

Contextualization of Collaborative Value Creation in Cross-Sector Partnership: the Lithuanian Case

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Abstract:

Purpose and Originality: The purpose of this research was to identify main contextual (macro and meso) factors influencing cross-sector partnerships creating the collaborative value and to give some empirical evidences from Lithuania as young developed country. The originality of this research is achieved by revealing cross-sector partnership contextual elements and their impact on cross-sector partnership management and collaborative value creation.

Method: The purpose of the research was achieved using the interpretivist approach to analyse and explain contextual elements of cross-sector partnership. The data was collected by applying the exploratory qualitative research. The main method was the semi-structural interviews with representatives from business organizations and NGOs, and brokers/intermediaries of NGO and business partnerships). The method of qualitative content analysis was used for the analysis of research data.

Results: Results of this research argues that collaborative value creation in cross-sector partnership is affected by partnership context, which is described by macro and meso stimulating and restraining factors. Analysing the case of Lithuania, it was found, that stimulating macro level factors are connected to the growth of society awareness, a favourable attitude towards international investors, while meso level factors were formed by the transformation of business organization behaviour, the increasing competition and the increasing role of social responsibility in the business. Restraining macro level factors were linked to NGO regulation problems, limited financial resources, the lack of civil society maturity and government institution support, while meso level factors were described as the lack of institutional memory and no appropriate strategic approach towards partnerships.

Society: The research results suppose presumptions of the change in the knowledge of the management of cross-sector partnership, by giving new and fresh understanding about the influence of macro and meso level factors on the collaborative value creation in cross-sector partnership.

Limitations / further research: The content of collaborative value creation allows to state that the multidimensional nature of collaborative value creation concept creates many challenges to the researchers in their attempts to develop a holistic portrait of the complex phenomenon and to identify the major value attributes and dimensions. Therefore, future researches could focus on the determination of the impact of the contextual factors on cross-sector partnership development. A comparative analysis of the countries with the same economic and social development level is recommended.

Keywords: collaborative value, cross-sector partnership, macro level factors, meso level factors, collaboration, NGOs, business organizations.

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1 Introduction

Ongoing social changes, active globalization processes, capital, product and labour mobility, intensive flow of ideas and information, information dissemination via social networks, etc. motivate business, governmental and non-governmental organizations (referred to as NGOs¹) to look for new interaction mechanisms. Cross-sector partnership is defined as a collaboration paradigm of XXI century, which is one of the most essential strategic techniques in world organizations. Over the last decade the number of cross-sector partnerships increased in both developed and developing economies (such as Lithuania) (Berger, Cunningham & Drumwright, 2006; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009).

Cross-sector partnerships are considered as mechanisms to combine skills and resources of organizations from different sectors for finding improved and innovative solutions to social, economic, technological and other problems (Gray & Stites, 2013; Branzei & Le Ber, 2014). The growth of corporate social responsibility in private sector motivates business organizations to work with NGOs to acquire positive reputation taking the responsibility for social problems (Seitanidi, 2008, p. 51). NGO and business organizations own different resources and skills, therefore, having common goals in cross-sector partnership they may receive advantages and generate collaborative value (Teegen, Doh & Vachani, 2004; Porter & Kramer, 2011). Collaborative value creation is the process of collaborators' interaction when the transitory and multidimensional benefits relative to the costs are generated and accrued to organizations, individuals and the society (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b). This research applies the above definition. Thus, cross-sector partnership can generate value to different actors (partners, partnerships, direct beneficiaries and the other stakeholders) and incorporate various levels of analysis, i.e. individual, organizational, partnership, beneficiary and society levels. Generated value is reflected in the variety of collaborators and dimensions, which proves that partnership incorporates different collaborative value concepts.

In prior studies usually cross-sector partnership research is associated with inter-organizational relationship area, in which the main interest is to explain collaboration motives and ongoing dynamics of the relationship using the resource dependence, social exchange, legitimation, efficiency and strategic management theories. It explores the factors that influence the interaction of cross-sector partnerships (Huxham, Vangen, Huxham & Eden, 2000; Austin, 2000; Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Bryson, Crosby & Stone, 2006; Rondinelli & London, 2003). Group of researchers (Bryson, Crosby & Stone, 2006; Kolk, Van Tulder & Kostwinder, 2008; Seitanidi, 2010, etc.) identified cross-sector partnerships' barriers. But those studies were not oriented to particular partnerships of business organizations and NGOs, creating the collaborative value. King (2007), Le Ber & Branzei (2010), Plowman et al. (2007) explored cross-sector partnerships in a collaborative value creation process, but focused more on the analysis of the process rather than the context. Prior research finds that

¹ NGOs include associations, charity and donation funds, public institutions (except for state and municipality) and other non-profit organizations.

the outcomes of cross-sector partnerships are often shown from one partner's perspective, focusing mostly on business organizations and rarely from all partners' perspective simultaneously (Selsky & Parker, 2005). Therefore, the contextualization of NGO and business organizations partnership, which ensures collaborative value creation in cross-sector partnership, is a largely unexplored research area.

Furthermore, there is very little research in Lithuania that would conceptualize NGO and business partnership management dimensions and collaborative value creation. It focuses more on the interaction of NGO and municipalities (Šilinskytė, 2015; Raišienė, 2010; Guogis, Gudelis & Stasiukynas, 2007; Kunčikas, 2001; Wejcmantas, 2001); on the changes in cross-sector interaction in a public administration context (Raipa, 2014); on public and private sector partnership (Kavaliauskaitė & Jucevičius, 2009; Šutavičienė, 2011; Dūda, 2010). Kėrytė (2014) explored the context and conditions for social NGO initiation and NGO entrepreneurship. The researchers usually focus on organizational motives and main factors influencing the collaboration success. However, the nature and the context of collaborative value creation in cross-sector partnership in Lithuania are not well-explored. Therefore, *the research question* was formulated: what factors stimulate and restrain collaborative value creation in cross-sector partnership (a partnership context)? *The aim of this paper* is to present main contextual (macro and meso) factors influencing cross-sector partnerships creating the collaborative value by giving some empirical evidences from Lithuania.

