

Stimulators and Barriers to Coopetition in Non-Commercial Entities - Case Study of Cultural Institutions

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Abstract

Research on the stimulators and barriers to establishing and developing coopetition has so far been conducted in management literature mainly from the perspective of enterprises. Although the subject of management in the cultural sector has for several decades been attracting more and more interest from researchers and practitioners operating in this field, interest has rarely been shown in the area of coopetition, while analysis has never been conducted into the stimulating factors and barriers to coopetition among cultural institutions. Taking into account the specificity of the functioning of non-commercial organizations, including the context of such organizations' activities in the field of culture, as well as the growing role of public and non-profit organizations in the economy, the aim of this article is to identify the stimulators and barriers to establishing and developing coopetition in non-commercial organizations based on the example of cultural institutions. The research results are the product of qualitative field research conducted among 42 museums in Poland. Based on the research, 18 stimulators and 11 barriers to establishing and developing coopetition among cultural institutions were identified.

Keywords: coopetition, non-commercial entities, cultural institutions, cultural sector, stimulators of coopetition, barriers of coopetition

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1 INTRODUCTION

Many examples from economic practice show that competing organizations, to a limited or wide extent, rely on cooperative relations with rivals in order to achieve their goals more effectively and efficiently, increase performance, access and exploit resources, create more value or gain market strength (Hung & Chang, 2012; Czakon, 2014; Park & Kim, 2021; Seepana et al., 2021). Such an amalgamation of both competition and cooperation is cooptation (Nalebuff & Brandenburger, 1997), considered as the most effective form of relationship between organizations (Walley, 2007). Although the concept of cooptation is not new (Meena et al., 2023), and the existing literature answers many questions about cooptation, and it explains and describes both the phenomenon itself and the aspects related to it, researchers still point to a high degree of terminological and cognitive discrepancy, revealing the need for a coherent and synthetic conceptualization of this multidimensional construct (Dorn et al., 2016; Crick & Crick, 2023). What is more, the phenomenon, although studied mainly from the perspective of enterprises, is not only important for commercial entities. Public and non-profit organizations also rely on cooptation to achieve specific goals, resulting from, e.g. the mission. It should be noted, however, that despite decades of research on the cooptation phenomenon, the literature review reveals sporadic research interest in cooptation in non-commercial organizations, and thus – a clear research gap, but there are a few important reasons why it remains important to pay attention to cooptation among public and non-profit organizations.

Firstly, as noted, the concept of cooptation as a synergistic phenomenon has important implications among non-commercial organisations. The literature indicates many objective market premises confirming the existence of cooptation among non-profit organizations (Ritchie & Weinberg, 2000; Kylänen & Rusko, 2011). Organizations in the public and non-profit sectors struggle with both limited financial and intangible resources, which stimulates competition in these sectors and encourages organizations to enter into cooperative relationships. It is worth noting that non-commercial organizations – despite the existence of objective market conditions – often do not treat other organizations operating in the same sector as competitors (Juszczyk, 2021). However, reality forces competition between non-commercial organizations, among others for funding, employees, volunteers, influence, prestige, contracts, orders and recipients/users (Tuckman, 1998; Nikolova, 2015). Although the first publications on public benefit organizations appeared in the 1980s (Kramer et al., 1981), and a steady increase and even a sharp acceleration of published research was noted after 2000 (Lyons, 2020), based on the literature review, it can be seen that the literature in the field of management, in particular cooptation, has not developed significantly in this area.

A particularly interesting and dynamically developing sector, in which the vast majority of entities are non-commercial organizations, is the cultural sector. This sector contributes significantly to economic growth by increasing demand and supply for cultural products and services, especially in recent years as a result of the development of information technologies (Ghazinoory et al., 2021). Research interest in the cultural sector has so far been shown, among others, in the concept of culture industries, emphasizing the economic links between popular culture and high culture (mainly associated with the world of art) (Galloway & Dunlop, 2007), and the concept of the creative industries, emphasizing in a special way such elements as creativity, entrepreneurship and productivity in culture management (Ghazinoory et al., 2021). What is important is that recent research has revealed that modern cultural institutions, which are facing dynamic changes in functional and internal processes, the increasingly diverse needs of recipients as well as problems with financing activities and limited resources, are today seeking a competitive advantage in cooperation with competitors (Margolis, 2009; Cassar, 2013). Although for several decades the subject of management in the cultural sector has attracted increasing interest among researchers and practitioners operating in this area, research has rarely been conducted in the area of cooptation (Najam, 2003; Mariani, 2007, 2018; Poisson-de Haro & Myard, 2018; Meena, et al., 2023).

Thirdly, the phenomenon of cooptation allows organizations to achieve numerous benefits, including using a smaller amount of the organization's own resources, or managing them more effectively by accessing the resources of a partner, with whom they also combine resources (Hung & Chang, 2012), thus reducing risk and operating costs (Ritala & Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, 2009). Hence, organizations are more and more often entering into cooperation with competitors, and the resulting cooptation brings higher value to the organizations than competition or cooperation alone (Czakon, 2014). These benefits are in practice stimulators to establishing and developing cooptation. They have been relatively well recognized in the literature at the individual, dyad and inter-organizational level (Gast et al., 2015; Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016; Dorn et al., 2016; Chim-Miki & Batista-Canino, 2017; Westra et al., 2017; Gernsheimer et al., 2021). However, there are also barriers on the way to or during cooptation, as this phenomenon, considered to be paradoxical (Czakon et al., 2014) and full of tension (Fernandez & Chiambaretto, 2016; Ritala et al., 2017), also entails certain risks or costs, such as a lack of trust (Raza-Ullah et al., 2014; Crick et al., 2022), the risk of partner opportunism, or deterioration of the organization's financial results (Sampson, 2007; Raza-Ullah et al., 2014; Westra et al., 2017). These barriers are often described in the literature as the “dark side of cooptation” (Crick et al., 2022). However, it should be emphasized that research on the stimulators and barriers to establishing and developing cooptation has so far been conducted in management literature mainly from the perspective of enterprises and identifying them in

non-commercial organizations, especially among cultural institutions, constitutes a marginal stream of research (Meena et al., 2023).

Fourthly, in research on cooptation among cultural institutions, the specificity of the functioning of public or non-profit organizations must be taken into account. This is because for organizations entangled in financing problems and organizational deficiencies, which at the same time are subject to political decisions (Lorgnier & Su, 2017) and have to compete for qualified employees or creating unique offers with entities from the private sector (Mariani, 2007), the incentives and barriers to cooptation will probably be of a different nature to those which have been identified so far in the private sector.

Taking into account the identified gaps in the literature on the subject, as well as the increasing role of public and non-profit organizations in the economy, the aim of this article is to identify the stimulators and barriers to establishing and developing cooptation in non-profit organizations based on the example of cultural institutions. Thus I focused on the following research questions: (RQ1): *What are the stimulators to establishing and developing cooptation in non-profit organizations based on the example of cultural institutions*; (RQ2): *What are the barriers to establishing and developing cooptation in non-profit organizations based on the example of cultural institutions*?

To reach the aim of the paper, a qualitative field research process was implemented. The research contribution is based on the results of individual in-depth semi-structured interviews with representatives of 42 public and private museums in Poland.

