

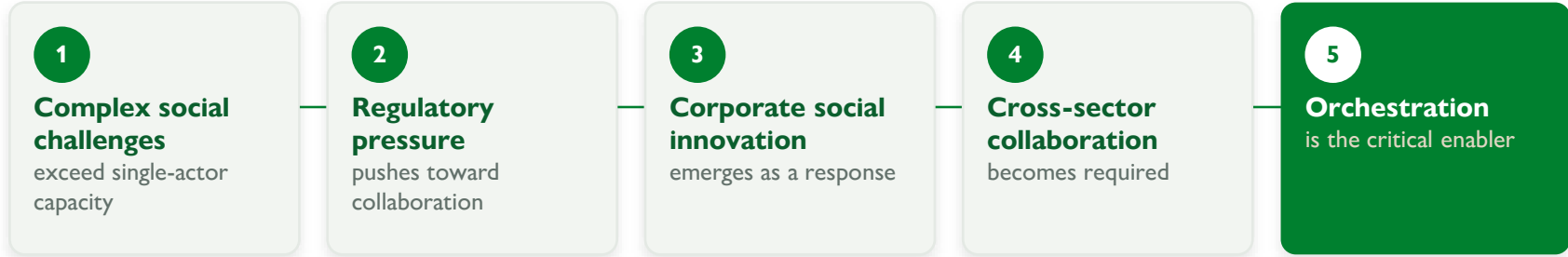
A Relational View of Orchestration

Enabling Corporate Social Innovation for Human Rights
in Global Value Chains

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From compliance to collaboration



RESEARCH GAP

- CSI research describes *enabling conditions* but rarely examines how collaboration is actively coordinated, cultivated, and sustained over time.
- Orchestration research developed primarily in innovation ecosystems and technology networks, not in social contexts
- Business orchestrators face a distinctive tension: significant resources, but legitimacy deficits when seen as contributing to the problems they address

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do business orchestrators build relational mechanisms to enable corporate social innovation for human rights along the value chain and what does a non-progressing initiative reveal about the orchestration process?

Bridging corporate social innovation, orchestration and the relational view

CORPORATE SOCIAL INNOVATION (CSI)

"[...] A strategy that combines a unique set of corporate assets in **collaboration with the assets of other sectors** to co-create breakthrough solutions to complex economic, social, and environmental issues that impact the **sustainability of both business and society**" (Mirvis et al., 2012, p. 3)

ORCHESTRATION

Actions undertaken by central actors to **design, coordinate and sustain networks** of diverse organizations toward collective goals (Dhanaraj & Parkhe, 2006).

Creates conditions for diverse actors to productively interact and **co-create value** (Nambisan & Sawhney, 2011)

RELATIONAL VIEW

Inter-organizational relationships as sites of **collaborative value creation** beyond single-actor capacity (Dyer & Singh, 1998).

Advantage through:

- Relation-specific investments
- Knowledge-sharing routines
- Complementary resource combinations
- Effective governance

