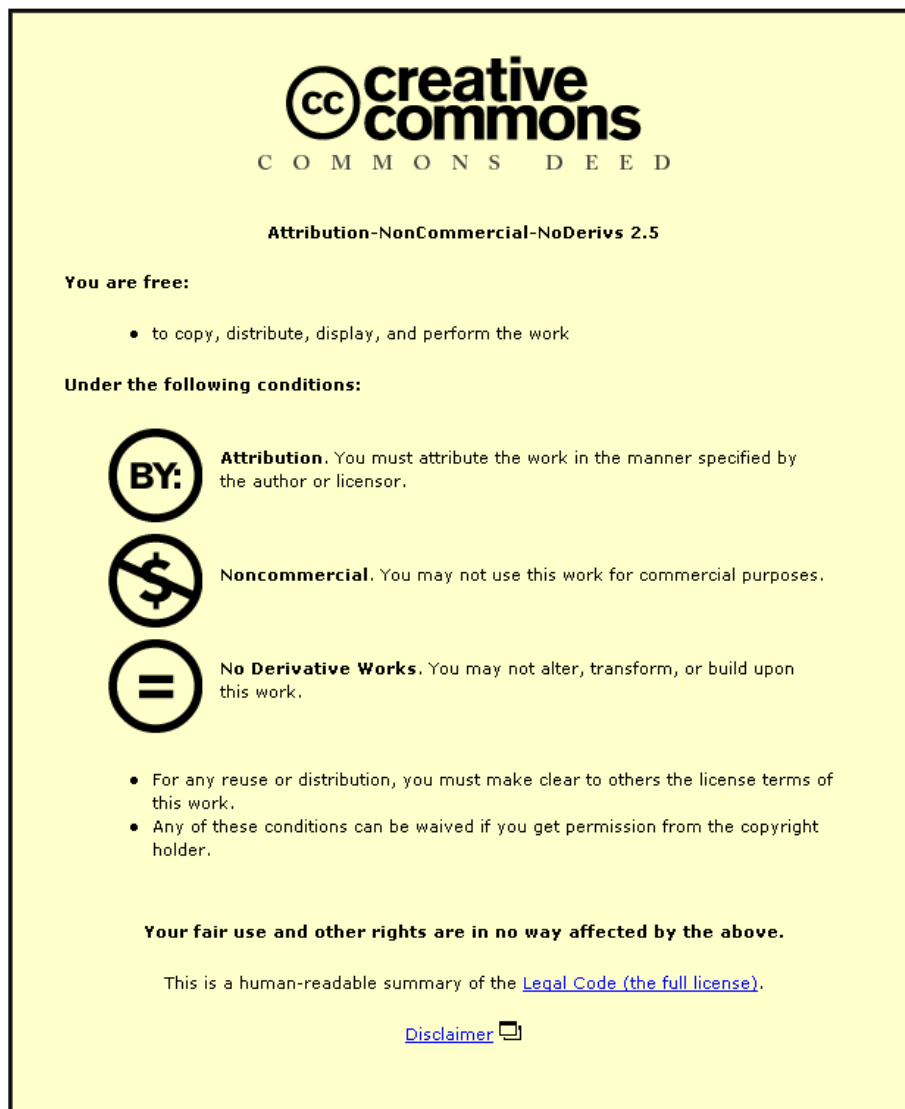


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Sport Marketing in Cyprus

The Dynamics of the Sport Sponsorship Context:

Emergence, Development and Management Practices

in the Football Industry

A thesis submitted to the
School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences
at Loughborough University
in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the underlying mechanisms and processes that shape sport sponsorship in Cyprus. A systematic review of the international sport sponsorship literature (1980-2009) is undertaken and used as the guide for the qualitative empirical study concentrating on football sponsorship activity undertaken in Cyprus as a developing sport sponsorship market. The systematic review reveals sponsorship management structures, practices, tendencies, and models adopted at a range of national settings, and discloses contrasts that exist in different contexts. The findings of the systematic review highlight the management practices employed by sponsors, such as their motives, decision-making practices, activation and leveraging initiatives, objectives, and evaluation processes. With regard to the empirical investigation, sponsorship activity is viewed and interpreted within the broader social and cultural context in which it takes place. The analysis of the findings is informed by critical realism paradigm, so that the underlying causal mechanisms and structures shaping (or influencing) sponsorship activity in Cyprus are identified and discussed.

