A CASE STUDY OF NGO-GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION IN VIETNAM:

PARTNERSHIP DYNAMICS EXPLAINED THROUGH

CONTEXTS, INCENTIVES, AND BARRIERS

A Thesis

by

ANH NGUYEN THUC NGUYEN

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

August 2011

Major Subject: Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications

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Partnership Dynamics Explained through Contexts, Incentives, and Barriers

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ABSTRACT

A Case Study of NGO-government Collaboration in Vietnam:

Partnership Dynamics Explained through Contexts, Incentives, and Barriers.

(August 2011)

Anh Nguyen Thuc Nguyen, B.A., St. Mary's University, Texas

Co-Chairs of Advisory Committee: Dr. Glen C. Shinn
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Collaboration among international NGOs (INGOs) and governmental organizations (GOs) have contributed significantly to the goals of poverty alleviation and agricultural development in developing countries. Much of the literature on NGO-GO partnerships have explored theoretically or empirically what motivates and hinders cross-sector collaboration. But not many have studied cross-sector collaboration from both analytical and descriptive perspectives. This study filled in this gap by drawing from previous studies a conceptual framework through which contexts, incentives, and barriers that influence INGO-GO partnerships were described and explained.

The researcher adopted a qualitative case-study method with emergent design. Personal interviews were conducted with 20 key informants, including eight Vietnamese staff from one INGO and 12 government officials from six GOs who partnered with the INGO. All participating organizations were institutions serving agricultural and rural development in the south of Vietnam. The data were collected in 2010 and analyzed using the software package ATLAS.ti.

The results showed four categories that interact to form a framework of a dynamic continuum of partnership development. The four categories included conditioning factors, incentives, barriers, and feedback loop. The categories held the following themes: 1) *socio-political contexts* and *organizational natures* for conditioning factors, 2) *shared missions*, *resource mobilization*, *capacity building*, and *networking* for incentives, 3) *ideological conflicts*, *structural constraints*, and *operational hurdles* for barriers, and 4) *reflections* and *recommendations* for feedback loop.

The study contributed a theoretical and empirical based perspective on INGO-GO partnerships in post-reform countries. It provided a framework that comprehensively describes and explains partnership dynamics. The study also shared knowledge of the intricacies of INGO-GO partnerships in rural Vietnam. For institutions serving agricultural and rural development, the study could assist in strategic management to minimize constraints and maximize opportunities in collaborative environments.

DEDICATION

To my parents and siblings,

who taught me the meaning of bonding and collaboration

and

To all of my teachers, colleagues, and friends,

who showed me the sweats, tears, and joys of partnership development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOMENCLATURE

GO   Governmental organization

INGO   International non-governmental organization

MO   Mass organization

NGO   Non-governmental organization

PO   Professional organization

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Vietnam is an agricultural country transitioning to an industrial economy. The adoption of the Renovation Policy (Doi Moi) in 1986 marked a starting point for economic reform in Vietnam (Dang, 2004). The socialist state has since moved from a centralized economy to a more market-oriented approach, and one of the important reforms was giving farmers the rights for private land-use. Although the government recognizes the role of agriculture as cornerstone for future economic growth, the resources needed to support a large population of low-income farmers exceed its current capability. Hence the government has adopted an open-door policy, welcoming international donors and development agencies. Their joint efforts often take the form of project-based development partnerships. These cross-sector partnerships operate in a complex socio-economic and political environment of post-reform Vietnam. The focus of this study is to understand the incentives and barriers that shape these partnerships, in particular the partnerships between governmental organizations (GOs) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in Vietnam.

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This thesis follows the style of the *Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education*.

Although opening the door to international organizations, the Vietnamese government maintains firm legal frameworks to regulate the activities of these non-state entities (Decree 45, 2010; Decree 88, 2003). One control mechanisms is the requirement that INGOs collaborate with local GOs to implement projects and deliver services. The increasing number and influence of INGOs operating in Vietnam have created the conditions for the emergence of the Vietnamese civil society, also termed the voluntary sector (Norlund, 2007). In a recent investigation on the legal frameworks controlling Vietnamese civil society, Sidel (2010) described the socio-political contexts that influence the partnerships between INGOs and local organizations as follow:

> For the vast majority of the thousands of formal and informal organizations now active throughout the country, the Vietnamese state generally acquiesces in and even encourages their day-to-day activities, while retaining a detailed regulatory structure and making clear that the state and Party remain in control of the pace and direction of growth in nonprofit activity. (p. 52)

To enhance their political positions and to maintain positive relations with the state, INGOs in Vietnam often choose, or more often are pressured, to collaborate with GOs (Hakkarainen & Katsui, 2009; Norlund, 2007; Wishermann & Nguyen, 2003). Nonetheless, these partnerships offer unique opportunities and challenges to both INGOs and GOs in Vietnam. The success of INGO-GO partnerships, which translate to improvement of the quality of life for millions of farmers, often hinges on effective inter-organizational collaboration.

Traditionally, INGOs partner with GOs that are professional organizations (POs) such as the Agricultural Extension Centers and the Veterinary Sub-Departments. In recent years, however, INGOs have diversified their partners to include GOs that are more grass-root in nature—thus becoming more like civil society bodies—such as Women's Union, Farmers Association, and Youth Union (Norlund, 2007). With massive memberships composed mainly of the rural population, these GOs are called mass organizations (MOs). As partners with INGOs, POs and MOs each have unique strengths and weaknesses, and INGOs recognize them as well: POs possess technical expertise while MOs excel in community mobilization. POs and MOs also recognize the opportunities and resources provided through partnerships with INGOs. Hence, both sides have become active in pursuing inter-organizational, cross-sector collaboration.

Statement of Problem

Historically, farming in Vietnam was done by rural people with limited education and skills. As Vietnam changes to a more industrial society, farmers must improve their efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness. As population increases, there is also increased demand for agricultural products. Today, many INGOs and GOs aim to improve the wellbeing of the rural Vietnamese farm population, especially low-income farmers. This study examined the opportunities and challenges that can promote as well as hinder the effectiveness of INGO-GO partnerships in rural Vietnam—which in turn determines the effectiveness of the projects and services that they deliver to farmers.

The World Bank World Development Report 2004 confirmed the trend that states have been seeking alternative methods of service delivery, including contracting out or collaborating with non-state providers. The stakes are high for all—donors, recipients, and implementers alike—and a majority of those in the last category are INGOs and GOs who have long realized that they must join forces to achieve their shared missions. The collaboration logic is straightforward: No matter how strong an organization is, it cannot have the strength to do everything, especially to provide public goods for national development (MacDonald & Chrisp, 2005). Furthermore, the benefits of collaboration are numerous: "economic efficiencies, greater service quality or quantity, organizational learning, access to new skills, diffusion of risk, improved public accountability, the ability to buffer external uncertainties, and conflict avoidance" (Gazley, 2010, p. 53).

Literature on NGO-GO collaboration is not scarce, yet the task of explaining partnerships comprehensively has remained challenging. The problem, as reported by Teamey (2007) in a synthesis of the field's literature, appeared that "there is a lack of conceptual understanding of these relationships beyond simple typological classifications," because "for the most part, research on non-state provider-government relationships is *descriptive* (case studies) rather than *analytical*" (p. 8).

Some studies have suggested the difficulty of conceptually understanding partnerships lie in the complex dynamics of partnership development, implying that partnerships, like *ecological* bodies, evolve over time to adapt to the continually

changing contexts surrounding them (O'Leary, Gazley, McGuire & Bingham, 2008; Ramanath, 2005; B. Gray, 1989).

In terms of the context of partnerships, few studies have examined the collaborative practices between INGOs and GOs in post-reform countries such as Vietnam and China. Furthermore, concerning the population selected in studies of NGO-GO partnerships in developing countries, some researchers have warned of the tendency of "NGO-centrism," recommending instead a research design that includes the perspectives of both NGO and GO partners (Hilhorst, 2003; Lewis & Opuku-Mensah, 2006; Teamey, 2007).

Conceptual Framework

As the literatures suggested above, an analytical and descriptive study is needed to describe and explain partnerships comprehensively. The conceptual framework of this study was formed to guide the research design to accomplish that task.

As incentives and barriers to partnerships are shaped first by their contexts, the framework acknowledged the role of the conditioning factors that influence partnership development, particularly their agenda of engagement (Teamey, 2007; Lewis & Opuku-Mensah, 2006). The study's framework also recognized how partnerships are shaped by the interactions between institutions and society while simultaneously transforming them. Smith and Gronebjerg's (2006) models (demand/supply, civil society/social movement, and regime/neo-institutional model) along with Selsky and Parker's (2005)

theoretical platforms (resource dependence, social issues, and societal sector) enabled the researcher to categorize a web of interactive factors that can motivate or deter partnerships in the public sector.

Lastly, recognizing partnerships as ecological bodies evolving over time (O'Leary, Gazley, McGuire, & Bingham, 2008; Ramanath, 2005; B. Gray, 1989), the researcher conceptualized partnership development on a dynamic continuum. The study's framework was inspired by a framework proposed by Teamey (2007), which was drawn from an extensive review and synthesis of literature on NGO-GO partnerships. Since the scope of this study is much more limited, the researcher used Teamey's framework as a general guide and focused on just a number of elements that reflect the researcher's conceptualization process.

The conceptual framework was a dynamic continuum of partnership development with four major components: conditioning factors, incentives, barriers, and feedback loop. Conditioning factors shape incentives and barriers for partnerships, the former leading to agenda of engagement while the latter to a renegotiation of agenda. The feedback loop channels updates from conditioning factors and agenda renegotiation back to agenda of engagement, thus facilitating new or revised agenda of engagement. The interactions between these components are the dynamics of partnerships.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to comprehensively describe and explain the contexts, incentives and barriers that influence INGO-GO partnerships in Vietnam. Based on the recommendations from the reviewed literature, this study intended to approach the subject both descriptively and analytically. On the one hand, it sought empirical data, and on the other hand, it built on previous studies to arrive at a framework that could illuminate the empirical data. The purpose of the approach was to contribute to building a contextualized and theoretical-based framework that would enable a comprehensive understanding of partnership dynamics (Carlile & Christensen, 2005).

The specific research questions included the following:

1) What are the contextual factors that condition INGO-GO partnerships in their formation stage and continue to influence them throughout their development?

2) What are the incentives that determine their agenda of engagement?

3) What are the barriers that prompt the renegotiation of the agenda of engagement in the partnership development process?

Significance of the Study

This study had theoretical and practical applications. From a theoretical standpoint, it contributed to the body of knowledge on partnerships and inter-organizational collaboration, particularly in regards to non-state actors and government

collaboration. It also provided an international, comparative perspective in the field of development research. The resulting framework—a dynamic continuum of partnership development—can also be used as an instrument for future studies.

In terms of practical implications, the study provided knowledge and insights into the intricacies of cross-sector partnerships, especially partnerships between INGOs and GOs in developing countries. The study thus could contribute to improving mutual understanding and communication between the government and the nonprofit sectors, thereby increasing the effectiveness of cross-sector collaboration. For public leaders working in the field of agricultural and rural development, the study could assist in strategic management to minimize constraints and maximize opportunities in collaborative environments.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

This study was a snap-shot study providing a cross-sectional look at partnerships whereas partnerships can be dynamic and constantly changing phenomena. In addition, using a qualitative case study approach, the study's findings might be unique to the sample of selected organizations and respondents, thus limiting the potential for the findings to be generalized to other groups or settings. The researcher also acknowledged the influence that her personal biases might have on the results of the study despite her rigorous use of multiple techniques to maintain the trustworthiness of the results.

Delimitations

The study was bound within the context of post-reform Vietnam. The study focused exclusively on partnerships between non-state entities and state institutions that serve agricultural and rural development, targeting in particular low-income farmers. Rather than examining or measuring the effectiveness of their partnerships, the researcher chose to study the contexts, incentives, and barriers that contribute to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the partnerships.

Context of the Researcher's Experience

The researcher's decision to study INGO-GO partnerships came directly from her professional experience in agricultural and rural development in Vietnam, her home country. Indirectly, it originated from her educational and personal experiences.

The researcher's roots are not in agriculture. She studied Philosophy and English Literature at the undergraduate level. Through her college years, she developed an interest in economic justice, which led her to exploring poverty issues and became attracted to the field of development, a field that to her seeks to address poverty and economic justice. She has since volunteered and worked for different nonprofits in the United States, Bangladesh, and Vietnam.

Through her work experience in the rural areas, she developed a love for agricultural and rural development. Foremost, she realized that development is impossible without collaboration, collaboration between individuals, communities,

organizations, and between social sectors. Through her professional work with an international nonprofit operating in Vietnam, she observed a multitude of INGO-GO partnerships succeed and fail in a matrix of socio-political and organizational issues. She always wondered, "What motivates and what hinders partnerships?"

So here she was, writing a thesis on the contexts, incentives, and barriers that shape INGO-GO partnerships. The researcher's liberal arts background planted in her a love for critical analysis and theoretical frameworks, especially frameworks that integrate diverse forces to produce comprehensive explanations. Her work experiences culminated in a research question that she believed could be answered using frameworks. Academically, she wanted to make theoretical and practical contribution to the study of partnerships. Personally, she considered this study a stepping stone in her quest to understanding collaboration so that, upon returning to the workforce, she could collaborate successfully.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of the Literature

First, the literature review described the Vietnamese *socio-political contexts* and the characteristics of GOs in Vietnam. The GOs comprised of two groups: 1) professional organizations (POs) such as the Agricultural Extension Centers and the Veterinary Sub-Department, and 2) mass-organizations (MOs) such as the Farmers Association and Women's Union. MOs function as community grass-root organizations while POs are technical, extension service providers. Both groups have bureaucratic natures with a hierarchical network from central to provincial to district to village level.

Second and third, the researcher reviewed the *perception gaps* and the *power structures* in INGO-GO relationships in Vietnamese contexts. Past studies showed that perception gaps disharmonize expectations, thus hindering partnership effectiveness. The studies suggested that perception gaps between INGOs and local organizations result from different self-images, which are products of the domestic contexts of an organization's origin. Different from Vietnamese GOs, INGOs have more flexible organizational structures and operate with participatory and democratic principles of development. The gaps in perception and in organizational natures then generate *power structures* that are distinctive of INGO-GO partnerships in Vietnam.

Fourth, the researcher presented *theoretical constructs* that explained cross-sector partnership and inter-organizational collaboration. This section covered 1) typologies of partnerships, 2) theoretical platforms of cross-sector partnerships, 3) equilibrium theory of inter-organizational network, and 4) sociological approach to understanding partnership dynamics. Typologies of partnerships introduced transactional versus developmental partnerships; four types of public networks—informational, developmental, outreach, and action; and three models of INGO-GO partnerships—demand/supply, civil society/social movement, and regime/neo-institutional. Theoretical platforms of cross-sector partnerships included resource dependence, social issues, and societal sectors platforms. Equilibrium theory proposed four dimensions of a balanced network: domain consensus, ideological consensus, inter-organizational evaluation, and working coordination. Finally, a sociological approach to understanding partnership dynamics offered social capital and ecological institution theories.