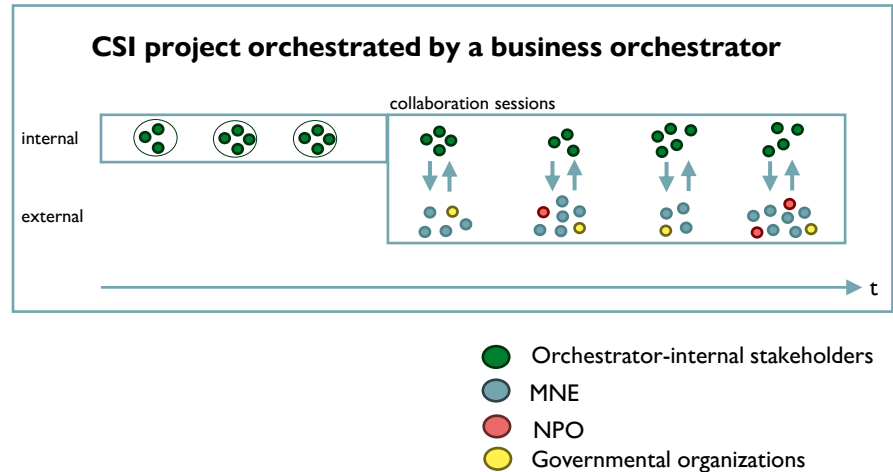
→ Analytical lens

CASE DESCRIPTION

An intrinsic single-case study

Orchestrator	Global software multinational, deeply embedded across global value chains
Initiative	Cross-sector CSI project exploring software-based support for human-rights due diligence
Goal	Co-create innovative solutions to better identify, prevent and address adverse human rights impacts along value chains.
Context	Regulatory uncertainty; sensitive data; multi-sector collaboration
Timeframe	18-month phase
Why this case	The only non-progressing initiative

Human Rights Along the Value Chain



An intrinsic single-case study

Design	Qualitative single-case study; intrinsic case of a non-progressing initiative
Data	17 semi-structured interviews (10 core team + 7 orchestrator-internal stakeholders); orchestrator-internal documents; publicly available secondary sources
Data Collection	from June 2024 to January 2025
Analysis	1 inductive coding of orchestration activities 2 assembling and grouping first-round codes into patterns 3 relational view as third-order analytical structure

