Value co-creation:
A Learning-centred framework

Terhi Villanova

Department of Marketing
Hanken School of Economics
Helsinki
2020
Abstract:
Value creation theories are experiencing a shift in focus. Discussion is moving away from dyadic relationship between the firm and the customer, and indicates that this complex topic should be researched more holistically. There is an emergent need to understand the roles played by different actors involved. As organizations are increasingly looking for new external value creation opportunities, understanding the dynamics between various private and public actors is essential.

This paper aims to expand the understanding of value co-creation and improve the understanding of activities that contribute toward value creation during the process. Also, the understanding of the interrelated relationship between the activities is enriched. In addition, the research will look at the value outcomes from the perspective of various actors and bring together the value creation process and the value outcomes. Forests, as environmental assets, can be regarded as creating various types of value. This research will present actors’ perceptions of value outcomes relating to their participation in the Forest Programme process, during which guidelines were established regarding the usage of city own forests in City X in Finland. Interestingly, majority of the value outcomes have a personal aspect embedded in them.

The empirical research was conducted using a deductive – inductive -hybrid approach, to build on existing theory, however allowing for exploratory findings. The data collection was executed using qualitative personal interviews and the respondents were the participants of the Forest Programme process. The results of the research confirm that two phases 1) interaction and 2) integration, take place during the value co-creation process. The results reveal that there are new activities that were previously not included in the value co-creation process, or that their role had not been considered significant. The results also shed light to the relationship between the value co-creation activities. Based on the empirical results of the research, a new theoretical framework for value co-creation is suggested: The Learning centred value co-creation.

The Learning centred value co-creation framework proposes that interaction between actors leads to the integration of resources, through learning. This framework contributes to the academic discussion by showing that value co-creation process includes also negatively toned dialogue, which leads to conflict. However, the research also shows that by solving the conflict through learning and empathy, the conflicts have a role in contributing toward value co-creation. The research shows that in occasions, conflict was also a necessary antecedent for compromise.

Facilitation enables successful interaction. This is highlighted in the results that show that conflicts often take place and facilitation by a neutral participant is essential. The results of this research further the holistic understanding of value co-creation process in combination with the value outcomes, that previously were not sufficiently understood together. The two streams of value creation literature are combined in this research, which concludes that even during a collaborative value co-creation process, the majority of the value outcomes achieved are personal.

Keywords:
Value, value creation, value co-creation, actor, interaction, conflict, facilitation, learning, integration, resources, resource matching, value outcome
CONTENTS

1 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 1
  1.1 Research Problem .......................................................................................................................... 2
  1.2 Research aim .................................................................................................................................. 4
  1.3 Contribution and Focus ...................................................................................................................... 4
  1.4 Delimitations .................................................................................................................................. 5

2 Value Creation ..................................................................................................................................... 6
  2.1 Defining value ................................................................................................................................. 6
    2.1.1 Consumer Value – Holbrook’s typology ...................................................................................... 7
    2.1.2 Value vs. values .......................................................................................................................... 10
  2.2 Value creation vs. value outcomes .................................................................................................... 10
  2.3 Actors creating value ....................................................................................................................... 11
  2.4 Actors in a network .......................................................................................................................... 13
  2.5 Value creation process ..................................................................................................................... 16
    2.5.1 Resources .................................................................................................................................. 16
    2.5.2 On Interaction ............................................................................................................................ 17
    2.5.3 On Integration .............................................................................................................................. 19
    2.5.4 Value Leveraging ........................................................................................................................ 20
    2.5.5 Summary of value co-creation process ..................................................................................... 23

3 Methodology .......................................................................................................................................... 25
  3.1 Research context: Value of forest - City X Forest Programme ....................................................... 25
  3.2 Research philosophy and approach to theory development ............................................................ 26
  3.3 Qualitative interviews .................................................................................................................... 28
  3.4 Data and Sampling .......................................................................................................................... 29
    3.4.1 Description of Documents ......................................................................................................... 29
    3.4.2 The Sampling of Interviews ....................................................................................................... 30
    3.4.3 Data Collection - Interviews ....................................................................................................... 32
  3.5 Analysis of Data ............................................................................................................................... 33
  3.6 Ethics of the study ............................................................................................................................ 36
  3.7 Quality of the research ..................................................................................................................... 36

4 Empirical Findings ................................................................................................................................. 39
  4.1 Learning centred model of value co-creation .................................................................................... 39
  4.2 Interaction ......................................................................................................................................... 41
    4.2.1 Co-ordination ............................................................................................................................... 41
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Interview Guide ................................................................. 80
Appendix 2 Example from document: Jyväskylän kaupungin metsät ........82
Appendix 3 Example from document: Luonnon monimuotoisuuden
avainkysymykset ........................................................................ 83
Appendix 4 Examples from document: Virkistys, maisema ja
kulttuuriympäristö metsäisillä alueilla ....................................... 84
Appendix 5 Description of Forest Programme Process ......................... 85
Appendix 6 Example of coding during analysis .................................. 86

TABLES

Table 1 Categories of economic values attributed to environmental assets
(based on Pearce and Moran, 1994, p.12) ........................................... 2
Table 2 Value creation literature summary ......................................... 3
Table 3 The Typology of Consumer Value, based on Holbrook (1999 p. 12) ...... 9
Table 4 Definitions on key terms and concepts .................................. 11
Table 5 Documents used for research .............................................. 29
Table 6 Details on verbal interview recordings .................................. 32
Table 7 Example interview questions ............................................... 33
Table 8 Five roles of facilitation ....................................................... 43
Table 9 Dimensions of Facilitation .................................................. 46
Table 10 Types of Resources ............................................................ 47
Table 11 Summary of types of learning occurred ............................... 49
Table 12 Example quotes on learning .............................................. 49
Table 13  Dimension of participation .................................................. 51
Table 14  Examples of the participation dimension .............................. 52
Table 15  Dimensions of type of dialog ............................................. 53
Table 16  Forms/functions of dialog .................................................. 54
Table 17  Types of compromises ....................................................... 56
Table 18  Categories of value outcomes ........................................... 60
Table 19  Actors’ approach to forest usage ......................................... 64
Table 20  Learning matrix ............................................................... 66

FIGURES

Figure 1   Value co-creation through A2A interaction and resource integration in a many-to-many network setting, modified from Gummesson and Mele (2010 p.190)   20
Figure 2   Value leveraging (modified from Reypens et al. 2016 p.45) .......... 21
Figure 3   Value co-creation activities, adopted and combined from Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) and Gummesson and Mele (2010) ......................... 24
Figure 4   An example of the analysis conducted - Learning .................. 35
Figure 5   Learning centred value co-creation .................................... 40
Figure 6   Compromise scale ........................................................... 57
Figure 7   The similarity and dissimilarity of resources ......................... 58
Figure 8   Value outcome categories ................................................ 61
Figure 9   Interaction phase and activities ......................................... 66
Figure 10  Dialog – conflict – learning –loop ..................................... 67
Figure 11  Integration and activities .................................................. 68
Figure 12  Learning centred value co-creation -framework .................... 70
Figure 13  Value outcome relationships ............................................. 71
1 INTRODUCTION

The concepts of value and value creation are receiving attention and interest in the
academic discussions in different fields, especially in the fields of management and
marketing (e.g. Khalifa, 2004; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016). Regardless of the
great attention to the value discussion, or maybe for that very reason, there exists very
little consensus on how to define value (Lepak, Smith and Taylor 2007; Sánchez-
Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). In the words of Gummesson and Mele (2010,
p.183) “value is a complex phenomenon of life”, and therefore makes an interesting
research topic for a thesis.

On the other hand, there is consensus regarding the idea, that the marketing value
theories are experiencing a shift in focus, making it a very motivating and current topic
for this thesis. (Lusch, Vargo, Wessels, 2008; Gummerus 2013; Reypens, Lievens and
Blazevic 2016). However complicated the topic of value may be, there is an increased
indication that this complex topic should be researched more holistically. It is no longer
feasible to research the dyadic relationship between customer and a firm (Polese, Mele,
Gummesson, 2017; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic 2016), but the topic of value must
have “a more holistic appreciation of the role played by all actors involved (from
suppliers to employees, and society at large) in value creation” (Pera, Occhiocupo,
Clarke, 2016 p.4034). As the organisations are increasingly looking outside their own
walls for new opportunities, and also due to the rising concern of societal issues, ability
to collaborate with external actors becomes more important (Pera, Occhiocupo, Clarke,
2016; Pinho et al, 2014; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic 2016). The holistic understanding
of the dynamics between various actors, private sector, public sector and citizens, is the
focus of this thesis.

Forests, as environmental assets, can be regarded as creating various types of value. The
value can be monetary or non-monetary, and economic value can also be attributed to
the forest’s non-monetary usage. A widely used categorization of values attributed to
environmental assets is one provided by Pearce and Moran (1994) presenting that value
can be use value (direct or indirect), total economic value (future direct and non-direct
value), or non-use value (bequest or existence value). This categorisation is presented in
the table below.
Table 1 Categories of economic values attributed to environmental assets (based on Pearce and Moran, 1994, p12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use Values</th>
<th>Total economic value</th>
<th>Non-use values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Use</td>
<td>Indirect Use</td>
<td>Option Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumable outputs:</td>
<td>Functional benefits:</td>
<td>Future direct &amp; indirect values:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g. Food, biomass, recreation</td>
<td>E.g. Flood control, Storm protection</td>
<td>E.g. biodiversity, conserved habitats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The discussion has previously emphasized the controversy of monetary production value of timber and pulp in contrast to the environmental protection value of forests (e.g. Edwards et al. 2008). However, there is an increased awareness of the non-monetary, social and cultural values associated with the forest usage, such as improving quality of life, recreational usage and promoting sustainable lifestyle (ibid).

1.1 Research Problem

The literature on value creation has traditionally looked at dyadic relationships between a focal value creating company and a customer (e.g. Grönroos, 2008, Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, 2008, Gummerus, 2013). There are some more recent ideas that suggest the customer being a value creator on their own, without the firm’s input (e.g. Heinonen, Strandvik, Voima, 2013) However, the discussion overall is heavily leaning on the traditional actors: firm and customer.

Currently, the academic discussion is scarce on research that would approach the value creation from a multi-actor perspective, including other actors beyond the firm and the customer. There are only few authors who have recently brought forward the idea of approaching value creation from a multi-actor network point of view (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016; Pera Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016). However, neither have they conducted research on networks that would include all private, governmental and non-
profit organizations. The current front in value creation, from the value creating actor perspective, is presented in the below table.

**Table 2 Value creation literature summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Focal company (and Customer)</th>
<th>Company and Customer together</th>
<th>Only customer</th>
<th>Other actors in network</th>
<th>Network of private, governmental and non-profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grönroos, 2008</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lusch et al. 2008,</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gummerus, 2013</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalifa, 2004</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heinonen, Strandvik, Voima, 2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pera Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To understand value creation in a multi-stakeholder environment is becoming increasingly important due to the nature of how we organize ourselves (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016). In the fast-moving society of today, organizations engage in collaboration in order to increase their resources. The increased collaboration is part of a larger trend toward increased outsourcing, instead of internal specialisation. This trend is not only present in the private sector, but also in public and non-profit sector (Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, 2008). In the global search for sustainability, a need has risen to include in the value creation discussion, also the view of different type of actors, such as non-profit organizations (Pera, Occhiocupo, Clarke, 2016). The City X Forest Programme case is an interesting possibility to research collaborative process between public, private and non-profit sector organisations.

This research builds on value creation theories, looking at how value is co-created in a multi-actor network, where value is created for diverse actors. Reypens, Lievens and
Blazevic, (2016) investigated an innovation network, and the processes that take place during value creation and value capture. They suggest that further research could take a look at the different aspects of their findings, and that the underlying details of value co-creation could be researched more specifically. This thesis, and the research conducted, will build on the research of Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, (2016) and bring new insight regarding the value co-creation activities in a network setting, where multiple stakeholders are present in a facilitated process.

1.2 Research aim

This paper aims to expand the understanding of value creation process and identify activities, that contribute toward value creation during the process. The research will also look at the value capture from the perspective of each actor and bring together the value creation process and the value outcome. The research aims to answer the following questions:

Research questions

**Value co-creation process and activities**

RQ1: What are the activities that contribute toward value co-creation process in a multi-actor network?

RQ1b: How the activities promote value creation?

**Value outcomes**

RQ2: What kind of value is created (value outcome) during the process?

RQ2b: How do the individual actors perceive the value captured?

1.3 Contribution and Focus

The focus of the research is in understanding the complex setting of a multi-actor value creation process and the activities that take place within that setting. Pera, Occhiocupo, Clarke, (2016 p.4033) state that “little research has systematically addressed value co-creation from a multi-stakeholder perspective”. Also, Wieland et al. (2012) suggest that the interconnectedness and collaborative nature of value creation is not understood to the full extent. The purpose of this research is to generate further understanding on the topic, and specifically on the value co-creation as a process between multiple actors. The
collaboration between different organizations ranging from public to private and including also non-profit organizations, is the key focus of this thesis.

This research will analyse, how value is created during the value co-creation process. Previous literature has stressed the need to understand “the dynamics of value creation process” (Gummesson and Mele, 2010 p. 182) and that there should be more focus on “identifying and understanding what kind of value is co-created for whom, using what resources, and through what mechanism” (Saarijärvi, Kannan and Kuusela, 2013 p. 6). The aim is to further the understanding of the activities that form the value co-creation process. This is the guiding motivational insight for the research conducted in this thesis.

The researcher’s understanding is that his type of explorative research has not been conducted previously, where multi-actor network of participants with such varying backgrounds (public body, private organization, non-profit organization, and citizens) have been researched through a case study of a facilitated process regarding territorial usage (E.g. Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic 2016; Pera, Occhiocupo, Clarke, 2016). Research has also suggested that there is a need to understand the difference between the value creation process and the value outcomes, and in addition, there is specifically a need to look at value more holistically to understand how these two are combined (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016; Lepak, Smith and Taylor, 2007). This research will add to the current research front by combining the value creation process with the value outcomes in a multi-actor setting.

1.4 Delimitations

There are some delimitations to this study that are necessary to state. The research at hand is a master's thesis and therefore limited in scope. Due to the time and scope limitations of the research, the focus of this thesis will be in value creation as processes. The thesis will concentrate on furthering the understanding of the activities relating to value co-creation process in combination with value outcomes. In-depth analysis of different value categories or typologies is outside the scope of this research.

Another delimitation of the research is that the investigation will focus on a single case, the City X Forest Programme, which is a unique process and it may be that the dynamics are different in other settings. By examining a specific case, the author aims to provide exploratory insight to value creation processes, through the perceptions of individual participants.
2 VALUE CREATION

In this chapter, theoretical views on value are presented in order to provide an understanding of the literature surrounding the concept of value creation. The theory will also look into understanding how value is defined. The theoretical framework for this thesis will build on the theories of value, value co-creation and value outcomes. The central concepts within this framework are value creation, value co-creation, actors creating value, interaction, resource integration, value capture, value outcomes, and value slippage (Eg. Gummesson and Mele, 2010; Lepak, Smith and Taylor, 2007; Mele, 2011; Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016).

Value and value creation are central to marketing theory. Marketing processes are concerned with the facilitation of processes that take place between actors, and aim to create value (Holbrook, 1999). In this paper, it is suggested that value can be examined from the value creation perspective, and from the value outcome perspective (E.g. Gummerus, 2013). Value can be approached by looking at the value creation process itself, or from the perspective that inspects the value outcomes. The primary research focus of this paper is on analysing the value creation and how value comes to be, however also looking into the value outcomes.

This paper will seek to gain deeper understanding of the activities that contribute toward value co-creation (Gummesson and Mele, 2010; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016), and the outcomes resulting from the process. However, it is important to first define what is considered when discussing value. This paper suggests that is not possible to define value only by looking at how value comes to be, but one must also look at value holistically, and how it has been approached in the previous literature. It is also useful to make a brief distinction between value and values, to clarify the topic discussed in this paper.

