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; pp. 1)

The following research is an exploration into the ability of cross-sector partnerships which have been able to achieve a collaborative advantage. The partnerships under investigation are between The Ocean Project, a charitable organization dedicated to inspiring ocean conservation action through the aquarium community, and three of its partner aquariums.

Using the theory of collaborative advantage as the theoretical underpinning, this exploration begins with a literature review on each of the key concepts which are relevant to this study, including *collaborative advantage*, *social innovation*, and *cross-sector partnerships*. The literature review was conducted to gain insight into which conditions are commonly present in cross-sector partnerships and to provide a knowledge base with which to reflect upon after the subsequent phases of research, which include a case study with interviews and my direct observation as an intern at The Ocean Project.

The results of this research provide interesting insight into cross-sector partnerships which have been able to achieve a collaborative advantage within the context of social innovation. The conditions which were found to have an influence on achieving a collaborative advantage are (1) *mutual benefit,* (2) *common aim,* (3) *organizational fit,* (4) *commitment,* (5) *resources,* (6) *risk,* and (7) *trust*. Given the growing academic interest in both cross sector partnerships and social innovation, the results are relevant to practitioners who are in similar situations or wish to begin their own partnerships. The key theme which has been identified within this context is *risk*; more specifically, the aquarium industry's perception of risk when experimenting with innovative approaches to engaging their visitors to take conservation action. The aquarium industry is dominated by the industry "educator" paradigm, which follows the philosophy *we conserve what we understand*. In other words, individuals must be educated and understand ocean issues in order to care enough to take conservation action. The Ocean Project offers a different approach to conservation, supported by their research, which indicates that individuals who are interested in conservation don't need to be educated on the issue; they need to be shown how to take action. The Ocean Project has begun to implement this approach with the three partner aquariums under investigation in this study. While it remains to be seen if these approaches are successful, the results found here are relevant to all cross-sector partnerships which are interested in social innovation.

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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

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 and approaches. Today's society can be characterized by a general lack of awareness or involvement regarding environmental problems. We can easily see that if we hope to address these issues, there is a need for new 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 alike have slowly begun to drift away from our connection with the environment. OECD countries have created a consumer lifestyle, one which emerging economies strive to achieve for themselves. Unfortunately, this lifestyle has come at great costs to the health of our environment and we have yet to see the most severe of repercussions which we will endure. Instead of growing our own food, most of us 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; and 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 lost our mindfulness and the 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? Now, that is a slight departure from the original meaning, but it gets the message across. So, what does this all mean? This serves to indicate that the conventional method of education, although important and necessary, is simply not enough to stimulate behavioral change; more important than an in depth understanding of an issue is the practical knowledge for how to incorporate conservation action into our daily lives and understand the relevance to our own livelihood. 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 in which new approaches to raise public 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. Partnerships have existed for centuries in many different forms to address many different 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 cross sector collaboration and 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).

In the remainder of the introductory chapter I first describe the knowledge gap which I intend to address with this research. Second, I give an explanation of my research objective and the scientific relevance. Third, I present my primary research question and sub-questions used to guide this research, along with the research framework. Fourth, I elaborate on the methods employed in this research project including a literature review, case study and direct observation. Lastly, I give a comprehensive outline of the remaining contents of this thesis.

1.3 Knowledge gap

Over the recent years there has been a proliferation of studies addressing CSPs, covering 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. As a result of the diversity in the literature, as many authors have noted (Googins and Rochlin 2000; Ansell & Gash 2007; Selsky & Parker 2005), the research on CSPs is highly fragmented. The current state of CSP research suffers from non-standardized terminology, a lack of a comprehensive theory 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, who have substantial experience working within collaborative arrangements, have recently developed a theory with which to evaluate collaborative arrangements, which they have coined as the *theory of collaborative advantage*. This theory, which I will discuss in detail 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 in order 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 conditions (e.g. communication, trust, power, etc.) and the underlying key issues within those conditions (e.g. how does trust positively/negatively affect the partnership). The conditions 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).

However, as this theory has only recently been developed, it suffers from a lack of application and has not been applied to research by other scholars. Furthermore, it has not been applied 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 will help to demonstrate the quality and usefulness of the theory of collaborative advantage and subsequently contribute to closing the knowledge gap on how CSPs are able to create collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation. This will be done through case study research in which I examine the partnership between a small charitable organization, The Ocean Project, and three of its partner aquariums. Ultimately, this will provide a unique insight into the capability of partnerships to foster social innovation that intends to facilitate a societal shift towards more sustainable behavior.

1.4 Research objective & relevance

In line with the theory of collaborative advantage, this research is practice-oriented with theoretical relevance (Huxham & Vangen 2005); the objectives of this research are both descriptive and explanatory in nature[1] (Verschuren & Doorewaard 2010). As aforementioned, currently the only attempt at developing a comprehensive *theory*[2] with which to evaluate collaborative arrangements is theory of collaborative advantage has been developed by Huxham & Vangen (2005). However, although Huxham & Vangen (2005) state that their theory has "been subjected to wide-ranging scrutiny and refined accordingly" they continue to state that 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. With a stronger theoretical basis for understanding how CSPs are able to produce meaningful outcomes, the results of this research contribute to the *Environmental Governance for Sustainable Development* program of the Copernicus Institute by providing insight into how CSPs are able to create a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovations to engage the public in conservation action.

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[1] The use of *descriptive* and *explanatory* are intended to be consistent with the definitions provided by Verschuren & Doorewaard (2010).
[2] I emphasize theory because although many frameworks have been developed (see Chapter 2) there is
currently only one theory which has been specifically developed for evaluating collaborative arrangements and
currently only one theory which has been specifically developed for evaluating collaborative arrangements and
that is the theory of collaborative advantage.

The first objective of this research, which is more theoretically relevant, is to examine the relationship conditions of CSPs, in the context of this case study, which have been conducive to achieving a collaborative advantage and fostering social innovation. In other words, I aim to build upon the theory of collaborative advantage by evaluating the conditions of three partnerships collaborative which have been able to foster social innovation. By building upon the theory of collaborative advantage and attempting to create 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. In addition, as previously mentioned, there is currently a lack of research on partnerships with the aim to foster social innovation to increase public engagement in environmental conservation and stimulate behavior change. As a result, this unique case study presented an excellent opportunity for exploring a field within partnerships which has yet to be examined in.

The second objective, which is more practically relevant, is to produce a holistic understanding of *how* the partnerships in this case study have been able to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation to engage the public in conservation action. This second objective is *explanatory* in its nature and attempts to explain why these partnerships have been able to achieve a collaborative advantage. This understanding is practically relevant and valuable for practitioners who are in similar situations. Accordingly, recommendations will be developed from the results obtained during the data collection phase.

In sum, I aim to *describe* which conditions are relevant within these partnerships in a general sense. Additionally, I seek to give an in depth *explanation* into each case study and how and why these conditions have contributed to successful collaboration. The first objective is more theoretically relevant, i.e. which conditions are relevant to successful collaboration, and the second objective, which is more practically relevant, provides insight through context-specific explanations. These points will be revisited in the *methods* section.

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 a collaborative advantage?*
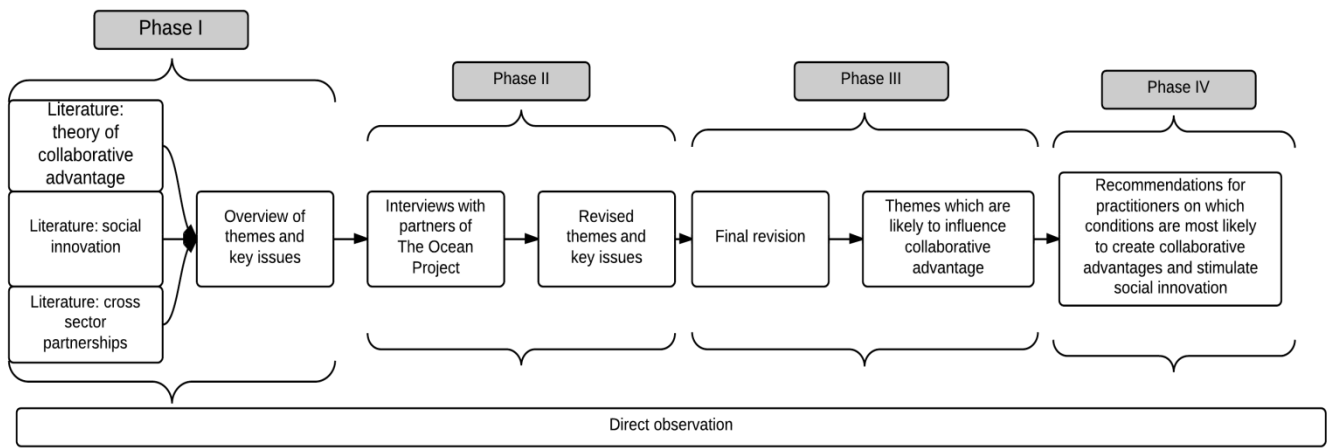
Figure 1. Research framework

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Using the themes based theory of collaborative advantage, *conditions* are considered to be those conditions which were present within the partnerships that contributed the partnerships achievement of a collaborative advantage. The research took place in four separate phases. Beginning with a literature review; I aimed to establish a substantial knowledge base within the current literature on the theory of collaborative advantage, social innovation, and CSPs. This first phase served as the basis for identifying conditions which were likely to be relevant to the case study under analysis. The conditions synthesized from the literature review also serve as points of reflection for the case study results. In subsequent phases II, the case study, and III, the revision phase, I focused my research on narrowing down the conditions which are relevant to achieving a collaborative advantage in relation to the stimulation of programs, or social innovations, that raise awareness and promote sustainability. In the final phase, based on the results of the literature review, the instrumental single case study, and the final revision, the conditions are translated into conditions and developed into recommendations for the institutions participating in this study, as well as for practitioners in general, on which conditions of CSPs are most relevant to achieving collaborative advantages. The goal of instrumental case study is to examine a specific instance in order to understand a general principle (Ilott et al. 2013). In this case, I am interested in studying the instance of social innovation in the context of CSPs to understand a general principle, how partnerships achieve a collaborative advantage. In consideration of my position as an intern at The Ocean Project throughout every phase I was actively collecting relevant data as a direct observer. The data from direct observations, although collected throughout the entire project, was applied during phase III, the final revision.