Following the interpretivist approach, the research analyses and reveals cross-sector partnership contextual elements confirming their impact on cross-sector partnership management and collaborative value creation. Knowledge about those factors can be useful for researchers working in the field of cross-sector partnerships and for managers of cross-sector partnerships dealing with challenges, especially in Lithuania.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 The concept of cross-sector partnership

Various scientific terms are used to describe different inter-organizational subjects or inter-organizational agreements. Very often the concept of "inter-organizational relationships" is considered as the umbrella one, including such organizational forms and structures as "partnerships", "alliances", "joint activities", "networks" (Huxman, 2003), "social partnerships" (Nelson & Zadek, 2000), „social alliances" (Berger, Cunningham & Drumwright, 2006), "strategic partnerships" (Austin, 2000), etc. Hibbert & Huxham (2010) state, that different terminology, used in the scientific literature of inter-organizational relationships theory and the practice, complicates possibilities of this theory adoption while transferring theoretical knowledge to practical results. This leads to the process of looking for more specific and appropriate scientific approach to explain the relations between business organizations and NGOs in the context of collaborative value creation.

The partnership definition depends on the context of the analysis. In the context of value creation the partnership is considered as broad collaboration, when partners share and change information and resources seeking for common results, which could not be reached by working separately (Huxham & Vangen, 1996; Waddell & Brown, 1997). Boydell (2007, p. 5) identifies the collaboration as the participation process, when subjects (individuals, groups or organizations) are working together for particular results. So, both sides, included to the partnership, must rely on their common tasks and the trust in their partners to reach higher goals.

Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos (2011) described cross-sector partnerships as voluntary collaboration of organizations, belonging to different sectors, oriented to solve commonly prioritized social problems. Moreover, cross-sector partnerships are described as cross-sector projects, created specifically to solve social problems and their causes (Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 850). Such projects can be two types: transactional (short term, constrained and mainly oriented to organizational goals) or integrative (long term, based on common interest) (Googins & Rochlin, 2000). Therefore, cross-sector partnerships are analysed with the focus on objectives that exceed the boundaries of organizations. According to the types of the sector (public, private and non-profit) and number of sectors involved to the partnership, four types of cross-sector partnership can be identified (see in Fig. 1).

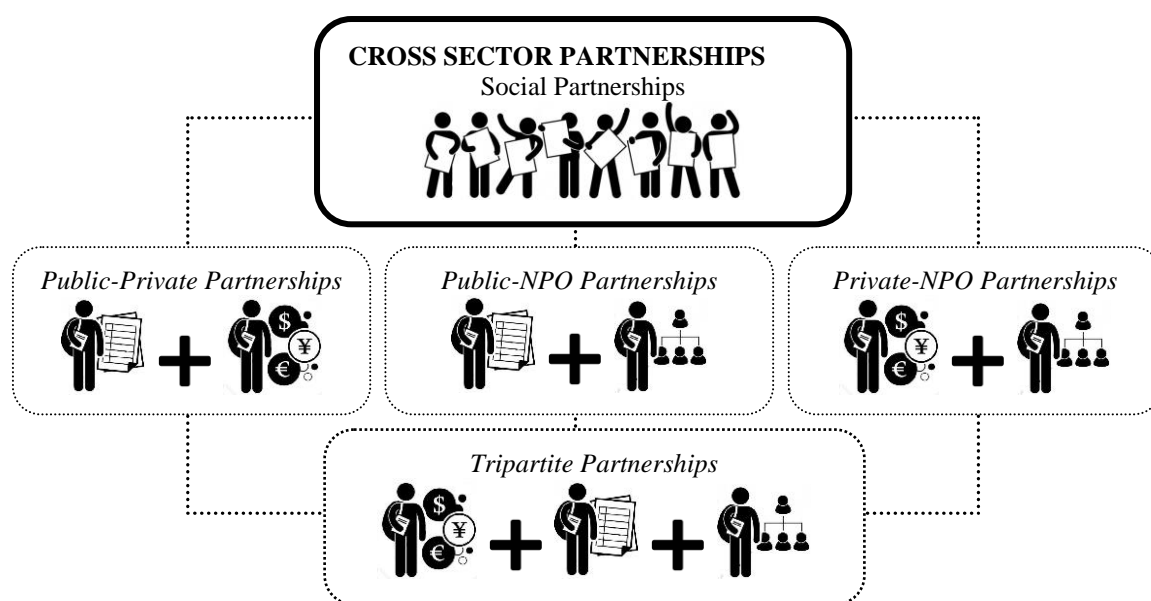


Figure 1. Types of cross-sector partnerships

Source: adapted from Seitanidi & Crane, 2009, p. 414.

