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# **THE EVOLVING SOPHISTICATION OF AMBUSH MARKETING: A TYPOLOGY OF STRATEGIES**

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## **TRENDS IN SPONSORSHIP**

As the number of official sport sponsorship programmes has grown, and developed in importance and sophistication, over the past three decades, so too have the efforts made by un-associated brands to capitalize on the financial benefits and media value provided by sport (often commonly referred to as ‘ambushing’). The need for marketers, sponsors, and officials to acknowledge, understand, and defend against ambushing has therefore been magnified by the staggering growth of sponsorship investment during this period of time. The paper therefore examines where we are right now with ambush marketing, presenting a new conceptualization of the phenomenon, and proposing a typology of ambushing strategies. The research upon which it is based has sought to explore the managerial implications of ambushing for sponsors and commercial rights holders, and is thus intended to contribute to a better understanding of how to manage and protect official sport sponsorship programmes.

Following a restructuring in the International Olympic Committee (IOC)’s sponsorship programme by organizers of the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympics, ambush marketing emerged as a significant threat to sport sponsorship, providing marketers with a means of associating with sport properties and event commodities such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) World Cup<sup>1</sup>, without contributing financially to the properties in order to secure any official association. By offering would-be sponsors an alternative means of associating with an event, without substantial expense, ambush marketing has therefore become a major threat to the investments made by official sponsors, potentially devaluing sport sponsorship by cluttering the marketing environment surrounding sponsorship.

These concerns are of particular importance for sport sponsors and commercial rights holders, as the investment made by sponsors – and the revenue generated by event organizers – have grown exponentially over the past twenty-five years. Global sponsorship spending in 1984 amounted to approximately \$2 billion (Meenaghan 1991: 5-10); more recent estimates of sponsorship investment in the United Kingdom alone project sponsorship expenditures to surpass £1 billion in 2009, with projections forecasting a further rise in the run-up to the 2012 London Olympic Games. In total, the 2008 international sponsorship industry was calculated

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<sup>1</sup> Both the IOC and FIFA sell a small number of high-value sponsorship packages, in return for which they undertake to protect their official partners and their sponsorship programmes from being undermined by rival organisations.

to have been worth \$43.5 billion (IEG 2007), a growth of \$19.1 billion over the previous six years. Moreover, marketing expenditures in leveraging and promoting sponsorship are generally agreed to have at least equaled, if not exceeded, the amount spent securing rights, meaning that sponsorship's overall estimated market value may amount to nearly \$100 billion per annum.

Changes to the management of sponsorship rights and the way in which they are being protected have accordingly seen contract values grow considerably over time, making sponsorship a major contributor to sport rights holder's revenues. The development of corporate sponsorship programmes by FIFA at the 1982 World Cup and the IOC at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics gave rise to category exclusivity and commercial rights bundling in sponsorship, which have been key drivers in sponsorship's subsequent growth. For the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, South Korea, Coca-Cola spent \$22 Million to become the exclusive drinks-category sponsor (Sandler and Shani 1989: 9-14); estimates from last summer's Games in Beijing have major sponsors, including Coca-Cola, paying three times that amount, with sponsorship investment for major events projected to rise even further as London 2012 approaches. As a result, the IOC has estimated that sponsorship revenues account for 40% of total IOC turnover, with similar shares reported by other global sport governing bodies (International Olympic Committee 2006).

## **PREVIOUS RESEARCH**

In the sponsorship literature, ambush marketing research has emerged over the past twenty years as an area of considerable interest, characterized by four predominant themes: (i) an identification of what ambush marketing is, and its aims and objectives (Coulson 2004: 32; Sandler and Shani 1989: 9-14; Meenaghan, 1994: 77-88; Crompton 2004: 1-12; Séguin and O'Reilly: 2008, 62-84); (ii) the use of consumer-based measures of ambush marketing's impact on sponsorship, such as post-event consumer recall sponsorship studies (Meenaghan 1998: 305-322; McDaniel and Kinney 1998: 385-403; Lyberger and McCarthy 2001: 130-137); (iii) the discussion of the ethical concerns surrounding ambush marketing and the morality of ambush campaigns (Retsky 1996: 14; Payne 1998: 323-331; O'Sullivan and Murphy 1998: 349-366); and (iv) an exploration of the legal implications of ambush marketing efforts, and the measures available to sponsors and rights holders to combat ambush marketing (Townley, Harrington and Couchman, 1998: 333-348; McKelvey 2006: 114-123); McKelvey and Grady 2008: 550-586). Despite the advances being made in our understanding (for instance, Farrelly, Quester, and Greyser 2005: 31-39), ambushing nevertheless remains a largely underdeveloped field in need of further investigation and analysis.

