

Exploring conditions for successful cross sector partnerships

*Lessons from The Ocean Project & its partner
Aquariums*



Sustainable Development: Environmental Governance

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Abstract

“The twenty-first century will be the age of alliances”

-James E. Austin (2010)

The following research is an exploration into the ability of cross sector partnerships to achieve collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation. The cross sector partnerships under investigation are between The Ocean Project, a charitable organization dedicated to inspiring ocean conservation action and three of its partner aquariums, New England Aquarium, Oregon Aquarium and North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knolls Shore.

This research has two aims, (1) to contribute knowledge to the theoretical basis for evaluating cross-sector partnerships and (2) to explain how the partnerships in this study have been able to achieve collaborative advantage. The primary research question guiding this research is: *under which conditions are cross sector partnerships likely to achieve collaborative advantage?* To answer this research question multiple methods are employed: a literature review and a case study with interviews and direct observation.

Beginning with a literature review in Chapter 2, conditions likely to be relevant to collaborative advantage are synthesized and hypotheses are developed. These conditions and hypotheses are then refined by comparing them against the results of the case study in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, a reflection on the similarities and differences between the partnerships provides insight into the nuances of conditions and how they may influence collaborative advantage in different ways. In Chapter 6, a final revision of conditions and hypotheses is presented and recommendations for practitioners are provided.

The results of this research have produced a total of 15 conditions related to achieving collaborative advantage. Given the narrow scope of this research, these conditions should *not* be seen as complete or static, but rather they provide practitioners with an understanding of how the partnerships in this case study have been able to achieve collaborative advantage. Through this understanding, practitioners may be able to transfer the recommendation to their own situations. Additionally, as more partnerships are formed similar to the ones in this case, the conditions and hypotheses presented here can be further tested and refined in future studies.

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I am pleased to present the product of my endeavors in this final report. I am confident that the results of this research contribute to the Sustainable Development Environmental Governance track, the participants in this study and hopefully for future research and other practitioners.

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Abbreviations

CAQDAS – Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software
CSP – Cross-sector partnership
NCA – North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores
NEAQ – New England Aquarium
NGO – Non-governmental organization
NPO – Non-profit organization
OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
Oregon – Oregon Coast Aquarium
TOP – The Ocean Project

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Tackling wicked problems in the 21st century

Populations are growing, resources are becoming scarcer, globalization continues, and there are ever increasing pressures on our ecosystems, from climate change to clean water and food production; it is indubitable that the number and complexity of problems which we face today are greater than ever before. With new problems comes need for new solutions. Today's society is characterized by a general lack of awareness to environmental problems. If we hope to address these issues, we need innovative approaches to creating awareness and getting the public engaged in conservation. From the industrial revolution and into the consumer era of the 21st century, developed and developing nations have slowly begun to drift away from our connection with the environment. OECD countries have created a consumer lifestyle which emerging economies strive to achieve for themselves. Unfortunately, this lifestyle comes at a great cost to our environment and I fear we have yet to see the worst. Instead of growing our food, we buy it from the supermarket; instead of getting water from a nearby river or lake, most of us buy bottled water or get it out of the tap; instead of making our own clothes, most of us buy it from the retail store; the list goes on and on. The point is, as our society has become progressively more disconnected with our environment in terms of how it sustains our lives, we have subsequently began losing our mindfulness and ability to be stewards of the ecosystems which we depend so much on.

Reports, such as the recent IPCC report on climate change, demonstrate that, indeed, we do have a significant amount of knowledge about environmental issues and their potential long term impacts. Moreover, there are possibilities for altering our environmentally destructive path and rebuilding a sustainable future for future generations. However, getting from point A to B is easier said than done, and our current societal paradigm has drifted from the traditional approach of using scientific evidence as our basis for addressing these types of issues. Virtually every issue has become politicized, particularly those concerning global commons. In our subjective world, objective science cannot hope to influence the degree of behavioral change which is required. Moreover, societies are faced with a whole host of economic issues and given the impact that the recent recession has had on individual livelihood, these issues hold a firm position as the number one concern for many and most citizens in OECD countries (Pew Research 2014). Results from a Pew Research survey have found that in both Europe and the United States more citizens rank financial instability as a greater concern than climate change (Pew Research 2014). Another Pew Research survey conducted during 2009, 2013 and 2014 found that in the United States among 20 different issues tested, *dealing with global warming* ranked 2nd to last, only surpassing *global trade issues* (Pew Research 2014). Economic issues dominated the top concerns. Your initial reaction might be similar to my own in thinking that American's do not provide the best benchmark for gauging public awareness of climate change. Although it is true that American's can be characterized as more skeptical than nearly every other nation, in a poll of 39 countries conducted in 2013, an average of only 1 out of 2 people felt that climate change is a major threat to their country (Pew Research 2014).

In spite of the lack of awareness, research has shown that American's, for example, support protecting the health of the ocean and environment. However, individuals most often lack the practical knowledge for understanding how these issues relate to their own lives and incorporating conservation into their daily lives (IMPACTS Research 2008). This statement is well reflected in the saying, *give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime*. In other words, you can give an individual as much education as you'd like, but until you show them how to act upon that, how can you expect them to change? So, what does this all mean? It serves to indicate that the conventional method of education although important and necessary, is simply not

enough to stimulate behavioral change; more importantly is the practical know-how to incorporate conservation action into our daily lives. As a result of this predicament, we can see that there is an imperative for developing innovative ways to raise public awareness *and* foster citizen engagement in conservation action.

1.2 Cross-sector partnerships

One of the ways innovative approaches to raise awareness and engagement in conservation action can be fostered is through the power of cross sector collaboration. Cross sector collaboration, or cross-sector partnerships (CSPs), happen on all different scales and scopes; most often CSPs refer to when two institutions from separate societal sectors (public, private, government) come together to collaborate and collectively address and issue or achieve a goal. Bryson et al. (2006, pp. 44) define CSPs as:

The linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organizations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately.

Partnerships have existed for centuries in many forms to address many issues. From Thomas Edison's partnership with J.P. Morgan and the Vanderbilt family to develop the electric light bulb to today's Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) to develop sustainable timber certification standards, partnerships have, historically, been critical factors in shaping the society in which we live today. Over the past couple of decades, and more recently through the economic crises, nations across the globe have begun to experience rapid decentralization of government authority, which has been marked largely by the international trend of decreasing governmental regulation and increased privatization and outsourcing. In the wake of this societal transition there has been an unmistakable growth of CSPs. This phenomenon is widely recognized and documented by scholars throughout academia (Ansell & Gash 2008; Austin 2000; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Googins & Rochlin 2000; Glasbergen 2010, 2011; Huxham & Vangen 1996, 2008, 2013; Selsky & Parker 2005).

I continue by introducing the knowledge gap, explaining my research aims, objectives and scientific relevance. Following, the primary research question and sub-questions are presented in the research framework and a brief overview of the methods: a literature review, case study with interviews and direct observation. Lastly, I outline the remaining contents of this thesis.

1.3 Knowledge gap

Over recent years there has been a proliferation of CSP literature, everything from how to evaluate them to how-to guidelines for practitioners to develop successful partnerships. The literature on this subject comes from a variety of fields and approaches, some of the more prominent approaches are discussed in Chapter 2. Research on CSPs is highly fragmented as a result of the diversity in the literature, as many authors have noted (Googins and Rochlin 2000; Ansell & Gash 2007; Selsky & Parker 2005). CSP research suffers from non-standardized terminology, a lack of a comprehensive theory or evaluative framework and little coordination between scholars. One attempt to develop a comprehensive theory for evaluating CSPs has been made by Huxham & Vangen (2005). These two scholars have recently developed a theory with which to evaluate collaborative arrangements. They have coined this as the *theory of collaborative advantage*. This theory, which I discuss in Chapter 2, offers a promising opportunity to build a stronger theoretical basis for evaluating collaborative

advantage and providing feedback for partnership practitioners.

In brief, the theory of collaborative advantage evaluates collaborative arrangements to understand how they can be managed to increase the chances that the potential for advantage will be harnessed (Huxham & Vangen 2005, pp. 11). This is done via practice-oriented research in which partnerships are evaluated by the researcher. The researcher conceptualizes the synergies and tensions of the partnership dynamics with themes (i.e. communication, trust, power, etc.) and the underlying key issues within those themes (e.g. how does trust positively/negatively affect the partnership). The themes and underlying key issues are then presented to the partners in the “spirit of *handles for reflexive practice*...They provide a basis for consideration of how to manage (in order) to collaborate, but they do not prescribe what to do” (Huxham & Vangen 2005, pp. 11).

The theory of collaborative advantage has only recently been developed, it suffers from a lack of application and has not been applied to research by other scholars. Furthermore, CSPs have yet to be studied within the context of social innovation. As social innovation is said to be “inherently a concept allowing for cross-sector partnerships” (Osburg & Schmidpeter; pp. 173), there is value in understanding how collaborative arrangements may foster it; this is the knowledge gap which this research addresses. This research adds to the theoretical base of knowledge for evaluating CSPs and contributes to closing the knowledge gap on how CSPs are able to achieve collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation. This is done through case study research where I examine the partnership between a small charitable organization, The Ocean Project, and three of its partner aquariums. Ultimately, the results provide unique insight into the capability of partnerships to achieve collaborative advantage and foster social innovation.

1.4 Research aims, objectives & relevance

Consistent with the theory of collaborative advantage, this research is practice-oriented with theoretical relevance (Huxham & Vangen 2005); the aims of this research are *descriptive* and *explanatory* in nature¹ (Verschuren & Doorewaard 2010). As aforementioned, the only attempt at developing a comprehensive theory with which to evaluate collaborative arrangements is theory of collaborative advantage. However, although Huxham & Vangen (2005) state that their theory has “been subjected to wide-ranging scrutiny and refined accordingly” they continue stating they “do not regard this process as complete, and would expect to see further refinements and developments of the concepts with usage” (Huxham & Vangen 2005, pp. 215). As a result, there is a need for building upon this theory. Given the increasingly relevant role of CSPs as a tool for fulfilling a governance role, by understanding how CSPs achieve success the results of this research contribute to the *Environmental Governance for Sustainable Development* program of the Copernicus Institute.

¹ The use of *descriptive* and *explanatory* are consistent with the definitions provided by Verschuren & Doorewaard (2010).

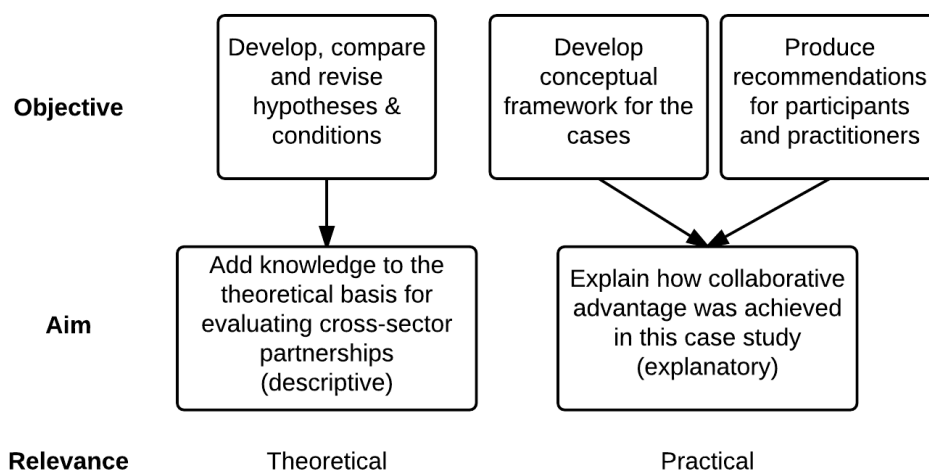


Figure 1. Research aims & objectives

The first aim is more theoretically relevant and seeks to add knowledge to the theoretical basis for evaluating CSPs. By creating a stronger theoretical basis for researching collaborative arrangements in the context of social innovation, this research is relevant to social scientists studying CSP management or social innovation. Moreover, as previously mentioned, there is a lack of research on CSPs aimed at fostering social innovation. This first aim is more descriptive: to describe conditions relevant to achieving collaborative advantage. To assist in achieving this aim, I have the objective of synthesizing conditions and developing hypotheses relevant to achieving collaborative advantage. Specifically, conditions are synthesized and hypotheses are developed in Chapter 2, compared with the results of the case study in Chapter 4, and, finally, revised in Chapter 6.

The second aim – to give insight into precisely which conditions have been relevant to collaborative advantage in this case study – is more practically relevant. This second aim is more *explanatory* in nature and attempts to explain *how* these partnerships have been able to achieve collaborative advantage. This understanding is practically relevant and valuable for practitioners who are in similar situations. To assist in achieving the second aim this research has two objectives. First, in Chapter 4, for each partnership the conditions relevant to collaborative advantage are integrated into a conceptual framework. Second, in Chapter 6 the results of the case study are used to develop recommendations as potential guidelines for partnership management.

In sum, I aim to *describe* which conditions are relevant to the collaborative advantage of the partnerships in this case study, in a general sense. Additionally, I *explain* how these conditions have contributed to collaborative advantage and, based on that explanation, provide recommendations for practitioners. As such, the results of this research have both theoretical and practical implications.

1.5 Research question & framework

The following primary research question, research framework and sub-questions have been developed to steer the research.

Research question

- Under which conditions are cross sector partnerships likely to achieve collaborative advantage?

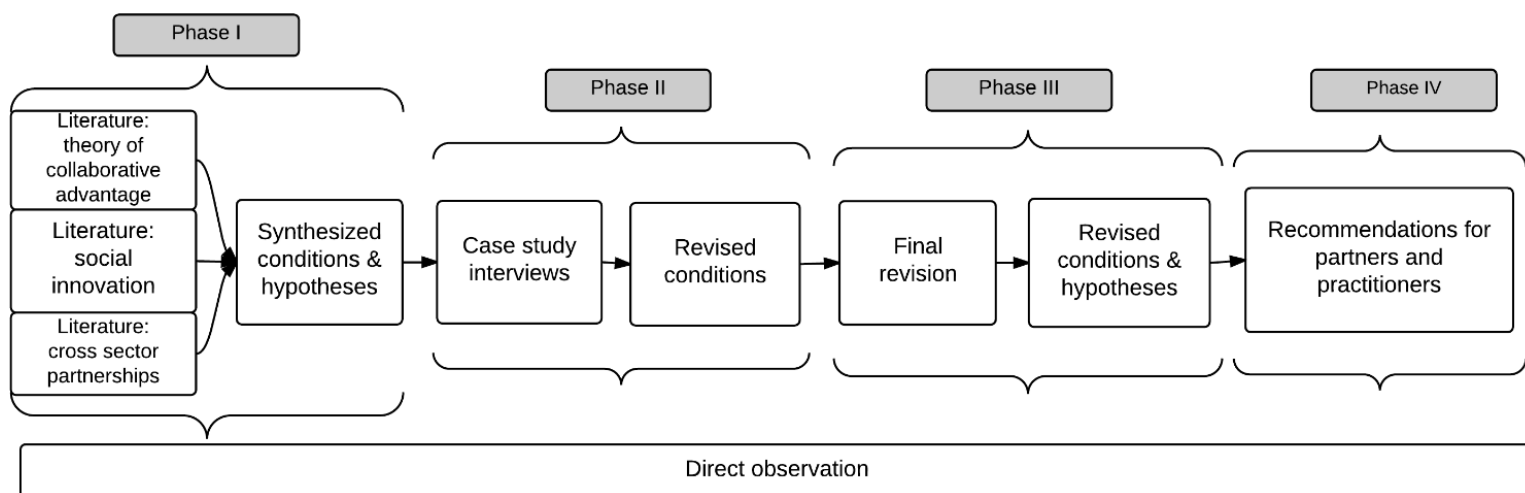


Figure 2. Research framework

The research took place in four phases, beginning with the literature review phase. I first aimed to establish a substantial knowledge base within the current literature on the key concepts: the theory of collaborative advantage, social innovation, and CSPs. This phase served to identify and synthesize conditions which are likely to be relevant to CSPs achievement of a collaborative advantage. For each of the synthesized conditions an accompanying hypothesis is developed which is then tested in the case study chapter. Throughout the following research phases the synthesized conditions were used as points of reflection for the case study interviews.

In phase two: the case study, and phase three: the revision, I focused on narrowing down conditions relevant to achieving a collaborative advantage within the cases. Specifically, the conditions related to the stimulation of aquarium programs (social innovations) that encourage sustainable behavior. In the final phase, using the results of the previous phases, the conditions and hypotheses are revised and translated into recommendations. Recommendations are made for the institutions participating in this study as well as for CSP practitioners in general.

In consideration of my position as an intern at The Ocean Project, throughout each research phase I actively collected relevant data from direct observation. Although this data was collected throughout the entire project, it was applied during phases three and four.

1.5.1 Phase I – Literature review²

The phase focused on a review of existing literature on the key concepts. The purpose was to gain an understanding of key concepts, identify commonalities and differences, and develop an overview of which conditions are relevant to achieving a collaborative advantage. For each of the conditions identified in the literature review a hypothesis is developed and then compared with the case study results.

² To see which sources have been used for the literature review, please refer to the reference list.

As previously mentioned, the conditions synthesized in this phase act as a knowledge base for the following phases. They do *not* represent a structured, exhaustive overview of conditions. As a result, conditions are added or eliminated as they appear in the subsequent phases of research. In the following chapter I provide details on the employed methods, which included the use of the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), Dedoose.

Sub-questions for this phase

- *According to literature on the theory of collaborative advantage what conditions are likely to contribute to or constrain partnerships ability to achieve collaborative advantage?*
- *According to literature on social innovation what conditions are likely to contribute to or constrain partnerships ability to achieve collaborative advantage?*
- *According to literature on cross sector partnerships, what conditions are likely to contribute to or constrain partnerships ability to achieve collaborative advantage?*

1.5.2 Phase II – Case study: interviews & direct observation

During this phase, my primary source of data came from semi-structured interviews supplemented by data from direct observation. This phase served to gain insight into the conditions of the partnerships under investigation and how they contribute or constrain success. More specifically, those conditions which were relevant to achieving collaborative advantage in the context of stimulating social innovation.

Electing to use the semi-structured interview format in this phase³, the interviews were conducted with staff from The Ocean Project, New England Aquarium, North Carolina Aquarium and Oregon Coast aquarium, all of which have been able to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate innovation. In addition to interviews, this phase took place during my internship in which I was also collecting data from direct observation. This included data from informal conversations, weekly meetings with The Ocean Project, and my participation at a symposium in Chicago on *Innovation in the Living World*.

After interviewing the aquariums' staff, I interviewed employees of The Ocean Project for triangulation and to enhance the trustworthiness of the results. Interviews with The Ocean Project assisted in determining whether or not the conditions identified by the partners were also reflected by the responses of The Ocean Project. This allowed me to gain an understanding of conditions that both partners identified as relevant and the nuances in partners' perceptions.

Consistent with the theory of collaborative advantage, conceptual frameworks to visualize how conditions are related to collaborative advantage are particularly useful for practitioners. However, rather than using the framework developed by Huxham & Vangen (2005) (see Appendix A), I have elected to adapt the governance framework from Bryson et al. (2006) (Figure 5, section 2.6.1). This choice is based on the perception that Huxham & Vangen's framework does not sufficiently provide practitioners with an idea of which conditions are relevant to which partnership process, e.g. is communication more important during formation or as part of the process. The governance framework, on the other hand, allows practitioners to see which condition is relevant to which process and how processes influence each other. For each partnership the conditions are integrated into the

³ Justification for this format as well as the justification for the sample selection are provided in the methods section.

governance framework and a visual representation is developed. The governance framework is drawn from CSP literature by Bryson et al. (2006) and Ansell & Gash (2008).

Sub-questions for this phase

- *According to practitioners, what conditions appear to constrain or contribute to the partnership's ability to achieve collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation?*
- *According to my direct observation, what conditions appear to constrain or contribute to the ability of partnerships to achieve collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation?*

1.5.3 Phase III – Final revisions of conditions & hypotheses

The third phase of this research is a final revision of the conditions and hypotheses. To provide the reader with an understanding of the nuances in the conditions and how they relate to collaborative advantage, I reflect on the similarities and differences between the cases studied. Then, before answering the research question and drawing a conclusion, I discuss results, limitations and strengths of the research.

To assist in the final revision, the hypotheses developed from the literature review are integrated into Table 5 (section 4.6). In this table, the reader can see whether the interview responses supported or rejected the proposed hypothesis, or if it was not applicable. The conditions in Table 5 relevant to collaborative advantage in this case study are then merged into Figure 11 (section 4.6). The purpose of this figure is strengthen the transferability (or external validity) of the case study results by providing an example of an answer to the primary research question: under which conditions are partnerships more likely to achieve collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation. This gives practitioners a general idea of which conditions should be managed to achieve collaborative advantage.

Consistent with the argumentation behind the theory of collaborative advantage (Huxham & Vangen 2003), given the extreme heterogeneity of collaborative arrangements in everything from size to scope, this final revision is *not* intended to serve as any kind of prescribed framework for achieving a collaborative advantage, nor as a formula for success. The purpose is to add to the transferability of the results by providing practice-oriented examples which other practitioners may see as transferable to their own situations.

1.5.4 Phase IV – Recommendations

In the final phase of this project two sets of recommendations are developed and suggestions for future research are discussed. The first set of recommendations has been developed uniquely for the practitioners who participated within this study. The core concept behind the theory of collaborative advantage is to evaluate a CSP by identifying the conditions and underlying key issues within that CSP and, based on those conditions, to develop recommendations for practitioners. Through this, the researcher is able to provide practitioners with a holistic understanding of the synergies and tensions which should be managed to continue producing a collaborative advantage⁴. The sub-question developed to guide this first set of recommendations is as follows:

- *Which conditions seem to contribute to or potentially constrain the ability of partnerships in this case to achieve collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation?*

⁴ This point will be revisited in more detail in the discussion the theory of collaborative advantage.

- *Which conditions should be managed by practitioners to ensure each partnership is able to continue achieving a collaborative advantage?*

A second set of recommendations has been developed for practitioners in general. Based on the conditions identified in this research, the second set of recommendations is developed for practitioners. To reiterate, these recommendations are not a recipe for successful collaboration, however, it does provide practitioners with practical based examples of successful collaboration which may be transferable to their own case. Ultimately, each practitioners must make their own judgment as to how well the examples laid out in this study relate to their own situations. The second set of recommendations aims to add to the transferability⁵.

1.6 Outline

Guided by the sub-questions in section 1.5.1, Chapter 2 details the results of the literature review. I begin with a description the literature review methods. Following is a description of the concept of collaborative advantage and an in depth look at the theory of collaborative advantage, developed by Chris Huxham and Siv Vangen (2005). I then give an overview of social innovation: what it is, its current state in academia, how it relates to this research and a justification for my conceptualization. After the discussion on social innovation is an overview of some mainstream approaches and frameworks developed to evaluate CSPs. This overview gives insight into ways to evaluate CSPs and provides the context for the justification of my approach. Finally, based on the aforementioned literature, I synthesize the conditions relevant to the case study. These synthesized conditions form the theoretical underpinning and the basis for my methodology. For each condition a hypothesis is developed and then compared with the results of the interview responses.

Chapter 3 thoroughly details the case study design and methods. Introducing with a justification for an instrumental single-case study with embedded units and moving on to a description of the sources of information from which data were collected. Interview methodology is then explained to justify the sample selection and the preparation and implementation processes. The chapter is closed with a short synopsis of the direct observation methods.

Chapter 4, which is guided by the sub-questions in Phase 2, section 1.5.3, aims to gain insight into which conditions were perceived by practitioners as contributing/constraining collaborative advantage and according to direct observation. This chapter examines the partnerships between The Ocean Project and three of its partner aquariums. I provide a brief history of The Ocean Project and the partner aquariums, New England Aquarium, Oregon Coast Aquarium and the North Carolina Aquarium Society. Narrative descriptions of the conditions relevant to the collaborative advantage, based upon the interview responses, are provided for each of the partnerships under investigation.

In Chapter 5, using the data collected, I reflect upon the similarities and differences between the conditions identified in the interview responses. This provides the reader with an idea of the nuances of conditions and how conditions influenced partnerships in similar or different ways. This chapter is closed with a discussion on the results, limitations and strengths of this research.

In Chapter 6, I begin with a final revision of conditions and hypotheses and an answer to the primary research question. Next, general recommendations are made for the participants of this study based on conditions that were consistent in all three partnerships. Continuing, I provide specific

⁵ The qualitative version of external validity, see Chapter 3 for further reading on trustworthiness.

recommendations for each of the partnerships. The purpose of specific recommendations for each partner is based on the theoretical approach employed in this research; the theory of collaborative advantage acknowledges the high level of complexity and the heterogeneity between every partnership renders the generalizability of results to be difficult. Taking this into consideration, each partnership has different conditions relevant to their collaborative advantage. However, while recognizing the difficulty of generalization, given the usefulness of extrapolating results, as much as possible efforts are made to further enhance the transferability. This is done by providing a set of recommendations for practitioners who are in CSPs with similar attributes to the ones evaluated in this case study. Finally, recommendations for future research possibilities are made.

Chapter 2 – Literature review on key concepts

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to answer the following sub-questions:

- *According to literature on the theory of collaborative advantage what conditions are likely to contribute to or constrain partnerships ability to achieve collaborative advantage?*
- *According to literature on the theory of social innovation what conditions are likely to contribute to or constrain partnerships ability to achieve collaborative advantage?*
- *According to literature on the theory of cross sector partnerships, what conditions are likely to contribute to or constrain partnerships ability to achieve collaborative advantage?*

This chapter has two parts. After discussing the methods, the first part introduces the key concepts and theory used in this research, followed by a description of the theoretical approach, which was adapted from literature on CSPs. Here I describe the theory of collaborative advantage, social innovation and three approaches for evaluating CSPs. In part two, having analyzed literature on the key concepts, I provide a synthesis of conditions and develop hypotheses. Because the conditions identified here serve as points of reflection for the case study findings, the conditions identified here are not static, but rather impermanent and are refined using data from the subsequent phases of research. In other words, based on the case study results, conditions may be added or eliminated as necessary.

2.2 Methods

Having known I was interested in evaluating CSPs ability to achieve collaborative advantage and stimulate public engagement in conservation, the starting point of this research was a search for an appropriate theoretical approach. Several approaches have been developed to evaluate CSPs; I was most intrigued by the theory of collaborative advantage. Holding a constructivist perspective, and in line with the notion that reality and truth are relative and subjective (Baxter & Jack 2008), my interest in this theoretical approach came from its acknowledgement that every collaborative arrangement, although might be similar, are ultimately different and need to be managed as such. In other words, I chose the theory because it does *not* attempt to develop a recipe for successful collaboration, but rather uses reflective practice to provide recommendations to manage for achieving a collaborative advantage. Moreover, given the unique characteristics of this case study, the theory of collaborative advantage appeared to be both the most comprehensive and the most flexible in terms of application.

The next step was to develop a knowledge base with which to begin my research. I began reviewing literature on the theory of collaborative advantage to establish an overview of conditions, after which I reviewed literature on social innovation and CSPs to find additional conditions. Using these literary sources, with the assistance of Dedoose⁶ I made a synthesis of conditions related to collaborative advantage and social innovation.