2.1 Defining value

Value has gained importance in marketing and management literature previously, and it has been discussed widely (E.g. Lusch, Vargo, Wessels, 2008; Gummerus 2013; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016). Perceived value has been raised as an important topic by both academia and businesses (e.g. Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). However, or may be due to the extensive interest, the attempts to define value have been
many and diverse, and it has been approached from various perspectives (e.g. Zeithaml, 1988; Gummerrus, 2013; Khalifa, 2004; Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007).

In her exploratory research, Zeithaml (1988) looked into the price, quality and value of a product among consumers. She found that value was defined in different ways among consumers in relation to the other aspects researched, named price and quality. However, she concluded that all those definitions could be combined to state that “perceived value is the consumer’s overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given” (Zeithaml 1988, p.14). Zeithaml further elaborates that what is considered as “received” or “given” vary between individuals, and that “given” does not only refer to money but can also be other resources such as e.g. time. This paper agrees that Zeithaml (1988) gives a clear definition for value and that this definition can be used to initiate the value theory discussion that will follow in the next sections.

As value can also relate to other aspects than physical products, it is useful to expand on the definition given by Zeithaml (1988). The above-mentioned differences between individuals’ definitions on value imply that value is subjective. Also, Holbrook (1991) discusses value as an interactive and relativistic concept. Gummerrus (2013), provides a review of value literature and she concludes similarly that the value creation process includes interactive aspects and that value is relative to the actor evaluating the value outcomes. When looking deeper these views are very similar to Zeithaml’s (1988) definition that speaks about giving and receiving, a basic form of interaction. Building on this discussion, it is concluded that in this paper, value is approached as experiential, subjective and being a result of interaction or exchange.

2.1.1 Consumer Value – Holbrook’s typology

As previously discussed, value is seen as a subjective concept. It is useful to expand the discussion on value through the views of perceived value. One of the most influential authors on perceived value has been Holbrook (e.g. Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo 2007), who presents a consumer value typology (Holbrook, 1999).

“One can understand a given type of value only by considering its relationship to other types of value” (Holbrook, 1999 p.4). This echoes the words of Zeithaml (1988) discussed earlier in this paper, that found out that the definitions of value were varying in relations
to the other aspects researched, named price and quality. Again, we can notice that previous theory supports value being *relative and personal*.

Holbrook (1999, p 5) defines consumer value as “an interactive relativistic preference experience”. He further elaborates that by interaction he means that there is an object that has some value embedded in it, but this value is only relevant once experienced and appreciated by a subject (actor). By relativistic, Holbrook (1999 p.6) means that the value is comparative as well as tied to a person and tied to a specific situation or context. He also emphasizes that value as a concept is preferential, and the value related theories and terms convey the idea of personal preference. Finally, Holbrook (1999) concludes that the value does not reside in a product or a brand, but rather in the consumption experience. Therefore, he claims, all products provide services, and this leads all marketing fundamentally being services marketing. This line of thought has been developed further by Grönroos (2008) and after that by for example, Heinonen, Strandvik and Voima (2013).

Holbrook (1999) proposes a framework, Typology of Consumer Value, to classify the types of value that can occur in the consumption experience. He uses three key dimensions to structure his framework: 1) Extrinsic vs. intrinsic value 2) Self-oriented vs. other-oriented value and 3) Active vs. reactive value.

According to Holbrook (1999) extrinsic value can be seen as value, which relates to the functional value of a product or service. The value comes, for example, from ability to do something with an object or gain value from using a service. In contrast the intrinsic value is value embedded in the consumption experience itself, such as for example listening to music. One could argue that based on this description, the intrinsic value is even more personal and based on personal appreciation, as it does not have an externally visibly value that could be easier to evaluate also by another person.

Holbrook (1999) also suggests another dimension: self-oriented versus other-oriented value. The distinction is in whether the value is appreciated for one’s own sake or for others. It is not merely regarding who will have some sort of benefit from the consumption, but also who is supposed to be affected by it. Holbrook states that for example being environmentally conscious is regarded as having other-oriented value as well as purchasing something for yourself in order to impress others. Regardless of the seemingly clear distinction between self- and other-oriented value, one can argue that this is indeed the most ambiguous of Holbrook’s dimensions, as can one really separate
oneself from others? Looking at the previously given examples, if one wants to do good for the environment, does not that lead indirectly to also doing good for oneself? Or if the aim is to impress neighbours, is not the ultimate goal to gain appreciation and status for oneself through the neighbours’ reactions? Nonetheless of the before mentioned ambiguity in the definition, this paper agrees that the dimension suggested by Holbrook (1991) aid in understanding the multifaceted qualities of value as a concept.

The third dimension stated by Holbrook (1999) is the active versus reactive value. Active value, he describes, is something that involves the subject to do something to or with the object. Inversely, reactive value is when something is done to or with the consumer by an object. This dimension emphasizes the role of the consumer as an active actor or a more passive recipient. By placing the three dimensions in a table Holbrook (1999 p. 12) produces an eight-cell table that shows the different variations and forms that consumer value can take place.

Table 3 The Typology of Consumer Value, based on Holbrook (1999 p. 12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extrinsic</th>
<th>Intrinsic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-oriented</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>EFFICIENCY</td>
<td>PLAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>EXCELLENCE</td>
<td>AESTHETICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other-oriented</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>STATUS</td>
<td>ETHICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>ESTEEM</td>
<td>SPIRITUALITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo (2007 p.441) conclude that Holbrook’s typology “captures all of the economic, social, hedonic, and altruistic components of perceived value, (and) is the most comprehensive approach to the value construct, since it defines more sources of value than other studies”. This paper agrees on the ideas put forward by Holbrook (1999) and thereafter enforced by many (E.g. Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007; Gummerrus, 2013) and agrees that value as a complex construct including aspects of economic, social and altruistic components.
2.1.2 Value vs. values

In understanding value and value creation, it is important to separate this discussion from the discussion regarding values (plural). Holbrook (1999) explains that the preferential aspect of the value concept refers to a personal assessment of value and is not to be confused with values (plural). Value, Holbrook (1999 p. 8) describes as “an outcome of evaluative judgement” whereas values, he suggests, are seen as referring to norms and standards that we use to make those judgements. The above reasoning demonstrates that value indeed is something different from values. However, there seems to be a connection between values and value. It is an interesting question, whether values can influence the person’s perceived value.

2.2 Value creation vs. value outcomes

Gummerus (2013) presents a value theory categorization dividing the theories to those concerned with value creation, and to those concentrating on the value outcome determination. In this section, we will concentrate on reviewing the theories around value creation, and the settings, in which value creation takes place. This will support the research aim of understanding the value co-creation process in a multi-actor setting.

As also the concept of value, the theories on value creation are multiple and there is little consensus on what exactly is meant by value creation (Lepak, Smith and Taylor, 2007). Lusch, Vargo and Wessels (2008 p.8) define that value creation takes place “when a potential resource is turned into a specific benefit”. Gummerus (2013 p.19) elaborates that the value creation involves “the parties, activities, and resources”. Parties can be having the same meaning as the term “actors” used by several authors (E.g. Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016; Gummesson and Mele, 2010).

This paper agrees with Lusch, Vargo and Wessels (2008) and uses the above provided definition as a basis for our discussion regarding value creation. Further, in this paper the subject in value creation is referred as “an actor”. It is of interest to this paper to understand the settings in which value creation takes place, and all three aspects of those settings: the actors involved, the activities undertaken, and the use of resources (E.g. Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke. 2016; Gummesson and Mele, 2010; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic. 2016). This research will also look at the value capture and therefore make a connection between the process and the outcome.
Most authors support the view that actors contribute resources to value creation and that different, interactive activities take place during the process (E.g. Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke 2016, Gummesson and Mele, 2010; Reypens et al. 2016). The key theoretical concepts regarding this paper are present in the table below:

**Table 4 Definitions on key terms and concepts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>“an interactive relativistic preference experience” Holbrook (1999, p.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value creation</td>
<td>“when a potential resource is turned into a specific benefit” Lusch et al. (2008, p.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value co-creation</td>
<td>“Value co-creation occurs by integrating actor resources in accordance with their expectations, needs and capabilities” Gummesson and Mele, 2010 p. 192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>(in the context of value creation) “is a driver of co-creation” Gummesson and Mele, 2010 p. 191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“through A2A interaction a dialog is set up, knowledge and other resources are transferred, and learning takes place” Gummesson and Mele, 2010 p. 191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource integration</td>
<td>”A2A interaction through which two or several actors link their resources for mutual benefit” (Gummesson and Mele, 2010 p.195)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.3 Actors creating value

In this section, the concept and role of actors in value creation is reviewed. As presented previously, by actors this paper refers those subjects who engage in value creation. Actors can be individuals, firms or other institutions. This theoretical section of the paper treats all actors uniformly, and at this point the paper does not separate between the different types of actors, and whether this affects their role in value co-creation or not.
Product Dominant –logic

Traditionally, the companies were seen as the value creators, who harnessed their resources in order to create value for customers. The value was regarded to be value in-exchange, taking place when the goods produced by the company were purchased by the customers (e.g. Holbrook, 1999, Grönroos 2008). The value of the goods was considered in monetary and economic terms. The increase in value was seen as a consequence of increased and more efficient production. As value was considered residing in the production and products, this theoretical approach is referred to as the Product-Dominant (PD) -logic. (Gummerus, 2013; Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, 2008) In the PD-logic, value creation is seen as a dyadic, and it suggests a linear relationship between the firm and the customer. Customers are considered as being at the receiving end of value and not having an active part in the value creation process (e.g. Grönroos, 2008).

Service Dominant –logic

Recently, the Service-Dominant -logic (SD-logic) approach presents that value is not something that the firm creates on its own, but that value is co-created between the company and the customer (e.g. Grönroos, 2008; Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, 2008, Gummerus, 2013). However, the co-creation is based on the idea, that it is the firm that provides the resources, and that the value is created when the customer uses a product or service and experiences, that the product is creating value for them. The value creation process is still seen as linear, taking place between the firm and the customer. The resources are seen as provided by the firm, or by firm and customer, keeping the firm still at the focal point of the value creation.

Service Logic

In the past years, the discussion has moved toward the service logic approach suggesting that the value creation is a more complex process orchestrated by the customer, and customer may also be the only creator of value. (E.g. Grönroos, 2008; Grönroos, 2015; Heinonen, Strandvik, Voima, 2013). Grönroos (2008 p.305) observes that it is not value that is exchanged between a company and a customer, but merely resources “aiming at facilitating value-in-use”. However, the ideas put forward by Grönroos are still focused on the linear relationship between company and customer.

As presented above, the value creation can be seen as conducted by the firm, firm and customer together, or by customers themselves (E.g. Grönroos, 2008; Grönroos, 2015;
In the recent years, value creation theory has moved from the linear and dyadic, firm to customer relationships, to observing the value created in settings that involve multiple participants (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016; Gummesson and Mele, 2010, Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016). Lusch et al. 2008 (p.19) suggest that “in service-dominant logic, the supply chain is reconceptualized as a network of service systems”. This thesis will build on the ideas put forward by the SD –logic theories, however adding to those ideas with findings from research conducted in multi-actor networks, without a single leading organisation or firm that is mostly included in the SD –logic theories (e.g. Grönroos, 2008).

Some of the recent literature (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016; Gummesson and Mele, 2010; Heinonen, Strandvik, Voima, 2013) presents that all actors may contribute to the value co-creation by bringing their own resources to the process. Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke (2016) also suggest that there may not be one specific focal actor, but the value creation is a complex network setting of actors with different roles and ability to influence the process. The following sections will also show that the discussion around value creation is moving towards network-thinking, and away from the idea of linear relationship.

2.4  Actors in a network

“Value creation has become a network phenomenon” (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016 p. 46). The recent literature suggests that value creation should be looked at holistically in a network setting (Pinho et al, 2014; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016; Pera Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016, Vargo and Lusch, 2017). This paper has presented previously, that value creation is enabled through interaction between actors. The current literature suggests that the actors are many, and they can form also complex connection between one another (ibid). Pinho et al. (2014) also propose that networks evolve and change over time, which makes the understanding of value co-creation dynamics even more important.

Gummerus (2013 p.23) has not fully adopted the network view on value creation and argues that “value networks (in turn) refer to offering a networking service to customers and thereby enabling interlinkages between customers”, however she believes that the customers are still seen as having a secondary role and company being the one leading value creation. An alternative view is provided by Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) who conducted a qualitative study on the value leveraging process in a network setting.
The context of their research was an international project, The European Medical Information Framework (EMIF), by the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI). The project had 57 public and private partners, with over 300 participating individuals from 14 European countries. Research itself consisted of 29 interviews. Given the nature of the project, Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) argue that in their research they looked at collaboration that took place in a network setting whereby there was no single focal firm, but actors had equal opportunities as contributors. However, this does not mean that they all act similarly. Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) believe that the actors are uniquely positioned in a network, depending on the individual value outcomes that they pursue. They further describe that in a multi-stakeholder setting, without a single leading firm, all stakeholders seek to find balance, regardless of their unique characteristics and aims.

Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) base their value co-creation research partly on stakeholder theory, therefore emphasising reaching the co-creation beyond the traditional company-customer relationship, to involve a wider group of stakeholders. As the research conducted for this thesis deals with a complex co-creation process, between various actors from public, private and non-profit sector, the theoretical ideas presented by Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) are of particular interest for this thesis.

**Individual actors**

Gummesson and Mele (2010) stress the importance of individual actors stating that it is the involvement and commitment of the actors to interact with each other that enables value co-creation. They also suggest that interaction allows actors to participate in the value creating processes of other parties. However, one may argue whether this then would expand the value co-creation process “of others” so that it becomes the value creation of the actor referred here. As the value creation process is viewed more holistically, it is expected to see new challenges in defining where one value creation process ends and another one begins.

Pera Occhiocupo and Clarke (2016) present a view, in which all actors contribute with their resources to the network. It is worthwhile to examine also how value is created in a network setting, not only on a network level, but also for and by, the individual actors. The characteristics and motivations of individual actors influence the value creation
process, and differences among the actors have an influence on their roles in the process. (Pera Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016). Pera Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016 interestingly point out that stakeholder-actors (i.e. organizations rather than individual consumers) are strategically task-oriented, which facilitates co-creation even in the situation where shared motives are lacking. Also, Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) noticed that there were differences between the public and private actors. Their results showed that “private partners focused on delivering the end result as efficiently as possible.. whereas public partners were more focused on the research process...” (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016, p. 45). This could be interpreted so that the individuals who present those organizations are not acting as individuals, but only presenting the view of their organization and act accordingly. This is an interesting idea and would benefit from further researcher regarding the individual roles of the actors, and whether it is possibly to truly present an organization, and not oneself as an individual.

Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke (2016 p.4036) found out that “reputation enhancement, experimentation, and relationship motives, are the most salient and recurrent triggers to co-create”. They also argue that these motives represent the ground for resource integration (ie. value co-creation process) in a setting where stakeholders have “unique identities, conflicting values and agendas, and differing objectives” (Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke 2016 p.4039). The ideas put forward by Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke (2016) are increasingly valid in the current times, where the society is facing difficult questions regarding sustainability. In the midst of events such as ecological crisis and global pandemic, it is crucial that organizations can find a common ground, even with having conflicting agendas and goals.

**Actors as part of network and society**

Recently, Vargo and Lusch (2017) provide a somewhat consolidated view bringing together the different thoughts on the actors’ roles, and they suggest the dyadic relationships between actors exist, but that they are embedded in larger networks. Vargo and Lusch (2017) suggest that the value creation research is moving to a perspective, which addresses the value creation on a more macro, level, or “zoomed out”. Vargo and Lusch (2017 p.49) state that “the network has a purpose, not in the sense of collective intent but rather in the sense of individual survival/wellbeing, as a partial function of collective wellbeing”. Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) similarly suggest that there
are interdependences between the network-level and actor-level processes that are necessary for the value leverage to happen. They also argue that the balance of those interdependencies is crucial for the value creation to take place successfully.

Vargo and Lusch (2017) believe that going forward, institutions will have a significant facilitating role in network eco-system co-creation. In their view, the inclusion of institutions will create new opportunities for the theoretical approach to research holistically the value creation on a societal level.