Phase I – Literature Review

The first phase of this research was focused on a review of existing literature on the theory of collaborative advantage, social innovation and CSPs. The purpose of this phase of research was to gain an overall understanding of key concepts within these respective fields, identify commonalities and differences, and develop an overview of which conditions. As previously mentioned, although this phase is an important first step, it should be noted that the conditions which have been drawn from this phase of research will act as a guide in my research in the following phases, they do *not* represent a structured overview of conditions and, as a result, additional conditions and issues are added or eliminated in the subsequent phases of the case study. Moreover, the discussions of

conditions in literature were used as points of reflection for the results of the interviews[3]. For an idea of which sources have been used in this phase of the research, see the References section. These sources serve as the basis for the literature review. In the following *methods* section I go into detail on exactly how I conducted this phase of the research, 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 hinder and/or foster partnerships ability to achieve a collaborative advantage?*
- *According to literature on the theory of social innovation what* conditions *are likely to hinder and/or foster partnerships ability to achieve a collaborative advantage?*
- *According to literature on the theory of cross sector partnerships, what* conditions *are likely to hinder and/or foster partnerships ability to achieve a collaborative advantage?*

Phase II – Case study: Interviews & direct observation

Following the literature review in Phase I, in which an overview of conditions has been developed, in Phase II, the case study phase, my primary source of data came from semi-structured interviews that were conducted with practitioners. The case study was conducted as an exploratory instrumental single case study, given my interest in studying the phenomenon of social innovation within the context of CSPs in order to gain further insight into how CSPs are able to achieve a collaborative advantage.

The purpose of this second phase was to develop an understanding of the relationship between collaboration and social innovation. Specifically, to gather insight into which conditions have been relevant to achieving a collaborative advantage within the context of stimulating new approaches towards engaging the public in conservation action. Electing to use the semi-structured interview format in this phase[4], the interviews were conducted with the Directors of Education from three partners of 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 interviewing, 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 also during my time spent at a symposium in Chicago on *Innovation in the Living World*. This is explored further in the methods section.

After carrying out interviews with each of the partners and identifying conditions relevant to each case, I then conducted interviews with the employees of The Ocean Project to further triangulate the results of the interviews and enhance the reliability and validity of the results. Essentially, the purpose of the interviews with The Ocean Project employees was to determine whether or not the conditions identified by the partners were also reflected by the responses of The Ocean Project employees. This allowed me to gain a further understanding of which elements both partners did/didn't identify as important.

Using the results of all of the interviews, I synthesized the conditions and which had been identified by the interviewees as relevant to the achievement of collaborative advantage and fostering social

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[3] This point is expanded upon in the methods section.
[4] Justification for this format as well as the justification for the sample selection are provided in the methods section.

innovation. I elaborate on how I carried out the interview process, including how the participants were selected, in the *methods* section.

<u>Sub-questions for this phase</u>

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

Phase III –Final revision of conditions The third phase of this research was to make a final revision of the conditions which have been identified, synthesized and revised. In this phase of the research, using the results of the interviews, combined with my direct observations, I have revised the conditions and by going back over those which were identified and synthesized in the literature review and analyzing how they relate to the case study findings within this research. From this revision I have made a final synthesis of conditions which have been relevant to achieving a collaborative advantage within these CSPs. Consistent with the argumentation behind the theory of collaborative advantage (Huxham & Vangen 2003), given the extreme heterogeneity of collaborative arrangements in everything from their size to scope this final revision of conditions is *not* intended to serve as any kind of prescribed framework for achieving a collaborative advantage or as a how-to recipe for success. Rather the purpose is to add to the knowledge base of the theory of collaborative advantage and provide practice-oriented examples which other practitioners may see as transferable to their own situations.

Phase IV – Recommendations
The fourth and final phase of this research project will be the development of two sets of recommendations for partnership practitioners. The first set of recommendations has been developed uniquely for each of the practitioners who participated within this study; the core concept behind the theory of collaborative advantage is to evaluate a CSP by identifying conditions and underlying conditions within that CSP and, based on those conditions, to present a picture back to the practitioners within that CSP. Through this evaluation method the researcher is able to provide the practitioners with a holistic understanding of the synergies and tensions which ought to be managed appropriately in order to continue producing a collaborative advantage[5].

<u>Sub-question for the recommendations for The Ocean Project and its partners</u>

- *What* conditions *and key issues of the cross sector partnerships between The Ocean Project and three of its partner aquariums are most relevant to the achievement of collaborative advantage?*

Following the first set of recommendations, a second set of recommendations has been developed for practitioners with an interest in achieving a collaborative advantage. Based on the conditions have been synthesized from the previous phases of research, this second set of recommendations will be developed for practitioners with suggested conditions which are relevant to overcoming potential collaborative barriers and capitalizing on potential opportunities. Although this will not be a guide or a recipe for success, it will provide practitioners with real examples of collaboration and

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[5] This point will be revisited in more detail in the discussion the theory of collaborative advantage.

allow them to make their own judgment as to how well the examples relate to their own situations. The second set of recommendations aims to contribute to answering the primary research question.

1.6 Outline

The second chapter of this thesis details the literature review on the key concepts related to this research paper and the conditions which are relevant to this research. The concepts include cross sector partnerships, social innovation and collaborative advantage. I begin with a description of the methods employed in the literature review. Following this I describe the concept of collaborative advantage and take an in depth look at the theory that I have chosen to adapt my theoretical framework from, the theory of collaborative advantage, which has been developed by scholars Chris Huxham and Siv Vangen (2005). I then provide a description 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 a descriptive overview of some of the mainstream approaches and frameworks which have been developed by scholars to evaluate cross sector partnerships. This overview will provide the reader with a holistic picture of the different ways in which cross sector partnerships have been evaluated and provide the context for the justification of the approach I have taken in this research. Finally, based on the aforementioned literature, I synthesize the conditions that I anticipated were relevant to the case study. The synthesized conditions form the theoretical underpinning for my approach and the basis for my methodology.

In the third chapter, I thoroughly outline the case study design and methods which have been employed in this research. Beginning with a justification of my choice for an exploratory instrumental single-case study with embedded units and then moving on to a description of the sources of information from which data were collected. Information is then provided on the interview methodology, including a justification for the sample selection as well as the preparation and implementation processes. The chapter is closed with a short synopsis of the direct observation methods.

Chapter four details the case study under investigation; the partnership between The Ocean Project and three of its partner aquariums. In this section I provide a brief history of The Ocean Project as well as a description of the partner aquariums, New England Aquarium, Oregon Coast Aquarium and the North Carolina Aquarium Society. For each of the aquariums which have been included I provide a description of the partnership which has been constructed from the responses of the interviews and verified as accurately interpreted by the respondents.

In the fifth chapter, using the data collected from each of the methods, I reflect upon the similarities and differences between the conditions identified in the interview responses. This provides the reader with an idea of how certain conditions have influenced partnerships in similar or different ways. In Chapter 6 I first discuss the limitations and strengths of this research. This is followed by a conclusion in which an answer for the research is question is provided. This is done by using the conditions that have been identified in the case study and translating them into conditions which have been conducive to the partnerships' achievement of a collaborative advantage. More specifically, these conditions are translated from those conditions which were cross-cutting all of the interview responses, i.e. conditions which were common to each of the partnerships collaborative advantage.

After the conclusion, having reflected upon the interview responses, the literature, and my own direct observation, general recommendations are made for the partnerships which have been

evaluated in this research. Continuing, I provide specific recommendations for each of the partnerships. The purpose of providing specific recommendations for each of the individual aquariums is based on the theoretical approach employed in this research which recognizes 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 will naturally have different conditions which are relevant to their partnership[6].

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[6] This approach is discussed in detail in the *theory of collaborative advantage* section.

Chapter 2 – Successful cross-sector partnerships: a literature review

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 hinder and/or foster partnerships ability to achieve a collaborative advantage?*
- *According to literature on the theory of social innovation what* conditions *are likely to hinder and/or foster partnerships ability to achieve a collaborative advantage?*
- *According to literature on the theory of cross sector partnerships, what* conditions *are likely to hinder and/or foster partnerships ability to achieve a collaborative advantage?*

In this chapter I carry out two tasks. First, I provide an introduction into the concepts and theory used in this research, beginning with the concept of collaborative advantage. This is immediately followed by a brief overview of the theoretical approach for this research, adapted from the theory of collaborative advantage, in which I describe how the theory was established, its purpose, and the fundamental elements (conditions). I continue with an overview of some of the mainstream approaches for evaluating CSPs. The overview provides the reader with an understanding of a few of the mainstream approaches, or frameworks, which have been developed by scholars from various fields to evaluate the CSPs.

Second, I provide the results of my synthesis of conditions from a literature review conducted on the each of the key concept areas. The purpose of this literature review was to establish a knowledge base of conditions which are relevant to achieving a collaborative advantage. These conditions serve as points of reflection for the case study findings that have been collected in the subsequent phases of the research. The conditions synthesized in this chapter serve only as a knowledge base, and as such are not static, but rather are considered to be impermanent and are refined using data from the subsequent phases of research. Before carrying out the aforementioned tasks, I describe the methods employed in this review.

2.2 Literature collection & analysis

In this first phase of research the literature review was conducted to develop a sufficient knowledge base about the concepts of collaborative advantage, social innovation and cross sector partnerships and to synthesize a list of conditions. Having known initially that I was interested in a case study on how CSPs are able to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate public engagement in conservation, the starting point of this research and the literature review began with my search for an appropriate theoretical approach. While several different approaches have been developed over the recent decades (see section on CSPs in Chapter 2) I was most intrigued by the theory of collaborative advantage, which is described in depth in Chapter 2. 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 that fact that the theory acknowledges that every collaborative arrangement, although maybe similar, are different, and need to be managed as such. In other words, the theory does not attempt to develop a recipe for successful collaboration, but rather uses reflective practice to provide recommendations to manage in order to potentially achieve collaborative advantage. Moreover, with the unique case study which I have chosen to evaluate, the theory of collaborative advantage appeared to be both the most comprehensive and the most flexible in terms of application.