Recently, ambush marketing research has shifted focus, utilizing qualitative methods to produce case study analyses and interviews rather than simply establishing consumer recall. Such an approach has enabled the renewed investigation of what constitutes ambush marketing, and revealed further insight into how ambush campaigns are perceived within the

sport sponsorship community. Perhaps most important, suggestions of ambush marketing's role as a factor in – and contributor to – marketing clutter, has raised greater concern over the impact of ambushing on sponsorship, and the proliferation of marketing and sponsorship opportunities surrounding major sporting events (Shani and Sandler 1998: 367-383; Séguin and O'Reilly 2008: 62–84).

Despite providing an initial understanding of ambush marketing, a number of criticisms can be made of ambush marketing research to date: first, while a number of counter-ambushing methods have been proposed (Meenaghan 1996: 103-113; Hoek and Gendall 2002: 72-91), these strategies have yet to be meaningfully tested or explored, save those involving legal or legislative protection. Likewise, although the discussion of ambush marketing is deeply rooted in discussions about sport sponsorship, there is a dearth of research into the actual impact of ambush marketing, from a practical, managerial, or strategic perspective. Finally, and most disconcertingly, no definitive understanding of ambush marketing exists, and recent developments in sport marketing have raised renewed concerns over the actual impact of ambushing can have on sponsors. Moreover, it is still not entirely clear what specifically constitutes ambush marketing. Indeed, our common understanding of ambush marketing appears to be based on definitions proposed twenty years ago. Such definitions offer only a limited perspective of the aims, motives, and uses of ambush marketing as a marketing communications tool.

As sponsorship has grown and the problem of ambush marketing has arisen, the need for academic studies of ambushing has emerged. Yet, to date, no satisfactory conceptualization of ambush marketing exists, and our understanding of ambushing is often grounded in studies conducted almost two decades ago. These studies do not adequately represent the evolution of ambushing nor the ensuing and associated concerns and issues that have become apparent over the past twenty years. To address these limitations, this study therefore focuses on adding value to our understanding of ambushing, analyzing the methods and strategies prevalent in ambush marketing practice, and creating a unique typology of ambush marketing, proposed herein.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In order to look deeper into the problems and issues raised within the existing research base, and to address the increasingly outdated view of ambushing taken in past studies, a two-stage research process was employed. The first phase of research involved the creation and development of a database of reported ambushing cases. Based on an in-depth documentary analysis, this provided a historical perspective on ambush marketing attempts, and the subsequent counter-ambushing strategies that sponsors and/or property owners have taken. Given the nature of ambush marketing, the largely underdeveloped theoretical body of work focusing on ambushing, and significant media coverage of ambushing at major sporting events, the use of print and news media, as well as a number of first-hand observations and accounts of ambushing, helped to provide an initial framework for the study.

The document analysis that was undertaken drew from more than 1000 sources relevant to the study of ambush marketing, guerrilla marketing, parasitic marketing, and sport sponsorship. The sources used were predominantly English and French language news items, as well as a collection of German and Polish sources, drawing on the languages spoken and understood by the research team. The works analyzed included print media, web-based news sources, legal documentation, television advertising media, as well as peer-reviewed journal articles and collected ambush marketing visual materials. Rather than providing a detailed review and analysis of the content of the collected pieces, the aim of the document analysis was to create a database of incidents of event sponsorship ambushing. As such, throughout the analysis, dates, events, official event sponsors, ambushers, and the strategies taken both to ambush the event, and to protect against the ambushing, were noted, resulting in **350** detailed cases included in the initial database (*See Table 1 for sample entries*).