The study offers three noteworthy contributions to the cooptation literature: (1) summarizing and integrating existing knowledge on the stimulators and barriers to cooptation, (2) identifying and exemplifying the factors determining the emergence and inhibition of cooptation, taking into account the specificity of non-commercial organizations and three levels of analysis, i.e. at the inter-organizational, dyadic and individual level among cultural institutions; (3) providing recommendations to managers of non-commercial entities for a better understanding of cooptation and its impact on organizational activity, in particular on the drivers and barriers that could be useful in the context of the formulation of an organization's strategy and dealing with the paradoxes resulting from cooptation.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The theoretical part is divided into two sections. The first discusses previous research findings in the field of cooptation among cultural institutions, taking into account the specificity of this phenomenon among non-commercial organizations. The second part focuses on briefly discussing the stimulators and barriers to establishing cooptation that have been so far identified in the management literature. Next, the research methodology is described. Then, the research results are presented, and in the last part of the article I discuss the main contributions, indicating the limitations of and future directions for research.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Cooptation of Cultural Institutions

The popularization and recognition of the phenomenon of cooptation among researchers of management has resulted in a significant increase in the number of empirical studies published in recent years in this field. Previous research on the cooptation phenomenon can be divided into three main areas. The first of these focuses on questions about the reasons for the occurrence of cooptation, explaining the determinants, motives and conditions of its formation (Brandes et al., 2007). In this dimension, the authors mainly refer to the following theoretical foundations: transaction cost economics (Wilhelm, 2011; Le Roy & Sanou, 2014); institutional theory (Pathak et al., 2014); strategic learning theory (Fredrich et al., 2019; Gast et al., 2019); the resource-based view (Bogner & Barr, 2000; Andersson & Evers, 2015) the relational view (Crick, 2019) or absorptive capacity (Volschenk et al., 2016). The second focuses on research on the course of cooptation – establishing cooptation, interactions, or cooptation as a process (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000). In this area, researchers refer to the following theoretical foundations e.g.: paradox theory (Gnyawali et al., 2016), tension management (Fernandez & Chiambaretto, 2016; Ritala et al., 2017), or mutual trust (Morris et al., 2007; Czakon & Czernek, 2016; Crick, 2019). Finally, the third area relates to the results and effects of cooptation (Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016; Dorn et al., 2016). The results of research indicate a positive relationship between cooptation and, for example, an increase in market share (Gnyawali & Park, 2009), innovation (Ritala, 2012), productivity (Le Roy & Czakon, 2016), or usefulness in the context of activities defined in the organization, such as marketing activities (Chiambaretto et al., 2016), logistics (Wilhelm, 2011), or management control (Grafton & Mundy, 2017). In addition, it appears that cooptation is important for the strategy of enterprises in terms of the situation in the sector as well as economic and social development (Le Roy et al., 2018).

In strategic terms, cooptation is considered a dynamic strategy (Devece et al., 2019), which develops over time (Kylänen & Rusko, 2011; Mariani, 2018), whereas the relational approach to cooptation defines it as "a system of integration of various actors, which is based on a partial compatibility of interests and goals" (Czakon, 2014). We can assume that interdependence is the foundation of cooptation, and its degree may determine the

benefits gained, the achievement of convergent goals, and the creation and division of value. On the other hand, engaging in co-competition often causes tensions, opportunistic behaviour and knowledge leakage, creating a particularly vulnerable relationship (Fernandez et al., 2014; Tidström et al., 2018; Raza-Ullah, 2020). In this context, it is suggested that research should pay more attention to the time aspect of co-competition, analysing how the roles and dynamics between the partners involved change over time (Rajala & Tidström, 2017). In addition, recent research confirms that co-competitors can assume different, sometimes conflicting, roles (Akpınar & Vincze, 2016; Qin et al., 2020), and emphasizes the importance of co-competitors constantly reconfiguring their relational interdependencies (Ansari et al., 2016) as the partnership develops. Due to its difficult and potentially harmful nature, co-competition is considered one of the most complex and demanding organizational phenomena (Lundgren-Henriksson & Kock, 2016; Tippmann et al., 2018), which can be an immense challenge for managers of cultural institutions.

The few studies conducted among cultural institutions suggest that as a result of, for example, the diversification of functions and roles performed by contemporary cultural institutions – their "multi-product" nature (Del Chiappa et al., 2014), project orientation, emerging new forms of financing (such as civic budgets), or the need to compete with each other (very similar and sometimes even the same cultural services (Cheng, 2006)) - it is necessary to expand the scope of cooperation between cultural entities, including co-competition (Cassar, 2013; Cortese et al., 2021). An example of co-competition is a situation where cultural institutions share resources to enhance their visibility through a specific project like an exhibition, and at the same time, they have to compete with each other to attract and sell their artworks during the show. As previous research on co-competition among cultural institutions has revealed, involvement in co-competition allows cultural institutions to achieve a competitive advantage, for example by creating a complementary and diversified cultural offer (Qizi, 2021). Co-competition stimulates knowledge transfer and its spillovers, which can have a positive impact on an organization's innovativeness (Bérubé & Gauthier, 2020), thus co-competitive relationships are crucial for the creation and diffusion of knowledge among cultural institutions and for fostering their innovativeness. Interactions with other institutions, social structures, in which the knowledge is embedded, are the prerequisite for starting the process of creativity. This justifies the need to cooperate with other entities in order to inspire and develop innovations. Co-competition is also a way to exchange experiences, skills and abilities, which is important for entities dealing with culture because, unlike entities from the private sector, as non-profit entities they devote more attention to creative work, providing specific goods and services of a socially useful nature (Gainer & Padanyi, 2002; Finkel et al., 2017). Cooperation with rivals also allows cultural institutions to maximize the use of limited resources, increasing the dynamics of action in the implementation of missions and social goals. It gives cultural institutions the opportunity to overcome organizational shortcomings, and positively affects the reduction of operating costs, achieving the effect of synergy in the area of competences, experience and knowledge, or increasing social legitimacy (Juszczak, 2021).

The literature also indicates that as a result of individual perceptions of managers, cultural entities enter into co-competition in a deliberate, unintentional and even unconscious way (Juszczak, 2021), while co-competition among cultural institutions manifests itself in at least three areas (Scheff & Kotler, 1996; Cheng 2006; Juszczak, 2021): the artistic area, (e.g. organizing events cultural events, displaying permanent or temporary collections, conducting research, etc.); 2.) the administrative and management area (e.g. in the field of personnel management, marketing activities, administrative services, or substantive consulting) and 3.) the social area, related to e.g. building public trust in the institution and ties of recipients with the cultural institution, with conducting external pro-social activities with competitors, or maintaining social relationships between representatives of the involved entities.

However, as has already been indicated, the previous considerations on the importance of co-competition for the functioning and development of cultural institutions, due to research deficiencies, give an incomplete picture of the actual state of affairs regarding the phenomenon of co-competition. It should be emphasized that the co-competition relationships analyzed at the inter-organizational level are dependent on and specific to the industry or area in which the entities operate (Czakoń, 2014), hence they are contextual (Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016).

2.2 Stimulators and Barriers to Co-competition in Management

In the literature, the stimulators to establishing and developing co-competition have so far been analysed in the form of antecedents (Bouncken & Fredrich, 2012; Kraus et al., 2018; Czakoń et al., 2020; Kallmuenzer et al., 2021), incentives (Devetag, 2009; Velu, 2016; Chiń et al., 2018), motives (Song et al., 2015; Bengtsson & Kock, 2020) and co-competition purposes (Arenas et al., 2021). It should be emphasized that these terms are sometimes used by researchers interchangeably. Research on factors stimulating the establishment and development of co-competition has developed significantly in the last decade – both in terms of scale and scope (e.g., multi-level analysis, industry, dyad or enterprise perspective) (Gernsheimer et al., 2021). Whereas previous research often discussed the antecedents, incentives and rationale behind co-competition mainly in terms of its goals (most often on the basis of the resource-based theory of the firm), a recent wave of empirical research has highlighted the existence of a distinct set of motives that lead organizations to cooperate with a competitor

(Kraus et al., 2018; Czakon et al., 2020). At this point, it should be emphasized that the vast majority of previous research conducted in this area has related to profit-oriented enterprises.