According to Parker & Selsky (2004) public-private partnership satisfies the needs of infrastructure and public services with social implications, but does not focus on social problems' solving. Partnership of public and non-profit sectors aims to the strengthening of the public welfare. Partnership of business organization and non-profit organization (in this

case – NGO) is one of social partnerships' types (Selsky & Parker, 2005; Seitanidi, 2008; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009), which is oriented to the solving of such social problems as health and education services accessibility, social and economic exclusion, integration to the labour market, etc. Tripartite partnerships focus on extensive projects such as the development of a community, provision on social services, solving of environmental and health problems, etc. Pittz & Intindola (2015, p. 1172) emphasize that despite of differences all types of cross-sector collaboration are considered as cross-sector partnerships. In this research the approach of private-NPO partnership is analysed, because it mainly reflects the process when organizations create the collaborative value for participants as well as for the society.

2.2 The concept of collaborative value created in cross-sector partnership

Before starting the analysis of the collaborative value concept, authors emphasize that in this research the value is considered as a subjective, individually interpreted concept depending on the context and situation rather than objective, material unit having the monetary expression.

The value created on the basis of inter-organizational collaboration is represented in different names: shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2011), blended value (London & Hart, 2010), collaborative value (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b; Austin, 2000; Murphy, Arenas Vives & Batista-Foguet, 2015; Le Ber & Branzei, 2010, etc.). In this research collaborative value is defined as “the transitory and enduring multidimensional benefits relative to the costs that are generated due to the interaction of the collaborators and that accrue to organizations, individuals, and society” (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, p. 728; 2012b, p. 945; Austin & Seitanidi, 2014, p. 4). Most researchers consider the value creation as the main motive for cross-sector partnerships. According to them, cross-sector partnerships exist for the creation of collaborative value: development of public value and creation of shared value. Creating the collaborative value must adopt the forms of resources' transfer, knowledge and basic competencies' exchange, which are considered as necessary for solving complex, large-scale problems requiring solutions (Sakarya, Bodur, Yildirim-Öktem, & Selekler-Göksen, 2012, p. 1712; Austin, 2010; Selsky & Parker, 2005). Therefore it requires the consolidation of several organizations capabilities.

Some researchers (Selsky & Parker 2005; Austin, 2000) believe that the conceptualization of the collaborative value created in cross-sector partnership for beneficiaries is very difficult task. According to its mission and design the collaborative value created in cross-sector partnership is focused to the target beneficiaries (Austin, 2000). Voluntary agreements between business organizations and NGOs (including common creation, targeted exchange and sharing of products, services or technologies) and interventions (to activities of partners) are guarantors that no one can be separated from the obtainment of this value, especially specific segments of the society having unsatisfied needs (Yaziji & Doh, 2009). Therefore, beneficiaries of the collaborative value created in cross-sector partnership are considered as targeted group and typically it is recognized as marginal or vulnerable segment of the society (Lepak, Smith & Taylor, 2007; Phills, Deiglmeier, & Miller, 2008). Austin, Leonard, Reficco

& Wei-Skillern (2006, p. 264) defines the value having no economic effect for beneficiaries and the society as a “social value”: it is improving the situation of the society in order to eliminate barriers that increase social exclusion, to provide assistance to people who can not adequately represent their needs and to reduce undesirable economic side-effects. Such a “social value” becomes the result of the strong collaboration and at the same time it is the driving force for future cooperation of partners. Regardless of the genesis of the collaboration, the partnership can only be the successful one for the long term if the mutually benefit exists for all participants in a cross-sector partnership.

Collaborative value can gain different forms (see in Table 1).

Table 1. Results of cross-sector partnerships according to subjects

Subject	Type of results	Expected results from a cross-sector partnership	Sources
<i>Business organization</i>	New results	Possibilities for innovations	Yaziji & Doh (2009)
		Product and process innovations	Austin (2000)
	Better results	Competitiveness	Kramer (2011)
<i>NGO</i>	New results	Possibilities for innovations	Holmes & Moir (2007)
	Better results	Possibilities for the improvement of a process	Seitanidi (2010)
		Development of unique capacities and knowledge creation	Porter & Kramer (2011)
<i>Society</i>	New results	Innovations oriented to meet needs of beneficiaries	Ishikawa & Morel (2008)

Source: authors' conducted.

Steijn, Klijn & Edelenbos (2011) has identified three types of value creation: (1) effectiveness – the reduction of expenses in the process of achieving results; (2) efficiency – the increase of desired results, (3) innovation – the creation of new results. The first two types are related to lower-cost benefits, while the third one reflects the innovative results of the partnership, which are particularly important in solving complex problems. The efficiency of collaborative value creation is difficult to study because partnerships are changing and developing constantly, there is still the lack of control groups, constant units and indicators of the measurement (Kolk, Dolen & Vock, 2010). Besides, the diversity of partnerships' types complicates the possibility to generalize results of a partnership due to the dependence on the partner and the partnership (Clarke & MacDonald, 2016, p. 3). Consequently, it is emphasized, that the collaborative value creation in a cross-sector partnership depends on various determinants, including contextual factors.

2.3 The context of collaborative value creation in cross-sector partnership

The analysis of the collaborative value creation in cross-sector partnership follows the assumption that cross-sector partnerships are developed differently by separate partners because they are affected by different contextual factors. Therefore, the disclosure of such factors is a precondition for the formation of cross-sectoral partnerships.

Raišienė (2010) emphasize the influence of external and internal organizational environment for the development of cross-sector partnerships. Accordingly, the context consists of internal

and external elements. Contextual factors include a wide range of variables; the main ones are regional, national and local environments, economic, political, cultural and social conditions. All of these factors are complexly and dynamic interconnected and overlapping, affecting the emergence and the development of cross-sector partnerships.

