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## OVERCOMING PARADOX FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE DEFINITION: CASE OF LITHUANIA

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**Abstract:** The study explores dilemma around *de jure* adopted social enterprise conception and social enterprise universe de facto developing through bottom-up initiatives. The presented analysis of Lithuania case presents situation, where conception on social enterprise was adopted following EU framing, and good practices of countries, having strong historicall roots of social enterprise development, but bypassed evaluation of local context. The study shows, that narrow definition of social enterprises, applied to the legal framework of the state leads to deterioration of the social entrepreneurship concept and forms alternative area of various social enterprise models embedding global practices and broad definition of social enterprise. In Lithuania two contradictory domains of de jure and de facto social enterprises emerge and create dichotomous situation where some social enterprise forms are permanently supported and recognized by the state and others – not. Situation of Lithuania is especially referring to Central and Eastern Europe countries where natural development of social enterprises was historically interferred. The study elaborates hypothesis, that adoption of social enterprise conception to national legal framework shall be designed primarily corresponding to de-facto existing social enterprise universe and placing them along a continuum. It shows the need to pay attention to local and global evolutionary discourse and appreciate cross sectoral nature of social enterprises and their special place in the overall economy. It reveals that social entrepreneurship as main catalyst for social innovations go beyond conventional "bi-polar" representations of the economic landscape. The non-profit sector can no longer be viewed as separate to the business or state sector, instead, social enterprise models appear as intermediate actors. This view emphasizes the need for synergetic mixes of resources, cross-sectoral policies making and support means to social enterprise organizations, rather than clear-cut frontiers and divisions between sectors.

**Keywords:** Social Enterprise, non-governmental organization, rural community, public services, decentralisations

**JEL Classification:** D21, H23, J21, O15, D62, P43

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