Relation-specific investments

Dedicated assets, mutual commitment

Knowledge-sharing routines

Joint learning & sensemaking

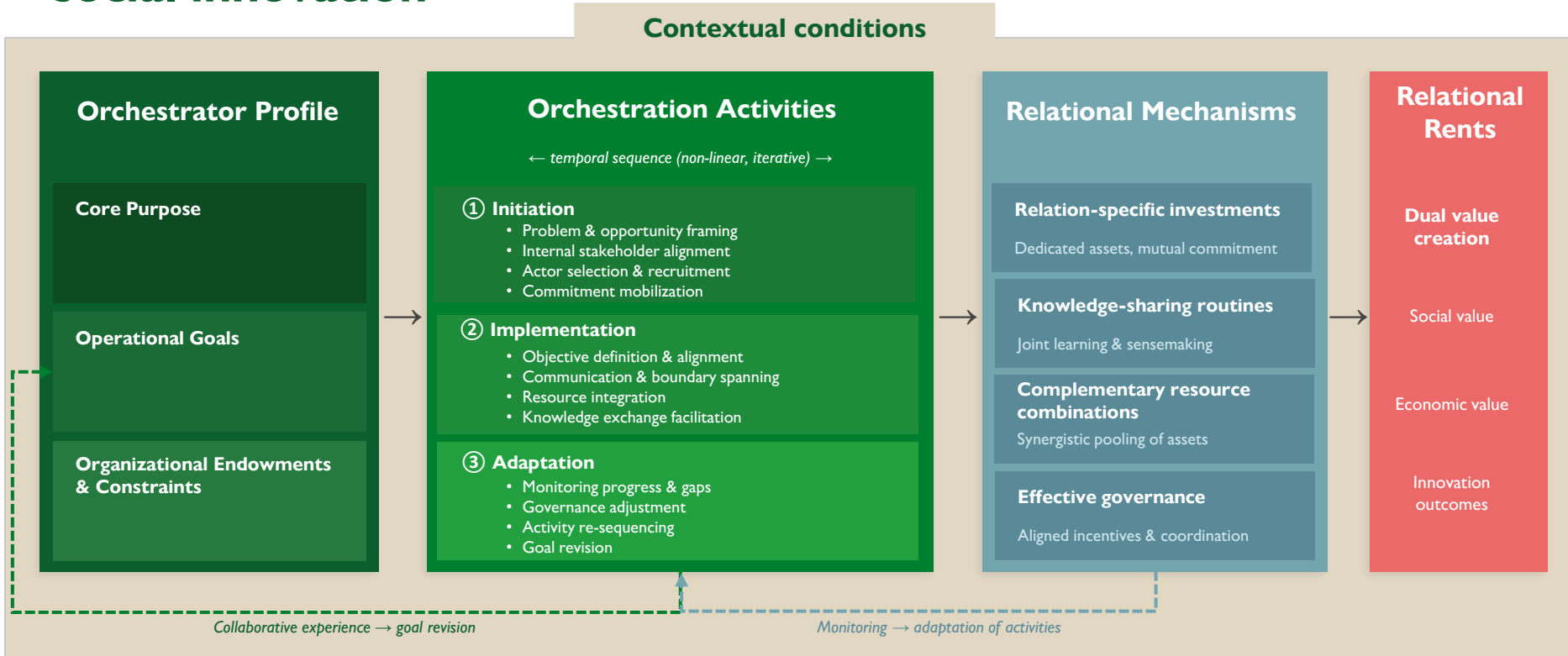
Complementary resource combinations

Synergistic pooling of assets