Having chosen my theoretical approach, the next step was to develop a knowledge base with which to begin my research. Knowing that I was interested in studying CSPs and how they are able to stimulate social innovation (i.e. develop new approaches towards engaging the public in conservation action), I first began by reviewing literature on the theory of collaborative advantage to establish an overview of conditions, after which I began reviewing literature on social innovation and CSPs in order to find any additional conditions which were not covered by the theory and had potential relevance to this case study. Using all of these literary sources, with the assistance of Dedoose, the online computer assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) software; I then made an overall synthesis of conditions for the case study (see Figure 3).
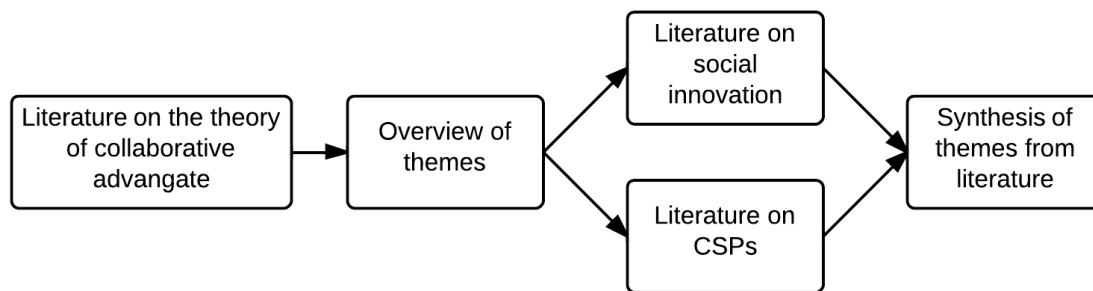
Figure 2. Literature review process

My literature review was conducted primarily with articles retrieved from Google Scholar, with additional sources from Scopus, Utrecht University's online catalogue, and a small number of 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 lead 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 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 with which to begin my synthesis of conditions. Of course, this was a fairly superficial review and there are *many* more scholarly articles which could have been utilized in this process. However, the purpose of the initial literature review was only to provide a knowledge base for the subsequent research phases; an in depth review of conditions

would be enough to constitute multiple books. As conditions appeared in data in the subsequent phases, the literature was revisited as a point of reflection. For example, trust is a theme which appeared in the literature and also in the interviews, so after the interviews were conducted and the theme of trust was identified, I revisited the literature on the theme of trust in depth for further reflection. On the other hand, scope, was another theme which appeared frequently in the literature, but unlike trust it did not surface as a relevant theme during the interviews; hence, although it was a theme identified in the literature as potentially relevant, due to the fact it did not appear in the interviews, it was never analyzed in depth.

The synthesis process was relatively straightforward. Beginning with literature from the theory of collaborative advantage, I began to highlight statements about collaborative arrangements which I thought may be 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 would highlight those statements which were both thematic in nature, recurring through the texts, and were related to the conditions which either hinder or foster successful collaboration. 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 whenever I came across statements which were related to trust in collaboration, I would code that excerpt under the theme of *trust*. 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 certain conditions were left out from my synthesis as they were considered irrelevant to this particular research, namely, *democracy*. The reason for leaving democracy out was because I assumed that the collaborative arrangements in this case study are not heavily affected by democratic dynamics. For example, the context in which the theme democracy was referred to 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. The origin of the root word col- which comes from Latin means *jointly* or *together*, which brings us to the one commonality between all types of collaboration: it can never be done alone. 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, an introduction to which came in section 1.1. The goal of every CSP is to achieve a collaborative advantage. The term *collaborative advantage* is used frequently throughout collaborative literature, but it is often times 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. A narrower, field-specific definition can be found in business where collaborative advantage, which is also called "joint competitive advantage", refers to "benefits gained over competitors in the marketplace

through supply chain partnering" and relates specifically to the outcome of collaborative activity that could not have been achieved by any single institution acting independently (Mei et al. 2008). In between these definitions a broad but narrow enough definition has been developed by Huxham & Vangen (2006) who define a collaborative advantage as *"that synergy can be achieved by integrating the resources and expertise of one organization with that of others"*. In consistency with the primary objective of this research, I am interested in evaluating the conditions which help produce that synergy and for all intents and purposes this definition is the most suitable for this research. However, the *type* of synergy which can be achieved through collaboration is very broad, such as 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 which 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 when the partnership has been able to produce 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 provides the theoretical basis for this research. The theory of collaborative advantage was officially coined by authors Chris Huxham and Siv Vangen in 2005 in the authors' book, *Managing to Collaborate: the Theory and Practice of Collaborative Advantage*. The theory is a themes-based theory[7], the origin of which has been 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 (as demonstrated with the dotted lines in Figure 1.). Additional themes may be present in collaborative arrangements and as such they may vary from partnership to partnership, the themes-based structure acts as a starting point from which a more specific framework may be developed. In addition to practitioner generated themes, the authors have developed three other related themes which have been derived from different sources. The first of these three is *cross-cutting themes*. Cross cutting themes are those themes which, based on the authors research, 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

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[7] Within the context of this study themes will be referred to as *conditions* throughout the remainder of the paper.

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 add[8]. 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 will 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). Figure 1 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.
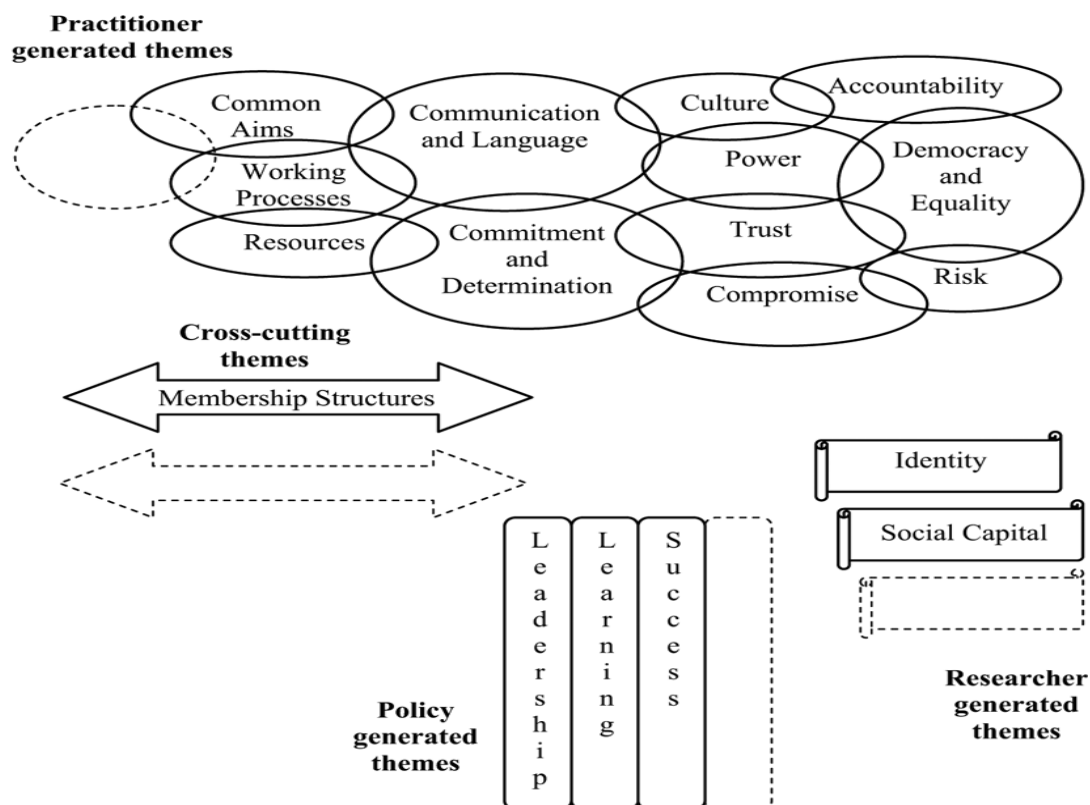
Source: Huxham and Vangen (2005, p. 38)

Figure 3. Types of themes in collaborative practice.

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

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

is where the role of identifying the underlying key issues comes into play. Let's consider, for example, two partnerships. Let's say that one 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 advantage[9]. 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 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.

2.5 Social innovation

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief introduction into the concept of social innovation, its relevance to this case study and how it has been conceptualized within the context of this research. Although considerably 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 issue of 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

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[9] 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.

(Obsurg & 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 cross sector partnerships, but is rather focused on the thematic partnership conditions which have been conducive to the stimulation of social innovations. Unfortunately, given my limited research time, I have not been able to conduct any assessment of the outcomes of the social innovations which have been developed. However, this research is aimed at providing insight into the conditions which are relevant to the achievement of a collaborative advantage, and 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. Due to the fact that these innovative programs have yet to be fully implemented, this research does not aim to provide insight into successful social innovation but is rather focused on the achievement of collaborative advantages which have produced social innovation.

2.6 Cross-sector partnerships

In this section I give an overview of three approaches and frameworks which have been developed by scholars for evaluating CSPs, these are 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 the context in which partnerships have been studied, and subsequently the basis for the justification of the theoretical approach which I have chosen to take. Additionally, the literature on these approaches has contributed to the basis for the synthesis of conditions from CSP literature.

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[10]. 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 a 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 Huxham and Vangen (2005) 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[11], 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). According to scholars, these factors, conditions or conditions, range from trust to organizational culture and everything in between. These conditions and their underlying issues are critical to the success of partnerships. Some are stated to be more critical during the formation of the partnership, such as trust, and some are more critical during the implementation phases, such as commitment. A more in depth discussion of conditions will take place at the end of this chapter.

Research on CSPs has been carried out across many disciplines, from health care to education, and as a result has been approached by researchers within these fields differently in terms of theoretical frameworks, models, objectives and goals. Here I discuss three mainstream approaches towards evaluating CSPs followed by a discussion of the approach which I have chosen. Although I have chosen to base my research primarily on the theory of collaborative advantage, which will be discussed in a following section, the approaches discussed here offer interesting evaluation techniques and as such have influenced my approach. Moreover, I have chosen to include an overview of these approaches because I believe it is important for the reader to have a clear understanding of the different ways in which CSPs may be evaluated.

This first approach I discuss here is the *continuum approach*, followed by a discussion of the *platform-framework approach* and I conclude with *governance framework approach*. As aforementioned, after descriptions of the approaches I discuss social innovation and the theory of

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[10] For the purpose of this research, social innovations refer to new approaches towards raising awareness and creating public engagement in conservation. This will be revisited in a following section.
[11] Factors, themes and conditions will all be used interchangeably throughout this paper to refer to partnership relationship factors.

collaborative advantage. At the end of the chapter, based on my literature review, I present a synthesis of conditions which I expected to be relevant to my research.

The continuum approach

James E. Austin, a professor at Harvard Business School, has written a significant amount on CSPs and collaboration has developed the *collaboration continuum* (Austin 2010). The collaboration continuum (See Figure 1) provides a framework which, depending on the degree and level of interaction in collaboration, categorizes partnerships into one of three different typologies, or stages.

In Austin's (2010) continuum the first and most traditional type of collaboration which occurs is at the *philanthropic stage*. This stage is characterized by a charitable donor contributing resources to a nonprofit or advocacy group for any given cause. The resources which often come in the form of funds are provided to the nonprofit or advocacy by the charitable donor (usually a corporation or foundation). In this stage the donor does not have much, if any, say in how those resources will be used. In fact, often times the donors at this stage of collaboration do not even require follow up reports on the usage or impact of those resources (Austin 2010). An example of a partnership at the philanthropic stage is a foundation which donates to a nonprofit or advocacy group, and the transaction ends there. Although the foundation may want to see their resources used to promote a particular cause, at this stage they do not interact with their partner in a collaborative manner.