Specifically, the findings of study, which focused on the top division of the national professional league, revealed the existence of a sponsorship continuum involving four significantly different sponsorship approaches, ranging from purely philanthropic to heavily rational and commercial. Interestingly, the study revealed the interdependence of global and local processes within the sponsorship-related practices, suggesting that sponsorship arrangements in this specific context are marked culturally by processes of glocalisation. Such processes appeared to be vividly expressed in sponsorship-related projects in Cyprus, and involved an amalgamation of several local and cultural factors such as a strong prevalence of localism, nationalism, political clientelism, and reliance on personal relations. Community pressures seemed to have a central role in sponsorship related decision-making, whilst sponsorship activity appeared also to be influenced by the structure of the sponsors' industry, the organisational structure and corporate culture, as well as by the structure and local specificity of the football market in Cyprus. More specifically, competitive imbalance of the national league, politicisation of football, the level of competition within a particular industry, and centrality of authority and control (both organisational and cultural), are additional factors that appeared to impact sponsorship activity in the specific market.

Acknowledgements

*“As you set out for Ithaka
hope the journey is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery”*

C.P. Cavafy

This is exactly what the PhD journey was for me... an Ithaka. It was a long one, difficult, hard, but at the same time challenging, enjoyable, full of discovery, inspiring, exciting. Now, with the journey past, I realise that it would not have been the same without having the specific people around me, my “fellow travelers”. Therefore, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Ian Henry and Dr. Guillaume Bodet, my supervisor and co-supervisor, who complemented each other wonderfully well. Ian and Gui are not only mentors to me. I would like to thank them for being inspirational, supportive, and patient. I would also like to thank them for their immense knowledge, scholarly inputs, valuable guidance, insightful discussions we had, and consistent encouragement they provided me with along this fulfilling road. It has been an honour to work with them.

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Chapter 1- Introduction

1.1 Thesis Topic

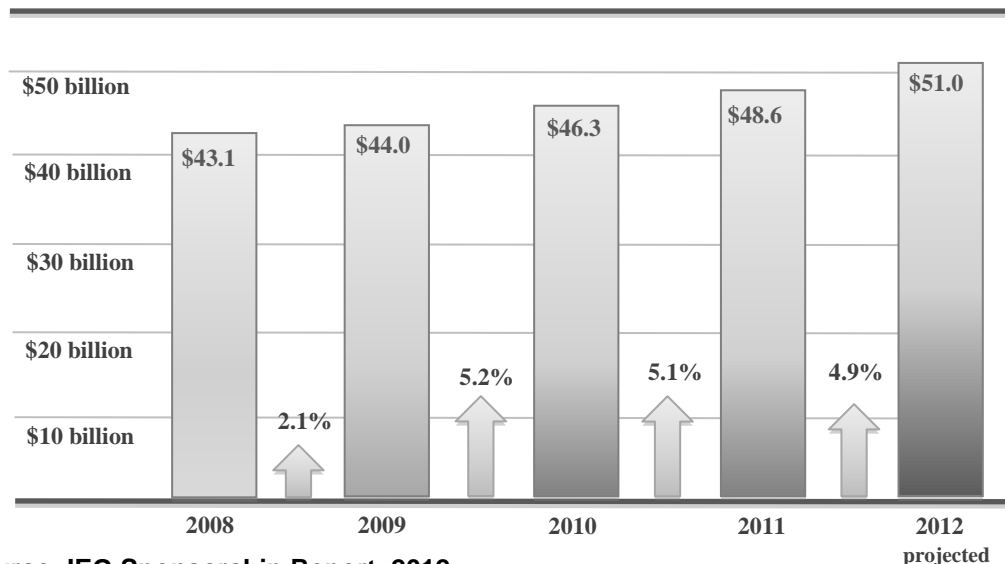
While commercial sponsorship is a relatively contemporary phenomenon, sponsorship is a concept which originated in Ancient Greek and Roman times. The sponsorship of sport was originally the patronage of sporting events by leaders in the community, such as emperors or kings, providing entertainment for the public (Carrigan & Carrigan, 1997). In ancient Rome in 65 BC, Caesar sponsored gladiatorial festivals to curry political favour and enhance popularity (Head, 1988), while the wealthy citizens of Ancient Greece supported athletic and arts festivals in order to enhance their social standing (Burton, Quester, & Farrelly, 1998). In fact, the word sponsorship derives from the Greek word *horigia* which is a combination of the words *horos* (the dance) and *igoumai* (I lead or direct) (Dalakas, 1996).