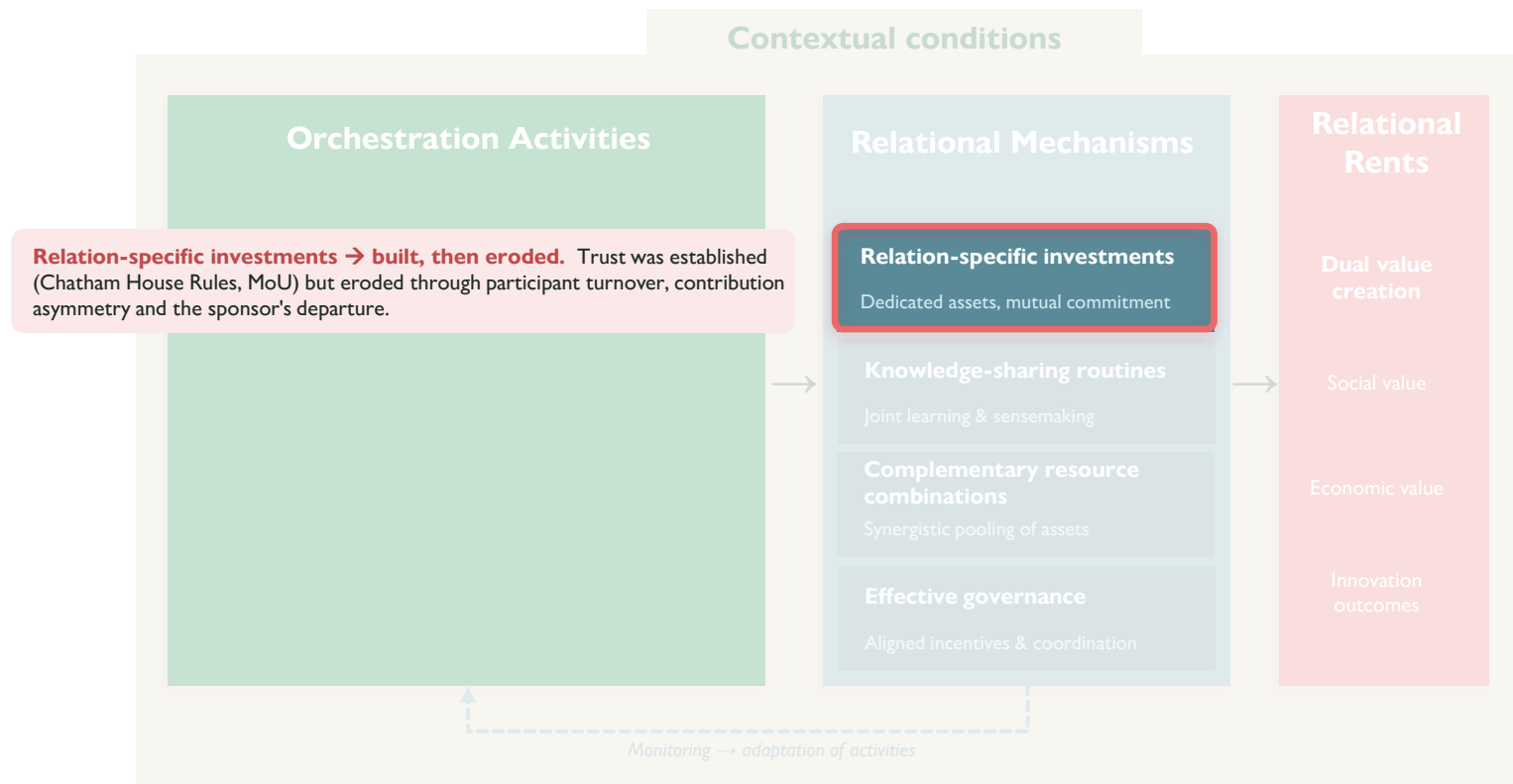
Effective governance

Aligned incentives & coordination

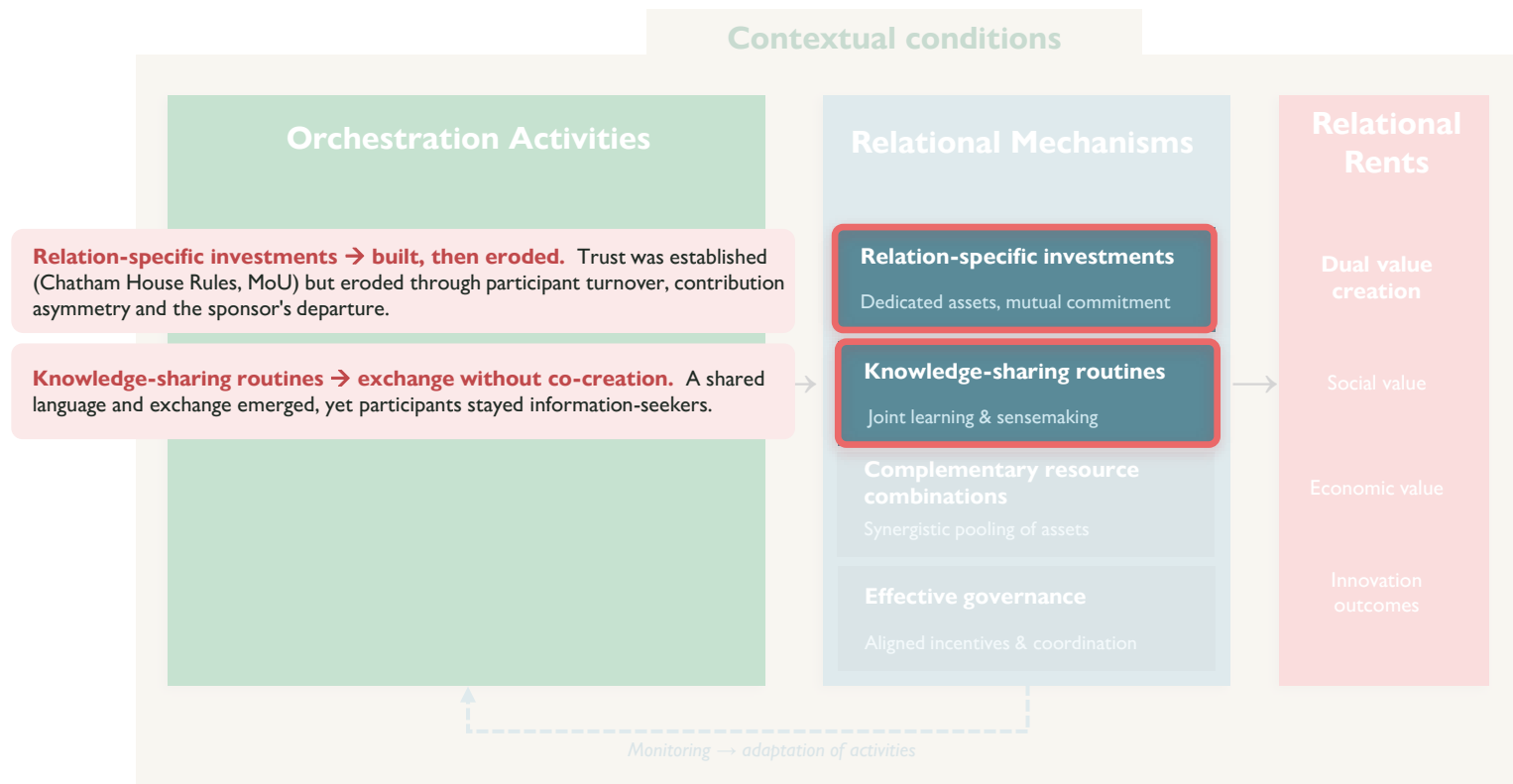
A temporally structured model of orchestration for cross-sector social innovation