**Table 1: Ambush Marketing Case Database (Sample)**

Year	Event	Ambusher	Ambushee	Tactic employed Counter-measures taken
2008	Summer Olympics: Beijing, China	Gatorade (PepsiCo)	Coca-Cola	Gatorade ran a television spot featuring Chinese athletes counting down to 2008; the ad concluded with a group of children, aged approximately 7-10, in a large Olympic-training style centre playing table tennis counting down to 2012 and 2016
2006	FIFA World Cup: Germany	Bavaria Brewery	Budweiser	Stadium officials forced fans to remove Bavaria's promotional wear – orange lederhosen promoting Bavaria – and watch the game in their underwear.
1996	UEFA Euro 1996: England	Nike	Umbro	Nike purchased all poster space/advertising sites in and around Wembley Park tube station as a means of promoting the brand during the event; these actions sparked UEFA's pre-emptive measures taken for Euro 2000 and tournaments since (renting all advertising media within 1-3km radii of venues).
1992	Summer Olympics: Barcelona, Spain	American Express	Visa	American Express ran advertisements correctly stating that visitors to Spain 'don't need a visa'; Visa took no official action, and American Express publicly defended their advertising campaign as legitimate and not ambushing.
1984	Summer Olympics: Los Angeles, CA	Nike	Converse	Nike developed murals near the Olympic Games sites featuring Nike-sponsored track athletes, visible from within the Los Angeles Olympic Coliseum, resulting in 42% of American's confusing Nike as an official sponsor of the Games.

It is important to note that, for this study, only those instances of ambush marketing whose impact on sponsorship is of considerable interest or notable consequence, have been included. Most major sporting events (such as the Olympics or the World Cup), employ ambush marketing protection teams to investigate sometimes hundreds of potential ambush marketing cases, many of which are simple intellectual property rights infringements involving the illegal or incorrect use of trademarks, copyrights, manufacturing of merchandise, or re-distribution of tickets. While cases such as these are of obvious interest to event rights holders, their impact on sponsorship programmes is generally minimal and can easily be dealt

with by relevant authorities using cease and desist letters, or the enforcement and protection of an organization’s intellectual property rights. In order to properly assess and understand the nature of ambush marketing relating to sponsorship, in this study only those cases involving the ambushing of direct competitors, incidents drawing international media coverage, multi-national promotional campaigns, or those attempts which garnered preventative or reactionary counter-ambushing efforts were included.

The second phase of research consisted of a series of semi-structured interviews with industry professionals and academic researchers, exploring their knowledge and opinions of ambush marketing, their perception of its place in marketing and their views on observations made by the research team during the first phase of the study. Respondents were selected based on experience, either direct or indirect, with ambush marketing at both the strategic and tactical levels, across a variety of sports; in the defense against ambush tactics; or on the basis of past research experience. In total, fourteen respondents participated in the interviews, during which they detailed their experiences of sponsorship and ambush marketing. Interviewees were also asked to define ambush marketing, and to explain in detail the methods, tactics, and strategies used by ambushers, sponsors, and events rights holders, in relation to ambush marketing.

The interviews employed a grounded approach aimed at generating an insight into practitioner perspectives on the ambushing phenomenon. Responses were digitally recorded when permitted and then subsequently transcribed, allowing each transcript to be coded and analyzed. Key themes, such as the nature of ambush marketing, the parallels between marketing and law present in ambush practices, and issues surrounding its legitimacy and the authority of sponsors, guided the interviews, and provided a useful platform in further analyzing the case database that had been created.

**Table 2: Interviewee profiles**

<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>Number of interviews</b>
Academics	4
Consultants	5
Sponsors	3
Governing bodies	2
Total	14

**The Evolution of Ambushing**

In re-examining the history of ambush marketing through the case database, an evolution in the tactics used by ambushers, the counter-measures taken, and the communication media available to ambushing brands/corporations, is clearly apparent. As with sponsorship, whose growth and development over time has been well-documented (Meenaghan 1998: 305-322; Crimmins and Horn, 1996: 11-21), so too has ambushing evolved since its emergence in the 1980s. This evolution appears to have been driven by technological advancements and the growing financial importance of sport marketing. While television advertising continues to be an important vehicle for ambush campaigns during major events, the internet and the rise of

social media have recently grown into a notable marketing platform for non-sponsors, and offered new and unexplored opportunities for marketers. Moreover, the appeal of ambushing for companies has only heightened over time, particularly given the high-cost, undefined-reward environment that typifies sport sponsorship, which often contributes in emphasizing the challenges facing sponsors.