2.5 Value creation process

In order to answer the research question: “What are the activities that contribute toward value co-creation process in a multi-actor network?”, it is vital to first understand the theoretical views regarding the dynamics and activities within the value co-creation process. The literature on value co-creation presents views on co-creation being a process that build on several activities or practices that take place during the process (e.g. Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016, Gummesson and Mele 2010). Pera et al. 2016 describes value being “encapsulated in practices”. In this thesis both “activities” and “practices” are treated as synonyms and referring to activities that are embedded in the value creation process.

2.5.1 Resources

As presented earlier, the resources are one of the main concepts involved in value co-creation. The theory of value co-creation is based on bringing together resources that are then for example modified or matched through a set of activities, by actors (E.g. Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, 2008; Gummesson and Mele 2010; Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016). Pinho et al. (2014) believe that value creation happens when resources are used. When discussing resources, the concept of resourcing can be seen as a contrast to traditional “producing”, e.g. how the combination of resources can be viewed as a similar activity as the more traditional view on producing goods (Gummesson and Mele, 2010). Gummesson and Mele (2010) take a holistic look on resourcing and further state that resourcing covers the practices of resource creation, resource integration and resistance removal.

Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke (2016) present that resources reside in individual actors, but only through engaging in value co-creation processes, the resources are transformed into value. Similarly, Gummesson and Mele 2(010 p.194) state that potential of an actor
for value creation is not only the result of his resources, but from the “capability to match, to position itself in a network and to contribute to its success and evolution”. Also, Gummesson and Mele, (2010) suggest that the resources of each actor can also vary in quality and quantity. Therefore, it can be argued that the characteristics of resources are always individual and cannot be compared with one another. From the views presented by Gummesson and Mele (2010) and Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke (2016) it is evident that interaction and the ability of actors to interact and match their unique capabilities is at the core of value creation.

Lusch, Vargo and Wessels (2008 p.7) further explains that resourcing is at the core of value creation, and it leads to collaborative value co-creation that involves all parties in the value creation network, not only the provider and beneficiary. Based on this discussion of resourcing we approach resourcing as an activity being at the core of a complex value creation process, involving several actors, possibly the whole network. In the following section we will look at the activities on value co-creation in more detail

2.5.2 On Interaction

Integration is suggested to be the initiator of value co-creation (Gummesson and Mele, 2010). They present a value co-creation framework that builds on the S-D-logic and the work of Vargo (2008). Vargo (2008) presents a network-to-network facing model in which actors bring their own resources to the value creation space and perform as resource integrators. Gummesson and Mele (2010 p.191) argue that interaction is “a driver of co-creation” and needs to take place before integration happens. Also, Grönroos and Voima (2013 p.133) describe interaction as “the function of co-creation”.

Following Vargo (2008), Gummesson and Mele (2010) look at value creation in the context of interaction and resource integration. Gummesson and Mele (2010 p.181) state that interaction is an essential antecedent to resource integration. The interaction that takes place between actors, allows further activities to take place. Interaction permits people to “transfer their subjective meanings into artefacts and give meaning to reality” (Gummesson and Mele, 2010 p.191). This expresses how individual resources can become common resources and allow the actors to enter the value creation process with others (ibid). This is crucial to understand when researching the value creation dynamics between actors. According to Gummesson and Mele (2010), interaction can happen through dialog, resource transfer and learning.
Dialog

Dialog is a form of interaction that can take place in a value co-creation process (Vargo, 2008; Gummesson and Mele, 2010). The purpose of dialog in value creation is to make one’s resources known and available (Gummesson and Mele, 2010). Dialog can be seen as social interaction that builds a basis for the value creation processes.

Dialog aims at creating constructive interaction and a network level vision. Dialog can also act as a means of overcoming personal bias and facilitate integration through change in personal position (Gummesson and Mele, 2010). Also (Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, 2008 p.9) refers to similar bias problems regarding value creation, by discussing “resistance” which according to him can be for example “cultural resistance” due to differences between actors. The importance of overcoming one’s position is accentuated in value networks consisting of actors with varying interests, such as collaboration between governmental, private and non-profit sector.

Resource transfer

Interaction also enables resource transfer and leads the actors in a network to share their resources and allows access to different types of resources (Gummesson and Mele, 2020). Resource transfer and sharing of resources “shapes social capital which becomes a source for value creation and competitive advantage” (Gummesson and Mele, p. 192). This explanation by Gummesson and Mele (2010) is at the core of value co-creation and emphasizes the collaborative nature that creates added value, and competitive advantage, through the combination of individual resources. This idea is aligned with the earlier presented view that the individual actors may have resources within them, but that they are only truly fulfilled when combined with others (Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016).

Learning

Learning is also one of the forms of interaction that takes place during the value co-creation process (Gummesson and Mele, 2010). When resources are brought together
synergies take place and this in turn enables new knowledge to emerge (Gumesson and Mele, 2010; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016). This new knowledge contributes toward forming a cyclical learning and value co-creation process (ibid.) that Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) refers as value leveraging, which will be discussed in more detail further in this paper.

2.5.3 On Integration

To build on the idea of resourcing, it can be seen that at the core of value co-creation is the idea of combining or integrating resources (e.g. Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, 2008; Gumesson and Mele, 2010). Resource integration can be defined as “actor-to-actor (A2A) interaction through which the actors link their resources for mutual benefit” Gumesson and Mele (2010 p.181). At the integration phase, the actors process their resources through complementarity, redundancy or mixing, in order to match their resources with those of other actors (Gumesson and Mele, 2010). Similarly, Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, (2008), argue that resources have no intrinsic value, and that they only come to existence once they are integrated with other resources. As discussed previously, Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke (2016) similarly argue that resources may reside in actors, but only really come to existence through the integration on a network level. All the explanations above highlight the important role of integration as realising value through co-creation.

Complementarity

Complementarity is one of the forms of resource integration. Complementarity refers to the resources complementing or supplementing each other. Through complementarity the resources can create synergies and form added value. (Gumesson and Mele, 2010)

Redundancy

However, not always are the resources complementary to each other and redundancy can occur. In order to create value, it is useful to look at the redundancies and aim to exploit them. By bringing the similar resources, from different actors, together it is possible to form a stronger and more developed common resource. (Gumesson and Mele, 2010)
Mixing

Mixing in the context of resource integration refers to the practice or using both, complementarity and redundancy, in order to integrate resources efficiently. (Gummesson and Mele, 2010)

The process of value co-creation based on interaction and integration is presented below (figure 2, Value co-creation through A2A interaction and resource integration in a many-to-many network setting, Gummesson and Mele, 2010). The figure below shows a linear framework beginning with interaction, followed by integration and enabled by matching; a process that allows value co-creation to take place. Gummesson and Mele (2010 p. 193) believe that resources matching is the key to value co-creation and can be seen as “the fit between or the consonance of resources, activities and processes”. By this they refer to the idea that all forms of interaction and resource integration strive for better match between the actors and resources.

![Figure 1: Value co-creation through A2A interaction and resource integration in a many-to-many network setting](image)

**Figure 1** Value co-creation through A2A interaction and resource integration in a many-to-many network setting, modified from Gummesson and Mele (2010 p.190)

### 2.5.4 Value Leveraging

Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016 p.41) approach value co-creation as part of a process that they call “value leveraging”, which they describe as “the overarching process of both value co-creation (network level) and value capture (stakeholder level)”. They further explain that value leveraging consists of resources, co-creation, outcomes and capture. Resources have been discussed earlier on this paper and Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) also see them as located within individual actors, but then becoming valuable ones brought to the network level process of value co-creation. Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016, p.44) further specify that resources identified by actors in their research were: expertise, experience, knowledge, tools, infrastructure, and relationships.
The primary interest for this thesis is on co-creation, which is the network level process identified by Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) and the following paragraphs will concentrate on understanding co-creation and the activities that are embedded.

Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) confirm that their understanding of the co-creation is based on the ideas of SD -logic (e.g. Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, 2008), whereby co-creation is a result of resource integration. However, they present that their research setting is a complex and dynamic setting, where value is created for multiple stakeholders, requiring for more holistic approach that SD -logic has provided previously. The qualitative research on the value leveraging process by Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016), is of particular interest to this thesis, as it is an analysis of a complex and dynamic setting, including heterogeneous stakeholders with variety of interests.

Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016 p. 45) define co-creation as a network level process during which resources are recombined through coordination, consultation, and compromise. They further argue that the co-creation, that takes place on a network level, and the value capture, that takes place in a stakeholder level, are interconnected and together form a value leveraging network. The idea of looking at value creation and value capture separately was brought forward already by Lepak, Smith and Taylor (2007) who argues that value creation and value capture should be viewed as separate processes. Their argument is that the value created by one actor may be captured and retained by a different actor or actors. Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) present a cyclical process framework, combining the process of value co-creation and value capture into value leveraging (figure 2 below). This framework presents the co-creation and value capture as connected activities that leverage value.

![Figure 2 Value leveraging (modified from Reypens et al. 2016 p.45)](image-url)

Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) elaborate on the processes and describe that co-ordination can be characterised as co-ordinating and planning, but also about stimulating synergies and managing needs and expectations. They also mention that co-ordination prevents activities to overlap with each other. Based on this description, it can be concluded that the co-ordination process resembles the role of a facilitator.

Consultation process is described as the possibility to “share and discuss thoughts, ideas, needs, and expectations” and it was seen to have “stimulated open dialogue” Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016 p.44).

Compromise is the third process required for value co-creation in a multi stakeholder network described. It was see as balancing the “multiple interests, motives, and expectations” Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016 p.44). These processes lead to diverse value outcomes on a network level: innovation outcomes, knowledge outcomes, and relational outcomes. It is worth noticing that knowledge and relationships are mentioned as both, resources and value outcomes, emphasising the idea that resources own their own are not value generating, unless integrated with other resources (e.g. Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, 2008; Vargo, Maglio, Akaka, 2008).

Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) also suggest that value outcomes are then further captured on an actor level through anticipation, assessment and application. By actor level capture they mean that the network level value outcomes are interpreted or implemented on an actor level. For example, anticipation involves the actors trying to anticipate what type of value would be created on a network level and how they could use it.

The assessment process aids the actors to analyse what type of added value would the process create for them. Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) stress that this is very important for the value leveraging process, as the individual actors need to see value for them in the process to keep participating. Also, Lepak, Smith and Taylor (2007 p.181) discuss the importance of actors perceiving added value in the process for them, and not only generating all or most of the value to others to capture, which they refer to as “value slippage”. Lepak, Smith and Taylor (2007 p.187) also state that “slippage obviously
provides little incentive for a source to continue creating value in the long term”, which is again aligned with the ideas of Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic 2016.

Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic 2016 also identified that certain aspects regarding the type of stakeholders, had an impact on the value co-creation process. They noticed that the number of stakeholders involved the value creation process influenced the co-creation process. They concluded that a high number of stakeholders participating in collaboration affected the ability to co-ordinate and consult efficiently, and also hindered the ability to compromise. They also noticed that differences of culture and objectives, both had an impact on all three processes. Similarly, Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke (2016) confirm that actor characteristics have an influence on the value co-creation process dynamics. This is an interesting factor, but outside the current scope of the thesis and further discussion will be left out.

2.5.5 Summary of value co-creation process

In order to create a more conceptual understanding of the value co-creation activities, a summary of the common factors is provided. It is useful to observe the similarities, rather than differentiating characters, to create a more holistic view of the activities underlying the value co-creation process. In this paper, the author presents a model (Figure 3 below) that summarises the value co-creation discussion of previous sections, and builds on the work of Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) and Gummesson and Mele (2010). Based on the literature review presented here, it can be concluded that the interaction between actors builds on the concepts of co-ordination, consultation, (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic 2016), resource transfer, learning and dialogue (Gummesson and Mele, 2010). The literature review shows that coordination described by (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic 2016), includes the same elements that the resource transfer and learning described by (Gummesson and Mele, 2010). Also, the idea of consultation presented by (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic 2016), is described in the same way as dialogue in the model by (Gummesson and Mele, 2010). In addition, integration of resources, is facilitated by compromise (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016), complementary, redundancy and mixing (Gummesson and Mele, 2010). Based on the similarities between these models, a new modified framework is presented below, and it summarises and concludes the literature review chapter.
The above framework will be used as a guiding principle during the research process. This paper argues that the most relevant aspects of the current value creation literature are presented and further developed in this chapter and summarised in the above figure.

*Figure 3*  Value co-creation activities, adopted and combined from Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) and Gummesson and Mele (2010)
3 METHODOLOGY

In the following chapter, the approach for the empirical research is presented and the methodological choices for this particular research are explained. First, the research context is presented and motivated through a discussion regarding its suitability and significance for the research topic. Then the research philosophy, and approach to the research are presented. After that, the sampling strategies that consist of purposeful sampling strategies, are explained in detail. The chosen research method, which is personal, qualitative interviews is explained and the data collection and analysis are described. Finally, the quality and trustworthiness of the data is discussed.

3.1 Research context: Value of forest - City X Forest Programme

The forestry policies in Finland are guided by national and local Forest Programmes. Finland, and Europe in general, have moved toward more sustainable forestry goals, including activities that support the biodiversity and protect endangered or vulnerable species. However, the financial production requirements for the publicly owned forests are still significant. The Finnish forest industry is worth 16 billion euro annually and has a significant role in bringing forward sustainability measures. (Luonnonvarakeskus (Metla), 2012c; Luonnonvarakeskus (Metla), 2012d)

Finland has 76% of its surface covered by forests, more than any other country in Europe (Luonnonvarakeskus (Metla), 2012a). Most of the forests are privately owned, and relatively small areas are possessed by individual families. However almost one-third of the forests, five million hectares, are publicly owned, and form a significant resource for value creation. (Luonnonvarakeskus (Metla), 2012b) The value of forest, and more specifically, the value of publicly owned forests, are of great significance to the Finnish society.

City X owns 8700 hectares of forest (Jyväskylä, 2020a). The forest areas are currently divided to economic forests 32 % (c. 2780 ha), recreational forests 29 % (c. 2500 ha), protected areas 16 %, (c. 1430 ha), nearby forests 15 % (c. 1280 ha), value forests 3% (c. 260 ha) and other types 5% (Jyväskylä, 2020b). In early 2017, City X commenced a project for drafting a Forest Programme. The aim of the Forest Programme was to agree collaboratively on the different modes of forest usage. The Forest Programme was composed in collaboration by several parties, including specialists from the City of X, the
University Y, Government, NGO 1, NGO 2, NGO 3, Private forestry company, and NGO 4. The process was facilitated by a neutral, environmental collaboration and conflict resolution agency, Facilitator A (Jyväskylä, 2020c; Jyväskylä, 2020d; Akordi, 2020).

The process of creating the City X Forest Programme sets the context for this empirical research. The author will look at the collaborative process that defined the guidelines that will give direction to the City X’s forest strategy until year 2030. The vision of the Programme was that City X would be a pioneer in combining economic, ecologic and social goals of forest usage. The Forest Programme’s purpose was to have a strategic plan to guide the maintenance and the use of forest areas in City X. The strategic emphasis was on recreational forests, diverse forests, forest that are in different stages and common forests. The aim was to change 1000 hectares (c. 28%) of the economically used forest into recreational usage, which will not have economic requirements. The goal for protected forest areas was 17% (13.5% in 2017) which translated into additional 310 hectares of protected forest. The aims included connecting the protected areas better and supporting the natural diversity of the forest, such as the maintenance and formation of decaying wood, and the creation of diversity in the age of the trees. There were also goals regarding enhanced communication between the citizens and City X, which took different forms such as improved website and surveys. The classification of forest into different usage groups aided in understanding the values connected to the specific areas and their usage. (Jyväskylä, 2020c)

The projected effects of the Forest Programme are the increased number of trees, and slower growth. The productivity requirements were removed for other areas excepts those allocated to economic usage. The advantages should be seen in the maintenance of forest biodiversity. Also, improvements were sought in the area of recreational usage in terms of enhanced experiences and well-being. The negative impact could be seen as reduced amount of wood and income retrieved from the forests. (Jyväskylä, 2020c)

Overall, the goal of the City X Forest programme was the creation of logical and clear guidelines as how to act in the different types of forests in order to promote their most important respective value. This case will examine the value co-creation between the Forest Programme participants, and how value was created.