Lastly, drawing from the literature, the researcher formed a *conceptual framework* that guided the study's design, methodology, and subsequent analysis of data. The conceptual framework was a dynamic continuum of partnership development with four major components: conditioning factors, incentives, barriers, and feedback loop. Conditioning factors shape incentives and barriers for partnerships, the former leading to agenda of engagement while the latter to a renegotiation of agenda. The feedback loop channels updates from conditioning factors and agenda renegotiation back to agenda of engagement, thus facilitating new or revised agenda of engagement. The interactions between these components are the dynamics of partnerships.

Socio-political Contexts of INGO-GO Partnerships in Vietnam

INGOs and the Emergence of Civil Society in Vietnam

In the past decade, one of the most studied phenomena in Vietnam has been the emergence of civil society (Sidel, 1995; Kerkvliet, 2003; Duong, 2004; Norlund, Dang, Bach, Chu, Dang, Do et al., 2006; Norlund, 2007; Salemink, 2006). World Alliance for Citizen Participant (CIVICUS) defines civil society as "the arena between the family, state and the market, where people associate to advance common interests" (2005, p. 19). Although INGOs in general belong to the category of civil society, Norlund et al. (2006) suggested that, as foreign entities, they be separated from civil society organizations in Vietnam. Nevertheless, Norlund et al. acknowledged two new trends that may considerably blur the distinction between INGOs and civil society organizations in Vietnam. First, INGOs are hiring more Vietnamese nationals, even at the country director level. Second, a number of INGOs (for example, Oxfam and Save the Children) are expanding into large consortiums, while others are localizing themselves to become more like Vietnamese NGOs. The former approach strengthens the voice and negotiating power of INGOs, while the latter helps them assimilate to gradually gain credibility and avoid unnecessary attention to their activities.

These trends reveal the reactions of INGOs to the socio-political environment of Vietnam. Studies by Norlund et al. (2006), Norlund (2007), Hakkarainen and Katsui (2005), and Wischermann and Nguyen (2003) also indicated the sensitive and complex interactions between the state and INGOs. For example, entering Vietnam, INGOs bring

not only financial and technical resources to the field, but also new approaches that manifest the ideas of participatory and people-centered development (Poussard, 1999). These approaches have long been advocated in the field of development worldwide, but they are still unfamiliar to the centralized, hierarchical environment of the one-party socialist state of Vietnam. The government's cautiousness of INGOs' ideology and activities was reflected through its establishment of The People's Aid Coordination Committee (PACCOM) in 1989. All INGOs are required to register with PACCOM and renew their operation permits annually. They are also asked to report the progress and results of their projects to PACCOM. A majority of INGOs' activities were initiated following the Renovation Policy in 1986, and the number of INGOs operating has increased "from around 30 in the beginning of the 1990s to 400 by the end of the 1990s and by mid-2000s there were approximately 540" (Norlund et al., 2006, p. 30).

INGOs and the Governmental Extension System/Professional Organizations (POs)

With the goal of improving agricultural productivity and modernizing its agriculture, in 1993, the Vietnamese government established the nation's first agricultural extension service. A new Department of Agriculture and Forestry Extension was created within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to "oversee the development of the provincial extension system and to plan national extension programs, garner and manage funding, and provide technical direction for the new systems" (Poussard, 1999, p. 125). Hence, in every province, a provincial Agriculture and Forestry Extension Centre (AFEC) was established, with Extension Stations placed in

each district of the province. A contract part-time Extension Worker was also hired for each 10-20 communes of a district.

These extension units at the national, provincial, district and commune levels have been the main partners for project implementation with international aid agencies. For many years, INGOs and other foreign aid agencies working in rural Vietnam have been recognized as contributing significantly to developing the country's extension system and building capacity for extension staff (Poussard, 1999). INGOs in particular have introduced and provided extension staff with training on participatory techniques such as data collection, program planning, project implementation, grassroots training and project evaluation (Poussard, 1999). Through long-term project-based collaboration, INGOs have demonstrated to governmental officials the values of people-centered approaches. In this respect, INGOs are helping to sensitize government officials, building their capacity for interaction with civic associations.

INGOs and Mass Organizations (MOs)

Norlund et al. (2006) proposed that in Vietnam "a broader understanding of civil society is not yet fully part of mainstream political thinking," but civil society organizations are "increasingly perceived as equal partners (rather than just passive followers) of the State" (p. 27). Norlund et al. (2006) did an assessment of civil society in Vietnam and categorized civil society organizations as follows: 1) mass organizations; 2) national socio-professional associations; 3) local associations; 4) science and

technology development and research organizations; and 5) informal groups. This research project concerns with the first two types of civil organizations.

The findings by Norlund et al. (2006) also indicated that, in Vietnam, the boundaries between civil society and the state are not clear, and these boundaries appear most blurry in the case of *mass organizations*. As the name implies, the traditional function of mass organizations has been to mobilize the nation's people for national purposes. Sakata (2006) described mass organizations as having a "four-layered organizational structure from central, provincial, district, to commune level in order to effectively transmit decisions and instructions made at the central level" (p. 47). All mass organizations belong to an umbrella organization called the Fatherland Front, which remains under the direct leadership of the state. Mass organizations have memberships open to any social member belonging to a mass category such as youth, women, workers, or farmers. Established since the 1930s, the largest mass organizations in Vietnam are the Women's Union (12 million members), Farmers Association (8 million), Youth Union (5.1 million), and Labour Union (4.2 million) (Norlund et al., 2006).

Although mass organizations are political entities closely linked with the state, they cannot be separated from either civil society or the state, because their activities are integrated in both spheres (Gray, 1999; Norlund et al., 2006). The "central-local dichotomy" is unique for mass organizations because at grassroots level, mass organizations can "work with substantial autonomy, while the administration higher up in the system often serves as a career ladder, tending to make the organizations function

more bureaucratically and follow the policy of the State and Party" (Norlund et al., 2006, p. 22). The integrative characteristics (both governmental and civil) of mass organizations give it distinctive advantages. In rural areas, mass organizations play the role of grassroots bodies that promote the interests of rural populations and communicate their needs to the central government (Duong, 2004). With widespread organizational structures that can reach households in each village, mass organizations are becoming important development partners for both governmental agencies and international donors (Sakata, 2006; Norlund, 2007).

For example, the Women's Union has been one of the main partners for many INGOs for development work at the commune and village level (Norlund et al., 2006). In recent years, mass organizations have actively started to seek partnerships with foreign donors and INGOs. As the organizations receive support from central governments only for their core expenses, funding from foreign donors and INGOs have become an increasingly important financial resource for mass organizations (Norlund et al., 2006).

INGOs and Civil Society Organizations in Their Relationships with the State

Capacity building for either state officials or civic workers is fundamentally institutional building and, as a result, institutional reform in the long term. As partners of governmental and civil organizations, INGOs are not only pursuing humanitarian goals, but also affecting the sociopolitical changes in Vietnam. Their activities and presence have strengthened the role of Vietnamese civil society. Studies by Wischermann and

Nguyen (2003) and Hakkarainen and Katsui (2009) have indicated the increasingly important role of civil organizations in the face of the widening gap between social needs and what the state can fulfill.

Nevertheless, INGOs and Vietnamese civil organizations have been self-conscious and careful in how they project their images to the state. In the relationships with governmental organizations, Wischermann and Nguyen (2003) found that civil organizations consider themselves playing the roles of coordinator, implementer, intermediary, and networker. After these most important roles, the organizations also see themselves as partners, supervisors, innovators, and lastly, advocates (p. 13). This perception may reflect to a great extent the viewpoint of INGOs in their relationship with governmental agencies. INGOs tend to be action-oriented, which appears to be more safe and sensitive in the socio-political environment of Vietnam than advocacy work. The same situation, in which there is limited space for civic activism, can be observed in other one-party socialist states in Central and Southeast Asia (Ma, 2002; Katsui, 2005).

The Perception Gaps between INGOs and Local Organizations in Vietnam

Hakkarainen and Katsui (2009) studied partnerships between five INGOs and their Vietnamese counterpart organizations; the INGOs included three Finnish NGOs and two Japanese NGOs working in the north of Vietnam. The authors explored

individually the perception of INGOs versus the perception of their Vietnamese partners on the subject of partnership.

Their findings indicated that INGOs view their partnership with Vietnamese partners as a) a project agreement; b) the process within a project; c) the foundation of a project; and d) equality. With partnership as a project agreement, INGOs expect clear divisions of roles, responsibilities, and resource exchanges; there is space for discussion but little room for change throughout the project. With partnership as the process within a project, INGOs on the other hand expect growing mutual understanding that leads to the roles being "negotiated and changed over time," and the relationship to be "reality-oriented with some flexibility" (p. 121). With partnership as the foundation of a project, INGOs engage in a more "future-oriented vision," looking for shared values that help initiate and maintain the partnership before as well as after a project. INGOs that hold this perception of partnership are aware of the resource-based imbalance within the relationship, yet they recognize that "asymmetrical interdependence is justified as a division of labor that is doing what you're good at" (p. 123).

With partnership as equality, there is a split between the views of Finnish NGOs and Japanese NGOs. Japanese NGOs consider equality as "symmetrical interdependence," or "50-50 share of all the aspects in the relationship" (p. 123). Finnish NGOs, however, view equality in terms of "an equal right to raise their voices heard and thus influence decisions" (p. 124). As a result, Japanese NGOs consider themselves more often as "supporters" rather than "partners" with Vietnamese organizations, whereas Finnish NGOs consider themselves more as equal partners. This diverging

interpretation of partnerships reveals the different expectations and collaborative behaviors among international actors. Hakkarainen and Katsui (2009) believed that the different self-images of INGOs in a host country are influenced by the domestic environment in the INGO's original country. For example, Finland has a very strong civil society in which NGOs practice regularly their right to negotiate and influence governmental decisions, even if they depend on the government financially. In contrast, civil society in Japan is still new and growing, with NGOs being often of small sizes and not highly recognized by the government.

Hakkarainen and Katsui (2009) found that Vietnamese counterpart organizations hold completely different views of partnership. They consider partnership as a) personal interactions; b) a source of money; and c) a result-oriented action. In the first category, Vietnamese partners consider their personal interactions with INGOs staff more important than formal agreements between two organizations. This view reflects the important of leadership for INGOs: the right persons can make substantial difference in their relationships with local organizations. In the second category, Vietnamese partners expect only more project activities with more funding from INGOs, rather than focusing on positive changes in development attitudes and practices. In the third category, Vietnamese partners consider the existence of cooperation—meaning the practical results of collaboration—more important than how it is implemented. In short, Hakkarainen and Katsui (2009) concluded that "the 'partnership' perception of Vietnamese partners is more consequence-oriented… and less concerned with the values" emphasized by INGOs (p. 126).

Power Structures in Cross-sector Partnerships in Vietnam

To explain the perception gaps between Vietnamese partners and INGOs, Hakkarainen and Katsui (2009) looked at the effects of government control and the condition for people's participation in Vietnamese contexts. According to the authors, the state exerts explicit and implicit effects on INP's activities. For example, explicitly the government expects INGOs to work more closely with either governmental or mass organizations than with other types of organizations. Then, implicitly, in order for INGOs to assure their legitimacy in the eyes of the government, they must always involve more actors for project implementation than necessary. Often they end up having administrative partners at the higher up level in addition to implementation partners at the field level (Wischermann & Nguyen, 2003).

Furthermore, the political tradition of highly centralized decision-making has engrained in Vietnamese partners the practice of top-down planning and inflexible project implementation. Adhering to this socio-political norm and influenced by the Vietnamese communal culture, project participants and beneficiaries are often very hesitant in raising their voices. In fact, both participants and project partners in the field tend not to believe in their power to influence decisions and make changes. Hence, INGOs usually have to spend extensive time and resources for awareness raising, particularly for the participatory development approach (Hakkarainen & Katsui, 2009).

Nonetheless, INGOs have their own advantages, which are financial and technical power. Wischermann and Nguyen (2003) reported on the problems faced by

civil organizations, with the top challenges being lack of funding and well-trained professionals, hence their being attracted to INGOs, who often possess superior expertise and financial resources. Resource dependency creates a power structure in the relationships between INGOs and any Vietnamese counterpart organizations, including both governmental and mass organizations. This condition is quite distinct from the relationship between NGOs and the state in the West, which is often reversed with the government playing the role of a powerful contractor.

Theoretical Constructs for Studying Cross-sector Partnerships

Typologies of Partnerships

In reviewing the literature on partnership typologies, Selsky and Parker (2005) proposed a typology that is time-based, differentiating between *transactional* and *developmental* partnerships. While transactional partnerships (Austin, 2000) are short-term and more constrained, developmental partnerships (Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Wymer & Samu, 2003) are longer-term and therefore embrace more integration between organizational partners. Selsky and Parker (2005) divide developmental partnerships into three stages: formation, implementation, and outcomes. Through these stages, developmental partnerships experience a growth process that transforms organizational partners over time.

Agranoff's (2007) typology of the four different types of inter-organizational network also contributes to the understanding of partnerships (informational network;

developmental network; outreach network; and action network). What distinguishes one type of network from another is the level of shared activities accomplished. In informational networks, partners only exchanges information without subsequence actions. In developmental networks, partners not only exchange information but exchange them through activities (such as workshops and seminars) that help build each other's capabilities. In outreach networks, partners move closer to taking actions by planning together and influencing each other's strategies. In action network, partners actually join hands in implementing activities and policies. Ideally, the higher levels of networks include all the activities done in the lower-level networks, for example action network should comprise all the activities that exist in the other three types.

Smith and Gronebjerg (2006) proposed three theoretical frameworks to conceptualize INP-GO partnerships:

- Demand/supply model: focuses on how GOs and INGOs complement and compensate for one another's weaknesses in providing social goods.
- Civil society/social movement model: focuses on how the social, economic and political environments combine to create the dynamics of partnerships
- Regime/neo-institutional model: focuses on understanding the processes by which INGOs and GOs—as social structures—become institutionalized or transform over time.

Theoretical Platforms of Cross-Sector Partnerships

Selsky and Parker (2005) synthesized the partnership literature from various

disciplines and proposed the following theoretical platforms for studying cross-sector

partnerships: a) resource dependency platform; b) social issues platform; and c) societal

sector platform. First, from a resource dependency perspective, organizations collaborate

to cope with resource constraints and environmental uncertainty (Pfeiffer & Salancik,

2003; Child & Faulkner, 1998). They need to find new ways of acquiring resources, and

so often find collaboration an effective solution. Resources can be financial, technical,

political, or social, depending on the circumstances of individual organizations. The

major factor that drives collaboration is meeting an organization's needs while also

"minimizing inter-organizational dependencies and preserving the organization's

autonomy" (Gray & Wood, 1991, p. 7).

Second, from a social issues perspective, organizations are perceived as

stakeholders of social issues and not just organizations (Waddell, 2005). The major

factor that drives social partnerships is a shared desire to address meta-problems that

affect all social actors. Collaboration then emerges as a sensible choice since these meta-

problems exceed the scope of single organizations and often "fall through the cracks of

prevailing institutional arrangement" (Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 852). Lastly, from a

societal sector perspective, the blurring boundaries between all social sectors are

emphasized. Here the drive of social partnerships is a growing understanding that

traditional solutions embraced by each sector cannot solve current social problems, and

therefore all sectors should learn from each other by collaborating with each other (Selsky & Parker, 2005).