So far, the stimuli for establishing and developing coopepetition have been analyzed in the literature from various perspectives, for example as internal (the organization's goals, resources, strategies and capabilities), relation-specific (e.g. partner and relationships characteristics) or external factors (i.e., political, social, economic, technological factors and stakeholders) (e.g. Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016; Mariani, 2018). Padula and Dagnino (2008) point to exogenous and endogenous drivers. The first of these are the forces provided by the environmental sources of coopepetition, affecting the degree and structure of the overlap of the partners' interests, while the second – endogenous – forces derived from the dynamics of interaction, determined by the knowledge profile of the dyad members. Factors that encourage coopepetition can also be grouped into those of an inter-organizational nature, occurring at the dyad or individual level. When analysis is conducted of stimulators to coopepetition at the dyad level, they include, for example: complementarity of resources, asymmetry of knowledge, compatibility of goals, past and existing connections with potential partners, including relationship flexibility, trust and the partner's reputation (Gast et al., 2015; Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016; Czakon & Czernek, 2016; Dorn et al., 2016). In turn, among the stimuli to coopepetition analysed at the level of a given organization (the individual level), researchers most often identify the need to acquire knowledge and resources, the current self-assessment of the organization (e.g. perceived vulnerability to threats, position, implemented strategy), individual goals and capabilities, past experiences, existing social relationships and individual values (Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016; Dorn et al., 2016; Chim-Miki & Batista-Canino, 2017; Gernsheimer et al., 2021). One of the recent studies on coopepetition stimulators also indicates the existence of the so-called coopepetitive mindset (Czakon et al., 2020), an unobservable construct, which consists of: experience in coopepetition, cooperative orientation and trust. Among the very general stimuli to coopepetition often mentioned by researchers, the following have been highlighted: specific, existing market conditions, the degree of market changes, competition within the industry, the phase of the industry's life cycle, the existence and powers of regulatory authorities (Dorn et al., 2016). They also include: stakeholder pressure or technological requirements affecting convergence, uncertainty within the industry, the complexity of the environment (Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016; Chim-Miki & Batista-Canino, 2017), but also globalization or deregulation (Czakon et al., 2014).

The important findings in terms of incentives for coopepetition among non-commercial organizations relate to the importance and influence of external stakeholders, such as policy makers, who can not only prepare the ground for coopepetition interactions, but can actually trigger and influence coopepetition once it is formed (Mariani, 2018). It is worth emphasizing here that the influence of external stakeholders is related to unintentional coopepetition, which was not deliberately planned by cooperating competitors, but happened anyway as a result of being imposed (Kylänen & Rusko, 2011), for example, by a financing entity or a political decision maker (Lorgnier & Su, 2017). In general, external stakeholders such as policy makers and regulators can shape the coopepetition development and thus influence how organizations interact with each other over time (Mariani, 2018).

Nevertheless, coopepetition is also conditioned by certain barriers. Research by Tidström (2009) identified the fear of establishing cooperation with a competitor, as well as the fear of losing the autonomy of the organization. The main barriers to establishing coopepetition include the lack of trust between the parties involved, which results in lowering the organization's performance (Raza-Ullah et al., 2014; Czakon & Czernek, 2016; Crick et al., 2022). Recent research shows that coopepetitive partner organizations can adopt opportunistic behaviour, cause knowledge leakage, amplify tensions, challenge intellectual property, and undermine competitive advantages (Crick, 2020; Czakon & Czernek-Marszałek, 2021). Some authors also point to the lack of reciprocity in the exchange of resources (Hückstädt, 2022). Referring to the tensions caused by the existence of coopepetition, researchers indicate that they may occur at the individual, organizational and inter-organizational level, while also emphasizing the role of emotions in relationships, resulting in the durability and intensity of coopepetition (Raza-Ullah et al., 2014). Tidstrom (2014) suggests that different voltages result in specific outcomes. In extreme cases, the assessment of cooperation with competitors can be detrimental to a company's performance (Crick, 2020), determining conflicts and misunderstandings, and consequently disrupting partnerships and ending coopepetition initiatives. This was confirmed by the research of Chowdhury et al. (2016), in which the researchers point out that if rivals fail to distinguish between the paradoxical forces of cooperation and competition (Raza-Ullah, 2020), a number of negative effects can occur, such as tensions and lower levels of productivity. It is therefore necessary to manage coopepetition carefully (Crick, 2020). For managers, this skill or the lack of it may be a barrier to establishing and developing coopepetition.

The literature review also reveals that although it is uncertainty that encourages competitors to cooperate, coopepetition is characterized by a high degree of opportunistic behaviour (Morris et al., 2007), sudden twists (Bouncken et al., 2018), tensions (Tidström, 2014) and even a short-term horizon of action (Tidström, 2014). This may be due to divergences in the strategies of the entities involved, divergences in the goals of the parties, or due to a rival's desire to achieve a better market position (Walley, 2007). Also, the example of alliances between enterprises, in which coopepetition relationships are observable, proves that they are characterized by a

high degree of instability (Das, 2006). Although the studied alliances were created for a predetermined period of time, and their dissolution was planned from the beginning of the cooperation between the partners, some of them were dissolved or changed the structure of the partnership even before the common goals were achieved (Solesvik & Gulbrandsen, 2013). Negative effects of cooptation have been observed in several industries and environments, for example among family wine producers in the United States (Crick & Crick, 2021) and among tour operators in Lithuania (Bagdoniene & Hopeniene, 2015). These can be considered as barriers to entering into other cooptation relationships by experienced parties, or something that simply acts as a warning to other organizations. Taking into account the resource premises of cooptation, Lechner et al. (2016) also point to the barrier related to the lack of complementarity of resources, which usually intensifies competitive interdependence between organizations, and to the risk of resource leakage (in particular knowledge leakage, as noted above), which in turn generates reluctance to share resources, especially intangible ones. As emphasized by Köseoğlu et al. (2019), common and equal access to all markets may also limit the development of cooptation.

It should be added that the barriers to the establishment and development of cooptation typical for public and non-profit organizations also include (Fathalikhani et al., 2018; Van den Broek et al., 2018): problems with cooptation coordination (increased external coordination combined with a lack of managerial skills); leaving the mission for which organizations were established as a result of too far-reaching adaptation to the partner; loss of organizational identity due to too much involvement in cooptation (at the expense of one's own brand), or the increasing number of duties resulting from maintaining a cooptation relationship, which, due to the limited number and competence of the staff, discourages the development of cooperation between rivals and causes less and less involvement of the partners.

3 RESEARCH METHOD

The article presents selective results of the field research conducted. The empirical research was exploratory, and the research process used a qualitative, interpretative approach (Silverman, 2016). Exploratory qualitative research enabled a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study, as well as its description. This made it possible to focus on its features, characteristics, processes and meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), as these were to be used to identify specific aspects of the problem under study. The methodology used included qualitative research techniques with the use of qualitative research tools (Bouncken et al., 2021).