3.2 Research philosophy and approach to theory development

The philosophical assumption underlying this research is the idea that multiple versions of reality exist and that the world is socially constructed. Based on these beliefs, it can be
stated that the researcher has approached this topic and the empirical research, from an interpretivist viewpoint. The researcher believes that to understand the reality, it is crucial to understand the world of others and relationships between individual actors. Due to this, the research process was active, and interaction between researcher and participants was considered important regarding the approach taken. According to the interpretivist approach, already the research process is valuable as such, and this should be acknowledged during the research. (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988; Ponterotto, 2005)

The interpretivist philosophy believes that interaction with participants is a natural part of the process. The researcher also believes that the knowledge created is to some extent time-bound and context-dependent, which is recognised in the limitations of this research. However, as the aim of this research is not to provide statistically valid information, but to gain in-depth understanding of the issue being researched and subsequently to gain answers to the research questions at hand, the philosophical approach is aligned with the research aim and research questions. (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988)

The aim of the research guides in choosing the approach. In this case, the research focuses on understanding the value co-creation process that took place in a specific context, the City X Forest Programme. In contrast to searching for cause and effect relationships, this research seeks for a holistic understanding of the value creation setting, characterized by the actors participating in the process. This research was approached using a deductive - inductive -hybrid approach. A hybrid approach was taken as value creation has been widely discussed in literature, as presented in chapter 2, which allowed for theory to be used as a starting point for this research. However, the literature still lacks a detailed understanding of the value creation process, which lead also inductive approach being adopted. For the purposes of this research it is crucial to understand the social world of the individuals, and how they have contributed to the existence of the value co-creation process. What is of importance here are the individual experiences and interpretations of the value creation process, beginning from acknowledging whether or not the process has taken place in their minds. The data was analysed to seek in-depth understanding of the process through the individual interpretations and through interaction between the actors.
3.3 Qualitative interviews

Qualitative interviews are suitable to be used in research, which aims to understand topics that cannot be directly observed, such as: intentions, opinions, values and attitudes (Patton, 2015). The data collection for this research was conducted mainly using qualitative interviews. This research is exploratory in nature and aims to understand both individual value perceptions and the value co-creation dynamics between individuals. This research seeks to understand the inner experiences of individual actors, and therefore the qualitative interviews were chosen for data collection. As the aim of the research is to explore individual actors passed experiences, the qualitative interviews were considered as a suitable method for the purpose.

According to Patton (2015) the task of designing qualitative interviews can be approached with three different alternatives: the informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach, and the standardized open-ended interview. Due to their different characteristics, the alternatives have both advantages and disadvantages for the purposes of this particular research. The informal conversational interview is a flexible approach. With informal conversational interview, there are no pre-determined questions, whereas standardized open-ended interview is pre-planned and aims to ask each respondent the same questions, with similar wording.

The general interview guide approach, which was used in this particular research, lies somewhere between the before mentioned options, as it is based on the use of a pre-written interview guide that outlines the core topics to be investigated (Patton, 2015). The general interview guide was selected as the most appropriate method for this research as the guide supports the interviewer, aiding in covering all the pre-determined topics, however, allows for flexibility. In this case, the aim was to ensure that it is possible to seek for commonalities, or aim to make comparison between the different interviews, while allowing also for spontaneous topics to emerge. The selected method allowed the researcher to explore the topic and get rich information on the case.

Patton (2015) suggests that interviews can be recorded in order to document data as precisely, as possible. An audio recording was be used for the interviews so that it would be possible to return to the interview and recall exact words and tone of voice used during the interviews.
3.4 Data and Sampling

The data of this research consists of two types of data 1) documents and 2) interviews. The documents were pdf-presentations that are available on the City X website regarding the Forest Programme. The documentation used in this research consist of those documents that were available also to the participants of the Forest Programme, in the beginning of the process. The interviews are the personal interviews conducted with the respondents after the Forest Programme process had ended. The documents and interviews will be described in more detail below.

3.4.1 Description of Documents

The researcher familiarised herself with topic related documents prior to the interview process. The documents were used to get an understanding of Forest Programme process and to realise what type of information was available to the participants in the beginning of the process. The documents also added to the context specific understanding of the researcher, so that she could better relate to the topic at hand. The documents were also used in planning and designing the interview guide. The documents used for the purposes of this research are listed in the table below.

Table 5 Documents used for research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Name and Author</th>
<th>Main content for research</th>
<th>Author’s organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luontoarvot ja luonnonsuojelu Jyväskylässä (Peltonen, K., 2017)</td>
<td>Understanding the ecological aspect</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jyväskylän kaupungin metsät (Kytömäki, M., 2017)</td>
<td>Understanding the forest classification</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maisematason tarkastelu – Jyväskylän kaupungin metsäohjelma (Kotiaho, J. 2017)</td>
<td>Understanding sustainability and biodiversity</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keski-Suomen hakkautavoitteet (Reiman, H. 2017)</td>
<td>Understanding forestry and timber production</td>
<td>Forest centre, mid-Finland unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.4.2 The Sampling of Interviews

The sampling for the interviews was conducted using purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling in commonly associated with qualitative research. Purposeful sampling aims at including information-rich cases to the research sample. The aim is to find cases that will expand the researchers understanding of the studied phenomena, through significant data. Due to the approach taken in this particular research, purposeful sampling supports the type of inquiry, and smaller sample size that is applied in this research. (Patton, 2015)

Sampling out of the population was conducted in two stages. First the case was selected. Case research that aims to build or extend theory should be based on theoretical sampling. The cases are selected with the aim to further new theories (Eisenhardt, 1989). This case of City X was chosen as suitable based on the theory suggesting the need to research value creation processes more holistically, and especially in a context that would include actors from public, private and non-profit sectors (Pera, Occhiocupo, Clarke, 2016). The City X Forest Programme case involved actors presenting public, private and non-profit sector, and it was also facilitated by a neutral third-party organization.

The participants for the interviews were chosen using purposeful sampling, and selecting information rich cases, participants of the City X Forest Programme. The access to participants was relatively easy, as the participants had already been part of the City X Forest Programme and were well aware of the topic. A decision was made to approach the sampling more specifically through a group characteristics sampling strategy: maximum variation (heterogeneity) sampling (Patton, 2015 p.283). The aim of
maximum variation strategy is to capture the variety in the sample, by including individual cases that represent great diversity and are different from each other.

In this research, the variation in a small sample was maximized through research of documents, before the sampling decision was made. The researcher investigated the documents that were prepared for the planning stage of the City X Forest programme, including documents that for example described and defined the forest typologies used by the city, or that explained the forest as natural habitat for various species. Some of the documents were prepared by the participants and therefore gave insight to the participant views, already before the interviews. Traditionally thinking, a large variation in a small sample can be seen as a disadvantage in research, but the logic of maximum variation strategy is the opposite. By including cases that are very different from one another, yet finding common patterns that emerge, are significant to the research. (Patton, 2015).

This particular sampling strategy also gives direction to the analysis, as it is the emerging shared dimensions that the researcher intends to focus her attention to in her analysis. The aim of this research is not to create statistically valid findings, but rather to investigate in depth the value co-creation process. Therefore, including even polar extremes is justified, as they are usually the ones providing the richest data (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.537). It can be concluded that finding information rich cases is beneficial (Patton, 2015; Eisenhardt, 1989) however, it poses more requirements on the researcher to be careful with the sampling process, so that in the research there will be included those cases that can provide most data.

Ten respondents were selecting during the sampling process. Out of the ten selected respondents, eight agreed to be interviewed. Due to the nature of this specific study, only a limited number of cases could be selected (the participants of the City X Forest Programme). Research aim gives guidance to the optimal number of cases to study. In this case, based on the investigation of the preparatory documents for the City X Forest Programme, it was mapped out that there were different types of organizations participating in the project. The aim was to include at least one participant form each organization type (public, private, non-governmental). The sampling was successful, as over two participants were included for presenting both, the public sector, and the non-governmental organizations, and also a participant presenting a private company and the education sector were included. Eight participants were deemed enough, based on suggestion by Eisenhardt (1989 p.545), who states that selecting four to ten cases usually
works well. She further clarifies that available resources and other practical reasons may affect the sample size. This is confirmed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2015 p.297) who suggest that, depending on the aim of the research, the minimum sample size for semi structured in-depth interviews is over five respondents.

3.4.3 Data Collection - Interviews

The data was collected during October 2018 in City X. The interviews were conducted in person with the respondents. The interviews were individual personal interviews. The interviews were conducted using a pre-designed interview guide. Interview guide questions were developed based on the literature review conducted previously. The interview guide has been included in the appendices.

The data is non-structured and consist of verbal interview recordings, that are transcribed into a written form. The details regarding the verbal interview recordings are presented in the table 4 below. The transcribed data consists of 146 pages of text in separate documents for each individual interview. The interviews ranged from 42 minutes to over one hour, and between 16 and 25 pages of transcribed data each.

Table 6 Details on verbal interview recordings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Organization type</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length of the interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 1</td>
<td>City, structural committee</td>
<td>Chairman of the committee</td>
<td>9.10.2018</td>
<td>45:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 2</td>
<td>City – Structure, traffic and green areas</td>
<td>Forest planner</td>
<td>9.10.2018</td>
<td>52:07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 3</td>
<td>City - planning</td>
<td>Landscape architect</td>
<td>10.10.2018</td>
<td>54:43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 4</td>
<td>Private – Forest Industry</td>
<td>Regional Director</td>
<td>18.10.2018</td>
<td>01:00.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 5</td>
<td>NGO 1</td>
<td>Active member</td>
<td>18.10.2018</td>
<td>56:56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 6</td>
<td>NGO 2</td>
<td>Active member</td>
<td>4.10.2018</td>
<td>41:54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 7</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>12.10.2018</td>
<td>01:11.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 8</td>
<td>City – Forest Department</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>9.10.2018</td>
<td>49:32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions, such as the below example where used during the interviews.

### Table 7 Example interview questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions from the interview guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Did you feel that the process gave you new information and/or new viewpoints regarding the alternatives for forest usage and the impact of those alternatives for the City X region?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. To what extent do you feel that you understand better the viewpoints of others, and their reasoning, after this process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. How were the solutions found during the process?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.5 Analysis of Data

Two types of data were analysed for the purposes of this research: documents and verbal interviews. The documents were used and analysed prior to the interviews taking place. Content analysis was used to investigate the previously listed presentations. Content analysis was chosen as a suitable method for the analysis of the presentations as they included text (Krippendorf, 2004; Silverman, 2011), images, maps and numerical records (Krippendorf, 2004). The analysis was conducted with an aim to identify the main information regarding forest usage. Researchers made notes of the main contents of each presentation and indicated what was the main messages of each presentation.

The main part of the analysis dealt with the personal interviews conducted. Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf (1988) and Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2012) recommend beginning the analysis already during the data collection process. Such approach was also applied in this research. As the main form of data collection was by using personal interviews, it allowed the analysis process to begin already during the data collection process. The interviews were recorded, but the researcher also took initial notes to allow for immediate reflection on the main themes emerging from the data. The researcher also
discussed the initial findings with fellow researchers. This facilitated the researcher immersing herself deeper in the topic. As the data collection took place on different occasions, the preliminary analysis in between the interviews aided in refining the interview process. The analysis was mostly conducted based on the written transcripts of the verbal interviews.

The analysis process followed the suggested operations by Spiggle (1994). Spiggle (1994, p. 492) mentions that through analytical operations researchers “dissect, reduce, sort, and reconstitute data”. Spiggle (1994) further divides analysis process into seven operations: categorization, abstraction, comparison, dimensionalization, integration, iteration, and refutation. However, she also reminds that the different methods of analysis are not stages or steps in the path of analysing data, merely they are operations that will assist taking an organised approach to data analysis. The aim on these operations is to “organize data, extract meaning, arrive at conclusions, and generate or confirm conceptual schemes and theories that describe the data” (Spiggle, 1994 p. 493).

During the analysis, focus was given to the operations suggested by Spiggle (1994) and they were used in combination to aid the analysis and assist in arriving to the conclusion that emerged from the data.

Categorization was used as the starting point for the analysis. Spiggle (1994) was considered as a suitable reference for analysing the data of this specific research as she states that “categorization may be conducted deductively or inductively” (Spiggle 1994, p. 493). A hybrid model was adopted, and the coding was approached both deductively and inductively. The coding process began by using predefined codes that were based on the theoretical value creation process framework presented in chapter 2, derived from Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, (2016) and Gummesson and Mele (2010).

The analysis begun by inserting the predefined categories, derived from theory, into an excel sheet. Then the researcher begun to read through the interview transcripts by identifying the codes relating to the predefined categories. This part of the analysis was conducted deductively. However, soon it became clear that there was also a need to allow for inductive coding as certain theoretically significant themes appeared repeatedly throughout the interview data. At this point the researchers started adding also new categories. Due to the hybrid model including also inductive coding, the interview data was re-read multiple times in order to ensure that all data belonging to the newly created categories would become coded appropriately, not to omit any important data. As Spiggle (1994) explains, the categorisation can be revisited and the different analytical
operations do not have a set order, but they should be used as tools, in the way that they lead to useful analysis.

The other operations used included abstraction and dimensionalization. Once categories were identified from the data and the analysis proceeded, it became evident that some of the categories could be combined and merged into more abstract units. For example, when looking at the predefined category of learning, the process went from predefined theory based category (=learning) to several themes emerging from the data that were then sub-categorised: new information, new views, ways of working, new co-operation models, new contacts, negative learning, and ability to tolerate opposing views. And then categorised again into: New Knowledge, Process learning, and Relationships. And finally, the categories were revisited to form a dimensional table that presents the categories in a Factual – Situational and Positive – Negative matrix. The below figure visualises the data analysis process example. The categories and matrix are explained in more details in chapter 4, in the results sections of this thesis.

![Diagram showing data analysis process example](image)

**Figure 4**  
An example of the analysis conducted - Learning

Dimensionalization was used repeatedly during the research to create a deeper understanding of the emerging data and to aid in abstraction and comparison, as suggested by Spiggle (1994, p.495). During dimensionalization the content of different constructs was analysed in detail, and continua of different characteristics were found that created dimensions. A clear example would be the data regarding facilitators position in the process. Once the content of the construct, Facilitator’s role, was analysed further, the data clearly showed a continuum from bias to neutral, regarding facilitators role.
The analytical operations used during the data analysis allowed the verification of new emerging concepts and understanding the relationship of the theoretical concepts of value creation process.

3.6 Ethics of the study

Qualitative interviewing deals with several ethical issues that a researcher should be aware of. Patton (2015) lists several considerations, such as: the importance of being transparent and honest about the purpose of the interview, keeping confidentiality, and understanding how much to insist on more sensitive information. During this research, the interviews were aimed at understanding personal opinions, and views on the success of the process, and therefore it was assumed that the topic was somewhat sensitive. The participants were explained the academic purpose of the research, and permission was asked to audio record the interviews with a tape recorder. The participants were given the contact details of the researcher, in case they would like to ask further questions regarding the data usage later. The individual respondents will not be named in the research and their personal details are not revealed.

3.7 Quality of the research

Due to the nature of qualitative research, the criteria for addressing quality and credibility are challenging to determine. Many alternative criteria exist, and the different approaches used in qualitative inquiry demonstrate that “quality and credibility intersect with audience and intended inquiry purposes” (Patton, 2015 p. 677). Therefore, the quality of the research always must be determined the aim of the research in mind. However, there are criteria that are commonly used to address the question of trustworthiness of the data in qualitative research, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and integrity of the research (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989). The trustworthiness and quality of this research are demonstrated according to the before mentioned criteria suggested by Wallendorf and Belk (1989).

Credibility

There are multiple techniques for enhancing the credibility of a research. Already, during the data collection process, triangulation across sources was applied. As the research included eight different interviews, to very different types of informants, the criteria of triangulation across sources was met, as described by Wallendorf and Belk (1989). Triangulation across methods was also partially achieved, as even though the interviews
were the main data collection method, also documents were used to support data collection and analysis. Debriefing by peers was also used to enhance the credibility of the research. The researcher engaged in debriefing along the research process, starting from the data collection, and interacted with various peer members. This aided the researcher to be open to varying views on interpretations that were emerging. (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989).

