ABSTRACT
This study examines the role of framing in fostering a collaborative agreement between two environmental non-profits in the U.S. that aimed at saving a particular type of natural ecosystems, wetlands. Building on 87 interviews, 17 months of participant observation, and extensive archival data, I show that framing can be a double-edged sword that can promote, but also hinder collaboration between seemingly compatible organizations. Unlike previous work that focused on instances of success and portrayed framing as a strategic tool for persuading others, my analysis documents how framing initially resonated with what the intended recipient valued, but over time revealed a deeper-seated cultural difference in how such value was constructed. More specifically, differences in orders of worth, or principles used to construct the value of nature – either as something worthy per se or for the exchange and use value of its services – prevented collaboration between the two organizations. These findings shed light on the underpinnings of framing resonance, highlighting the complex cultural basis of inter-organizational collaboration.