In short, the resource dependency platform reveals the resource-based motives and the power structure in the partnerships. The social issues platform demonstrates the shared visions and interests that bond organizations. The societal sector platform highlights sector-based characteristics that can be studied in terms of how they become complementary, mutually beneficial factors in cross-sector partnerships, or vice versa.

Equilibrium Theory of Inter-organizational Network

Benson (1975, 1989) was among the first researchers who, instead of studying individual organizations as separate units of a network, examined inter-organizational network as a unit of analysis. His theory of an equilibrium model of inter-organizational partnerships states that a network can be categorized as balanced or imbalanced along four dimensions: (a) domain consensus, (b) ideological consensus, (c) inter-organizational evaluation, and (d) working coordination.

Benson (1975) defined *domain consensus* as agreements among participating organizations about their individual roles and scopes in the network; *ideological consensus* as agreements about their tasks and the approach to accomplishing these tasks; *inter-organizational evaluation* as attitudes by members of one organization for the value of the work of others; and *work coordination* as mechanisms established between organizations to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. Benson concluded that work coordination is a result of both domain consensus and ideological consensus, and

that, ultimately, resource and power are the two determinants of the equilibrium state of an inter-organizational network. In their study, Skelcher and Sullivan (2008) returned to Benson's theory and affirmed that it provided "a clear set of criteria that can be used in empirical measurement of equilibrium in the inter-organizational network, and thus the degree of potential for co-ordination" (p. 758).

Sociological Approach to Understanding Partnership Dynamics

Stone (1996) argued that although resource dependence theory, which represents the economic approach to studying partnerships, has played an important role in explaining partnerships, a sole focus on resource dependence may cause researchers to miss other vital forces that shape the organizations and their partnerships. The sociological approach to studying partnerships, in particular the *social capital* and *ecological* theories of partnerships, can fill in this gap.

According to Burt (2001), social capital is "a metaphor about advantage… the contextual element to human capital… that the people who do better are somehow better connected" (p. 202). Applied to organizations, social capital theories recognize the resource advantages—not only in terms of financial and technical resources, but also political and social resources—of organizations that are connected with coalitions or alliances. Hence social capital theory explains the dynamic process of partnership development in a much broader context than resource dependence theory.

Ramanath (2005) studied the development of NGO-GO relationships using *ecological theory*, which states that organizations—like organisms—become

increasingly complex over time to adapt to its changing environment. Ramanath

proposed that INP-GO partnerships need to be viewed "as evolving processes rather than

as interactions with clear and consistent characterizations (p. 157). Ecological theory

embraces the complexity of collaborative environments, recognizing the multitude of

variables that come into play throughout the development process of partnerships;

collaborations are therefore dynamic and emerging processes, not static conditions

(O'Leary, Gazley, McGuire, & Bingham, 2008; B. Gray, 1989).

A Conceptual Framework of Partnership Dynamics

As the literature review demonstrated, to explain the complexity of cross-sector

partnerships, there would be a need for a comprehensive framework that integrates

various theoretical approaches to understanding partnerships. The researcher

acknowledged that a study's platform needs to be specific in theoretical tradition or its

findings can be weak, as the risk of combining different theoretical traditions is a

potential lack of cumulative effect. On the other hand, the advantage was that multiple

theories can provide multiple bearing points and cross-cutting constructs. In the case of

this study, the combined theories increased and strengthened the comprehensiveness of

the conceptual framework, yielding more fruitful variations in application. Hence, as a

theoretical delimitation, the researcher deliberately chose an approach that combines

various theories.

First, Lewis and Opuku-Mensah (2006) emphasized the need for partnership studies to be contextual- and theoretical-based, not just detail-oriented and technical-focused. In summarizing the literature on NGO-GO partnerships, Teamey (2007) echoed this view: "NGO are founded and emerge in different socio-political contexts and at particular historical junctures, which in turn influence NGO-government relationships" (p. 18). The researcher therefore recognized the importance of examining partnerships in their contexts, to understand the conditioning factors that shape INGO-GO partnership.

Second, such a framework must take into account the dynamics of partnership development. Smith and Gronebjerg's (2006) model (demand/supply, civil society/social movement, and regime/neo-institutional model) along with Selsky and Parker's (2005) theoretical platforms (resource dependence, social issues, and societal sector) enabled the researcher to categorize a web of interactive factors that influence partnerships in the public sector. For the researcher, they became overarching constructs that illuminate a) the incentives driving organizations to enter partnerships, b) those barriers that force organizations to re-negotiate their agenda of engagement, and c) the influence of conditioning factors throughout the dynamic process of partnership development.

Third, Agranoff's (2007) typology of inter-organizational network (informational network; developmental network; outreach network; and action network) helped the researcher to categorize collaborative activities in a network at different levels. Thus the researcher could explain how the various agenda pursued by the partners reflect the growth stage of their partnerships. On the other hand, Benson's (1978) four dimensions

of equilibrium theory (domain consensus, ideological consensus, inter-organizational evaluation, and working coordination) allowed the researcher to focus on as well as anticipate factors that influence the balance of the partnerships.

Lastly, since most partnerships form, develop, and dissolve over time, the researcher perceived partnership development on a continuum. Furthermore, recognizing the ecological dynamics of partnerships (O'Leary, Gazley, McGuire, & Bingham, 2008; Ramanath, 2005; B. Gray, 1989), the researcher conceptualized this development further as a dynamic continuum. The researcher suggested that this dynamic continuum acknowledged the traditional stages of partnership development while also embraced the constant interaction of various forces that transform partnerships over time.

Drawn from an extensive review of literature on NGO-GO partnerships, the theoretical framework proposed by Teamey (2007) (see Figure 2.1) played a critical role in shaping the researcher's conceptual framework. Teamey explained her framework:

> [The researcher] hypothesizes that the institutional context conditions the formation of government and non-government organizations: their interests; values, ideologies, understandings and goals; resources, assets and capacity; decision-making processes and organizational structures; and the management of staff. In their turn, these affect the agenda and commitments (their definition of 'public action) that organizations bring to the encounter with 'partners' and their incentives for entering into relationships. (p. 22)
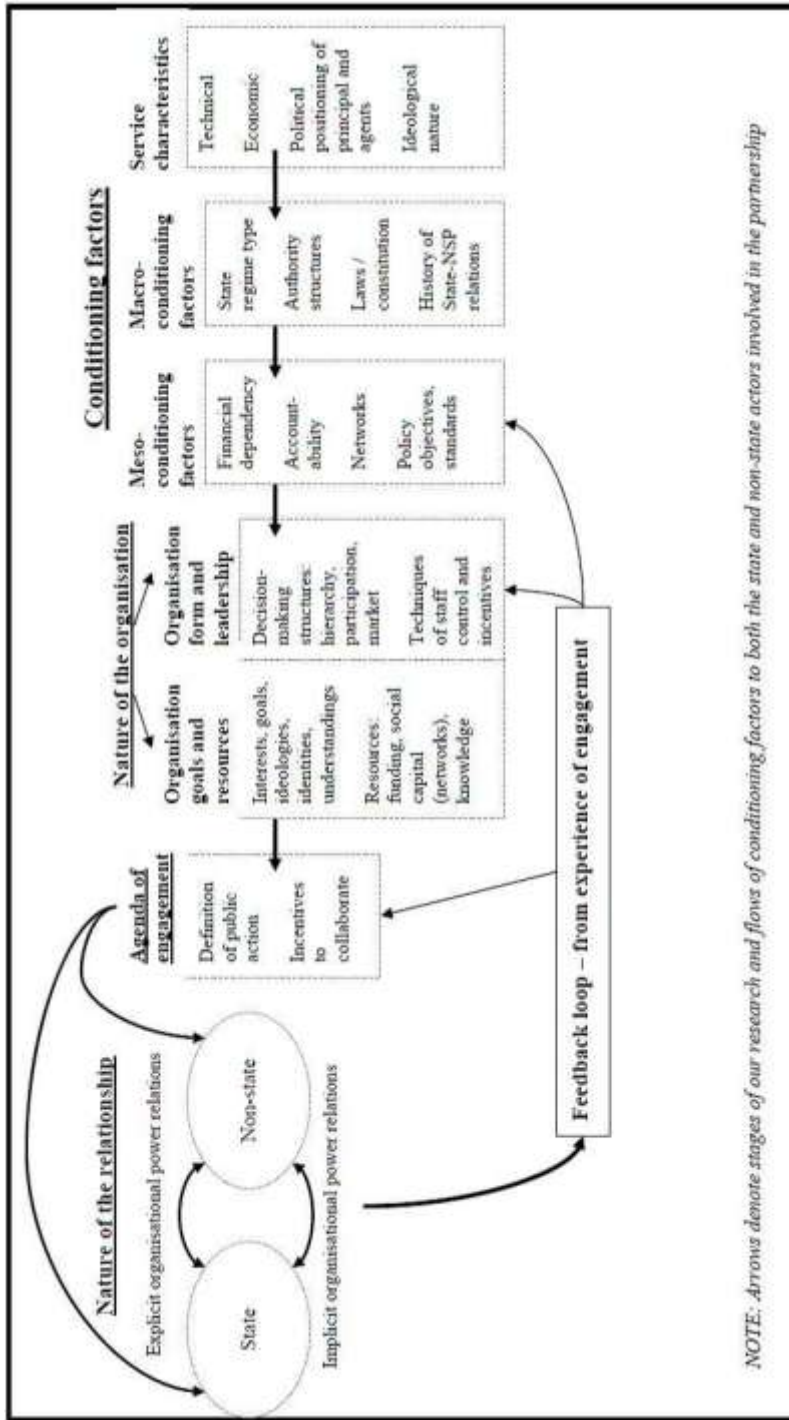
Figure 2.1. Flow Diagram for Analyzing Inter-sectoral Collaboration. Adapted from "*Whose Public Action? Analysing Inter-sectoral Collaboration for Service Delivery,*" by K. Teamey, 2007, p. 21, University of Birmingham.

Since the scope of this study was much more limited, the researcher used Teamey's framework as an inspiring broad picture from which the researcher selected a number of elements that were relevant and reflected her conceptualization process (see Figure 2.2). The conceptual framework was a dynamic continuum of partnership development with four major components: conditioning factors, incentives, barriers, and feedback loop. Conditioning factors shape incentives and barriers for partnerships, the former leading to agenda of engagement while the latter to a renegotiation of agenda. The feedback loop channels updates from conditioning factors and agenda renegotiation back to agenda of engagement, thus facilitating new or revised agenda of engagement. The interactions between these components are the dynamics of partnerships.

Conditioning Factors	Agenda of Engagement	Renegotiation of Agenda

| CONTEXTS | | INCENTIVES | | BARRIERS |

FEEDBACK LOOP
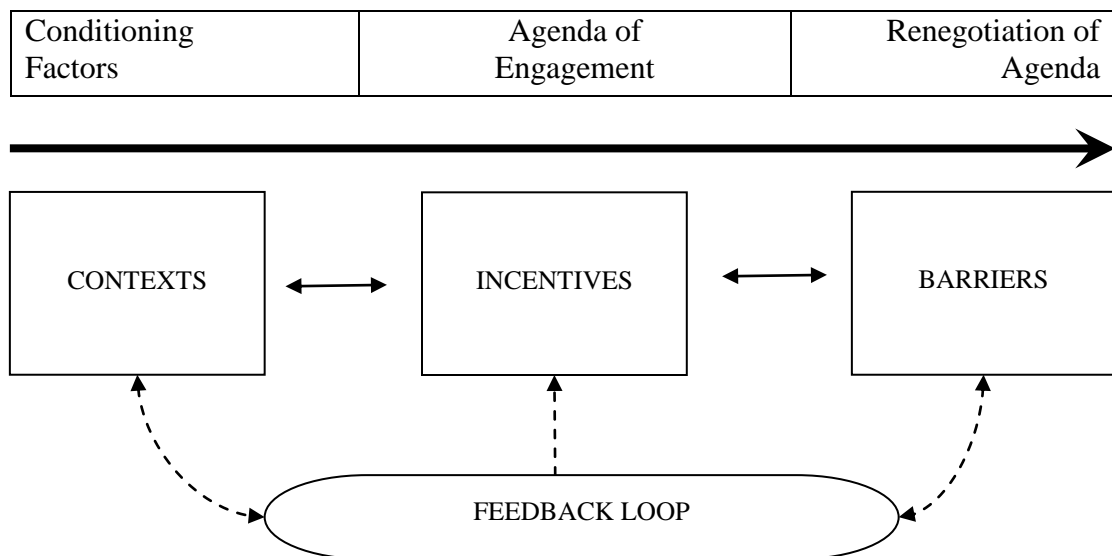
Figure 2.2. A Conceptual Framework of Partnership Dynamics.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Research Design

The researcher adopted the qualitative case study method as it fitted the nature of the inquiry, which was to examine in-depth and in-context the factors motivating or hindering inter-organizational partnerships. In addition, to obtain an accurate and comprehensive understanding of partnerships, the researcher would need to examine the perspectives of all parties involved. A naturalistic inquiry approach would then provide the researcher with a data-driven understanding that embraced the perceptions of various groups of participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Dooley, 2007).

According to Yin (2009), naturalistic qualitative case study allows studies "to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (p. 4). The qualitative case study method therefore enabled the researcher to collect and process rich data from which themes could be generated and triangulated with existing theoretical constructs to build toward an analytical framework. With this method, the researcher would build a contextualized and theoretical-based framework that describe (descriptive) and explain (analytical) partnership dynamics. This two-fold approach would be achieved through an interactive process using various data collection techniques and relying on "multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a

triangulation fashion" (Yin, 2009, p. 18). The researcher expected to find patterns emerging through continual, rigorous triangulation.

Furthermore, the qualitative case study method was selected because it embraces an emergent research design. In the beginning of the study, prior to data collection, the researcher needed to rely on the literature for a conceptual framework. Then in the process of data collection and analysis, the researcher expected the emergence of new themes or unfamiliar outcomes and methods of discovery. Hence the researcher needed an emergent design, which would allow adjustment of research strategies even when data collection has started (Dooley, 2007; Patton, 2002; Hoepfl, 1997).

Population and Sample

The study had two layers of population and sampling: a) selection of organizations, and b) selection of individual participants as key informants. The sample of selected organizations was a purposeful sample because, in the context of a qualitative and single case-study, the researcher aimed to discover the characteristics of a particular sample rather than to obtain a generalized understanding of various samples (Merriam, 2009). Purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to focus on information-rich samples from the entire population, studying them in-depth to identify and analyze vital themes concerning the purpose of the inquiry (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002).

To justify purposeful samples, Dooley (2007) suggested the establishment of operational criteria for selecting participants. In selecting organizations, the researcher

bounded the case study within a multi-organizational network that included six GO partners centering around one INGO. For selection of the GOs, the operational criteria were built on the initial selection of the central INGO, a U.S.-based nonprofit that has worked in Vietnam since the early 1990s. The INGO was selected based on its area of work (agricultural and rural development), its wide range of partners (collaboration with rural, governmental organizations in more than 30 provinces), its considerably long experience in Vietnam (over two decades), and its accessibility (INGO leadership supporting the study).