⁶ Online computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS)

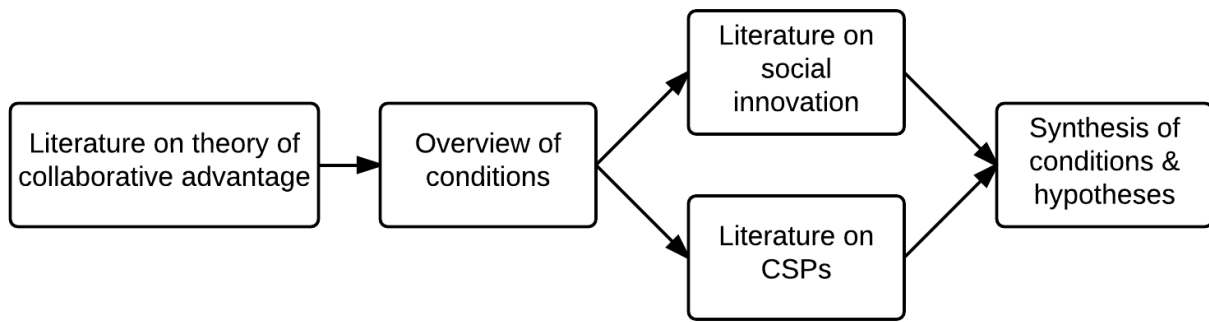


Figure 3. Literature review process

My literature review was conducted primarily with articles retrieved from Google Scholar, using additional sources from Scopus, Utrecht University’s online catalogue, and a few books. Using keywords such as “collaborative advantage”, “cross sector partnerships”, “social innovation” in various combinations, e.g. “cross sector partnerships and social innovation”, “collaborative advantage and social innovation”, etc. this led me to find prominent authors within the field of collaborative research, namely James E. Austin & M. May Seitanidi, John W. Selsky & Barbara Parker, John Bryson & Barbara Crosby, and of course, Chris Huxham & Siv Vangen. Each of these authors have developed approaches towards analyzing CSPs and focus on collaborative management, as such they served as the basis for my literature review on both collaborative advantage and CSPs. Other authors who have also written about the conditions which affect collaborative arrangements have also been included.

In addition, I sought out literature on social innovation; however, due to the limited number of articles on social innovation in the context of collaboration, I relied primarily upon books discussing social innovation in general (Murray et al. 2010; Franz et al. 2012; Adam & Westlund 2012; Osburg & Schmidpeter 2013) with a few additional supplementary articles (see References). The purpose for not delving deeply into the social innovation literature was two-fold. First, the purpose of the literature review was only to familiarize myself with key concepts and to synthesize relevant conditions for the subsequent case study, not to carry out in depth desk research. The second was in consideration of time and space limitations.

From my searches I collected 32 documents to begin my synthesis. Of course, this was a fairly superficial review and there are *many* more scholarly articles which could have been utilized in this process. However, as the purpose of this review was only to provide a knowledge base for the subsequent research phases, it was unnecessary. As conditions appeared in data in the subsequent phases, the literature was revisited as a point of reflection. For example, trust is a condition which appeared in the literature and also in the interviews. So, after the interviews were conducted and trust was identified, I revisited the literature on trust in depth for further reflection. On the other hand, scope, was another condition which appeared frequently in the literature, but unlike trust it did not surface as a relevant condition during the interviews. Hence, although it was a condition identified in the literature as potentially relevant, due to the fact it did not appear in the interviews, it was not applicable to the context of this case study.

The synthesis process was relatively straightforward. Beginning with literature from the theory of collaborative advantage, I began to highlight statements about collaborative arrangements relevant

to the case study, e.g. communication, common aims, leadership, etc. In order to do this systematically and efficiently, I used Dedoose to code the relevant statements into nodes which represented the conditions. Specifically, with each article I highlighted statements which were thematic in nature, recurring through the texts, and either hindered or fostered collaborative advantage. For example, trust was one of the first conditions which I came across as a condition which is important in collaboration, so when analyzing the literature, statements related to trust were coded under the *trust* node. In the event that a statement made reference to multiple conditions, that statement would be coded under each of the respective conditions.

During this process, *democracy* was the one condition that was omitted from the synthesis. The reason for leaving democracy out was based on the assumption that the CSPs in this case study were not heavily affected by democratic dynamics. For example, the context in which the democracy was referred to in literature was in regards to equal decision making power among partners in the collaborative arrangement; mostly referencing the need for external stakeholder participation and engagement. In consideration of the absence of any external stakeholder-related decision-making, I felt that democracy would not apply to this case study. However, given the fact that conditions are dynamic, in the event that eliminated conditions resurfaced in the subsequent phases of data collection, as the theory demands, they would be revisited in the final revision of conditions.

2.3 Collaborative advantage

Before defining the term collaborative advantage, it is first important to define collaboration. Collaboration is a *very* broad term and covers a massive scope and scale. Collaboration happens between individuals, organizations, nations and everywhere in between. The reasons for collaborating are infinite, whether it is individuals collaborating to manage common goods or a research group trying to develop a cure for cancer; collaboration is everywhere. In this study, the type of collaboration under examination is that of CSPs.

The goal of every CSP is to achieve collaborative advantage. The term *collaborative advantage* is used frequently throughout collaborative literature, but it is often referred to without any definition (Lasker et al. 2001; Hansen & Nohria 2004). At its most broad conceptualization, a collaborative advantage can be defined as achieving an outcome which is advantageous to those parties involved. Huxham & Vangen (2006, pp. 3) define collaborative advantage as the notion “*that synergy can be achieved by integrating the resources and expertise of one organization with that of others*”. In consistency with the objective of this research, I am interested in evaluating conditions which help harness that synergy and for all intents and purposes this definition is the most suitable for this research. However, the *type* of synergy that can be achieved is very broad, for example process efficiency, outcome efficiency, or any other kind of synergistic benefit which may result from collaboration. In light of this, it is important to further operationalize the concept of collaborative advantage as it relates to this research. In this research, the type of collaborative advantage I am evaluating is that which leads to the development of new approaches for engaging the public in conservation action. In other words, in the context of this research, a collaborative advantage is considered to be achieved if a partnership has been able to stimulate social innovation in the form of new approaches for engaging the public in conservation action.

2.4 The theory of collaborative advantage

After defining collaborative advantage it is important to provide a brief introduction into the theory of collaborative advantage, which contributes to the theoretical basis for this research. The theory was coined by scholars Chris Huxham and Siv Vangen in 2005 in *Managing to Collaborate: the Theory and Practice of Collaborative Advantage*. The theory is a themes-based theory, grounded in over 15 years of extensive empirical research conducted by the authors (Huxham & Vangen 2013). The foundation of this theory is the themes; themes represent practitioners 'first thoughts' regarding collaboration which were derived from very general questions (Huxham & Vangen 2013). Themes are important indicators of practitioners concerns, those themes which appear most frequently in partnerships are *practitioner generated themes*. Practitioner generated themes are derived solely from interviews with practitioners, as opposed to the research generated themes which are drawn from data, for example. Some of the practitioner generated themes are: *common aims; commitment and determination; communication; compromise; resources; trust; power; appropriate working processes; accountability; and democracy and equality* (Huxham & Vangen 2013). These practitioner generated themes provide the basis for the theory, although the authors acknowledge that these themes are not fixed nor are the particular labels which are used. Additional thematic categories may be present in collaborative arrangements and may vary from partnership to partnership.⁷

The purpose of this theory is to develop a holistic picture of the practice of collaboration that can be understood clearly by practitioners while simultaneously capturing the complexity which is inherent to the process of collaboration. By using the themes-based structure, researchers can examine which themes are the most explicitly present in a partnership and how the underlying key issues influence those themes and the partnership. An underlying *key issue* can be defined as a specific matter that underlies a theme. The underlying key issues of each theme will vary from partnership to partnership and can represent either a tension or synergy. For example, *power* is a theme, but power is an ambiguous term and depending on the context it may entail many different things, this is where the role of identifying the underlying key issues comes into play. Let's consider, for example, two partnerships. Let's say that on the one hand, one of the partnerships power between the respective partners is viewed to be as severely unbalanced by one of the partners, causing that partner to feel inferior and subordinate; this would be an example on an underlying key issue which is causing tension in the partnership and may be negatively affecting the ability of that partnership to achieve a collaborative advantage⁸. Now, let's say on the other hand there is a partnership where both partners feel that they have an equal level of control and input in the partnerships activities and as such increases the ability to create a synergy and achieve a collaborative advantage. In both of these examples the theme of power is present, but the underlying key issues give light to the context in which that theme may be characterized as, for example, a positive or negative influencing factor. By examining these underlying key issues, it is then possible to determine which issues are the most prominent in a partnership, i.e. where the synergies and tensions are. After the themes and underlying key issues have been identified they can be used to provide practitioners with a holistic picture of the partnership with which they can reflect upon develop recommendation for practitioners on how these issues might be managed in the future.

⁷ For a further discussion on thematic categories, please refer to Appendix A. I have omitted a discussion on the other thematic categories due to the fact I have elected to use the governance framework.

⁸ It should be noted that this is simply an example and there are surely situations in which, although power is imbalanced, the partnership is able to achieve a collaborative advantage due to the influence of other conditions. When looking at the achievement of a collaborative advantage none of these conditions can be considered in isolation from one another, but must be viewed as a holistic picture.

2.5 Social innovation

This section introduces the concept of social innovation, its relevance to this case study and how it has been conceptualized within the context of this research. Although less so than literature on collaborative advantage and cross sector partnerships, the literature on social innovation has also provided insight into conditions which may have been particularly relevant for this case study; in particular the conditions of *learning*, *networks*, and *scope*. These conditions will be explored further in the synthesis at the end of the chapter.

According to the Stanford Center for Social Innovation, a *social innovation* “is a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than present solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals”. With the rise of wicked problems, some of which were briefly discussed in the introduction, society as a whole, and more specifically the public, private, and governmental sectors have begun to turn to social innovation as a capable of providing solutions to many intractable issues. As such, collaboration has begun to play an increasing role in innovation; particularly NGO and business sector (Osburg & Schmidpeter 2013). Many scholars acknowledge that social innovation is inherently a collaborative concept (Adam & Westlund 2012; Franz et al. 2012; Murray et al. 2010; Mulgan et al. 2007; Osburg & Schmidpeter 2013). This often takes place in the form of an NGO identifying a problem and calling upon companies to help solve it, which is similar to the scenario that has taken place between The Ocean Project and zoos, aquariums, and museums (Osburg & Schmidpeter 2013). In essence, The Ocean Project, which functions as a network, has identified the inability of conventional visitor engagement methods to stimulate conservation oriented behavior and hence has called upon the community to develop innovative approaches towards engaging visitors to take conservation action and stimulate behavior change. Therefore, in the context of this research, a social innovation is referred to as an innovative development or modification of visitor engagement methods with the goal of stimulating behavior change and increasing visitor engagement in conservation actions. For many social innovations, behavior change is a fundamental component (Osburg & Schmidpeter 2013). For example, in the case of this research, the education departments of the aquariums are trying to develop programs to encourage visitors in taking conservation action. In this case, behavior change is the key indicator of success, without which the programs, or social innovation, would likely be considered a failure.

Social innovation, like innovation, is conceptualized to be developed through a series of stages (Mulgan et al. 2007). Specifically, four stages, the starting point of which is the awareness of a need that is not being met. In the case of this research, the need that is not being met is public engagement in conservation and sustainability, a result of which is the continued pollution and detriment of the environment. The second stage is the developing, prototyping and piloting of ideas. This second stage is where this research has been grounded. At the time the research was being conducted, the grantees of the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program had received their funds from and had begun working with Douglas Meyer on the implementation of their innovative programs. At this particular stage, each grantee had already developed their idea and begun to design plans for implementation and piloting of the ideas. The next, and third, innovation stage is evaluating whether or not the idea has been effective and then scaling that idea up. The fourth and final stage is learning from the experiences in the previous three stages, such as the unexpected consequences or unforeseen applications, and evolving to maintain innovation momentum. Taking into consideration the fact that this research was conducting during the second stage of innovation, this research has *not* attempted to evaluate the success or effectiveness of the innovative solutions under scrutiny. As such, this research does *not*

attempt to provide insight into how *successful* social innovations can be developed through CSPs, but is rather focused on the partnership conditions which have been conducive to the stimulation of social innovations. As such, the inability to determine the success of the social innovations under investigation does not pose any substantial barrier to producing relevant and useful results. That being said, an interesting next step in this research could be to analyze the success rate of the social innovations and measure their outcomes, which could provide valuable insight into the development of successful social innovations.

In sum, a social innovation is an innovation developed with the explicit intent of providing value to society as a whole, rather than private individuals. For the purpose of this research, this is operationalized as the development of innovative programs by aquariums for engaging their visitors to take conservation action.

2.6 Cross-sector partnerships

In this section I give an overview of three approaches and frameworks developed by scholars for evaluating CSPs: the *continuum approach*, *platform-framework approach*, and *the governance framework approach*. The purpose of the overview is to provide the reader with a basic understanding of different types of evaluative tools which have been developed to assess CSPs. The third framework discussed - the governance framework approach - is adapted to the results of this case study. Following this section is a synthesis of conditions and hypotheses.

2.6.1 Three approaches to evaluating CSPs

Partnerships have been created on all scales and scopes to address all kinds of issues. One of the common objectives for which partnerships are formed is to address social issues. The social issues can range across a broad spectrum, with everything from Starbucks partnership with coffee growers to provide fair trade wages to IKEA's partnership with Save the Children to fight extreme poverty, and innumerable others. Partnerships offer a unique opportunity for actors from different sectors of society to come together and create collaborative advantages through sharing knowledge and learning, and ultimately foster the stimulation of social innovations. Ideally, partnerships allow different societal sectors to bring their skills together and increase their overall capacity to address social issues. However, as we don't live in a perfect world, achieving collaborative advantage is not an easy task and the path towards building a successful partnership is laden with unforeseen obstacles and opportunities which have been documented by many scholars (Ansell & Gash 2007; Austin 2000; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Huxham & Vangen 1996, 2008, 2013; Schiller & Almog 2013; Bryson et al. 2006; Selsky & Parker 2005). Moreover, partnerships may have initial success (or failure) but then fail (or succeed). Partnerships are not a static collaborative arrangement and they must be managed as such in order to continue producing creating value for both partners and avoid falling into *collaborative inertia*. Collaborative inertia is a term coined by Austin (2010) to describe when a CSP is no longer producing advantageous outcomes and becomes characterized by a state of stagnation. The ability to overcome obstacles, seize upon opportunities, maintain long term collaborative advantage, avoid collaborative inertia, and ultimately produce a successful partnership is highly dependent on a number of factors. These factors, or conditions, have been addressed extensively in literature (Ansell & Gash 2008; Austin 2000; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Bryson et al. 2006; Googins et al. 2000; Huxham 1993, 2003; Huxham & Vangen 1996, 2008, 2013; Selsky & Parker 2005; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Rondinelli & London 2003; Holmes & Moir 2007; Das & Teng, 1997). Conditions, range from trust to organizational culture and everything in between. Some conditions are stated to be more critical

fundamental component of both partners' operations and as described by Austin, it ultimately takes the form of an institutionalized alliance.

Googins and Rochlin (2000) created a framework similar to Austin's (2010) in their three-stage partnership continuum. These scholars term the continuum stages as *reciprocal exchange*, *developmental value creation*, and *symbiotic value creation*. These stages, more or less, are consistent with those defined by Austin (2010). Also similar to Austin, based on the particular partnership stage, the authors make specific recommendations for which conditions to manage and how to build a successful partnership.

In both of these stage-focused approaches, the authors emphasize the importance of generating value. These scholars suggest that for a successful partnership, each partner must see the value in the partnership and have a clear understanding of how they will benefit from collaboration. Furthermore, each partner needs to understand how to generate that value through the partnership structure. In other words, what are the roles and responsibilities as partners? However, one noticeable difference between these scholars frameworks' is that Googins and Rochlin (2000) acknowledge that "the ability to generalize partnership models and capitalize on transferable knowledge is minimal at this time" (Googins and Rochlin 2000; pp. 141) and hence recognize the difficulty of generalization. Taking this element into consideration, the authors suggest more structured research within the field in order to develop a stronger knowledge base from which to construct more robust generalizations. Austin, on the other hand, has attempted to create a conceptual framework which can be applied to all types of partnerships.

The partnership typology examined in this case study does not fit well into this framework. The continuum frameworks have been developed to assess various forms of public-private partnerships, most often where a business is either partnering with the government or a non-profit organization (NPO). The partnership typology examined in this research is between a charitable organization (The Ocean Project) and three aquariums which are either state owned, NPO, or a hybrid of both NPO/state¹⁰. Furthermore, the partnership structures covered in the continuum frameworks are exclusively used to evaluate partnerships which have been formed by larger firms (corporations) and organizations, i.e. IKEA and Save the Children. The organizational capacity of these large organizations is substantially greater than that of an organization such as The Ocean Project which has less than three employees. As such, many of the discussions related to partnership structures and the influence of those structures on the partnership are not easily applied to this case study. In other words, because the scale of The Ocean Project is relatively minimal, it does not possess the resources nor the capacity to form partnerships in these complex structural forms. To be sure, this is not meant to imply that the continuum approach is irrelevant to this case study. On the contrary, despite the difference in scales, the relationship dynamics of the partnerships are quite relevant. Rather, it is meant to distinguish that if the continuum approach were to be applied to this case in isolation from other frameworks, it would lack a sufficient level of analytical rigor and potentially fail to extract meaningful results from this case study.

That being said, the continuum approach offers valuable insight into what conditions are important in the development of partnerships and how they can achieve collaborative advantage and avoid collaborative inertia. Moreover, given the extensive amount of empirical evidence which has been

¹⁰ Seattle Aquarium was founded by the City of Seattle and has recently become an independent non-profit. North Carolina Aquariums are all state-owned. New England Aquarium is an independent non-profit.

used to justify the suppositions made by Austin (2010) and Googins & Rochlin (2000) in their approaches, it would be a mistake to overlook them entirely.

Platform-framework approach

Another approach at developing an analytical framework taken from organizational research is that of Selsky & Parker's (2005), which I refer to as the platform-framework approach. This framework defines three conceptual *platforms* upon which to examine CSP's. The platforms are distinguished by partners' goals and interest orientations and represent the intention of and basis upon which partnerships are formed. The platforms include *resource dependence*, *social issues*, and *societal sector*. Resource dependence is used to describe partnerships which have been formed based on the organizations' need for resources. If a nonprofit partners together with a corporation in search of financial resources and the corporation is seeking a nonprofit to enhance its socially responsible image, this would be an example of a partnership founded upon the resource dependence platform. The social issues platform suggests that the source of social partnerships is based on the idea that "environmental turbulence generates unintended consequences; some of these manifest as social issues or "meta-problems" that exceed the scope of single organizations" (Selsky & Parker 2005; pp. 852). In other words, partnerships founded on this platform are created with the intent to address social issues with a broad scope which overreach the capacity of any single institution. In the third and final social sector platform, the source of the partnership is based on the notion that traditional sector solutions are incapable of addressing particular challenges and as such must be assisted through learning and knowledge transfer from organizations in other sectors. Partnerships on this platform are often intended as a supplement or replacement for governance arrangements, such as public-private partnerships. Following the identification of the platform, the authors then analyze four "arenas" where partnerships occur: business-nonprofit, government-nonprofit, government-business and tri-sector. Using the framework to identify and analyze case studies, the authors then examine the stages of CSPs and, based on the given arena, make recommendations for which conditions practitioners should manage during the *formation, implementation, and outcomes*.

In contrast to Austin (2010) and Googins and Rochlin's (2000) approaches, Selsky & Parker (2005) categorize partnerships not along a continuum, but based on the different types of *arenas* and emphasize the importance of identifying the platform upon which the partnership is established. Selsky & Parker's (2005) framework is very straightforward. However, the conceptual platforms are not well adapted to the partnerships examined in this case study. The partnership between The Ocean Project and its partner aquariums could fit into one or all of these platforms, depending on how you perceive it. For example, through the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program (see Case Study chapter for details) partner aquariums of The Ocean Project seek both intellectual and financial resources to assist in the implementation of innovative solutions. Based on this definition, one might consider the partnership to be along the resource dependence platform. However, when looking at the partnerships from The Ocean Project's perspective, the social issues platform is equally relevant. The Ocean Project seeks to address a meta-problem (degradation of ocean quality) through the formation of partnerships. Similarly, the societal sector platform could also be applied. As such, determining which platform the partnership was established upon may be seen as a subjective choice.

Furthermore, The Ocean Project is not legally a nonprofit and is rather an advocacy group/charitable organization, however in this approach there is no arena which this organization can be suitably placed in. While the business-nonprofit and tri-sector arena both provide valuable insight and share commonalities with this case study, neither is entirely suitable. Similar to the continuum approach, the platform-framework approach develops recommendations based on the partnership stages:

formation, implementation, and outcomes and focuses on conditions and key issues within those stages. The insight gained through this approach provides additional support for the theoretical underpinning of my research.

Governance framework approach

The final approach covered here, the governance framework approach, has theoretical contributions from Ansell & Gash (2007) and Bryson et al. (2006). I refer to this as the governance framework approach because these authors have developed their framework based on collaborative governance. For example, public-private partnerships, or other types of partnerships which are developed to fulfill a governance role. The frameworks developed by these scholars aim to evaluate partnerships based on collaborative process variables (Figure 5). Although the authors' frameworks vary slightly, these process variables are disaggregated into four general collaborative process categories: *initial conditions*, *institution design/structure*, *collaborative process*, and *outcomes*. Depending on the particular process, these variables are further disaggregated into more specific variables. For example, regarding the initial conditions of partnership formation, these authors highlight relevant conditions, such as the initial level of trust and incentives for collaboration (Ansell & Gash 2007) or the common aims and interests of the partners (Bryson et al. 2006). These authors go into detail on each of the process variables and develop recommendations for partnership practitioners.

Although the partnership which I evaluate in this research is *not* intended to fulfill a governance role but rather to stimulate behavioral change in aquarium visitors, the governance framework approach has elements which are adaptable to my case study. For example, the process categories and variables are generally transferable to this case. Additionally, unlike the figure developed by Huxham & Vangen (2013)¹¹ the governance framework provides practitioners with insight into which conditions influence which partnership process. Although certain conditions are relevant throughout the whole partnership (i.e. trust), practitioners should focus more attention on nurturing certain conditions during certain partnership activities. For example, while it is important for partners to work together during partnership processes, a history of working together is an initial condition which can help to build a foundation of trust for partnership success. Communication, on the other hand, is a condition which should be managed during partnership processes to ensure that partners have access to communication channels.

¹¹ To see the figure please refer to the Appendix

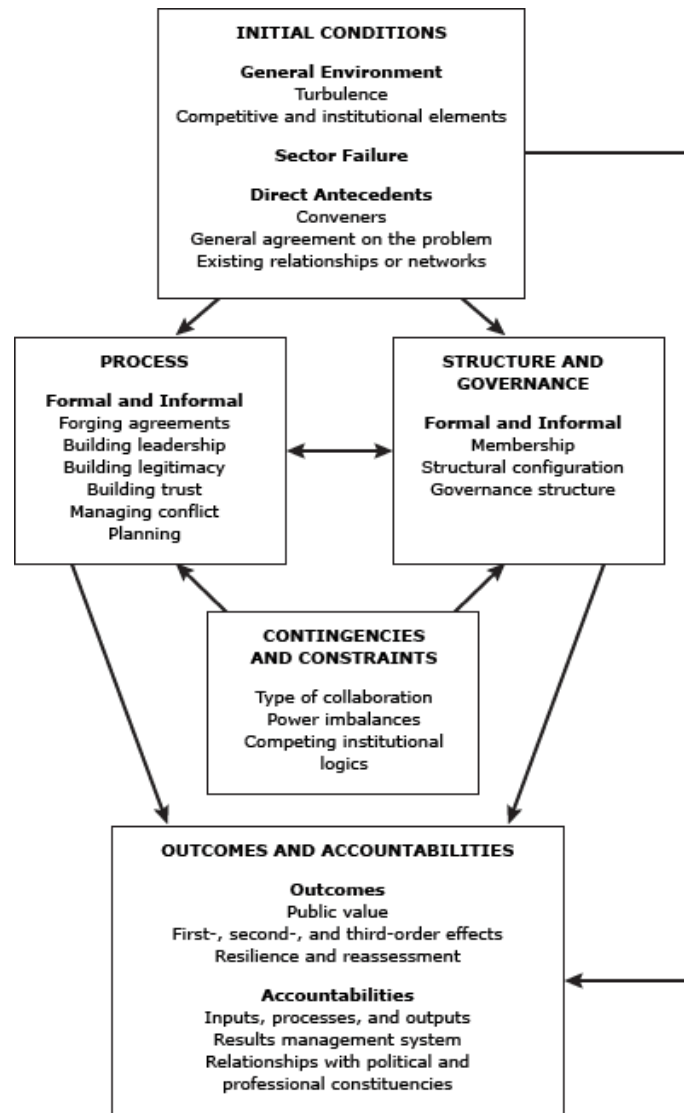


Figure 5. A framework for understanding cross-sector partnerships (Source: Bryson et al. 2006)

2.7 Synthesized conditions & hypotheses

Having reviewed and analyzed conditions from each of the key concepts, I developed the following list of 15 conditions to serve as a base of knowledge and as points of reflection for the case study results (Table 1). These conditions were selected based on their relevant contribution or contingency to collaborative advantage and/or their relevance to social innovation; the only condition which was identified and intentionally omitted was *democracy*, as was discussed in the methods section. Each condition is grouped into a process category based on how it was discussed within the literature. For example, a good organizational fit is most relevant as an initial condition, as such it is included in the initial conditions process category (see Figure 12 in section 4.9).

The conditions were synthesized from the literature with the help of CAQDAS, Dedoose. Here, I briefly discuss those conditions, with a brief description of the context in which they were discussed and a hypothesis for their relevance to collaborative advantage. Although previously noted, it is important to reiterate here that this synthesis is by *no means* exhaustive or complete; this was not the intention. These conditions were identified to provide a knowledge base to reflect on for the subsequent phases of research. Each condition can be discussed at great length, as they influence partnerships in heterogeneous ways. In this sense, this review may be considered superficial, a potential limitation

that will be expanded upon in the Discussion. Furthermore, in consideration of the fact that these conditions will serve as points of reflection for the interview results and, as such will be revisited in depth as they relate to those results, the review here is as brief as possible to avoid repetition. The order which the conditions are discussed is based on their frequency of citations and quantity of sources.