Transferability

Transferability refers to the possibility to apply research findings in different settings and with different respondents (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989). Transferability can be improved by *triangulation across sites through purposive sampling*. This relates to research being conducted at different places and at different times. The research at hand was not observation, as the case was with Wallendorf and Belk (1989), so this technique was not fully applicable. However, purposive sampling regarding respondents was used to ensure that the respondents would present a rich and varied sample. Wallendorf and Belk (1989) also suggest *seeking for limited exceptions* to define the boundaries for transferability. This was applied in the research conducted, and it led to show that the theory needed to be adjusted as it did not work in some instances. The application of *emergent research design* also allows for qualitative research that can build theory while being strong in its transferability. Emergent research design was applied in this case to allow for flexibility and openness based on learnings in previous stages.

Dependability

The dependability of research results refers to the ability to replicate the research and come up with similar results. It must be noted that the results of a qualitative research that focuses on people will be subject to changes, due to people and contexts continually changing. However, dependability can be affected by observation over time, and explanation of change (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989). Wallendorf and Belk (1989) suggest returning back to the respondents, months or even years later for further research. In this case the scope of the research was limited, and this could not be realised. However, it would be very interested to do so, as a continuation to this Master’s thesis, as also the
respondents made many comments to the future, and they were already suggesting that the value outcomes may re-shape over time.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the concept of the findings being determined by respondents and conditions and not by the researcher and her biases or motivations (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989). Wallendorf and Belk (1989) suggest using triangulation across researchers and methods, reflexive journals, and auditing to improve confirmability. Triangulation across researchers was applied, and there were two people involved in conducting interviews. Also, the data collection was done by using audio-recordings, which were then transcribed into text, and also interview notes were taken. The researcher also used other informal notes that could be compared to the reflexive journal, recommended by Wallendorf and Belk (1989).

**Integrity**

The final aspect to assess regarding trustworthiness, is the integrity of the research. This refers to the extent to which the informants are expressing their true opinions. Integrity of the research would entail that the respondents are representing their ideas as truthfully as possible and not changing their answers because they do not trust the researcher, or in order to for example appear better themselves. The integrity can be improved by ensuring trust and rapport between the researcher and the informants. (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989). The researcher aimed at creating rapport between the researcher and participants, increasing the integrity of the research. The rapport building was started via emails and by personal phone calls already prior to the interview event. This way there was already some level of familiarity and relationship between the researcher and participant. It was also explained to the informants that their names would not appear in conjunction with their answers, and that the research was done for academic purposes.
4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

In this chapter, the empirical findings of the research will be presented. The findings are based on the data collection process and the interviews conducted. The research conducted aimed to answer the following questions. Firstly; what are the activities that contribute toward value co-creation process in a multi-actor network? And, how the activities promote value creation? The results regarding activities will be presented in the sections 4.1., 4.2 and 4.3. And secondly, what kind of value is created? And how do the individual actors perceive the value captured? The results regarding value outcomes and the actors perceived value will be answered in the section 4.4 of this chapter. Finally, also additional findings are presented in section 4.5.

The results are presented following the structure of a newly created value co-creation framework, that has been developed based on the research results. The below figure (5) shows the two main phases of value creation: interaction and integration, and activities related to both phases.

The results below will confirm that the two phases, interaction and integration, do take place during the value co-creation process. The results will also show evidence of most of the previously identified activities taking place, however some in more significant roles than others. Also, most importantly, the results reveal that there are activities that are previously not included in the value co-creation models or that their role has not been seen as significant. The results also shed light to the relationship between the value co-creation activities. Therefore, based on the empirical results of the research, a new theoretical framework for value co-creation is presented.

4.1 Learning centred model of value co-creation

Based on the empirical findings of this research this paper suggests a new framework for value creation; the Learning centred value co-creation model.

The findings show there is an interaction phase, during which the actors contribute with their resources. The means of interaction are dialogue and conflict. The findings also show that facilitation has a significant role during the interaction phase. The results also suggest that the transition from the interaction phase to the integration phase is facilitated by learning. Learning was emphasized in the results and took multiple forms. The results showed also an indication of empathy that developed as a result of learning. Learning has a significant role in the value creation process by preparing the actors for
integration phase. Learning works as the mechanism that moves the value creation process from the interaction phase to the integration phase. The learning process brings actors and resources to the common mental space, which is an antecedent for integration to take place.

The research results showed that the integration phase takes place and the means of integration are mostly compromise and to some extent also complementary and redundancy. The integration activities lead to value being co-created and value outcomes are realised. The framework below presents three main parts: 1) Interaction, including resource transfer (=R), 2) Learning and 3) Integration.

*) R=Resource transfer

**Figure 5** Learning centred value co-creation
The following sections will present the detailed results regarding the interaction and integration phase in more detail.

### 4.2 Interaction

Interaction is prerequisite for value co-creation (Gummesson and Mele, 2010, Gummerrus, 2013; Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016). As presented in chapter 2, in the light of the current literature, the activities during interaction phase are: co-ordination, facilitation, resource transfer, learning, consultation and dialog (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016; Gummesson and Mele, 2010). In addition, the results of this research show that also conflict is an activity of interaction, and this will be discussed in further detail in this section. It is evident from the empirical results that interaction, in its different forms, took place during value creation process.

#### 4.2.1 Co-ordination

As discussed in the chapter 2, co-ordination in the context of this research is considered as co-ordinating and planning of activities, and it is also about stimulating synergies and managing needs and expectations (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016). As concluded earlier in this paper, the co-ordination process as characterised above, also involves facilitation. The results showed various types of co-ordination, or the lack of it, taking place during the process. The co-ordination was both “official” and “unofficial”, meaning that the co-ordination efforts were conducted either by official facilitators or they happened naturally as part of the process between actors. Particularly, facilitation as a specific type of co-ordination emerged dominantly from the research results and therefore this will be looked into in more detail in the following section.

#### 4.2.2 Facilitation

From the research results, it is evident that facilitation had a strong presence during value co-creation process. The facilitator’s role was emphasised by all respondents. The co-ordinating role of the official facilitators was seen having both positive and negative influence on the value creation process. Interestingly, the results showed the same respondents having both negative and positive notions regarding the facilitators and facilitation. It seemed that the topic held a lot of controversy. The results showed both positive and negative perceptions on the **control of conversation** held by the facilitator. The respondents indicated that they would have hoped for stronger steering of the conversation at times. However, the professional ability of the facilitator to “tone
down” the situation was acknowledged. The facilitators were also perceived as having a professional ability to exercise control over the conversation.

The research also showed that the facilitators participation was seen as positive to the extent that they allowed the conversation to cover different topics, and that the issues were approach from different viewpoints. However, there was criticism that the facilitators could have forced more exact opinion to be expressed, as the conversation was seen to be too vague at times, not leading to conclusions. There were also comments regarding the documentation of the process, and that there would have been room for a bigger role for the facilitators in this respect.

Nonetheless, closely related to exercising control, the **neutrality of the facilitators** was brought up on several occasions during the interviews. There were respondents who said that they doubted, whether the facilitators were really neutral or not. There was also doubt regarding the facilitators taking all comments as equal, or did they possible prefer certain type of dialogue? There were even comments regarding the facilitator actually being against some participants and their views. The respondents also believed that the facilitators represented certain types of values, and that they promoted their personal attitudes. There was also indication that the different individual facilitators showed their own opinions to different degrees. To the lesser extent, the results also showed that the facilitators were seen as able to keep things professional and not let the process get too personal.

There was also indication, that an actor took **an unofficial role of the facilitator**. This was commented by the role taking actor themselves, and it was also perceived similarly by another actor. The actors responded that they had tried to “listen to all parties equally” and steer the conversation. Or that they had given “encouraging comments” in order to make the process go forward. This shows that the actor’s took different roles during the value creation process and there were different dynamics between the actors.

During analysis, facilitation was identified as a category, under interaction. Further content analysis was conducted to identify themes within the facilitation category. Five different themes emerged from the content analysis: Control of conversation, Neutrality vs. Bias, Participation of facilitator, Unofficial facilitation, and Motivation. The table below, shows in detail the example extracts that that were identified during the content analysis for each theme. Once the content was organized under each theme, it became
visibly that each theme could also be divided into two sections; positive and negative. Therefore, the below table presents facilitation under five themes, having both positive and negative dimension.

**Table 8 Five roles of facilitation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control of conversation</td>
<td><em>Well I appreciate Firstname’s professionalism in the sense that she probably also did work in the background and then in those situations she knew how to soften them a bit and in that way to pull together and then pull in the right direction too.</em> (Respondent 2)</td>
<td>“at that point the protection speech wasn’t really stopped at all, so it just went on” (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“They framed the conversation, how to discuss, what to discuss.” (Respondent 6)</td>
<td>“You would’ve wished for some kind of stop there” (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They were able to control the conversation with quite little intervention” (Respondent 6)</td>
<td>“However, there were moments that I hope they would’ve interfered more.” (Respondent 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It worked quite well when there was Firstname as a referee” (respondent 7)</td>
<td>“The facilitator was able to control the conversation quite well with quite little intervention.” (Respondent 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I must give points to the consultant as at some point, especially this Firstname, Firstname took a role in the background that enabled us to move forward.” (Respondent 8)</td>
<td>“The facilitator was able to control the conversation quite well with quite little intervention.” (Respondent 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutrality vs. Bias</td>
<td>“it was found terribly good, that there was an external neutral party, in this type of situations, when it's loaded with different values, it comes so easily” (Respondent 3)</td>
<td>“it actually had a bit of a greener coloring when (Firstname) was in charge” (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“maybe they after all were able to keep it just as business, so in a way that is kind of good with the facilitator that they don’t get involved in that thing” (Respondent 3)</td>
<td>“in some of these situations it had felt for some of the city representatives, that they are not impartial, that they somehow didn’t believe his opinions (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think that they took it quite professionally, and took their own, I mean stayed at their position, the way I was hoping it to be, That they were quite unbiased.” (Respondent 7)</td>
<td>“so he felt, that he was argued against, that you can’t think about it in that way, that we can think about this and this way, and that is how his experience was, and that he was really, and he’s one of the gentlest people I know, but he was really upset and a little angry, and he said he won’t be coming to meetings anymore” (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“so for example criticism regarding the facilitator and so, that then I had to also say to (Facilitating company) little that there are experiences like this” (Respondent 3)</td>
<td>“It was a long process, yeah. Yes, at some point, quite a bit, quite a bit how would I say it, fed up with the level of discussion. At one point” (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
there, it seemed that also the leaders of this project were more behind the protection issues, even though they should have been neutral.” (Respondent 4)

At some point, during the process, it happened a little bit so that there was some sort of lack of trust between the consultant (Facilitating company) and city forest representatives. That they felt that the consultants were acting like taking sides partially, that they had their own attitudes regarding the process and not being completely neutral. (Respondent 5)

“Of course, there is a fundamental issue in having an external facilitator, that someone is paying to that facilitator, so that is the problem, who is the party paying the salary.” (Respondent 7)

“Often it is the problem, that those who have the money, will pay the facilitators salary, should not be like this.” (Respondent 7)

“I think that there should be something done prior to the process, to show that it is transparent, and how it’s secured that the facilitator is unbiased.” (Respondent 7)

“I was quite disappointed in Firstame’s behaviour, and I also said it to her face, that she had clearly chosen her side” (Respondent 8)

**Participation of facilitator**

Well Firstname was maybe the driving force there, so after this phase I highlighted to Firstname that I hope you would make it, like let’s organize so that you definitely can participate all meetings, I mean in my opinion she was the “main maestro” who was able to put her words right, I mean very skilled” (Respondent 3)

"Yeah we had an hour you could open up (and laugh) too.” (Respondent 2)

But I have to say that yes, they (Consultant) handled that conversation from a very wide angle and from many angles, that quite cleverly, a smart system. It did not stay, the discussions did not remain one-sided, even though those statements came from both extremes, so everyone had the opportunity to influence it.” (Respondent 4)

“Well, there might have been a place for some kind of facilitation there, that you would’ve asked more exact questions, that what do you think about this, and you can only say exactly that yes or no, nature conservation interferes with recreation. Yes or no, and then the whole round like this and then discussion that why do you say so, if others say that it isn’t so. (Respondent 5)

“Probably yeah, that when a consultant has been hired to do this so often, then the consultants do the written part too” (Respondent 2)
**Unofficial facilitation**

"In fact, sometimes I put in a little comment in and a little bit of encouragement, that then it would be a good idea to get some compromise and that this is not the case, that now we might go a little far on this original topic.”  
(Respondent 1)  (Also in Compromise)

Yes, even in them yeah then came a some interruptions, but (Surname Firstname) which here was a project lead from our side, then resolved the conflict. Personally, I wouldn’t have been able to get such a good email whereas Firstname wrote the message a little differently. But it was good it was taken care of in that way (Respondent 2)

"maybe I had a little different role in the group than others, that ,maybe also I was a little so that I tried to bring up many things equally  
(Respondent 3)

They had those sparks clearly so at that point,also myself I felt a bit like a mediator and listened to the bursts of both sides in turn"  
(Respondent 3)

"I filtered, so it was a terribly heavy stage for me here”  
(Respondent 3)

---

**Motivation**

"now we’re going through the diamond here, always bring us back from it, don’t give up now, so a person keeping the faith”  
(Respondent 3)

They were really nice. (Respondent 6)

The empirical results presented the concept of facilitation as a complex activity that took place during the value creation process. What shows the complexity is the array of comments regarding facilitation and the also before-mentioned controversy, regarding the comments. For example, one respondent who first commented on the facilitators that “they were quite unbiased”, he afterwards in many occasions raised a concern of the facilitators being paid by the city and maybe not being unbiased. It is not only the amount of remarks, but the diversity of the and also the controversy that can be found in them.

In some cases, also the same respondent, gave conflicting views showing complexity in evaluating facilitation as an activity of value co-creation. Through organizing these comments into categories, and then analysing the content and the tone of the responses,
the below dimensions were identified. Also, the controversy of individual actors presented both positive and negative views on the same dimension was taken into account. The dimensions of facilitation are presented in the table below.

**Table 9 Dimensions of Facilitation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Too much control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Biased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Too involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Discouraging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.2.3 Resource Transfer**

Resources and resource transfer form a basis for value co-creation (e.g. Lusch, Vargo and Wessels, 2008; Gummesson and Mele 2010; Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016). Resources in the context of this research are seen as those skills, information and abilities that the actors bring to the value creation process. From the interviews conducted the theme of resources could be indeed identified as a part of the value creation process. The actors were aware of the skills and information that they possess and that they brought to the process.

The research results identified different types of resources: knowledge, information, facts, ideas, practicality and clarification. Knowledge was seen as a topic specific information regarding the forests and the usage of forest. It also became evident from the respondents’ comments, that they perceived themselves as bringing information to the process that could be shared with others. There was also indication of respondents understanding that they have unique ideas, that are useful resources for the process.
They commented on bringing their own ideas to the value creation process. The research also found that the actors doubted other actors understanding what the resources and information that they have truly is.

Interestingly the actors seem to agree on “facts being facts”. One of the respondents indicates that there was not much discussion, as we were going through facts. Also, in other occasions it became clear that the “facts” aided compromises to take place. They also commented that it was wanted from the facilitator to remind everyone about facts. This is very interesting, as there were people who had very different ideas on how the forests should be maintained, but they still believed that there exist facts, that are non-negotiable, and that people should agree on.