For the contextualization of collaborative value creation in a cross-sector partnership, macro factors (dependent on environments in which NGOs and business organizations operate) and meso factors (driven by organizational factors of NGOs and business organizations) which stimulate or restrain cross-sector partnerships must be used for the analysis. This approach is the essential one to avoid the critique given for prior researches when cross-sector partnerships were analysed as emerging in a vacuum without any attention for social processes' embeddedness and interactions in the institutional context (Vurro & Perrini, 2011). The analysis of the institutional context contributes to the explanation how cross-sector partnerships must be formed and implemented corresponding to the context and existing logic, social perceptions, expectations and preferences of the society.

Presented approach of internal and external factors stimulating or restraining cross-sector partnerships for the creation of collaborative value was adapted for the empirical research, which was performed in the young developed country – Lithuania.

3 Method

The research design is determined by the *interpretivist paradigm*, which is based on a subjective researcher's interpretation of the explored phenomena. The interpretivist approach corresponds to the research goals because a context, time and people interaction is the philosophical background of this research. Moreover, since people perceive different situations differently, both partner's experiences are revealed to identify the processes of cross-sector partnership in collaborative value creation. The interpretivist approach is used to analyse and explain contextual elements of cross-sector partnership recognizing their impact on collaborative value creation.

Although the qualitative research is often criticized for “lack of science”, qualitative methods often become the main tools used in social science research in generating scientific knowledge. Collaborative value creation in cross-sector partnership is a multidimensional phenomenon and its analysis included various aspects (organizational, partnership and contextual dimension).

The research design. To get a holistic view of collaborative value creation in cross-sector partnership, which relates partners' and researcher's views, this research revealed the contexts through detailed descriptive data collected from the interviews and the researchers' field notes (Creswell, 2009). This research aimed to provide the insights on contextualization of collaborative value creation in NGO and business organization partnership using *the qualitative method – semi-structural interviews* to interview persons who are able to reasonably reflect their experiences. All research participants were distinguished into three

groups: NGO, NGO and business organization partnerships, and business partnership intermediaries. *The research sample (22 informants)* consisted of: 9 representatives of business organizations (marked as IK-V), 9 NGO representatives (marked as IK-N) and 4 intermediaries of NGO and business partnership (marked as IK-T). The major requirements for informants and organizations were as follows: (1) Business organizations: (a) organizations having at least 1-year experience of partnership with NGO, (b) socially responsible business organizations with high reputation; (2) NGOs: (a) NGO in social area, (b) organizations having at least 1-year experience of partnership with business organizations; (3) NGO and business partnership intermediaries - individuals who consulted NGO and business organizations on partnership issues.

The research instrument – semi-structural interview guidelines prepared in accordance to the contextual factors (macro and meso), which have an impact on cross-sector partnership development. Taking into consideration that participants of NGO and business organizations had different experiences in forming and implementing cross-sector partnerships the questions and themes predetermined. However, it was not tied up to the question order. Additional questions were asked considering the course of the dialogue and the experiences of NGO and business organization partnerships.

The participants were sent e-mails with the research topic and goals. They were asked for the consent to participate in the interview. 20 direct interview meetings and 2 Skype interviews were conducted. Each interview took 49 minutes on average. Participants' consent was given to record the interview on a voice recorder. Direct interviews were arranged in acceptable environment for participants: café (1), park (1), home (1), office (19).

All audio records were transcribed. *A qualitative content analysis method*, which is used for the social phenomena analysis, was employed. The qualitative content analysis kept the following order (Holloway & Todres, 2003): multiple reading and re-examination of the data, data coding, grouping the codes into categories, highlighting the structure of the received data determining the themes.

4 Results

4.1 Macro and meso factors stimulating cross-sector partnership and collaborative value creation in Lithuania

Collaborative value creation in the cross-sector partnership can be possible just with the favorable and positive attitude of partners and some efforts. Consequently, informants were asked about factors which stimulate them and their organizations to choose the way of cross-sector partnerships (see in Table 2).

Table 2. Stimulating external (macro level) and internal (meso level) factors

Category	Subcategory	Illustrative statement
Macro level factors	Favorable attitude to international investor	<i>In Lithuania, this international investor is viewed quite favourably (IK-V1).</i>
	Increase of public awareness	<i>In Lithuania, it is increasingly perceived that the public can do more, that together with NGOs, governmental and business organizations they can solve part of the social problems (IK-N2).</i>
Meso level factors emerging from NGOs	Increasing organizational capacities of NGOs	<i>Ten years ago, as far as I worked, I see enormous progress in terms of strengthening NGOs <...> new progressive ones come (IK-T3); NGOs are strong enough, certainly there are leaders among those organizations, people leaders <...> they just need the help, provision of opportunities to implement those ambitions (IK-V3).</i>
Meso level factors emerging from business organizations	Adoption of good practice	<i>The [Lithuanian capital] companies starts to see what the big international business organizations having CSR [corporate social responsibility] do for decades <...> take examples from grand actors and try to apply here in Lithuania (IK-N5); Many business organizations gain this foreign experience (IK-N8).</i>
	Change of attitude toward volunteering	<i>It seems to me <...> that the attitude toward business volunteering has changed, for example, to the direct participation of people in NGOs, <...> and the contribution to NGO activities (IK-N3); Volunteering is becoming increasingly important for changing generation <...> the wish to contribute, to do something more is really vital among young people, and most of them do it even in their spare time (IK-V4).</i>
	Increasing trust in NGOs	<i>Business organizations are showing increasing trust in NGOs. <...> Linking their image with NGO or saying that 'we are going together' seems to me unimaginable seven or ten years ago (IK-N3).</i>
	Improved etiquette of communication with NGOs	<i>I can say that during these 7 years everything has changed greatly in business organizations: the culture in general, reaction to NGO, to the asking for the support. <...> Humanity, courtesy, business ethics has greatly increased (IK-N3).</i>
	Increasing business awareness	<i>I'm really not that sceptic who says that here is not and that the business is irresponsible or responsible as much as it matters. Yes, it is, but it's normal. This is normal and I think that many become really conscious and they attempt much focused (IK-N7).</i>