The study used semi-structured, in-depth individual face-to-face interviews. A total of 42 interviews were conducted - 22 with representatives of public museums and 20 interviews with representatives of private museums. This number enabled achievement of the so-called saturation effect (Suddaby, 2006). The interviewees were selected deliberately, taking into account such criteria as: (1) legal form of activity, (2) simultaneous occurrence of cooperation and competition relationships in the activity of the museum, (3) importance of the museum in Poland, (4) range of activity, (5) size of entity and (6) its activity. The interviewees in the case of public museums were mainly directors, their deputies or proxies, and other senior and middle-level managers. In the case of non-public museums, they were the founders, i.e. owners, or presidents of associations or foundations, when the founder of the museum was an association or foundation. Therefore, it should be recognized that in the context of the studied phenomena, the interlocutors were key informants (Kumar et al., 1993).

The field research took place from January to July 2020. However, due to the announcement by the World Health Organization of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the numerous government restrictions introduced as a result, some of the interviews in March-June 2020 were conducted via online tools, each time using audio and video. The total duration of all interviews is approximately 47 hours. The average interview duration is approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes.

The interviews were recorded and field notes were taken at the end of the interviews. After collecting the data, the research material was written down and transcripts of the interviews were made. The text after transcription had a total of 909 pages. The content of the interviews was then encoded (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2000) using the NVivo computer software. The coding of the empirical data was made using deductive-inductive logic, so-called abduction (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003), i.e., connecting codes resulting from the literature (deduction) with codes that appeared as a result of the analysis of the interview content (induction).

The research used the so-called focused coding of categories, expanding the structure of the codes, and finally creating their hierarchy. In the context of selectively presented research results, this article uses codes related to the following aspects: (1) the importance of cooptation for the activities of cultural institutions, in particular in museums; (2) antecedents to / motives for /stimulators of the establishment of cooptation among museums; (3) antecedents of /motives for /stimulators of the cooptation development among museums; (4) barriers to the establishment of cooptation among museums; (5) barriers to the development of cooptation among museums.

As Czernek (2015) emphasizes, it is important to include quotations from the interviews in the section devoted to the research results as they give the text scientific validity. The findings of the research are presented along with chosen quotations from the interviews so as to give a voice to the interviewees themselves, which at the same time increases the credibility of the qualitative research and allows for a better understanding of the research findings (Czernek-Marszałek, McCabe, 2022).

4 EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The research successfully identified and specified the stimulators and barriers to the establishment and development of coopetition relationships by cultural institutions. The public and non-public museums whose representatives were included in the study were characterized by both cooperation and competition relationships, although their participation in the competition process was often unconscious – the interlocutors did not treat one another as competitors (unconscious coopetition). Also, due to the fact that competition generated pejorative associations, the representatives of museum institutions deliberately did not identify activities undertaken by a certain entity as a competitive struggle. However, among the interlocutors there was also a group that not only consciously entered into cooperation with competitors, but also had a specific goal related to the activity of the museums they represented (emerging or intentional coopetition).

In total, 18 stimulators and 11 barriers were identified in relation to the museums covered by the study establishing and developing coopetition relationships. It should be noted that the stimulators usually refer to the establishment of a coopetition relationship, while the barriers appear more often both before and during the coopetition. What is more, in some cases the identified stimulators to establishing coopetition relationships with other museums also acted as barriers. An example is the establishment of coopetition relations as a result of their initiation by authorities at various levels – this stimulator was revealed only in the case of public museums. These were also examples of obligatory coopetition enforced by political decision-makers, which meant that the coopetition had a short time horizon and usually did not bring benefits, which determined the treatment of this type of stimulator to establishing coopetition relationships as a barrier as well.

4.1 Stimulators of Coopetition among Cultural Institutions

Analysis of the empirical material showed the existence of a set of stimulators to coopetition among public and private museums, representing the public sector and the non-profit sector respectively. These are presented in Table 1 and they are then discussed in the order in which they are listed in the table in the further considerations in this section.

Table 1. Stimulators to establishing and developing coopetition relationships among public and private museums

No.	Stimulator of coopetition
1.	Better meeting the needs of diverse and demanding audiences. Desire to reach new audiences.
2.	Opportunity to exchange experiences, knowledge, skills and abilities.
3.	Synergy effect in the area of competence, experience and knowledge (creating innovative ideas).
4.	Maximizing the use of limited resources.
5.	Increasing the dynamics of activities in the implementation of the mission and goals.
6.	Possibility of obtaining external funds for the implementation of specific tasks.
7.	Possibility to overcome own organizational shortcomings.
8.	Similarity of actions and activities.
9.	Increasing social legitimacy.
10.	Reducing operating costs, including those related to uncertainty.
11.	Local identity/location similarity.
12.	Coopetition initiated by other institutions (e.g., cultural institutes).
13.	Coopetition initiated by the organizer (local authorities at various levels and state authorities).
14.	The prestige of cooperation with a competitor.
15.	Social pressure.
16.	Organization of joint industry events.
17.	Willingness to support, help, transfer knowledge to smaller, less prestigious entities.
18.	Lobbying to change the law.

Source: own elaboration

One of the stimulators of coopetition among cultural institutions presented in Table 1 for public and private museums was better meeting the needs of diverse and demanding recipients, which was also related to the desire to reach a new audience. As the interlocutors pointed out, limited museum collections, a profiled area of activity, and also the limited budgets of the institution were an obstacle to independently building a cultural offer that was more attractive and more extensive, and that evoked emotions in contemporary recipients.

Every now and then something needs to be changed in this museum. Exhibit something less, something more, change something, because if we don't do it, unfortunately no one will come to us, because they won't look at the same thing all the time, right? And then this cooperation, even with a competitor, makes sense and it seems to me that it is beginning, that is the reason for cooperation between museums. Such an exchange of artifacts, well, exchange, such as to say, we cannot stand still. We need to create a better offer. [3NP]

Another stimulator to establishing competition relations, indicated relatively often by the interviewees, was the possibility of exchanging experiences, knowledge, skills and abilities between competitors. The cooperation relationships created facilitated the entities' access to new knowledge and the possibility of its assimilation. Cooperation provided museums with more opportunities to exchange experiences, allowed for numerous and valuable substantive consultations between the parties involved, and gave the opportunity to acquire new competences and skills.

The third of the identified stimulators (see Table 1.) due to which museums undertook a cooperation relationship was the achievement of the synergy effect in the area of competence, experience and knowledge, and the related generation of innovative ideas. This aspect is also related to the previous one that refers to the exchange of experience and knowledge, because, as a result of mutual observations and learning, museums have activated creativity, allowing them to jointly create innovative ideas using the capabilities of cultural institutions. This is confirmed by the statement of a senior manager of one of the public museums in Lesser Poland:

The exchange of experience, the exchange of knowledge and good practices is conducive to innovation, just in our area. [13P]

It should be noted, however, that the creation of innovative ideas was possible only when each of the museums used knowledge-sharing mechanisms, which means that the sharing of ideas was not one-sided.

The research also showed that another stimulus to establishing cooperation with a competitor was the possibility of maximizing the use of limited resources. Cooperation allowed museums to take full advantage of the limited financial resources, human resources and exhibitions that museums had at their disposal. For example, joint organization of an exhibition involved the use of smaller financial resources on the part of a single entity. The time and involvement of employees was divided between the two institutions, while the combined exhibitions of the two museums made a greater impression on recipients than using the exhibits of a single museum:

We cannot ignore the financial effects of cooperation with competitors, because we are always limited with a budget that, let's face it, is never sensational. It's simply easier to organize a project when you combine resources. [4P]

In addition, the interviewees also confirmed that cooperation with a competitor allows them to more dynamically pursue their social goals and the goals resulting from the Act on Museums. This is quite an important finding, as it confirms the often-repeated claim in the private sector that cooperation allows entities to achieve partially convergent cooperative goals and divergent competitive goals. The same mechanism has also been observed in the case of cultural institutions, both in the public and non-profit sector.