Condition (Process category)	# of Excerpts	# of Sources ¹²	Hypothesis
Common aims/interests (Initial condition)	56	22	To achieve collaborative advantage an important initial condition is that both partners agree on the common aims/interests to be achieved.
Trust (Initial condition & Process)	48	18	To achieve and maintain collaborative advantage, trust must be established between partners initially and continuously reinforced throughout collaboration processes.
Organizational fit (Initial condition)	38	16	To achieve collaborative advantage an important initial condition is organizational fit; partners need to be compatible in terms of values and beliefs.
Communication (Process)	35	18	To achieve and maintain collaborative advantage, an important partnership process condition is communication between partners, which should occur frequently and openly.
Resources (Initial condition)	23	12	To achieve collaborative advantage, each partner must be able to provide the other with a valuable resource.
Leadership (Process)	24	16	To achieve and maintain collaborative advantage an important process condition leadership support, which is also important for promoting organizational learning and an openness to innovation.
Learning (Process)	25	14	To foster social innovation and achieve collaborative advantage an important process condition which must occur through collaboration is learning.
Power (Structural/governance)	21	14	To achieve and maintain collaborative advantage, an important structural and governance condition is that power imbalances be managed to ensure that both partners feel equally influential.
Commitment (Process)	21	12	To achieve and maintain collaborative advantage, partners must be committed to and engaged in partnership processes and activities.
Compromise (Initial condition)	23	11	To achieve collaborative advantage partners need to initially compromise on goals and partnership processes.
Openness/willingness (Initial condition)	17	6	To achieve collaborative advantage and foster social innovation it is important that both organizations be open to accept new ideas and experiment with innovation.
Networks (Process)	16	12	A CSP is more likely to stimulate social innovation and achieve collaborative advantage if partners initially are given access to a network that facilitates learning.

¹² For a full list of sources please refer to Appendix B.

Working together (Initial condition)	16	10	To achieve and maintain collaborative advantage, it is important for partners to initially have a history of working together and to continue to work together in collaborative processes.
Conflict (Contingency/constraint)	11	8	To achieve and maintain a collaborative advantage a CSP must have mediation processes in place which address conflict between partners and mitigate tensions as they arise.
Scope (Contingency/constraint)	10	6	To stimulate innovation and achieve collaborative advantage, the scope of the goals and aims of that partnership must benefit the capacity of the partners.

Table 1. Conditions and hypotheses derived from literature

Common aims/interests (Initial conditions)

Common aims/interests refer to commonality between the goals of each partner. In other words, do the aims/interests of each partner have something in common with each other, or are they conflicting? According to the literature, achieving common aims/interests between partners is an extremely important initial condition for achieving collaborative advantage. Establishing common aims/interests is almost exclusively referred to as an important condition in the partnership formation stage, i.e. partnerships that establish a common aim/interest are more likely to succeed and achieve a collaborative advantage. To take some examples from the literature, “Initial team meetings, for instance, should focus on exploring values and perspectives, determining common interests and objectives, and maintaining open minds on both sides about the nature, extent, and importance of problems and potential solutions” (Rondinelli & London 2003; pp. 71). Also, “Cross-sector collaborations are more likely to succeed when one or more linking mechanisms, such as powerful sponsors, general agreement on the problem, or existing networks, are in place at the time of their initial formation” (Bryson et al. 2006; pp. 46). Although this example does not explicitly site common aims, the *general agreement on the problem* is a fundamental component of establishing a common aim and as such coded it under the condition of common aims. It is important to note that conditions are by no means mutually exclusive in their influence and as such commonly influence each other and cannot be considered in isolation. Trust, for example, has been cited as an important condition in establishing common aims (Jamali et al. 2011; Rondinelli & London 2003).

Hypothesis: To achieve collaborative advantage an important initial condition is that both partners agree on the common aims/interests to be achieved.

Trust (Process & initial condition)

It’s difficult to imagine an extremely successful partnership if both partners don’t at least have some element of trust in one another. Discussions of trust refer to the need for partners to have a mutual trust in each other’s capabilities and activities. Similar to communication, trust is a condition which is described as relevant throughout every partnership phase, whether it is the initial trust that influences the formation of the partnership or the trust that partners need to share with one another during the implementation stages. Additionally, trust is perhaps the most interconnected condition to all of the other conditions. Trust influences openness/willingness, shared understanding, communication, working together, commitment, so on and so forth. As such, trust is clearly one of the most important conditions in the achievement of collaborative advantages. As one practitioner has stated, “Trust has lubricated the overall quality of our relationship, encouraging collaborative behavior, facilitating new forms of association and reducing the probability of opportunism” (Jamali et al. 2011; pp. 386). Furthermore, “Trust and respect is important if collaborations are to be successful and enjoyable”

(Huxham & Vangen 2005; pp. 141). Huxham & Vangen (2005) developed the concept of a *trust-building loop* (Figure 6) in which they recommend that partners build trust incrementally through modest outcomes, and after success is achieved and trust is reinforced, progressively increase the goals and repeat. This allows for trust to be built in a cyclical process which reinforces trust that has been established.

Hypothesis: To achieve and maintain collaborative advantage, trust must be established between partners initially and continuously reinforced throughout collaboration processes.

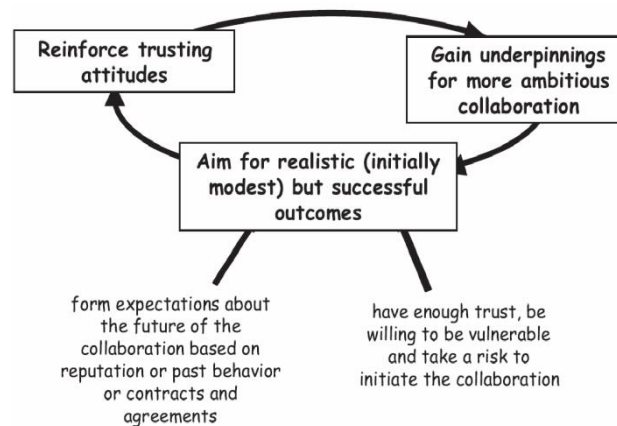


Figure 6. Trust-building loop (Source: Huxham & Vangen 2005)

Organizational fit (Initial condition)

Organizational fit refers to how well the values and beliefs and the overall organizational cultures of the respected partners align with each other. Different organizations, and more specifically, different sectors, generally have different organizational cultures, including different languages, working habits, values/beliefs. Organizational fit, similar to common aims, is cited as an important aspect in the formation stage of successful partnerships. In other words, it's an important initial condition) Organizational fit, which is often referred to as selecting the right partner, is considered an important condition in that it allows, for example, easier communication between organizations and there is less time spent on compromising goals and objectives (Austin 2000; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Foss & Nielsen 2010). As Das & Teng (1997) indicate, "The choice of an alliance partner has a profound impact on the sustainability of the alliance, just as the choice of a spouse largely determines the fate of a marriage".

A common underlying key issue of organizational fit is values/beliefs which make up the organizational culture and are perhaps the primary determinant of organizational fit. Googins & Rochlin (2000) states this clearly, saying that, "Corporations and communities may share the same geographic space, but in fact they speak different languages, share different values and cultures, and on a day to day basis operate within quite different worlds." On a more general note, Austin (2000) claims, "the more congruent the partners' values, the stronger the alliance's cohesion". Also, in their discussion on the potential barriers created by heterogeneous values and beliefs, Selsky & Parker (2005) note, "Impediments to building a common partnership culture include different views on business and social priorities¹³".

¹³ Views on business and social priorities are considered to be the operationalization of values and beliefs.

Hypothesis: To achieve a collaborative advantage an important initial condition is organizational fit; partners need to be compatible in terms of values and beliefs.

Communication (Process)

According to scholars, communication is critical ensure successful collaboration and collaborative advantage. However, unlike common aims/interests, organizational fit and other conditions which are discussed as more relevant during the formation stages of partnerships, communication is a critical component in all stages of the partnership activity. For example, Austin (2000) claims that, “To realize the full benefits of an alliance, the partners need to have means of communicating effectively, efficiently, and frequently. Multiple communications channels, formal and informal, are used”. Furthermore, communication is an important condition in relation to other conditions such as trust, organizational fit, openness/willingness, etc. Austin (2000) goes on to state “Good communication appears to foster trust and vice versa.” In a paper focused on innovation in the context of business-NGO partnerships (Jamali et al. 2011), six cases were evaluated, four of those six cited a high level of communication as critical components in the ability of the partnerships to create value. Kania & Kramer (2011) cite the importance of continuous communication stating that partnership “participants need several years of regular meetings to build up enough experience with each other to recognize and appreciate the common motivation behind their different efforts”. This particular quote demonstrates the connection between communication and *shared understanding*, a condition which will be discussed later. In essence, according to many authors (Austin 2000; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Jamali et al. 2011; Huxham 2003; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Googins & Rochlin 2000; Bryson et al. 2006) maintaining high levels of communication is important to create shared understanding of partners goals, increase trust, and in general foster a relationship of working together as true partners, as opposed to communicating irregularly which can allow for misunderstandings and potential for mistrust in one another’s agendas.

Hypothesis: To achieve and maintain collaborative advantage, an important partnership process condition is communication between partners, which should occur frequently and openly.

Resources (Initial condition)

Many partnerships have been formed on the basis that each partner has a resource which the other doesn’t have and vice versa, this has been covered briefly in the overview of the *platform-framework approach* in which the authors discuss the resource-dependency platform. The ability of partners to provide each other with resources which they do not already possess is known as *resource complementarity*. Resources refer to funding, competencies, or anything of the sort. For example, “core competencies exchange uses each institution’s distinctive capabilities to generate benefits to the partner and the collaboration” (Austin 2000; pp. 78). Resource complementarity suggests that a collaborative synergy can be created through cross sector (or intra sector) resource sharing (Austin 2000; Selsky & Parker 2005; 2010). For example, to use this case study as an example, The Ocean Project has conducted extensive communications research on who to engage and how to engage them in regards to taking conservation action. This is a resource which many aquariums have neither the time nor the funds to carry out. Furthermore, many aquariums do not have the financial resources to implement innovative programs, a resource need which is met in part by the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program. Similarly, although The Ocean Project has conducted the communications research and developed the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program, they themselves have no way to implement the findings and as such have sought partnerships with zoos, aquariums and museums to do so. This is an example of a situation in which potential resource complementarities can be achieved.

Hypothesis: To achieve collaborative advantage, each partner must be able to provide the other with a valuable resource.

Leadership (Process)

Leadership is necessary component in virtually every project, collaborative arrangements are no exceptions. According to many scholars, strong leadership is essential to achieving successful collaborative arrangements (Austin 2000; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Jamali et al. 2011; Rondinelli & London 2003; Berger et al. 2006; Bryson & Crosby 2005; 2006; 2010). Huxham & Vangen (2005) and Crosby & Bryson (2005; 2010) have both extensively reflected on the role of leadership in collaboration.

Leadership is often cited to play a role in the context partnerships aimed at innovation (Dover & Lawrence 2012; Holmes & Moir 2007; Berger et al. 2006). Specifically, according to these scholars partnership leaders must be open to innovation, in addition to possessing many other skills¹⁴, some of the key aspects of leadership are their *managerial capacity* and *innovation orientation*¹⁵. Managerial capacity is represented by the degree to which leaders are capable of facilitating partnership processes and has been cited as playing vital role in the implementation of partnership programs (Selsky & Parker 2005). Additionally, innovation orientation refers to the degree to which leaders and their organizations in general, are oriented towards innovating and able to identify innovation. For example, in their framework for identifying corporate innovations through engagement with non-profits, Holmes and Moir (2007; pp. 417) state that “the capacity of [an] organization to identify an innovation opportunity through nonprofit engagement will be influenced by three intra-firm factors: first, the willingness of the organization to experiment; second, the innovation orientation of its managers; and third, its communicative capacity”. Having partnership leaders with a high level of managerial capacity and a predisposition towards innovation is an important element in achieving a collaborative advantage, particularly in the form of innovation (Holmes & Moir 2007; Adam & Westlund 2012; Franz et al. 2012).

Hypothesis: To achieve and maintain collaborative advantage an important process condition is the support of leadership, which is also important for promoting organizational learning and an openness to innovation.

Learning (Process)

The importance of learning as a partnership process is mentioned in some of the literature on collaborative advantage and CSPs, but from my review it was almost exclusively covered in the literature on social innovation. In the literature, learning is said to play a vital role in fostering social innovation (Powell et al. 1996; Selsky & Parker 2005; 2010; Jamali et al. 2011; Adam & Westlund 2012; Franz et al. 2012; Murray et al. 2010; Mulgan et al. 2007). Murray et al. (2010) identify the lack of a culture of learning that rewards actors from learning from their own mistakes, other sectors, or other places. One of the primary reasons learning is emphasized in the way that it is, is because innovation is often said to *require* failure (Franz et al. 2012; Mulgan et al. 2007; Adam & Westlund 2012; Murray et al. 2010) and as such those failures must be learned from in order to produce more innovation. One of the conditions which is intricately tied to learning is *networks* (discussed below) which are said to

¹⁴ As noted previously, an in depth discussion of conditions will be avoided in this section and as such I will not discuss leadership qualities.

¹⁵ Innovation orientation was only explicitly mentioned in the literature on innovation, however given my research interests, I anticipated that it would be a relevant key issue to pay attention to and as such included it.

be a locus of learning and innovation (Powell et al. 1996; Selsky & Parker 2010; Adam & Westlund 2012; Franz et al. 2012; Murray et al. 2010; Mulgan et al. 2007).

Hypothesis: To foster social innovation and achieve collaborative advantage an important process condition which must occur through collaboration is learning.

Power (Structural & governance)

Power, like trust and communication, is a condition which is pervasive throughout all partnership stages. Most commonly, power is discussed in reference to the power relations between the partners (Huxham 2003; Selsky & Parker 2005; Bryson & Crosby 2006; Dover & Lawrence 2012; Schiller & Almog-Bar 2013). More specifically, many authors refer to the importance of regulating power imbalances. For example, if two partners have a severe power imbalance, the inferior partner may be less trusting of the other partner and as such the partnership may require power balancing mechanisms. This concern has been addressed by numerous authors, such as Bryson & Crosby (2006; pp. 50) who suggest that “Cross-sector collaborations are more likely to succeed when they build in resources and tactics for dealing with power imbalances and shocks”. Similarly, Austin states that “calls for shared (Ashman, 2000; Austin, 2000a), consensus (Elbers, 2004) decision making and co-regulation (Utting, 2005) have been suggested to balance the power dynamics across the partners (Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007)”. In a study, *The Role of Power in Nonprofit Innovation* by Dover and Lawrence (2012) the authors explore the relationship between power and innovation, more specifically how power can(t) foster innovation. This notion has interesting relevance to this research and will be revisited as it applies to the results.

Hypothesis: To achieve and maintain collaborative advantage, an important structural and governance condition is that power imbalances be managed to ensure that both partners feel equally influential.

Commitment/engagement (Process)

Commitment is considered to be a fundamental element of successful collaborative arrangements. Partners must be committed to the partnership process. Waddock (1989; pp. 18) equates partnership to commitment, stating that “A partnership is a commitment by a corporation or a group of corporations to work with an organization from a different economic sector (public or nonprofit). It involves a commitment of resources – time and effort – by individuals from all partner organizations.” A common condition in collaborative arrangements is that they are often time consuming, energy draining, and in general require a lot of effort to maintain, i.e. a strong commitment (Googins & Rochlin 2000; Rondinelli & London 2003; Huxham 2003; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Austin 2000; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Berger et al. 2006). Huxham & Vangen (2005) go as far as saying that, because of the extreme difficulty, unless necessary, collaboration should be avoided¹⁶. Commitment is presumed to be necessary for success.

In a discussion the role of commitment in leadership, Berger et al. (2006; pp. 131) note, “For a partnership to thrive, the managers themselves needed to be deeply and holistically involved in the partnership”. Or, put more generally, in their paper on the relational processes of social innovation within CSP’s Le Ber & Branzei (2010; pp. 142) state, “Higher levels of engagement promise significant collaboration gains”. Rondinelli & London (2003; pp. 67) also capture the importance of commitment, specifically in regards to corporate-NPO relationships, “Participants in the corporate–NPO collaborations that we studied told us that corporations must have strong commitments to pursue the

¹⁶ This point will be revisited in the discussion.

relationship and to cooperate with the selected NPO partner on finding solutions if the partnership is to be productive.”

Hypothesis: To achieve and maintain collaborative advantage, partners must be committed to and engaged in partnership processes and activities.

Compromise (Initial condition)

Compromise is a condition discussed largely in relation to organizational fit as well as partnership goals and processes, the development of which requires negotiation, or compromise. As such, it can be considered an important initial condition. Given that many CSPs occur between sectors with competing goals, values/beliefs, etc. compromising becomes a common condition when discussing about what the goals of the partnership are. It is not difficult to conceptualize that organizations from different sectors operate with different cultures, languages, values and beliefs, etc. and as such have competing goals and interests which must be compromised in a partnership situation. In other words, partners must make an effort at developing a *shared understanding* of one another in order to effectively communicate across different organizational languages and cultures and achieve collaborative advantage. As Huxham (2003) has noted, “some of the difficulties that arise out of the need to communicate across different professional and natural languages and different organizational and professional cultures are unlikely to assist the negotiation process”. Or, as Rondinelli & London (2003) have pointed out in their study on partnerships, “Both corporate and NPO respondents highlighted the importance of participating organizations’ efforts to understand, or willingness to learn about, the culture and operations of each other”. In essence, taking into consideration the varying organizational cultures, competing goals, and objectives of different sectors, compromising and developing a shared understanding is said to play an important role in fostering partnership success.

Hypothesis: To achieve collaborative advantage partners need to initially compromise on goals and partnership processes.

Openness to innovation (Process)

The condition of openness, or willingness, refers to partners being open to change and new ideas. This is particularly relevant to the context of innovation as it requires a willingness to be open to new knowledge. Many authors suggest that, similar to the need for compromise, there is a need for partners to be open and willing to adapt to new situations, develop new processes, and step outside of the typical comfort zone when engaging in a collaborative arrangement (Austin 2000; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Rondinelli & London 2003; Huxham 2003; Huxham & Vangen 2005) especially in the context of partnerships looking to innovate (Holmes & Moir 2007; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Adam & Westlund 2012). Holmes and Moir (2007), for example, explicitly mention that being open to new ideas from external environments is a key predictor of firm’s innovative performance. In other words, corporations who are more open to knowledge from external environments, such as the nonprofit sector, are more likely to innovate than those who rely solely on internal knowledge production to stimulate innovation. According to Austin (2000) this need for openness and willingness also applies to collaborations with a social purpose, such as the one under investigation.

Hypothesis: To achieve collaborative advantage and foster social innovation it is important that both organizations be open to accept new ideas and experiment with innovation.

Networks (Initial condition)

The condition of networks, and more specifically, their importance in promoting knowledge sharing/learning and innovation was almost exclusively covered in the social innovation literature. Networks provide a medium for knowledge sharing, which according to literature is fundamental to stimulating learning and ultimately producing innovation (Franz et al. 2012; Jamali et al. 2011; Adams & Westlund 2012; Mulgan et al. 2007; Murphy et al. 2012; Murray et al. 2010; Powell et al. 1996). For example, Mulgan et al. (2007; pp. 33) point directly to the importance of networks in the context of social innovation; “social innovation is aided by practitioner networks, allies in politics, strong civic organizations (from trade unions to hospitals) and the support of progressive foundations and philanthropists.” Furthermore, when discussing drivers of innovation, Murray et al. (2012; pp. 7, brackets added) claim, “in the social field the drive [to innovate] is more likely to come from a wider network, perhaps linking some commissioners in the public sector, providers in social enterprises, advocates in social movements, and entrepreneurs in business.” In essence, networks are an important condition in the context of stimulating social innovation.

Hypothesis: A CSP is more likely to stimulate social innovation and achieve collaborative advantage if partners initially are given access to a network that facilitates learning.

Working together (Initial condition & process)

Working together is a condition which is said to be a foundation for trust and shared understanding (Dover & Lawrence 2012; Jamali et al. 2011; Kania & Kramer 2011; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Huxham & Vangen 2005). Through working together, partners are able to familiarize themselves with one another and co-relational working habits, reducing the potential for conflict and misunderstanding or mistrust. In their evaluation of an agricultural related partnership, Austin & Seitanidi (2012; pp. 943) capture the importance of working together as a facilitator of shared understanding, commitment and trust, noting that, “As the partners worked together and with the farmers, they engaged in collaborative discovery and learning leading to adaptation and redesign. Shared working experiences in the field deepened their understanding of each other’s organizational cultures and created interpersonal bonds, mutual trust, and shared commitment to the project”. And one business partner in the Jamali et al. (2011; pp. 384) study emphasized “the importance of strong relationships based on open communication and frequent interactions”. Moreover, Murphy et al. (2012) document the importance of Danone’s carefully designed routines and processes for spreading knowledge, of which working together was a key element of success. This condition is important both initially and during the partnership process. More specifically, a *history* of working together is an initial condition and working together is important during the process.

Hypothesis: To achieve and maintain collaborative advantage, it is important for partners to initially have a history of working together and to continue to work together in collaborative processes.

Conflict (Contingency/constraint)

As mentioned previously, because CSPs happen across different sectors and different organizational missions, values, beliefs, cultures, languages, etc. they are considered to be prone to conflict (Huxham 2003; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Austin 2000; Selsky & Parker 2005; Rondinelli & London 2003). Le Ber & Branzei (2010; pp. 141) point out that “inherent fragilities and incompatibilities that often predispose cross-sector partnerships to distrust, conflict, and premature failure”. Because of these inherent fragilities, conflict is a relevant condition to collaborative advantage in that it must be avoided or managed correctly. Bryson & Crosby (2006; pp. 48), for example, propose that, “Because conflict is common in partnerships, cross-sector collaborations are more likely to succeed when partners use

resources and tactics to equalize power and manage conflict effectively". Conflict can occur for a variety of reasons and threatens to erode trust, weaken participant's commitment, negatively influence communication channels, etc. From the literature review, conflict has been identified as the most common condition to act as a barrier to achieving a collaborative advantage.

Hypothesis: To achieve and maintain a collaborative advantage a CSP must have mediation processes in place which address conflict between partners and mitigate tensions as they arise.

Scope (Contingency/constraint)

Scope is most frequently mentioned in literature that discusses innovation in a partnership context. From the literature review, there seem to be two notions regarding scope. The first notion is represented by Rondinelli & London (2003) and Murphy et al. (2012), is that when attempting to innovate, the scope must be narrow and piloted on a small scale, after which, if there is success, it may be implemented on a broader scale. For example, in their discussion on piloting solutions on a small scale before scaling up, Murphy et al. (2012; pp. 1705) state, "While piloting solutions is not exclusive to social innovation, it is...essential to processes of learning and galvanizing support and enthusiasm for social innovations." On a similar but different note, Rondinelli & London (2003; pp. 71) suggest that, "cross-sector environmental management alliances may get bogged down if problems are defined too broadly or abstractly or if solutions are so comprehensive that it will take years for the company to implement them."

The second notion is represented by Holmes & Moir (2007) and Austin & Seitanidi (2012), is that small scale innovations are likely to create incremental change, whereas broad "open-ended" searches for innovation have the potential to create a radical, unexpected change. In Holmes & Moir's (2007; pp. 417) words, the scope of the collaboration "is assumed to impact the innovative outcome. Its focus may be a narrow, discrete project or an open ended, multifaceted initiative (Mandell and Steelman, 2003; Waddock, 1991). The suggestion being that the former is more likely to lead to an incremental, planned innovation, while the latter has the potential to produce more radical, unexpected change." Austin & Seitanidi (2012) reinforce this notion.

Hypothesis: To stimulate innovation and achieve collaborative advantage, the scope of the goals and aims of that partnership must befit the capacity of the partners.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter gave insight into the conditions synthesized from the literature on the key concepts as relevant to achieving collaborative advantage and fostering social innovation. Each condition has been grouped into its respective process category (Figure 7). In the subsequent phases, Figure 7 is revised and refined based on the case study results. The conditions and hypotheses in this chapter serve as the knowledge base for developing the semi structured interviews and for reflecting upon the results of the interview responses. Specifically, interview responses were analyzed to determine whether or not each hypothesis proposition was supported, rejected, or not applicable (see Table 5 in section 4.6). After reflecting on these conditions, respondents are provided with recommendations for their partnerships and for practitioners in general (Chapter 6).

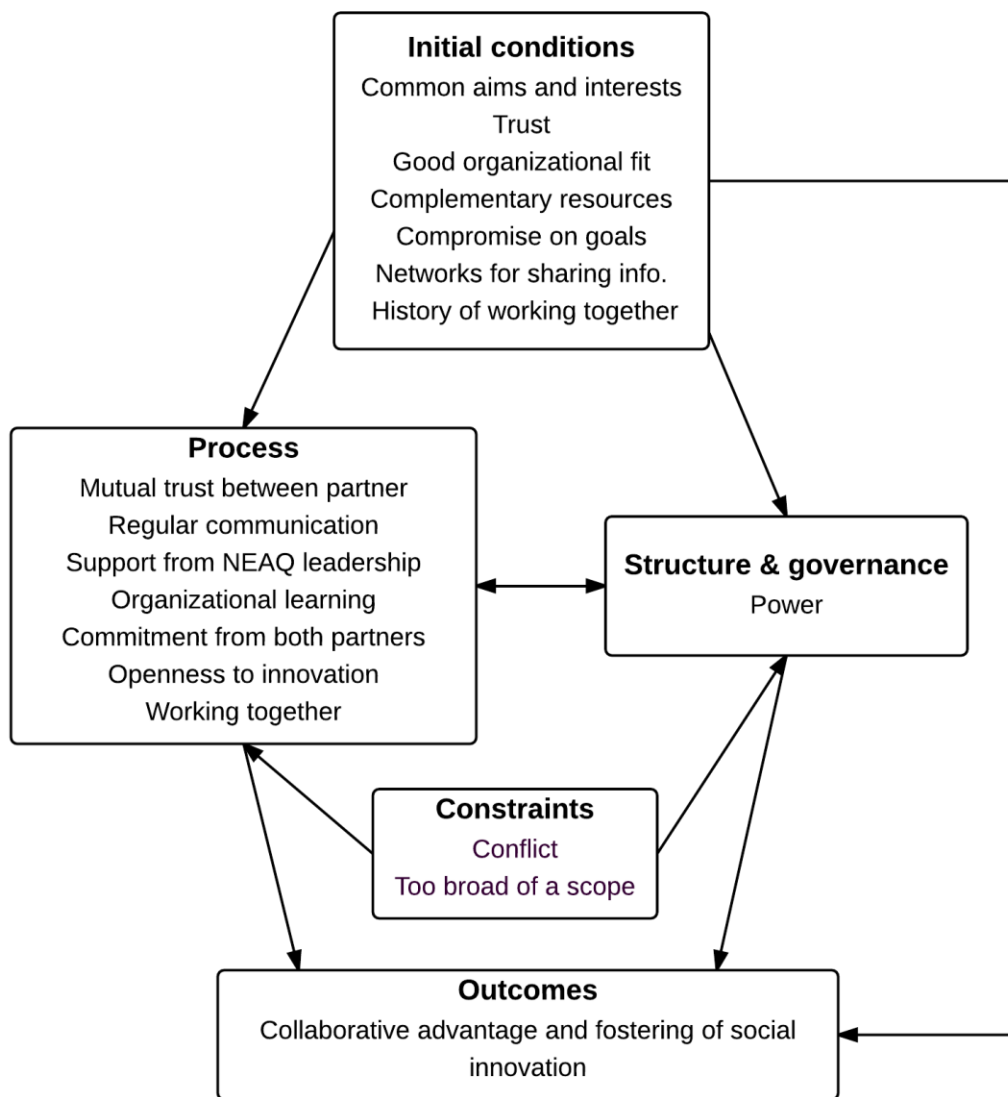


Figure 7. Conditions been synthesized from the literature as relevant to achieving collaborative advantage and fostering social innovation (Source: Bryson et al. 2006)

Chapter 3 – Case study design & methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the qualitative methods used in this research. As described in the previous section, three methods have been employed in this research. The purpose of multiple methods is both to accommodate my approach as well as for triangulation, a critical factor in establishing trustworthy results. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985) the use of multiple methods assists in reducing the individual limitations of each respective method. For example, in the case of this research, establishing background knowledge through a literature review assisted in reflecting upon the attitudes and behaviors of the interviewees. Moreover, my own observation from within the workplace allowed me to further triangulate the results and establish trustworthiness.