Main stimulating macro factors, according to informants, are related to the increase of public awareness and favorable attitude towards the international investor. Modern business is responsible for solving social problems in a society, and therefore social business responsibility relies on how business organizations perceive and fulfil various obligations to the society, how business aspirations match with provisions acceptable to the public and to what extent the business contributes to the growth of the welfare. It is needed to take into the account the fact that corporate social responsibility is formed and defined by the public opinion. The society monitors whether business organizations fulfil obligations of social responsibility and do not tolerate its neglect. If the business does not respect the social responsibility, the society responds appropriately to it. Socially responsible business organizations adapting to social rules and expectations and seeking for social legitimacy, gain a competitive advantage both on the national and international markets, strengthening their reputation from the view of point of consumers, employees and the society. The initiatives of social responsibility of Lithuanian business organizations have been encouraged by international investors by transferring the good practice's principles. The NGO's positive attitude towards the international investor can be explained by the NGO's desire to increase the trust and reputation in the society, because relations with an international investor having a positive reputation increase the legitimacy of the NGO in a society.

The increasing awareness of the Lithuanian society and its contribution to the solution of social problems are confirmed by results from interviews, and this shows the increasing public awareness.

The analysis of statements on stimulating internal (meso) factors revealed that the growing organizational capacities of NGOs is taken as one of main motivating factors encouraging business organizations to engage in partnerships with NGOs. According to results of interviews, stimulating internal factors are connected to some changes in business organizations. Informants have explained that the content of the adoption of good practice is based on aspirations and efforts of Lithuanian capital business organizations to meet standards of foreign capital companies' activities. Informants associated the change of the attitude towards volunteering in business organizations with the changing generation of the society and the change of the concept of business volunteering in Lithuania. Other identified factors were linked to the transformation of the behaviour of business organizations due to the increasing competition and the implementation of social responsibility principles.

4.2 Macro and meso factors restraining cross-sector partnership and collaborative value creation in Lithuania

Informants were asked about macro and meso factors, which restrain cross-sector partnerships and collaborative value creation (see in Table 3).

Table 3. Restraining external (macro level) factors

Category	Subcategory	Illustrative statement
Macro level factors, restraining partnerships	The lack of support from governmental institutions	<i>The state plays an insignificant role, although there are corporate tax exemptions for companies that sponsor materially or declare the support <...>, but for companies that have really high profits, this tax exemption is too insignificant. <...> I would like somehow for more promotion from local self-government (IK-N3); There are probably a lot of projects where we could get involved, but in most cases, these projects get harder without government assistance. <...> This is one of the main brakes for other companies to get involved because there are so many social things that we could change if we had the government or certain ministries' help (IK-V9).</i>
	The lack of maturity of civil society	<i>Our context [of Lithuania] is the insecurity, distrust, indivisibility, very high confinement (IK-N3); In most post-soviet states, NGOs are a very new entity. <...> Civil society did not exist 20-30 years ago. An NGO was created most often by an international donor when they came to the post-soviet states in 1990. <...> In Lithuania, it was an artificially created organization, an artificially created entity that did not come from civil society (IK-T2); Some kind of cultural codes where we simply can not communicate, listen, see a bit more widely. We do not have traditions of listening and solidarity. <...> Again, consequences of our history (IK-V8).</i>
	Problems of NGOs' legal regulation	<i>There is the confusion about the NGO status in Lithuania. There are public organizations, funds of charity and donation, and associations. Associations can be business associations, there may be professional associations. <...>. Charity and donation funds – there are nine infinities of them, smaller ones - bigger ones; I took the money, gave them to socially disadvantaged families and that's all. Public organizations - <...> a derivative <laughs> - the one that raises for everyone, at least for me, a lot of questions <laughs>. These are non-profit organizations, but there are also a great number of business, consultants or any other public enterprises that can make a great contribution to NGOs, but they are not really such. <...> A really big question from the legal side - who is who (IK-T2).</i>
	EU support as a restraining factor for partnerships between NGOs and business organizations	<i>One of those contextual factors is the European Union's money, which does not encourage cooperation with business. Somehow it spoils that market, I have a thought, but they will be over too (IK-T2); Sometimes the greed from the partnership, especially when it comes to European projects. <...> Someone has a project and wants to really absorb it so to keep as much money as possible for personal gain (IK-V6); There are many NGOs that actually do not do that. They are designed to absorb funds (IK-T2).</i>
	Limited financial resources of NGOs	<i>Our operating model is much more complicated. <...> The state finances us only through projects. <...> Very specific items for financing are anticipated in projects, and you, as an organization, have your own goals, therefore resources needed to achieve organization's goals are not funded, you have to think by yourself how to finance them. <...> This is the biggest challenge for you to do good works and still to find resources to do it (IK-N1).</i>

The analysis of macro and meso factors restraining partnerships between NGOs and business organizations revealed some challenges: large bureaucracy in Lithuania, the “sticking of public labels”, the lack of government support, the lack of maturity of civil society, immaturity of the market, problems of NGO legal regulation, the provision of EU support to NGOs and limited funding for NGOs activities.