The operational criteria for selecting the six GOs were the following:

1) Partner types: the sample equally represented by both types of GOs—professional organizations (POs) and mass organizations (MOs);

2) Age of partnerships: varying across the entire length of the INGO's operation in Vietnam, from a minimum of one year to a maximum of 20 year partnerships;

3) Gender balance: the sample having a relative balance of males and females.

In selecting respondents, the researcher used a stratified purposeful sample to facilitate comparisons and triangulation during data analysis. Patton (2002) described stratified samples as samples within a sample, allowing the researcher to capture variations of the larger sample represented within its layers or tiers. The researcher chose eight respondents from the INGO and 12 from the GOs for a total of 20 key informants. All respondents were Vietnamese, representing a relatively balanced mix of gender and management and field operation level, with ages ranging from early 20s to late 50s.

Concerning the INGO respondents, the sample included six field-operation staff (who work directly with GO partners on a daily basis) and two senior management officials. Concerning the GO respondents, the sample drew two members from each of the six GOs; the two were the Project Manager and Project Assistant of the collaborative project. All individual respondents satisfied the operational criteria of being key informants as they have on-going, first-hand knowledge, and experience of the partnerships examined in the study.

In summary, based on the criteria discussed above, the researcher selected a sample as shown in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1.

Characteristics of the Sample

Respondents	Total
INGO (1 organization)	8
GOs (6 total: 3 POs and 3 MOs)	12
Total	**20**

Data Collection

Techniques and Instruments

The researcher chose the face-to-face, semi-structured interview as a key data collection technique. As "a conversation with a purpose" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.

268), an interview engaged both the researcher and the respondent in a conversation that was spontaneous yet at the same time focused on the research questions guided by the research study (Merriam, 2009; deMarrais, 2004; Patton, 2002). Interviews also enabled the researcher to solicit research-focused information from individuals or groups that might not be available using other means.

Semi-structured interviews with flexible and open-ended questions were used so that the respondents could adapt the answers and the researcher could direct the conversation during the interview (Merriam, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Semi-structured interviews also gave the researcher the advantage of flexibility to adjust pre-focused questions—both during the course of an interview and over the course of the data collection process—to probe for information that the researcher perceived as relevant or valuable.

Concerning instruments, the researcher used an interview protocol, data collection forms, and other devices as well as the researcher herself as a human instrument. Uniquely different from non-human instruments, a human instrument is capable of adapting to the various contexts encountered in the study to interpret and evaluate the interactions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The human factor is indispensable in qualitative research because "contextual inquiry demands a human instrument" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 187).

The researcher conducted face-to-face, in-depth interviews with all 20 respondents. All interviews were one-on-one except for a focus group of three INGO respondents, thus the total was 18 interviews, including 17 individual interviews and one

group interview. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted 60 minutes on average (ranging from 45 to 90 minutes). All data were collected during June and July 2010. The interviews were not recorded as most respondents expressed reservation with audio-recording. The researcher respected their preferences with the belief that respondents' comfort was essential for open and honest sharing.

Context and Translation Issues

As this international study was placed in the contexts of post-reform, rural Vietnam, the settings played a particularly important role. The reason is "Without an understanding of the context where the participants live, the results could emerge with no clear interpretation of the data. Participants express their ideas, perceptions, and interpretations, based in a context in which they have learned and that imbues their realities" (Gonzalez y Gonzalez & Lincoln, 2006).

The researcher's background enabled her to address the issue of contexts to a great extent. As the researcher is a Vietnamese native with university-level education in both Vietnamese and English, she was able to observe and conduct personal interviews without the aid of a translator. In addition, since the researcher had prolonged engagement with the participating organizations and their staff in the past, she had extensive knowledge of their environments and enjoyed easier access to the respondents. Her previous engagement also gave her the advantage of rapid and thorough immersion in the local settings.

During the interviews, the researcher took handwritten notes because the respondents expressed reservations with recording. The researcher had to take notes using a mix of English and Vietnamese because, under time pressure, the choice of language depended on whichever she could use most readily to register the responses. The researcher typed up the transcripts as well as did analysis using English. The researcher was aware of the lost-in-translation problem, as Finnegan and Matveev (2002) said, "words often do not translate because elements in one culture are not found in another" (p. 17). But the researcher also recognized her advantages in being a native speaker with an intimate knowledge of the local culture, which enabled her to find conceptual or functional equivalencies in the process of translation.

Ethical Consideration

All respondents received a Recruitment Letter and an Information Sheet two weeks in advance. Before the actual interviews and before the consent forms were signed, they were also reminded of their rights to voluntarily participate in the study or to withdraw from it at any point. The confidentiality of their identity (names, positions, affiliated organization, and work location) was guaranteed. The identity of the studied organization was also omitted from all official records of the study.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in a research study consists of measures taken by the researcher to ensure the integrity of the data and the findings. In other words, trustworthiness answers the question of "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). The conventional terms for trustworthiness are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Merriam, 2009). For naturalistic qualitative study, the criteria for trustworthiness are expressed in terms of a) credibility, b) transferability, c) dependability, and d) confirmability (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). To establish trustworthiness, the researcher used the following data collect methods: prolonged engagement, reflexive journaling, member checks, peer debriefing, triangulation, and audit trails.

Prolonged engagement requires a researcher to immerse in the contexts to acquire the ability for in-depth understanding and appropriate interpretation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described prolonged engagement as a researcher's persistent and focused observation of the important elements of the study; such observation is possible only through continuous and thorough immersion. As a Vietnamese native with professional experience in agricultural and rural development, who has acquainted with all the selected organizations in her past work, the researcher of this study already had prolonged engagement, to a large extent, prior to the data collection stage.

Reflexive journaling is a technique that allows the researcher to capture her thinking and decision-making processes throughout the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher kept the journal to track the details of the study as it emerged, and to catalogue the researchers' reflections, particularly during data collection and analysis. Reflexive journaling also enabled the researcher to identify and address any of her bias due to her familiarity as well as unfamiliarity with certain respondents or contexts.

Member checks are techniques used to solicit respondents' feedback on whether the data recorded and the interpretations made by the researcher are accurate and credible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). The researcher performed member checks throughout the interview process by periodically summarizing or restating respondents' answers for their confirmation of the accuracy of the data.

Peer debriefing is a process through which the researcher systematically shared her experiences and findings with professional peers who have knowledge of certain aspects of the study but were not involved in the study (Merriam, 2009). In this study, peer reviews occurred in the form of debriefing meetings between the researcher and the members of her advisory committee. Peer debriefing enhances credibility because it challenges the legitimacy of the research process through the judgments of professional peers (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To increase the accuracy of data analysis and interpretations, the researcher used the triangulation technique, meaning to cross-check the data through multiple sources and techniques (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the range of sources and

techniques used by the researcher included semi-structure interviews, prolonged

engagement, field notes, reflexive journaling, peer debriefing, and member checking.

Finally, a vital tool to build trustworthiness is an audit trail, a system of

documentations that show the steps taken by the researcher to convert raw data to the

finished products, thereby allowing external auditors to evaluate the credibility of the

process and the products (Merriam, 2009). The audit trail assisted the researcher in

minimizing biases and maximizing fairness by forcing the researcher to examine closely

the techniques and processes used to convert the raw data to meaningful findings.

Data Analysis

For a qualitative study, data analysis starts the moment the researcher arrives at

the study settings, observing, participating, and reflecting on all the elements that the

researcher perceives as related to the study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

Data analysis then continues until the researcher arrives at findings that inform the

research questions. Throughout the collection process, the researcher was a human

instrument. She not only collected data, but also continually interpreted them to form

working hypotheses and adjust the collection strategies (Erlandson et al., 1993).

Unitized Coding and References

To preserve confidentiality, the names of the 20 respondents were coded using

alphabetical letters from A to T. Since the respondents came from three different types

of organizations, the organizational types were coded as N for "non-governmental organization," P for "professional organization," and M for "mass organization." As for quote references, the citations included references for the exact paragraph number (as indicated in the original transcripts processed in ATLAS.ti). This unitized coding system helped identify from whose perspective the respondent was speaking (INGO, PO, or MO). It also assisted the organizing of the Audit Trails for a comprehensive view of the diversity and density of the reported data. Below are examples of the unitized codes:

- A-N#17 means "from respondent A, an INGO participant, paragraph 17"

- M-P#8 means "from respondent M, a PO participant, paragraph 8"

- O-M#9-10 means "from respondent O, an MO participant, paragraph 9-10"

Since the respondents referred to the INGO repeatedly using its real name, the INGO was given the pseudonym AGNET whenever it was mentioned in a response.

Overview of the Data Analysis Process

The researcher executed two types of data analysis, one during the data collection process at the research site, and one following the completion of data collection. The first form of analysis, done by reading through the transcripts and journaling, revealed to the researcher the large or common patterns. It also allowed the researcher to improve the collection techniques to obtain more information deemed valuable or relevant. The post-data collection analysis was guided by the initial analysis to expand in depth and breadth. These interactions between data collection and data analysis distinguish naturalistic qualitative research from traditional research (Erlandson et al., 1993).

For data analysis following the completion of data collection, the researcher employed the *constant comparative method* with the support of the qualitative research software ATLAS.ti. "Constant comparative" means comparing simultaneously various collections of data to identify emerging themes, patterns, consistencies, and anomalies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). The researcher used constant comparative method to discover relationships within the data sets. According to Goetz and LeCompte (1981), relationship discovery, or hypothesis generation, "begins with the analysis of initial observations. This process undergoes continuous refinement throughout the data collection and analysis process, continuously feeding back into the process of category coding. As events are constantly compared with previous events, new topological dimension, as well as new relationships, may be discovered" (p. 58).

According to Yin (2009), case study method depends on *triangulation* of data using multiple sources in the process of data analysis and interpretations. The sources used in this study included semi-structure interviews, field notes, researcher's observations, and reflexive journaling. Using constant comparative method and data triangulation, the researcher moved from axial/free coding to selective coding to create and continually refine the emerging categories and themes (Dooley, 2007).

From Categorical to Thematic Analysis: The Coding Process

a) Data acquaintance

First, the researcher acquainted herself with the raw data by reading and re-reading transcripts, taking notes of noticeable information or patterns that the researcher

deemed relevant to the study. This step lasted during and after the data collection

process, possibly on-going until the researcher started seeing repetitive patterns. The

researcher found reflexive journaling to be particularly helpful during this stage.

For example, in the beginning, the researcher noticed a strong repetition of the

terms "shared missions, politics, workload, networking, capacity building." These terms

gave a sense of direction to the next step of data analysis.

b) Free coding

The researcher uploaded all the interview transcripts (in Microsoft Word format)

to ATLAS.ti and started to attach codes to specific quotes. This step was called free

coding because the researcher freely created and named the codes, continually

generating new codes while examining the transcript to capture any possible themes. The

number of free codes created in this process could be overwhelming. Yet the researcher

needed not repeat this process for every transcript, because after a number of free coding

sessions, the larger patterns/categories started to emerge, or the researcher has reached

data saturation. The researcher did a few more rounds of free coding to gradually

collapse the list of free codes. Table 3.2 showed the list of free codes established in the

first round of free coding:

Table 3.2

List of Free Codes in Alphabetical Order

ADVANTAGES	GO's integration	Partner selection
Age of partnership	Ideology	Partner selection criteria
Barriers	Incentives	Personal incentives
Capacity building	Interaction	PO strengths
Change	Internal perspective	Politics
Compensation	Internal resentment	Power
Complementary	Job title	Procedures
Conditioning factors	Learning	Reasons for collaboration
Culture	Mission dedication	Recommendations
Development model	MO strengths	Resource dependence
Development Priority	MO vs. PO	Resource mobilization
Different perceptions	Negotiated process	Self-fulfillment
DISADVANTAGES	Networking	Sensitivity
Effectiveness	NGO's recommendations	Shared mission
Expectations	NGO limitation	Strategy/Method
External influence	NGOs contrast practices	Sustainability
Flexibility	Organizational culture	Technical barriers
Forced choices	Organizational incentives	Workload
Free choices		

c) Initial categorization

In the list above, the codes "advantages" and disadvantages" were capitalized to stand out as the initial categories, or cluster families (ATLAS.ti's term). These categories came directly from the original researcher questions, which aimed to identify the advantages and disadvantages facing INGO and GO partners. These categories also guided the interview protocol, thus already focusing the collected data on reflecting the major categories of advantages and disadvantages. What the researcher aimed to accomplish in this step was to collapse the free codes further to group them into

manageable sub-categories. However, the researcher found that there were still so many possible sub-categories, though some more illuminating than others.

d) Literature review of emerging categories/themes

At this stage, the researcher felt the need for additional literature review. The review of literature then became very fruitful because the researcher already had in mind a set of data and themes to roughly fit in various theoretical constructs/frameworks proposed by previous studies. The literature review also enabled the researcher to redefine the scope of the study and refocus the research questions using the available data. The result of this step was a conceptual framework that guided the researcher further in data analysis. For example, the researcher recognized the elements of "partnership dynamics" and "conditioning factors," both of which became vital components of the findings.

e) Selective coding

At this stage, the researcher already had a general framework in mind but needed to fine tune the codes to achieve simultaneously two goals: a) respecting the integrity of data by letting the codes genuinely emerge, rather than forcing them to fit the framework, and b) capturing the codes that reflect the framework while continually challenging the framework itself. Since the researcher at this point already became intimate with the multiple sources of data and had knowledge of relevant theoretical constructs, the researcher applied the constant comparative method intensively, almost intuitively. As a result, a bigger picture with selected themes started to emerge: a

dynamic continuum of partnership development with "conditioning factors,"

"incentives," "barriers," and "feedback loop" being the major categories.

The researcher also constantly faced the decision of how to operationally define a

theme, whether to expand or collapse it. The reason was that data could reveal a

multitude of interpretations and sub-themes for each main theme, yet they were not

equally represented by the respondents. Moreover, embracing all of them could mean

more literature review, redefined scope of the study, or revised research questions.

Summary of Methods

The researcher adopted a qualitative case-study method with emergent design.