Moderator: *"So, do you also take into account the social effects of working with competitors?"*

Interviewee: *"There's no denying that the social results that we get are important to us, right? Sometimes in such cooperation it is possible to achieve certain goals faster." [1P]*

Another important and relatively frequently quoted motive for establishing cooperation between competing museums was the possibility of obtaining external funds for the implementation of specific tasks. The limited budgets at the disposal of cultural institutions, in particular private museums, pushed museums into cooperation, the aim of which was to obtain external funds. It should be noted here that the representatives of private museums indicated that due to the unfavourable provisions of ministerial competitions, they were deprived of the chance to apply for numerous subsidies from structural funds, etc. Their entering into cooperation in order to obtain external funds was also caused by the formal requirements of many competitions. This problem concerned public museums in particular. Cooperation with an experienced partner with specific resources increased the chances of obtaining co-financing for a certain project from external funds. In addition, in the vast majority of cases, the provisions of the competitions were constructed in such a way that a single entity could not receive a subsidy, as all kinds of partnerships serving the implementation of a project were rated more highly. Such provisions were also dominant in various types of EU programmes, under which subsidies were awarded for conducting cultural activities:

In many cases, it is not even a requirement, because it is actually formally necessary to indicate partners, so it is a formal requirement, but even if there was no such requirement, well, if we want to prepare the project well in terms of content, we must look for partners. We have to use their knowledge, competence and experience to implement it in the best possible way, and yes - this cooperation with competitors takes place here (...). [8P]

Another stimulator to establishing cooperation relationships between museums was the possibility of overcoming their own organizational shortcomings. In other words, cooperation was helpful in overcoming museums' organizational problems related, for example, to the organization of exhibitions. Organizational

shortcomings included a lack of sufficient technical tools, appropriate staff, appropriate management decisions or the equipment needed to organize specific cultural events. The frequency of organizational deficiencies determined the quality of work and, consequently, the attitude of people to work and their supervisors, hence the possibility of overcoming organizational problems prompted museums to cooperate with competitors:

Yes, of course, it's easier for us to organize an attractive exhibition together (...). It's just easier if we want to bring, or, for example, import a large exhibition from abroad. It is easier to divide the costs or organize transport, arrange insurance, agree on where this exhibition will be presented and generally implement such a project. [12NP]

Another factor stimulating cooperation between museums and competitors was the similarity of actions and activities of the entities. The similarities in the activities of museums often also resulted from geographical (location) similarities, as well as similarities in missions, goals or programmes of activities. Competing museums, thanks to the existing analogies of operation, implemented joint initiatives in a more competitive manner, and showed greater understanding towards each other and more effective implementation of joint tasks.

According to the research, museums also entered into cooperation with competitors in order to increase their social legitimacy. Coopetition was supposed to ensure that the entities involved obtained a certain degree of social support as a result of the implementation of certain values shared by a given community. Gaining greater social legitimacy also allowed museums to be more credible in the fight for certain values, or in taking a stand on specific social problems:

Moderator: *"Do you think cultural institutions, in particular museums, cooperate with competing cultural institutions?"*

Interviewee: *"I think so. These are difficult collaborations, but they often mean prestige, greater firepower, impact, attracting social attention, showing that you are active in a certain area."* [18P]

The next stimulator to coopetition among museums mentioned by the interviewees was the possibility of reducing costs, and uncertainty related to the activities of museum institutions. Cooperation with a competitor, according to the respondents, helped to spread the risk and reduce the costs of providing public and social services, but also contributed to reducing the risk of partners' opportunistic behaviour through monitoring mechanisms and the use of an information sharing approach:

Lower costs? Sure. We go hand in hand as other directors and I, we like each other. Some people are a little weird, but everyone is a little weird. It's always best to cooperate when you're on similar wavelengths and there's some business to do. [14NP]

Often, the coopetition relationship also resulted in long-term reciprocity between museum representatives, which was related to the continuation of market transaction benefits e.g. in the form of reducing information costs or stimulating innovative activities in the field of culture.

Interestingly, local identity and location similarity were also stimulators to museums establishing coopetition relationships. Operating in the same local or regional environment was conducive to establishing cooperation between competitors, not only due to the close location of the entities' seats, enabling the joint provision of a cultural offer in a given area, but also, and in some cases primarily, for reasons of creating a cultural offer focused on building a sense of cultural belonging, local/regional identity, and thus spreading common traditions and cultural values

We cooperate with the nearest museums in the area, especially with the Museum in Chrzanów (name of the city). We do some actions together, for example, the Night of Museums or joint workshops. That's the way it is. We would rather not reach beyond Plaza and Chrzanów (names of the cities), because in fact, the most intense cooperation is happening here, at this local level." [5NP]

Another factor that stimulated museums to enter into coopetition was the initiation of such relations by other external institutions. Examples were the initiatives of various cultural institutes inviting people to cooperate on a certain project. This cooperation often involved cooperation with a competitor or several competitors, while rejecting a proposal to participate in some project entailed the possibility of exclusion from certain circles that were important in the museum environment, or even being deprived of the possibility of obtaining certain benefits.

There are also cases where cooperation with competitors was the result of decisions of organizers financing the activities of museums - local government authorities at various levels - hence this motive was revealed only in the case of public museums. Coopetition relationships were initiated by local government, provincial or state authorities due to certain political circumstances or the social goals guiding the organizers. These were examples of obligatory coopetition, enforced by political decision-makers. In these cases, it was about the influence of the pressure of political decision-makers:

We are in the structures of the Lesser Poland Voivodeship and the governing body there seems to require us to cooperate with other museums from this province, often with museums from Krakow, because there is the largest concentration of museums here. [22P]

Another stimulator to coopetition among museums was the prestige of cooperation with a given competitive entity. The interviewees emphasized the point that, when deciding to cooperate with a certain

competitor, they took into account the importance of the partner's experience and its prestige in the museum industry. According to the research, less significant museums in the industry were looking for a partner with an established position and valued in the museum environment, cooperation with which added credibility, and enabled smaller entities to build their brand and prestige both in the eyes of the audience and in the museum industry itself. As the interlocutors emphasized: *"image issues play a very important role"* [4NP].

Social pressure is another stimulator to cooperation among public and private museums identified in the research. Some of the interviewees claimed that they felt external pressure to start cooperation with some competitors. This pressure came from the recipients' environment, hence establishing cooperation with a competitor was aimed at meeting social expectations:

Sometimes we feel such social pressure - that is, let's enter into cooperation relationships with another museum - our region or the community surrounding us ... this is informal pressure, of course. They would like my museum to have good cooperation with various great museums from Silesia ... we feel that. Of course, sometimes, for example, some articles that appear in the press directly relate to that, but these are also expectations that people leave for us in visitor books or in various comments via social media. [3P]

Another factor stimulating cooperation between competing museums was the willingness to jointly organize industry events. These events mainly took the form of cyclical museum conferences, addressed to people employed in museums. On the basis of the research observations, it should be added that these conferences were of great importance to the interlocutors, as their organization had a positive impact on the image of the museums involved, and helped build their position in the community. The complementary resources, competences and knowledge of the competing entities allowed for a functional division of roles and responsibilities of the organizers, as well as efficient coordination of the organization of the event.