In different countries, NGOs (the voluntary sector) are developing in a variety of ways according to the established traditions, the peculiarities of the political, cultural, social and economic development of these societies. In Lithuania, because of political and historical reasons, the civil society is still rather weak and unviable. The growing attention to the formation of civil society and the “third sector” is marked very recently. The Law on the Development of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) of the Republic of Lithuania was issued in 2013, and this shows the strengthening attention of the civil society to the formation of “the third sector”. However, there are still many problems with the formation of a strong civil society in Lithuania. This is confirmed by informants’ insights in the study. The distrust of the community is still the most contextual obstacle.

According to informants, the limitations of NGOs’ financial resources reduce their ability to ensure the continuity of activities. The main national funding sources for NGOs are thematic programs and funds co-coordinated by ministries or their subsidiary bodies. These programs mainly focus on small-scale and / or partial financing of existing projects and activities. Also, there is often a discriminatory treatment of NGOs in relation to wage billing, administrative costs, and the purchase of necessary measures. NGOs are forced to adapt to one-off actions and short-term results, and they are not encouraged to consistently pursue their goals by providing services or activities needed by the society, targeted groups or local communities. The Lithuanian NGO sector was funded by foreign donors, mainly through programs that funded individual projects. In the last few years, a significant amount of EU funds was provided for the implementation of various social initiatives. Although these funds have significantly contributed to the strengthening of the capacity of NGOs, however, informants categorized the EU funds as contextual factors that restrain the partnerships between NGOs and business organizations.

Informants were asked about meso factors in NGOs and business organizations, which restrain cross-sector partnerships and collaborative value creation (see in Table 4).

Table 4. Internal (meso level) factors, restraining NGOs and business organizations

	Category	Subcategory	Illustrative statement
NGOs' perspective	The lack of human resources	The lack of a person mentoring partnerships with business	<i>What mostly restricts? <...> Here it relies on those resources, human resources. The lack of NGO human that would coordinate projects, cooperation with business, engagement in business. Volunteers have their own work, family and life, and if we need some kind of information urgently, they will be not online in the middle of the day (IK-V1).</i>
	The lack of the strategic approach to partnerships	Closeness in partnerships	<i>Sometimes we want to be involved in some strategic level, even in the tactical one, because we can help a lot. <...> We have 2,000 employees, so we can couch each NGO with issues of marketing, communication, law (IK-V8).</i>
	Category	Subcategory	Illustrative statement
NGOs' perspective	The lack of managerial competencies	Lack of publicity skills	<i>Contribution to an initiative gives the opportunity for this initiative, but it is also necessary to speak about, the initiative must be publicized (IK-V5). Many people do not know that such organizations are or what are they doing, what benefits they bring and to whom they want to help, they are not capable to represent themselves properly (IK-V8).</i>
		Lack of time management skills	<i>NGOs may be somewhat accustomed to receive funding, and <...> and to appear at the very end of the project. <...> It is a little bit more complicated to be able to plan the time and comply with agreements with NGOs (IK-T2).</i>
		Lack of entrepreneurial skills	<i>Selling abilities <...> and homework, they can always be better done on the side of NGOs to explain why funds are needed, to clarify the purpose, and to sell the problem to a business in some way (IK-N1). The NGO sector employs people who do not have two things in comparison to businesses - without entrepreneurial and time planning skills (IK-N4).</i>
		Lack of project management skills	<i>If it is a small initiative, one person is quite well organized, but when a larger circle of people is involved, then the lack of project management skills appears. <...> The initiative starts to slip (IK-V8).</i>
Business organizations' perspective	Attitude towards NGOs	Attitude towards NGO as a free activity	<i>It is very difficult to prove for Lithuanian companies that people's salaries should be supported in order for NGOs to work. Lithuanian companies are more likely to support new projects, children's activities, a "soft" part, not a "hard" one. <...> It is forgotten that there are people who make that day-to-day work. <...> Not everyone agrees that 10% from the total amount would go for administrative services. <...> There is still the impression that I am a volunteer and all "back office" is volunteers (IK-N5). It is often imagined that an NGO is a volunteer group that does something from the air. NGOs do not show that value, they have to say that what they are doing is costing, that they work not because of 'holly spirit' and that they are a resource in a partnership. <...> It the business wants for an equal partner, it must understand the costs of a particular job (IK-T1).</i>
		Attitude towards NGO as a beneficiary	<i>Our partners still see the recipient of the support in us. <...> 'Enjoy what you get and have what you get'. But there is not [an idea] that we are here altogether dependent on each other and that's why we need to talk about common goals somehow (IK- N6). NGOs are often in the role of the applicant, a slightly weaker organization (IK-T2). From the point of view of the NGO sector, this negative attitude from the business is well felt, as to the sector of the lower level of development (IK-T3).</i>
	The lack of maturity for cross-sector partnership	Lack of strategic approach to the partnership with NGO	<i>Understanding about sponsorship, that even financial sponsorship must be very clearly in line with the business vision, strategic long-term goal, with their values, activities, is poor. If you are engaged in the cement production, then you will not support the installation of flower beds. Very often there is such an attitude 'you asked so nicely, came so many times - ok, we will give the money' (IK-T3). There is the lack of such understanding of that social responsibility (IK-N8). The concept of social responsibility in Lithuania is still a new wave. <...> In the future, this should encourage the business to look at the field of NGOs in Lithuania, with whom they can go for the partnership (IK-T1). They probably still have not established social responsibility strategies (IK-V7).</i>
Lack of institutional memory		<i>The business organization redesigns, dismisses entire departments, totally new people come in, <...> practically they have to re-write the book (IK-N6). You patiently do your job, introducing again. <...> You exhale, inspire and do it again and again (IK-N7).</i>	
Distrust in NGOs		<i>Business distrust in NGOs their resources, abilities, human resources skills, knowledge interferes (IK-T1). In Lithuania, the trust in NGOs is much lower than in many Western countries. <...> A rare business organization trusts, understands, knows the context of NGOs, knows what to trust, what not (IK-T2).</i>	