Personal interviews were conducted with 20 key informants, including eight Vietnamese

staff from one INGO and 12 government officials from six GOs who partnered with the

INGO. All participating organizations were institutions serving agricultural and rural

development in the south of Vietnam. The data were collected in 2010 and analyzed

using the software package ATLAS.ti. The coding process was essentially a triangulated

and constant comparative process, with the use of literature as an additional source of

data besides interview transcripts, reflexive journaling, field notes, and observations.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

From the process of data analysis and on the basis of the conceptual framework,

four categories and 11 themes emerged. Certain themes were represented more strongly

than the others; the density of each theme will be discussed in the corresponding

narratives and reflected in the Audit Trails (see Appendix D). Below is a chart of the

categories and themes (see Figure 4.1):

CONTEXTS	INCENTIVES	BARRIERS
	3) Shared missions	
1) Socio-political contexts		7) Ideological differences
	4) Resource mobilization	
2) Organizational nature		8) Structural constraints
	5) Capacity building	
		9) Operational hurdles
	6) Networking	

FEEDBACK
10) Reflections;   11) Recommendations
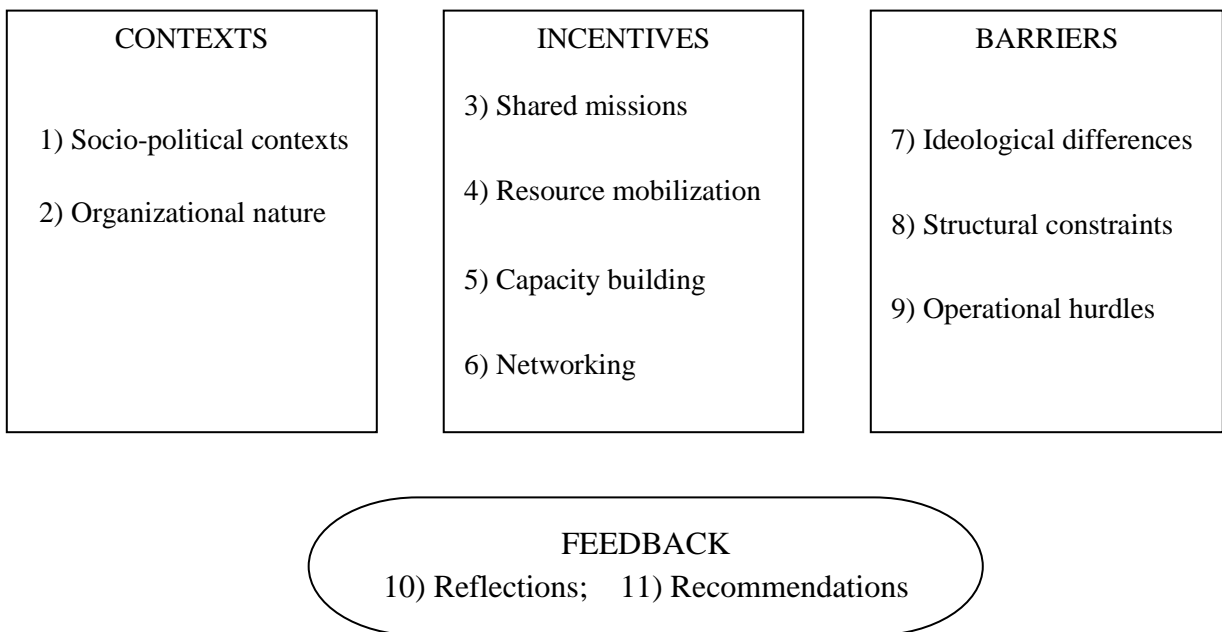
Figure 4.1. Categories and Themes Emerged from Data Analysis.

Expositions of Themes

Theme 1: Socio-political Contexts

Socio-political contexts were expressed by respondents in terms of legislative framework, hierarchical system, and political pressures. The conditioning effect was that the INGO found it impossible not to collaborate with GOs, due not only to explicit legal requirements but also implicit political pressures. For example, the process of finding partners and gaining approval for a project in a province required the INGO to officially a) apply for a permit to operate as an organization at the national level, b) obtain project approvals at the provincial level, and c) implement projects through partnering with GOs at the local level. This legislative framework, however, gave room for a great deal of maneuvering at the local levels, forcing the INGO to consider the various degree of political influence that it has in different geographical areas.

In dealing with GOs at different levels, the political question faced by INGO was whether to use a top-down or bottom-up approach in selecting its partners. An INGO respondent explained the top-down approach as follows:

ANGET does not start from the provincial People's Committee (the highest governmental body in a province) but goes straight to agencies such as Agricultural Extension Centers or Veterinary Sub-Departments. This, however, limits AGNET's political position because, if [it] goes top down from the People's Committee, the local agencies may perceive [it] in a higher position.

The limitation of this top-down approach, however, is that the People's

Committee may pre-assign a partner for AGNET. (E-N#35)

With the top-down approach, the INGO may carry more political influence and hence receive more respect from local entities, yet it is limited in its choice of local partners as the higher government office may recommend or designate in advance a local body—even if it is not the best suited—to partner with the INGO. On the other hand, if the INGO takes a bottom-up approach to find a capable partner before having the partner seek top-down approval for the project, it faces the following problem:

It's hard to choose a partner because, in a province, the internal organizations

are covering for each other very well. Before making decisions on partner

selection, we may need to get information through informal channels, through

talking... For example, find out if certain organizations already have large

projects and do not care much for small projects [AGNET projects are typically

less than $100,000]. (G-N#55)

The politics of connected influence could abound during the partner selection process and also after that, once the partnerships have already formed. An INGO respondent explained, "*Partner relations not only mean direct collaboration, but also mean relations with their [higher level's] bosses. For example, if the district office knows AGNET has close contacts with the provincial office, they will treat AGNET differently, helping project work run more smoothly*" (F-N#29-29).

Another INGO respondent pointed out how politics determined the choice of personnel: "*for the position of Project Manager, we should invite a person with the*

highest authority [rather than with the most suitable qualities] *in the partner's*

organization" (G-N#32-32). A PO respondent concurred with this view: "*Selecting*

project management members for a project is very difficult because some members are

on the list only for the names but they do not work… So AGNET needs to find ways to

select effective members and withdraw those who are not effective" (T-P#38).

Theme 2: Organizational Nature

      The theme of organizational nature pertained mainly to the type of partners

considered by the INGO: professional organizations (POs) versus mass organizations

(MOs). Examples of the first type are Veterinary Sub- Department or Agricultural

Extension Center, and of the second type, Women Union or Farmers Association. Both

are governmental organizations (GOs). Nearly all respondents agreed that these two

types of partners complement each other in their strengths and weaknesses: the former

having technical expertise while the latter specializing in community development with

strong grass-root networks:

> *Mass organizations specialize more in trainings and communication while other*
>
> *[professional organizations] partners are into technical matters… [The latter]*
>
> *can provide great support in economic development while [the former] can*
>
> *approach farmers, and hence do community development, better*" (A-N#28).

      One MO respondent, however, countered the view that MOs are not professional:

"*the word 'professional' needs to be used more appropriately as it can mean expertise in*

communication and mobilization; it needs to be used depending on the areas" (K-M#32).

INGO respondents perceived POs as organizations with technical expertise but "*they may not care much about anything other than their professional areas of work*" (E-N#27). Even PO respondents themselves acknowledged that "*Agricultural extension tends to focus more on technical issues and so lacking some focus on changing farmers' awareness*" (I-P#13).

INGO respondents agreed on the overall strengths and weaknesses of GOs in general. The weaknesses were being "*oversized, centralized, top-down*" (E-N#19), or limited in capacity in terms of "*both professional capacity (weak technological communication, low English ability) and awareness (outdated development perspectives)*" (F-N#31). On the other hand, the strengths of governmental partners consisted in their having already a network of "*established contacts and connections, infrastructures…. human resource… particularly for the project accountant position*" (H-N#21).

Respondents disagreed on the type of partners that works more effectively with INGOs. Some echoed the following position: "*we don't necessarily target any type, because it could be that the same type of organization may be strong in one province but weak in another. We should instead evaluate the capacity of an organization, of its leadership*" (A-N#30). Another respondent emphasized that "*what distinguishes a partner is the commitment and enthusiasm… [It is] subjective distinction rather than categorical difference*" (E-N#21).

Concerning the characteristics of the INGO, some INGO staff critically

responded: "*AGNET actually has aspects that are very much like the bureaucratic*

government: There's no firing policy; low salaries; low quality staff due to the not

desirable pay, so AGNET is influenced very much by the working style of the

government" (B-N#58 & C-N#58). The GO partners, on the other hand, viewed the

INGO simply as independent and not attached to political goals (M-M#17) or, more

positively, being approved by the government and not carrying political agenda (S-

P#35).

Theme 3: Shared Missions

An overwhelming amount of data reflected this theme. All respondents

designated "shared missions" as the number one reason motivating their organizations to

enter the partnerships. The INGO and GOs in this study both shared the missions of

alleviating poverty and caring for the environment.

A sense of shared missions not only bonded the organizations, but also became a

source of personal inspiration for a number of respondents (P-P#24, Q-P#10, R-P#16). A

PO respondent said, "*Between these gains and losses [positives and negatives in project*

collaborations], the gains for farmers are what drives us to work" (I-P#25), and an MO

respondent said, "*[The collaboration works] personally bring me happiness because of*

the support given to poor women" (K-M#14).

An MO respondent shared more in-depth why she was dedicated to the mission:

Farmers who participate in the project love and understand each other more. Some farmers even change their lifestyles. For example, some young farmers used to get drunk and hit their wives and children, but since joining the project, they were more aware of their actions and changed. Personally, I also feel the appreciation and love that farmers have for me. Sometimes when I visit them, whether they have some banana or a chicken, they said they wanted to give them as gifts to me. When I visit them, I also bring old clothes as donations for them or buy sweets for the children. We organize the celebration of Women's Day or Children's Day and have fun together. (J-M#8-9)

Theme 4: Resource Mobilization

This theme reflects the resource dependence theory: organizations entering partnerships to cope with resource constraints. The main types of resources discussed by the respondents as motives for their collaboration were financial, human, and political resources. The INGO provided the former while the GOs provided the latter.

The resource advantages perceived by the INGO respondents include the GOs' human resources, networks, and most importantly political influence. Several INGO and GO respondents agreed with these advantages provided by GOs to INGOs (E-N#18, F-N#13, H-N#19, M-M#10, P-P#17, R-P#56). A number of specific responses are as follow:

- *"The governmental employee system is very large, ready to be assigned to work, which is to the advantage of NGOs"* (F-N#21-21).

- *"[GOs'] wide and thorough network in the rural areas; support from and coordination by the local authorities during the project implementation process"* (D-N#10).

- *"GOs have authority, power, and influence on local authorities, which NGOs don't have. Local authorities have very significant influence on a project"* (C-N#11).

- *"We [GOs] can ask for permits or approach the People's Committee timelier. Paperwork for foreigners to visit the field, for example, can be obtained faster because the provincial government supports our collaborating work, also because the proposed paperwork comes from a governmental organization"* (P-P#37).

On the other hand, there were also advantages for GOs, the greatest of which being funding, which all respondents acknowledged as being second only to "shared missions" in terms of motivating collaboration. An INGO respondent asserted that *"The greatest strength of AGNET is money. AGNET brings in project funding"* (B-N#51). An MO respondent explained, *"Since governmental funding for farmers are limited, NGOs' support helps farmers break out of poverty faster"* (J-M#5).

Theme 5: Capacity Building

This was a strong theme. All GO respondents shared the view that the capacity building activities provided by the INGO was a factor that motivated them to join the partnerships; they also acknowledged that their enhanced capacity has led to the overall increased capacity of their organizations (A-N#20, E-N#60, F-N#11, I-P#7, K-M#15-16, L-M#18, M-M#36, P-P#22-23, Q-P#8-9, T-P#14).

A PO respondent said, "*At an older age I no longer go to school or take classes but joining AGNET I can participate in trainings, and then working on the project I have hands-on lessons that help me realize what I need to learn*" (R-P#14). Another respondent stated that "*I received capacity training, especially in project management; these knowledge and skills can be applied both professionally and personally*" (S-P#17-18).

Some respondents even asserted that, through the work experiences and trainings they received, they would replicate the INGO's model in other projects managed by their own organizations. For example, an MO respondent said positively, "*[I learned through] experience in project work with AGNET: thinking, learning, applying AGNET model for other projects. When AGNET withdraws, I will propose with the People's Committee to continue these projects. The local authorities highly valued AGNET's projects. AGNET does needs-assessment and find the right target group*" (O-M#10).

Theme 6: Networking

This was also a strong theme mentioned by all respondents. GO respondents in particular mentioned the personal joy and professional benefits of networking that they gained from belonging to a network spanning different geographical regions and institutional types. All GO respondents recommended that the INGO facilitate more annual gatherings and field trips for the partners as well as farmer participants to meet and learn from each other. An MO respondent shared that "*I was able to extend my social network, get to know NGOs and other partners in other provinces, learn to balance my work and my AGNET tasks*" (N-M#16).

Networking also means capacity building and enhanced reputation—which translate to professional advantages—for both the individuals and their organizations (F-N#12, S-P#16, T-P#13). A PO respondent said, "*Mentioning AGNET, the Department of Planning knows about Ms. T [herself]*" (T-P#18). Following the same line, another PO respondent said, "*Since we have worked with AGNET for many years, when we mention AGNET here, it means we're talking about [us]*" (P-P#18). Two MO respondents specifically pointed out that the enhanced reputation helped to expand their already existing network by "attracting" more farmers to become members of their organizations (L-M#15, M-M#19).

For the INGO, the networking benefits through their GO partners are also tremendous, especially in terms of improving their reputation and connection with the high-level government bodies. A PO respondent said, "*Our organization brings the AGNET model to other projects in our province and so creates a reputation as well as*

increases trust in AGNET" (R-P#19). An MO respondent similarly said, "*AGNET's*

impact so far is very good and will receive local recognition if the project continues. The

Vice-president of the Provincial People's Committee has a positive evaluation of the

AGNET project" (O-M#33-34).

Theme 7: Ideological Conflicts

a) Conflicts on program strategy

       For the respondents, the issue of ideological conflicts boiled down to different

expectations in program strategy: holistic community development versus household

economic improvement. Both the INGO and GO respondents agreed that the INGO

embraced an effective development model (holistic development with strong

mechanisms for sustainability). However, they conflicted in their views of what should

be emphasized as the main goal in Vietnam's current conditions.

       The data showed that ideological conflicts can happen not only across

organizations but also within an organization itself. Some respondents said they agreed

with the partners, thus disagreeing with some of their own organization's view as well as

their colleagues, and vice versa.

       For example, an INGO respondent said that, although holistic community

development is the goal of the INGO, in her opinion, "*it's probably more important to*

focus on poverty reduction, hunger eradication, and environmental protection [because]

these two goals require different level of capacity building, and community development

needs more capacity building" (A-N#12). She further explained, "*Theoretically*

speaking, community development appears wonderful and our partners support it. But practically speaking, our partners said that it's very difficult to implement, especially within a project's timeframe of 3 years. In addition, increasing the capacity for community also takes more time" (A-N#13).

Another INGO respondent agreed: "*I think AGNET projects should set smaller goals, because currently there're so many objectives and it's very difficult to achieve them. Holistic community development is too much for the current situation. At a certain stage, AGNET needs to focus on some areas to do it really well. With our current capacity and resources, we should focus on things such as economic development and environmental improvement*" (B-N#55).

Respondents within the GO groups faced the same conflict: some respondents championed household economic development while others insisted on holistic community development. As a result of this situation, some INGO staff might agree and feel more connected—thus collaborating more effectively—with some GO partners than with others, depending on if they share the same ideology.

Some GO respondents advocated a balance between these two views (I-P#15-16, L-M#25, P-P#52). A PO respondent explained the issue at length:

> *There needs to be a balance between investment for behavioral changes and for income improvement, because farmers need financial support before they need other intangible and mental support. Financial impacts must come first before other behavioral and spiritual impacts can be absorbed. The AGNET development approach is a little heavy on the spiritual values. For example, the*

[project participants] have to work together for six months before they receive

the [inputs]; they said 'meetings and meetings all the time but getting nothing.'

In reality, how far can an empty stomach go? (I-P#15-16)

b) Conflicts on target population

The ideological conflict was also expressed in terms of selecting a target population: the very poor versus the moderate or non-poor. Some respondents proposed that the INGO approaches only the very poor families who have true needs of support, while others suggested that working with a group of families at different economic levels will be more effective.