Nowadays, the concept and purpose of sponsorship has changed dramatically. Although there is not a universally accepted definition on sponsorship, early conceptualisations of the sponsorship activity that used to encompass the aspect of philanthropy or patronage (see Gratton & Taylor, 1985; Mescon & Tilson, 1987) seemed to be eclipsed today. Gradually, there was a general consensus in the literature that sponsorship was an investment in cash or kind relating to the purchase of an association with a property in return for the exploitable commercial potential linked to that property (Cornwell, 1995; Meenaghan, 1983, 1991; Otker, 1988). According to Quester and Bal (2012), the commercial potential of sponsorship at the time of that definition was related mainly to the objectives of attaining brand exposure and attracting audience's attention, but this definition "has become obsolete as sponsorship practice has evolved" (p. 296). Nowadays, the sponsorship medium has come to be regarded as much more than just a component of the promotional mix. Sponsorship is regarded today as the means for achieving more refined goals such as the creation of corporate identity and

corporate culture (Cunningham, Cornwell & Coote, 2009; Garry, Broderick & Lahiffe, 2008; Hickman, Lawrence & Ward, 2005; Pichot, Pierre & Burlot, 2009). In fact, sponsorship had been considered as strategic resource which has the capacity to create a sustainable competitive advantage for the sponsor (Amis Pant & Slack, 1997; Amis, Slack & Berrett, 1999). Moreover, the sponsorship medium has been developed to serve as a partnership and relationship-building strategy (McCarville & Copeland, 1994; Olkkonen, 2001; Olkkonen, Tikkanen & Alajoutsijarvi, 2000).

The realisation of the importance of sponsorship led to a remarkable number of organisations using sponsorship as the means for achieving their commercial objectives. Therefore, the resources devoted to sponsorship related activities have increased considerably. Although it is difficult to estimate sponsorship spending accurately, it is worth noting the impressive improvements that have taken place during the last three decades. According to Sponsorship Research International (1998), world-wide sponsorship expenditure was reported to be \$2 billion in 1984, a figure that had increased to \$18.1 billion in 1997. Total global sponsorship spending in 2008 escalated to \$43.1 billion, whilst it was projected to reach \$51.0 billion in 2012 (*IEG Sponsorship Report, 2012*).

Table 1:1 Total Global Sponsorship Spending.



Source: IEG Sponsorship Report, 2012.

With regard to the European market, 2010 sponsorship spending reached \$12.9 billion whilst sponsorship spending was projected to reach \$14.1 billion in 2012, an 9.3% increase over 2010.

Table 1:2 Global Sponsorship Spending by Region.

	2010 Spending	2011 Spending	Increase from 2010	2012 Spending (Projected)	Increase from 2011 (Projected)
EUROPE	\$12.9 billion	\$13.5 billion	4.7%	\$14.1 billion	4.4%
ASIA PACIFIC	\$10.6 billion	\$11.2 billion	5.7%	\$11.9 billion	6.3%
CENTRAL/SOUTH AMERICA	\$3.6 billion	\$3.7 billion	5.6%	\$3.9 billion	5.4%
ALL OTHER COUNTRIES	\$2 billion	\$2.1 billion	5.1%	\$2.2 billion	1.3%

Source: IEG Sponsorship Report, 2012

Although there is a range of activities that represent sponsorship opportunities for sponsors, sport has proved the most popular sector with 69% of North America sponsorship spending devoted to a variety of sport properties (*IEG Sponsorship report, 2012*). The scene is similar to Europe, since Thwaites (1995) mentioned that the sports sector may attract as much as 75-80% of spending in the UK. Moreover, according to a report delivered by the International Marketing Reports as cited by Donohue (2007), Germany represents the largest sports sponsorship market in Europe, followed by the UK. As the same report indicated, football appeared as the sport receiving the largest amount of sponsorship revenue since it represented approximately 38% of the total sponsorship spending within the European sport sponsorship sector.

Although there is not much sport sponsorship evidence with regard to the Cyprus market, it is indeed the case that during the last two decades sponsorship has grown significantly. Sport sponsorship development, however, is still regarded as being at an early stage. In fact, sponsorship has just recently been recognised as

a promotional activity by companies in Cyprus. In the past, sponsorship participation was largely confined to the private sector, with very few large companies investing in sport. However, during the last two decades, corporate spending in Cyprus has grown substantially, as evidenced in the amount of sponsorship deals and the money invested, with the state-owned industry, such as telecommunications and electricity authorities, becoming interested in entering sports sponsorship agreements. Although there are no studies or official records indicating the growth of sponsorship in Cyprus, a review of local newspapers' records illustrates that sport sponsorship activity has grown dramatically. Companies appear to be highly interested in associating their name with sporting activities, organisations, events, teams, and individual athletes. On the other hand, decreasing reliance on government support, due to a range of reasons (EU regulations, increased competition for resources etc.) has forced sport clubs and organisations to search for new sources of revenue, turning sports sponsorship into a highly valued and popular activity.