The second stage in the collaboration continuum is the *transactional stage.* In the transactional stage the partners "carry out their resource exchanges through specific activities" (Austin 2010, pp. 22). For example, one of the common types of partnerships at this stage is *cause-related marketing*. Cause-related marketing partnerships occur when a corporation partners with a nonprofit to further a cause while simultaneously co-branding their own brand to increase their own profitability. In this type of partnership both partners have a more heavily invested interest in the outcome of the partnership and, in contrast to the philanthropic stage, the donors or corporations do have a say in what the objective of the partnership is and how to implement it. To illustrate this using one of Austin's (2010) examples, the clothing company Timberland partnered together with City Year, an organization dedicated to putting young people into service and transforming American society. Initially, this partnership was characterized by the philanthropic stage, where Timberland was providing charitable contributions to City Year, but the transaction ended there. The partnership evolved into a transactional stage when Timberland went from solely providing resources to actively working together with City Year on multiple different levels; from being the official supplier of City Year's uniforms to City Year staff leading Timberland in team-building and diversity training.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT	LOW>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>HIGH
• Nature of Relationship	*Philanthropic>>>>Transactional>>>>Integrative*
• Magnitude of Resources	*Small>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>Big*
• Scope of Activities	*Narrow>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>Broad*
• Importance to Mission	*Peripheral>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>Central*
• Interaction Level	*Infrequent>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>Intensive*
• Managerial Complexity	*Simple>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>Complex*
• Social Value	*Modest>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>Magnified*

Figure 4. Collaboration continuum (Austin 2000).

The third and final stage in Austin's continuum is the *integrative stage*. The integrative stage occurs when the level of engagement and degree of interaction between partners becomes very high, as seen in figure 1. At this stage, the partners' missions are aimed at a collective objective, resource exchanges intensify and personnel interactions become more frequent. In this stage, the partnership becomes a fundamental component of both partners' operations and as described by Austin, it ultimately takes the form of an institutionalized alliance. To illustrate this stage with the previous example of Timberland and City Year's partnership, Austin (2010) indicates the transition from transactional to integrative when Timberland employee's work for City Year became inseparable from their regular work duties. In other words, doing work to help achieve partnership goals became a tangible part of employee responsibility. For example, initially Timberland employees were being compensated additionally for their work with City Year, when that work eventually became part of their job description, the partnership became a joint venture in which employees from both partners' were working together on multiple different levels with little boundaries between each other. To summarize the transitions along the continuum: in the philanthropic stage, Timberland's transactions with City Year were simply resource based, with little to no employee interaction. In the transactional stage, Timberland and City Year began to form a closer alliance, interaction between employees increased and working together on multiple different levels began but employee duties were still seen as largely independent of the partnership. In the integrative stage, Timberland and City Year employees were working together on all levels; Timberland's CEO became member of City Year's board of directors and employee duties for the partnership became a part of the regular job.

Googins and Rochlin (2000) make a similar effort to Austin's (2010) in their attempt to define a 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 and that each partner must be aware of what the value is and how to generate that value through a well-constructed and implemented partnership. These scholars indicate 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, who has spent a significant amount more time developing his continuum, has attempted to create a conceptual framework which can be applied to all types of partnerships. Both of these approaches are valuable in their own respect and offer valuable insight into collaboration. However, while both approaches offer valuable insight into the research of my case study and assist in providing the theoretical underpinning, due to the inability of both of these continuums to be adapted to the partnerships which I have chosen to analyze, I have abandoned their approach.

The platform-framework approach

Another approach at developing an analytical framework taken from organizational research is that of Selsky & Parker's (2005), which I will refer to as the platform-framework approach. In this framework the authors first define 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 suggests that the partnership is formed based on a need for resources. If a nonprofit partner's together with a corporation in search of financial resources to aid in their objectives, 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 "metaproblems" 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 Rochlins' (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 my 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. Similarly, as The Ocean Project is not legally a nonprofit and is rather an advocacy group, there is no arena which this case study can be placed in. Although 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 within those stages. The insight gained through this approach provides additional support for the theoretical underpinning of my research.

The governance framework approach

The final approach which I cover here briefly is what I refer to as the governance framework approach from both Ansell & Gash (2007) and Bryson et al. (2006). I refer to this approach 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 (see figure 2 for an example). Although they vary slightly, these process variables are disaggregated into four general collaborative process categories which are *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 particular conditions which are relevant, 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, the underlying key issues of those variables and ultimately develop partnership management recommendations for practitioners.

Of all the approaches mentioned here, the governance framework approach is the most adaptable to my case study. However, the partnership which I evaluate in this research is *not* intended to fulfill a governance role and has rather been established as a network through which to stimulate behavioral change. As a result the governance-based theoretical approach does not lend itself well to this research; many of the process variables which are discussed in both frameworks are not applicable to my research. For example, as seen in Figure 5, *structure and governance* conditions such as governance structure and structural configuration do not apply to this particular case study. The reason for this is the partnership under investigation has no real structure, e.g. partners simply have to sign up on The Ocean Project website to become a partner.

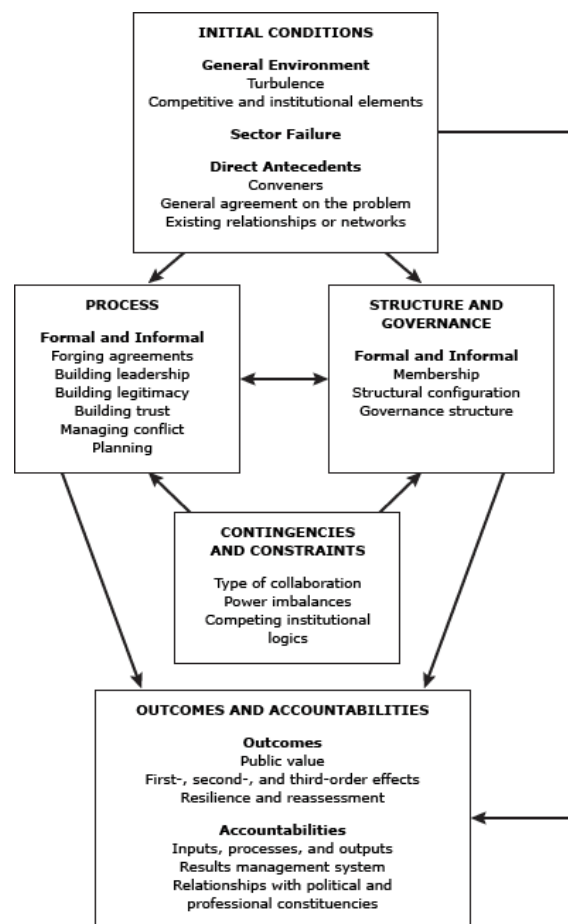**Figure 5.** A framework for understanding cross-sector partnerships (Bryson et al. 2006).

2.7 Synthesis of conditions
After having reviewed and analyzed conditions in the literature 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. These conditions were selected based on their relevance to

achieving collaborative advantage and/or their relevance to social innovation; the only theme which was left out at this point in the research was *democracy*, as discussed in the methods section.

The list of conditions was synthesized from the aforementioned literature using the CAQDAS, Dedoose. Here, I will briefly discuss the conditions which were identified with a concise overview of the context in which they are most often discussed. Although previously noted, it is important to reiterate here that this synthesis is by *no means* exhaustive or complete, as this was not the intention. These conditions were identified to provide a basis for the subsequent phases of research. Each theme in itself can be discussed at great length as they relate to CSPs differently. In this sense, this review may be considered very 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 will be brief to avoid repetition. The order in which the conditions are discussed here is based on their frequency of statements which have been coded in Dedoose.

Theme	# of Excerpts	# of Sources	Sources
Common aims/interests	56	22	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	48	18	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	38	16	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	35	18	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	23	12	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	24	16	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	25	14	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	21	14	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	21	12	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	23	11	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	17	6	Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Austin 2000; Holmes & Moir 2007; Huxham 2003; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Rondinelli & London 2003
Networks	16	12	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	16	10	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	11	8	Austin & Seitanidi 2012; 2012; Bryson et al. 2006; Holmes & Moir 2007; Huxham 2003; Le Ber & Branzei 2010; Rondinelli & London 2003; Selsky & Parker 2005
Scope	10	6	Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Holmes & Moir 2007; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Murphy et al. 2012; Rondinelli & London 2003; Waddock 1988

Table 1. Conditions synthesized from the literature.

Common aims/interests

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 theme in creating successful CSPs and achieving a collaborative advantage. Establishing common aims/interests is almost exclusively referred to as an important theme 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 theme 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).

Trust

Trust is a fairly obvious theme. After all, 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 trust between partners. Similar to communication, trust is a theme 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 probably, if not the most, interconnected theme 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.
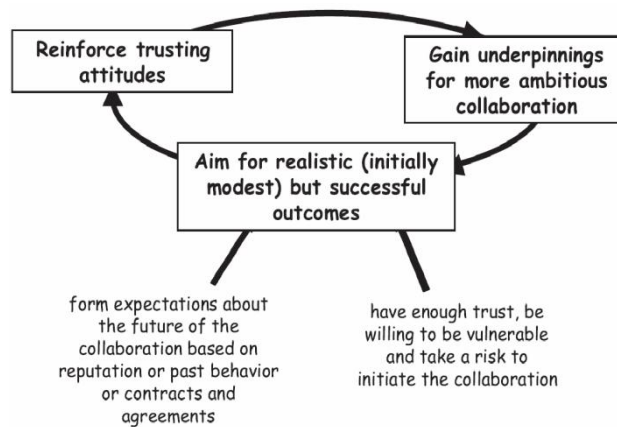
Figure 6. Trust-building loop. Huxham & Vangen (2005; pp. 140)

Organizational fit

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 development of successful partnerships. Organizational fit, which is often referred to as selecting the right partner, is considered an important theme 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). In a discussion on creating value from collaboration, Austin & Seitanidi (2012; pp. 729) state that "the realization of the potential value of resource complementarity is dependent on organizational fit". Or, put more generally, "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" (Das & Teng 1997).

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 priorities[12]".

Communication

Communication is said to be a critical component of 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 theme in relation to other conditions such as

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

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 theme 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.

Resources

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.

Leadership

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 skills[13], some of the key aspects of leadership are their *managerial capacity* and *innovation orientation[14]*. 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).

Learning

The theme of learning 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 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).