Also influencing ambush marketing's changing nature have been the counter-ambush mechanisms used by rights holders, an indication of the moderate success enjoyed by event organizers in their continuing attempts to combat ambush marketers. The earliest tactics employed by ambushers took advantage of easily identifiable and available marketing opportunities being passed over by official sponsors, including signage near event sites and event broadcast sponsorship. However, given the efforts of sponsors and rights holders to better protect sponsorships and official partners, the availability of such opportunities has waned. For instance, when the IOC negotiates television broadcast rights with media partners, it now restricts the use of the term 'broadcast sponsor' within such agreements, obliging broadcasters to police their own advertising partners. Also, UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) has taken broadcast sponsorship protection a step further, buying and controlling all advertising time during matches, and allotting the time to sponsors. As a result, sponsors are not only protected from potential ambush campaigns, but are also 'obliged' to better leverage their investment.

Moreover, UEFA have additionally spearheaded the use and enforcement of marketing exclusion zones surrounding stadia and event host sites, as a result of Nike's Euro 1996 and 1998 FIFA World Cup promotions. These exclusion zones have also now been implemented by the IOC and are seen as a required element of any Olympic-host bid. Indeed, the IOC now expects that all host bidders will undertake to pass legislation protecting official partners from ambush marketers. Exclusion zones have forced ambushers to become more creative and encouraged greater planning for larger, more ambitious ambush campaigns. While ambushing has infrequently been strategically managed, counter-measures such as exclusion zones have forced ambush marketers to better plan, commit greater time and allocate more resources than ever before, to successfully ambush events. For rights holders and sponsors, though, the growing number of ambush marketers, as well as the increased media attention given to ambushing since the 2006 FIFA World Cup, is evidence of ambush marketers' willingness to adapt to any counter measures being used. Among the methods employed for more recent sporting events, online promotions, viral marketing campaigns, off-site giveaways, and increasingly creative and legally-conscious campaigns, have all served as alternatives to early ambush media, challenging the creativity and authority of official sponsors.

### **The Practitioner's View**

The evolution of ambush marketing evidenced in the database would also appear to reflect practitioner views and experiences of ambushing. A number of recurring themes emerged from the definitions offered by respondents, including an emphasis placed on the role of

authority, intended association and the broad range of ambushing techniques used. Most interestingly, each of the respondents – when asked to describe ambush marketing in their own words – re-iterated the difficulty practitioners face in defining ambushing, noting the broad area of activities and tactics used, and the generally broad, grey area that an ambush marketing definition must cover.

One participant defined ambushing as “a company conducting marketing activity around a sports property... which creates in consumers’ mind a link to the event... including a broad spectrum of behaviors and activities”. The allusion to the multitude of activities included in ambushing was echoed by other respondents, who variously noted that: “you can’t limit it to any one medium” and “no one sentence can define it”. Another definition put forward, “gaining media exposure for an event for you that you haven’t purchased the official rights”, highlights the emphasis placed on exposure and awareness by many.

In response to questions regarding their awareness of ambush marketing as it impacts sponsorship and commercial rights values, two interviewees explicitly stated that while ambush marketing can pose certain logistical and managerial issues for rights holders, its existence is nevertheless indicative of a valuable property and is as such not entirely unwelcome. While the interviewees agreed that sponsors must better leverage their investments and capitalize on the marketing opportunities available to them, each of the respondents stressed the view that sponsorship protection and the defense against ambush marketing is the responsibility of the rights holder. Hence, the consensus was that it should be the likes of UEFA and the IOC which protect sponsorship investments rather than the sponsor.