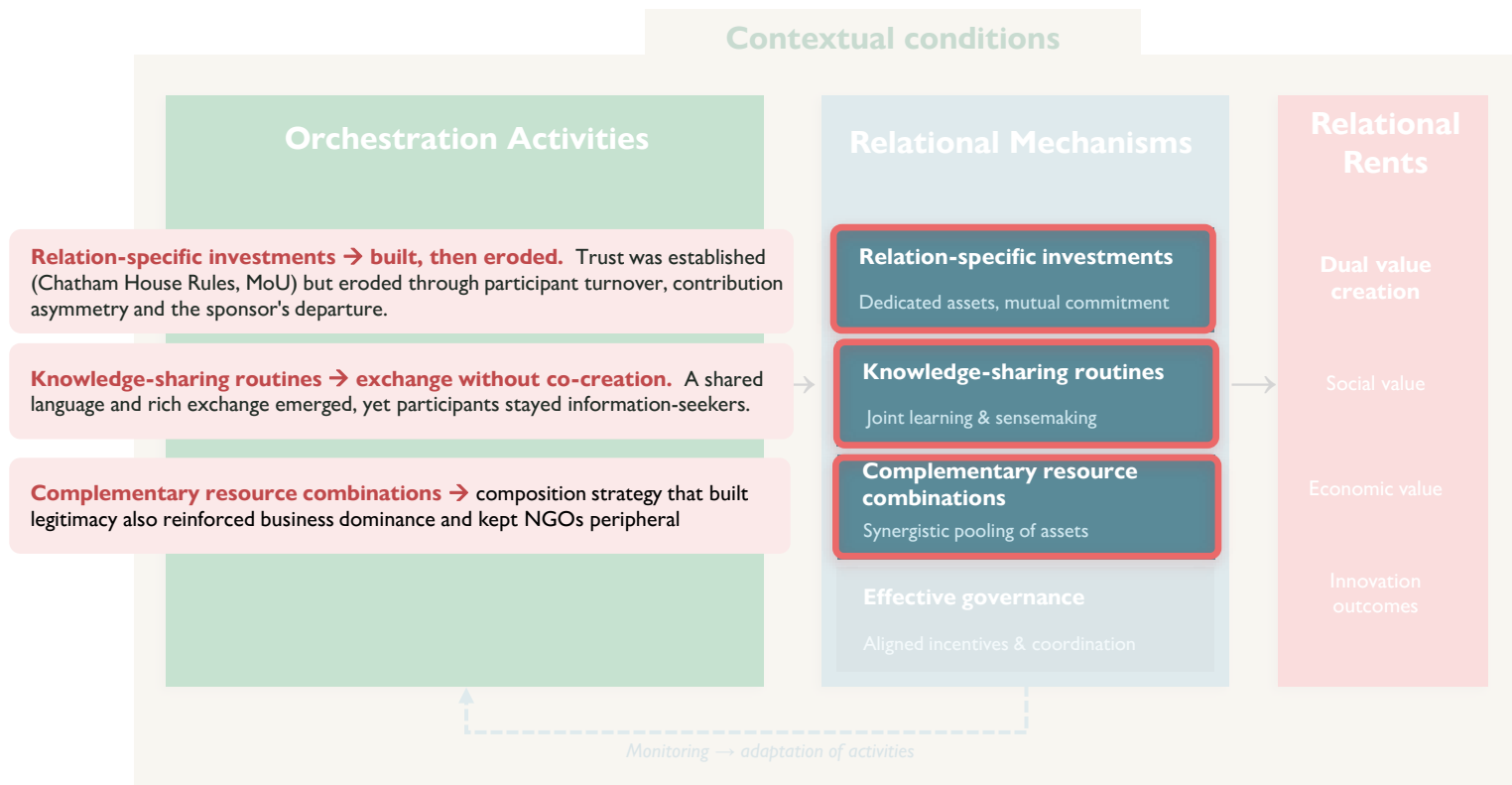
A temporally structured model of orchestration for corporate social innovation