Power

Power, like trust and communication, is a theme 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 coregulation (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

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[13] As noted previously, an in depth discussion of themes will be avoided in this section and as such I will not discuss leadership qualities.

[14] 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.

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.

Commitment/engagement

Commitment is considered to be a fundamental element of successful collaborative arrangements. 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 theme 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 avoided[15]. That being said, when collaboration does take place, 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 relationship and to cooperate with the selected NPO partner on finding solutions if the partnership is to be productive."

Compromise

Compromise is a theme discussed largely in relation to organizational fit as well as partnership goals and processes, the development of which requires negotiation, or compromise. Given that many CSPs occur between sectors with competing goals, values/beliefs, etc. compromising becomes a common theme 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.

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[15] This point will be revisited in the discussion.

Openness/willingness

The theme 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.

Networks

The theme 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 organisations (from trade unions to hospitals) and the support of progressive foundations and philanthropists." Furthemore, 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 theme in the context of stimulating social innovation.

Working together

Working together is a theme 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.

Conflict

As mentioned previously, because CSPs happen across different sectors, and as such across 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 theme 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 theme to act as a barrier to achieving a collaborative advantage.

Scope

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.

2.8 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter gave insight into the key concepts in this research and a synthesis of conditions found in the literature review. These conditions provided the knowledge base for both structuring the interviews as well as for reflection on the results. Specifically, after having completed the interviews (Chapter 3) I used the literature on these conditions to reflect upon the answers from the respondents in order to gain further insight into their partnerships. After reflecting on these conditions, I then provided the respondents with recommendations for their partnerships (Chapter 3) and for practitioners in general (Chapter X). In the next chapter I dive into the case study.

Chapter 3 – Case study design & methods

3.1 Introduction

This section provides a description of the qualitative methods used to carry out this empirical research. As described in the previous section, three methods have been employed in this research, the purpose of which 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 has assisted in reflecting upon the attitudes and behaviors of the interviewees. Moreover, my own observation from within the workplace allows me to further triangulate the results and establish trustworthiness.

I continue this chapter by clarifying my choice for the instrumental case study with embedded units, followed by an explanation of the sources of information used in this research. Next, I provide detailed descriptions of how I carried out implementation of each of the methods employed in this study. I conclude the chapter with a brief summary.

It is important to note that this research is considered to be a *naturalistic inquiry*[16] 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 (see Table 1). 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*[17]. Collectively, these terms refer to establishing *trustworthiness*. 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.

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[16] For a detailed explanation of naturalistic inquiry see Lincoln's *Naturalistic inquiry* (1985)
[17] For a detailed explanation of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability

Quality criterion	Possible provision made by researcher
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. Adapted from Shenton (2004, pp. 73).

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. For this research, I am interested in studying the contemporary phenomenon of how collaborate advantage can be achieved and produce social innovation[18]; specifically, within the context of the partnerships between The Ocean Project and three 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 because of the belief that they are critical in informing the phenomenon of collaborative advantage. Moreover, within this case there are certainly more variables of interest than data points, which calls for the use of multiple sources of evidence in order to triangulate results (Yin 2009). Furthermore, as indicated by Yin (2009), case study research benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis, which in this case is the theory of collaborative advantage. Finally, consistent with the notion that qualitative research does not lend itself well to producing generalizable results in the conventional sense (Lincoln & 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

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[18] 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.

comparison within their own partnerships with similar attributes, because of which the single case study is a suitable choice[19].

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 management[20]. 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 (Ilott 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 additional typologies, the *exploratory* case study and the *explanatory* case study. The exploratory case study can be 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 am interested in contributing to theory development by further *exploring* the conditions and on which it is based. Similarly (though less so), and 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 conditions by seeing how well these theoretical propositions apply to this particular case under investigation; in this sense the research is also explanatory.

It is of critical importance to note that with the instrumental case study approach generalization in the conventional statistical sense is considered to be unachievable (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 – 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,

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[19] 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).
[20] Confirmed through informal communication.

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.

Through this instrumental case study I explore in depth 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 participating institutions as well as other practitioners who can then determine the transferability of the results of these cases to their own situations and see the transferability of the case findings.

3.3 Sources of information

To assist in establishing trustworthiness, before describing each of research phases it is important to give an overview of the sources and types of information which were 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, literature[21], 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 which are of interest are individual's experiences, feelings, and perceptions[22], as well as characteristics of collaborative processes, situations and conditions. These characteristics will be conceptualized through conditions[23].

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 the case of 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 that is collected in the case study is then reflected upon using the knowledge that was collected during the literature review.

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[21] Literature on the theory of collaborative advantage, social innovation and cross sector partnerships.
[22] In regards to collaboration.
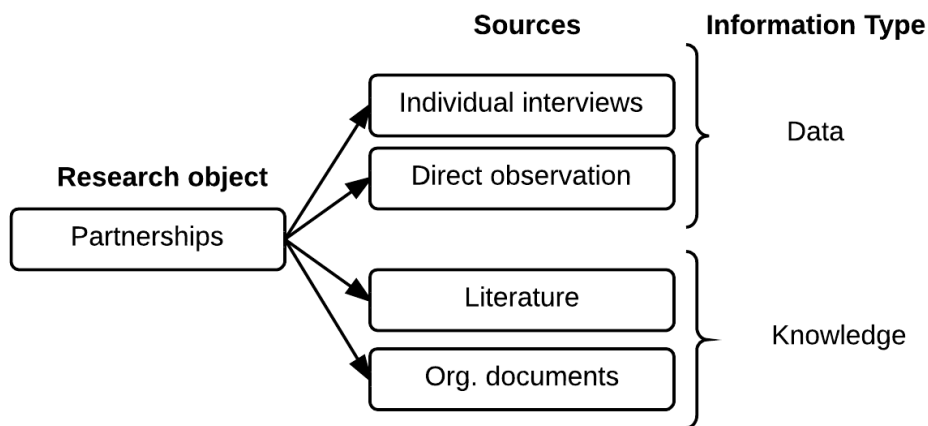[23] Briefly mentioned in the introduction, reviewed further in Chapter 2.

Figure 7. Research objects and sources of information (Verschuren & Doorewaard 2010, pp. 207)

3.3 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.

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.

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 theme, 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 theme 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 variety of different types of questions with a total number of 11 (see appendix for list of questions). The 11 questions served as the overall structure to the interview, although there were times when questions led into follow-up questions, 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 interviewer[24] 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 experience[25]. 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.

	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

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[24] An element which will be discussed further in the research limitations.
[25] Douglas Meyer, part time consultant for The Ocean Project, has significant experience in conducting interviews.

Table 3. Eight principles for interview preparation stage, adapted from McNamara (2009).

Implementation

After preparing came the implementation. The first set of interviews was conducted with each of the Directors of Education 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 the Director of Education from North Carolina. Initially unsure as to whether or not this would have any adverse effect on my results[26], I sought the advice of my supervisor, Carel Dieperink, who informed me that as long at the structure and format remain the same, an in person interview should not negatively 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), which was my initial plan, upon the advice of Douglas Meyer I opted not to. While I was doubtful as to why the participants would have any desire not to be open and honest speaking about a very non-controversial topic, 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.

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[26] I was unable to find any literary references to this kind of dilemma.

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│                                                     │
│                      Box 8.1                        │
│                                                     │
│          Quality Criteria for an Interview          │
│                                                     │
│                                                     │
│   • The extent of spontaneous, rich, specific, and relevant │
│     answers from the interviewee.                   │
│   • The shorter the interviewer's questions and the longer │
│     the subjects' answers, the better.              │
│   • The degree to which the interviewer follows up and clar- │
│     ifies the meanings of the relevant aspects of the answers. │
│   • The ideal interview is to a large extent interpreted │
│     throughout the interview.                       │
│   • The interviewer attempts to verify his or her interpreta- │
│     tions of the subject's answers in the course of the interview. │
│   • The interview is "self-communicating"—it is a story │
│     contained in itself that hardly requires much extra de- │
│     scriptions and explanations.                    │
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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 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 cross-cutting conditions, i.e. conditions which were present and relevant within each of the interviews. 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.

3.4 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. 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 investigation[27] as well as for the general recommendations provided in the conclusion

3.5 Conclusion

In sum, 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

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[27] And are explicitly noted when referenced to.

all data points for triangulation and reflection upon the results, recommendations for practitioners were produced, these will be presented in the results.

Chapter 4 – The cases

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I provide background information on The Ocean Project and a description of each of the three partner aquariums under investigation, New England Aquarium, Oregon Coast Aquarium, and North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores. After the background information, using the responses from the interviews conducted with both The Ocean Project and the partner aquariums, I provide three narrative style discussions, one for each partnership. In each discussion I describe the conditions which have been identified as relevant to the achievement of a collaborative advantage by each institution, how they interact with each other and some of the underlying key issues of those conditions. Following this chapter, in Chapter 5, I provide reflections on the similarities and differences between the partnerships. In Chapter 6 I conclude this research with a discussion on the limitations of this research, a conclusion and recommendations for the partnerships under investigation and recommendations for partnerships in general.

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 World Oceans Day[28], 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 examine three of those partnerships. Beginning with a look at the New England Aquarium, I will first provide a very brief introduction into the aquarium itself, followed by a narrative on the partnership with The Ocean Project. Using the results of the interview, the narrative will explore how the partnership was formed, the basis for the relationship, the conditions which have been relevant to achieving a collaborative advantage and social innovation, and overall how the partnership functions. After the narrative, having reflected on both my direct observation as well as the literature, recommendations are provided for both institutions regarding which conditions have been relevant to the achievement of collaborative advantage and how they might be managed to maintain that. This will be done for each of the aquariums.

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

4.3 Embedded unit #1: New England Aquarium

The New England Aquarium (NEAQ) is a private, not-for-profit aquarium which was established in 1969 in Boston, Massachusetts. Since it's established, the NEAQ has been one of the United States most popular aquariums and remains so today with approximately 1.3 million visitors per year. New NEAQ, one of the founding partners of The Ocean Project, is one of several aquariums on the forefront of conservation and is dedicated to "redefining what it means to be an aquarium combining education, entertainment and action to address the most challenging problems facing the ocean."

The following narrative is made up from the interview reponsenses from Heather Deschenes, the Manager of Youth Programs at the NEAQ as well as those from the employees of The Ocean Project. The narrative will discuss the basis for the relationship as well as explore the relationship conditions which have been identified by the respondents as important to the stimulation of social innovation and achieving a collaborative advantage. After the narrative, having reflected on the responses from the participants with the literature and my own direct observations, recommendations are made for how to maintain a collaborative advantage into the future.

4.4 The partnership

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 and they have a good *organizational fit*, there has been a degree of difference in regards to the appropriate approach for implementation of the program. The paradigm which dominates the NEAQ leadership and the aquarium community[29] 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.