Ultimately, it was generally problematic for respondents to define ambush marketing in concise terms, many of the respondents instead referring back to the various ambushing goals or objectives set, the wide array of tactics available, and ambushing’s unlimited scope in terms of reach and applicability. Given an absence of consensus, and based upon an analysis of the case database and the general content of the interviews, the authors therefore propose a new definition of ambush marketing. In many ways, given the more ‘capitalistic nature’ of ambush marketing that was identified by respondents and witnessed in the case database, ‘ambush’ marketing as a title may be somewhat misleading. Rather, the French ‘*pseudo-parrainage*’, or pseudo-sponsorship, is perhaps more applicable. Nevertheless, in re-envisioning ambush marketing communications today, the following definition is proposed:

*“Ambush marketing is a form of associative marketing which is designed by an organization to capitalize on the awareness, attention, goodwill, and other benefits, generated by having an association with an event or property, without the organization having an official or direct connection to that event or property.”*

## **Re-Visiting Ambushing Strategies**



As well as debating the nature of ambush marketing, past studies have also sought to identify the tactics or techniques used by ambushers in associating themselves with sporting events and their sponsors. Past examinations of ambushing have previously revealed five marketing opportunities typically targeted by ambushers, thereby allowing ambushing campaigns to be categorised into the following: sponsoring the broadcast of an event; sponsoring subcategories and leveraging this sponsorship aggressively to overshadow competitor sponsors; buying advertising time surrounding event broadcasts, before and after official telecasts; aligning major promotions, not sponsorship related, with an event and actively leveraging those promotions; and the use of alternative creative means – highlighting the innovation and dynamism of ambushers, and the plethora of opportunities to ambush events available (Meenaghan 1994: 77-88; Meenaghan 1996: 103-113). Unfortunately, despite underlining the importance of ambush marketing as a marketing communications tool, this list of opportunities reflects an increasingly outdated view of ambush marketing. Since its inception, ambushing has developed in sophistication, yet research and the accompanying literature have failed to capture the evolution in practice.

That said, some updated and expanded categorizations have been proposed, reflecting the changes in ambush marketing tactics over time (Crompton 2004: 1-12). As well as including the sponsorship of event broadcasts and the use of television advertising time surrounding an event as previously noted, a further five potential forms of ambushing have been identified: the sponsorship of associated entities (other than the organizers/rights holders); the use of advertising media near/in proximity of the event/venues; advertising using a theme or implied association; creating a competitive attraction to distract from the event; as well as suggesting the accidental ambushing of an event due to a lack of diligence on the part of the organizer. This categorization, as with preceding attempts within sponsorship literature, emphasized above all the marketing opportunities available to ambush marketers, as well as providing a new perspective on ambushing's reach as a marketing communications tool.

Based on these categories above, a number of pertinent comments should be made; as previously noted, increasingly in sport broadcast agreements, rights holders are seeking to control broadcast sponsorship availability and more actively protecting sponsors. The IOC, in an effort to protect against various forms of broadcasting ambushes, now stipulates within their broadcast contracts that media partners must regulate advertisements more strictly and prohibit use of the phrase 'broadcast sponsor', and variations thereof. Similarly, UEFA, as part of their sponsorship packages, purchase all advertising time during their event broadcasts and distribute that time to their sponsors, stopping any broadcast sponsorship ambushing and forcing sponsors to better leverage their associations.

Likewise, based on UEFA's experiences at the 1996 European Championships (and the subsequent 1998 FIFA World Cup), the use of advertising media in and around host venues is now strictly policed by event organizers and local governments. This is due to the advent of marketing exclusion zones surrounding stadia, and the enactment of ambush marketing legislation in Olympic host cities. However, despite the advancement and continued

progression of counter-ambush marketing measures, the growth of ambush as a communication tool has still accelerated, thanks in part to the growth of new media, the remarkable growth of the sport marketplace, and the sophistication of sport sponsorship (brought about by the fragmentation of the sponsorship rights market). While broadcast sponsorship – for the biggest sporting events – is now largely protected against ambushing, other opportunities have emerged and new methods developed, especially with the advent of new social media. In this context, rather than categorizing more recent or contemporary ambushing attempts in the same way as those proposed before, in this paper we present a typological approach aimed at conceptualizing modern ambush marketing. This helps in addressing the fundamental lack of a theoretical conceptualization that has restricted ambush marketing research to date.

For example, in previous categorizations, broadcast sponsorship efforts are grouped as one; within the new typology proposed here, the distinction is made between sponsors of a member association or club leveraging their tie to an event, and the efforts of a direct competitor of an official sponsor purposely ambushing their rival in an effort to devalue their sponsorship and mislead consumers. As such, our typology is less a categorization of the marketing communications opportunities available to ambushers (for example, broadcast sponsorship; outdoor advertising media; promotional giveaways). Rather, it adopts a multi-dimensional perspective of ambushing objectives and implications, and of the themes and tactics used by ambushers.