An INGO respondent who supported the former approach said:

If farmers have better knowledge and know what to do, they tend to put their self-interests above all rather than community's interests, and so they don't need AGNET projects. But with poor and low education farmers, although it is harder to approach to help them, they are more accepting, more uniting in spirit, and so change their awareness more significantly. (G-N#87-88)

This view was contrasted by a GO respondent: "*AGNET doesn't necessarily have to work with families of the same level of poverty. Group of mixed financial conditions, especially including those members with capacities and reputation can be advantageous [those better-off families can help the worse-off families to succeed]*" (M-M#48).

Theme 8: Structural Constraints

Based on the respondents' feedback, the theme of structural constraints described the constraints that were caused by ill-designed features of the systems. The structural constraints identified by the researcher included a) Roles and responsibilities arrangement, and b) Personnel management practices.

a) Roles and responsibilities arrangement

The main issue was the work overload falling on the GO partners because they hold concurrent duties as both a project collaborator and a full-time government official with separate job duties. What exacerbated the situation was the low compensation that GO partners receive through the collaborative project, though they have to work hard to implement the project activities. All respondents indicated the large workload as the number one barrier affecting their collaboration effectiveness, and several critically expressed the issue of low compensation (A-N#20-22, B-N#16, D-N#15, F-N#16, I-P#30, N-M#7, P-P#29, Q-P#17). An INGO respondent explained:

> *Since project work is an addition to [GO partners'] official work, they have an overload while the compensation is very low compared with the work requirements... They often promise but do not keep their promises, mainly because AGNET work is not their priority work, so they focus on completing their organizational duties first.* (H-N#12 & #34)

An MO respondent addressed the issue bluntly: "*The workload is very large and yet there is no overtime pay. I hope to receive better compensation*" (L-M#36).

In some cases, the issue was alleviated thanks to the cooperation of the GO partners' organizations by providing them with support to accomplish the collaborative duties (J-M#16, O-M#13, R-P#23). For example, a GO respondent shared her case: "*With combined work responsibilities, it's very hard to work on both my job and the project, but it's manageable. AGNET project is considered a work component now in my organization so I can integrate project activities with my work to utilize the material and human resources of the organization for AGNET's work*" (J-M#16).

Another GO respondent, however, approached the issue with a very different perspective: "*I have to work overtime, very early or late, for AGNET activities. I work mainly because of enthusiasm not because of the compensation*" (T-P#21).

An INGO respondent summarized the situation as follow: "*In the process of the collaboration, some partners said they learned a lot from AGNET, but some others considered the work to be a burden. As for AGNET, we recognize that our project work can be the burden for the partners, but they also have the opportunities to learn while having access to resources to help their farmers*" (E-N#15).

b) Personnel management practices

Both the INGO and the GO systems had human resource management issues that hinder the collaboration process. For the INGO, it is the high turn-over rate, and for the GOs, it is the frequent staff rotation practice.

A respondent explained the negative impact of the INGO's turnover rate: "*AGNET's staff turnover is high, which affects the effectiveness of collaboration. It takes time for both partners and new staff to get to know each other. The new staff also need*

time to learn about the AGNET model and so it's hard for them to help partners in

training" (P-P#63-63). Other INGO respondents also acknowledged the problem (D-N#59, E-N#14, H-N#30).

An INGO explained the reason for the turnover rate: "*[AGNET's] salary and*

other supports are little. There's no policy to retain employees. In performance

evaluation, there's only salary increase and level of job completion; there's no bonus or

encouragement" (E-N#64).

Concerning the staff rotation practice by GOs, an INGO respondent said,

"*[GOs'] weakness is the regular rotation of government staff, which affects the*

effectiveness of the project management team" (E-N#19).

Another issue that both sides faced was the loss of qualified community workers

due to low compensation. An INGO respondent stated: "*When their capacity has been*

enhanced through work experience, then they will leave. Looking for high quality

candidates who want to work is very difficult" (G-N#20).

Theme 9: Operational Hurdles

Compared with the structural constraints, operational hurdles captured the issues

that faced collaborative partners at a more daily, operational level, including a)

Reporting procedures, b) Budget constraints, and c) Capacity building barriers.

a)   Reporting procedures

An INGO respondent described the issue of reporting requirements visually, as

demonstrated by one of his GO partners: "*[he] showed me two stacks of paperwork on*

his desk and said, 'For our multi-billion dollar project it is only this thick, while for your

one-billion project, it is this much thicker" (G-N#16-16).

Another PO respondent complained: "*Reporting procedures and forms are too*

complicated and difficult with a lot of demands. The reporting schedule is okay. But the

content needs to be clearer and easier to understand. I have a headache and have

problem understanding these forms. Those that are used for farmers particularly need to

be more simple and clearer" (I-P#31).

Another PO respondent explained the problem in more details: "*The reporting*

system is too long, not reasonable, demanding too much unnecessary information. For

example, the conditions of the family cannot be changed that quickly over time to be

reported that regularly" (S-P#45).

b) Budget constraints

A number of respondents, from both INGO and GO, concerned about the limited

budget for travel, which affected the project's effectiveness. For example, an MO

respondent said, "*Travel cost should be increased so more field visits can be done;*" yet

as a person dedicated to the mission, she followed up with, "*however, once we join the*

project, we no longer care so much about the financial compensation, but mainly to

work for farmers" (J-M#22).

Some other respondents said the cost was manageable if they could combine the

project duties with their work duties and maintain personal dedication: "*If we count each*

penny then the expense is not sufficient, but if we integrate and combine AGNET work

with our organizational work then it can work out. What makes up for it is personal

effort and time since from the beginning we knew that we're working for the poor" (P-P#42).

c)   Capacity building barriers

Several GO and INGO respondents expressed concerned about the limitations of the training system, though capacity building was a critical project component. An INGO respondent explained the problem in very concrete terms: "*AGNET wants partners to take the training and then bring them to farmers within 3-6 months; but in reality, it takes 6-12 months for partners to be able to transfer that knowledge. They cannot make changes that fast*" (D-N#29).

An MO respondent commented on the training content: "*[AGNET] needs to look more deeply into how to adjust its training materials—the community development principles taught to farmers—to suit the local conditions better. For example, in our province, since we're close to the new industrial zones, farmers should be taught to be particularly aware of industrial wastes. This training focus will be different to the focus for farmers living in more rural areas*" (M-M#44).

Concerning the intensity of the training materials for target population, an MO respondent said, "*Projects by INGOs, however, often demand a lot of knowledge and learning while farmers' capacity is limited*" (J-M#14).

Another issue that was raised by several GO and INGO respondents is the lack of training—particularly in project management—for members of the project management team. An MO respondent said, "*My biggest concern is the insufficient capacity of my*

staff when they join the project. They need more training and hands-on experience" (M-M#58).

Theme 10: Reflections

Respondents provided spontaneous reflections on a variety of subjects from their collaborative experiences. The reflections selected to share were those that related to the themes explored above or carry insights that the researcher deemed noteworthy.

On the subject of partner selection, an INGO respondent said: "*The number one issue is how to select a good partner, because we don't hold the handle of the knife, but the blade, once we give a project to a partner. If partners don't use project fund effectively, we cannot punish them. So, selecting partners is like getting married; whatever the result, we will have to live with it for 3 years*" (G-N#53-53).

On the factors contributing to effective partnerships, some respondents emphasized the roles of mutual trust, mutual respect, dedication, and enthusiasm in addition to understanding of the project model (G-N#59-62, Q-P#33, R-P#43).

Discussing the signs that reveal positive changes in partnerships, an INGO respondent suggested that "*Proofs of positive changes in partners are their becoming more creative and proactive*" (B-N#38).

Commenting on the differences between old and young project partners, a PO respondent said, "*Young partners are more active but lack experience in solving problems. Older partners have more official responsibilities for their governmental positions, so their time is more limited*" (I-P#11-12).

The issue of corruption and negative cultural practices also surfaced. An INGO respondent shared that, "*When a project comes, partners may do a quick calculation of how much they can get out of the project. Or they do projects to get percentage*" (F-N#35), and that "*drinking and eating before discussing work*" is often needed (F-N#37).

Lastly, in countering the view held by some GO partners that small projects are not worth their efforts, a PO respondent said:

We should not think that small projects in rural development are like "salt in the sea" but that if it's small, we do it small accordingly… Even when the province has 2-10 billion projects, they are still not successful because the projects are so heavy on propaganda or focusing on disbursing funds instead of investing in trainings and monitoring. (R-P#15 & #21)

Theme 11: Recommendations

Respondents also recommended solutions for the barriers that hinder collaboration effectiveness. For ideological conflicts, an INGO respondent suggested, "*In implementing [AGNET's community development model], we can't completely replicate the model right now. We need to set smaller targets to bring people together and try to implement whatever fits Vietnam's situations first*" (G-N#23-23).

For the issue of partner's workload (structural constraints), an INGO respondent proposed that "*An increase in our project funding size will increase our voice, and we can demand to have the partner organization to assign a Project Assistant to work full-*

time or have more time for AGNET" (G-N#36-36). Another INGO respondent

recommended an even stronger approach:

> *Reorganize the local project management team [a group of GO personnel at the*
>
> *district and village levels]: a) Only the Project Manager will be an existing*
>
> *governmental officer; the rest will be hired separately to work for the project.*
>
> *This way the full-time members will be more attached to their rights and*
>
> *responsibilities. World Bank projects use this approach… b) Decrease the size of*
>
> *the management team, fewer but full-time staff.* (E-N#43)

Many respondents recommended an enhancement in compensation for GO

partners to provide financial incentives (H-N#37, G-N#11, L-M#42, P-P#39, & S-P#51).

One of them said, "*Improving the benefits for the project management members; right*

now their compensation is very low, which limits their enthusiasm for project works" (E-

N#46).

For the issue of capacity building barriers (operational hurdles), nearly all

respondents suggested an increase in training for not only the GO partners but also the

frontline staff in the field. An MO respondent said, "*The group leader and project staff*

at village level also need to receive more management training to help them facilitate

the group activities more effectively" (M-M#45).

There are also many recommendations concerning partnership management in

general. For example, discussing the process of building relationships with GO partners,

an INGO respondent said, "*We need to keep our rules and principles in dealing with*

partners. In a new province, we may go top down in the beginning, but later our

relationship with the partner will become horizontal. So, at first we need to be fair and clear-cut in dealing, but later we can be more flexible. Still, we should not discuss politics with partners or be involved in their internal organization issues" (G-N#43-43).

An MO respondent talked passionately about how the annual partner gathering should be improved:

> *The annual meeting to share experience should not be located at the headquarter office, but in a province and rotate among different provinces. A location may be selected for the purpose of demonstrating certain models or activities. This meeting is not just for conference or training activities, but mainly to share lessons and experience. Doing this will help us to a) Find out why some locations do well while others do not, and b) Have local leaders participate in the meeting to know more about AGNET projects.* (K-M#38)

Discussing the topic of sustainability, which was the goal for both INGO and GO partners, a PO respondent emphasized that "*There should be trainings for local leaders and government agents to help them maintain the project activities. If local leaders let go of the project, it will die for sure. Whatever project is cared for by the village leaders, it will run well. Plus, they have the authority to enforce rules and regulations*" (I-P#20).

In short, to improve the partnerships, respondents jointly recommended that the INGO become more flexible in implementation methods; provide partners with more intensive capacity training, particularly in project management skills; improve the transparency and efficiency of reporting procedures; and finally, enhance either tangible or intangible benefits for partners.

Discussion

The researcher found the findings consistent with the views and/or findings of a number of other researchers. For example, O'Toole (1997) observed that "Managers in networked settings do not supervise most of those on whom their own performance relies" (p. 47). The data in this study confirmed this observation. The INGO staff's performances are evaluated based on the results of the collaborative projects. The GO partners also put their reputation, and thus career prospects, at stake if the projects in which they were involved fail. However, the INGO staff and the GO partners did not supervise each other; they could only work with, or more accurately rely on, each other to implement the projects. They could feel motivated to help each other succeed, meaning their partnership is effective. Or both—or either of them—can also choose to do the contrary, not investing time and effort in the project, meaning their partnership is ineffective.

The researcher also found Gazley's (2010) conclusion aligns with this study's findings: "From both the public- and the private-sector perspective, collaboration can be supported by a combination of coercive, incentive-based, and normative influences that occur at both the individual and the institutional level" (p. 52). The conditioning factors (socio-political contexts of Vietnam and organizational nature) provided coercive as well as incentive-based influences on the partners and their organizations. INGOs have no choice but collaborating with GOs, but they both find that they can mobilize each other's resources to each other's advantage.

Finally, the researcher found the findings consistent to a great extent with Bardach's (1998) findings on the incentives and barriers that influence public-sector partnerships. For example were the incentives in terms of "personal career" and "people's desire to join in the effort." The respondents in this study rarely mentioned explicitly how the collaborative work impacted their career, yet they emphasized the impact on their reputation to their supervisors, peers, and communities—which inevitably influences their career prospects. The theme of *shared missions* also reflected the partners' desire to join in the poverty alleviation effort. As indicated in the findings, many respondents said that they work not for the compensation, but for the joy of helping, though they were aware of having to make some personal sacrifices.

Summary of Findings

Data analysis yielded four major categories and 11 themes that were interrelated. The first category, *Conditioning Factors*, included the themes of *socio-political contexts* and *organizational nature*. The first theme described the legislative framework, hierarchical systems, and political pressures within which the INGO and the GOs have to function. On the one hand, these forces obligated the INGO to collaborate with the GOs; on the other hand, the INGO learned that the collaboration would also be to its advantage in the contexts of Vietnam. As the second theme reflected, the structural and operational characteristics of GOs—their powerful political connections, national-local

networks, and extensive human resources—brought competitive advantages to the partnership table.

The second category, *Incentives for Partnerships*, included the themes that contribute to the agenda of engagement between the INGO and GOs. First and foremost, INGO and GO organizations entered partnerships because of their *shared missions*, to assist poor farmers, alleviating poverty. Second, as discussed above, they partner for mutual benefits through *resource mobilization*; the INGO provides funding while the GOs, political resources and physical networks. Next, *capacity building* was a critical factor motivating GOs to engage in partnerships, therefore having opportunities for continual trainings and experiences that enhance the capacity of the individual partners as well as their organizations. Lastly, *networking*—in terms of increased reputation, attracting more memberships, and expanded personal and professional networks—was an incentive for both GO and INGO partners.

The third category, *Barriers to Partnerships,* consisted of the themes that explain partnership conflicts and thereby leading to a renegotiation of the engagement agenda. The themes of barriers functioned at three levels: ideological, structural, and operational. The *ideological conflicts* occurred in the realms of program strategy and target population. Concerning program strategy, some partners insisted on holistic community development while others championed household economic improvement. As for the choice of target population, some partners suggested only the very poor selected while others call for a mix of participants at various economic levels. These conflicts happened not only between the INGO and GOs but also between the staff within the same

organizations. Next, *structural constraints* were the systems issues that hinder partnership effectiveness. The first issue was roles and responsibilities arrangement: GO partners' concurrent duties— "member of the collaborative project" as well as "full-time GO official" without special arrangement for increased duties— result in their overloads of work, which affect their morale and well-being. The second issue was personnel management practices: The INGO has high turnover rate and the GOs frequently rotate their staff, both of which cause negative interruptions in partnership development. Lastly, *operational hurdles* were operational problems such as reporting procedures (cumbersome, over-demanding), budget constraints (insufficient travel/field expenses), and capacity building barriers (unreasonable training requirements, lack of necessary trainings).