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[29] As identified through direct observation. This point will be revisited in the final recommendations.

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.

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[30]. 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

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[30] 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.

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.
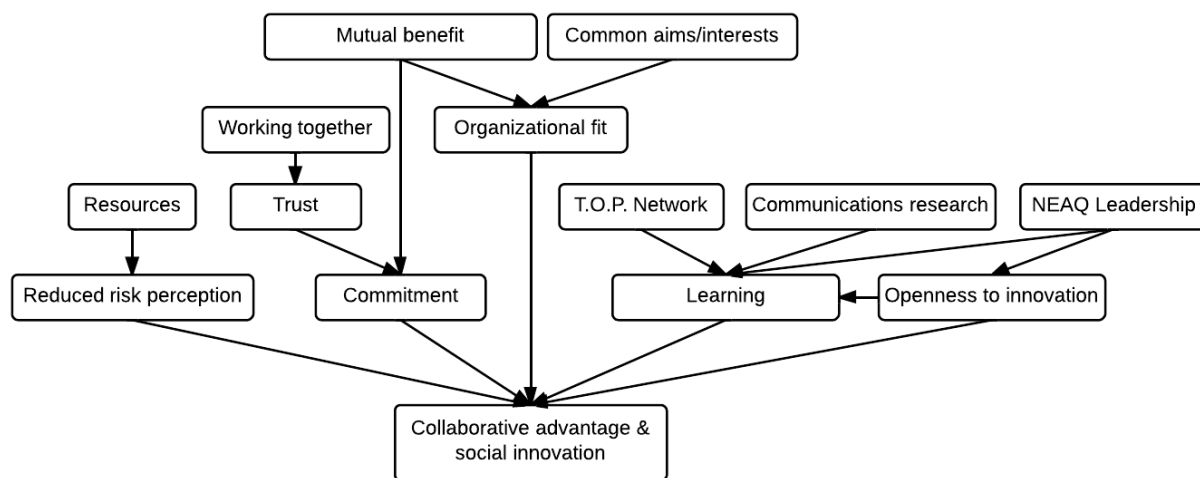

Figure 8. Conditions relevant to NEAQ and The Ocean Project partnership's collaborative advantage.

To summarize this discussion, there are several conditions (italicized) which have been identified by the respondents as contributing to, or hindering, the partnership's ability to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation. Additionally, there is seemingly much room for improvement, which will be discussed in the following recommendations.

The ability of this partnership to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate innovation can be attributed to several conditions. To begin with, these partners have a high ***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. While there is a divergence on some of the procedural tactics, 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***. Because the partners have expressed a high level of trust in one another and because both partners have been able to benefit from the partnership, individuals from both organizations are ***committed*** to achieving a collaborative advantage and stimulating social innovation.

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 there is a perception of ***risk*** which 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 theme in reducing this risk perception and subsequently allowing experimental innovative solutions to be tested; without which the social innovation would have unlikely been developed.

Additionally, there are several conditions which have been identified as important to specifically the stimulation of social innovation. First of all, it is important that the leadership at NEAQ has **openness** to innovation, promotes organizational **learning,** and supports the aims of the Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program. Second, both the **communications research** and the **network** access, which NEAQ has been provided via The Ocean Project, has greatly contributed to learning and the stimulation of innovative ideas. Third, the resources provided by the Grants greatly reduce the perception of risk from NEAQ; the Grants resources give NEAQ, and Heather, the freedom to experiment with innovative ideas which otherwise would have been considered too risky to implement.

4.5 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 inspiring "the public to better understand, cherish and conserve marine and coastal ecosystems."

The following narrative, which will be presented in the same format as the previous one, 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.

4.6 The partnership

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.

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.
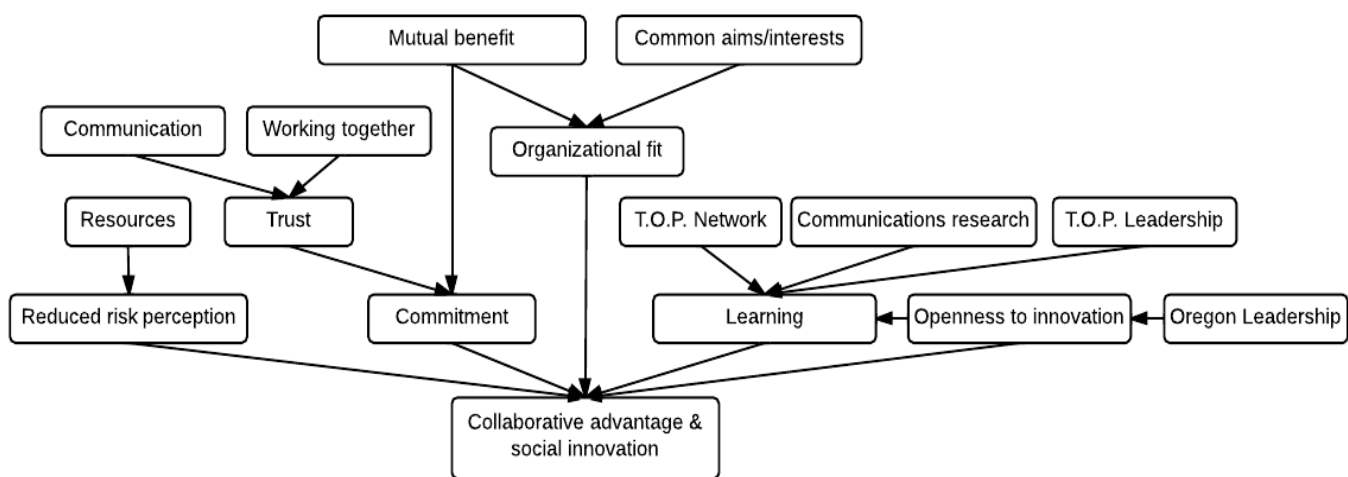
Figure 9. Conditions relevant to Oregon and The Ocean Project partnership's collaborative advantage.

To summarize the conditions identified (italicized) as relevant to this partnerships ability to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation, the building blocks of the partnership and include **working together** and **communication**, both of which have contributed to **trust**; developing a shared understanding and having a **common aim/interest** which assist in a good organizational fit;

both partners gain added value from the partnership and as such obtain a ***mutual benefit*** which also contributes to a high ***organizational fit*** and a high level of ***commitment*** from both partners.

The ***leadership*** of The Ocean Project in pushing aquariums to be innovative and ***learn*** by experimenting with new approaches 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. Although Kerry is willing to think outside the box, there is still a perception of ***risk*** when attempting to develop experimental innovative solutions, but the risk is greatly reduced by the ***resources*** from the Grant, which give Oregon the freedom to experiment with innovative solutions.

4.7 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. After the general discussion and recommendations I conclude the chapter with a synopsis.

4.8 The partnership

Similar to the other two partnerships which have been discussed, the partnership between North Carolina Aquariums[31] (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 *working 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. All of these conditions have also contributed to a high level of *trust.*

The *aims* and *interests* of these organizations have been described as evolving in the same kind of way, a condition which has contributed to their *organizational fit*. 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.

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[31] 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).

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 learning, but the *support* and empowerment. The conditions of empowerment and support were 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 relationship between The Ocean Project and NCA leadership, which, similar to the previous partnerships, 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 hindrances to the ability of this partnership to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation is that NCA is particularly burdened by many layers of authority, which can provide both political and philosophical barriers. 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 Direct of NCA has played an important role in fostering high levels of trust and reducing the perception of risk.
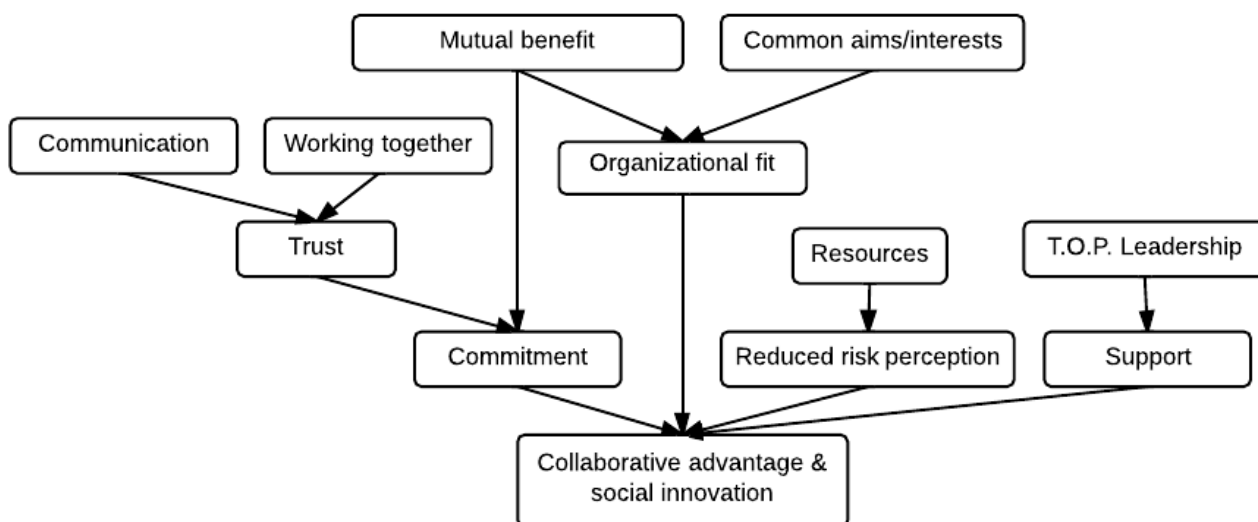
Figure 10. Conditions relevant to NCA and The Ocean Project partnership's collaborative advantage.

To summarize the conditions identified (italicized) as relevant to this partnerships ability to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation, the foundation of this partnership was built through a history of informal interaction via conferences, working together prior to the Grant and also collaborating closely for World Oceans Day, all of which have contributed to *trust*; the partners have a very ***common aim/interest*** which assists in a making organizational fit; both partners gain added value from the partnership and as such obtain a ***mutual benefit*** which also contributes to a high ***organizational fit*** and a high level of ***commitment*** from both partners.

The ***leadership*** of The Ocean Project in pushing aquariums to be innovative the support they have provided in both tangibles and intangibles 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 theme in achieving a collaborative advantage. The relationship ties with the Director of the NCA has been important, however due to the extremely bureaucratic nature of NCA, there is still a perception of *risk* when attempting to develop experimental 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.