Having analyzed the ambushing database and the practitioner interviews that were undertaken, eleven types of ambush have been identified. These types accounts for ambushing activities which range from the direct attack of one organization on a rival, to the unintentional association of a company with an event due to reputation or past marketing efforts (See Table 3). The typology draws upon and develops earlier studies on ambushing, and includes a number of the same general themes. However, this new typology is intended to more accurately reflect managerial considerations and underlying marketing communications planning activities undertaken by ambush marketers, and focuses less on grouping together efforts in broadly descriptive categories. The eleven types of ambushing identified are further divided into three categories – direct ambush activities, indirect or associative ambushing, and incidental or un-intentional ambush attempts – further highlighting the different strategies, motives, and measures used by non-sponsors to develop an attachment to an event.

**Table 3: A typology of ambush marketing**

	Ambush Strategy	Definition	Case example	Number of cases observed in the database

<b>DIRECT AMBUSH ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>PREDATORY Ambushing</b>	The deliberate ambushing of a market competitor, intentionally and knowingly attacking a rival's official sponsorship in an effort to gain market share, and to confuse consumers as to whom is the official sponsor	<b>Heineken, UEFA European Championships, 2008</b>  Heineken, in an effort to ambush Carlsberg's official sponsorship, created marching band-style "Trom-Pets" (drum hats) for Dutch fans on their way to Bern which also acted as drums, branded with the Heineken logo and name; the company released advertisements featuring Dutch fans travelling to Switzerland, visiting the official Oranje fans camping complex, and Heineken marketing executives plotting ways to ambush the European Championships	<b>34</b>
	<b>COAT-TAIL Ambushing</b>	The attempt by an organization to directly associate itself with a property for the purpose of ambushing through a legitimate link, such as the sponsoring of participating athletes, or of a participating team or association, without securing official event sponsor status.  Not to be confused with the oft-used term 'piggy-backing'; while piggy-backing implies acceptance or complicity, coat-tail ambushing refers to the association of a company to an event for the purpose of associating with the property	<b>Nike, Beijing Summer Olympics, 2008</b>  Following Liu Xiang's injury in the men's 110m hurdles, Nike released a full-page ad in the major Beijing newspapers featuring an image of the disconsolate Liu, a Nike-endorsed athlete, and the tagline: 'Love competition. Love risking your pride. Love winning it back. Love giving it everything you've got. Love the glory. Love the pain. Love sport even when it breaks your heart.'	<b>89</b>
	<b>PROPERTY INFRINGEMENT Ambushing</b>	The intentional use of protected intellectual property, including trademarked and copyrighted property such as logos, names, words, and symbols, or knowingly infringing on the rules and regulations of an event, in a brand's marketing as a means of attaching itself in the eyes of consumers to a particular property or event	<b>Unibet, UEFA European Championships, 2008</b>  Betting company Unibet released a series of magazine advertisements in Polish magazine Pitkanonza for online betting on the European Championships, explicitly featuring the words 'Euro 2008' and football in their adverts	<b>47</b>
<b>ASSOCIATIVE AMBUSH ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>SPONSOR SELF-Ambushing</b>	The marketing communications activities by an official sponsor above and beyond what has been agreed in the sponsorship contract, effectively ambushing the property which they support, and infringing upon other official sponsors	<b>Carlsberg, UEFA European Championships, 2008</b>  Official sponsor Carlsberg extended its promotions beyond the scope of their sponsorship rights, effectively ambushing the other sponsors by going beyond their contractual allowances; as well as their in-stadium promotions and signage, Carlsberg also gave away headbands to fans during the tourney, sporting fake team-colored hair; in the fan zones surrounding the stadium, Carlsberg gave away t-shirts to fans with the Carlsberg marks for those visiting the brand's promotional booth	<b>8</b>
	<b>ASSOCIATIVE Ambushing</b>	The use of imagery or terminology to create an allusion that an organization has links to a sporting event or property, without making any specific references or implying an official association with the property	<b>Nike, Beijing Summer Olympics, 2008</b>  Throughout their 2008 summer marketing, Nike made considerably use of the number 8, a symbol of luck and fortune in China, as well as a symbol for the Games (whose start date was 08.08.08). Nike use similar design patterns in several shoes and items of clothing, using the number 8, as well as drawing comparisons to the Beijing Olympic Stadium 'Birds Nest' design, and the five rings logo	<b>84</b>

