

# Cross-Sector Alliances: What is “new” here?

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University of Michigan



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## Introduction

- Growing interest in cross-sector alliances
- Challenging set of issues for both partners
- Practitioner perspective: Offers both partners a new and challenging approach to achieving their fundamental missions
  - Success requires understanding what is unique about these alliances
- Academic perspective: Offers a context that can potentially challenge and extend existing theory
  - To gain academic “legitimacy” requires making a theoretical contribution

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## My Research Questions:

- What types of cross-sector collaborations exist?
  - Note: I have a particular interest in cross-sector “alliances”
- What are the similarities and differences between cross-sector and intra-sector alliances?
- Can an exploration of cross-sector alliances challenge current thinking and extend existing literature?
  - How do mistrustful organizations with fundamentally different structures and values create *legitimacy*, establish *trust* and enhance *knowledge sharing*?
  - Do cross-sector alliances differ in important ways?
  - What are the unique tensions in alliances between corporations and non-profits?



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## Study Design

- Archival research
- Interviews with key informants



- Inductive Research
  - Case studies



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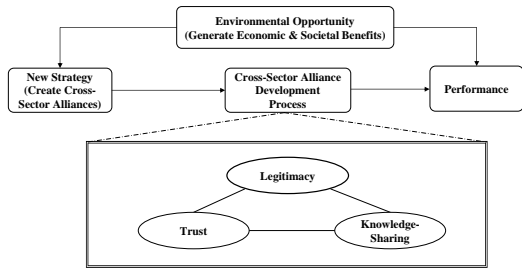
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## Model: Cross-Sector Alliances



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## Our Findings

- Rondinelli & London. "Assessing alliances" (AME, 2003)
  - Identified different types of cross-sector collaborations
  - Compared corporate and cross-sector alliances
- Rondinelli & London. "Building value, legitimacy and trust" (Book chapter, 2002)
  - Explored key challenges in the alliance development process
- London, Rondinelli & O'Neill. "Strange bedfellows" (Chapter, 2005)
  - Identified different types of cross-sector alliances
  - Evaluated differences in knowledge sharing & learning orientation
- London & Rondinelli. "Managing tensions" (SSIR, 2003)
  - Examined unique tensions in cross-sector alliances

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## Moving Forward

- Cross-sector alliances are interesting phenomenon; attracting growing attention from managers in the corporate, non-profit & public sectors
  - Corporate strategy
  - Non-profit strategy
    - Environmental protection
    - Poverty alleviation
  - Public-private partnerships
  - Social entrepreneurship
- Good research can have important implications
  - Can help managers across the different sectors to better develop and manage these challenging alliances
  - May provide an opportunity to extend existing literature
    - Alliances
    - Trust
    - Learning/Absorptive Capacity
- University of Michigan/William Davidson Institute – Two initiatives
  - Social entrepreneurship
  - Base of the pyramid

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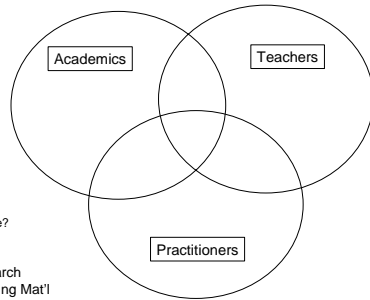
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## BOP Initiative



- Website/Info Platform
  - <http://wdi.bus.umich.edu>
  - E-Notification Engine
- Int'l Conferences
- Academic Forums
  - Edited Book/Special Issue?
- Fellows Network
- Blog/Community Building
- Original/Sponsored Research
- "Working" Cases & Teaching Mat'l
- Projects with Partner Organizations



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Additional Thoughts,  
Comments, Elaborations?

Thank you!

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