions (and vice versa) that ultimately link to ranging degrees of collaborative activities, larger-scaled, quantitative studies should be undertaken to include measures of these in survey form to be completed by administrators who partake in public-public program collaboration. A first step would be to broaden the pool of informants to Head Start and VPI administrators across Virginia, but additional states with similar types of separated Head Start and state-funded programs could also be added. If larger-n studies are not an option, at least increasing the pool to a larger sized small-n study could result in conducting a qualitative comparative analysis that could include both collaborative process dimensions and collaborative management techniques in a same model that links to collaborative activities outcomes.

This exploratory study helped to create a solid understanding of PPPC between dyadic partners that run publicly funded preschools. Future cases studies could be designed to see if similarities and differences emerge in the relationships between collaborative management techniques, collaborative process dimensions, and degrees of collaborative activities in different problem domains. One potential case for study could be multiple police departments located in

close jurisdictions to one another. While these are not “programs” per se, they do share similar characteristics of PPPC studied in this research that sheds light on collaboration between standalone programs (departments) that need not collaborate with each other, but find a way to work together.

I developed two typologies for collaborative management techniques, one that classified different types of “history of collaboration” stories and the other that identified different types of framing among dyadic partners. These typologies could be further investigated to see if they capture valid types of both techniques. In addition, collecting “history of collaboration” stories could be a fruitful investigation itself, as I found them to be highly meaningful for the more involved dyadic partners.

Finally, two related, but potentially distinct future research possibilities include a longitudinal study of these collaborative dyads to see how their collaborative process dimensions, management techniques, and collaborative activities change over time. Closely linked to this suggestion, during the course of this research I discovered quite a bit of preschool administrative turnover, so another longitudinal study would be to revisit these groups where administrators changed (or were in the process of changing) and study how these administrators inherit a dyadic partnership and proceed with their relationships.

Conclusion

I began this journey to examine PPPC between Head Start and VPI to learn more about what motivates public administrators to engage collaboration in (at times) challenging circumstances and how they initiate, manage, and sustain degrees of collaborative activities. I gained much insight from delving deep into the dyadic partnerships to learn more about collaborative activities, collaborative process dimensions, and collaborative management techniques.

Primarily, I found very dedicated administrators striving to bring opportunities to at-risk community preschoolers, and most of them willing to forge relationships to engage in some degree of collaborative activity between themselves and their public preschool counterparts. These findings offer encouraging signs that future additional attempts to collaborate federal-state programs are feasible, but certainly not without hard work and collaborative spirit. While the future for some of these partners is not quite clear, what is clear is a desire to help out current and future generations of children increase their chances of school success.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 4, 2014
TO: Laura Smietanka Jensen, Donna Ann Sedgwick
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires April 25, 2018)
PROTOCOL TITLE: Parallel Policies & the Challenges of Blending Federal and State Policies to Provide
Preschool to At-Risk Children: A Case Study Approach
IRB NUMBER: **11-536**

Effective June 3, 2014, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the Amendment request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6,7
Protocol Approval Date: October 6, 2013
Protocol Expiration Date: October 5, 2014
Continuing Review Due Date*: September 21, 2014

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

IRB Number 11-536

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Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office(irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

These are examples of types of questions to be asked, but the questions may change given the information provided by the informant.

For VPI or Head Start Program Directors/Administrators (School district, Community Action Agency, County, City, etc):

1. What is your current job title?
2. Describe your current job duties and responsibilities.
3. How long have you worked in early childhood development and education?
4. How many VPI (or Head Start) classrooms are in your county? Where are they located? How many classrooms per location?
Do different VPI programs/classrooms have a different relationship with the Head Start program in your county (city)? If yes, how so?
5. What does collaboration mean to you? What about partnerships?
 - 5.a. Has your program ever attempted any collaborative activity between Head Start and VPI? (Answer first) – Go to rubric.
6. Were you involved in the decision to pursue a collaborative activity or combine the programs? (If yes, continue to questions 8 – 9), If NO, Were you involved in the process to combine programs? If yes, continue to questions 8-9; If No to both, Go to Ques 7)
7. Can you tell me who was involved in the decision to combine? Can you tell me who helped to combine the programs? Do you think they might be willing to be interviewed?
8. How and why did collaboration or combining them come about? What did you do to help this to happen? Are there things you do today to support collaboration between the programs?
Who have you interacted with at Head Start (VPI)?
9. Can you outline the specific steps it took to collaborate or combine these program dollars together, including things such as combining regulations, talking to state and federal-level program administrators, meetings, etc?
10. Do differences in program standards/regulation between Head Start and VPI affect collaboration for your programs?
11. In your relationship with Head Start (VPI), do you have clearly defined roles and responsibilities? If so, what is your role? What is the other program's role? If so, how did these come to be defined?

12. Do you rely on a manager for coordination of your relationship with Head Start (VPI)? Who is most likely to initiate a meeting or phone call?
13. Do you and Head Start (VPI) have the same goals? If yes/no, can you discuss some of the similarities (differences)? If yes, how were these goals established? If yes, do you revisit these?
14. Do you participate in group brainstorming sessions with Head Start (VPI)? If yes, what about?
15. Do you consider Head Start (VPI) to be a partner? Explain.
16. What are some formal aspects of your relationship with Head Start (VPI)? (agreements, MOUs, other contracts). What are some informal aspects of your relationship with Head Start (VPI)? (phone calls, conversations at other meetings/professional meetings, etc.)
17. Do you think that by working with Head Start (VPI) you achieve goals better? Explain.
18. Do you think that Head Start (VPI) appreciates what your program brings to your relationship?
19. Do you trust your Head Start (VPI) counterpart? Explain. If yes, how do you think trust was established? Can you give an example? If no, do you think that the lack of trust hinders your relationship?
20. Is your program committed to continuing with a collaborative relationship? Do you think Head Start (VPI) is also committed? If yes, how do you think this commitment developed?
21. By collaborating with Head Start (VPI) do you feel that it affects your program goals? If yes, how? If no, why not? How do you balance your program goals with collaborative goals?
22. What are the advantages to collaboration or combining the programs?
23. What are the challenges to collaboration or combining the programs?
24. Any disadvantages you see in attempting to collaborate or combine?
25. If you attempted collaboration in the past, but it doesn't continue today, do you have ideas about why collaboration didn't continue?