	<b><i>DISTRACTIVE Ambushing</i></b>	The creation of a presence or disruption at or around an event in order to promote a brand, without specific reference to the event itself, its imagery or themes, in order to intrude upon public consciousness and gain awareness from the event's audience	<b>Bentley, The Open Championship, 2008</b>  Bentley set-up a row of cars prominently displayed outside Hillside Golf Club, directly adjacent to Royal Birkdale, the host course of The Open, a means of attracting interest and, in term, deterring from Lexus' official sponsorship of the event	12
	<b><i>VALUES Ambushing</i></b>	The use of an event or property's central value or theme to imply an association with the property in the mind of the consumer	<b>Puma, European Championships, 2008</b>  Advertised their football line during the spring and summer with the slogan "JUNE 2008: TOGETHER EVERYWHERE" - a direct reference to the European Championships being played that month, and the underlining themes of unity and anti-racism of the tournament	10
	<b><i>INSURGENT Ambushing</i></b>	The use of surprise, aggressively promoted, one-off street-style promotions or giveaways, at an event, in order to maximize awareness, while minimizing investment and distracting attention away from official sponsors and the event itself	<b>K-Swiss, French Open - Roland Garros, 2008</b>  K-Swiss ambushed rivals Adidas and clothing sponsor Lacoste in a one-off guerrilla marketing ploy, setting up an enormous purple K-Swiss branded tennis ball on top of a crashed car, along a major route to Roland Garros	56
	<b><i>PARALLEL PROPERTY Ambushing</i></b>	The creation of, or sponsorship of, a rival event or property to be run in parallel to the main ambush target, associating the brand with the sport or the industry at the time of the event, thus capitalizing on the main event's goodwill	<b>Nike Human Race, International, 2008</b>  Nike organized a global 'counter-event' called 'The Human Race', being run in 24 cities across the world - including Shanghai - starting 7 days following the Olympics and featuring massive international marketing throughout the Olympics centered around Nike and the marathon	17
<b>INCIDENTAL AMBUSH ACTIVITIES</b>	<b><i>UNINTENTIONAL Ambushing</i></b>	The incorrect consumer identification of a non-sponsoring company as an official sponsor, unknowingly or inexplicitly, based on a previous or expected association with an event	<b>Speedo, Beijing Summer Olympics, 2008</b>  Speedo earned considerable media attention throughout the Beijing Games as a result of the success of swimmers in their LZR Racer swimsuits, resulting in the brand being identified as a sponsor and cluttering the market	7
	<b><i>SATURATION Ambushing</i></b>	The strategic increase in the amount of marketing communications around the time of an event by a non-sponsor in order to maximize awareness of the brand during the event, aggressively marketing the brand around an event, and maximizing the use of available advertising before, during, and after, the broadcast	<b>Lucozade, Beijing Summer Olympics, 2008</b>  Lucozade, during the Olympic Games, aggressively promoted their brand through print and television adverts, above and beyond their standard marketing, prominently featuring athletes and a variety of sports, in line with the Olympics	6

N.B. **Direct ambush activities** are defined as the intended, targeted association of a brand (by an ambusher) with an event or property, through a clear, an explicit reference or an intended connection to the ambushee; **Indirect ambush activities** are defined as the association of a brand with an event or property, through suggestion or indirect reference, drawing on the awareness and attention of consumers surrounding an event, without express reference or attachment to the property; **Incidental ambush activities** are defined as the presumed association of a brand with an event or property, without that brand establishing a clear, explicit or intended connection.

The eleven types of ambushing identified reflect the diversity of ambushing activity that has recently become evident. As such, the typology is intended to enhance our understanding of the aims of ambushers, while also serving to highlight some of issues associated with identifying what constitutes ambush marketing.