The above discussed different types of resources are presented through exemplary comments in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource type</th>
<th>Citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge &amp; Skills</td>
<td>“I am probably the one who knows the most about these city forests.” (Respondent 5) Of course, the environmental NGOs always want to influence and take part when possible, as we have the skills to do that. (Respondent 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>“Well, he may not have had the knowledge regarding what I brought to this process, meaning they might not have thought things out that way” (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facts</td>
<td>“Those were just facts that we went through and they didn’t spark so much discussion.” (Respondent 2) “Well, as they say, knowledge adds misery, like also for me now it’s emphasized, for example, you have pretty serious facts about the endangerment of forest habitats, so you start dealing with them and also understand what are the means to deal with them.” (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“And after some fine-tuning when those facts were put on the table and it was discussed, then yes I then moved on.” (Respondent 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I was there to ensure that the discussion was based on correct facts” (Respondent 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>I think it was really pretty good, that maybe the city also figured out what our thoughts were at that moment and that probably, to some extent, shaped the process, that it was known where we start from.” (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicality</td>
<td>“There was a lot of discussion there and it was very awakening for many of them, because these measures, which were presented here in the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results also indicated that the formal way of sharing information in the beginning of the process (“tietopohja”) was seen as very useful. Respondents described this as an important starting point for the process. This links directly to the previous section of this paper where facilitation was discussed. Based on these results, it is evident that the formal facilitation and control of the process was perceived overall as aiding the process and contributing positively toward the value co-creation process.

4.2.4 Learning

Learning in the context of value creation is described as sharing of knowledge and information between actors (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016; Gummesson and Mele, 2010). In the interview data, several notions regarding learning can be found. The research results show that learning can take many forms. The main categories of learning identified from the research can be listed as: learning new knowledge, process learning and relationships.

Learning new knowledge was described as learning new topic related knowledge, such as how does the lifecycle of a tree influence forest maintenance, or how can certain species be protected from the effects of forest industry. The respondents were mostly learning new information about topics that were not directly related to their own work or personal interests. Learning new topic specific knowledge contributed towards learning to acknowledge, and maybe to understand better, new views and different approaches to forest usage. The importance of learning in value creation and especially the learning to understand various viewpoints and approaches, will be discussed further later on in this paper, when the new framework of value co-creation is presented.

Interestingly, the research revealed that so called “negative learning” also took place during the value creation process. Some respondents indicated, that there were actors who were trying to influence the information available to the group through information that some actors deemed as false or insufficient.

The results also showed that the respondents did not merely learning to acknowledge and understand the opposing views and approaches, but they learnt how to react
to them. The results showed that the actors learnt to tolerate opposing views and that they learnt how they can work together with other actors with opposing views. The results indicate that learning occurred regarding the value creation process itself and the way of working together developed as a result.

Learning also occurred in a form of learning to know new people and new organizations. The results show that new relationships were formed. The actors interview responses show that they saw these new relationships as positive and they had already benefited from them. They also believed that the new relationships formed would become valuable in the future. New co-operation models, outside the forest programme process, were established. Learning was identified occurring both by the actor making changes and the actor observing the change. From the above description of the learning types, it becomes evident that based on the research results, learning can be seen closely linked with dialog.

The table below summarises different themes of learning that were identified from the research results, and their categorisation.

**Table 11**  Summary of types of learning occurred

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>New knowledge</th>
<th>Process learning</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>New information</td>
<td>Ways of working</td>
<td>New co-operation models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New views/approaches</td>
<td>Ability to tolerate opposing views</td>
<td>New contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative learning (false information)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the category was identified from the results and below table present some example quotes.

**Table 12**  Example quotes on learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Well, as they say, knowledge adds misery, like also for me now it’s emphasized, for example, you have pretty serious facts about the endangerment of forest habitats, so you start dealing with them and also understand what are the means to deal with them.” (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I learnt really a lot about forestry” (Respondent 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“So they are quite serious about that thing and really behind it, and think so and it is right and it just is, but that how you handle and discuss those things” (Respondent 2) \rightarrow \text{NOTE: Also in Dialogue.}

“I learnt about new aspects regarding forestry, and also I had not understood before that often the citizens themselves are the ones requesting for trees to be cut in the city forests.” (Respondent 7)

Well I would say that the learning that I myself got from there (...), that landscape protection. Such green thoughts, I was left with the impression that the payer of the case is not, something is being protected without being cared for or who is ultimately paying for it, leaving the forest to rot so that the wood and funghi can grow there and so on. But that costs money. It’s a carefree life if you don’t have to think about money.” (Respondent 4)

“it needs to be thought from a little different perspective than in the past (Respondent 2)

“Well, probably the understanding increased at least, that yes, we are thinking of something here too. Not just putting things there blindly.” (Respondent 2)

“I recollect that a picture was shown to everyone on a computer screen that there is a terrible deforestation in the city land, and that is what they do. And it wasn’t even from the city land to begin with” (Respondent 2)

“Well, prior to this, I hadn’t heard about scientific results regarding the health benefits that a forest can have.” (Respondent 8)

**Process learning**

“I learnt a lot about the city’s decision-making structures” (Respondent 7)

“I learnt that it depends a lot on people and individuals and how they get along.” (Respondent 6)

“It was, there was quite a lot of discussion and twisting due to these different backgrounds of ours, but we did finish the job though” (Respondent 4) \rightarrow \text{NOTE: Also in Dialogue}

“Yes, definitely, yeah, tolerance of different opinions, and that, that you can say stuff, so courage in understanding that you can also deal with those topics without starting a war, but it does require a lot.” (Respondent 3)

“I learnt how I can influence as a citizen” (Respondent 7)

**Relationships**

“Well I got yeah. I got a few contacts, that now, if I know that if. Want to know something regarding the forest, so I can check from there.” (Respondent 1)

“each one had to think about the opposite, "opposite" side’s thoughts and views and to try to understand. I for example, during this process, I joined NGO A as a member to see how those thoughts are on the other side, regarding these forest issues. And also, I assume that the same kind of understanding then took place there in another side, regarding the economic side of this thinking, hopefully” (Respondent 4)

“I guess there was some small change going on. One big achievement for me was that a representative of the forest company said that he had not joined NGO A because of this process. After me talking so much about these endangered wild birds, he has joined NGO A now. So, it was a pretty good achievement (laugh) (Respondent 5)

“Yes it is, and it must be absolutely, also I myself visited the City X Nature Conservation Association now it was the board meeting” (Respondent 3)
4.2.5 **Dialog**

As discussed previously in chapter 2 of this paper, dialog is about sharing ideas and knowledge, and it aims at creating constructive interaction and a network level vision. It can also be seen as means of overcoming personal bias. (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016; Gummesson and Mele, 2010). Consultation is an activity referred as “stimulated open dialogue” by Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016 p.44). Based on this, and supported by the results of the research, this paper concludes that in the context on value co-creation, consultation can be seen as a form of dialog rather than a separate activity. The research results show that dialogue was an important enabler for value co-creation during the process. The importance of sharing knowledge and personal views became evident from the empirical data. Some actors had a more active role in taking part in dialogue. There were clear differences between the amount of interaction of the actors. Some actors were identified as much more active participants than others. The results show actors identifying themselves or others as active or passive participants. It becomes evident form the research results that participation in dialogue has a dimension ranging from non-participation, or passive participation to active participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 13</th>
<th>Dimension of participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive participation</td>
<td>Active participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research results show that either end of the spectrum is not the desired result, but that the optimal participation level can be found somewhere in the middle of the spectrum.
Table 14  Examples of the participation dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passive Participation</th>
<th>Active Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“if people are there in meetings somehow experiencing, that they are not getting to say it all, that they’re being crushed or something, as it’s not so easy to everyone, some people have stronger personalities than others so” (Respondent 3)</td>
<td>“many were in a terrible hurry to get their own views heard and didn’t have the patience to listen to others, so it was a little restless” (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“so how many opinions there are here that don’t come up or that are still in conflict with each other and get here, so their thinking was something like that, of course I don’t really even remember anymore all what it was like. (Respondent 3)</td>
<td>“Yeah, I used quite many turns to speak compared to many others, for example” (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Well yeah, everyone had their own personality, and not everyone is so talkative or loud, so it’s a pity that for example a person from sports services. He was a very qualified person there but maybe he didn’t get that much time to talk as he would’ve deserved.” (Respondent 2)</td>
<td>“after all, in my opinion, nature organizations saw this remarkable possibility of influencing things, so that they were really active until the end, then like these Forest Company or Government, who did not have such a personalized passion for this matter, they had a little looser commitment. Whereas the members of nature organizations were never absent from any of the meetings (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“There were clearly that type of people who were more distant and withdrawn (...) took a smaller role.” (Respondent 7)</td>
<td>“there were those certain people who were always speaking more” (Respondent 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Type of dialog.** There was also indication that not only the amount or volume of participation had an impact on the value creation process, but also the type of dialogue that took place. Some actors were seen as communicating more precisely and effectively than others. The respondents’ answers showed that they had experienced the participation in the dialog of some of the other actors unclear, in the sense that they felt they did not understand what type of opinions they were trying to express. There were comments that described the style of conversation too vague and not leading to progress. One respondent also commented saying that he did not feel that there was not much added value of having a person participating in the process, if he did not make his opinions heard in a precise manner. This implies that the efficient and clear style of conversation was regarded as having a linear relationship with value creation. It also became clear from the research results, that some actors were seen as more committed to the process than others, due to the way they participated in the dialog. From the research results it seems that dialog as a value creation activity is not so simple and has various dimensions to consider. Based on the content of the extracts regarding type of dialogue, the following dimensions were identified.
Table 15  Dimensions of type of dialog

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concrete .......................................................... Vague</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just concretely dig up those opinions from there, behind all ifs and buts and eloquence. I appreciate that at least (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committed .......................................................... Non-committed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;that probably, as in any that sort of group, there may be half the gang there. Some are really committed and then some from a different planet&quot; (Respondent 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valued ........................................................ Not valued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;partially then again, I felt that it did not necessarily add much value to it, that there were some people involved who had very little to say about it. And who participated quite passively in that whole process.&quot; (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research results showed that dialog took different forms during the process. There was dialog that was aimed at **sharing knowledge and ideas**. This was to promote information sharing between the actors. This aspect of dialog can be seen as a natural consequence of resource transfer and this type of dialog supports the resources to be shared and used in the value co-creation process. Dialog was also used as means to **express** opposing views and opinions. The dialog was described as “chaotic” and “painful” at times, but the aim was to **accommodate opposing views**.

As discussed also in the resources section earlier on, the results indicated that the actors perceived there being two different “sides” with differing knowledge and understanding of the situation. This is connected to the finding of “sides” appearing also in the context of dialogue. The results show indication that the process was not perceived as neutral, but there was some **bias** in which way the dialogue took place. At times the dialog also formed into a **conflict**. A new value creation activity, conflict, was identified from the empirical data. It was evident that during the interaction phase there was aggressive negatively toned dialogue between the actors and conflicts developed.
Also, a less “goal oriented” form of dialog was found in the results. Dialog that lead to empathy was considered as useful, also when it did not lead to immediate concrete results or compromise.

Table 16     Forms/functions of dialog

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of dialog</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing knowledge / ideas</td>
<td>“Well, of course, at every point it tried to bring my own view as well (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“If the situation seemed to get stuck, if I add some fact to offer, I could aid the situation” (Respondent 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomodating opposing views</td>
<td>“So to reach such an agreement and to discuss and learn to know people and it would be a little easier to work with them in collaboration (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“when the painful and chaotic situation was passed and we got like enough discussion” (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“even if there are different opposing opinions, things can be discussed and people can stay civil, and even if sometimes it boils over a little they can still get over it” (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biased</td>
<td>“If they wanted to go in this direction, then it has gone right for them, ie more emphasis is being placed on this protection, the environment (Respondent 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“ more strongly or somehow even those small words are interpreted somehow, that for real, there was discussion over one term in one of the meetings” (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>“That everyone was feeling a little tensed” (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yes there I wondered, that just the nature reserve side have quite a tight situation, and also accordingly forest side then, they both feel that they are attacked, and I don’t have that type of experience with the ideas that I represent” (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“There was one person who at the beginning immediately announced that he was starting from that idea that no action would be taken in the city’s forests. And then pushed those opinions of his for a long time,” (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“E-mail conversation at that time was also quite wild” (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sometimes there was a yes and yes I myself took part in it and maybe sometimes I was a little provocative. But yes, the others there provoked too, it was like that. It’s a pretty bad way to communicate in a job like this so it’s the exchange of email between meetings that also showed it. There you can be is easily misunderstood, either accidentally or intentionally, and then such a rather sour e-mail exchange occurs very quickly ”(Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Very large. That personal chemistry is quite big, I think it’s a big part of this process, and it clearly became at least one of the problem areas if you are very different in your speaking style and sense of humour, it can become quite personal friction, which then starts to affect your ability to handle things. (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I also almost lost my temper” (Respondent 3)

“I mean I took it quite badly, personally at some point” (Respondent 7)

“The program is ready and there were very sharp statements when I left. In the first meeting, someone unnamed suggested protecting all the city’s forests as a model for the rest of Finland, which I found quite a shocking performance, because it is already poor management of the city’s forest resources or not even poor management, but destruction if we go down that road” (Respondent 4)

“Pretty rough comments came from there, criticism” (Respondent 4)

“ Noticed that the group is passionate about the subject, that there were very different opinions” (Respondent 1)

"I consciously took on a bit of a strict role here, because I felt there was such a process here, that it was really possible to make an impact.” (Respondent 5)

“It was quite rowdy and ripping and not constructive and not consensus seeking, but people were in their foxholes and bullets were flying” (Respondent 8)

| Empathy | “somehow it feels that people just have to be able to let it out, and I don’t necessarily have to say anything or agree with them or anything, that I just, that they can say it and tell me, and that may already be enough to solve the situation although we still disagree.” Respondent 3 |

Opposing views were identified from the data in the context of learning. They are also present in dialogue. The below extracts were shown previously under the heading, Learning, but they are highly relevant to revisit here. From the below extracts it is visible, how respondents indicate empathy and understanding for opposing views, and ability to build successful dialog regardless:

“So they are quite serious about that thing and really behind it, and think so and it is right and it just is, but that how you handle and discuss those things.” (Respondent 2) → NOTE: Also in Learning.

“It was, there was quite a lot of discussion and twisting due to these different backgrounds of ours, but we did finish the job though” (Respondent 4) → NOTE: Also in Learning.

4.3 Integration

Integration phase follows the interaction phase of the value creation process. Integration is described as the actors matching their resources, commonly for example through compromise (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016; Gummesson and Mele, 2010, Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016).
4.3.1 Compromise

The research results show that compromise is clearly present in the value co-creation process. In the light of the results, compromise is the most common activity for integrated resources between actors. Compromise as a word was also mentioned multiple times by the respondents. In various occasions, value was perceived generated through compromise. As mentioned earlier in this paper, there was strong empirical evidence of conflicts taking place during the value creation process. However, these conflicts in most cases, eventually lead to compromises. What was typical for the compromises following conflict, is that they were achieved through intense disagreement. The compromises achieved were rather slim, however there was content regarding them. The compromises were mostly achieved either through nearing of opinions, acceptance or agreement, s the table below demonstrates.

Table 17 Types of compromises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nearing of opinions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“But then there are not such different perspectives, it is really the coordination and that kind of need to make compromises so it was clear from the very beginning and through that it may cause pain that how far each one can come against his own ideas” (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Maybe yeah there were missing the things that each of us would have like to be included. But I think the main lines are clear to everyone, so that we should cope.” (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Probably no such turn-arounds took place, but yes, it was perhaps more of a search for the middle ground” (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Of course he also gave in a little” (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Yes I think it happened. And the very extremism so surely, they realized that they can’t be left alone, that they are both part of this society and purely things can’t go according to their own decisions, but others have to be taken into account. Personally, I think the current forestry is different than it was sometime in the 50s, when nature was not taken into account.” (Respondent 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“And if there were then conflicting views that no progress could be made, then more was discussed and twisted until then, through some compromises, it was agreed that it could be accepted.” (Respondent 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“And, of course, not everyone agrees on everything still, however, in such a way that one could vote for that yellow the way it was done there.” (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“At least I would hope that everyone understand that we have to make compromises. That you may not get anything if you’re too strict.” (Respondent 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“And it would not have been possible to make that booklet and the program that is more complete on the internet, if we had not reached an agreement on that matter” (Respondent 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compromise has shown to be a complex activity and it is also dimensional. The different types of compromises can be put on a scale to present either a “Slim” compromise (negatively toned) or a Change of opinion (positively toned).