The fourth and final category, *Feedback*, included the themes of *reflections* and *recommendations.* These themes described the functions of a feedback loop that makes agenda renegotiation and partnership improvement possible. Through reflections and recommendations from both sides, each party can develop solutions to strengthen the incentives and diminish the barriers.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to comprehensively describe and explain the incentives and barriers that influence INGO-GO partnerships in Vietnam. The specific research questions included the following:

1) What are the contextual factors that condition INGO-GO partnerships in their formation stage and continue to influence them throughout their development?

2) What are the incentives that determine their agenda of engagement?

3) What are the barriers that prompt the renegotiation of the agenda of engagement in the partnership development process?

Conclusions

Through data analysis, the researcher found the answers to the three research questions, and moreover, synthesized them to arrive at an operational framework that explained the dynamics of partnership development.

Concerning the first research question, the researcher found that *socio-political contexts* and *organizational nature* are the two major contextual factors that condition INGO-GO partnerships throughout their development. Concerning the second research question, the researcher found four incentives that determine the partners' agenda of engagement: *shared mission*, *resource mobilization*, *capacity building*, and *networking*.

Concerning the third research question, the researcher found three barriers that cause

renegotiation of the engagement agenda: *ideological conflicts*, *structural constraints*,

and *operational hurdles.*

Overall, based on the conceptual framework drawn from the literature review and

on the study's findings, the researcher proposed an analytical framework for studying

partnerships dynamics: A Dynamic Continuum of Partnership Development (see Figure

5.1). The continuum appears linear but in fact grows into a circular, interactive process

throughout the development process of partnerships, with the bridging device being the

feedback loop.

Conditioning Factors	Agenda of Engagement	Renegotiation of Agenda

CONTEXTS

Socio-political contexts

Organizational natures

INCENTIVES

Shared missions

Resource mobilization

Capacity building

Networking

BARRIERS

Ideological differences

Structural constraints

Operational hurdles

FEEDBACK LOOP
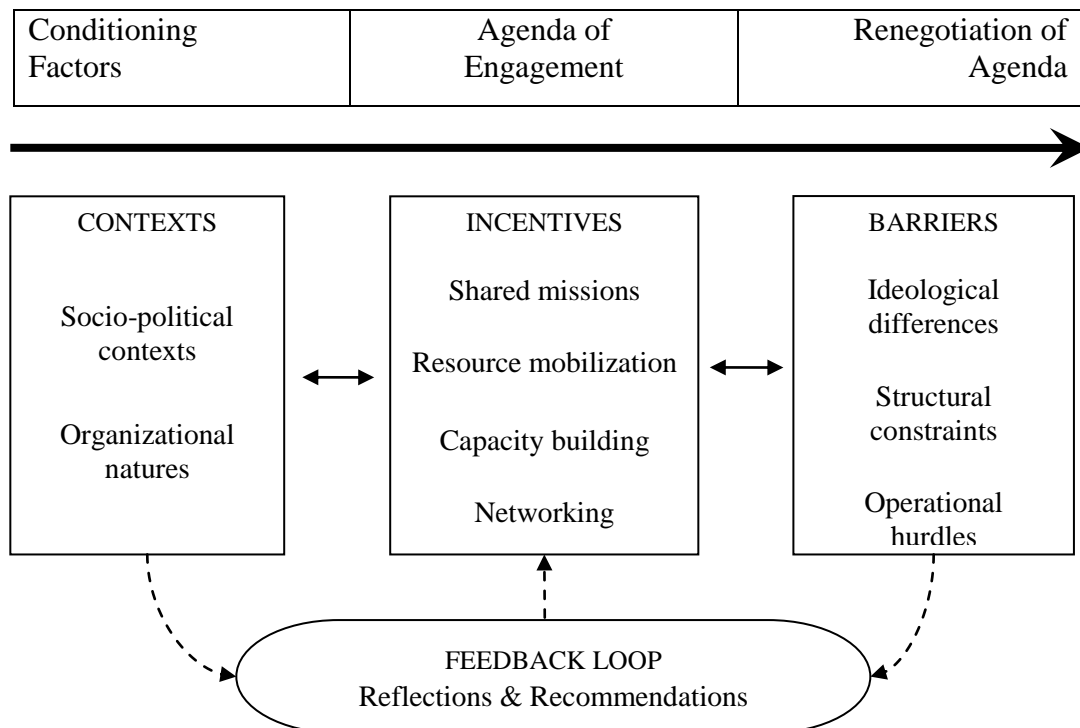Reflections & Recommendations

Figure 5.1. A Dynamic Continuum of Partnership Development.

At the stage of partnership formation, the process is linear: conditioning factors lead partner organizations to forming an agenda of engagement, which are later renegotiated as partnership barriers surface. However, the linear process ends there. During partnership development, the whole engagement process produces reflections and recommendations that are channeled through a feedback loop to impact the agenda of engagement, which again will be renegotiated. If the feedback loop is receptive and effective in its channeling functions, the partner organizations will be able to enhance the incentives and address the barriers in a timely manner, thereby improving partnership effectiveness. On the other hand, if the feedback loop is narrow and ineffective, the partner organizations will likely remain in, or aggravate, their conflicts, thereby diminishing partnership effectiveness.

Contributions

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributed an analytical framework that can be tested and refined further by other researchers. The study also offered a theoretical- and empirical-based perspective on INGO-GO partnerships in post-reform, rural Vietnam. Grounded in both previous literature and empirical data, the resulting framework promises to open up venues for future research.

In terms of practical contribution, the study provided knowledge of and insights into the intricacies of partnerships between INGOs and local governments in developing countries, particularly for socialist states such as Vietnam and China. For public leaders

working in the field of agricultural and rural development, the study could assist them in making strategic decisions to minimize constraints and maximize opportunities in collaborative environments.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The dynamic continuum framework can help researchers who do snap-shot studies to construct a broader time-framed analysis of partnerships. The framework can be used as both a conceptual and operational framework. As a conceptual framework, it can assist in the formulation of research problem and research design. As an operational framework, it can guide data collection and interpretation.

The categories used in the framework (conditioning factors, incentives, barriers, feedback) are flexible categories that lend themselves to expansion and contraction to suit emerging themes. Thus researchers can use them to capture a multitude of incentives and barriers, or advantages and disadvantages that influence partnerships. Furthermore, the dynamic interactions between these categories can enable researchers to examine their subjects through a larger window of time.

The themes used in the framework are more specific but also carry the same characteristics as the categories and thus can be employed similarly.

Practical Implications

Emphasizing the importance of contexts, the study implied that collaboration incentives and barriers can align or differ between countries, even between areas within a country, depending on the socio-political contexts and organizational natures.

The study also showed that shared missions are the number one incentive driving collaboration in the public sector. Yet shared missions do not imply ideological agreement. Ideological differences, if occurring, may demand significant renegotiation of an engagement agenda because they involve organizational-level strategies.

The findings suggested that shared missions initiate collaboration, but resource mobilization nurtures it. Placed in a broad context, resource mobilization can explain a wide range of incentives, because resources can be financial, technical, political, or in many other forms; they can be tangible or intangible, direct or indirect, implicit or explicit. In this sense they may include social capital as a form of intangible resource. The study showed that incentives such as networking power and capacity building were intangible resources that could manifest into tangible rewards for both parties.

Furthermore, the strongly-represented themes of capacity building and networking reflect the genuine needs for more capacity building and social networking in the public sector in developing countries.

The findings also called attention to a merge of identity once the organizations become long-term partners. The findings showed that partners' reputations and performances became increasingly dependent on each another. As some respondents

said, mentioning one partner meant talking about the other. This situation can bond the partners as well as create pressures between them.

Next, the barriers found in this study should warn organizations of the issues hindering their partnerships at three levels: ideological, structural, and operational. The first two barriers may pose more difficulties as they are systems issues, the fixing of which require system changes. The operational barriers, on the other hand, may demand less drastic adjustments. Nonetheless, the three barriers are interrelated. For example, as the collective responses revealed across the themes, staff turnover was a structural constraint yet it led to operational hurdles when new people had to take time to learn and current members had to readjust.

Finally, the findings suggested the importance of the feedback loop. Organizations can obtain feedback officially through reports and meetings, and unofficially through work-related interactions with partners. As the respondents reflected, quality feedback may hinge on the level of mutual trust and respect that the partners have for each other.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Researchers

Concerning methodology, the researcher found the emergent design to bear the most fruit. During data analysis, the researcher returned to do additional literature review to settle on a conceptual framework that could guide further data analysis and illuminate

the findings. Although the researcher had expected this process to occur based on the instructional literature on qualitative methodology, the researcher still found that the review consumed tremendous time. The initial review prior to data collection was particularly perplexing and thus created anxiety for the researcher going into the data collection process. Thus the researcher recommends future researchers who consider emergent design to be aware of these issues to handle them effectively.

The research found the qualitative research software ATLAS.ti to be immensely useful and recommends that future researchers utilize the software. Time and effort spent on manually handling transcripts and other forms of data, especially during various rounds of coding and recoding, can be invested in the actual coding process. Future researchers may also consider devoting time in advance to learn the software, which the researcher found intuitive in design once the user becomes familiar with it.

Concerning research design, the researcher recommends that future studies expand the sample of INGOs to have more than one perspective. This study focused on only one INGO in its network with multiple GO partners, hence the characteristics of the partnerships may be influenced by the idiosyncratic natures, if existing, of the INGO.

Next, the researcher found the language barrier to be an issue although the researcher was a Vietnamese native with university-level education in both Vietnamese and English. The researcher concerned most about the integrity of the translated quotes. Quotes reflect not only respondents' ideas but also attitudes and feelings. But due to linguistic and cultural barriers, the translation process may rob quotes of those qualities or unintentionally mislead interpretations. Since the quotes' translation cannot be cross-

checked by respondents whose English is limited, the researcher is not certain what can be done directly about this issue. The available yet indirect measures to address it are prolonged engagement, reflexive journaling, and peer debriefing, with the last technique preferably done in both languages and with experts of both cultures.

Finally, concerning the use of multiple theories to build a study's conceptual framework, the researcher recommends that future researchers examine the fundamental assumptions that underlie each theoretical tradition. The purpose is two-fold. First, future researchers can then identify the cross-cutting and bearing points that hold different theories together in a framework. Second, they can also recognize and address conflicting assumptions that would otherwise undermine the integrity of the conclusions.

Recommendations for INGOs and GOs in Vietnam

First, prior to approaching partnerships, organizations should examine the local areas' institutional and political systems, legislative frameworks, and organizational characteristics of the target partners. An understanding of these conditioning factors will inform the organizations on the incentives and barriers that influence the future partnerships. Then they can take appropriate steps to develop effective agendas of engagement.

Second, organizational partners need to be aware of their compatibility in both missions and ideologies. Shared missions do not mean shared ideologies or implementation approaches. A well-rounded awareness of their compatibility will help organizations avoid as well as prepare for future conflicts.

Third, as the advantages of capacity building and networking incentivize organizational employees in their collaborative work, INGOs and GOs can improve their partnerships as well as their attractiveness to potential partners by investing more resources to strengthen these incentives.

Fourth, to overcome the three-level barriers (ideological conflicts, structural constraints, and operational hurdles), organizations need to remember that these barriers are closely interrelated. Therefore they will be addressed more effectively and efficiently using a systematic approach that focuses especially on organizational alignment.

Lastly, organizations should be aware that feedback loops are indispensable to agenda renegotiation and partnership sustainability. Organizations should therefore be proactive in establishing, maintaining, and improving the feedback loops so that they have constant access to sources that can sustain and rejuvenate their partnerships.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

TO CONDUCT THE RESEACRH STUDY

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES - OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

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Human Subjects Protection Program

Institutional Review Board

MEMORANDUM

DATE:	19-Apr-2010
TO:	NGUYEN, ANH N 77843-3578
FROM:	Office of Research Compliance Institutional Review Board
SUBJECT:	Initial Review
Protocol Number:	2010-0312
Title:	Inter-Organizational Collaboration for Non Profit Managers: Understanding the Influences of Sector-Based Characteristics on Collaborative Behaviors
Review Category:	Expedited
Approval Period:	19-Apr-2010 **To** 18-Apr-2011

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL

Step 1: Arrive early to make observation of the settings. Make new entry in field notes including: interview number, date, location, name/title of respondent, start/end time of interview.

Step 2:   Introduce researcher's name, affiliations, and interview purpose. Ask for use of <u>recording device</u>.

Step 3: Give respondent 2 copies of consent form; ask him/her to read, sign, and return one.

Step 4: Ask "**Is there anything about the study you would like me to tell you before we begin?**"
Prepare to explain the study's purpose, sponsorship, sampling procedure, and respondent's contribution to the study. *Start when respondent seems ready.*

[VIETNAMESE: "Anh/chị có câu hỏi hay thắc mắc gì về cuộc nghiên cứu này trước khi chúng ta bắt đầu phỏng vấn không?" Chuẩn bị giải thích mục đích cuộc nghiên cứu, cơ quan hỗ trợ, cách chọn đối tượng, và đóng góp của đối tượng nghiên cứu]

1. Opening question: **How long have you been with your organization?**

   [VIETNAMESE: "Anh/chị công tác ở cơ quan bao lâu rồi?"]

2. Organizational purposes: **What are the current priorities of your organization?**

   [VIETNAMESE: "Hiện nay các mục tiêu nào là ưu tiên hàng đầu của tổ chức anh/chị?"]

3. Organizational resources: **What in your view are the strengths of your organization?** Probing for financial resources, technical expertise, and political power.

   [VIETNAMESE: "Theo anh/chị thì tổ chức mình có các thế mạnh nào?" Gợi ý thế mạnh tài chính, chuyên môn, hay chính trị.]

4. Organizational limitations: **What do you think may hinder your organization from achieving its goals?** Probing for internal and external factors.

   [VIETNAMESE: "Theo anh/chị thì các yếu tố nào có thể hạn chế mức độ thành công của tổ chức mình? Gợi ý các yếu tố bên trong và bên ngoài.]

   Inter-organizational expectation, obligation, and dependency:

5. **What in your view are the reasons your organization collaborate with organization X?** Probing for socio-economic or political reasons; also to see whether the partnership is emergent or imposed by external authority.

   [VIETNAMESE: "Theo anh/chị thì vì sao tổ chức mình hợp tác làm dự án với tổ chức X?" Gợi ý các nguyên nhân chính trị xã hội, tài chính; đồng thời tìm hiểu xem việc hợp tác là tự nguyện hay do sức ép bên ngoài.]

6. **In specific terms, what do you expect organization X to do or to provide through the collaborative partnership?** Probing to see if these expectations have changed over time.

   [VIETNAMESE: "Theo anh/chị thì tổ chức mình mong đợi tổ chức có những đóng góp hay hỗ trợ cụ thể nào thông qua dự án hợp tác?" Tìm hiểu xem các mong đợi này có thay đổi theo thời gian.]

7. **What impacts do you think the partnership has made on your organization?** Probing for negative and positive influences; also to see if these impacts were anticipated.