4.9 Conclusion

Each of the partnerships under investigation in this study has both many interesting similarities and differences. The following chapter reflects on these similarities and differences and how they have interacted within each partnership. After which a discussion takes place in which I reflect upon the limitations of this research and the difficulties faced as a novice research, which although were many, I am confident the results of this research are trustworthy and useful for both the participants of the study, other practitioners, and future research.

Chapter 5 – Reflection & discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, using the data collected in each of the research phases, including the literature review, direct observations and the interviews with the participating organizations to reflect on the similarities and differences between the partnerships. This will provide the reader with an idea of which conditions were common throughout each of the partnerships and which conditions were unique in each partnership. In the next chapter after the discussion and conclusion, building off the reflections in this chapter, I highlight the conditions which are relevant to the success of the partnerships in this study a (CSPs in the context of social innovation) and provide recommendations for both the partnerships in this study as well as for practitioners in general.

5.2 Similarities and differences between cases

In this section I reflect on the similarities and differences found in the cases which were described in Chapter 4. In Chapter 6, I provide recommendations for each of the individual partnerships and partnerships in general which may be in similar situations.

Common aims, mutual benefit & organizational fit.

To begin with, each of the partnerships had a high organizational fit which was positively influence by the congruity of aims and the ability of the partners to create a mutual benefit. Although, it should be noted that other factors contribute to organizational fit. For example, organizational cultures, values and beliefs, etc. These conditions were similar in most aspects with the exception of the partnership between NEAQ and The Ocean Project which was described in section 4.2 and will be revisited in the following chapter in the recommendations for NEAQ and The Ocean Project.

Communication, working together & trust

Each of the partnerships were founded on conditions of working together and communication, which are conditions that when managed well contribute to greater trust between the partners. However, although each of these conditions was relevant to the partnerships, they also had different underlying key issues. For example, I chose not to include communication as a theme contributing to trust in the NEAQ partnership, because although communication was happening, it did not seem to be happening to an extent in which trust was being established, moreover both partners expressed a certain dissatisfaction with the level of communication in the partnership. On the other hand, Oregon and NCA both cited that communication between the partners was important, particularly in the case of NCA where The Ocean Project communicates with leadership outside of the context of the Grant on a more interpersonal level.

Commitment

Commitment was a theme that was present in each of the partnerships, namely from Douglas and the interviewees' from each of the aquariums. However, commitment from the leadership of all partners seemed to be lacking, which reduces trust and increases the perception of risk (Huxham & Vangen 2005). For The Ocean Project, the lack of commitment was largely a result of resource constraints; 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).

Risk & resources

Not only did risk appear as a relevant theme in each of the cases under investigation in this study, but during the *Innovation and the Living World Symposium* risk was a very apparent theme as a potential barrier to innovation. In the cases under evaluation, and reflected by the participants in the symposium, the perception of risk by leadership is a major barrier. From the data collected, the perception of risk is a result of two phenomenon. Although this has been covered in Chapter 4, I will briefly summarize here. First, the industry's conventional approach to inspiring aquarium visitors prevents aquarium leadership from branching out and experimenting with new methods. Second, aquariums are not the most profitable businesses, moreover most are not-for-profit, and as such they are very cautious on their spending, as a result 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 condition in enabling the partnership to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation.

Learning, leadership & network

The communications research as a tool for learning was a key theme in both NEAQ and Oregon and, and was cited as an important condition in stimulating social innovation, but not for NCA. However, Windy repeatedly cited the importance of the communications research and The Ocean Project's leadership as tools for supporting her in developing innovative solutions. Similarly, The Ocean Project's leadership was considered an important theme in pushing both Oregon and NCA, while Kerry from Oregon cited the importance of that leadership as a function to stimulate learning, Windy from NCA cited the importance of their leadership as a support mechanism throughout the industry.

The relationship of the 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 leadership[32].

Lastly, The Ocean Project's network was considered an important theme by both NEAQ and Oregon in stimulating innovation, 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

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

community, it was not considered to be a very relevant theme to the achievement of their collaborative advantage or the stimulation of social innovation.

The conditions which were common to achieving a collaborative advantage in these partnerships were *organizational fit*, which was fostered by a *mutual benefit* and *common aims/interests*; *trust* which was fostered by *working together* and *communication*; *commitment*, which was fostered by trust and mutual benefit; and, perhaps most importantly of all, resources, which were able to reduce the perception of risk. In the cases of both NEAQ and Oregon, *learning* was an important theme, but it was fostered by different conditions in each case. Additionally, the *network* provided by The Ocean Project was cited as an important condition for facilitating learning within both NEAQ and Oregon, and although it was briefly mentioned by Windy, it was not attributed to the collaborative advantage. And in the cases of NCA and Oregon, The Ocean Project's *leadership* was also an important theme. In the discussion in the following chapter I detail the limitations of this project and reflect upon the research, followed by the conclusion in which I answer the research question, discuss the implications of this research, and provide general recommendations for practitioners.

6.1 Discussion

After over a decade of developing the theory of collaborative advantage, Huxham & Vangen (2005) come to the conclusion that, unless "the stakes are really worth pursuing" don't collaborate unless you have to. Prior to conducting this research, I was puzzled at that conclusion and was almost certain that it was not true in every context, particularly the one in which this research is grounded; I stand corrected. I now firmly believe that Huxham & Vangen (2005) were indeed right on target with their conclusion. Even in the context of this research where both partners have a common aim from the outset, a high level of organizational fit and can produce a mutual benefit, it became very clear throughout this research that, even with those conditions, collaboration is indeed *extremely* time consuming and requires a significant commitment. That being said, given the limited resources of The Ocean Project and the extraordinarily broad scope of their aims, they have done well at collaborating. However, as discussed throughout Chapter 3, there is still significant room for improvement.

Throughout this research I came across several limitations. To start, from the outset I believed that a sample size of three was manageable enough for the allotted time; I was wrong. Through my investigation of each of the three cases, I could only but scratch the surface of many of the nuances of these partnership relationships. While I do believe that I was able to uncover results that are useful, I can't help but feel there was still so much yet to be explored. For example, prior to conducting my interviews, I was under the impression that one interview session with each of the aquariums' point person for the partnership combined with interviews from each of The Ocean Project staff would be sufficient to gain insight into these relationships; that was only partly true. While I was able to gain insight into these partnerships and identify many relevant conditions to their ability to create a collaborative advantage, after having collected the data and analyzing it, I found one crucial piece that was missing, interviews with the leadership at each of the aquariums. Having identified leadership as a theme in the literature review, I knew that it would be relevant, but I did not have enough knowledge at that point to know indeed how much it would have helped had I been able to interview the leadership. Moreover, it would have been beneficial to have been able to conduct multiple interviews with each of the participants in order to further triangulate the results.

Another limitation to this research is that the theory of collaborative advantage was developed out of practice-oriented research in which the researchers were actively participating in the collaborative arrangements, working as consultants and were able to influence events and record data post-intervention to gain further insight. While I was able to develop recommendations by reflecting upon others' empirical research, due to the extreme heterogeneity of collaborative arrangements, specifically this one, it's impossible to know whether those recommendations are suitable. However, in consideration of the fact that theory of collaborative advantage is to provide reflexive handles for practitioners and *not* to provide them with how-to guidelines, this limitation is not as significant compared to others.

Another difficult aspect of this particular research project was that, although the theory of collaborative advantage lent itself fairly well to be adapted to this project, the authors, Huxham & Vangen (2005) developed the theory in a drastically different context in which the collaborative arrangements were much more structured. Similarly, there is essentially *no* literature that has been conducted on a partnership of this type. The Ocean Project's partnerships are a very unique kind. For example, The Ocean Project has been established as a network to inspire conservation action, particularly through zoos, aquariums and museums. In other words, The Ocean Project was established with collaboration as a sole function. So, while it is a cross sector partnership in the sense that it is a charitable organization and the aquariums are all either private/public not-for-profits, they are still within the same community. Most of the literature on collaboration is in the context of collaboration which happens between different organizations, which were not developed with the sole purpose of collaborating with the industry, such as public-private partnerships, NGO-business partnerships, etc. unlike The Ocean Project, which is solely dependent on collaborative activities, the organizations in these partnerships have functions outside of collaboration. Additionally, The Ocean Project's partnerships are *extremely* loose and have no real structure, another characteristic which was not represented in previous empirical research. These characteristics made the application of the theory of collaborative advantage a difficult task.

As a novice researcher, this project has been a significant learning experience. In addition to becoming more acutely aware of the limitations, I was able to develop my interviewing skills, familiarize myself with the use of 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 conducting them and felt that, given my beginner status, was able to do a good job. On the other hand, I was even less familiar with direct observation, and while I was able to incorporate some of my direct observation into the results, I felt that I could have done a better job at tracking my direct observations and creating a better audit trail.

It should also be mentioned that mutual benefit was a theme which appeared consistently throughout the interviews but was not identified 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) do clearly cite the importance of creating a shared value, a theme which I failed to include in the initial literature review. That being said, it is a theme which was a fundamental component in the success of the partnerships in this study.

In sum, despite the limitations of this project I was able to produce useful results and gain an in depth understanding of the research methods which were employed. Additionally, I gained valuable insight into the process of collaboration, which although I can still say I am an advocate of, I now

have a significantly better understanding of the complexities and difficulties involved in achieving a collaborative advantage.

5.2 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, several conditions were relevant throughout each of the partnerships and identified by all respondents as important contributors to the success and collaborative advantage in their institution, specifically within the context of social innovation. There were a number of limitations and lessons learned throughout this research, but the project has still provided value and may act as a point of departure for more research in the future. The next chapter will conclude this research project by answering the main research question and providing recommendations for both The Ocean Project and its partners as well possible recommendations for practitioners in similar situations who find the results of this research transferable to their own partnerships.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion & recommendations

6. Introduction

In this chapter, I conclude the research by discussing those conditions which have been relevant to the success of the partnerships under investigation in this study. The aim of this research was to investigate three CSPs which have been able to achieve a collaborative advantage within the context of social innovation. This was done by first doing a literature review of existing empirical research and identifying conditions which have been cited previously. Using an exploratory instrumental case study design, interviews and direct observation were employed to collect additional data and refine the conditions found in the literature to conditions which were specific within the context of this research project and may be transferable to other research projects. After the conclusion, building off of the previous phases of research I provide recommendations for the partnerships under evaluation in this study and recommendations for partnerships which may be developed in a similar context.