I continue this chapter by, first, justifying my choice for a case study, specifically for an instrumental case study with embedded units. This is followed by an explanation of the sources of information used in this research. Finally, I provide detailed descriptions of how I carried out implementation of each of the methods employed in this study.

It is important to note that this research is considered to be a *naturalistic inquiry*¹⁷ as defined by scholars Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln (1985), and therefore follows the qualitative criteria developed by Lincoln & Guba (1985) for this type of research (Table 2). To specify further, in place of internal validity I am concerned with *credibility*; in place of external validity I am concerned with *transferability*; in place of reliability I am concerned with *dependability*; and, finally, in place of objectivity I am concerned with *confirmability*¹⁸. Collectively, these terms refer to establishing *trustworthiness*. As such, these terms will be referred to in regards to the trustworthiness of the results. Consistent with the notion that “detailed methodological description enables the reader to determine how far the data and construct emerging from it may be accepted” (Shenton 2004, p. 72) the following section is laden with detail, the purpose of which is to assist in establishing trustworthy results.

¹⁷ For a detailed explanation of naturalistic inquiry see Lincoln’s *Naturalistic inquiry* (1985)

¹⁸ For a detailed explanation of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability

<i>Quality criterion</i>	<i>Possible provision made by researcher</i>
Credibility	Adoption of appropriate, well recognised research methods Development of early familiarity with culture of participating organisations Random sampling of individuals serving as informants Triangulation via use of different methods, different types of informants and different sites Tactics to help ensure honesty in informants Iterative questioning in data collection dialogues Negative case analysis Debriefing sessions between researcher and superiors Peer scrutiny of project Use of “reflective commentary” Description of background, qualifications and experience of the researcher Member checks of data collected and interpretations/theories formed Thick description of phenomenon under scrutiny Examination of previous research to frame findings
Transferability	Provision of background data to establish context of study and detailed description of phenomenon in question to allow comparisons to be made
Dependability	Employment of “overlapping methods” In-depth methodological description to allow study to be repeated
Confirmability	Triangulation to reduce effect of investigator bias Admission of researcher’s beliefs and assumptions Recognition of shortcomings in study’s methods and their potential effects In-depth methodological description to allow integrity of research results to be scrutinised Use of diagrams to demonstrate “audit trail”

Table 2. Provisions that may be made by researcher to address Lincoln & Guba’s trustworthiness criteria
(Source: Shenton 2004)

3.2 Instrumental case study with embedded units

As described by Yin (2009) a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident. In this research I studied the contemporary phenomenon of how collaborate advantage can be achieved and produce social innovation¹⁹; specifically, within the context of the partnerships between The Ocean Project and three partner aquariums, of which the boundaries of the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. In other words, I have chosen the case study method because I am deliberately interested in examining contextual (partnership) conditions based on the belief that they are critical in informing the phenomenon of collaborative advantage. Moreover, within this case there are more variables of interest than data points, which calls for the use of multiple sources of evidence in order to triangulate results (Yin 2009).

As indicated by Yin (2009), case study research benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. For this research, theoretical propositions were drawn from the theories studied in the literature review. Consistent with the notion that qualitative research does not lend itself well to producing generalizable results in the conventional sense (Lincoln

¹⁹ In the form of new approaches, strategies or ideas for creating public awareness of and engagement in conservation action which have been implemented by aquariums.

& Guba 1985; Firestone 1987; Stake 1995; Morse et al. 2002; Baxter & Jack 2008), I am *not* interested in identifying typicality or representativeness for all CSPs. On the contrary, I seek to establish *transferability* by identifying patterns of conditions within partnerships in relation to achieving a collaborative advantage to provide reflexive handles for management. These findings may subsequently be used by researchers or practitioners for comparison within their own partnerships with similar attributes, because of which the single case study is a suitable choice²⁰.

According to Stake (1995), the criteria for the choice of the single case should be based on the opportunity to learn. By this he means identifying a case in which there is both good access and a high willingness to participate in order to ensure that the researcher can maximize the learning opportunity. In line with this logic I have chosen the single-case study in consideration of the facts that (a) I will be directly working together with The Ocean Project and its partner aquariums, (b) my level of access is sufficient, (c) and the participating practitioners have demonstrated a high willingness to participate in order to gain a better understanding of this phenomenon for their own partnership management²¹. The particular case I have chosen to study is not representative of a larger population and is characterized by its uniqueness. However, I am interested in conducting an instrumental case study (see below) and according to Harling's (2007) criteria for choosing an instrumental case, "the case chosen can be a typical case although an *unusual* case may help illustrate matters overlooked in a typical case because they are subtler there" (Harling 2007, pp. 2; emphasis added).

To specify further, this research is carried out as an *instrumental case study*, a typology which was originally coined by Robert E. Stake (1995) and has since been elaborated upon by numerous scholars. An instrumental case study is one in which a specific instance is examined in order to understand a general principle (Illott et al. 2013). In this case, I am interested in studying the specific instance of social innovation in order to understand a general principle: how partnerships achieve a collaborative advantage.

According to Yin (2009) the instrumental case study may be divided into two typologies, the *exploratory* case study and the *explanatory* case study. The exploratory case study is described as *theory seeking*, whereas the explanatory case study is *theory testing*. This research is primarily exploratory, but it will share elements of explanatory case studies. Regarding the exploratory factor, as aforementioned the theory of collaborative advantage is still in its infancy, through this research I contribute to theory development by further *exploring* the conditions and on which it is based. Again taking into consideration the fact that the theory of collaborative advantage is less than a decade old, I am interested in *testing* what has been developed in regards to the conditions by comparing how well the theoretical propositions apply to the case under investigation. In this sense the research is also explanatory.

As previously mentioned, generalization in the conventional statistical sense is considered to be unachievable with this type of case study (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Stake 1995; Yin 2009). However, this case does attempt to identify patterns and conditions which may be extrapolated or transferable to other similar cases (Stake 1995). Lincoln & Guba (1985) refer to this as *transferability* and state that case-to-case transfer, an activity which the reader is responsible for, "can be accomplished if the inquirer provides sufficient detail about the circumstances about the situation or case that was studied" (Schwandt 2007, pp. 127). This is referred to by Stake (1995) as "*naturalistic generalizations*

²⁰ Consistent with the logic of Stake (1995) and other qualitative researchers (Firestone 1987; Guba & Lincoln 1994; Morse et al. 2002; Baxter & Jack 2008; Yin 2009).

²¹ Confirmed through informal communication.

– *conclusions* that both inquirer and reader arrive at through engagement in life or through vicarious experience—in contrast to formal, propositional generalizations” (Schwandt 2007, pp. 127). According to Stake (1995) the inquirer should assist the reader in this process by “developing interpretive accounts that are personal, narrative in structure, and richly detailed” (Schwandt 2007, pp. 127). Taking these considerations into account, the methods and context of this research are elaborated upon to a significant extent in order to strengthen the transferability and, ultimately, enhance the trustworthiness of the results.

In sum, in this instrumental case study I explore the phenomenon of how collaborative advantage is achieved and social innovation stimulated, the results of which are used to produce recommendations (or naturalistic generalizations) for both the participants of the study as well as other practitioners who can then determine the transferability of the results of these cases to their own situations.

3.3 Sources of information

To assist in establishing trustworthiness it is important to give an overview of the sources and types of information used. The following research has been conducted with information acquired from three different methods (a) literature review (b) case study and (c) direct observation and four different sources, individual interviews, direct observation, literature²², and organizational documents.

According to Verschuren & Doorewaard (2010), information can be broken down into two types which are important in social science research, data (or facts) and knowledge. According to these authors, *data* related information places emphasis the characteristics of research objects. In the context of this research the *research objects* are the partnerships between The Ocean Project and three aquariums. The characteristics of the research object are individual’s experiences, feelings, and perceptions²³, as well as characteristics of collaborative processes, situations and conditions.

The other type of information is *knowledge*; knowledge is information which is obtained from “ready-made *insights* and *theories* that have been developed previously by others” (Verschuren & Doorewaard 2010, pp. 207). The knowledge information which is relevant to this research is that which is related to the key concepts, collaborative advantage, social innovation, and cross sector partnerships. The sources for these different types of information, as depicted in Figure 2, come from individual interviews with practitioners, my own direct observations as an intern with The Ocean Project, literature on each of the key concepts, as well as relevant organizational documents.

In this research, data is represented by the information collected during the interviews and direct observation. On the other hand, knowledge is data that is retrieved from both literature and relevant organizational documents. Knowledge was collected during the literature review and data was collected during the case study. The data collected in the case study is reflected upon using the knowledge that was collected during the literature review.

²² Literature on the theory of collaborative advantage, social innovation and cross sector partnerships.

²³ In regards to collaboration.

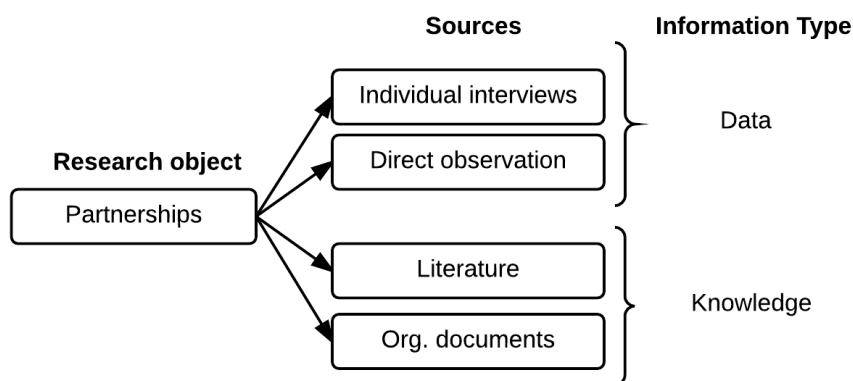


Figure 8. Research objects and sources of information (Source: Verschuren & Doorewaard 2010)

3.4 Interviews

In this section I give a detailed explanation of the interviewing process, including how the sample was selected using criterion-based purposeful sampling, the considerations made during the preparation process, and how they were implemented.

3.4.1 Sample selection

For the selection of the embedded units in this case study I used criterion-based purposeful sampling. As stated by Patton (1990), qualitative inquiry generally focuses on relatively small sample sizes, which are selected purposefully. According to Patton (1990), “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term *purposeful sampling*” (Patton 1990, pp. 169). There are several strategies which can be employed for purposefully selecting information rich cases, from which I used criterion sampling. The logic behind *criterion sampling* is to evaluate cases that meet a predetermined criterion of importance. The point of this is to ensure that cases are information-rich because they may either reveal system weaknesses or strengths which may in turn become targets of opportunity for program improvement (Patton 1990).

Using this method of sample selection, I purposefully selected three partners of The Ocean Project, North Carolina Aquariums, New England Aquarium and Oregon Coast Aquarium. The selection of these three partners was based on the criteria that they are the three partners’ of The Ocean Project to have been awarded resources from the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program in 2013-14. The Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program is a grant that was developed by The Ocean Project and is funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA). The grants were first launched in 2010-11 to assist in providing resources and incentives to aquariums for the development of innovative programs which engage visitors to incorporate conservation actions into their daily lives. In order to receive the awards, applicants must submit a proposal, in which they outline their innovative program, the total costs, the program outcomes they aim to achieve, and the ways in which those outcomes will be measured. The proposals are first sent to The Ocean Project, who then does a preliminary review and identifies candidates who they feel are deserving, after which The Ocean

Project forwards their recommendations on to NOAA who makes the final selection of candidates. Given my interest in studying the phenomenon of how partnerships are able to achieve a collaborative advantage and produce social innovation, I felt that these partners satisfied the requirements for purposeful sampling based on criteria.

Having selected my embedded units, I then proceeded to contact the respondents from each of the institutions and to schedule interviews. From New England Aquarium, I contacted Heather Deschenes, the Manager of Youth Development Programs; from Oregon Coast Aquarium, I contacted Kerry Carlin-Morgan, the Director of Education; and from North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knolls Shore, I contacted Windy Arey-Kent, the Curator of Education. The purpose for contacting each of these individuals was because they are the individuals who are responsible for the Innovative Grants. After having contacted each of the interviewees, I then began to prepare for standardized open-ended interviews. As described by Turner (2010), the standardized open-ended interview is “extremely structured in terms of wording of the questions. Participants are always asked identical questions, but the questions are worded so the responses are open-ended” (Turner 2010, pp. 756). This provides a sufficient level of open-endedness for the participants to contribute as much information as they would like while simultaneously allowing me the ability to ask probing questions as means of a follow up.

In addition to interviewing each of the partners from this sample selection, I conducted interviews with the three employees of The Ocean Project. I conducted these interviews afterwards so as to avoid, as much as possible, having a significant influence from their answers on the initial interviews with the partners. Additionally, my level of access to The Ocean Project’s employees was significantly higher and as such it made more sense, logistically, to conduct interviews with them after arranging the interviews with partners.

3.4.2 Preparation

Using the standardized open-ended interview format, a necessary first step was preparing the questions for the interviewee partners. I was interested in structuring the questions in a way in which the answers would contribute thematically to knowledge production and also maintaining a positive interview interaction. As defined by Patton (1990) the type of information which I was interested in was related to the interviewee’s behaviors, opinions, knowledge and backgrounds. I was not, however, interested in information related to senses or feelings (Patton 1990). Although I wanted to structure the questions so as to produce thematic knowledge about the partnerships, I also wanted to achieve as much neutrality as possible through asking questions which were not too leading. For example, while I was interested in discovering whether or not *conflict* was a relevant condition, rather than asking a question such as “If any, what kinds of internal/external conflicts have hindered your ability to innovate?” in which I refer specifically to the condition of conflict, I strove to develop questions which were leading enough to get relevant, information-rich answers yet not so leading as to be working those answers out of the interviewees. In place of the above question I opted to ask “What barriers, if any, exist within your institution that limits your ability to innovate [in visitor engagement]?” An indirect question which, I felt, was open ended enough to gain insight into potential conflict areas without subconsciously nudging the interviewee into speaking about conflict. When interviewing these partners, I used a total of 11 questions.²⁴ The 11 questions served as the overall structure to the interview, although there were times when questions led into follow-up questions,

²⁴ To see the list of questions please refer to Appendix C.

although these questions were not recorded they were taken into consideration while transcribing the interview responses.

When interviewing The Ocean Project employees, I used the same questioning structure and format; however I altered some of the questions to accommodate this change. The types of questions which were asked included introducing questions, follow-up questions, specifying questions, structuring questions, direct and indirect questions (Kvale 1996; see appendix for detailed table). It should also be mentioned that, given my beginner status as an interviewer²⁵ and unfamiliarity with the industry environment in which I was interested in evaluating, I sought the advice of one of The Ocean Project’s employees. The purpose of this was two-fold. First, as already stated I was a beginner conducting research-related interviews for the first time and as such sought practical advice from someone with interview experience²⁶. Second, I wanted to ensure that the questions I was interested in asking were appropriate for the context, non-conflicting and not too leading. Despite having later conducted an interview with Douglas, given that fact that these interview questions were constructed for the aquarium interviewees, I felt that his assistance would not have an adverse effect on the results. Moreover, by inviting peer scrutiny of the project I aimed to further establish my research credibility and contribution to trustworthy results.

Prior to conducting the interviews, in accordance with McNamara’s (2009) eight principles for the preparation stage (see Table 2): I ensured that during each interview took place in a setting with little distraction; I explained the purpose of the interview both during the initial communication as well as directly prior to conducting the interview; I addressed the confidentiality, letting each interviewee know that the interviews would both not be recorded and the results would only be shared back to them, directly, and with The Ocean Project (and vice versa); I was entirely explicit about the format of the interview; I indicated approximately how long each interview would take, which was one hour; I gave them my contact information as well as background information on my own personal research interests and objectives; I asked them if they had any questions prior to conducting the interview; and, finally, rather than counting on my memory to recall their answers. Additionally, in attempt to further ensure the honest of the participants and enhance credibility, prior to conducting each interview I reminded the participants that, although I was interning for The Ocean Project, in no way was I representing their interest, emphasizing that the information would only be used as reflective tools for management.

Interview principle	
1	Choose a setting with little distraction
2	Explain the purpose of the interview
3	Address terms of confidentiality
4	Explain the format of the interview
5	Indicate how long the interview will take
6	Tell them how to get in touch with you
7	Ask them if they have any questions beforehand
8	Don’t count on your memory to recall the answers

²⁵ An element which will be discussed further in the research limitations.

²⁶ Douglas Meyer, part time consultant for The Ocean Project, has significant experience in conducting interviews.

Table 3. Eight principles for interview preparation stage (Source: McNamara 2009)

3.4.3 Implementation

After preparing came the implementation. The first set of interviews was conducted with the aquarium staff from the partnerships under study. The first two interviews, which were with New England Aquarium and Oregon Coast Aquarium took place over the phone and lasted approximately one hour. The third interview took place in person; while attending an industry related conference in Chicago I had the opportunity to conduct my interview with Windy Arey-Kent, Education Curator from North Carolina. Initially unsure as to whether or not this would have any adverse effect on my results²⁷ I sought the advice of my supervisor, Carel Dieperink, who informed me that as long as the structure and format remain the same, an in person interview should not adversely impact the results.

Interviews with two of The Ocean Project employees, the Director, Bill Mott, and World Oceans Day coordinator, Alyssa Isakower, took place in person, following the same format and structure. The interview with Douglas Meyer, part time consultant for The Ocean Project, took place over the phone due to the fact that he is not located at The Ocean Project's office.

Interviewee	Organization	Position
Heather Deschenes	New England Aquarium	Manager of Youth Programs
Kerry Carlin-Morgan	Oregon Coast Aquarium	Director of Education
Windy Arey-Kent	North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shore	Education Curator
Bill Mott	The Ocean Project	Director
Alyssa Isakower	The Ocean Project	World Oceans Day Coordinator
Douglas Meyer	The Ocean Project	Consultant

Table 4. Interviewees

In spite of the frequent suggestions in literature to record the interviews (Kvale 1996; McNamara 2009; Seidman 2012), upon the advice of Douglas Meyer I opted not to. Initially I was doubtful as to why the participants would have any desire not to be open and honest when speaking about a very non-controversial topic. However, Douglas had advised me that although the topic maybe very casual and non-controversial, from his experience, the lack of a recording instrument has been a catalyst for more honest responses. Taking this into consideration, this tactic was employed to ensure the honesty of the participants and enhance the credibility. The interviews began with a small introduction and a brief recap of my research interests, the aim of the interview and the format which would be used. Following tactics suggested in literature to ensure that the interviews met the quality criteria (Kvale 1996; McNamara 2009; Turner 2010), throughout the course of this interview I was actively making clarifying statements to ensure that what I was understanding was correct. While interviewing I was simultaneously transcribing responses. After each question was answered by the interviewee, I would repeat what I understood back to the interviewee to get their verbal confirmation that how I was interpreting what I was hearing was accurate. As aforementioned, follow up questions were asked when necessary to further clarify statements and probe into interesting thematically-relevant points which were being made.

After conducting each interview I immediately began typing up a full summary of the report. Each report included, first, an overall summary of the interview in which I attempted to make a complete

²⁷ I was unable to find any literary references to this kind of dilemma.

review of everything discussed, without any interpretation on my end. After the overall summary, I included a description of the key conditions which I identified in the interview as most relevant to the achievement of a collaborative advantage and social innovation. The description also included a full list of conditions which were identified. This was followed by a description of my interpretation of the interview. My interpretation was intended to draw connections between conditions and identify some of the underlying key issues which, according to my interpretation, were (or weren't) relevant to the achievement of a collaborative advantage. The interview summary was concluded with a synopsis of my own research interests and goals. To ensure accuracy of my interview report and to further establish credibility I conducted *member checks* with each of the participants, this consisted of sending back each summary to the interviewee to be reviewed for accuracy and feedback.

The final process in the interview phase was analyzing the data. An analytical strategy appropriate for theory-oriented approaches was used for the interview data analysis; it was adopted from Flick et al. (2004) and, as suggested, was adapted to accommodate the specific needs of my case study. Upon receiving confirmation from each interviewee that my reports accurately reflected the content in the interviews, the first step of analysis was to reflect upon the conditions using the literature and direct observation to provide an overview of the relationship as well as recommendations. During this step, I analyzed the responses from both of the organizations to determine whether or not both partners considered certain conditions to be relevant to the success of the partnership. After cross analyzing the responses, I was able to gain insight into how the various conditions were perceived by the partners and how those related to the partnership. This allowed me to gain insight into the contradictions between responses and subsequently develop useful recommendations for both partners on how they might manage their relationship to reduce the contradictions and capitalize on the common conditions.

The second step was to input each of the summaries into Dedoose and code the data according to conditions. The purpose of this was to identify the conditions present and relevant in all partnerships. This allowed me to identify conditions which were likely to be relevant to partnerships of this type and provided the basis for more general recommendations. As such, the results of each interview are both reflected upon individually, in order to provide specific feedback and recommendations, as well as collectively to provide general recommendations for partnerships in a similar context.

3.5 Direct observation

A cornerstone of qualitative research for many scholars is the use of direct observation to influence the results of the research (Stake 1995). I chose to adopt this method of data collection namely for three reasons, (1) given my interest in studying the relationship conditions between partners and interpretation of those conditions, observational data provides a valuable data source; (2) as a research intern at The Ocean Project I have a sufficient level of access to settings in which valuable observations can be made; (3) and observational data serves as a method for further triangulation of the results. Stake (1995) disaggregates direct observation into two different types of observation with alternate purposes. On the one hand, there is *interpretive data*, which Stake (1995) characterizes as data which, by itself, seems to be immediately relevant to the research. On the other hand, there is *aggregative data* which is data that only becomes relevant when mixed in with lots of other data. Given the limited time spent as an intern and the space limitations of this research, my observations consisted of interpretive data.

My direct observation took place in three different settings; first, at The Ocean Project office while working through formal and informal work conversations if points of interests came into the discussion I would document them and the context in which they were mentioned. Second, every Tuesday of each week was a conference call with Douglas Meyer during which additional notes were made as needed. My third and most fruitful setting to collect interpretive data through direct observation was during the three day *Innovation and the Living World Symposium*, which took place in Chicago on April 28-30, 2013. The symposium was designed to assist zoo, aquarium and museum workers in overcoming barriers to innovation within their institution and the industry as a whole. This was a particularly fruitful environment for collecting data given the fact that each of the participants was selected based on the innovativeness of their institutions. Data from direct observation is included in the recommendations for each of the partners under investigation²⁸ as well as for the general recommendations provided in the conclusion.

3.6 Conclusion

I carried out this instrumental single-case study using three methods, a literature review, semi-structured interviews, and direct observation. The review of literature on collaborative advantage, CSPs and social innovation served to provide a knowledge base with which to structure my interview questions and overall theoretical basis for the subsequent phases of research. The interviews served to provide insight into the context of the relationship between The Ocean Project and three partner aquariums and identify conditions within those partnerships which are relevant to achieving collaborative advantage and stimulating social innovation. My direct observations were made throughout the case study research and were included in the final analysis of the data. Using all data points for triangulation and reflection upon the results, recommendations for practitioners were produced, these will be presented in Chapter 6. The next chapter explores the results of the case study by discussing the conditions relevant to each partnerships collaborative advantage.

²⁸ And are explicitly noted when referenced to.

Chapter 4 – The cases

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the interviews. For each partnership, I provide a brief history of the organization and a discussion on the conditions identified as relevant to the partnerships collaborative advantage. These discussions are based on the results from the interviews which I transcribed and then verified with the interviewees to establish trustworthiness.²⁹ I begin with a brief history of The Ocean Project in which I discuss the role of the organization and an overview of the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program, which was introduced in section 2.5.

At the end of the chapter, Table 5 was developed to show the reader which hypotheses were supported, rejected or not applicable to this case study. Using the results of the case study, Figure 7 developed in Chapter 2 is revised and refined to develop Figure 12 (section 4.6). Figure 12 shows which conditions were relevant to the achievement of collaborative advantage in this case study.

4.2 The Ocean Project

The Ocean Project began in the late 1990's with the intention of functioning as a network for sharing information on conservation and education among the zoo, aquarium and museum industry. The Ocean Project is comprised of 2.5 employees, the Director, Bill Mott; the World Oceans Day coordinator, Alyssa Isakower; and a part time consultant, Douglas Meyer. The Ocean Foundation is the fiscal sponsor for The Ocean Project; The Ocean Project has no revenue streams, it primarily dependent upon sponsorship to cover operating costs and as such is characteristically similar to a charitable organization.

In the early years, The Ocean Project primarily functioned as a research organization, collecting data about public perceptions of climate change, demographics of the population who show interest in conservation, etc. which took place for about a decade before it was compiled into a comprehensive communications research document which provides insight into the current state of public perceptions of climate change and who is most likely to take conservation action. Approximately three years ago, The Ocean Project developed the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program, which was briefly described in the sample selection. In essence, the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program, which is funded by NOAA, is aimed at providing resources to aquariums in order to assist in the development of new programs to engage visitors in taking conservation action. The resources come in the forms of funding and coaching/consulting. Along with conducting outreach for World Oceans Day³⁰, promoting the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program is The Ocean Projects primary task. As such, The Ocean Project must develop partnerships which are conducive to social innovation. Here, I explore three of those partnerships and the conditions which were relevant to the partnerships' collaborative advantage.

4.3 Embedded unit #1: New England Aquarium

The New England Aquarium (NEAQ) is a private, not-for-profit aquarium established in 1969 in Boston, Massachusetts. NEAQ has been one of the United States most popular aquariums and remains so today with approximately 1.3 million visitors per year. NEAQ, one of the founding partners of The Ocean Project, is one of several aquariums on the forefront of conservation and is dedicated to

²⁹ To see the fully transcribed interview discussions from which the results are based on, please refer to Appendix D.

³⁰ In consideration of space limitations, a discussion on World Oceans Day will be omitted from this report.

“redefining what it means to be an aquarium combining education, entertainment and action to address the most challenging problems facing the ocean.” The following discussion is based on the results from the transcribed interview with Heather Deschenes, the Manager of Youth Programs at the NEAQ and the employees of The Ocean Project. Conditions are discussed as they relate to the process categories in the conceptual framework, which can be seen in Figure 9.

4.3.1 Conditions relevant to collaborative advantage

Several conditions have been identified by the respondents which contribute to or constrain the partnership’s ability to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation (Figure 9). The conditions are discussed under their respective process category. Recommendations for the organizations in this partnership regarding how to continue achieving collaborative advantage can be found in section 6.3.2.

