

Managing Organizational Tensions in Hybrid Organization Collaboration: Case Mediapolis Media Cluster

Abstract

This study focuses on organizational tensions and dualities in strategic management of hybrid organization collaboration. Cross-sector collaboration combining public (noncommercial) and private (commercial) organizational orientations is considered an advantageous and dynamic strategic approach to shared value creation and co-creative innovation in disruptive operational environments, like media industries. However, cross-sector collaboration features inherent managerial complexities and organizational tensions due to the fundamental differences between the strategies and operational models of the actors.

The purpose of the paper is to explore organizational tensions, paradoxes (e.g. Lewis, Andriopoulos & Smith 2014) and dualities (e.g. Sutherland & Smith, 2011) in strategic management of cross-sector collaboration in media clusters. The paper illustrates complications in developing media clusters from spatial arrangements (as the traditional understanding of clusters, e.g. Achtenhagen & Picard, 2014) to arrangements of creating collaborative value between the participating organizations. The study also utilizes theorizations on collaborative dynamics and approaches, especially in hybrid (public-private) organizations (Battilana & Lee, 2014).

The qualitative case study examines the development of the management and operations of a media cluster "Mediapolis" (<https://mediapolis.fi/en/>) in Finland. Mediapolis aims to produce value especially through collaborative content and concept innovation in the context of digital creative industries, combining public and private organizations. The case study builds on extensive empirical material (interviews, participant observation, documentation, informal discussions and feedback sessions) collected since the Mediapolis project started in 2011. The abductive analysis (see e.g. Jay, 2013) focuses on management of complexities and organizational tensions in implementing collaborative strategies at Mediapolis, as well as managing the shared operations of the cluster. The results reveal tensions between the core dualities in developing Mediapolis as a collaborative arrangement between the participating organizations in practice, despite shared strategic-level aspirations.

The findings elaborate on the dynamics of different organizational orientations and business logics, discrepancies between visionary planning and practical actions and opposing organizational interests and strategies as sources for organizational tensions in collaborative contexts. The paper contributes to both theoretical and practical knowledge on organizational tensions and their strategic management in cross-sector collaboration in media cluster development and provides implications for managing the strategic paradoxes in hybrid organizations.

References

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Abstract topic: Strategic Management

Keywords: media cluster, hybrid organization, cross-sector collaboration, organizational tensions, strategic management