6.2 Conclusion

The results of this research have provided interesting insight into the research question:

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

Additionally it provides a further knowledge base for the theory of collaborative advantage. Using the seven conditions which appeared consistently throughout each of the partnerships under investigation, here I translate those conditions into conditions which may assist a partnership in achieving a collaborative advantage. To begin, based on the results of this study and other empirical research (Austin 2000; 2010; Austin & Seitanidi 2012; Googins & Rochlin 2000) it is important to ensure that partners have the ability to create (1) *mutual benefit*, a condition which was present in each of the partnerships in this study. To further emphasize, every interviewee responded that each of the partnerships were more of a "two-way street" where each partner is providing the other with value, as opposed to having one organization impose its interests on the others. Austin & Seitinidi (2012) and Googins & Rochlin (2000) have centered their research on the ability of partners to create a shared value for one another, which was confirmed in the results of this study and as such is an important condition.

Another important condition which was present in each of the partnerships, and is cited throughout the literature was a (2) *common aim*; both of the partners were interested in advancing ocean conservation through inspiring their visitors to take conservation action. Common aims, along with mutual benefit are conditions which both contribute to into a high (3) *organizational fit*. Organizational fit is another condition which was cited frequently throughout the literature as a component of success and was also indicated in the results of this research. It was very clear that these conditions allowed the partnerships to achieve a collaborative advantage despite very little structure[33]; the partners had a shared understanding of what they were trying to achieve and were (4) *committed* to achieving that. Commitment was an important condition, although as discussed more in the recommendations in the following section, there is room for increased commitment. One of the most essential conditions in each partnership was the ability of The Ocean Project to provide (5) *resources* from the Grant, which were absolutely necessary to reduce the perception of (6) *risk* in every partnership. Furthermore, risk is the one condition that was identified in the context

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[33] Structure in terms of formal membership and structural configuration, i.e. the partnerships are extremely loose and informal in their structure.

of this research that had not been discovered through my literature review. The reason for this may be attributed to the perception of risk comes from the paradigm which dominates the industry's approach to inspiring conservation action, which was discusses earlier. Moreover, this particular condition is particularly relevant within the context of social innovation, as it is related to the risk of investing resources into a program which may end up being a failure. (7) *trust* was an important condition; the trust between the partners was a key condition in enabling a collaborative advantage. For example, as mentioned earlier each of the aquariums trusted The Ocean Projects information and valued their insight as well as vice versa. Lastly, an important condition in building a trusting relationship is a history of (8) *working together.* These eight conditions were important in all three of the partnerships. Table 5 provides an overview of all of the conditions that were identified by the interviewees as relevant to their partnerships ability to achieve a collaborative advantage.

Conditions	NEAQ	Oregon	NCA
Congruent common aims/interests	x	x	x
Ability to create a mutual benefit	x	x	x
A good organizational fit between partners	x	x	x
The establishment of a trusting relationship	x	x	x
Commitment from both partners	x	x	x
Ability to provide resources/resource complementarity	x	x	x
Ability to reduce the perception of risk	x	x	x
An organizational culture which promotes learning	x	x	
A network to share information and stimulate learning	x	x	
The support of The Ocean Project as a leader		x	x
Frequent communication between partners			x
A history of working together	x	x	x
Organizational openness to innovation	x	x	

Table 5. Conditions present in the partnerships that were relevant to achieving a collaborative advantage.

Other conditions were identified throughout the cases, but they were not as consistently identified as the above mentioned conditions. However, because they are not listed in the above conditions is by no means an indication of their lack of relevance, on the contrary as discussed in earlier chapters of this book, all collaborative arrangements are different, as has been demonstrated within this case study. For example, *leadership* was consistently identified, but in a very heterogeneous way. For example, the leadership at NEAQ was an important driver of organizational learning a very important condition in stimulating innovation was. Whereas for Oregon, the importance of leadership was reflected in leadership role of The Ocean Project in pushing her institution to learn and experiment in new ways, with no explicit mention of the Oregon leadership other than the fact that they supported Kerry. Similarly, Windy from NCA also identified The Ocean Project's leadership as playing an important role in their collaborative advantage. 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. Furthermore, the *network* of The Ocean Project was identified as an important theme 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. However, both The Ocean Project and NEAQ were aware of the fact that the network both could be strengthened and should be strengthened in consideration of objectives of the partnerships.

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 which were evaluated in the case study, I then provide recommendations for practitioners who may be in similar situations. However, it should be reiterated that, following the theory of collaborative advantage and the approach taken in the case study design to trustworthiness, the recommendations should *not* be considered as a how-to guide for successful partnerships. On the contrary, the recommendations which have been developed from these case studies may or may not be applicable to other partnerships, which are dependent on the practitioner and the situation they are in (Firestone 1987; Guba & Lincoln 1994; Stake 1995; Morse et al. 2002; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Baxter & Jack 2008; Yin 2009).

6.4 General recommendations for The Ocean Project and its partners

The following recommendations have been developed from reflections on the literature, interview responses and direct observation. The goal of these recommendations is to provide each of the partnerships evaluated in the case study with suggestions on how they might manage the partnership in relation to different conditions in order to continue achieving a collaborative advantage and foster future social innovations. First, I will provide general recommendation in regards to the conditions of commitment, leadership and communication, which although had different issues in each partnerships, general recommendations may still be developed. Second, I provide partner-specific recommendations as most all of the conditions, although may be present in each partnership, have different underlying key issues and must be managed accordingly.

Commitment, communication & leadership

In all of the partnerships evaluated in this study, it is recommended that the conditions of commitment, communication and leadership be managed more attentively to continue achieving a collaborative advantage.

Beginning with commitment, as described in section 5.1, it is clear that although there is a commitment from both partners, 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, from the interview responses and direct observation, two problems appear in relation to commitment. First, from the data collected, the noticeable lack of commitment from the aquariums' leadership staff is, in addition to resource concerns and the industry's paradigm, a driver in the 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 NEAQ's leadership commitment by fostering trust through more formal communication and working together more regularly.

Although not all interviewees cited that communication is lacking, it was referenced by The Ocean Project as something that happens irregularly and could be improved, this was confirmed by direct observation[34]. 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, both Bill and Alyssa have expressed that 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 the constraint on resources is a barrier. On a similar note, Heather of NEAQ suggested that The Ocean Project needs to the capacity to bring 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 assisting in stimulating innovation in these partnerships and the greater industry in general, it would behoove The Ocean Project to invest more time in facilitating information sharing 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).

6.5 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).

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[34] During my 5 month internship neither Bill nor Alyssa communicated with any of the three partner aquariums.

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) recommend 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, the conditions within which there are underlying tensions that, if managed appropriately, could further benefit this collaborative arrangement 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.

6.6 Recommendations for Oregon Coast Aquarium & The Ocean Project

This partnership has been successful in achieving a collaborative advantage and stimulating social innovation and the partners had very little to mention in terms of barriers. However, there are a few underlying key issues which if managed more attentively would likely increased the benefit of the partnership.

The identified barriers of this partnership which potentially hinder the ability to stimulate social innovation and achieve a collaborative advantage were working together 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 issues such as these are brought into light and 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 endeavors[35]. 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.

In addition to the underlying tensions which were identified in the previous partnership regarding commitment, communication, and leadership, the underlying key issue which has been identified as a potential tension is related to Oregon's lack of staff capacity/knowledge of skill sets which were employed in their innovative solution. While this theme has not been identified in the context of other literature, it can be considered as a practitioner generated theme as it was indicated in Kerry's interview response. As such, it is a potential weakness which may cause harm to the outcome of the innovative solution which is currently being implemented. However, as the projects have yet to be implemented, it is recommended that both partners pay attention to the effect that this weakness has in order to learn from it and adapt to continue stimulating innovation.

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 implementing the recommendation suggested in section 6.4 regarding communication as well as working together more closely to ensure that resources may be allocated appropriately to reduce the potential effect of the barriers. Although these barriers have not created a barrier presently, as indicated in the interview with Oregon, it has been an underlying issue in the development of the innovative program.

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

A difference between this partnership and the other two is the relationship with both the Director of NCA and Windy is comparatively more tightly knit than it is with the other two partnerships. Moreover, these partners have worked together closely in various activities such as ocean acidification research, renewable energy programs, and World Oceans Day. All of these factors have contributed to building a trusting relationship. Additionally, Windy's commitment to achieving the common aims of the partnership was reflected in her own interview responses and mirrored by The Ocean Project.

The theme identified by Windy which has the potential to hinder the collaborative advantage is the multi-layer authority and bureaucracy which creates both a political and philosophical barrier[36]. 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 theme of scope. As suggested by empirical research, by focusing on small scale projects, such as the one being

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[35] For an in depth discussion on the SWOT analysis, see Moulaert 2013.

[36] 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.

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

6.8 General recommendations for practitioners & the next step

Based on the results of this research, there are several recommendations which 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 theme for the ability of the partnerships in this case study to achieve a collaborative advantage. Similarly, other important foundational 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 theme 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 manner[37].

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

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[37] The theme 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 positively to achieving a collaborative advantage.

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.

Consistent with the theory of collaborative advantage and the approach to taken in this research, the transferability of the results and recommendations in this research are dependent on the reader. However, it is very likely that these results can provide interesting insight into partnerships in this context and provide a basis for potential management techniques. With the rise of both CSPs and social innovation, it is additionally recommended that more research is conducted on CSPs within the context of social innovation we can hope to gain a better understanding of collaborative arrangements. Despite my understanding of Huxham & Vangen's (2005) mantra of *don't do it unless you have to* I strongly believe that can be overcome. Indeed, The Ocean Project is dependent on collaboration and has been a successful network for over a decade, of course, there are still complexities which must be addressed. Through further research on this subject, we can hope to reduce the complexities.

The next step in this research project would be to implement the suggested recommendations and follow their results to see if indeed they do have a positive effect on the partnerships. Given The Ocean Project's enormous network (2,000 partners) it would be interesting to see if they are able to continue achieving a collaborative advantage with these institutions, or if they are simply temporary arrangements where the partnership is successful via the Grant and once the resources run out, the partnership ceases to achieve a collaborative advantage and stimulate social innovation. Another interesting aspect which could be studied, is whether or not the social innovations which have been discussed in this study end up being successful and why or why not. This would provide particularly interesting insight into the phenomenon of social innovation, which although was discussed in the study, due to the programs still being in implementation phase their success or failure has yet to be witnessed. Given that collaborative arrangements and social innovation are inherently tied concepts, further research into these topics could potentially provide valuable insight into the ability of partnerships to stimulate *successful* social innovation.

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Appendix

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 of 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 conditions 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 conditions 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 conditions are the empowerment and support which is provided by TOP, this includes data, coaching, and funding. Although the intangible conditions 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

<u>In regards to the 3 partnerships in general</u>

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".

<u>In regards to NEAQ</u>

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.

<u>In regards to NCA</u>

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.

<u>In regards to NCA</u>
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

<u>In regards to the 3 partnerships in general</u>
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.

<u>In regards to NEAQ</u>
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.