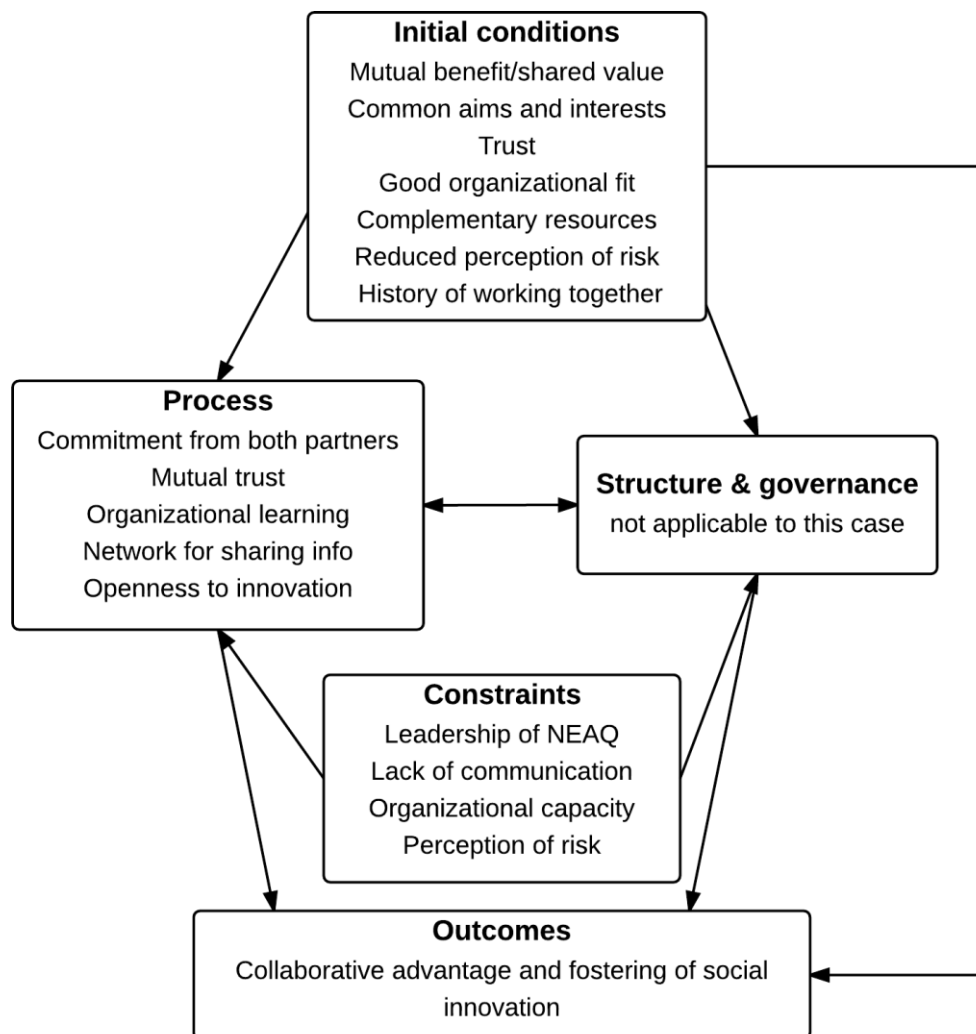


Figure 9. Conditions which contribute to or constrain the collaborative advantage between NEAQ and The Ocean Project.

Initial conditions

The ability of this partnership to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate innovation can be attributed to many conditions. We begin with an evaluation of the initial conditions of during partnership formation. These partners can be characterized as having a good **organizational fit** based

on their **common aims/interests** and ability to provide each other a **mutual benefit** through **resource complementarity**; each partner has resources which provide value to the other partner. It is clear that both partners have a high level of respect and **trust** for each other which has been established through a long **history of working together**. The ability of The Ocean Project to provide resources seems to be one of the most important conditions in enabling the partnership to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation; this has been expressed by both organizations. For example, although the partners have a common aim/interest, according to the respondents, this interest is not enough to stimulate NEAQ to develop new, experimental programs for engaging visitors to take conservation action. This is because the perception of risk (identified as a constraint) deters leadership from proactively implementing experimental innovative programs independently of the partnership. Hence, the resources provided by The Ocean Project seem to be the most important conditions for **reducing the risk perception** and subsequently allowing experimental innovative solutions to be tested; without which the social innovation would have unlikely been developed.

Process

Although the partners have a difference of opinion on how to carry out some of the partnership processes, a high level of **trust** in one another has contributed to their ability to overcome this difference. Both partners have individuals from that are **committed** to the partnership goals, achieving a collaborative advantage and stimulating social innovation. An important part of the partnership process, particularly in relation to stimulating innovation, is the organizations **openness to innovation** and their encouragement of **organizational learning**. NEAQ strives to be a leader in the industry and supports the aims of the The Ocean Project. Heather indicated The Ocean Project's **network for sharing information** was a key condition in stimulating learning and innovation in the organization

Contingencies/constraints

Although this partnership has been able to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation. If both partners hope to continue achieving collaborative advantage, several constraints should be addressed by practitioners. Recommendations for managing these contingencies and constraints comes in Chapter 6, however, here I will briefly highlight the potentially constraining conditions. To begin with, although Heather and The Ocean Project have a common aim, the **leadership of NEAQ** differs on how they believe that aim should be achieved, creating potential for conflict. It has been expressed that the partnership currently is characterized by a **lack of communication**, which according to scholars can undermine trust and invite conflict. While the leadership of The Ocean Project is committed, the lack of **organizational capacity**³¹ is a condition which, based on my direct observation as well as the responses of The Ocean Project staff, is an immediate constraint upon the leadership of The Ocean Project. Finally, the **perception of risk** which although was mitigated by The Ocean Project's resources, is a condition which may constrain future collaborative advantage.

4.4 Embedded unit #2: Oregon Coast Aquarium

Located in Newport, Oregon, the private, not-for-profit, Oregon Coast Aquarium was founded in 1992. Since its establishment, Oregon Coast Aquarium has quickly risen to become ranked as one of the nation's top 25 aquariums. It averages nearly half-million visitors per year and is recognized for its persistence in striving towards achieving conservation. The Oregon Coast Aquarium is dedicated to

³¹ Because the lack of organizational capacity is from the side of The Ocean Project, this contingency/constraint is relevant to all of the partnerships. However, to avoid redundancy it is only listed here.

inspiring “the public to better understand, cherish and conserve marine and coastal ecosystems.” The following discussion is presented in the same format as the previous section. This discussion has been developed from the interview responses from Kerry Carlin-Morgan, the Director of Education at the Oregon Coast Aquarium as well as from the employees of The Ocean Project.

4.4.1 Conditions relevant to collaborative advantage

The following conditions were identified as contributing to or constraining the partnership’s ability to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation (Figure 10). Recommendations for this partnership can be found in section 6.3.3.

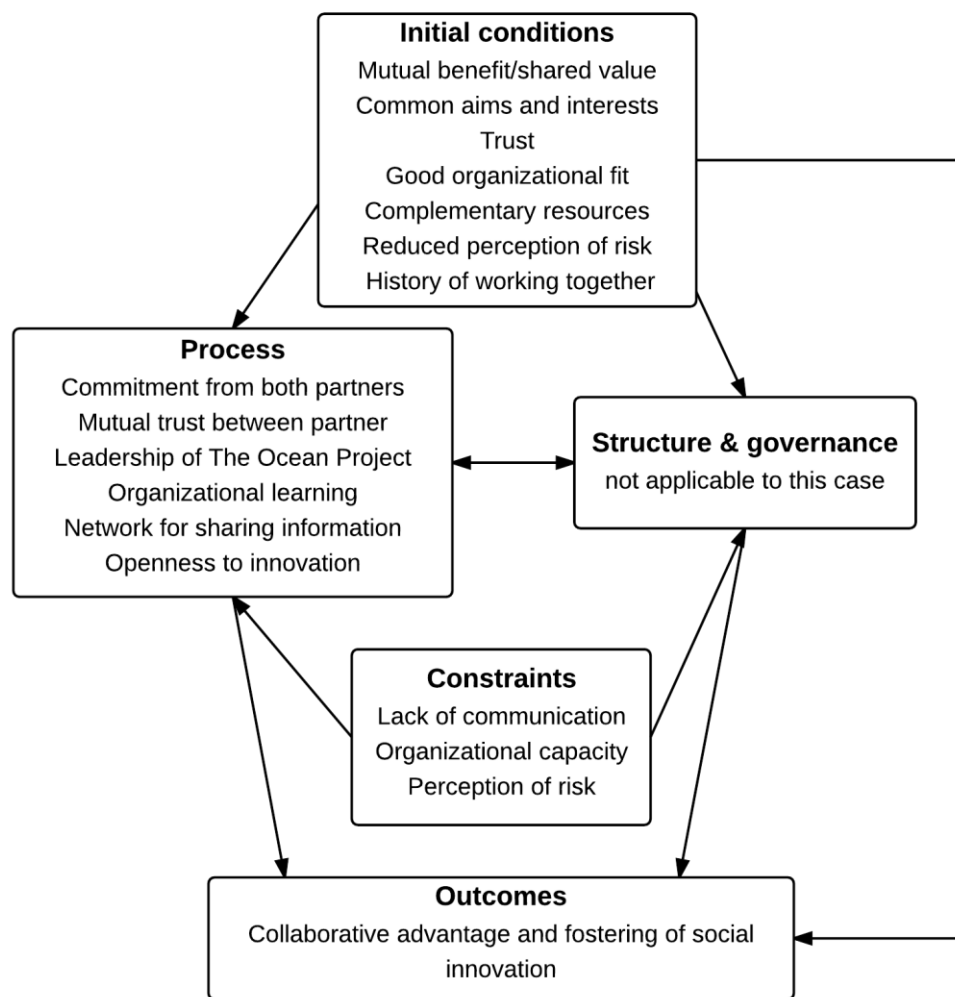


Figure 10. Conditions which contribute/constrain to the collaborative advantage between Oregon and The Ocean Project

Initial conditions

The initial conditions which create the building blocks of the partnership include a **history of working together**, which contributed to mutual **trust**. These conditions along with the partners’ **common aim/interest** assisted in creating a good **organizational fit**. Both partners indicated the added value from the partnership and the ability to **mutually benefit**. As with the partnership between NEAQ and The Ocean Project, **complementary resources** played an essential role in **reducing the risk perception**. This is a critical condition in the partnership, without which both partners have indicated the unlikelihood of successful collaboration.

Process

Regarding the partnership activities, or the process conditions, several factors have been identified by partners as relevant to collaborative advantage. Kerry from Oregon and The Ocean Project staff were pleased by the other partner's high level of **commitment**. Additionally, Heather indicated the importance of the **leadership of The Ocean Project** in pushing aquariums to be innovative and encourage **organizational learning** by experimenting with new approaches. This leadership has played an important role in stimulating Oregon to seek out innovative solutions apply for the Grants+. Similar to Heather from NEAQ, Kerry also noted the importance of The Ocean Project's **network** and communications research, both which facilitate learning. Additionally, the leadership of Oregon, which is **open to innovation** and willing support to Kerry in her decision to seek out funding for this kind of project.

Contingencies/constraints

This partnership shares some similar constraints with the other cases. First and foremost, although Kerry is willing to think outside the box and is open to innovative ideas, there is still a **perception of risk** from the Oregon leadership, as with the other cases, the risk is greatly reduced by the resources from the Grant, which give Oregon the freedom to experiment with innovative solutions. Kerry also identified that her staff lacks the **organizational capacity** and skills to assist in the development and implementation of new approaches. Both partners indicated a **lack of communication**, which although has not constrained the partnership at this point, based on literary evidence, this could have consequences for future achievements.

4.5 Embedded unit #3: North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores

The North Carolina Aquariums Divisions was established in 1976 and is part of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Environmental Resources. There are a total of three aquariums which are operated under their authority. The aquariums were established with the goal of promoting awareness, understanding and conservation of the ocean. Unlike the other two aquariums under investigation, North Carolina Aquariums are not private, but rather *public* institutions, ran by the state. After temporarily closing for expansion in 2004, the Aquarium reopened in 2006 and now attracts nearly half a million visitor per year, about the same as the Oregon Coast Aquarium. The remainder of this section will follow the format of the previous two sections. The interview was conducted with Windy Arey-Kent, Education Curator at the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores.

4.5.1 Conditions relevant to collaborative advantage

The conditions contributing to and constraining collaborative advantage in this case (Figure 11) were similar to those identified in the other cases, with a few slight differences discussed in the following paragraphs. Recommendations for this partnership can be found in section 6.3.4.



Figure 11. Conditions which contribute to or constrain the collaborative advantage between NCA and The Ocean Project.

Initial conditions

Similar to the other cases, the initial foundation of this partnership was built through a **history of working together** during conferences prior to the Grant and also collaborating for World Oceans Day, which contributed to the development of **trust**. The partners have an exceptionally well aligned **common aim/interest**, both partners were aware of and in agreement with each other's goals, assisting in making a **good organizational fit**. As with the other cases, partners gain added value from the partnership obtain **mutual benefit**. And again as with the other cases, The Ocean Project's **resources** have **reduced the perception of risk**. Windy explicitly stated that when she attempted to propose an innovative approach the NCA leadership rejected it, with the resources from The Ocean Project's grant, she was able to overcome that constraint.

Process

There is a major **commitment** from Windy to ensure the success of the partnership which is a key condition in the collaborative advantage. Similar to Oregon, Windy indicated the importance of the **leadership of The Ocean Project** in pushing aquariums to be innovative. Additionally, the support they have provided in both tangible and intangible resources has been key conditions in stimulating innovation. The **support and empowerment** which The Ocean Project has provided for Windy has been identified as an extremely important condition for achieving collaborative advantage. The Ocean

Project encouraged Windy to apply for the Grants+ program to fund her project proposal in spite of having it rejected previously. Both partners indicated more **frequent communication** takes place than was cited in the other cases, this can be at least partially attributed to the fact that these partners collaborate on other projects, such as World Oceans Day. Windy is proactive in her desire to develop innovative approaches, as such she demonstrates an **openness to innovation** which is important to the success of partnership processes.

Contingencies/constraints

This partnership had notably less identified constraining conditions when compared to the other two cases. However, that isn't to suggest that there are no potential barrier. For example, in spite of the close relationship ties between Windy, the Director NCA, and The Ocean Project, due to the extremely **bureaucratic** nature of **NCA leadership**, there is still a **perception of risk** when attempting to develop innovative solutions. In line with the other partnerships, the perception of risk is greatly reduced by the resources from the Grant, which give NCA the freedom to experiment with innovative solutions. The partners did not identify any other major contingencies or constraints on collaborative advantage.

4.6 Conditions for achieving a collaborative advantage

This section explores the 19 conditions identified in this case study as relevant for achieving a collaborative advantage and stimulating social innovation. The conditions and hypotheses have been merged into in Table 5. This table shows which hypotheses were supported, rejected, or not applicable within this case study. Additionally, those conditions which were identified after conducting the literature review, namely *mutual benefit*, *risk*, *support*, and *organizational capacity* have also been added to the table. However, hypotheses were not developed for these conditions. As such, for these four conditions, the right column in the table either indicates Y, yes, that condition was relevant or, N/A, the condition was not applicable to the case.³²

Conditions & hypotheses ³³	Hypotheses supported (Y), rejected (N), or not applicable (N/A)		
	NEAQ	Oregon	NCA
<i>(1) Ability to create a mutual benefit/shared value.</i> ³⁴	Y	Y	Y
(2) An important initial condition is that both partners have common aims/interests in the outcomes to be achieved.	Y	Y	Y
(3) An important initial condition is organizational fit. Partners need to be compatible in terms of values and beliefs.	Y	Y	Y
(4) Trust must be established between partners initially and reinforced throughout collaboration processes.	Y	Y	Y

³² Because hypotheses for these conditions were not previously developed, it's not possible to determine whether or not the data rejects it, as such (N) or "no" is not applicable.

³³ Hypotheses included where applicable.

³⁴ Conditions in italics are those conditions which were identified during the case study; hypotheses were not developed for these conditions.

(5) Partners must be committed to and engaged in partnership processes and activities.	Y	Y	Y
(6) Each partner must be able to provide the other with a valuable resource.	Y	Y	Y
(7) <i>Reduced perception of risk.</i>	Y	Y	Y
(8) It is important for partners to work together in collaborative processes which fosters shared understanding and builds trust between partners.	Y	Y	Y
(9) An important condition is the support of leadership, which is also important for promoting organizational learning and an openness to innovation.	Y	Y	Y
(10) <i>Lack of organizational capacity may threaten the future achievement of collaborative advantage.</i>	Y	Y	Y
(11) A CSP is more likely to stimulate social innovation and achieve a collaborative advantage if partners have access to a network that facilitates learning.	Y	Y	N
(12) To foster social innovation and achieve collaborative advantage an important process condition which must occur through collaboration is learning.	Y	Y	N
(13) It is important that both organizations be open, willing to accept new ideas and experiment with innovation.	Y	Y	N
(14) An important partnership process condition is communication between partners, which should occur frequently and openly.	N	N	Y
(15) <i>The support and empowerment of The Ocean Project.</i>	N/A	N/A	Y
(16) Partners need to make an effort to understand each other's organizations and compromise on goals and partnership processes.	N/A	N/A	N/A
(17) Partnerships must have processes in place which address conflict and mitigate tensions as they arise.	N/A	N/A	N/A
(18) To stimulate innovation and achieve a collaborative advantage, the scope of the goals and aims of that partnership must benefit the capacity of the partners.	N/A	N/A	N/A
(19) An important structural and governance condition is that power imbalances be managed to ensure that both partners feel equally influential.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 5. Conditions identified as relevant to collaborative advantage in this case

Out of the 19 conditions identified in this case study, 15 were relevant to at least one of the partnerships in this case study. Those 15 conditions have been used to develop Figure 12. This figure provides practitioners with a general idea of which conditions are important to collaborative advantage and to which process category they belong. The structure and governance process category was not adaptable to any of the partnerships in this case study and as such has been marked not applicable. However, structure and governance conditions are likely to be relevant in CSPs between larger organizations which have the organizational capacity and resources to develop more formal membership arrangements and structures.

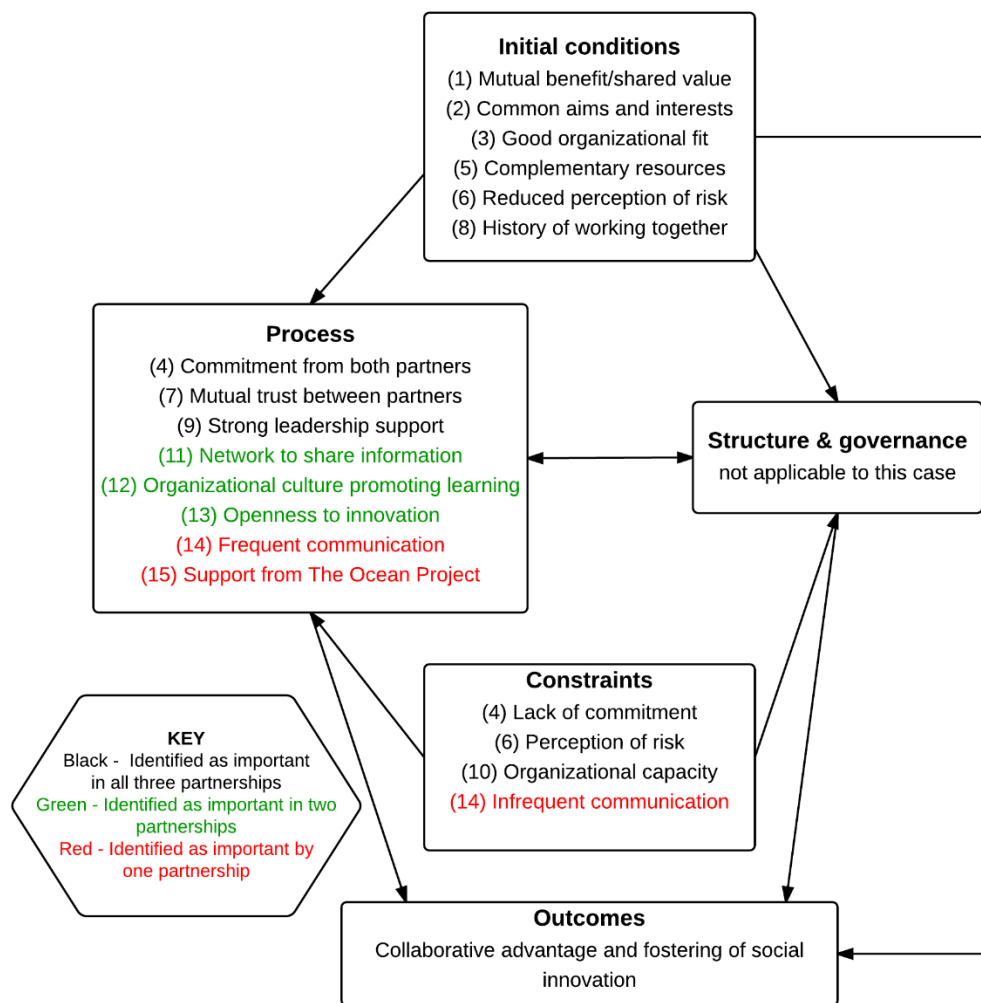


Figure 12. Conditions identified in this case study as contributing to or constraining collaborative advantage and fostering social innovation

I begin the following narrative discussion on Figure 12 with the first ten conditions in Table 5 that were relevant to all three partnerships, followed by a discussion on the four conditions which were relevant to two of the partnerships. And, finally, the two conditions, communication and support which were identified as important only in the NCA partnership. It is important to note that the number of the condition does not represent any sort of rank. For example, although mutual benefit is listed as the first condition in Table 5, it is not the most important condition. However, as seen in the Key in Figure 12, the color of the condition indicates whether or not it was identified as important by more than

one of the partnerships. Conditions 4, 6, 13 and 14 are included as both contributors to and potential constraints of collaborative advantage, this is discussed further below.

The hypotheses developed for conditions 16-19 were not applicable to this case study and as such they have not been merged into Figure 12. However, as evidenced by the literature, these conditions clearly are important to partnerships in certain contexts, they simply do not apply to this particular case.

Based on the results of this study and other empirical research, to achieve collaborative advantage partners must be able to create **(1) mutual benefit** for each other; a condition present in all of the partnerships in this study. Interview respondents indicated that to achieve collaborative advantage partnerships need to be a “two-way street” when it comes to producing value and benefits. Furthermore, initially it was because each partner was able to mutually benefit from collaborating that the partnerships were formed. Austin & Seitinidi (2012) and Googins & Rochlin (2000) centered much of their research on the importance of CSPs to create shared value. Although this condition was initially overlooked in the literature review phase, after analyzing the interview responses and reflecting back on the literature, the importance of mutual benefit became evident. Another important condition in each partnership, and also cited throughout the literature, is the need for partners to have **(2) common aims and interests**. For example, as seen with the partnerships in this case study, both organizations were interested in advancing ocean conservation through developing innovative approach to encourage visitors to take conservation action. Thus, they had a common aim and interest from the initial formation of the partnership. **(3) Organizational fit** is another condition which was cited frequently throughout the literature and identified by the interview respondents. Beyond having a common aim to promote ocean conservation, the organizations involved in the partnerships share values and beliefs and have similar organizational cultures, making them compatible in a partnership arrangement. The first three conditions have been identified as important conditions in the initial formation of the partnership and as such have been included under the initial conditions process category in Figure 12.

Moving on to the first of the process conditions, all partners indicated the importance of partners’ **(4) commitment**. It was clear that a strong commitment from employees of The Ocean Project and/or the aquarium’s was an important condition for the success of the partnership. However, there was clearly a **(4) lack of commitment** from much of the aquarium staff outside of the partnership contact person. Moreover, although The Ocean Project is very committed to the success of these projects, because the broad scope of their activities and limited staff capacity, they lack the resources necessary to be heavily committed to any one partnership.

Another condition found in all three partnerships collaborative advantage was the The Ocean Project’s ability to provide **(5) resources** to the aquariums from the Grant. Similarly, The Ocean Project required the resources of the aquariums in terms of staff and capital to experiment with new approaches. As such, both partners had complementary resources from the initial formation of the partnership. Additionally, the financial resources provided by The Ocean Project were absolutely necessary to reduce the perception of **(6) risk** in every partnership. Risk is the one condition that was identified in the context of this research that had not been discovered through my literature review. As discussed earlier, the perception of risk comes from the paradigm which dominates the aquarium industry’s approach to inspiring conservation action. Reduced risk perception is an important initial condition, as it was fundamental in establishing the partnership. However, due to the industry paradigm and the widespread **(6) perception of risk**, it has also been included as a constraint to collaborative advantage

as it poses a threat to social innovation. Without any willingness to risk, the likelihood of implementing innovative approaches is greatly decreased. Similarly, resources are a linchpin for the partnerships, without which there no collaborative advantage would have been achieved as the partners would not have been able to implement any social innovation without resources. As such, resources has also been included as a potential constraint to collaborative advantage.

The condition of **(7) trust** was cited by all partners as an important part of the collaboration process. To explicate, as aforementioned each of the aquariums trusted The Ocean Projects information and valued their insight as well as vice versa. Moreover, an initial condition which contributed to the development of trust and organizational fit is a history of **(8) working together**. Strong support from **(9) leadership** was a condition consistently identified as important to the process of collaboration, but in a very heterogeneous way. To explain, in the case of NEAQ, strong internal leadership was a driver of organizational learning and openness to innovation. For Oregon, on the other hand, the importance of leadership was reflected in the role of The Ocean Project as a leader, pushing institutions to learn and experiment in new ways. Similarly, Windy from NCA indicated The Ocean Project's leadership as an important condition in their collaborative advantage. However, unlike with Oregon, this was not because The Ocean Project pushed NCA to learn, but because they supported and empowered Windy to apply for the Grant and assisted in reducing the perception of risk.

(10) Organizational capacity was cited in both the Oregon and The Ocean Project as a condition which might be a contingency for future collaborative advantage. In the case of Oregon, Kerry indicated that the internal capacity of her staff at Oregon to embrace innovation was lacking and creates a potential barrier. In the case The Ocean Project, staff members indicated that the organizational capacity was an inherent barrier given the small number of staff and lack of resources. This is a contingency which affects not only the three partnerships within this case study, but *all* of The Ocean Project's partnerships.

The **(11) network** of The Ocean Project was identified as an important condition in enabling learning from industry's best practices, which was explicitly identified by both NEAQ and Oregon as an important condition in stimulating social innovation. Similarly, the importance of an organizational culture which promotes **(12) learning** was identified by NEAQ and Oregon as important, Windy felt as if she was "already on the same page" with the approach of The Ocean Project and there was no significant room for learning. Learning is particularly relevant to the fostering social innovation (Adam & Westlund 2012; Franz et al. 2012). Another condition closely related to the previous two, is an organizational **(13) openness to innovation**. This condition, which was important for both Oregon and NEAQ, was an element gave support to the ideas of the aquarium staff, more specifically the openness of administration and colleagues to innovative approaches. It was only in the case of NCA in which this condition was not present, Windy indicated that change was a slow moving process in the NCA aquariums. She further indicated that had it not been for her own personal track record for success and the financial resources from the Grant, the leadership would unlikely have support the social innovation.

Interestingly, one of the conditions that was cited most in the literature review, **(14) frequent communication**, was only cited as important to collaborative advantage in the NCA partnership. Windy cited speaking with Alyssa and Douglas at least every month or two and it was an important part of project development and providing support for Windy's efforts. I included the condition of **(14) infrequent communication** under a potential barrier and constraint. The reason for this was two-fold, first, the importance of frequent communication was cited 35 times in 18 different resources in the

literature review, making it the fourth most common condition in the literature. Second, although interview respondents did not indicate that infrequent communication was constraining collaborative advantage, they did cited that communication could be improved and a routine dialogue was not occurring frequently.