The potential of collaborative value creation depends on organizational capabilities of each partner. However, the results of the research indicate that the organizational capacity of NGOs is not sufficiently developed. According to informants' opinion, the factors restraining cross-sector partnerships emerge as the lack of NGO's human resources, managerial competencies and a strategic approach to partnerships with a business organization. The lack of human resources and lack of resources, organizational capacities and capacities to raise funds remain key challenges for the NGO sector in Lithuania. Another important aspect emerging from results of the empirical research is the lack of NGO's managerial skills. Informants had some doubts about NGOs' capacities in project management, publicity and time planning activities. The lack of NGO's entrepreneurship competences interferes with finding business partners as well as with finding the common language. NGOs are used to apply to business organizations for the financial assistance only and rarely see a business as an operational partner. The question is if NGOs understand goals of business and can identify market opportunities, how business organization could benefit from the partnership. Besides, partnerships with business organizations require additional costs related to the partnership management from NGOs. Due to limited human resources NGOs do not have sufficient organizational capacity to coordinate such partnerships as well.

Main meso factors restraining business organizations from partnerships with NGOs are related to the mindset of business organizations, determined by provisions to the NGO sector existing in the society, to the lack of institutional memory in the business organization, and to the lack of a strategic approach to partnerships with NGOs. When analyzing internal restraining factors arising from business organizations, informants noticed that formally there are no limits for cross-sector partnerships in Lithuania, i.e. the institutional context does not affect the operation of cross-sector partnerships, but the main reason for problems is no traditions for partnerships. Informants have emphasized that business organizations see the NGO activities as unpaid (free) work, the NGO – as a beneficiary, the sector – as a lower developed sector. Therefore NGOs often find themselves in the role of applicants for financial support. There is still a lack of understanding of NGO activities among business organizations, they do not trust in capacities of NGOs. The distrust in NGOs and their resources encourages business organizations to take over functions of NGOs and to address certain social problems by themselves. The lack of institutional memory of business organizations is based on a lack of social capital and the lack of communication between people. The business organizations' understanding about the sponsorship, that the financial support must coincide clearly with the vision of a business organization, a strategic long-term goal, values and activities of an organization, is still poor in Lithuania.

Often, business organizations are restrained by the confusion of corporate social responsibility and the provision of support, without seeing direct benefits to the business. In this context, it is important to emphasize that the approach to the responsibility of a business organization needs to evolve in Lithuania. Partnerships with NGOs, as an instrument for social responsibility, should be seen as an integral part of a business organization's strategy rather

than an additional business organization's activity associated with philanthropy. The good practice reveals that business organizations perceiving the importance of social responsibility for the business are much more ready and willing to create the collaborative value in cross-sector partnerships.

5 Discussion

The analysis of the contextualization of collaborative value creation in a cross-sector partnership in Lithuania showed that macro and meso factors stimulate and restrain cross-sector partnerships in Lithuania (see in Fig. 2).

Utilizing an institutional approach and research findings argue that both external (macro level) and internal (meso level) factors stimulate and restrain collaborative value creation in cross-sector partnership.