APPENDIX C: CODES

Assigned codes based upon interviews and theories that I am testing. Codes are listed in bullets below. I grouped them by categories.

Program Characteristics/History

- # of Head Start Classrooms
- # of VPI Classrooms
- Head Start administrator job duties
- VPI Administrator/personnel job duties
- Blend/braid history
- Blend/braid details

Why HS and VPI collaborate or work together

- Increase Access
- Other Benefits
- Help Kids
- Worthy kids (This group of kids worth it to help)
- Equity for all community kids
- Programs benefit from working together
- Learn from each other

How working together began

- Activate (includes history of working together)

How programs work together or see each other

- Clearly defined roles
 - How established roles
- Brainstorm together
- How programs coordinate with each other
 - Who leads?
 - How lead/coordinate
- Formal Aspects
 - MOU
- Informal Aspects
- Gaining administrative permission/buy in
- Waiver
- Take serious as partners
- Program goals affected by each other/by working together
- Balancing VPI and HS goals

Collaborative Activities (what the programs do together)

- Blend classroom
- Create joint professional development

- Discuss applicants for placement
- Hire staff together
- Share applicant information/names
- Share assessment (PALS) info
- Share building space
- Share home visits
- Share professional development info/invite
- Share transportation
- Single application
- SPOE
- Other meetings
- Other Collab Activity
- Future collab activity ideas
- How decide on these activities
- Administrative details of collaborative activities
- Collaborative activity that no longer happens or did not happen
- Very separate, no activity

Collaborative Challenges

- Regulation issues
- Change of leadership
- Communication issues
- Programs on different schedule
- Gaining support from the top
- Lack of program respect
- Personality issues
- Programs different in approaches to preschool and overall
- Resource issues
- Steal kids
 - Multiple applications
 - Parents not truthful at times
 - Parental choice for program
 - Competition for kids
- Time issues
- HS & VPI teacher tension

Definition of collaboration

- Communicating
- Compromising
- Working together
- Other definitions

Commitment to Collaboration

- Program committed to collaboration
- How establish commitment

Communication Examples

- Examples of working things out/communicating to create collaboration
- Working out processes

Goals

- Programs achieve goals better working together
- How programs come to agree upon goals
- Definition of kindergarten readiness

Trust

- Do programs trust each other
- How trust was established

Relationship

- Programs developing an understanding of each other
- How relationship develops
- Future strategies/ideas for relationship building
- Mobilizing- building collaboration

Emergent codes (these are themes/ideas that came out of interviews that I did not necessarily ask about, but I noticed reoccurring ideas among interviewees)

- Head Start “better” – more family involvement
- VPI “better” – more academic
- Support different approaches (HS & VPI) to preschool – Ok to be different
- “Our kids” – School district discussion of all preschoolers becoming public school kids
- HS quality concerns
 - Stigma of Head Start program
- Teacher certification issues
- Placement decisions
 - How HS/VPI placement decisions made
- Network (if part of larger HS/VPI collaboration)
- Invite HS to participate in school meetings/activities
- Preschool is different (than other public schooling)
- Follow school rules (HS having to follow rules when share space/prof dev/blend)
- Align programs
- Assessment

APPENDIX D: TRUTH TABLES FOR QCA ANALYSIS

Strong Collaborative Activity

sgov	sadmin	sauto	snorm	smutual	number	scollabact	consistency
1	1	0	1	1	5	1	1
1	1	0	1	0	4	1	1
1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0
0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0

Not Strong Collaborative Activity

sgov	sadmin	sauto	snorm	smutual	number	~scollabact	consistency
0	0	1	0	0	4	1	1
0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
1	1	0	1	1	5	0	0
1	1	0	1	0	4	0	0
1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0

Collaboration Degree of Collaborative Activity

sgov	sadmin	sauto	snorm	smutual	number	collab	consistency
1	1	0	1	1	5	1	.60
1	1	0	1	0	4	1	.50
0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0
1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0

Not Collaboration Degree of Collaborative Activity

sgov	sadmin	sauto	snorm	smutual	number	~collab	consistency
0	0	1	0	0	4	1	1
1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
1	1	0	1	0	4	0	.50
1	1	0	1	1	5	0	.40

Coordination I Degree of Collaborative Activity

sgov	sadmin	sauto	snorm	smutual	number	coord1	consistency
1	1	0	1	1	2	1	1
1	1	0	1	0	2	1	1
1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0
0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0

Coordination II Degree of Collaborative Activity

sgov	sadmin	sauto	snorm	smutual	number	coord2	consistency
1	0	0	1	1	4	1	1
1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
1	1	0	1	0	1	1	.50
1	1	0	1	1	1	1	.40

Cooperation and No Relationship Degree of Collaborative Activity

sgov	sadmin	sauto	snorm	smutual	number	coopno	consistency
0	0	1	0	0	4	1	1
0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
1	1	0	1	1	5	0	0
1	1	0	1	0	4	0	0
1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0