Finally, one condition that was neither found in the literature nor cited by any partnerships other than NCA, is the importance of **(15) support** from The Ocean Project. Windy heavily emphasized the importance of the support of The Ocean Project in her endeavors and as a key contributor to their partnerships collaborative advantage. In fact, within the NCA partnership, this was easily one of the most important conditions for collaborative advantage. It was clear that because Windy was in an uphill battle against the leadership of NCA in regards to experimenting with innovation, the support from The Ocean Project gave Windy the confidence she needed to proceed with her ideas.

4.7 Conclusion

The results of this case study have provided interesting insight into conditions relevant to collaborative advantage. The results give participants in this study and practitioners in similar contexts an idea of the conditions that contributed to or may potentially constrain the collaborative advantages of the CSPs in this study. Through this understanding, practitioners gain additional insight into the nuances of conditions and how they might influence collaborative advantage in various ways. It is important to remember that, as demonstrated in this chapter, conditions may influence a partnership in any variety of ways. At one time a condition might be a contributor to collaborative advantage and at another time it might be a contingency, as is the case with communication, for example. As discussed, these results are not exhaustive, rather they provide insight into the complexities faced within CSP arrangements. Chapter 5 explores the similarities and differences of the relevant conditions between the cases discussed in this chapter. Additionally, I reflect on the results of this research with a discussion on the limitations, strengths and usefulness.

Chapter 5 - Reflection & discussion

5.1 Introduction

Using the data from this research, I reflect on the similarities and differences between the partnerships in this case study. This reflection provides practitioners with an understanding of the nuances of the conditions relevant in the different partnerships. After all, even though a condition may be relevant in every partnership, its influence on collaborative advantage is not always homogenous. On the contrary, when investigated in depth conditions can be relevant in different ways, sometimes contributing to collaborative advantage and sometimes constraining it. Following the reflection is a discussion on the results, limitations and strengths of the research.

5.2 Similarities and differences between partnerships

In the previous chapter, 15 conditions were found to be relevant to the achievement of collaborative advantage and fostering social innovation. In the following reflection the 15 conditions will be discussed and the similarities and differences between the cases will be reflected upon. Although the conditions will be discussed under separate headings, due to their inherent interrelatedness, certain elements of the discussion may overlap. I begin discussing the conditions with similarities and close with the differences. In the following chapter, recommendations for partners and practitioners are provided. As such, the reflection on similarities and differences here is, intentionally, absent of recommendations.

5.3 Similarities

Mutual benefit

One of the clear similarities between the three partnerships is the acknowledgement of a mutual benefit as an important initial condition. Respondents from all partnerships highlighted the importance of obtaining value from the partnership. Though this condition was not identified in the initial literature review, after reflecting on the results of the interviews it became evident that the importance of creating shared value was cited by other CSP scholars, namely Austin (2000).

Trust

Respondents from all partnerships indicated trust in one another. This condition seemed to be particularly important given the limited capacity of organizations to interact on a regular basis. In other words, because there was a clear level of established trust between all of the partners, certain other conditions which were lacking (i.e. communication) had less of a negative impact on the partnership's collaborative advantages.

Organizational fit

All partnerships in the case study had a good organizational fit, this can be attributed to the well aligned organizational cultures, values/beliefs, and missions of all of the partners. Although the organizations are in different sectors, all partners are familiar with the issue of ocean conservation and are well equipped to work together.

Resources & risk³⁵

Not only did risk appear as a relevant condition in each of the cases under investigation in this study, but during the *Innovation and the Living World Symposium* risk was a very apparent condition as a potential barrier to innovation. In the cases under evaluation, and reflected by the participants in the

³⁵ Due to their extreme interrelatedness, these conditions are discussed together.

symposium, the perception of risk by leadership is a major barrier. The perception of risk is a result of two phenomenon I briefly summarize here³⁶. First, the industry's conventional approach to inspiring aquarium visitors often prevents aquariums educational departments from experimenting with innovative approaches. The second reason, which partly contributes to the first, is that aquariums are not the most profitable businesses, most are not-for-profit, and as such they are very cautious on financing projects which aren't *sure* to attract revenue. As a result, aquarium leadership is often hesitant to invest into new programs unless they know those programs will return a profit.

Through the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program, The Ocean Project is able to significantly reduce that perception of risk by (a) providing financial resources (b) providing coaching throughout the development of programs to ensure that, when implemented, they have a higher chance of being successful. In each of the cases under evaluation in this study, the interviewees from the partnership institutions explicitly stated that, without the resources provided from the Grant, they would not have been able to justify the development of the innovative programs which they wanted to implement. As a result, it can be said that the ability of The Ocean Project to provide resources to its partners was an important initial condition in enabling the partnership to achieve collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation.

Commitment

Commitment was present in all three partnerships. More specifically, commitment from the aquarium staff and The Ocean Project was present in all three partnerships. However, commitment from the aquarium leadership was lacking, which according to scholars may potentially reduce trust and increase the perception of risk (Huxham & Vangen 2005). Additionally, although The Ocean Project is most assuredly committed to the partnership goals, there are constraints on the ability of the staff to be committed to these partnerships; the organization is simply too small and underfunded to be heavily committed to all of its activities. It is likely that, if The Ocean Project aims to continue creating a collaborative advantage and stimulating social innovation in these and other partnerships, a greater level of commitment from both partners is needed (Huxham & Vangen 2005; Waddock 1988; Austin 2000; Berger et al. 2006; Rondinelli & London 2003; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Googins & Rochlin 2000).

History of working together

A history of working together in one form or another was an important initial condition for these partnerships. Through working together on projects and interacting through conferences, partners were able to become acquainted with one another and get a feel for the values/beliefs and goals of each other. Interviewees cited this history together as an important part of the foundation of these partnerships. Although partners had different levels of interaction in the past, it was clear that through various forms of working together all partners were able to establish trust and a shared understanding.

Openness to innovation

An openness to innovation is a condition which had to be present for these partnerships to achieve collaborative advantage. Given that the goal of these partnerships is to produce innovative ways to engage aquarium visitors to be sustainable, it is unlikely any of them would have been successful had they not been open to innovation. With that said, there is an important distinction to be made with this condition. While The Ocean Project and aquarium staff had a clear innovation orientation, the openness to innovation of the aquarium leadership is questionable. In all three partnerships, staff cited that without the resources from The Ocean Project, their innovative projects would not have

³⁶ This has been covered extensively in Chapter 4.

been implemented. So, while it can be said that the participants in the study are open to innovation, based on the perception of risk, it is unlikely that aquarium leadership is as open to the innovation.

5.4 Differences

Common aims

The partnerships were generally well aligned in their aims and, for the most part, should be considered as a similarity. However, the one noticeable difference within these conditions was identified in the partnership between NEAQ and The Ocean Project which was described in section 4.3, to recap, The Ocean Project and NEAQ leadership – not Heather, but her superiors – differ in their opinions on how to approach engaging visitors to adopt sustainable behavior. Although this difference in opinion has not had any effect thus far on the partnerships success, depending on how these differences in opinion continue to evolve, if they are not managed appropriately they may constrain future collaborative advantage. This point is revisited in the recommendation for NEAQ and The Ocean Project in section 6.5.

Leadership

The relationships of the aquarium leadership between NEAQ, NCA and Oregon, was different in every case. For example, with NEAQ, The Ocean Project employees all know the leadership and have communicated and worked together in past years; as mentioned in section 4.2 NEAQ was a founding partner of The Ocean Project and their leadership is very familiar with The Ocean Project. However, at this point in time The Ocean Project does not communicate regularly with the leadership of NEAQ. On the other hand, the leadership at NCA, specifically the Director of NCA has a close relationship with The Ocean Project and they communicate regularly, for example, as previously mentioned The Ocean Project will seek feedback from the director of NCA. Finally, from the data collected, there was no indication of any relationship between The Ocean Project and the leadership of Oregon, The Ocean Project seemed totally unfamiliar with Oregon's leadership³⁷.

Communication

Communication was a condition which, based on the literature, I expected to be more relevant than was indicated by respondents. Other than NCA, communication was not cited as happening frequently or being a contributor to collaborative advantage. On the contrary, although formal communication was outlined as a required part of program implementation, interviewees indicated that often time's communication was happening less regularly than it was supposed to. Respondents from both sides acknowledged this. The only exception was with Windy from NCA. Windy indicated that she communicated with The Ocean Project on a more regular basis. However, this can be partially attributed to her relationship with Alyssa Isakower and her engagement in World Oceans Day activities. In general, it was clear that Windy was interacting and communicating with The Ocean Project more regularly than either of the other partners.

Organizational capacity

Identified as a potential constraint, organizational capacity is a condition which was discussed in different contexts. Kerry from Oregon identified her staff's lack of capacity in terms of innovation skills as a potential constraint on their ability to implement innovative approaches. NCA and NEAQ did not make any direct reference to their staffs organizational capacity, however it was apparent that

³⁷ The Ocean Project director, Bill Mott, was unaware of who Oregon's leadership was, he had to look it up online.

Heather at NEAQ was the least burdened by organizational capacity; not only is NEAQ a leader in the industry, they possess the resources and staff to adapt to changes more quickly. Although Windy from NCA did not directly reference staff capacity as a barrier, given her discussion on the burden of NCA's bureaucracy, it can be said that the organizational capacity is somewhat constrained not only by the bureaucracy, but also by resources. Compared to both Oregon and NEAQ, NCA is considerably smaller and, given that it is a state-owned institution, faces additional barriers.

Organizational learning

Learning was an important condition in different ways for different reasons. Beginning with NEAQ, the leadership of NEAQ encouraged a staff culture of learning and Heather acknowledged the importance of ensuring staff are continuously up to date and learning. In this partnership, organizational learning was largely a function of the organizational culture. In the case of Oregon, organizational learning was more so a function of The Ocean Project as a leader, pushing institutions to learn and experiment with innovative approach to visitor engagement. Windy from NCA did not acknowledge that organizational learning was an important process in the partnership. On the contrary, Windy indicated that because she shared the same views as The Ocean Project, there was little to learn from the information they provided, it was more of a support mechanism, giving legitimacy to her own approach.

Network

The Ocean Project's network was considered an important condition by both NEAQ and Oregon as a facilitator of learning and stimulating innovation. The network was beneficial for these partners in providing access to what is happening in the rest of industry and best practices. Although the network was mentioned by Windy as a tool for keeping up with the community, it was not considered to be a very relevant condition to the achievement of their collaborative advantage or the stimulation of social innovation. All partners indicated the network could benefit from being strengthened and having a more active platform through which to discuss ideas and collaborate with other industry professionals.

Support

Support was the lone condition identified by Windy from NCA which was neither reflected in the other interview responses nor the data. One of the reasons this condition was important for NCA and not the other two cases is based on the relationship between the aquarium staff and the aquarium leadership. On the one hand, both Heather and Kerry indicated they receive support from the leadership of their organization in terms of having the freedom to do what they would like (for the most part). On the other hand, at NCA, as previously discussed, Windy is burdened by bureaucracy and leadership which only partially supports her efforts to innovate.

5.5 Discussion

Several limitations arose during this project. From the outset I was confident a sample of three cases was manageable given the allotted time; I was wrong. While investigating the three partnerships, I was only able to scratch the surface of the nuances of the partner's relationships. While I remain confident in the usefulness of the results, much remains to be explored. Prior to the interviews, I was under the impression that one hour-long interview session with the aquariums' staff and The Ocean Project staff would be sufficient to gain insight into these relationships; this was only partly true. To illustrate, after analyzing the data it was clear that interviews with the partner aquariums' Director's would have been beneficial. Had I conducted interviews with the aquariums' leadership I could have further triangulated the results of the data, increasing the trustworthiness of the results. Additionally,

I could have gained further insight into the condition of leadership and its impact on collaborative advantage. However, after this realization, interviews with aquarium Director's would have been unlikely due to their busy schedules. Hence, even if I had known that interviews with aquarium leadership could have been useful, chances are I would never have had an opportunity.

Another difficulty was that although the theory of collaborative advantage lends itself fairly well to the context of the case study, the authors, Huxham & Vangen (2005) developed the theory in a drastically different context with more traditional partnership typologies. In fact, from my literature review, I found no studies conducted on a partnership typology which is transferable to the ones in this case. As explained in section 2.5, The Ocean Project's partnership arrangements are very unique and each of the three partnership arrangements in the case are slightly different. The Ocean Project, a charitable organization, which differs from a traditional NPO³⁸, operates solely on donations from fiscal sponsors and has no revenue streams. As an organization, it was established to educate through partnerships with zoos, aquariums and museums. Hence, at times it was difficult to adapt parts of the theoretical framework. The lion's share of studies on CSPs have evaluated traditional partnership typologies such as public-private partnerships, NPO-business partnerships, etc. Unlike The Ocean Project where the purpose is collaboration and the traditional typologies simply do not fit. This was a limitation in terms of being able to adapt the literature, however, as the number of CSPs continues to increase and more similar CSPs are formed, the results of this research will become increasingly relevant and useful.

As a novice researcher, this project was a significant learning experience. I was able to develop my relationship building and interviewing skills, familiarize myself and gain experience with CAQDAS, and gain insight into my own strengths and weaknesses as a researcher. For example, although I had not previously conducted interviews for research, I found myself to be very comfortable and felt satisfied with my results. On the other hand, I was even less familiar with direct observation, and while I was able to incorporate some of my observations into the results, I could have improved in recording data and establishing an audit trail.

The importance of producing a mutual benefit was a condition which appeared consistently throughout the interviews but I failed to identify in the initial literature review. However, after reflecting upon the literature during the analysis of the interview responses, scholars such as Austin & Seitanidi (2012) and Googins & Rochlin (2000) clearly cite the importance of creating a shared value, a condition which I failed to include in the initial literature review.

Aside from the limitations, there are strengths as well. As mentioned earlier in this section, it is inevitable that as CSPs continue to grow in numbers, more partnerships similar to the one evaluated in this study are bound to be formed. As these new partnerships are formed, the results of this research will be able to provide useful insight to practitioners. Furthermore, the combination of the theory of collaborative advantage into the governance framework offers a new lens to look at CSPs and contributes to building upon the theory of collaborative advantage and the evaluation of CSPs.

In sum, despite the limitations of this project I was able to produce useful results and provide an interesting, new perspective to the study of CSPs. Additionally, I gained valuable insight into the process of collaboration in the context of social innovation. Beyond developing my own understanding of the difficulties of collaboration, as the partnership phenomenon continues to happen on an

³⁸ It differs in that its goals are philanthropic or focused on social well-being. And in the case of The Ocean Project, it receives all of its operating costs strictly from fiscal sponsors and has no revenue streams.

international scale, the results of this research will be particularly useful in providing examples for partnerships that aim to achieve similar goals.

5.6 Conclusion

The CSPs evaluated in this case share many similarities and differences. By demonstrating these similarities and differences, the reader gains insight into the nuances of conditions, how they have affected the partnerships and how they have contributed to collaborative advantage. This provides practitioners with an idea of some of the opportunities and difficulties faced in partnership management. Although partners might be very compatible and interested in achieving the same goals, complexities arise during partnership formation and throughout collaborative processes.

There were a number of limitations and lessons learned throughout this research, but the project still provides value and may act as a point of departure for more research in the future. The next chapter concludes this research by answering the main research question and providing recommendations for The Ocean Project and its partners. Recommendations for practitioners in similar situations and suggestions for further research are also provided.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion & recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This research had two aims; (1) to add to theoretical basis of knowledge for evaluating CSPs; (2) and to provide the participants in this study, and practitioners in general, with insight into how the partnerships in this case have been able to achieve collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation. The research was guided by the primary research question:

Under which conditions are cross sector partnerships are likely to achieve a collaborative advantage?

To provide insight into the research aims and question, three CSPs between The Ocean Project and aquariums were evaluated. Through this evaluation unique insight was gained into how partners were able to achieve collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation. More specifically, three objectives were achieved. First, conditions and hypotheses were synthesized, developed and revised. This objective has helped contribute knowledge to the theoretical basis for evaluating CSPs. Second, a conceptual framework was developed and integrated into the case study results to demonstrate which conditions have been relevant to which partnership process. Third, recommendations were developed for practitioners. The second and third objectives have contributed to explaining how the partnerships in this case achieved collaborative advantage.

In the next section I answer the primary research question and revise the hypotheses developed in Chapter 2. Following, in section 6.3, recommendations have been developed for the participants in this study and, in section 6.4, for practitioners in general. First, I give general recommendations for The Ocean Project and its partners. These recommendations were developed based on the conditions relevant to the all three partners' collaborative advantages. Second, recommendations for each of the three partnerships are developed based on the relationship conditions which were specifically relevant to its collaborative advantage.

The first set of recommendations provides the study's participants, and practitioners in general, with an idea of the conditions that commonly contributed to the collaborative advantage of the partners in this case. This allows the partners and practitioners to develop an understanding of conditions which commonly contribute or constrain collaborative advantage in this type of partnership context and how they might be managed.

The second set of recommendations, which are related to each individual partnership, intends to provide the partners with specific feedback on the conditions relevant to their partnership's collaborative advantage. The second set of recommendations allows the study's participants to see which relationship conditions are unique to their partnership and possibilities for how those conditions might be managed, to continue achieving a collaborative advantage.

Finally, to increase the transferability of this study and enhance the trustworthiness of the results, a set of recommendations is developed for practitioners engaged in CSPs in a similar context.³⁹ These recommendations have been developed by reflecting on the conditions commonly identified in the partnerships in this study and the literature. Given that the approach to this research does not lend itself particularly well to developing generalized recommendations, these may be considered as relatively superficial. However, they still provide valuable insight into which conditions should be managed closely to achieve a collaborative advantage. Moreover, the results provide an excellent starting point for future research as more CSPs similar to the ones in this study are formed.

³⁹ See pages 41-42 for recap on transferability and trustworthiness.

6.2 Revised conditions & hypotheses

The results of this study were never intended to produce a formula for how to achieve collaborative advantage. They do, however, provide valuable lessons to partnership practitioners and interesting into the primary research question and research objectives. A total of 15 conditions were found to contribute to or potentially constrain the collaborative advantage of the partnerships in this case. From these results, partnership practitioners involved in similar contexts can get an idea of under which conditions a CSP aimed at fostering social innovation is likely to achieve a collaborative advantage. Thus, according to the results of this research, when under the conditions in Table 6 a cross sector partnership is likely to achieve collaborative advantage. Furthermore, the hypotheses derived from the literature review in Chapter 2 have been reworked – where necessary – into new hypotheses and merged into the Table.

#	Condition (Process category)	(Revised) hypotheses ⁴⁰
1	Mutual benefit (Initial condition)	Partner's ability to create value for one another and mutually benefit from the partnership encourages commitment and is an initial condition which contributes to collaborative advantage.
2	Common aims/interests (Initial condition)	Having common aims/interests from the initial partnership formation contributes to a good organizational fit and a shared understanding, which contributes to collaborative advantage.
3	Trust (Initial condition & Process)	Establishing a partnership on foundation of trust which is then nurtured and reinforced through collaborative processes is a condition that contributes to collaborative advantage.
4	Organizational fit (Initial condition)	A good organizational fit, which is determined by values/beliefs, organizational cultures and missions is an important initial condition which contributes to collaborative advantage.
5	Communication (Process)	Communication can be considered an important process condition, however if both partners have a good organizational fit, mutual trust, common aims/interests, communication does not have to occur frequently to achieve collaborative advantage. ⁴¹
6	Resources (Initial condition)	Resource complementarity is an important initial condition in partnership formation. In the context of partnerships which aim to develop social innovation which may be perceived as risky, resources are a particularly important condition which contribute to collaborative advantage.
7	Reduced risk (Initial condition)	For partnerships aimed at fostering social innovation, reducing the perception of risk through, for example, resources, is an important condition to meet in order to achieve collaborative advantage.

⁴⁰ Because some hypotheses were not developed for conditions in Chapter 2, not all have been revised, but some have been newly proposed.

⁴¹ For the purpose of this research, frequent is considered more than once every two months.

8	Leadership (Process)	Strong leadership that actively encourages commitment, organizational learning and is open to innovation, contributes to stimulating social innovation and collaborative advantage.
9	Learning (Process)	When organizational learning takes places in partnership processes, social innovation is more likely to be fostered and collaborative advantage is more likely to be achieved.
10	Organizational capacity (Contingency/constraint)	If organizational capacity is lacking and partners do not possess the necessary resources or staff to achieve partnerships goals, collaborative advantage may potentially be constrained.
11	Commitment (Process)	A strong commitment to achieving partnership goals from both organizations is a process condition which contributes to achieving collaborative advantage.
12	Openness/willingness (Initial condition)	Partners need to be open to experimenting with new approaches and accepting the possibility of failure in order for social innovation to be fostered and to contribute to achieving a collaborative advantage.
13	Networks (Process)	If a CSP aimed at social innovation has a network in place, learning is likely to be facilitated, and as such access to a network is a condition which contributes to achieving collaborative advantage.
14	Working together (Initial condition)	A history of working together fosters shared understanding and trust between partners as an initial condition, the process of continuing to work together throughout collaboration reinforces that trust and understanding, as such working together contributes to achieving collaborative advantage.
15	Support (Process)	When partners provide support for each other they empower one another, giving confidence to practitioners. Support is a condition which contributes to collaborative advantage, particularly when a partnership is faced with constraints from leadership.

Table 6. Revised conditions and hypotheses

The revised hypotheses can be a starting point for future research and contribute to the theoretical basis of knowledge for evaluating CSPs. In light of the fact that there are very few CSP arrangements which are similar to this case⁴², this table will be particularly useful as more partnerships of this type are developed. Hence, this table contributes knowledge to the theoretical basis for evaluating CSPs and is a useful starting point for further research into CSPs of this type.

6.3 Recommendations for The Ocean Project and its partners

In this section I provide recommendations for The Ocean Project and its partners. After the general and specific recommendations for the partnerships in the following section I provide recommendations for practitioners who may be in similar situations. However, it should be reiterated that, following the theoretical approach of this research, recommendations should *not* be considered

⁴² As evidenced by lack of literature on CSPs of this type.

as a how-to guide for successful partnerships. On the contrary, the recommendations developed from these case studies may or may not be applicable to other partnerships, it is entirely dependent on the practitioner and the context of the situation they are in (Firestone 1987; Guba & Lincoln 1994; Stake 1995; Morse et al. 2002; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Baxter & Jack 2008; Yin 2009).

6.3.1 General recommendations for The Ocean Project and its partners

The goal of these recommendations is to provide the participants of this study with general suggestions on how to continue achieving collaborative advantage. First, I provide recommendations regarding the conditions commitment, leadership and communication, as these were the conditions from which general recommendations can be developed. Second, I provide partner-specific recommendations as most all of the conditions have different underlying key issues.

Commitment, communication & leadership

These recommendations apply to The Ocean Project and the three partner aquariums. Beginning with commitment, there is a clear commitment from organizations in all of the partnerships. However, for each of the aquariums the burden of commitment is almost solely on the persons who were interviewed. More specifically, although there is a commitment from each of the partnerships via the innovative solutions grant, there seems to be a lack of engagement, or commitment, from the leadership in all of the evaluated organizations, including The Ocean project. It is regularly cited in literature that commitment from organizations' leadership is a necessary component of creating a collaborative advantage (Huxham & Vangen 2005; Waddock 1988; Austin 2000; Berger et al. 2006; Rondinelli & London 2003; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Googins & Rochlin 2000). For example, although the leadership of each aquarium has a common overarching aim that is consistent with The Ocean Project, two problems appear in relation to commitment. First, the noticeable lack of commitment from the aquariums' leadership staff drives in the perception of risk. To explicate, because the aquariums leadership are neither committed nor engaged in partnership activities, they are more wary of the goals and outcomes which are trying to be achieved. This creates a lack of understanding which then leads to a perception of risk. Second, although Bill Mott and Alyssa Isakower are committed to the partnership, they are constrained by the sheer scope of The Ocean Project's activities and as such they do not have the capacity to be fully committed. Following the logic of the commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing, which has been developed in the context of partnerships (Morgan & Hunt 1994), the recommendation for both of these problems would be to work on increasing leadership commitment from the aquariums by fostering trust through more formal communication and working together more regularly.

Most interviewees cited that communication is lacking and it was referenced by The Ocean Project as something that happens irregularly and could be improved, this was further confirmed by direct observation⁴³. As a result, all of the partnerships could benefit from improved communication. The main source of this, as evidenced by the interview responses and direct observation, is simply a lack of routine dialogue. Outside of the mandatory communication regarding the grants, which takes place between Douglas and the aquariums, Bill and Alyssa have expressed they do not communicate frequently with any of the partners and vice versa. Bill expressed a sense of frustration regarding a lack of feedback from partners, but noted that the constraint on resources is a barrier. On a similar note, Heather of NEAQ suggested that The Ocean Project needs to develop the capacity to bring

⁴³ During my 5 month internship neither Bill nor Alyssa communicated with any of the three partner aquariums regarding the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program.

together the grantees, get their feedback, and share information to facilitate learning and foster more innovation.

While it is understandable that the resources constrain The Ocean Project, due to the cited importance of communication (Googins & Rochlin 2000; Austin 2000; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Huxham & Vangen 2003; 2005; Ansell & Gash 2008; Waddock 1998), particularly in the context of partnerships aimed at social innovation (Holmes & Moir 2007; Kania & Kramer 2011; Jamali et al. 2011; Le Ber & Branzei 2010) it is recommended that efforts be made to remedy the lack of formal communication outside of the Grants+ program. Similarly, both Heather and Kerry cited the importance of the network which is provided by The Ocean Project as a key facilitator of learning and innovation. However, Heather also identified the network communication could be improved, which has been further confirmed by The Ocean Project responses as well as direct observation. Although Windy and Kerry did not explicitly mention a need for improved network communication, because networks are cited as a key driver of information sharing and subsequently learning and innovation (Powell et al. 1996; Adam & Westlund 2012; Mulgan et al. 2007; Murray et al. 2010; Jamali et al. 2011; Holmes & Moir 2007) in order to continue stimulating innovation it would behoove The Ocean Project to invest more time in communicating information through their already established network. Furthermore, as the network has been cited as a source of benefit for partners, by strengthening the network The Ocean Project increases their value to their partners, this has been cited in literature as an important condition in increasing commitment to the partnership (Morgan & Hunt 1994).

6.3.2 Recommendations for NEAQ & The Ocean Project

It is clear that, on the one hand, the aims on the individual (e.g. Heather's aims) and organizational level (e.g. overarching institutional aims) share the same *what aims* (Huxham & Vangen 2005), i.e. each partner knows *what* the collaboration is aimed at achieving: engaging the public to take conservation action. On the other hand, there are conflicting perspectives on the *how aims*, i.e. how through what process should the aims be achieved. More specifically, the individual aims of Heather are consistent with those of The Ocean Project, but it has been cited that the *how aims* of the NEAQ leadership may be conflicting with the individual aims of Heather and the organizational aims of The Ocean Project. This issue has not prevented the partnership from achieving a collaborative advantage, as of yet, however, according to many scholars it is not likely to contribute to achieving a collaborative advantage (Austin 2000; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Kania & Kramer 2011; Berger et al. 2006; Rondinelli & London 2003; Le Ber & Branzei 2010).

