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**Executive Summary**

## Actor Engagement Practices and Triadic Value Co-creation in the Team Sports Ecosystem

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Our research goal is to investigate actor engagement practices in an interactive multi-actor environment. Furthermore, we analyze value co-creation in triadic actor constellations through an S-D logic ecosystems lens in order to better understand the dynamic realities and underlying mechanisms of micro-level interactions. Actor engagement is not only characterized by the fact it describes a highly interactive process of resource integration, but also includes the notion that actors from very different domains such as customers, firms, public actors come together and interact with each other. Networks with multiple actors are hard to manage for a focal actor as the dynamics of interactions may evolve and change over time. The context of team sports can also be characterized as an environment where various actors engage and exchange resources in a highly dynamic manner. In sports, various actors such as event organizers, customers, volunteers, federations, public bodies, form networks and co-create value. As such, value co-creation can also be studied from a service ecosystem perspective in the field of team sports. There are complex structures of relationships, practices and institutions that frame exchange among actors in this context.

We conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with 22 experts of various kinds in the German Bundesliga. In this context, market-facing (e. g., firms), public (e. g., clubs) and private resource (e. g., spectators) integrators come together to create value collaboratively and form a team sports ecosystem. The qualitative data revealed four general and overarching actor engagement practices in team sports. Firstly, our results show that actors engage in *implementing, informing & discussing, performing* and *signaling* in triadic constellation. Secondly, we found that the practices described have different effects from the triadic perspective. We found *simultaneous, sequential*, and *actor-led* co-creation to be present in team sports ecosystems. The data reveals both that actors or groups of actors have different roles in triadic constellations and how they interact with others. Sometimes, an actor alone initiates value co-creation through resource integration (actor-led triadic value co-creation). This actor engages in a certain practice (e. g., performing) and influences other actors to integrate their resources actively or passively. Other forms of resource exchange can only occur when three actors integrate their resources together (simultaneous triadic value co-creation).

Our framework suggests that there is a variety of possible constellations of resources integration in triadic constellations. This refers not only to different practices of how interactions between actors create value, but also that actors have different roles in such a triadic setting, with regard to resource integration. Managers have to determine what role certain actors play in a triad to understand how they can create value collaboratively.

This study contributes to the theory of multi-actor engagement and value co-creation in complex service ecosystems. It is the first study which refers explicitly to triads as an integral component of service ecosystems, in this case the team sports ecosystem. We show how market-facing, public and private actors co-create value in a triadic constellation. Furthermore, we present value co-creation in triads as a middle course between the complexity of ecosystems and the simplicity of service interaction in dyads. Triads are the simplest form of a larger network. So any practices that can be found in triads are also likely to be found in more complex structures.