Another, quite surprising, stimulus to establishing cooperation was the willingness to support, provide assistance or transfer knowledge to smaller, less prestigious museum entities. This theme was revealed mainly, but not only, among private museums. In the case of private museums, it was usually about helping newly established entities at the beginning of their activities. This assistance was related to the preparation of documentation and registration of monuments, but also the transfer of knowledge related to management activities. Public museums also felt they had a mission to help smaller museums. Entering into cooperation with smaller, but still competitive, entities was treated in terms of playing the role of an educator or image support:

National museums should take partners for cooperation who are a little weaker than themselves, to promote them, train them, teach them. This should also be an educational role, to show how to work in our industry. [19P]

The last stimulator identified as a result of the research, which is characteristic mainly of private museums, was lobbying for legal changes. Private museums cooperated in the joint development of good industry practices, applying for the interpretation of certain legal provisions to the competent ministry, consulting changes in the scope of new legal regulations, and jointly submitting proposals for changes to the applicable law. First of all, they cooperated to represent a common voice before the government as a private museologist community:

Our partnership with the museum next door was created, above all, to articulate the common voice of these private museum communities, which has been so little heard so far. [2NP]

It should be noted that the presented stimulators to establishing cooperation relationships among cultural institutions – public and private museums – are not always inseparable. The research demonstrated, for example, that both the theme of the similarity of activities as well as the possibility to obtain external funds were important in the decision on whether to cooperate with a competitor.

4.2 Barriers to Cooperation among Cultural Institutions

Despite the existence of many objective stimulators encouraging museums to cooperate with rivals, the interviewees also pointed to barriers related to both establishing and developing cooperation relations. These can be considered as specific to the entities representing the cultural sector included in the study. Table 2 is a synthesis of the research results in this area. Each of the barriers is referred to in turn in the later considerations.

Table 2. Barriers to establishing and developing coepetition relationships among public and private museums

No.	Barrier to coepetition
1.	Opportunistic acquisition and use of knowledge, ideas and information developed by another entity.
2.	Concealment of knowledge or information held by an entity.
3.	Lack of reciprocity in the exchange of resources or hindering access to resources.
4.	Lack of trust.
5.	Local antagonisms.
6.	Lack of local identity/lack of location similarity.
7.	Short horizon of action when coepetition was initiated by the organizer (local authorities of various levels and state authorities).
8.	Interpersonal conflicts.
9.	Transitivity of hostile relations, resulting in treating the entity with which one has a direct relationship as a competitor.
10.	Differences in organizational nature and in the implemented activities.
11.	Reluctance due to organizational and legal form.

Source: own elaboration

When it comes to the barriers to establishing and developing coepetition relationships between cultural institutions presented in Table 2, representatives of public and private museums relatively often indicated that they were prevented from establishing coepetition by the possibility of the undesirable effect of spreading knowledge or ideas. This is related to the so-called paradox of openness, meaning that the risk of undesirable spread of knowledge and opportunism increases with partners' openness and knowledge sharing.

The interviewees were afraid that cooperation with a competitor might involve opportunistic acquisition and use of knowledge, ideas and information developed by themselves. Behaviour in this manner is most often caused by the desire to achieve a better competitive position in a relatively short time. As one of the respondents claimed, information entrusted in confidence regarding the purchase of another exhibit was used by another museologist to enrich his own collection:

A man boasted that he was buying such a motorcycle, so such scumbags went to the gentleman: "Hello, I'm from [surname], [surname] said he isn't buying it." And they sold him the motorcycle. The man comes along in a week " What did you come for?" "Come on, to buy that motorcycle." "Oh, Wacek [name] was here and he said you weren't buying it so he took it" And that's how it ended.[11NP]

In addition, as the director of one of the public museums admitted, in her daily work, she more and more often reminds her employees not to share information related to ongoing projects with employees representing a cooperating museum as part of their contacts. This barrier concerns both establishing and developing coepetition relationships.

Excessive protection of knowledge, and even open concealment of information in relation to another entity, also became a barrier to the development of coepetition between partners. At the same time, it should be emphasized that among the resources that museums most often share as part of coepetition are intangible resources, which include knowledge, information and experience in the field of art, and administration and management related to e.g., research, education, conservation, marketing or publishing, hence the indicated barrier is of great importance from the point of view of museums. Concealing knowledge or information paralyzes further cooperation between competitors and may lead to strengthening competition to such an extent that coepetition itself makes no sense:

Well, I had a situation where I just couldn't say everything. Once, I didn't trust them and twice, it took me years to figure it out and I said straight: listen, Henia [name], this is valuable knowledge for me and I won't tell you everything I know about this tank. You don't even know how angry she was. I don't understand because I think I did the right thing. And then there were rumours around me, she took revenge on me, she did everything that we did, she even made leaflets for herself to make her events stand out. She wanted to prove something to me. [19NP]

Barriers related to resources are also associated with the lack of reciprocity in the exchange of resources, or making access to them more difficult. Examples of such behaviour in practice include prolonging the formal settlement of matters, imposing non-obligatory costs, or denying access to non-strategic resources held by another museum. Due to the lack of interdependence based on the sharing of complementary resources and mutual benefit, which is a value for coepetitors, coepetition was not a mutually satisfying relationship for museums at that time. This barrier usually appeared during the coepetition relationship and was often the result of tensions or interpersonal conflicts that appeared between the representatives of the entities involved in the coepetition.

Another barrier to establishing and developing coepetition between cultural institutions identified in the research was the limited or lack of trust between potential partners or coepetitors. At the same time, it should be noted that a lack of trust is an immanent feature of the relationship between public and private museums. The

limited trust of representatives of public museums in relation to private museums should be emphasized, as well as the treatment of public museums by private museums in the category of entities from outside the environment that cannot be trusted:

Listen, if there is no trust, there is no cooperation. We, private museologists, do not work with those who do not know what to do with money, they waste it but they have a lot of money. I don't trust them. I do not believe them, I repeat. To sum up, these are otherwise normal people who have bats in the belfry. This is how I pigeonholed them and there is no cooperation here. [14NP]

It should be added, however, that limited or no trust also existed between entities from the same sector and was often based on the general reputation of a certain entity in the industry environment.

Interestingly, local antagonisms were also a barrier to establishing cooperation between competing cultural institutions, and influenced the perception of entities representing a different local identity as clear competitors. This is confirmed by the statement of a private museum owner in the Lublin province:

So, for example, Janów [name of the city] has never liked Kraśnik [name of the city], and Kraśnik [name of the city] does not like Janów, because Janów does not like Bilgoraj [name of the city] etc. (...) This causes reluctance among the people managing the museum in Kraśnik, the museum in Janów and the museum in Bilgoraj. And those museums will also fight for offers, for recipients, for everything. It's such stupidity. That's right, this is our Polish playground. [10NP]

The lack of a sense of the same local identity became another barrier to cooperation between museums. As was emphasized, the most intensive cooperation between museologists took place at the local level, which was important for shaping the local identity of the museums involved. When the entities functioned in places that are attractive to tourists, these activities were expressed in mutual recommendations to clients (tourists). At the same time, they also served to popularize the activities of museums in the tourist region, and thus enrich the tourist offer of the region. The lack of location similarity became a barrier to establishing cooperation between competing entities, especially in the case of museums whose activity (mission) was aimed at popularizing the history of a certain city, culture or region.