   [VIETNAMESE: "Thông qua dự án hợp tác này, tổ chức X đã có những ảnh hưởng như thế nào đến tổ chức của anh chị? Tìm hiểu các ảnh hưởng tích cực và tiêu cực; đồng thời xem các ảnh hưởng này có được dự đoán trước hay không.]

8. **If for some reason the partnership is suspended, how do you think it would affect your organization?** Probing for the severest effects / dependency factors.

   [VIETNAMESE: "Nếu vì lý do nào đó việc hợp tác bị tạm ngưng, anh/chị nghĩ tổ chức mình có thể bị ảnh hưởng như thế nào?" Tìm hiểu các ảnh hưởng/yếu tố lệ thuộc sâu nhất.]

9. **If you have the power to make any changes, what would you do about this partnership with organization X?**

   [VIETNAMESE: "Giả sử anh/chị có khả năng để tiến hành cải tổ, anh/chị nghĩ mình sẽ thực hiện những thay đổi nào trong công việc hợp tác với tổ chức X?"]

10. **How long have you worked in this collaborative project with organization X?**

    [VIETNAMESE: "Anh/chị làm việc trong dự án hợp tác với tổ chức X bao lâu rồi?"]

11. *If time permits, ask:* ***Do you also work on other collaborative projects with similar organizations? If so, are the experiences different? Would you like to share why?***

[VIETNAMESE: "Anh/chị có làm việc trong một số dự án hợp tác khác với các tổ chức trong cùng lãnh vực không? Nếu có thì anh/chị thấy kinh nghiệm hợp tác với các tổ chức này có khác không? Anh/chị có ngại chia sẻ một số nguyên do?"]

12. Closing question: **Is there anything else you would like to share?**

[VIETNAMESE: "Anh/chị có muốn chia sẻ bất cứ vấn đề nào khác nữa không?]

Step 5: -   <u>Member checking</u>: summarize main points and ask for feedback (or promise to follow up).
- Ask for relevant <u>project documents</u> and other materials.
- Ask for preferred means of follow-up communication; obtain business card; give thanks.

APPENDIX C

A SAMPLE OF ATLAST.TI OUTPUT:

LIST OF QUOTATIONS WITH COMMENTS FROM INTERVIEW 1

All current quotations (13). Quotation-Filter: All (extended version)

_____

HU: Nguyen's Thesis (2)
File: [C:\Users\Anh Nguyen\Documents\My Dropbox\MY THESIS\DATA ANALYSIS\Nguyen's Thesis (2).hpr6]
Edited by: Super
Date/Time: 2011-05-18 09:10:54

_____

P 1: Interview 1_A-N.doc - 1:1 [Another positive effect is the..] (10:10)   (Super)
Codes: [Reflections]
No memos

Another positive effect is the increased influence/recognition of our staff in dealing with "new" partners thanks to the upgrade of the job title: from Program Officer to Program Manager (Program Assistant then upgraded to Program Officer). I emphasize here two types of partners: "new" and "old" partners. Since old partners have worked with us for years, the title change didn't really make influence on them.

Comment:
      The respondent is reflecting on how a change made by the INGO influenced the partners. The INGO increased its
      personnel and made the positions more specialized; the new job titles of the INGO staff positively impressed the
      "new" partners. This is an interesting insight for INGOs and GOs, demonstrating the importance of job titles, which
      in some culture may weigh more heavily than in others.

P 1: Interview1_A-N.doc - 1:2 [Community development-this is ..] (12:12)   (Super)
Codes: [Ideological difference]
No memos

Community development-this is L's strategy, and in my personal opinion, it's probably more important to focus on poverty reduction, hunger eradication, and environmental protection.

Comment:
      Here is an example of an INGO respondent who aligns more with the ideology of many GO respondents (household
      economic development) than with the ideology held by the INGO itself (holistic community development).

P 1: Interview1_A-N.doc - 1:3 [These two goals require differ..] (13:13)   (Super)
Codes: [Ideological difference]
No memos

These two goals require different level of capacity building, and community development (CD) needs more capacity building. Theoretically speaking, CD appears wonderful and our partners support it. But practically speaking, our partners said that it's very difficult to implement, especially within a project's timeframe of 3 years. In addition, increase the capacity for community also takes more time.

Comment:
      What this INGO respondent was saying resonated with the views of many GO respondents (???). She pointed out the
      discrepancy between theory and practice.

P 1: Interview1_A-N.doc - 1:4 [Good method: with passing on t..] (15:15)   (Super)
Codes: [Int'NGO]
No memos

Good method: with passing on the gift, the beneficiaries don't have a dependent attitude. Matching or without matching, we still sign projects and provide inputs. Helping and guiding at the same time, our model is more effective than those of other organizations.

P 1: Interview1_A-N.doc - 1:5 [the most serious factor affect..] (18:18)   (Super)
Codes: [Reflections]
No memos

the most serious factor affecting projects is the dependency of farmer participants who want to remain at the poverty level so they can keep receiving support. There are those who hardworking but still poor while there are those who poor because they are lazy. To be fair we must distinguish these two different kinds of poor groups and help those who deserve help. There is also an attitude among poor farmers that it's ok for foreign-aid projects not to succeed or sustain.

Comment:
    Some GO respondents resonate with this view, which warns both GOs and INGOs of the need to find effective methods to select participants who are truly in need.

P 1: Interview1_A-N.doc - 1:6 [all NGOs who want to work with..] (20:20)   (Super)
Codes: [Legislative framework]
No memos

all NGOs who want to work with farmers have to go through the government

P 1: Interview1_A-N.doc - 1:7 [For GOs, when they collaborate..] (20:20)   (Super)
Codes: [Multi-level purpose]
No memos

For GOs, when they collaborate in projects, they actually take on extra work.

P 1: Interview1_A-N.doc - 1:8 [GO staff who join the project ..] (20:20)   (Super)
Codes: [Capacity building]
No memos

GO staffs that join the project can learn management experience while also diversify their work and have more support for their farmers

P 1: Interview1_A-N.doc - 1:9 [We used to provide 100% of fun..] (22:22)   (Super)

Codes: [Resource dependence]
No memos

We used to provide 100% of funding. But after the economic regression, HQ now prefers matching, and the purpose is also to increase the sense of responsibility.

P 1: Interview1_A-N.doc - 1:10 [whoever wants to work with...] (22:22)   (Super)
Codes: [Multi-level purpose]
No memos

whoever wants to work with AGNET needs a heart for development

P 1: Interview1_A-N.doc - 1:11 [select potential partners and ..] (24:24)   (Super)
Codes: [Recommendations]
No memos

select potential partners and have them compete to be our official partners; this way we can have high-quality partners.

P 1: Interview1_A-N.doc - 1:12 [They are both government organ..] (28:28)   (Super)
Codes: [Int'NGO] [Mass org]
No memos

They are both government organizations. MOs specialize more in trainings and communication while other GOs are into technical matters.

P 1: Interview1_A-N.doc - 1:13 [In selecting partners, we don'..] (30:30)   (Super)
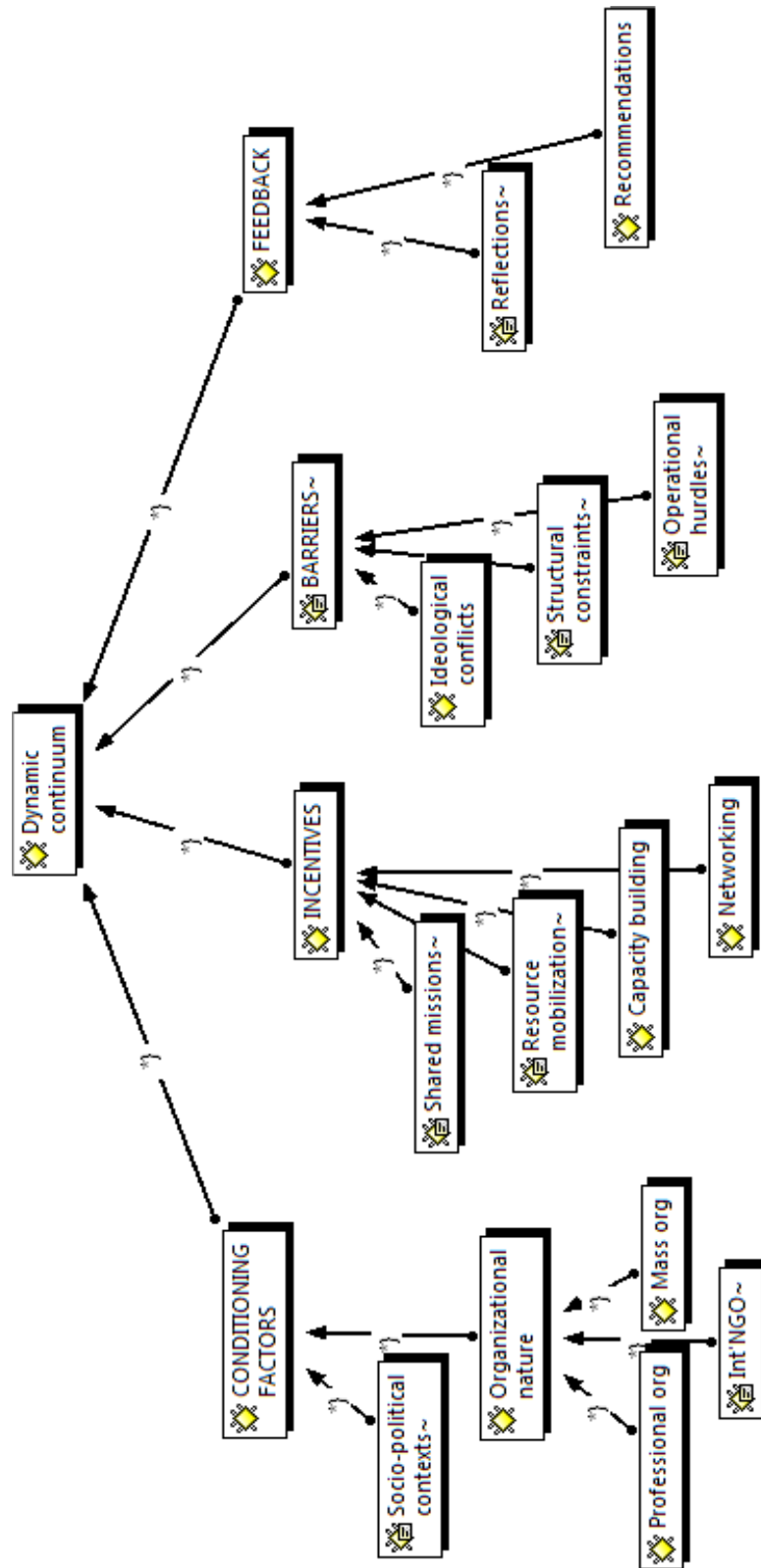Codes: [Organizational nature]
No memos

In selecting partners, we don't necessarily target any type, because it could be that the same type of organization may be strong in one province but weak in another. We should instead evaluate the capacity of an organization, of its leadership, and once we have found appropriate partners, we can focus on finding a local community that fits our project.

APPENDIX D

A SAMPLE OF ATLAST.TI OUTPUT:

NETWORK VIEW WITH ALL CODES

FEEDBACK

Reflections~

Recommendations

Dynamic continuum

BARRIERS~

Ideological conflicts

Structural constraints~

Operational hurdles~

INCENTIVES

Shared missions~

Resource mobilization~

Capacity building

Networking

CONDITIONING FACTORS

Socio-political contexts~

Organizational nature

Professional org

Mass org

Int'NGO~

APPENDIX E

AUDIT TRAILS

Categories/themes	Sources
Contexts	
1. Socio-political contexts	A-N#20; B-N#6, 14; C-N#6; D-N#7; E-N#17, 19, 35, 54, 61, 65; F-N#19-20, 23, 26, 28-29, 34, 37; G-N#32, 55; I-P#21, 27-28, 35, 38-40, 46, 48, 50; K-M#42, 44; L-M#13, 23; M-M#55; N-M#28; O-M#19, 21; P-P#37; R-P#27, 31-35, 49, 61; T-P#35-36, 39
2. Organizational natures	B-N#36; B-N#58; C-N#34; C-N#58; D-N#36; M-M#17; S-P#35; A-N#28; C-N#34; B-N#36; D-N#36; C-N#38; E-N#26-27; E-N#28-30; F-N#7; I-P#13; I-P#44; J-M#4, 28; K-M#32-33; L-M#31; M-M#9, 12, 17, 33, 51-52; N-M#10
Incentives	
3. Shared missions	B-N#53; C-N#53; D-N#53; E-N#9; I-P#5, 25; J-M#4, 89; K-M#10, 14; M-M#6; O-M#6-7; P-P#11, 24; Q-P#10; R-P#11, 16; S-P#8
4. Resource mobilization	A-N#22; B-N#12, 51; C-N#11, 51; D-N#10, 51; E-N#18; F-N#13, 21; H-N#19, 21; J-M#5; K-M#20; L-M#17; M-M#10, 39; P-P#17, 37; R-P#18, 45, 56, 57-59
5. Capacity building	A-N#20, 26; E-N#60; F-N#11; I-P#7, 9; K-M#15-16; L-M#18, 37; M-M#36; O-M#10; P-P#22-23, 27;

	Q-P#8-9; R-P#14; S-P#17-18; T-P#14
6. Networking	F-N#12; I-P#8; L-M#15, 37; M-M#19; N-M#16; O-M#30, 33-34; P-P#18, 26; Q-P#23; R-P#19; S-P#16; T-P#13, 33
Barriers	
7. Ideological conflicts	A-N#12, 13; B-N#55; C-N#18; G-N#87-88; I-P#15-16; L-M#25-26; M-M#48; P-P#53, 62; S-P#6
8. Structural constraints	A-N#20, 22; B-N#16; D-N#15, 59; E-N#14-15, 19, 64; F-N#16, 31; H-N#12, 22, 30, 43; G-N#20, 23; I-P#30; J-M#16; N-M#7; O-M#13; P-P#29, 63, 65; Q-P#17; R-P#23; T-P#21, 38
9. Operational hurdles	D-N#29; E-N#64; F-N#31; G-N#16, 21; I-P#23, 31; J-M#14, 22; K-M#26; L-M#36; M-M#44, 58; N-M#7; P-P#42; R-P#40-41, 61, 62-63; S-P#45
Feedback loop	
10. Recommendations	A-N#24, 30; B-N#55; D-N#59; E-N#37, 43-45, 46, 61; F-N#40; H-N#37; G-N#11-15, 21, 35-36, 66; I-P#19, 20, 36; J-M#25-26; K-M#35-37, 38-40; L-M#42; M-M#45, 58; N-M#32; O-M#31; P-P#31-34, 39-40, 56; Q-P#29; R-P#23; S-P#51
11. Reflections	A-N#22; B-N#14; C-N#26; B-N#28, 32; D-N#43;

	E-N#21, 24; F-N#35, 37; H-N#33-34, 40-41; G-N#43, 47, 53, 59-62, 71-81; I-P#11-12, 33; J-M#6, 10, 20; L-M#9; N-M#7, 18, 23; P-P#56; Q-P#19-20, 33-35; R-P#15, 21, 43-44, 50; S-P#34, 38, 39-43, 63, 64; T-P#29

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