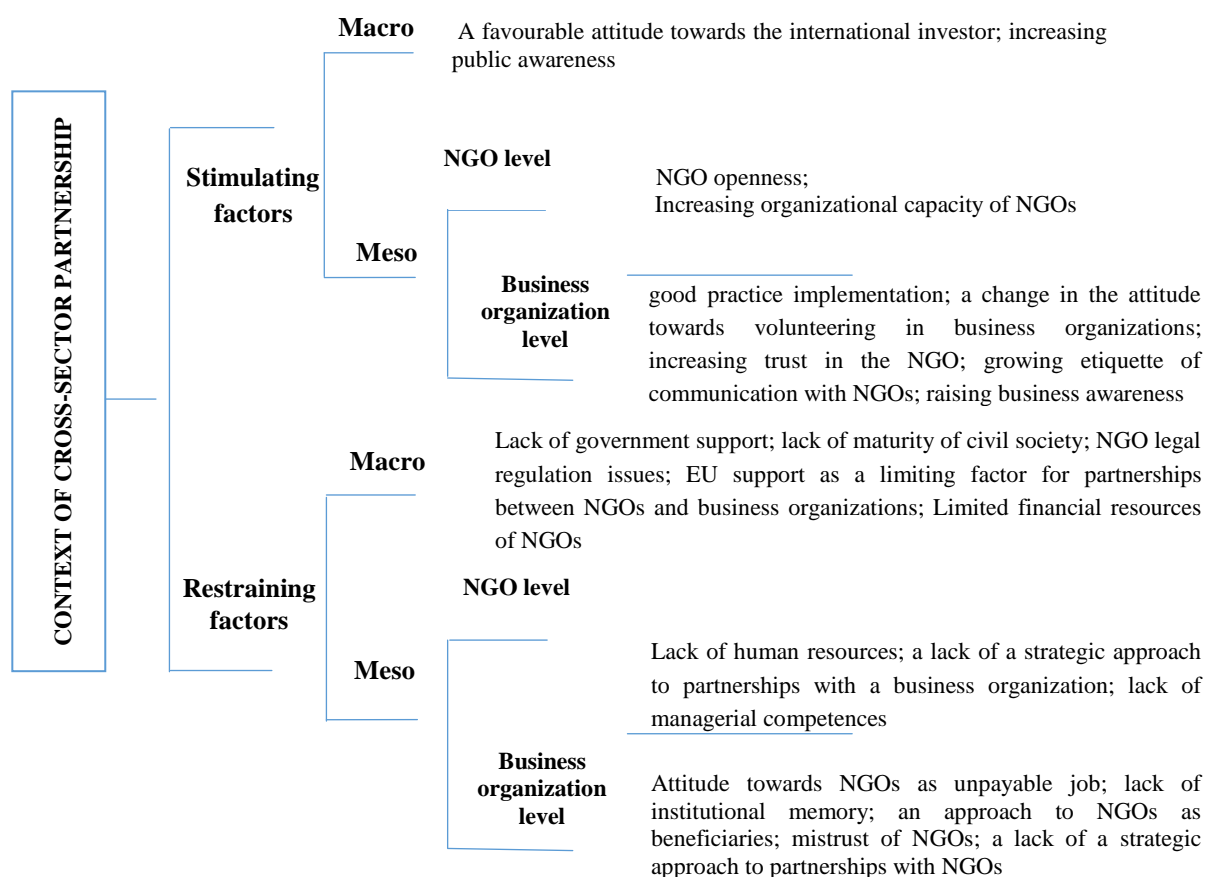


Figure 2. Visualization of the construct of cross-sector partnership: the map of categories and subcategories

Source: authors' conducted.

Macro factors, which restrain NGO and business organization partnerships, are linked to NGO regulation problems, limited financial resources, the lack of civil society maturity and government institution support. The research showed that unfavourable institutional

environment has a direct impact on NGO's ability to be equal partner for business organization. The lack of stable financial resources and NGO legal regulation issues determine the lack of human resources and managerial competences in NGO. Insufficient NGO organizational capacities restrain collaborative value creation potential. Qualitative content analysis revealed that main internal (meso level) factors, which restrain NGO and business organizations, are linked to business organization mindset, determined by existent society attitude towards NGO sector; and linked to the lack of institutional memory in business organization and strategic attitude towards partnerships with NGO.

All insights from the empirical research show that Lithuanian private-NGO sectors partnerships are still in the phase of the development. Therefore, it is needed to deal with various challenges by investing time, financial and human resources to change the old-fashion mindset of organizations and society and to make a progress in cross-sector partnerships.

6 Conclusion

The analysis and the synthesis of the content and the concepts of cross-sector partnership and collaborative value creation revealed the complexity and multidimensionality of its contextual concepts. The cross-sector partnership as a developing process depends on the uncertainty driven by a context, the nature of the process, relationship with the partners and the outcomes. It is a multidimensional process, which develops depending on partnership characteristics. The concept of collaborative value creation could be broadly defined as transitory and enduring benefits, that are generated due to the interaction of the collaborators and that accrue to organizations (meso level), individuals (micro level), and society (macro level). Collaborative value creation takes different forms depending on partnership members' motives, the nature of transferred resources and the interaction level.

Qualitative research findings argue that collaborative value creation in cross-sector partnership is affected by partnership context, which is described by the following factors: macro and meso stimulating and restraining factors; NGO and business organization characteristics, selection of an appropriate partner; formal and informal partnership governance mechanisms.

The analysis of macro level factors shows that NGO and business organization partnerships are encouraged by the growth of society awareness and a favourable attitude towards international investors. Meso level factors are determined by the transformation of business organization's behaviour due to the increasing competition and due to the implementation of social responsibility principles.

Macro factors, which restrain NGO and business partnerships, are as follows: NGO legal regulation issues, limited financial resources, and the lack of civil society maturity and authority support. The research finds that an unfavourable institutional environment has a direct impact on NGO ability to be an equal partner for business organization. The lack of stable financial resources and NGO legal regulation issues resulted in the lack of human

resources and management competences in NGO. Insufficient NGO organizational capacities restrain the potential for collaborative value creation. The qualitative content analysis identified that major (meso level) internal factors, which restrain NGO and business partnerships are linked to an organizational mindset, determined by existing society views on NGO sector, to the lack of the institutional memory and the strategic approach to partnerships with NGO.

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Povzetek:

Definiranje kontekstualnih elementov medsektorskega partnerstva: primer Litve

Namen in izvirnost: Glavni namen raziskave je definiranje faktorjev, ki vplivajo na medsektorsko sodelovanje, nastajanje vrednosti sodelovanja ter to podpreti z nekaterimi empiričnimi dokazi na področju Litve.

Metoda: Raziskava temelji na interpretativnem pristopu za potrebe analize in pojasnjevanja kontekstualnih elementov medsektorskega partnerstva. Empirični podatki so bili zbrani ob pomoči pol-strukturiranih intervjujev kateri so bili potem obdelani na podlagi analize vsebine.

Rezultati: Rezultati te raziskave kažejo na to, da sodelovalna vrednost, ki nastane znotraj medsektorskega partnerstva v veliki meri odvisna od narave konteksta znotraj katerega se je takšno partnerstvo razvilo.

Držba: Rezultati raziskave omogočajo nov vpogled v upravljanje med-sektorskih partnerstev na podlagi boljšega razumevanja makro in mezzo faktorjev ki vplivajo na tovrstna sodelovanja.

Omejitve/ nadaljnje raziskovanje: Ta raziskava predstavlja osnovo za nadaljnjo multidimenzionalno analizo med-sektorskega sodelovanja, katera bi omogočala sestaviti celovito podobo tega fenomena.

Ključne besede: sodelovalna vrednost, čez-sektorsko partnerstvo, makro-faktorji, mezo-faktorji, sodelovanje NVO, organizacije.

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