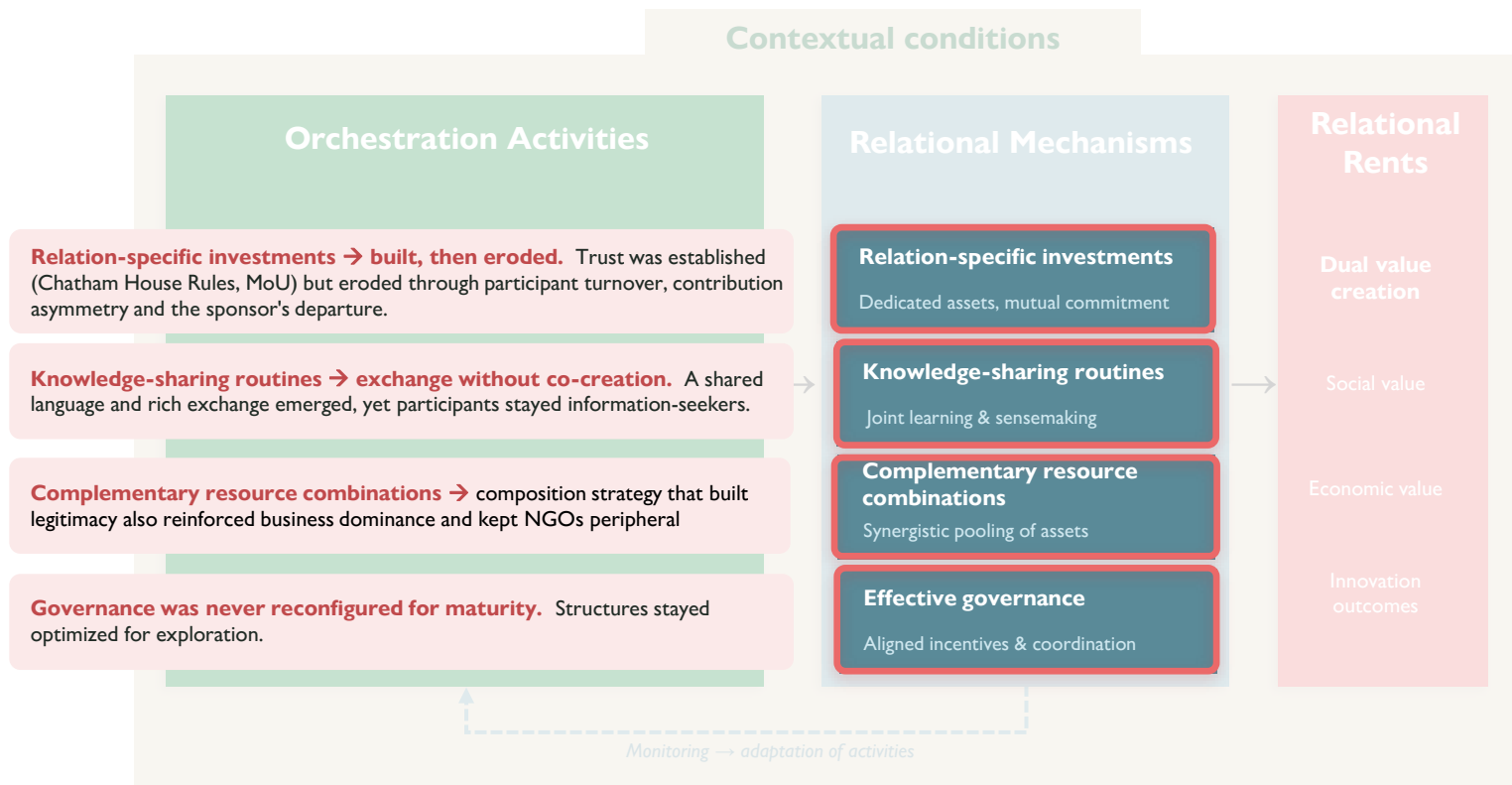
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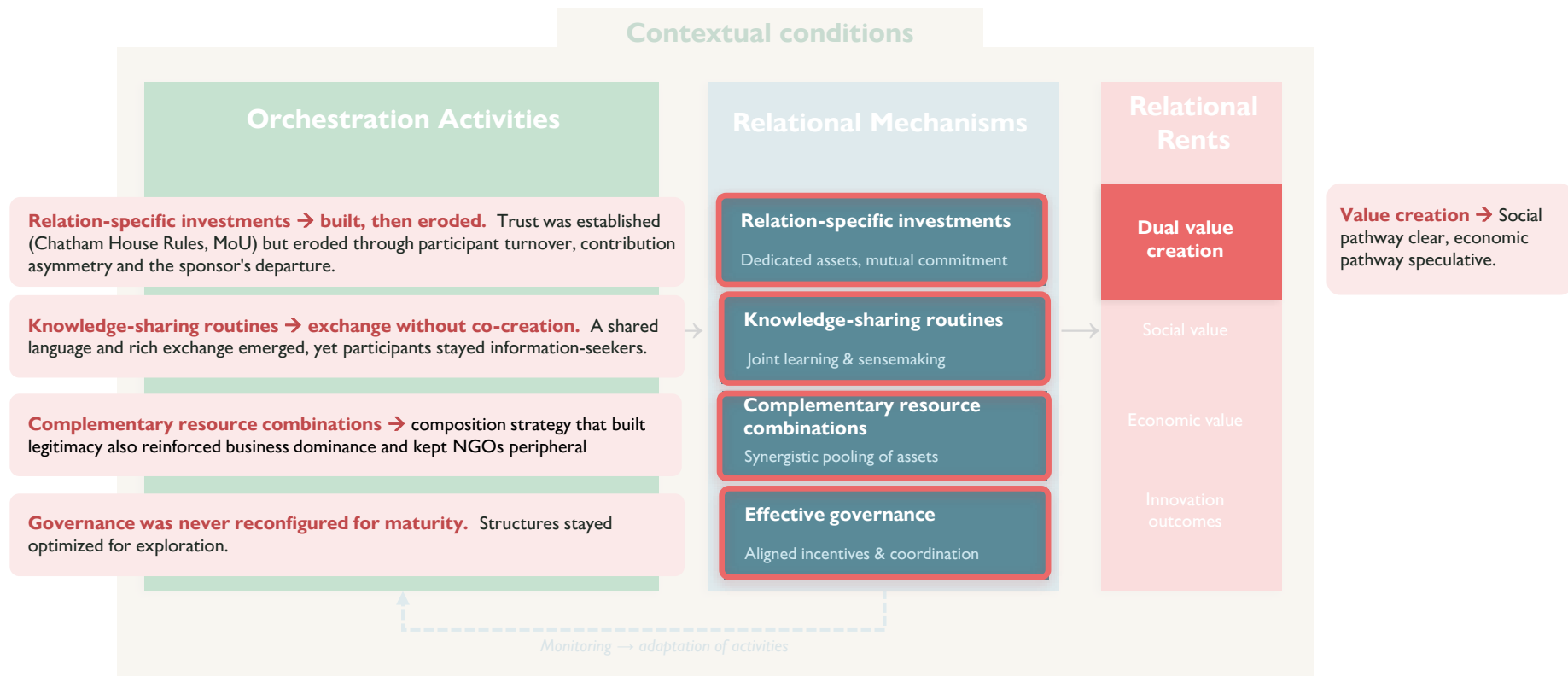
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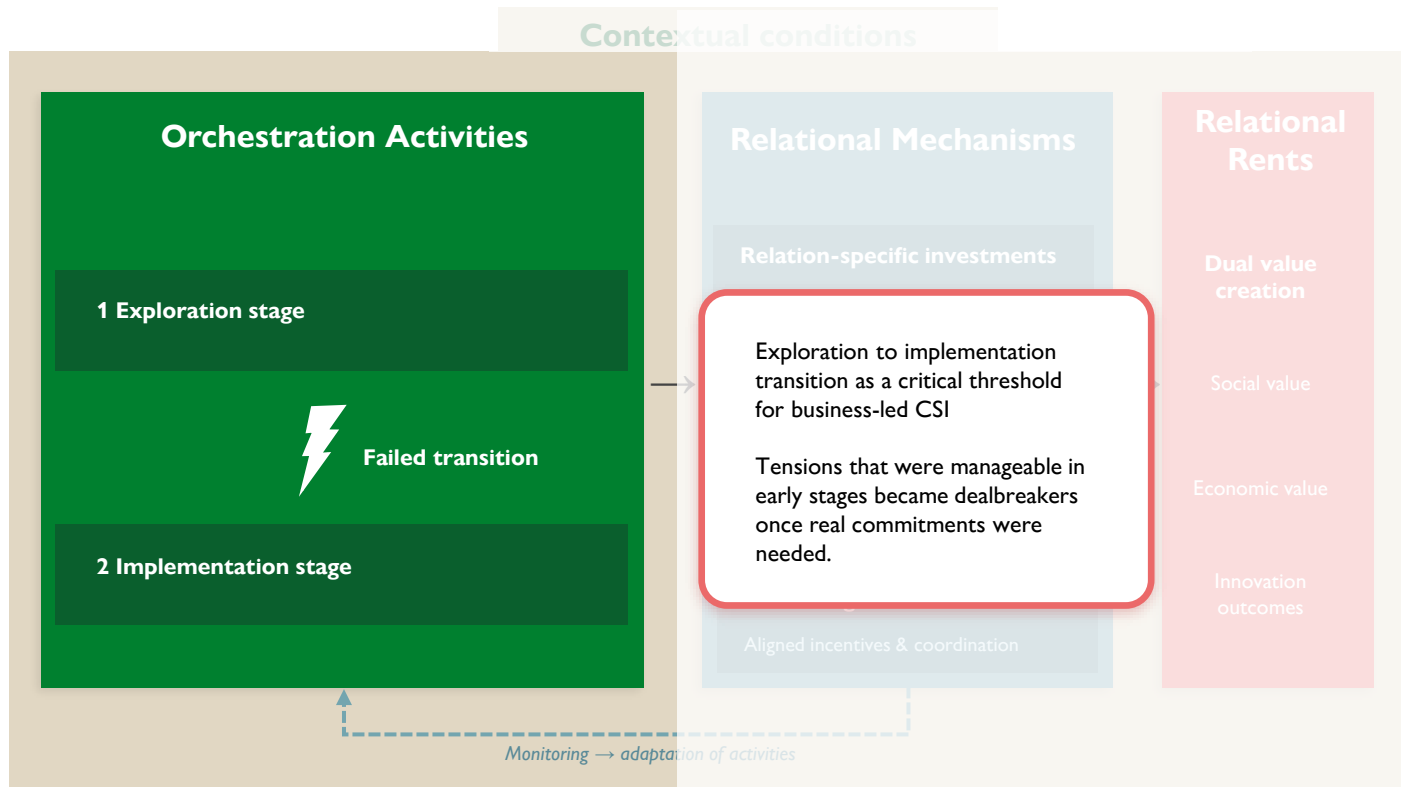
A temporally structured model of orchestration for corporate social innovation



A temporally structured model of orchestration for corporate social innovation



The transition as a boundary condition



Theoretical advances and implications

- **Temporal fragility: orchestration as ongoing relational work**

Relational mechanisms are not sequential accomplishments but continuous maintenance work. They don't only develop over time. They deteriorate when conditions shift.

→ *Extends Dyer et al.'s (2018) dynamic relational view*

- **Configuration misfit: exploration logic constrains implementation**

Practices optimized for early-stage exploration actively constrained progression to implementation and collective innovation. The orchestration configuration was never redesigned for implementation.

- **Dual-value ambiguity**

Relational mechanisms remained intact, yet none converted to relational rents. Without a credible dual-value narrative, reinvestment at the transition point did not follow.

→ *Extends Le Ber & Branzei's (2010) value slippage*

Thank You.

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