**Slim compromise** (Negative) ------------------------ **Change of opinion** (positive)

Figure 6   Compromise scale

### 4.3.2 Complementary and Redundancy

Complementarity and redundancy are other activities for resource integration. Complementarity refers to the synergies between resources that can create added value. However, sometimes the resources do not complement each other, and redundancy occurs. In this case a stronger common resource can be created by disregarding the redundant resources. (Gummesson and Mele, 2010)

The research results show indication of the idea of complementarity, but more so the lack of it. It seems like complementary was actively sought only by one of the actors. This actor refers to the idea of complementary resource usage, in a form of combining a nature protection area with re-creational usage area, for example in a form of a natural reserve area where it would be however allowed to go skiing. He believed that this would be a win-win situation, but he felt that his idea was denied without explanation. He did not understand the reason behind being against this. The following extracts describe the situation of complimentary resource usage being sought by an actor:

What goes wrong with them if they are protected a little more. That doesn’t open up to me, like what was the problem.” (Respondent 5)

“And like that, they didn’t have that or he didn’t have the idea that they could be combined and there was no willingness to combine, so that we could set up a conservation area where you are allowed to do skiing trails or something.” (Respondent 5)

“Why do they find it problematic that we would add protection, like how does it. After all, the results of our resident survey were such that those protected areas were the most popular outdoor and recreational areas of all.” (Respondent 5)
Redundancy is not strongly present either in the results. There is however some indication of combining resources, or the actor perceiving their resources being similar to the other actors’ resources. The similarity of own views and resources vs. others can be identified again in this context. This is visible in the below examples:

"And then this Natural Resources and the Environment side representative. Again, with whom we very much agreed." (Respondent 5)

"However, after all, almost half of it was related in some way, you were able to make connection with protection related issues." (respondent 2)

"Well, I would say that when there were supporters of this kind of traditional forestry here, it was me and the city’s forest department. And I and the city’s Department of Forestry and the forest-side representative, (Respondent 4)

Figure 7  The similarity and dissimilarity of resources

4.4 Value Outcomes

The research results show that different type of value was created during the process. The respondents indicated various types of value as an outcome of the process they participated in. Value was seen in either achieving personal objectives, achieving interpersonal gains or in concrete matters, like the finalised programme itself.

Most often the value generated was seen as having a personal aspect to it. Personal value was seen in a) having a mandate to work, b) being proud of one’s own achievements, and c) in achieving personal goals. The results show in many occasions that the actors saw value in the process and programme giving them mandate to work in their respective jobs. They expressed that now they had the right to do their work and that they could refer back to the programme, in case someone was doubting their actions.
There was content that something (the programme) was now guiding their work and they could gap ahead and implement their own tasks. The respondents also indicated that they believed that the programme would allow them to work in peace and allow them to do their jobs better. There was also a comment saying that the actor felt that the process had encouraged her to be braver in implementing her work.

The actors also took personal pride in the programme. There were comments regarding being proud of having participated in the process and that the actors had showcase the report to others, telling that they have taken part in such a process. The programme had been presented both in the workplace as also to social connections. The programme was also seen as having value in a sense that the actors were able to promote and accomplish their personal goals, such as influencing on the percentage of the city forests being allocated to nature protection.

The results also indicated that the actors found value in the process on an interpersonal level. The data shows that the actors saw value in the a) process itself, and b) in forming relationships. The interview data shows comments where the actors believe they could use similar processes again and that the learnings from this process are valuable for their work. The comments also show that the actors got to know each other well during the process and that they believed that they would contact those people again after the process. They saw the newly formed relationships as beneficial for their jobs and making it easier to reach out to different organisations.

Value was also seen in the form of the end result itself. For most actors the value of the process was in the documentation itself, that was the end result of the process. It provided them with value in the form of concrete achievements and economic value. The interview data show comments where the end results are described as valuable due to certain figures, economic requirements, or certain details in it. The actors saw value in the contents of the actual forest programme that was formed during the process. Reference was also made to the website that has all the programme materials and that the website may also be updated and developed in the future.

The table below illustrates, with examples, the respondents’ views regarding different value outcomes. The different types of value outcomes are further categorized under: Personal, Interpersonal and Concrete results.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Example quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandate to work</td>
<td>&quot;I feel that I have the justification to do the work that has been done also before. But where some modifications have been done now. So in a way there has come that justification now and if someone comes to say otherwise then I can dig (the programme) and like do you remember that this exists?&quot; (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Especially to work in peace, I think that from our perspective it's quite important, and the coming years will show how well we succeeded.&quot; (Respondent 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I'm fully behind it and I don't need to grit my teeth, with some things there was need to think, how this can be done, so that it will become good, that I can implement these guidelines&quot; (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Well, I have to say, that now this end result, the end product. Here, when one has been breathing for a while since it was finished, I hope that in a way it will now give a peace of mind at work, these things have been through through and how to act, so as an end result it is tolerable and good and. But that process was very heavy.&quot; (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;My own actions, and perhaps the idea that there may be more courage in it,&quot; (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, yes, I have dared to present it in many occasions, showing this is something that I've done, I mean it is not a disaster, it's quite good&quot; (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;No, or I have told the group of friends and then when I got the booklet, it has been going around here.&quot; (Respondent 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Well I don't know if on a personal level it has been helpful. But I'm happy that I have been able to influence these things in this way. However, I think it would have been a different outcome if I had not been involved. So in that sense, I'm glad I went for it.&quot; (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;So, I thought it was a significant achievement.&quot; (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;But then there is also a more detailed program of measures with quite detailed level things or even very small things. It was quite important to me, and since it was managed to get included when I was involved in it, it was at least like for me, that I felt that I could influence it.&quot; (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Learning</td>
<td>&quot;After all, this was kind of pilot-type experiment for us, that this interactive negotiation procedure is being tested here now, that we get some kind of idea if we can have an approach like this somewhere else&quot; (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;We still have to draft it in a certain way, then that too is probably an evolving process,&quot; (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Big ships turn slowly, well now it has started turning.&quot; (Respondent 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;It's a pity that the people were changing somewhat, there were changes with the external people, these outsiders. (Respondent 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Relationships | “Well nothing particularly significant. Well now some people are more familiar, so no, no. With several of those people in the city there has been contact already in the past. They were contacts already and then these others. Probably won’t come across with them anywhere in particular. Well, maybe on the Ministry, their representative can be like that now” (Respondent 5)  
“Yeah, of course this group now got to know each other terribly well” (Respondent 3) |
| Concrete results | “Well yeah, the end result of what’s been out of the oven now is pretty good, indeed it is.” (Respondent 2)  
“But, so the end results is very good at being, we are all happy with the content.” (Respondent 3)  
“The website of the program, where you can find all the materials and always, if even monitoring and other things come, all those materials can be found there” (Respondent 3)  
“We were driving it, that it would be that seventeen per cent protection target which is internationally approved. Well, now it’s in the programme.” (Respondent 5)  
“For example the protected forests percentage went up to 17%, on bar with the Nagoya target level, so this is immediately very good.” (Respondent 6)  
“Yeah, but there are numbers out there that will help too. What was important to me is that you have those concrete numbers.” (Respondent 5)  
“It now came with the economic effects also, and nothing, I think that it passed as such” (Respondent 5)  
“There were included, the views of the representatives of the green values, in the program and then also this economic way of thinking.” (Respondent 4)  
“I think that the end results was such, I mean at the end I think we did understand each other quite well.” (Respondent 8) |

The above section concludes that the value outcomes were seen either personal, interpersonal or as concrete results.

![Figure 8: Value outcome categories](image)
Finally, the individual actors had an overall positive perception on the final outcome of the process. They described as “supporting” the programme or that they were “on the same side”, indicating that they approved the outcome and it fitted their personal worldview.

“I'm fully behind the forest program.” (Respondent 2)

“Yeah and the end result was the type that it really did, that it went through without bigger discussions, even though it had that price tag. (...) this is the way to go” (Respondent 1)

“Well yeah, there’s nothing like impossible to do, just some extra work” (Respondent 2)

Well I thought it was useful and came true. The price tag is quite reasonable, too, and I think that, if it is assumed that it costs around EUR 300 000 a year, then the townspeople will feel that they will benefit as much. that yes, in my opinion, there were many good ideas” (Respondent 1)

“If you put it on a scale of 0 to 10, then yes it gets 8 from me” (Respondent 4)

But if he sees it put it this way, so he has gotten his thoughts included, and the booklet when I have accepted myself, and FirstName if it accepts, approves when, so why not. The goal has been reached” (Respondent 4)

“I thought it was a terribly good moment of success when we got that crystallization.” (Respondent 3)

“I think in this way the end result is better, even though it was a little heavy process” (Respondent 8)

“In one word I would say that the programme was successful, but there were difficult moments and it was very difficult to work together.” (Respondent 7)

“We were all quite happy with it” (Respondent 6)

4.5 Additional results – Opinion and Values

Personal vs. Organisation’s opinion. There was clear indication during the research, that the opinions shared by the actors were seen as personal, as opposite to organization’s view. The respondents indicated in several occasions that they believed that the actors representing certain institutions or organizations, were not presented a collective view of that specific organization, but rather their own personal opinions. In some cases, they assessed the opinions being different that they felt would be the “official” opinion of the organisation and made a judgement that this must be a personal opinion of the actor representing the organisation. There was also indication that there was doubt regarding communication taking place between the individual representative of an organization and the rest of the organisation.

“so yes, not necessarily it isn’t the organization, the whole opinion of the organization, it is about the person who is there. I felt like that, it just can’t be (and laughter).” (Respondent 2)
"These people were supposed to represent a certain group, that how well they really did with their background group then exchange of ideas there, and how much it is about that individual person and for us, this was the question from the beginning" (Respondent 3)

"It never came from him in such a way that now we were discussing this and this, but, quite clearly, he brought his own feelings to that table" (Respondent 3)

"Yes, I think everyone was probably quite alone representing there."

"Yeah, of course our city has different units, of course, who probably then disagree a little on different things," (Respondent 3)

"At some point I felt that there was some disagreement also between the different people representing the city." (Respondent 7)

"Yeah, but now it was really the case that the city was not a homogeneous party, but there were many parties within the city and they had very different interests" (Respondent 5)

There was also an actor who confirmed that he was representing his own opinion, however he felt that he was trusted by his home organization to do so. Another one who felt that even if he learnt from the process, this earning did not really happen on an organizational level.

"Very little, because I saw that in the association of ours, there isn't really a right group to whom it might have been so worthwhile to take this, I mean I always informed the board regarding what is going on. But not on a very detailed level, I was enjoying their trust that I would do the things that I would deem right. (Respondent 5)

"I think it was more so me learning than our organization" (Respondent 6)

**Economic vs. Green values.** An interesting result including values, was the understanding of other actor’s opinions or “their side”. It is evident from the results that the actors involved in the value creation process felt that on top level, there were two opinions or “sides” present in the process: 1) economic benefits from forest usage and 2) preserving the forests. What makes the finding even more interesting is that the individual perception of which side was presented more in the group, varied based on individual interpretations. The actors represented both views, interpreted the situation so that the opposite side was more presented in the group composition. It can be seen from the interview extracts below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic forest</th>
<th>“Green” forest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Yeah, it was almost immediately visible in the group composition as soon as the group was put together. I mean, almost half of the people were related in some way, a connection could be made to protection.” (Respondent 2)</td>
<td>“You can ponder a little, that when there were three representatives from that beginning from the forest side. So it was a pretty big part of this whole group already, I think it was a bit overemphasized, their role in it.” (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The economic crew was here, and the scale weighed towards the protection side. The composition of the group, when you think and remember those people, was pretty much a group of people behind the green idea” (Respondent 4)</td>
<td>“And then, they also had the view that too much attention was paid to this protection and diversity issues like this. On the other hand, however, they themselves did not actively bring up anything more specific, like the economy or employment or other issues, that were then anyway just thrown out of there.” (Respondent 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“And after all, when there was such a small group of supporters of forestry, quite often it seemed, looking from the side, that the people in the forestry department got accused in this in a way, during negotiation and discussion” (Respondent 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to understand the value co-creation activities during interaction and integration of resources, and how value is co-created through the interaction and interaction phases that take place. The research questions specifically asked in the beginning: “What are the activities that contribute toward value co-creation process in a multi-actor network?” and “What kind of value is created during the process?”.

In this chapter, the main findings of the research will be discussed and analysed in the light of previous literature. In chapter 4, the results of the research were presented and a new framework for value co-creation was suggested. This chapter will discuss the main findings in relation to the aim of the study, which was to further the understanding of the value co-creation process, and to gain deeper knowledge of the activities that are the antecedents of value co-creation. The chapter begins by discussing the main findings regarding value co-creation and the revised framework for value co-creation that provides theoretical contributions. The discussion continues with the presentation of managerial implications. Finally, the chapter will conclude with the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Main findings

The results presented in the previous chapter confirmed that the value co-creation process begins with interaction. The results indicated, that as suggested by previous research (Gummesson and Mele, 2010, Gummerrus, 2013; Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016, Reypens, Lievens, and Blazevic, 2016), the following activities are present during the interaction phase: co-ordination, resource transfer, learning, and dialogue. However, in the light of the research results, a new activity, conflict, will be added as an activity of interaction phase. Conflict has previously been recognised as possibly having also positive effect on value co-creation (Mele, 2011), however, the relationship between conflict and other value co-creation activities has not been clearly presented before.

Another main finding regarding the interaction phase was, that co-ordination took a form of facilitation and therefore it is suggested to use the term facilitation for this activity instead of co-ordination. The interaction phase can be visualised as below figure presents.
Based on the results on interaction, this paper concludes that the interaction phase of value co-creation includes the activities of facilitation, resource transfer, learning, dialogue, and conflict. This paper highlights conflict as an activity of its own, as it has an important function in aiding learning, which in turns leads into integration to happen. This will be discussed more thoroughly when the new framework is discussed.

Another important finding emerging from the research results is the significant role of learning, which previous literature does not highlight. The research results showed learning taking place in multiple forms. The different type of learning categories can be further integrated to represent two dimensions, Factual vs. Situational learning, and Positive vs. Negative learning. These findings bring forward the understanding of learning as an important activity during value co-creation.

Learning has previously been seen as positive and mostly relating to new information and knowledge (Gummesson and Mele, 2010; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016) and possible new relationships (Lievens and Blazevic, 2016). However, this research concludes that learning can be presented in a matrix having Factual – Situational axis, and a Positive – Negative axis. Therefore, learning is a much more complex activity than literature has presented so far.

Table 20 Learning matrix
The previous sections have shown that interaction is based on dialog that can take multiple forms. However, dialog often leads to conflict. Mele (2011) recognises that especially conflicts due to differences in values are difficult in terms of value co-creation. The research shows that even though conflict has a negative ring to it, has an important role as accommodating the opposing views. This has previously been suggested by Mele (2011), however her work focuses of the management of conflicts. The research conducted for this thesis, presents that the conflicts can assist the process and lead toward value co-creation through learning. It appears that learning has an important role, and acts as a turning point, in which the interaction can return to further dialog, or continue towards the integration phase. Below, the dialog – conflict – learning –loop is presented.

Figure 10  Dialog – conflict – learning –loop
Previous literature suggests that integration takes place after interaction (Gummesson and Mele, 2010, Gummerrus, 2013; Pera, Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016). The results confirmed this view, and identified compromise and matching as the activities of integration, as presented in the figure below.

![Integration and activities](image)

The results show that the positive, synergies creating matching techniques, such as complementarity described by Gummesson and Mele (2010) are not really present in the integration phase of the process. There is very little initiative to seek for complementary resource usage, only one example was found. Previous literature (E.g. Lusch, Vargo, and Wessels, 2008, Gummesson and Mele, 2010, Gummerrus 2016, Reypens, Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016) is largely focused in the positive synergies, however this research shows that the integration is rarely a result of synergies, but a tight negotiation and actors each giving up something to reach a satisfactory compromise for everyone. However, the main way of value co-creation is through compromises. The compromises were described as slim and were more often a result of a “forced” agreement, than a natural nearing of opinions and synergies found.