Additionally, a disagreement in aims has potential to create conflict and undermine the trust which has been established through past successes (Murphy et al. 2012; Huxham & Vangen 2005). Moreover, from the interview responses, it is not clear that the disagreement on this particular issue is understood well on both sides and as such may be remedied through clarification. Scholars (Austin 2000; Huxham 1993; Rondinelli & London 2003) suggest that this issue may be worked out by having all relevant actors sit down together and explicitly discussing the aims. This does not mean that a precise agreement has to be made, but having discussed these process issues at the outset permits a more fruitful assessment of the outcomes (Huxham & Vangen 2005) By doing so, the partnership may benefit from the fact that each collaborator will know exactly what the aims are; there will be less chance of counterproductive divergent actions; it may foster more collaborative behavior and reduce the competitive atmosphere, which seems to be present; and, perhaps most importantly, programs can then be assessed in terms of strategy and then the outcomes may be evaluated to provide insight into the appropriate aims (Huxham 1993; pp. 608).

To summarize the recommendations, to reduce the potential of collaborative inertia the conditions which should be managed in this partnership are: a stronger commitment from the leadership from both partners, specifically regarding engagement in partnership activities; increased formal communication between partners; strengthening the network communication to increase the flow of information within the industry. According to empirical research (Huxham & Vangen 2005; Waddock 1988; Austin 2000; Berger et al. 2006; Rondinelli & London 2003; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Googins & Rochlin 2000; Morgan & Hunt 1994; Powell et al. 1996; Adam & Westlund 2012; Mulgan et al. 2007; Murray et al. 2010; Jamali et al. 2011; Holmes & Moir 2007) by managing these conditions, the partnership is likely to foster increased trust, commitment, enhance the benefits for both partners, and most importantly of all, stimulate more innovative solutions.

6.3.3 Recommendations for Oregon Coast Aquarium & The Ocean Project

A few contingencies or constraints may potentially hinder the ability to achieve collaborative advantage, such as communication and staff capacity/lack of knowledge. All interviewees from The Ocean Project indicated that the capacity of the organization is, in general, a barrier to all partnerships. Similarly, Kerry indicated that Oregon's staff capacity and/or lack of knowledge is a barrier to innovation; interestingly while Kerry explicitly mentioned this barrier during our interview, The Ocean Project employees were unaware of this issue. This would indicate that communication could be improved from both partners to ensure that these issues can be addressed. Given that this is mostly a resource related issue in the sense that Oregon does not have the resources to train employees in new skill sets, through conversations with The Ocean Project, my direct observations, the following recommendation has been developed to manage this barrier. By communicating more frequently with partners during the early stages of Grant development, The Ocean Project and Oregon could work collaboratively identifying resource related barriers and subsequently allocate Grant resources to address the issue, e.g. allocating Grant resources to skill development training at the Oregon Coast Aquarium. For example, these barriers could be identified by conducting a SWOT analysis, a common tool for both technological and social endeavors⁴⁴. Douglas had explicitly stated that it would be beneficial if The Ocean Project vetted proposals more thoroughly. One way of accomplishing this could be through a SWOT analysis which would allow the partnership to identify the weaknesses of a proposed program, such as lack of internal (Oregon) knowledge, and address issues from the outset. Through identifying weaknesses and threats earlier on in the project development, it is then possible to allocate the necessary resources to alleviate that potential weakness/threat (Moulaert 2013). Moreover, this would potentially allow the partnership to identify strengths and opportunities of the project and capitalize on those.

⁴⁴ For an in depth discussion on the SWOT analysis, see Moulaert 2013.

SWOT ANALYSIS



Figure 13. SWOT Analysis (Source: Moulaert 2013)

To summarize the suggested recommendations, in addition to those which were covered in the general recommendations, efforts should be made to identify potential barriers earlier in program development; such as those posed by lack of knowledge/staff capacity. This could be aided by, for example, implementing the recommendation suggested in section 6.3.1 regarding communication. Although these contingencies have not constrained collaborative advantage, as indicated in the interview with Oregon, it has been an underlying issue in the development of the innovative program and possesses the potential to threaten future success.

6.3.4 Recommendations for NCA at Pine Knoll Shores & The Ocean Project

The primary condition identified by Windy which has the potential to constrain collaborative advantage is the multi-layer authority and bureaucracy which creates both a political and philosophical barrier⁴⁵. The political barrier is created by the fact that NCA is a state run institution; this is a barrier that is not going to be overcome with any ease. However, the philosophical barrier, which is the barrier created by the industry's traditional approach to inspiring visitors to take conservation action, may be overcome. The most effective way to change this paradigm according to literature (Waddock 1988; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Mulgan et al. 2007; Murphy et al. 2012) is related to the scope. As suggested by empirical research, by focusing on small scale projects, such as the one being implemented at NCA with the Grants+ Program, and then garnering a more wide spread support through demonstrated success. While this not exactly a recommendation, in consideration of the aims of The Ocean Project, it is a noteworthy point to make. Essentially, in every partnership, the traditional approach to inspiring action which dominates the industry is a barrier to achieving a collaborative advantage and stimulating social innovation. As such, a potential way to overcome this on an industry-wide scale is through incremental successes which demonstrate that the conventional paradigm is not

⁴⁵ Of course, the resource constraints of The Ocean Project present the same dilemmas to this partnership as they do the others, but the impact of this constraint was not evidenced in the collected data.

as effective as the approach of The Ocean Project. Through these incremental successes, The Ocean Project can hope to slowly shift the paradigm.

6.4 General recommendations for practitioners & the next step

Several recommendations can be made to partnerships which aim to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation. Following the literature, regarding the foundation of the partnership it is of utmost importance that partnerships have a common aim, as Austin (2000) has cited in his research “Gray’s (1989) work cited advancing a shared vision as central to productive collective strategies”. It is clear that this was an underpinning condition for the ability of the partnerships in this case study to achieve a collaborative advantage. Similarly, other important initial conditions are the ability of partners to provide a mutual benefit for one another, having a good organizational fit, as Austin (2000) has stated, “The more centrally aligned the partnership purpose is to each organization’s strategy and mission, the more important and vigorous the relationship appears to be. The greater the mission mesh, the richer the collaboration. Similarly, the more congruent the partners’ values, the stronger the alliance’s cohesion.”

At the beginning of the partnership, there should be efforts made to communicate regularly, work together on projects and achieve small successes as trust building activities. Waddock (1988) captures this in his statement that “Social partnerships take time to develop. Trust building and education are not simple in most cases...Sometimes it takes having successfully implemented a small-scale program or achieved a modest goal for this trust to begin to build.” This statement aligns well with the results of this study, in each of the cases the partners had achieved small past successes which were cited as important for the foundation of the partnership. Moreover, if the innovations under investigation in this research are successful, it is likely that this will contribute to a greater building of trust. Furthermore, according to literature on social innovation, the approach to piloting small scale programs and then scaling them up is a common way to build trust and grow success (Waddock 1988; Huxham 1996; Rondinelli & London 2003; Holmes & Moir 2007). This is particularly related to the condition of *scope*, which was identified in the literature review and although it was not reflected in the interview results, each of the partnerships are approaching social innovation in this manner⁴⁶.

Although I was critical of the leadership’s role in the case studies in this project, it is clear that at the formation of each of the partnerships, leaders were engaged. However, following examples from literature (Huxham & Vangen 2005; Waddock 1988; Austin 2000; Berger et al. 2006; Rondinelli & London 2003; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Googins & Rochlin 2000), it would behoove partnerships to have a stronger commitment from leadership, which was a potential barrier to the partnerships under investigation in this study. On a similar note, commitment played a huge role in each of these partnerships and in particular overcoming the lack of commitment from leadership. In this sense, it would be recommended that partnerships ensure they have champions who are committed to achieving the partnerships goals.

6.5 Conclusion

This research has provided interesting insight into the ability of CSPs to achieve collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation. With the rise of CSPs and social innovation, it is

⁴⁶ The conditions of scope was left out because, although it was found in the literature as an aspect for building trust and success, the projects in this study have yet to be implemented and as such it is uncertain whether or not the scope contributes to or constrains collaborative advantage.

recommended that, in order to gain a better understanding of these phenomena, more research needs to be conducted on CSPs within the context of social innovation. By evaluating the CSPs between The Ocean Project and three partner aquariums, this research has shed light on conditions relevant to collaborative advantage and is an excellent starting point for further research.

There are several options for the next steps and future research. Ideally, the participants of this study would implement the recommendations I developed and track their impact on collaborative advantage. This would be an excellent way to determine the transferability of the recommendations and hypotheses and further illuminate the relevant conditions. Given The Ocean Project's enormous network it is in their utmost interest to understand which conditions contribute to collaborative advantage and as such, this would be a valuable endeavor. Similarly, the hypotheses developed in this study could be compared to other CSPs in similar situations to gain more insight into the transferability of the results.

Additionally, the results of this case study have built the foundation for further research into the effectiveness of the social innovations developed in this study. While I was unable to assess the success of the social innovations under investigation in this study, evaluating the outcomes of the social innovations from this case would provide valuable insight into the ability of CSPs to foster *successful* social innovations.

To conclude, this research project was fruitful, enlightening, and challenging. I have been able to produce results that are both theoretically and practically relevant. Participants of this study may use the results to manage their own situations or practitioners in similar contexts may apply the results. Additionally, researchers may use the developed hypotheses and conceptual framework for future CSP evaluation and further refine the usefulness of the theoretical knowledge.

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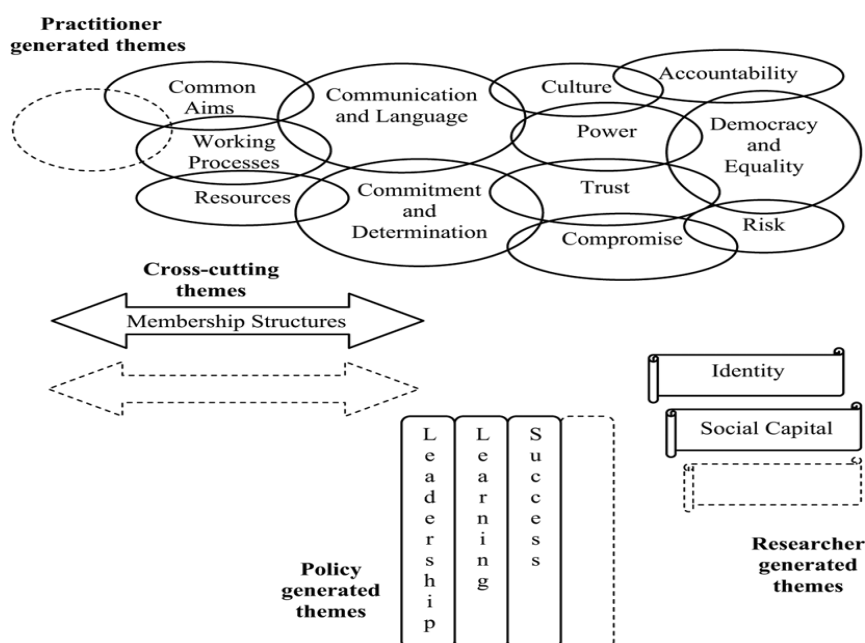
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Appendix A

Further information on themes of theory of collaborative advantage

In addition to practitioner generated themes, the authors have developed three other related themes. The first of these three is *cross-cutting themes*. Cross cutting themes are those themes that were present within multiple different partnerships but were not explicitly identified through interviews with practitioners. For example, from the empirical research constructed by the theory's authors, *membership structures* were an issue that was often not explicitly acknowledged by practitioners but appeared to cross-cut partnerships in most of the data. Second, *policy generated themes* is an additional theme category which was added to the theory in consideration of some of the normative goals of collaboration, such as learning, which policy makers aim to achieve but are often not recognized by practitioners. Although these themes may not be acknowledged by practitioners, when considering the ability of policy makers to influence practice, the authors felt it was an important theme to add⁴⁷. It is important to note that, due to the fact the partnerships in this case study are not structured or guided by written policies, the partnership arrangements within this research are not influenced by policy generated themes. Therefore, this is a thematic area which is not be revisited in the remainder of this research. The third type of additional themes is *research-generated theme*. Research generated themes are the most recent addition to the theory and consist of themes which have been identified by researchers (as opposed to directly from practitioners) as applicable to collaboration. Some examples include social capital and identity (Huxham & Vangen 2013). The figure below provides an overview of all the themes. It is important to point out that the themes are presented separately for the purpose of presenting the research in a more manageable way in which practitioners can consider each theme in isolation from the others while taking into account the overlapping aspects.



Source: Huxham and Vangen (2005, p. 38)

⁴⁷ Policy generated themes will not be included in the final outcomes of this research as they do not apply to this particular case study.

Appendix B

Sources for synthesized conditions

Condition (Process category)	Sources
Common aims/interests (Initial condition)	Waddock 1988; Huxham 2003; Babiak & Thibault 2009; Adam & Westlund 2012; Austin 2000; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Rondinelli & London 2003; Huxham 1993; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Kania & Kramer 2011; Bryson et al. 2006; Ansell & Gash 2008; Jamali et al. 2011; Murphy et al. 2012; Holmes & Moir 2007; Selsky & Parker 2005; Das & Teng 1997; Foss & Neilsen 2010; Googins & Rochlin 2000; Huxham 2003; Berger et al. 2006
Trust (Initial condition & Process)	Ansell & Gash 2008; Ausitin & Seitanidi 2012; 2012; Austin 2000; Babiak & Thibault 2009; Bryson et al. 2006; Das & Teng 1997; Foss & Neilsen 2010; Franz et al. 2012; Googins & Rochlin 2000; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Huxham 2003; Jamali et al. 2011; Kania & Kramer 2011; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Rondinelli & London 2003; Selsky & Parker 2005; Waddock 1988
Organizational fit (Initial condition)	Ausitin & Seitanidi 2012; 2012; Austin 2000; Berger et al. 2006; Bryson et al. 2006; Das & Teng 1997; Foss & Neilsen 2010; Googins & Rochlin 2000; Huxham & Vangen 1996; 2005; Huxham 2003; Jamali et al. 2011; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Murphy et al. 2012; Rondinelli & London 2003; Selsky & Parker 2005
Communication (Process)	Ansell & Gash 2008; Ausitin & Seitanidi 2012; 2012; Austin 2000; Babiak & Thibault 2009; Foss & Neilsen 2010; Franz et al. 2012; Googins & Rochlin 2000; Holmes & Moir 2007; Huxham & Vangen 1996; 2005; Huxham 2003; Jamali et al. 2011; Kania & Kramer 2011; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Murphy et al. 2012; Selsky & Parker 2005; Waddock 1988
Resources (Initial condition)	Ansell & Gash 2008; Ausitin & Seitanidi 2012; 2012; Austin 2000; Bryson et al. 2006; Foss & Neilsen 2010; Googins & Rochlin 2000; Holmes & Moir 2007; Huxham 1993; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Selsky & Parker 2005; Waddock 1988
Leadership (Process)	Ansell & Gash 2008; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Austin 2000; Babiak & Thibault 2009; Berger et al. 2006; Bryson et al. 2006; Das & Teng 1997; Dover & Lawrence 2012; Googins & Rochlin 2000; Holmes & Moir 2007; Huxham 2003; Kania & Kramer 2011; Murray et al. 2010; Rondinelli & London 2003; Selsky & Parker 2005; 2010
Learning (Process)	Adam & Westlund 2012; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Austin 2000; Foss & Neilsen 2010; Franz et al. 2012; Holmes & Moir 2007; Jamali et al. 2011; Lam 2004; Mulgan et al. 2007; Murphy et al. 2012; Murray et al. 2010; Powell et al. 1996; Selsky & Parker 2005; 2010;
Power (Structural/governance)	Ansell & Gash 2008; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Babiak & Thibault 2009; Bryson et al. 2006; Dover & Lawrence 2012; Holmes & Moir 2007; Huxham & Vangen 1996; 2005; Huxham 1993; 2003; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Murphy et al. 2012; Schiller & Almog-Bar 2013; Selsky & Parker 2005
Commitment (Process)	Ansell & Gash 2008; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Austin 2000; Berger et al. 2006; Googins & Rochlin 2000; Huxham & Vangen 1996; 2005; Jamali et al. 2011; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Rondinelli & London 2003; Selsky & Parker 2005; Waddock 1988

Compromise (Initial condition)	Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Babiak & Thibault 2009; Das & Teng 1997; Holmes & Moir 2007; Huxham & Vangen 1996; 2005; Huxham 2003; Kania & Kramer 2011; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Rondinelli & London 2003; Selsky & Parker 2005
Openness/willingness (Initial condition)	Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Austin 2000; Holmes & Moir 2007; Huxham 2003; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Rondinelli & London 2003
Networks (Process)	Adam & Westlund 2012; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Babiak & Thibault 2009; Bryson et al. 2006; Holmes & Moir 2007; Huxham & Vangen 1996; Jamali et al. 2011; Mulgan et al. 2007; Murray et al. 2010; Powell et al. 1996; Rondinelli & London 2003; Selsky & Parker 2005
Working together (Initial condition)	Adam & Westlund 2012; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; 2012; Dover & Lawrence 2012; Franz et al. 2012; Holmes & Moir 2007; Jamali et al. 2011; Kania & Kramer 2011; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Murphy et al. 2012
Conflict (Contingency/constraint)	Austin & Seitanidi 2012; 2012; Bryson et al. 2006; Holmes & Moir 2007; Huxham 2003; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Rondinelli & London 2003; Selsky & Parker 2005
Scope (Contingency/constraint)	Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Holmes & Moir 2007; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Murphy et al. 2012; Rondinelli & London 2003; Waddock 1988

Appendix C

Interview questions for the aquariums

1. Can you tell me about how you personally have interacted with The Ocean Project?
2. How would you describe the relationship between your organization and The Ocean Project? What would you say is the basis for it?
3. What does your organization gain from its relationship with The Ocean Project? What do they do well? Do you communicate on a regular basis?
4. Is there anything that you would say is lacking from your relationship with The Ocean Project? An area in need of improvement, either from their end or your own?
5. The Ocean Project has been increasingly focused on helping its partners find innovative and effective ways to engage visitors, especially as it relates to actions that help the ocean and its animals....how well does that align with the priorities for you and your organization?
6. To what extent would you say that The Ocean Project has helped you in this regard, finding innovative and effective ways to engage visitors?
7. What barriers, if any, exist within your institution that limits your ability to innovate in this area?
8. If you can identify elements of the relationship with The Ocean Project which have stimulated creativity and innovation within your organization, what are those elements?
9. Would you say that there is a sense of ownership in regards to the interaction between your organization and The Ocean Project? For example, is your organization highly motivated to developing new ways of engaging and communicating?
10. If another zoo, aquarium or science museum, were to ask you about partnering with The Ocean Project, would you recommend doing so? And would you have any additional advice for them?
11. Is there anything we've not discussed, or that you would like to emphasize from our conversation?

NEAQ interview transcribed

New England Aquarium was a founding partner of The Ocean Project. This means that they have been closely connected to NEAQ since the founding of TOP. This prior history has contributed largely to trust and familiarity between organizations, allowing both institutions to gain a shared understanding of each other's missions and objectives. Communication between institutions from multiple different levels happens less frequently at the top level and more frequently at the program (grants) level. Heather, who has been with NEAQ for 17 years, has been most involved with The Ocean Project over the past couple of years, as she is manager of youth development programs and plays a key role in the development of the Grant proposals. Heather is familiar with The Ocean Project's employees; her initial interactions were more involved with Bill and have shifted more recently to Douglas Meyer and Alyssa Isakower for more program level communication related to the Grants+ program and World Oceans Day.

The communications research that The Ocean Project has conducted has played an important role in NEAQ's ability to come up with innovative solutions. NEAQ does not have the capacity to conduct such research and the results of this research have played an important role in NEAQ's ability to justify their work and their approaches. NEAQ has been able to leverage the results of this research to help in the development of their grant proposals, thereby contributing to their attainment of the grants. This transfer of information has played a pivotal role in NEAQ's ability to develop new ideas and the resources of the grants have played a significant role in allowing NEAQ to implement their innovative solutions on a small scale and eventually scale these solutions up and grow their impact.

The Ocean Projects network has allowed NEAQ to gain access to the practices of other institutions and learn from industry examples, which has been an important function. However, the effectiveness of The Ocean Project as a network could be enhanced by more formal communication and strengthening the ties between institutions within the network. Outside of the program level communication, which happens both directly and frequently, much of the communication between The Ocean Project and NEAQ happens via informal channels, such as AZA conferences or other industry related events. In spite of the regular program communications, it would be beneficial if The Ocean Project were to take the lead on ensuring routine dialogue between grantees and provide a medium for more cohesive network which would allow grantees to gain more direct insight into the practices of other institutions and share ideas more frequently, which could enhance the stimulation of innovative solutions at the respective institutions. NEAQ's commitment and mission play a significant role in the partnership compatibility. As described by Heather, the mission of NEAQ and The Ocean Project align nearly perfectly, this not only fosters shared understanding but allows the partnership to avoid conflicting interests and objectives.

As an institution, beyond the education department, NEAQ is geared towards innovation for increased visitor engagement. Naturally, due to the different duties of the different departments, not all employees are focused on achieving this particular goal; Heather has expressed that this does not hinder the ability of NEAQ to develop and implement innovative solutions. The institution strives towards engaging visitors in innovative ways and is presently working at promoting this mindset in all institutional departments. For example, in its strategic planning process, NEAQ hosts workshops inviting all employees to provide feedback on the approaches, thereby inviting employee ownership of these innovative solutions programs and further striving towards institutional unity. Generally speaking, NEAQ has an innovation orientation and their leadership promotes organizational learning. The organization is open and willing to the development of new approaches and views itself as a front runner in cutting-edge aquariums. All of these factors play an important role in the ability of the partnership to foster innovation. In addition to The Ocean Project, NEAQ uses information from a variety of other partners and is well experienced in collaboration. This collaboration experience has provided NEAQ with additional capacity to achieve a collaborative advantage in their partnership with The Ocean Project. However, though the information provided by The Ocean Project is important, it is not the only source of information which is highly coveted by NEAQ.

World Oceans Day has been another important platform for NEAQ as it allows them to further showcase their commitment to sustainability and visitor engagement, this reinforces the partnership through working together and collaborating beyond the Grants+ program. NEAQ, which participates in World Oceans Day annually, has been able to adapt WOD to fit their specific institution's needs, allowing them to further build their relationship with The Ocean Project and demonstrate the conservation efforts that are being made on a state, regional and local levels. The Grants+ program has fostered ownership and allowed NEAQ to use the grant money to implement new approaches,

which otherwise may have been too risky or too costly. Using the financial resources and coaching help externally, while allowing internal program development, NEAQ is able to maintain ownership while at the same time working together with The Ocean Project on implementation planning.

Although NEAQ is innovation oriented, the history of its relationship with The Ocean Project has been an important factor in developing that orientation. Other factors which have been important and recommendations for other partners: getting to know The Ocean Project, developing partnership trust, shared understanding, having regular conversations and communication. Commitment is necessary, in order for the partnership to successfully stimulate social innovation you need to be committed, in other words what you get out of the partnership is dependent on what you put into it. Leadership plays an important role in promoting organizational learning. There are little, if any, inter-organizational conflicts which place barriers in front of the ability of NEAQ to innovate. In other words, the common aim of the leaders has allowed NEAQ to move forward with innovative solutions and become a front runner in the development of new approaches and secure grant funding two years consecutively.

Oregon interview transcribed

The initial relationship between Oregon Coast Aquarium and The Ocean Project was formed through interaction at conferences (e.g. AZA conferences) where The Ocean Project participated as presenters. One of building blocks of this relationship was working together on data collection and research, in which Oregon Coast assisted in the collection of data regarding ocean acidification. The data was then used as part of the results for TOP communications research. However, Kerry would not have characterized this interaction as a true partnership, but rather the “true partnership” came later through the interactions involved with the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program. Kerry has been aware of The Ocean Project for over 5 years and has personally interacted with each one of the staff and knows them by name. An important aspect of the partnership is that it is not solely dependent on the resources from the Grant, which although are a key component to allowing the innovative solution to be implemented, it is better described as a more working relationship where both institutions give and take in a more equal flowing manner. In other words, the relationship is mutually beneficial and, as described by Kerry, is able to produce positive outcomes for both partners. Another fundamental theme of this relationship is the ability of The Ocean Project to fill a knowledge gap for the Oregon Coast Aquarium with their communications research, which is highly valued by the Oregon Coast Aquarium, but it is not something that their institution alone has the resources or capacity to conduct. Along with the funding from the Grants, this information transfer has been an important factor in allowing the Oregon Coast Aquarium to develop new programs.

The Ocean Project has also provided a network through which to disseminate information among the aquarium industry, which is a big challenge in the industry. As described by Kerry, even when individual institutions are able to conduct their own research of this type, one of the biggest barriers is the lack of dissemination of that information. As a result, The Ocean Project functions as an important network for aquariums to share knowledge with each other. The Ocean Project plays an important leadership role in that they are constantly pushing institutions to engage their visitors to take conservation action and they have the research to back up that approach. The ability of The Ocean Project to provide this information is a very important theme for success in the partnership. In other words, the information transfer has been a very important theme in the allowing the partnership to stimulate social innovation (i.e. new programs for engaging visitors in conservation action).

Kerry communicates mostly with Douglas regarding the Grants+ program; another staff member has

been responsible for keeping in contact with Alyssa about World Oceans Day. Communication happens via phone, e-mail and is an important theme in the partnership. The fact that The Ocean Project's mission is very clear and they stay true to their vision allows Kerry to understand exactly what their intent is, which has fostered shared understanding. Furthermore, as described by Kerry, the core mission of The Ocean Project aligns closely with her own mission and the overall mission of the Oregon Coast Aquarium. In other words, the partnership can be characterized by a common aim/interest. Kerry has described that the leadership in the aquarium provides support and gives her flexibility in her own managerial capacity to pursue innovative projects. However, in consideration of the department-specific focuses (that is/isn't our job), not all departments in the Oregon Coast Aquarium share the same goals. That being said, as The Ocean Project is solely interacting with Kerry's department, there is a strong bond in the common aim and given the leadership's support for Kerry; she has a sufficient level of managerial capacity to influence change and the development and implementation of new programs.

In addition to the importance of the communications research and the grant resources, the requirements of the grant, which obligate the aquarium to report on the implementation of the project has been an important theme in pushing the institution. The reporting and tracking of measurable outcomes has been good a good requirement of the Grants+ program. The Ocean Project encourages the aquarium to experiment and the Grants+ program has given them the freedom and ability to develop innovative experimental projects, which otherwise may not have been possible.

One important theme regarding barriers to innovative approaches is staff capacity and staff knowledge. As described by Kerry, their new Innovative program is taking on aspects of social media and marketing which the staff is largely unfamiliar and unskilled to implement. The old organizational culture and conventional approach of using knowledge and education to promote awareness and conservation action has been the dominating paradigm and may act as a barrier to greater innovation. Even when there is an openness and willingness towards innovation, a lack of staff knowledge can be a barrier to innovation.

