

The combination of commercial and social entrepreneurship in a sports entrepreneurial ecosystem

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Introduction and research question

In the last few years the demand for and supply of sports was extended with various product-market-partner combinations (fitness, outdoorsports, urbansports, competitionsports, lifestylesports, etc.). In Europe, this development was caused on the one hand by more (older) societal motives and values in a more or less non-profit setting, and on the other hand by the rise of profit maximisation motives and values in a profit setting. These different motives and values of sports gradually converge and become intertwined, resulting in an entrepreneurial, hybrid sports landscape. Entrepreneurship is described as a process by which opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated and exploited. With this increasingly hybrid and complex sports landscape, the need to know about these entrepreneurial processes and instruments for multi value creation analysis grows. This explorative study aims to find an approach to identify the collaboration of several sportorganisations in an entrepreneurial process. The central research question is: What is specific to a sports entrepreneurial ecosystem and which conditions, activities and values can be identified in a successful sports entrepreneurial ecosystem?

Theoretical framework

Where business used to be regarded as a single industry, with a focus on profit maximisation and shareholder value, now companies and organisations are more and more viewed from a perspective based on a natural ecosystem (Moore, 1993). In this view, a business ecosystem is defined as 'an economic community supported by a foundation of interacting organisations and individuals - the organisms of the business world'. The economic community produces goods and services of value to customers, who are members of the ecosystem themselves. Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) describe four stages representing the development from an ego system (phase 1) to an eco system (phase 4):

1. Organising around centralised coordination: hierarchy and central planning are central coordination mechanisms (me world)
2. Organising around decentralized coordination: markets, competition and transactions are central coordination mechanisms (it world)
3. Organising around special interest group-driven coordination: stakeholder negotiations and dialogue, social market economy, and networks are central coordination mechanisms (you world)
4. Organising around commons: awareness-based collective action, co-creation, well-being of all are central coordination mechanisms (our world)

In a study on forms of collaboration for sustainable development Carayannis et al (2012) describe a helix model including five subsystems (education, economic, natural, mediabased/cultural and political). This helix is related to the stakeholders/parties in a sports entrepreneurial ecosystem

Several authors (e.g. Isenberg, 2010; Mason and Brown, 2013; Stam, 2015) have identified conditions and aspects of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. These should lead to entrepreneurial activities and multi level value creation.

The value creation within entrepreneurial processes can be analysed by a 4S model (Groen et al, 2002). This consists of four types of capital: strategic capital (Scope), social capital (Social), financial capital (Scale) and cultural capital (Skills) (4S model). Originally this model was focussed on the individual organisation, In this study the spatial capital is added (5S model) and is used to identify multi values within a sport entrepreneurial ecosystem,

Methodology

The above mentioned theories were brought together in a process-oriented, predominantly (inter)subjective and qualitative approach with a focus on collaborating entrepreneurial sportsorganisations. Three case studies were applied, each in a micro/local sports entrepreneurial setting (in which small and medium sized sportsorganisations operate in a collaborative and helix manner) to identify the conditions, activities and multi value creation in a sports entrepreneurial ecosystems

Results and conclusion

In the casestudies it was possible to identify framework conditions and systemic conditions. Entrepreneurial activities were identified on the level of sport entrepreneurial persons, start-up sportorganisations and existing sportsorganisations. Values were identified with a profit focus and a social focus and it seems that all these different focusses (commercial and social entrepreneurship activities and values) can be combined in an accepted way within an sport entrepreneurial ecosystem. Remarkable is that passion for and in sports is a very important factor in binding and bonding the several stakeholders, activities and values.

The approach seems to be promising in giving insight into conditions, activities and the multiple value creation that comes out of a sports entrepreneurial ecosystem. Further development in larger and more complex sports entrepreneurial ecosystems is recommended and the approach is open for adaptation and further construction, based on input from professional and academic fields, and from other interested parties.

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