**Learning centred model of value co-creation**

Based on the findings a new model of value co-creation is provided. It is confirmed that value co-creation begins with an interaction phase, during which the actors participate in dialogue and communicate with each other. They shared their resources with other actors and promoted their own views. However, the dialogue and interaction were not only seen as positive but received criticism from the actors. Previous literature has had
very little focus on the negative sides of dialogue and the possible barriers for value creation during the interaction phase have not been highlighted. The academic literature has previously emphasized the positive interaction between actors and the synergies created through that interaction (e.g. Gumesson and Mele, 2010; Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016). This positive interaction then is seen to turn into resource integration that leads to value co-creation.

This research contributes to the academic discussion by showing that value co-creation process has also negatively toned dialogue, which leads to conflict. However, the research also shows that by solving the conflict through learning and empathy the conflicts have a role in contributing toward value creation. This research concludes that even though conflict may be seen as a negative activity, it has a role in contributing toward value co-creation. The research shows that in occasions, conflict was also a necessary antecedent for compromise. During conflict, the actors were immersed in ideas contrary to those that they held themselves, which forced them to question and re-asses their own position. By widening their views and adding to their own understanding, through conflict, the value co-creation process was able to move forward.

This research shows that they amount, and type of dialogue has an impact on the value co-creation process. Dialogue is a crucial part of value creation, and a method of sharing resources, and based on the research results it, can be concluded that an inefficient dialogue may lead to only partial sharing of resources and therefore may hinder the value co-creation. As it is concluded that the type and volume of interaction is significant, it leads us to see that facilitation indeed is a crucial part of value co-creation process. Successful interaction is enabled through facilitation.

Therefore, another main finding of the research is the significant role of facilitation. The role of official facilitation was especially crucial during unsuccessful dialogue. The research results give a reason to consider facilitation as the support activity that enabled the actors to continue with productive interactions. The importance of facilitation is clear from the results presented, and for this very reason, it must be conducted correctly, as inefficient or biased facilitation led to dissatisfaction and distrust among actors. In the light of the research results, it can be established that getting facilitation right, is crucial to managing the value co-creation process between multiple actors. This is especially true in situations where actors are representing different types of organizations and interests, such as in this case: public, private and NGOs.
The new suggested framework shows that learning occurs between the interaction and integration phase of the value co-creation. This expands on the ideas of Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) who believe that new knowledge contributes toward forming a cyclical learning and value co-creation process. As previously discussed, Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) see that the cycle is formed through positive interaction and resource integration synergies, however the new learning centred model expands on this and presents also learning that occurs after negatively perceived situations and conflicts.

![Learning centred value co-creation -framework](image)

**Figure 12** Learning centred value co-creation -framework

**Value Outcomes**

The research conducted showed that the value outcomes, for most part, have a personal aspect. However, the results also showed that the value outcomes with personal aspect
were connected and overlapped with the other value outcomes, namely interpersonal and concrete outcomes. The discussion around value co-creation has previously raised a question regarding whether value is objective or personal and subjective (e.g. Gummerus 2013). This also raises a question regarding the interpretation of value: who is the actor determining the value created? Gummerus (2013 p.33) suggests that “instead of seeing the value created as absolute and objective, ... there might coexist multiple different perceptions on what value is. This is an interesting notion and highlights the need to understand the process from the individuals’ point of view, as this researched has done. The individual perceptions of value outcomes presented in this thesis are highly relevant, and they further the academic research of understanding the individual actors’ perception of value outcomes.

The majority of the value outcomes were categorised as “personal”. However, these different types of values co-exist and the value outcomes that are categorised as “personal” overlap with the interpersonal and concrete value outcomes. This relationship is visualised in the figure below, showing their connectedness:

![Value outcome relationships](image)

**Figure 13** Value outcome relationships

Gummerus (2013) and Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016) present that value creation processes are continuous or ongoing, whereas value outcomes take place in specific points in time. Based on the research conducted for this thesis, one must disagree with the ideas presented by Gummerus (2013) and Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic (2016), as this research provides examples of value outcomes that were extracted over time, such as for example mandate to work and relationships. These were not value outcomes that were tied in specific points in time, but they were extracted continuously, over time.
To conclude, this research provides valuable theoretical contributions and advances the understanding of value co-creation activities. This research contributes to academic literature by suggesting a new framework for value co-creation, which 1) identifies also negative characteristics of dialogue and adds conflict as a new activity for interaction, 2) demonstrates the importance of facilitation during interaction, and 3) presents learning as an outcome of interaction and an antecedent for integration. This research also adds to the understanding of value outcomes from an actor perspective.

The results of this research further the holistic understanding of value co-creation process in combination with the value outcomes. Previous literature describes that the value creation process and the value outcomes are too often looked as separate activities and not sufficiently understood holistically (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016; Lepak, Smith and Taylor, 2007). The two streams of value literature are combined in this research, which concludes that even during a collaborative value co-creation process, the majority of perceived value outcomes are personal. This is highlighted in the results that show that conflicts often take place, while the actors pursue different goals, and facilitation by a neutral participant is essential. This claim is supported by the results of value outcomes, which mostly have a personal aspect to them.

5.2 Managerial Implications

This research has shed light to the process of value co-creation and has also provided important managerial implications for practitioners. Firstly, it has been shown that the role of facilitation is an important activity during the value co-creation process. The results showed that facilitation had a significant role in improving interaction between actors. Facilitation is an aspect that can be directly influenced by managerial actions and could therefore lead to improved value co-creation processes.

Secondly, closely connected to facilitation, the concept of different level and different type of participation in dialogue was highlighted as an important factor during the value co-creation process. This leads to a managerial question, whether value could be created more efficiently by actively encouraging more intense, and certain type of participation during the value creation process? It gives a managerial advantage to understand that controlling the type of dialogue, and encouraging participation, can lead to more efficient value co-creation processes.
Thirdly, the results showed that the value outcomes for most part were perceived as having a personal aspect to them. This is very relevant regarding the management of value co-creation process from the motivational point of view. The findings suggest that the actors mostly seek and perceive personal value. Therefore, from a managerial point of view, it is important to clearly state what are the expected personal value outcomes of a value co-creation process. Lepak, Smith and Taylor (2007 p. 191) ask: “Can value creation activities survive in the long term if only one target is satisfied, or do value creators have to meet some minimum level of use value for all parties to maximize their exchange value?” In the light of the findings of this research, it can be concluded that there must be value for all actors for the value creation process to continue successfully in the long term.

5.3 Limitations and future research opportunities

The findings of this research have enriched the understanding of the value co-creation activities. However, due to the rigorous nature of academic research, all studies, including this research, have certain limitations. Some of the limitations arise from the specific context of the study.

The main limitation of this research is that due to the small sample size achieved through purposeful sampling, and specific case context, generalisations to value co-creation processes with a significantly different actor composition and setting cannot be made. Even though the very idea of this research was to gain insight to processes that have a composition of actors that is quite specific (governmental, private, education sector and NGOs), the dynamics may differ in a setting were the actors were more homogeneous.

Also, the research method itself causes some limitations. The data collection method used here was personal interviews, meaning that the data collected are those comments and remarks that are shared by the respondents. There is always a risk that some things are left untold. The research barely found mentions regarding complimentary resources. It may be, that the pleasant and positive things do not come up in an interview as easily, as for example conflicts that had caused strong emotions. The more “milder” experiences and topics might remain unmentioned to some extent.

The results of the study showed clearly that the actors in the process felt that they were divided into “two sides”. The opinions and values held by these two perceived groups
were considered as opposite. Previous literature gives an indication that individuals and organizations act differently during the value co-creation process (Pera Occhiocupo and Clarke, 2016). Some indication has also been given that personal characteristics may have an influence (Reypens, Lievens and Blazevic, 2016). This aspect was not included in the present research, but this proposes an interesting avenue for future research. Especially because the findings indicate that also actors representing an organisation were presenting themselves as individuals, at least partially. There would be a great opportunity to build on the present research and study co-value creation process that incorporates the values and attitudes of the actors, who present diverse organisations with different ideologies and goals. It would enrich the understanding of the impact of and actor’s role in an organisation and personal characteristics in value co-creation processes. This type of research could enrich the understanding of the actor dynamics during the value co-creation process.

The results also showed that the type of dialogue has an effect on the perception of the success of the value co-creation process. This would open up for possibilities to further explore, how different types of dialogue either contribute towards successful value co-creation or hinder it. It would be interesting to see research also on the possible barriers for value co-creation in terms of dialogue.

And finally, this research presents a new view suggesting that value outcomes may not be tied in specific point in time but captured over time. This presents an interesting opportunity for a longitudinal study to see how the perceived value outcomes have realised in the long run. It would be interesting to see, if the actors’ overall perception of the process changes over time.
REFERENCES


Jyväskylä, 2020c, Jyväskylän kaupungin metsäohjelman laadinta, [online] Available at: <https://www.jyvaskyla.fi/sites/default/files/atoms/files/metsaohjelma_yo_suunnitelma.pdf> [Accessed 6 July 2020].


Luonnonvarakeskus (Metla), 2012c Suomen metsät eurooppalaisessa vertailussa valikoitujen indikaattoreiden avulla kuvattuna, Metsänhoidon käytännöt [online], Available at: <http://www.metla.fi/metinfo/kestavyyss/finnish-forest-management.htm> [Accessed: 6 July 2020]


APPENDIX 1 INTERVIEW GUIDE

HAASTATTELURUNKO OSALLISTUJILLE

1. Mitä **taho** edustit Jyväskylän metsäohjelmaprosessissa?

2. Minkä takia sinä/taustaorganisaatiosi päätitte lähteä mukaan metsäohjelmaprosessiin?
   - Mitä **tavoitteita** teillä oli prosessille? Mitä halusitte saavuttaa?
   - Mitä muita **odotuksia**?

3. Missä asioissa yhteistoiminnassa onnistuttiin? Saavutetut **hyödyt/edut**?
   a. Kuinka tyytyväinen olet prosessin lopputulokseen?
   b. Miten edustamasi tahan intressit on otettu huomioon lopullisessa ohjelmassa?
   c. Entä muiden tahojen?
   d. Auttoiko prosessi sovittamaan yhteen näkemyksiä?
   e. Auttoiko prosessi käsittelemään mahdollisia konfliktteja?

4. Millaisia **haasteita** koit metsäohjelmaprosessissa?

5. Millaisia mahdollisia ongelmia prosessissa oli?

6. Miten **metsäohjelmaprosessi** oli rakennettu

7. Miten koit yhteistyöryhmän työskentelytavat?

8. Prosessin eri vaiheet – miten koit ne?
   Mikä ohjelmaprosessissa ja yhteistyöryhmän työskentelyssä toimi erityisen hyvin?
   Mikä rooli oli taustakartoituksella, parikeskusteluilla, lappuäänestyksillä, jne.
   Mitä haasteita prosessissa ilmeni? Koitko jonkin asian erityisen ongelmallisena?

9. Miten kuvailisit osallistujien **väliä kanssakäymistä** prosessin aikana?

10. **Entä ilmapiiriä?**
    Muuttuivatko nämä prosessin aikana?
    Miten koit roolisi prosessissa?
    Miten kuvalisit muiden osapuolten roolia prosessissa?
    Koitko että prosessi antoi sinulle uutta tietoa metsänkasittelyvaihtoehtoista ja niiden vaikutuksista Jyväskylä alueella?

11. **Entä uusia näkökulmia**
a. Mitä asioita opit?
b. Miten pystyit jakamaan omaa tietämystäsi muille prosessin osallistujille?
c. Miten muut prosessin osapuolet oppivat mielestäsi?
d. Missä määrin koet etäät ymmärrät paremmin muiden näkökantoja ja niiden perusteluita prosessin seurauksena?
e. Miten oma näkemyksesi minkään asian suhteen prosessin kulueessa?
f. Miten ratkaisut löytyivät prosessin aikana? (Keskustelun vai kompromissien kautta?)

12. Käsittelittekö prosessia ja siinä esille tulleita asioita oman organisaationne sisällä (esim. kokouksia prosessin aikana ehdotetuista malleista/ratkaisuista tms.)?
   a. Pystyittekö kanavoimaan näitä näkemyksiä prosessiin? Millä tavoin?
   b. Miten prosessissa mahdollisesti tapahtuva oppiminen oman organisaationne sisällä?

13. Miten luonnehtisit fasilitaattorien roolia metsäohjelmaprosessissa?
   a. Minkä asioiden suhteen fasilitaattoreiden toiminta oli erityisen hyödyllistä prosessin kannalta? (myönteinen keskustelu/ilmapiiri, rohkeus pohtia vaihtoehtoja, tasapuolinen asioiden käsittely, …)
   b. Oliko fasilitaattoreiden toiminnassa jotain ongelmallista sinun näkökulmastasi? / Miten fasilitaattorit olisivat voineet toimia vielä paremmin erilaisten näkökantojen punnitsemiseksi ja yhteen sovittamiseksi?

14. Miltä osin prosessi poikkesi aiemmista osallistuvista metsäohjelmaprosesseista joissa olet mahdollisesti ollut mukana?

15. Mitä oppeja prosessista saatiin yhteistoiminnallisen luonnonvarasuunnittelun soveltamiseseen jatkossa?
   a. Miten prosessia (ml. sen rooli suunnittelu- ja päätoimikunnajärjestelmässä) pitäisi kehitellä edelleen, jotta se paremmin vastaisi luonnonvarakaistojen sovittelun tarpeisiin?
APPENDIX 2  EXAMPLE FROM DOCUMENT: JYVÄSKYLÄN KAUPUNGIN METSÄT

Hoitoluokitus

- Jokaisella kuvioilla on hoitoluokka, joka kuvastaa kyseisen alueen tärkeintä käyttömuotoa
- Yhdellä kuvioilla voi olla useampiakin käyttötarkkoja, mutta hoitoluokituksesta selviää tärkein kuvioille asetettu tavoite

- Talousmetsät 45 % (n. 3800 ha)
- Ulkoilu-virkistysmetsät 23 % (n. 2000 ha)
- Suojelualueet 13 %, (n. 1150 ha)
- Lähimetsät 13 % (n. 1100 ha)
- Arvometsät 3%  (n. 300 ha)
- Muut 3 %

![Hoitoluokitus pinto-olot](image)
Haasteet – Metsälajisto taantuu

Yleisten metsälintujen yhdistetyt kannankehitystrendit Etelä-Suomessa

Punatulkku, hōmōtiainen, tōyhtōtiainen ym.

Fraikedas ym. 2015 Population trends of common breeding forest birds in southern Finland are consistent with trends in forest management and climate change – Omnis Fennica

Yleisetkin metsälinnut vähenevät, syy natsa metsäntalouden nykysuuntaus ja ilmastonmuutos
APPENDIX 4  EXAMPLES FROM DOCUMENT: VIRKISTYS, MAISEMA JA KULTTUURIYMPÄRISTÖ METSÄISILLÄ ALUEILLA

Poimintoja selvityksistä

- Jyväskylän ulkollumahdollisuusen selvitys
  - picture/46928_Sulkia_jki_viedos.pdf

![Selvitys](example.png)

Maisemallisesti merkittävät selännealueet, esimerkkejä

- **Aittovuori Halssilan taustana**
- **Korpilahden kirkonkylän eteläpuoliset**
- **Muiratsalon Satasarvinen**
- **Ylistönmäki lounasta valtatieltä**
APPENDIX 5 DESCRIPTION OF FOREST PROGRAMME PROCESS

(Link:https://akordi.fi/hankeutisia/jyvaskylan-metsahjelmatyossa-edetaan-kohti-ohjelman-koontia/)
### APPENDIX 6  EXAMPLE OF CODING DURING ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NOTE</td>
<td><em>WAVE 4:</em></td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>CAPABILITIES</td>
<td>STRATEGIES</td>
<td>OPPORTUNITIES</td>
<td>RELEVANCE</td>
<td>COMPETENCE</td>
<td>RELEVANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The categories are placeholders for actual data.*

---

**APPENDIX 6  EXAMPLE OF CODING DURING ANALYSIS**

This example is only a representation of the coding process during analysis. The actual content and coding categories will vary based on the research topic and data collection methods.