On the other hand, competition initiated by the organizers financing the activities of museums was generally characterized by a high degree of instability, and its dissolution was planned from the beginning of the cooperation between rivals, which is a barrier to the development of cooperation. A short action horizon was visible, especially when the cooperation relationships dissolved before the achievement of common goals. Local government and political conditions in the case of public museums became a source of destruction of the benefits jointly achieved by the cooperation partners. In turn, when it comes to private museums, in exchange for certain benefits related to access to resources, as part of top-down cooperation these organizations undertook activities aimed only at an economic goal (reducing costs), which resulted in tensions, conflicts and resulted in the duration of the cooperation relationship being relatively short:

This cooperation is most often directed or delegated to specific issues or activities, so it is only formal. People often don't want to work together under these conditions. It is sometimes the case that the goal of the commissioned task is not even achieved, because everything falls apart before then. [6P]

Another barrier to the development of cooperation indicated by the interviewees is interpersonal conflicts between representatives of the museums involved. These conflicts took place both at the management level and between employees of specific departments of the cooperating museums, and had a negative impact, especially on the development of cooperation and its results. The interviewees emphasized that interpersonal conflicts, which most often took place between museum directors, had a negative impact on existing cooperation, causing it to stagnate or even ending the relationship:

I mean, what I can say is that management conflict situations can definitely cause some cooperation to stop. This is what happens and this is what I have observed. [4P]

Interestingly, the research has revealed another barrier to establishing cooperation relationships related to the previous one, that is the so-called transitivity of the relationship, where a hostile interpersonal relationship between X and Y affected the interpersonal relationship between Y and Z. As claimed by the owner of a private museum, negative personal relationships between the owners/directors of museums X and Y translated into negative, sometimes even hostile, emotions of the owner/director of museum Z toward Y. This hostility manifested itself in the strengthening of competitive behaviour by the representative of a certain museum in relation to a museum which the entity had befriended, which resulted in negative relations and reduced the chances of cooperation to a minimum.

Also, the awareness of other action and activities or organizational differences became an obstacle to establishing cooperation between rivals from the museum industry. Museums naturally sought to create links with entities that implement similar initiatives or represent a similar profile of activity. This is related to the desire to learn and improve the business. When potential competitors did not notice the indicated similarities, they were not interested in a relationship that would not bring them the expected results.

The last of the identified barriers to cooperation relations between the museums studied was the reluctance to cooperate with a rival representing a different organizational and legal form. In practice, this relates to the

previously mentioned conflict between public and private museums. Mutual reluctance, a sense of injustice and unequal treatment constituted a significant barrier to cooperation:

All the competitions organized by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage are such competitions that can be safely called rigged, i.e., dishonest, where we, as private museums, have no chance to obtain anything. All funds go to state museums, which spend this money. It is here that there is definitely unfair competition and a dishonest approach to the subject. How am I supposed to work with such people? Never with any public museum. They're just typical competitors. [11NP]

It should be emphasized that the above-mentioned barriers may occur individually or be related to each other, e.g., interpersonal conflicts may result in hostile relations, and thus, in the industry environment they may cause hostility or concealment of knowledge and information.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to identify the stimulators and barriers to cooperation in non-commercial organizations based on the example of cultural institutions (museums). This paper contributes to the development of the cooperation research by providing an answer to the question of what encourages and stimulates non-commercial organizations to undertake and develop cooperation, but also what the barriers are to establishing or developing such cooperation relationships.

The answer to RQ1 *“What are the stimulators to establishing and developing cooperation in non-profit organizations based on the example of cultural institutions?”* covers a list of 18 stimuli (see Table 1.). Overall, most of the identified stimuli are identified in cooperation literature referring to commercial entities (e.g. better meeting the needs of diverse and demanding audiences, the opportunity to exchange experiences, knowledge, skills and abilities; maximizing the use of limited resources, synergy effect in the area of competence, experience and knowledge (creating innovative ideas), the possibility of overcoming one's own organizational shortcomings, reducing operating costs, including those related to uncertainty) (Padula & Dagnino, 2008; Raza-Ullah et al., 2014; Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016; Dorn et al., 2016; Chim-Miki & Batista-Canino, 2017; Gernsheimer et al., 2021).

It should be noted, however, that the stimuli identified as a result of the research extend the scope of the commercial sector stimulants identified in the literature. Due to the subject of the transaction with the environment – public and social goods, a specific mission of the entity or the nature of the purpose of action, which is a social goal (Kong, 2008) - the identified stimuli characteristic of non-commercial organizations include: the desire to increase social legitimacy, a sense of local identity or location similarities, social pressure, willingness to support, help and transfer knowledge to smaller, less prestigious entities or lobbying for changes in legal regulations concerning the cultural sector. Thus, it should be noted that the stimulators of cooperation identified for the first time refer to factors anchored in institutional theory, which was proposed as an appropriate framework for examining the impact of both the cultural and spatial context on the activities of organizations (Welter, 2011). It should be added that in the case of, for example, social legitimacy, social pressure or a sense of local identity or location similarities, we are dealing with institutional economic and sociological theories, which indicate that the individual behaviour of non-commercial organizations is structured by the rules and norms prevailing in the institutional environment. This means that institutional contexts can enable and constrain individual behaviour, while at the same time being dependent on it (Scott, 1995; Hodgson, 2006). It can therefore be concluded that those factors in the case of non-commercial organizations constitute an important source of incentives for cooperation, and therefore cooperation is determined by social and institutional norms of acceptability (Scott, 2010). It is worth emphasizing that among the identified stimuli there were also those indicated earlier by Mariani (2018), and concerning organizations from the cultural sector, i.e. initiating cooperation by the organizer (local authorities at various levels and state authorities). Mariani (2018) pointed to the influence of external stakeholders, such as policy makers, who can be considered as local authorities and organizers (entities financing) of cultural institutions. The conducted research in the field of initiated cooperation also indicates initiating cooperation by other cultural centres as part of cooperation on a specific project, combining the knowledge and resources of various units. Participation in such projects is important for cultural organizations, as it translates into the recognition of a given institution in the industry environment (Finkel et al., 2017). In addition, one of the tasks of contemporary non-commercial organizations is – as indicated in the literature – managing relationships with public and private partners in order to use the resources owned by organizations for the benefit of the community for which the non-profit organization operates (Bovaird & Löffler, 2015).

When it comes to (RQ2): *What are the barriers to establishing and developing cooperation in non-profit organizations based on the example of cultural institutions?* the analysis of the research material made it possible to identify 11 barriers to establishing and developing cooperation among non-commercial organizations (see Table 2). Some of these have so far been identified in the literature on the subject, mainly from the perspective of enterprises, i.e. opportunistic acquisition and use of knowledge, ideas and information developed by another entity (Morris et al., 2007; Crick, 2020; Czakon & Czernek-Marszałek, 2021), concealment of

knowledge or information held by an entity (Ritala & Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, 2013), lack of reciprocity in the exchange of resources or hindering access to resources (Walley, 2007; Hückstädt, 2022), lack of trust (Raza-Ullah et al., 2014; Crick et al., 2022), interpersonal conflicts (Raza-Ullah et al., 2014; Czakon & Czernek-Marszałek, 2021). It is also worth emphasizing that representatives of cultural institutions in their statements did not emphasize the tensions that may occur at the individual, organizational and inter-organizational level (Raza-Ullah et al., 2014), arising as a result of emotions in the paradoxical relationships of cooptation. On the other hand, they emphasized the importance of the transitivity of hostile relationships, resulting in treating the entity with which the direct relationship is formed as a competitor.