While individual ambushing organizations will have different motives and objectives underpinning their campaigns, the ultimate impact of their efforts upon sponsorship and event-linked marketing have historically been the defining factor in determining the nature of ambush marketing activity. As such, sabotage marketing or promotional giveaways outside a sporting event, while not directly attacking or impacting sponsorship in the majority of cases, nevertheless impacts upon consumer awareness and brand image transfer, thus negatively influencing official sponsorship effectiveness.

Moreover, whereas ambush marketing's previous and primary aim may have been to confuse consumers about who officially sponsors an event, or to detract from an official sponsorship's media profile enabling derivation of the same brand association benefits as official sponsors, contemporary ambush marketing appears to have evolved into a more broad-ranging, arguably more mainstream, form of marketing communication. Undoubtedly, in the case of major competitors such as Nike and adidas, Pepsi and Coca-Cola, or American Express and Visa, history has shown that influencing sponsorship success has been and continues to be an element of ambush marketing. However, as one sponsorship executive noted during interviews conducted as part of this study, "ambush marketing is client dependent, and is seen as a different approach to marketing, an opportunity parallel to sponsorship".

In this context, ambush marketing can be viewed as an alternative to sponsorship for some companies and brands, depending upon their budget, interests, and brand image; for other organizations, taking a more bold, daring approach to marketing their products or services, utilizing unauthorized and defiant means such as ambushing, represents an alternative means of gaining some of the same benefits of association with an event as sponsorship, while maintaining a connection with their own brand ethos. Throughout the database gathered and analyzed here, certain trends are readily apparent in examining those companies and brands actively ambushing, and those sponsors commonly affected by ambushing. Less conventional, often fashionable and anti-authoritarian brands, such as those emphasized by

companies like Nike and Pepsi, appear significantly more likely to ambush sporting events, as compared to their more official-sponsorship focused rivals Coca-Cola and adidas.

However, the ambushing typology presented here represents one particular newly emergent trend in sport marketing, the pre-emptive ambushing of a rival by an official sponsor, which has shifted power away from traditional ambushers. While few cases exist to date, adidas' marketing activities at the 2008 UEFA European Championships represent an acute awareness of the threat posed by competitors Nike and Puma, and a move towards claiming full benefits of their sponsorship association. While not all official sponsors can be expected to pre-emptively attack known ambushers so blatantly, using ambush marketing techniques to combat ambush marketing is a development worthy of greater investigation.

## **IMPLICATIONS & CONCLUSIONS**

The aim in formulating the typology presented here was to enable a better understanding of the process and management practices underpinning ambushing to be established, as a means both of better protecting sponsorship and of defending against ambush campaigns. While identifying tactics used in the past – such as broadcast sponsorship – has raised awareness of the threat of ambushing and given rise to possible counter-ambush attempts, the continued confusion regarding what constitutes ambush marketing and how to address the threats posed by ambush marketing has underlined the need to better assess which campaigns legitimately threaten sponsorship, and to what degree.

In examining past ambush campaigns from the database, collected within the context of this new typology, a distinct shift in paradigms is evident. Whilst early in ambush marketing's history, predatory and coat-tail ambush strategies were most prominent, more recently ambush marketing has had a clearer emphasis on associative marketing and the overall capitalization on the value of sporting events. Cases from the 1980s through to the mid-1990s exhibit a clearer and better-defined competitive relationship between ambusher and ambushee, with a number of attacks explicitly seeking to undermine a rival's sponsorship activities (such as American Express's 'You don't need a visa' Olympic-themed campaigns). However, in more contemporary examples, possibly reflecting the dramatic increase in sponsorship value over the last decade, a more indirect, opportunistic approach now more accurately describes ambush marketing.

The emergence of relatively new and unexplored ambush tactics, such as values-based ambushing and self-ambushing, re-affirm the value associated with these mega-sporting events, and the potential benefits sought by organizations recognizing this worth. Brands, this shift would seem to indicate, have adopted a much stronger focus on gaining and encouraging some benefit from a presumed association with an event, in place of early suggestions that ambushers sought primarily to detract from sponsorship and negatively impact a sponsor's returns. While in some cases, this is surely still a main focus, in capturing attention and drawing consumer awareness away from sponsors, ambushers are ultimately affecting the

activities of sponsors, our findings point away from intentional confusion and distraction, towards a broader, more opportunistic and benefit-driven perspective of ambushing.

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