Building blocks of the partnership and suggested actions for other partners include working together and communication; developing a shared understanding and having a common aim/interest; the importance of developing a mutual gain between the partnerships and ensuring it's not just a one way street. Kerry has never felt that The Ocean Project has imposed their interests on Oregon, but rather they have worked together so that both partners understand the value that they create for each other. When you work together with The Ocean Project and have a clear understanding of their goals and can understand that they are truly interested in seeing the industry succeed, building the partnership relationship is easy.

NCA interview transcribed

The initial interaction between Windy from North Carolina Aquariums (NCA) and The Ocean Project (TOP) took place informally at national and regional AZA and climate change conferences. Windy attended their working sessions at these conferences and had informal conversations with The Ocean Project staff. The interaction between these partners has increased over the past five years. Prior to applying/receiving the grant, Windy worked together with Douglas in the energy choice program. Through these informal conversations and through working together on the energy choice program, the partnership developed a relationship of trust. As described by Windy, over time the common aims/interests of The Ocean Project, which were initially focused on communications research and has evolved into conservation "asks", represented a similar evolution of Windy's own interest. In other

words, the common aims/interests of Windy/NCA and TOP developed in the same kind of way, which seems to have been important in building a closely aligned relationship and one in which both partners have a clear shared understanding of each others' goals. The information from the communications research of TOP was not new or enlightening, as Windy has described, the data served to be more of a validating source for what NCA/Windy already knew. However, the fact that TOPs data validated what Windy was already in line with thinking provided a form of empowerment and support for Windy, which seems to be a particularly important theme. In other words, although Windy may have already been aware of the approaches recommended in TOPs communications research, the simple fact that another organization was demonstrating evidence for this kind of approach was very important in terms of providing support for Windy and NCA. As Windy described, although the communications research information was out there on the web, there was little motivation to retrieve it, TOP helped facilitate this information transfer by directly providing the knowledge. The themes of empowerment and support are highlighted as equally or more important than the resources which have been provided by the grant. So, although the resources of the grant have been pivotal in allowing NCA to develop new approaches to engage visitors, the intangible themes of empowerment and support have also played a vital role.

Working together with TOP is easy because they listen very well, they are interested in hearing about what aquariums need and provide support for that very well. They do not deviate from their mission and are very good at staying focused and on track to achieve their goals. Unlike working with AZA, who provides more of a top-down, one-way style of providing information and expecting it to be implemented, TOP works together with aquariums, asks for feedback, and creates a two-street method of interaction where both partners create value for each other. Windy communicates with TOP regularly, at least once every month or two with Douglas in regards to the Grants+ program and as well with Alyssa for World Oceans Day. Moreover, Windy has been personally asked by Alyssa to be a participant on the World Oceans Day board, which is important in relationship building, working together, and establishing partnership trust. TOP functions as an important network for aquariums and helps to keep partners informed about what's going on in the industry.

TOP acts as a catalyst in pushing institutions to think outside of the conventional industry paradigm of expecting education to promote individual action and instead directly engage their visitors in conservation action. Industry tends to get bogged down and complacent, TOP pushes the industry to do stuff that is uncomfortable. This is a particularly important theme in the partnership and critical in the stimulation of new approaches for engaging visitors in conservation action. However, as described by Windy, more transparency in the exact goals of TOP would potentially increase institutional buy-in. As she has mentioned, although they know what their vision is, she may not, and increasing this transparency could be beneficial for partnership development.

Regarding finding innovative and effective ways to engage visitors in conservation action, the most important themes are the empowerment and support which is provided by TOP, this includes data, coaching, and funding. Although the intangible themes of empowerment and support have been highlighted by Windy, she also has indicated that the funding has been vital to allowing her to implement innovative approaches. Prior to receiving funding for this new program, Windy had been turned down by the leadership. This can largely be attributed to the risk aversion culture which is characteristic of many institutions in this industry and the inability of individual institutions to invest resources into programs which ultimately may or may not be successful. In this regard, the funding has been absolutely critical in the implementation of the innovative program. As a state institution, NCA is particularly burdened by many layers of authority, which can provide both political and

philosophical barriers. The further you go up, the more barriers you are likely to come across. This theme is particularly important regarding the potential barriers to innovation; although Windy and her direct leadership may have an innovation orientation and desire to pursue innovative approaches, they are hindered by the multi-layer authority and political and philosophical barriers.

In providing recommendations for potential partners, Windy emphasizes that it is important to be prepared to be taken out of your “comfort zone”. It is important to communicate goals clearly in order to develop the shared understanding of each partner’s objectives and the outcomes which each partner hopes to achieve. Moreover, it is important to be aware of your own organizational limitations, such as those expressed by Windy as a result of her institution being a state-run aquarium; this poses barriers and limitations which individuals must be aware of if they hope to catalyze the partnership to their benefit.

In closing, it is important to note that Windy sees TOP as a vital catalyst in the industry, as they are responsible for providing leadership and direction, which is required if the industry hopes to move away from the dominating conventional paradigm. As Windy has described, without TOP her institution would still be utilizing the same old approaches to promote conservation.

Interview questions for The Ocean Project

1. Can you tell me about how you personally have interacted with NEAQ/Oregon/NC?
2. How would you describe the relationship between your organizations theirs? What would you say is the basis for it?
3. What does your organization gain from its relationship with NEAQ/Oregon/NC? What do they do well? Do you communicate on a regular basis?
4. Is there anything that you would say is lacking from your relationship with NEAQ/Oregon/NC? An area in need of improvement, either from their end or your own?
5. The Ocean Project has been increasingly focused on helping its partners find innovative and effective ways to engage visitors, especially as it relates to actions that help the ocean and its animals....How has The Ocean Project helped NEAQ/Oregon/NC in this regard?
6. What barriers, if any, exist within your institution, or theirs, that limits your ability to stimulate innovation in this area?
7. If you can identify elements of the relationship with NEAQ/Oregon/NC which have stimulated creativity and innovation within their organization, what are those elements?
8. What conditions do you believe have allowed NEAQ/Oregon/NC to successfully develop innovative programs?
9. Is there anything else which you would like to include or are there any points of emphasis?

Bill Mott interview transcribed

In regards to the 3 partnerships in general

The partners help test different approaches that the rest of the community may embrace, field studies to test whether the research is effective when applied. Important for creating a mutual benefit for both partners. They all share a common aim, interested in engaging their visitors to take conservation

action. Ultimate goal is to have some measurable outcomes and impact (however this is yet to be seen as the programs have not been implemented). Success stories are important, lessons learned can be applied to the greater community. Once one aquarium shows success, others will listen, not as willing to listen to TOP, would rather listen to each other. They are important facilitators for breaking down the industry paradigm of using education to inspire action; if TOP can showcase aquariums doing innovative programs with a little money, all the better.

Bill expressed that communication could be better from both ends, a sense of frustration from a lack of feedback from institutions on whether or not certain approaches do/don't work, but also recognizes The Ocean Project could be more proactive in seeking the feedback. "We have a huge network, but no ideas about how many are using resources online or are they just signing up to get more hits on their own website". Grants+ program has helped to lower their risk averse behavior; both financial and coaching resources. Grants+ program helps opening up options for them to try approaches that they may have wanted to try but haven't been able to. They are conservative institutions who have to be able to show their relevance to their communities. In other words, helping them evolve with the times. Ultimately, hope to also help increase the bottom line.

A barrier is that these organizations tend to fall back to their traditional "educator" paradigm. Can't just give them money and expect them to innovate; part of Douglas' role as an evaluator is to make sure they follow up with their requirements. TOP work may be considered an "extra" and not a part of the daily activities, making it difficult to get a full institutional buy-in. "change is hard".

In regards to NEAQ

Bill is very familiar with NEAQ as they are a founding partner of The Ocean Project; however he initially interacted more with the aquarium than he does today. Relationship can be described as trusting. NEAQ has been awarded Grant money twice. Most of his time has been focused on fundraising; he communicates with them every few months, but does not interact with them frequently. According to Bill NEAQ is a very independent institution, they perceive themselves as leaders, which is a good thing, but it also renders them less interested in external information. For example, The Ocean project used to conduct in house training workshops, NEAQ was never interested in them, as such they have worked together, but not as receptive to some of The Ocean Projects input. Over the years they have evolved to see the value in the relationship with The Ocean Project. Their leadership can be difficult to work with, as Bill described "it comes down to egos". Biggest barrier is the lack of communication; Bill expressed a sense of frustration in regards to a lack of feedback, but also acknowledges his own lack of effort which is largely due to resources.

In regards to NCA

The Ocean Project has worked together with NCA over the years, they have conducted in house training workshops. Bill has a close relationship with the leadership, describes them as "institutionally strong". Bill knows the Director well, seeks her out for feedback on projects and new programs. Bill has described NCA as very receptive to The Ocean Project and as such they have worked together closely on multiple projects with both Douglas and Alyssa. Communication happens more frequently with NCA than NEAQ and Oregon, every other month they have conversations. Windy is committed to the relationship. Both organizations have a similar aim which makes it easy to work with them, in other words their organizations fit well together.

In regards to Oregon

Bill met Kerry on the conservation education committee, has interacted with Kerry informally as well

via AZA conferences. They have participated in working groups together; Oregon assisted in collecting data for the ocean acidification research. He is not very familiar with the leadership; they go through a lot of changes. They have had working groups together and a fair amount of face-to-face dialogue in the past, but no deep institutional connections. Oregon is a relatively new aquarium and they are progressive, receptive to The Ocean Project. Most interaction happens with Douglas for the Grants+ program, communication outside of that does not happen very frequently.

Alyssa Isakower interview transcribed

In regards to the 3 partnerships in general

On a basic level, need to work with them to hone strategies and test innovative approaches, see the results and try to influence the rest of the community. TOP's goal is to help zoos and aquariums engage visitors, they need an experimental field to test that in; these partners provide that experimental field. The partner's act as messengers to their fellow institutions (network), they need support from their institutions to build the reputation from The Ocean Project. Mutually beneficial relationship, shows that they are more than just entertainment oriented and are committed to the aim of conservation action, progressing forward with the times.

Some of the barriers are that The Ocean Project needs more staff to help manage relationships, it's very common to see other organizations lose interest because the lack of ability to build that partnership (staff capacity). As a result, The Ocean Project is very dependent on the commitment of these partners to keep the partnerships working. Alyssa expressed that it would be nice if the organizations were more linked up internally, different departments too disparate, they have buy in from the education departments but leadership "don't care". It's hard to do anything effectively without leadership/staff on board, internal cohesiveness. Big problem with people saying they know what TOP does, but they don't actually. The Ocean Project suffers from both a lack of organizational structure and lack of resources. If we could engage with them more over time, that would help the message stick. Resources from the Grants+ are crucial for the partner aquariums, but are too limited for a widespread impact on the community as a whole. Grants require a significant commitment from the partner institutions which is a barrier to more innovation. There is a general lack of staff and time in both organizations to be fully committed. For TOP a problem is not having enough time to engage with them longer term, more deeply. Used to do a strategy session every few weeks/phone calls, but those no longer take place.

In regards to NEAQ

Close relationship, this has been fraught with difficulties. New England prioritizes themselves, can be hard to get the leaderships attention; difficulty to work with them super closely. A point of tension because of their alternative approach to engage visitors; they are a mission focused aquarium. TOP has worked with them on small grants in the past. There is an internal disagreement within the org. regarding the approach to engaging visitors. Alyssa has worked with them personally somewhat via the small grants and World Oceans Day, but not super closely.

In regards to Oregon

Alyssa has interacted with Kerry at about the same level as NEAQ, via World Oceans Day and the Grants, but not much outside of that. Oregon has set out as an organization that is willing to take action, open to innovation. Worked together on collecting data for the communications research. Kerry described as very engaged with The Ocean Project.

In regards to NCA

Alyssa has worked the most closely with Windy of the three partners; Windy is on the board for World Oceans Day, they interact via that. Windy described as very dedicated. Relationship between both organizations described as close; TOP has worked more closely with NCA than the other partners. They are very receptive to TOP information, willing to implement suggestions. Leadership is involved more closely with TOP, they go out on a limb to work together with The Ocean Project. Some of the educational approaches are different, but they are a very conservative organization and state run, making change more difficult.

Douglas Meyer interview transcribed

In regards to the 3 partnerships in general

Basis of the relationship goes back to Bill, well liked person in the community. The communications research has given value to these institutions, even ones like NEAQ. There is a real value added by the market research and being a part of a network of other institutions. They provide a mutual benefit as they are the on the ground experts of visitor interaction. It's one thing to look at data coming back in reports (TOP perspective) and another to interact with the individuals on a daily basis (Aquarium perspective). Mutual benefit created by the fact that TOP has the market research, but they have the ability and expertise to implement. Gain insight from the expertise, learn from the success. We have the theoretical, they have the practical.

One thing Douglas learned from these interactions is that actually getting out the site in person is the only thing that has been missing from these partnerships. Establishing relationships of trust would be easier if working together in person. TOP used to spend a couple hours with staff, touring their facilities, gave TOP the context of how do their programs fit within their larger efforts, in addition to establishing the interpersonal relationships. No real complaints about any of the grantees. They've each run up against some external barriers. NEAQ hit public sector wall. TOP could do a better job of getting some qualifications earlier on regarding the expectations. Work together more closely with review committee. Asking more before proposals approved.

TOP helps them to answer questions that we have in common. When TOP talks about inspiring action, how do they actually do that? TOP is dependent on the aquariums to work together and experiment with solutions. Hopefully through research and coaching process they are giving them insight. Relationship described as a two-way street. They are the ones who are taking the risk; risk that visitors won't like conservation action; multiple levels of risk, individual risk, and institutional risk. TOP is using money to help eliminate risk. Their leadership important in allowing justification and applying for the Grants.

There is a difference between what they mean when they say inspire action to take the ocean; difference in paradigms. The people who've applied for these grants have institutional buy-in. The individuals took the initiative (commitment), not just doing it for the money, there has to be an organizational culture that allows for people to apply for these grants.

In regards to NEAQ

They have always perceived (positive way) themselves as leaders. They are a little more independent "they're going to do what they're going to do" kind of attitude. Differences in terms of approach outcomes; leadership's traditional approach is to maximize impact by education. Heather has tried to push the envelope, outcomes "did people do this, how did they feel about it". Youth oriented education. Heather is very committed, but faces some internal barriers. Communication takes place

regularly for the Grant, they are not as far along as NCA, but a little bit further along than Oregon in the Grants implementation.

In regards to Oregon

Worked with Oregon coast on ocean acidification research, they saw value in that, they did on site surveying. They are a little more interested in an exchange than NEAQ. Still making progress on the Grants+, communication happens regularly. Have done in house training the past with them, they are receptive to TOP information. Douglas is unfamiliar with their leadership, interacts solely with Kerry. Trusting relationship, they appreciate the communications research and Kerry is engaged and committed to the success of the Grant. Kerry has the mindset to be open to innovation and is willing to experiment, but described as not as far along as NCA. Relationship is mutually beneficial; they are easy to work together with.

In regards to NCA

Douglas has a good relationship with NCA, has interacted with Director. There is more communication with NC because they are the furthest along in the Grants process. Aims described as very close, they are very on board with The Ocean Project's goals, Windy is very committed to the partnership. They were described as more directly aligned with The Ocean Project and also a funder of TOP. Windy comes more from an interpretation approach, similar to The Ocean Project; they are thinking a lot about how do we teach people about underlying solutions. Douglas worked with Windy prior to the Grant on a renewable energy related project as well as the ocean acidification research to influence the communications research. In general, the relationship is described as more closely together, less need for clarification when communicating, Windy has a very similar mind set to TOP.

Appendix D

The partnership between NEAQ and The Ocean Project

NEAQ was a founding partner of The Ocean Project. As such, this partnership has a long history. In spite of their long relationship history and achieved successes, according to The Ocean Project interviewees, there are still many difficulties in the partnership. The prior history of working together has contributed familiarity between organizations and developing a shared understanding. Interviewees mutually agreed that there is trust between partners, which is important in facilitating the partnership to achieve a collaborative advantage. For example, because NEAQ trusts the information provided by The Ocean Project as a reliable source, they consider that information worth learning from; as such, trust is an important condition in allowing a collaborative advantage to be achieved.

However, there is a minor, yet noticeable clash between the organizational cultures. This was exemplified by the fact that, although the overarching aims and interests of the partners are very compatible, there has been a degree of conflict in regards to the appropriate approach for implementation of the Program. The paradigm which dominates the NEAQ leadership and the aquarium community⁴⁸ in general is the traditional approach to increasing conservation; educate individuals about the issue, make them care about it, and then they will act. Aside from Heather, it has been indicated by responses from both partners that this is the paradigm of the leadership. The other view, which is held by The Ocean Project and Heather, and is backed by The Ocean Project's communication research, starts from the assumption that most aquarium visitors are already interested in issues and want to get engaged, so instead of continuing to educate them, if you show them how to incorporate action lives, they are willing to act; they don't necessarily need to be educated on the subject.

Outside of the Grants+ communication, which happens both directly and frequently, most of the communication between the partners happens infrequently via informal channels, such as AZA conferences or other industry related events. As such, it can be said that these partners do not communicate on a very regular basis with each other outside of the mandatory requirements of the Grant. Both partners have expressed that communication channels could be improved.

The communications research that The Ocean Project has conducted has played an important role in stimulating learning within the NEAQ and fostering the ability to come up with innovative solutions. NEAQ does not have the capacity to conduct such research and the results of this research have played an important role in Heather's ability to justify the innovative solutions to the leadership of NEAQ. According to Heather this transfer of information, or learning, has played a pivotal role in NEAQ's ability to develop innovative ideas. Additionally, the resources of the grants have played a significant role in allowing NEAQ to experiment with innovative solutions. These resources greatly reduce the leadership's perception of risk, as well as the individual's, who in this case would be Heather. As identified by Heather, without the resources from the Grants+ program, it is unlikely that the innovative solutions program would have been implemented due to the potential risk and uncertainty in terms of success. In other words, without the resources, the cost benefit analysis does not favor the development of experimental, innovative programs.

⁴⁸ As identified through direct observation. This point will be revisited in the final recommendations.

It is also important to note that there is a high level of commitment from Heather as well as from Douglas Meyer; however, as essentially only these two individuals who communicate and work together in regards to the innovative solutions, a stronger commitment from both sides would likely benefit the partnership. While Heather expressed that she is highly committed to the partnership, and more specifically, the development of innovative programs, she also noted that many of the NEAQ departments operate in isolation from one another. The marketing department, for example, is not affiliated with the partnership and as such is not on board with the partnership goals. Even the leadership, although familiar with The Ocean Project, are not committed to or engaged in the *partnership*⁴⁹. According to Heather, this has not prevented the partnership from reaching a collaborative advantage, largely because the NEAQ leadership is open and willing to innovation and also promotes organizational learning; although it can make achieving institutional buy in a cumbersome task for Heather. This issue has been reflected in the responses from The Ocean Project.

The Ocean Project's network has allowed NEAQ to gain access to the practices of other institutions and learn from industry example, which according to Heather, has been an important condition in stimulating innovation. However, according to interviewees from both partners, The Ocean Project's capacity to maintain this network, in regards to both financial resources and staff capacity, is lacking.

Generally speaking, according to Heather, NEAQ leadership is open to innovation and promotes organizational learning which is an internally important theme in allowing for social innovation to be stimulated. NEAQ views itself as a front runner in cutting-edge aquariums. As identified by The Ocean Project interviewees this perception may hinder NEAQ's ability to collaborate effectively with other institutions as it renders them less interested in external information, i.e. they believe they are independently capable of achieving their goals. According to the responses from The Ocean Project employees, this can make working together a complicated task, but it has been manageable.

Both partners have expressed that the relationship is mutually beneficial, which is an essential theme in the success of the partnership. The Ocean Project is able to assist in the implementation of innovative solutions and subsequently measure the outcomes and learn from the successes/failures. Without the partners, The Ocean Project would have no way to test the effectiveness of their research or experiment with innovative approaches. The lessons learned allow The Ocean Project to contribute to their greater goal of stimulating social innovations throughout the entire industry. The benefit for NEAQ is that they are able to learn from the network, test innovative programs which otherwise may not have been developed and further establish their name as a front-runner in conservation oriented aquariums. This win-win situation functions as a strong glue holding the partnership together.

The partnership between Oregon and The Ocean Project

The initial relationship between Oregon Coast Aquarium and The Ocean Project was formed through a history of informal communication and interaction, e.g. AZA conferences where The Ocean Project participated as presenters. Trust was established through past history and through working together on ocean acidification research which The Ocean Project was conducting and Oregon Coast Aquarium assisted in data collection. The data was then used as part of the results for TOP communications research. Both partners indicated this to be an important foundation for trust.

⁴⁹ While they may be committed to achieving the same goals as The Ocean Project, here I indicate very specifically that, from the data I have collected, there is no evidence of the leadership's commitment to partnership activities.

As described by Kerry, the aims of The Ocean Project align nearly “perfectly” with her own aims and the overall mission of the Oregon Coast Aquarium, contributing to a high level of organizational fit. In other words, the partnership can be characterized by a common aim/interest. Moreover, Kerry has expressed that she is open and willing to innovation, willing to “think outside the box”. The leadership in the aquarium provides her with full support and flexibility, granting her a sufficient level of authority to make decisions such as applying for the Innovative Grants+. With that said the resources from the Grant still play a key role in reducing the perception of risk.

An important aspect of the partnership, which was initially identified by Kerry and confirmed by The Ocean Project responses, is that it is not solely dependent on the resources from the Grants+ program. Although the resources are a key condition in enabling innovative solutions to be implemented, the partnership is better described relationship of working together and providing a mutual benefit for one another. This has been identified by both partners as an important condition in achieving a collaborative advantage.

Another fundamental theme enabling this partnership to achieve a collaborative advantage is the ability of The Ocean Project to fill a knowledge gap for the Oregon Coast Aquarium with the communications research. As stated by Kerry, this information is highly valued by the Oregon Coast Aquarium and is an important condition in fostering learning and subsequently innovation. However, it is not something that their institution alone has the resources or capacity to carry out. Along with the funding from the Grants, this information transfer, or learning which has taken place, has been an important factor in allowing the Oregon Coast Aquarium to innovate. Similarly, The Ocean Project’s function as a network for has been another important condition in stimulating learning in Oregon, as with the NEAQ case, it allows partners to learn from others’ examples. Kerry has also indicated that The Ocean Project plays an important leadership role in that they are constantly pushing institutions to experiment with social innovations and engage their visitors to take conservation action, and they have the research to back up that approach. The research is an important tool in reducing the perception of risk and justifying innovative approaches.

The communication in this partnership mirrors that of the partnership with NEAQ; the only formal communication that takes place is between Douglas and Kerry in regards to the Grants+. However, interestingly in contrast to the partnership with NEAQ, neither partners expressed an issue with communication.

One important theme regarding barriers to innovative approaches, which has been identified by both organizations, is the overall staff capacity; this has been described as an issue for both The Ocean Project as well as Oregon. For example, as described by Kerry, their new Innovative program is taking on aspects of social media and marketing which the staff is largely unfamiliar and unskilled to implement. This is further exacerbated by the old organizational culture and traditional approach of using knowledge and education to promote awareness and inspire conservation action which has been the dominating institutional paradigm and may act as a barrier to greater innovation. Even when there is an openness and willingness towards innovation from both the leadership and staff, a lack of knowledge can be a barrier to innovation. Furthermore, Douglas has expressed that in the past, The Ocean Project was more involved in site visits, which allowed for further trust building, face-to-face dialogue, and demonstrated commitment; resources are the main barrier to continuing this effort.

The partnership between North Carolina Aquarium and The Ocean Project

Similar to the other two partnerships which have been discussed, the partnership between North Carolina Aquariums⁵⁰ (NCA) and The Ocean Project has been forged through a history of informal interactions at AZA conferences, informal communication between Windy and The Ocean Project staff, and prior to applying for the Grant, through Windy and Douglas collaborating together on the implementation of a renewable energy program at Windy's NCA facility at Pine Knoll Shores. Similar to Oregon, NCA also participated in collecting data for ocean acidification research. Additionally, Windy has developed a close relationship with Alyssa through participating as a board member for World Oceans Day, a celebratory event championed by The Ocean Project. Furthermore, it has been recognized by both Alyssa and Bill that the Director of NCA is a go-to person for feedback.

The aims and interests of these organizations have been described as evolving in the same kind of way. Starting from a research oriented approach and growing into stimulating conservation action. As Windy stated, it is "absolutely my goal" to engage visitors in conservation action. Windy's enthusiasm for achieving this goal has been demonstrated in her commitment, which Douglas has explicitly noted.

Interestingly, in contrast to the other two partnerships, although Windy considered The Ocean Project's communication research as an important tool in justifying her approach and empowering her to apply for the grants and experiment with innovative solutions, she also indicated that the information was neither new nor enlightening, i.e. Windy was already aware of the approaches recommended in the communications research. The important part was not the knowledge or the learning, or learning, but the support and empowerment. The empowerment and support of The Ocean Project were conditions highlighted by Windy as equally important to the resources provided by the Grant. So, although the resources of the grant have been pivotal in allowing NCA to develop new approaches to engage visitors, the intangible conditions of empowerment and support have also played a vital role.

Similar to the other partnerships, both partners have recognized the importance of a mutual benefit. Windy has expressed that because The Ocean Project makes an effort to listen and obtain feedback from NCA, in addition to which Douglas has been able to provide invaluable support through his assistance both prior to and during the work on the Grant. This mutual benefit has been further reinforced through Windy's participation on the World Oceans Day board, which both partners have expressed as a valuable asset.

Similar to the partnership with Oregon, Windy noted the importance of The Ocean Project's leadership, stating that they act as a catalyst in pushing institutions to think outside of the traditional industry paradigm of expecting education to promote individual action and instead directly engage their visitors in conservation action. Although Windy supported this approach, it has been identified as a particularly important theme in the stimulation of new approaches for engaging visitors in conservation action.

Regarding finding innovative and effective ways to engage visitors in conservation action, in addition to the most importance of empowerment and support provided by The Ocean Project, the resources including coaching and funding have been key in enabling innovation. Prior to receiving funding for this new program, Windy had been turned down by the NCA leadership in her request. Interestingly, this is in spite of the strong relationship between The Ocean Project and the Director of NCA. Similar

⁵⁰ This study was specifically conducted with the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knolls Shore, but in consideration of the lengthy name, it will be referred to simply as North Carolina Aquarium (NCA).

to the other cases, this indicates a lack of commitment from NCA leadership. As with the other partnerships this can largely be attributed to the risk aversion culture which is characteristic of many institutions in this industry and the inability of individual institutions to invest resources into programs which ultimately may or may not be successful. In this regard, the funding has been absolutely critical in the implementation of the innovative program.

One of the potential barriers to collaborative advantage and social innovation is that NCA is burdened by many layers of authority, which can provide both political and philosophical barriers and is the source of the perception of risk. Although this barrier is reflected in the other partnerships as well, it is a particularly difficult barrier to overcome considering that NCA is a state run institution and as such is burdened by a level of bureaucracy unknown to the other partnerships. As such, The Ocean Project has done well at providing Windy with the support and resources which she needs to experiment with innovative solutions. Additionally, it is important that, although The Ocean Project does not have relationship ties or commitment from some of the very high up politically affiliated leaders, their relationship with the Director of NCA has played an important role in fostering high levels of trust and reducing the perception of risk.