Among the newly identified barriers to cooptation typical of non-commercial organizations, in particular of cultural institutions, the following were found: local antagonisms, a lack of a sense of local identity (treating representatives of a different local identity as clear competitors) or a lack of similarity of location (an obstacle to the implementation of the mission of spreading the historical values of the region), reluctance to enter into cooptation due to the organizational and legal form (conflict between public and private entities) and short action horizon due to initiation of cooptation by the organizer financing the activities of the institution (local authorities at various levels and state authorities). These barriers, as in the case of stimulators, refer to sociological and institutional theories of cooptation, which have so far been rarely discussed in the cooptation literature (Dorn et al., 2016; Gernsheimer et al., 2021). Local antagonisms, local identity or similarity of location refer to an individual's knowledge of belonging to specific social groups, along with a certain emotional and value-holding meaning for him of belonging to this group, and thus to the concept of social identity (Turner, 1975; Hogg, 2016) embedded in sociological and anthropological theory (Cohen, 1986). This reveals completely new findings regarding the barriers to cooptation, also referring to psychological motivations leading the manager to approve or disavow existing group membership (Turner, 1996), which is also reflected in the mentioned reluctance to cooptation concluded with entities from the public or private sector. It can therefore be concluded that cognitive factors arising from the accentuation of intergroup differences in non-commercial organizations constitute one of the main sources of barriers to establishing cooptation. The research results revealed that among the newly identified barriers there was also a short horizon of action due to the initiation of cooperation by the organizer financing the activities of the institution (local authorities at various levels and state authorities). The indicated barrier relating to the short horizon of action has been described in the literature (Tidström, 2014), but as an effect of environmental uncertainty, and not as a result of local and state authorities forcing cooperative actions.

It should be emphasized that the dominant theoretical perspective revealed in the research material in the context of the emergence and development of cooptation by cultural institutions is the resource-based approach (Wernerfelt, 1984). The priority is the willingness to own and use a unique set of resources (tangible and intangible), offering recipients a proposal of higher value than other cultural institutions.

Additionally, when it comes to the specificity of the industry, the research revealed that as a result of the dynamic development of the cultural sector, and also the resulting changes in the cultural institutions themselves, such as the way of managing, creating and implementing action programmes, as well as due to limited financial resources and thus development, institutions are also forced to look for partnerships among entities with which they compete. For example, museums usually function in a specific environment, influencing that environment and creating numerous connections with it. The activities of cultural institutions concern not only direct visitors and users, but also broadly understood stakeholders, which include, among others, public authorities at various levels, the local community, tourists, tourism enterprises, scientists, local entrepreneurs, organizations associating history lovers, and the media. As this research shows, this environment creates stimulators (e.g., social pressure, local identity or lobbying for changes in the law) or barriers (e.g., transitivity of hostile relations, local antagonisms, top-down initiation) to establishing and developing cooperation with competing entities. When it comes to the level of dyads, the stimulants should be pointed out which relate, for example, to the previous experience of cooperation with a given partner, the similarity of actions and activities between competitors, or the prestige of cooperation with a given competitor. In turn, interpersonal conflicts, lack of trust, or the opportunistic behaviour of a competitor constitute barriers to cooptation. When considering the stimulators and barriers to cooptation at the individual level, the interlocutors emphasized, among others, the importance of individual emotions (jealousy, sympathy, etc.), resulting in, for example, reluctance to cooperate with a competing public or private entity, or the importance of acquiring knowledge and information (the importance of access to resources).

The newly identified stimulators and barriers to cooptation result from the specificity of the functioning of cultural institutions, which primarily take into account the local needs of the communities/recipients for whom they exist. The mentioned "multi-product" character of contemporary cultural entities (Del Chiappa et al., 2014) should be emphasized, as they offer a wide range of services related to education and spending free time, as well as those that are less visible to visitors but constitute an important, necessary aspect of the activity of such institutions (creating and storing collections, research and scientific activity or conservation work). The diversity of cultural institutions means that existing theories on the basis of management – including strategic

management – should be tested, modified or expanded, especially when it comes to well-recognized phenomena such as inter-organizational cooperation, competition or cooptation.

It should be emphasized that cooptation theory still has many dark spots in terms of the theoretical underpinnings of the entire concept. The present study attempts to bridge these theoretical gaps by presenting the stimulators and barriers to cooptation in non-commercial organizations.

5.1 Managerial Implications

The results presented in this study can be helpful for the managers and practitioners of non-commercial entities. Firstly, managers of non-profit organizations, in particular cultural institutions, should understand that cooptation, in addition to cooperation, may be necessary for development and survival, as well as being a real strategy for generating and appropriating value, but also passing it on to recipients. Secondly, the presented results of the research on the stimulators and barriers of cooptation can be seen as a justification for adopting a cooptation strategy – managers would know how to manage cooptation from the individual, dyad and inter-organizational perspective and how to develop cooptation and its results, paying more attention to e.g. the previous experience of cooperation with a given partner, the similarity of actions and activities between cooperating partners, and the development of social relationships. On the other hand, in order to achieve greater benefits from cooptation, they would pay more attention to the partner's opportunistic behaviour or avoid interpersonal conflicts. Thirdly, managers of non-commercial organizations are recommended to apply aspects of entrepreneurial behaviour such as: being creative, taking advantage of new opportunities and chances or providing value to recipients of social services and products. Managers would also treat cooptation as an opportunity coming from the environment to achieve additional benefits. Cooptation can help to achieve positive results, especially when the organization does not have enough resources. Cooperation with relevant rivals can increase market share, achieve a competitive advantage or create a better and more unique offer for recipients. Fourthly, managers' efforts can focus on building trust, thanks to which a smooth flow of knowledge between partners is possible. In addition, management may also design certain controls to address the conflicting interests of both parties involved. What is more, the identified drivers and barriers could be useful in the context of building or implementing an organization's strategy, dealing with the paradoxes resulting from cooptation, as well as for using the implications of cooptation to stimulate the development of non-profit organizations.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research

This research has some limitations. Firstly, the subjects of the research were cultural institutions, which have their own specificity, making the research closely related to a particular context. The stimulators and barriers to establishing and developing cooptation in other types of cultural institutions (e.g., theatres or art galleries) may be different, just as they may be different in various types of public and non-profit organizations. This conclusion also applies to the implementation of the research results in sectors other than the cultural sector. However, it should be noted that aspects related to inter-organizational issues, including cooptation relations, are usually presented as conditioned by the sectoral or national context (Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016; Stentoft et al., 2018). Secondly, a large number of the interviews were conducted during the global COVID-19 pandemic with the use of video communicators, which could have limited the understanding of the attitudes and behaviours of the respondents in their natural environment. This is important in qualitative research, and thus narrowed the research perspective due to the inability to experience the everyday life of the respondents. However, this does not change the fact that interviews conducted remotely sometimes made it possible to capture very subtle aspects resulting from the way the interlocutors communicated certain events, or to gather interpretive and contextual data during the conversations. Thirdly, the research is unrepresentative; some of the presented conclusions are only preliminary and it is necessary that these be confirmed or rejected based on future quantitative research.

Summing up the limitations, the current stock of knowledge and research findings, it is recommended to conduct further research on the stimulators and barriers to establishing and developing cooptation in other types of cultural institutions, as well as in other industries of the private and public sectors, as these have not to date been deeply explored (Meena et al. 2023). As a direction for future research, it is also worth considering in-depth analyses on the impact of cooptation stimulators and barriers on the achieved cooptation effects (positive and negative) and on the factors mitigating cooptation barriers, making it possible to expand the scope of cooptation between partners. In the context of the conducted qualitative research, it seems particularly valuable to conduct further research on the stimulators and barriers of cooptation in non-commercial entities with the use of quantitative analysis methods.

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