1.2 Research Aim

Given the importance assigned to sport sponsorship world-wide, the goal of this study is twofold. The study will first conduct a systematic review of the sponsorship literature on an international basis, which is expected to highlight tendencies and management practices employed by sponsors world-wide. The systematic review of the literature is expected to uncover the existence of possible differences and discrepancies with regard to the sport sponsorship structures and mechanisms that exist in different contexts. The results of the systematic review will, subsequently, form the basis for the development of the second part of the study, which aims to shift the focus onto a relatively immature and less developed sponsorship market, Cyprus, in an attempt to gain insight into the sponsorship decision-making and management processes employed by sponsors in this specific context.

Considering the emerging role of the sponsorship medium in Cyprus during the last two decades, as well as the lack of empirical evidence on the topic of sport sponsorship in the Cypriot context, this study will attempt to investigate through a qualitative research design the extent to which the sponsorship mechanisms and structures that are prevalent in the literature are also evident in the particular sponsorship context. Specifically, the purpose of the second part of the study is to examine the sponsorship management practices adopted by sponsors investing in football sponsorship in Cyprus, such as the driving forces impacting their decision to invest and the several mechanisms they employ in managing those sponsorship arrangements. Those mechanisms include the priorities and objectives sponsors set, the decision-making process they employ, the criteria for selecting their sponsorship arrangements, the audiences they attempt to reach, the leveraging practices they use in supporting their sponsorship investment, and the way in which they evaluate their sponsorship investment.

1.3 Rationale

The main rationale underpinning the decision to investigate the specific research topic is that, although sport sponsorship is a heavily researched area, and despite the fact that there have important and comprehensive reviews in the literature attempting to cover the topic of sport sponsorship (e.g. Cornwell & Maignan, 1998, Walliser, 2003), those were not systematic. The only attempt made to conduct a systematic review was by Santomier (2008), but this attempt was confined to addressing the relationship between globalisation, sports sponsorship, branding and new media technologies. Therefore, the study conducted by Santomier resulted in 24 documents that were eventually included, and this suggests that there was not an extensive research on the very broad topic of sport sponsorship. In contrast, the current research effort aims at providing empirical evidence on sport sponsorship based on a concrete, rigid and highly structured procedure that aims at minimising bias and making the process as objective as possible. The systematic review is expected to provide reliable evidence supporting or rejecting

several beliefs that exist about sport sponsorship through a transparent process that enables replicability. In addition, since 2001 – the time period up to which Walliser (2003) reviewed sponsorship-related research – a substantial number of studies have been published. Therefore, an updated review of the sponsorship literature can be particularly important to researchers and organisations interested in sponsorship.

A further reason for investigating the particular research topic through a systematic review is that it is expected to provide more insight into the different sponsorship practices employed by different sponsors in different contexts. Therefore, the importance of the systematic review is based on the claim that it will highlight areas and topics that deserve more research attention, different sponsorship management practices and different conceptualisations and beliefs about sport sponsorship. Therefore, the review is a standalone piece of work that is expected to contribute significantly to the development and deepening of understanding of the sport sponsorship field.

Another reason underpinning the rationale for this research is that the findings of the systematic review will be used to inform empirical work. Specifically, the results produced will be used as the platform for examining sponsorship management practices adopted by sponsors in a less developed and less mature sponsorship market, the Cyprus sponsorship context.

The rationale for choosing Cyprus as the context to be investigated rested primarily on the fact that Cyprus is a less mature sponsorship market, and, based on a scoping study conducted to inform the systematic review, it was evident that less developed sponsorship contexts had been under-explored in the literature. In fact, most of the studies examining sport sponsorship had been carried out in North America, with much of the remaining research that focused on Europe being related to developed sponsorship markets such as the UK sports industry. Very little research had been conducted in less mature sponsorship contexts both

within and outside Europe. As a result, Yang, Sparks, and Li, (2008, p.63) argued that “mainstream sponsorship theories and frameworks are built on the foundation of a highly commercialised market and related systems of social and cultural values”. Therefore, it would be interesting to shed light on conceptualisations and sponsorship management practices applied in less developed markets in an effort to highlight this relatively under-researched area from the perspective of sport sponsorship and to identify possible differences between different contexts. Cyprus provides a very different market for sports sponsorship, and given that there is very little research addressing sponsorship related practices in Cyprus, the current thesis is expected to provide invaluable information on the ways in which international and local organisations approach and act on the opportunities for sponsorship investment in Cyprus.

In addition, the reason for choosing football as the sport to be investigated is mainly due to the fact that football is the most popular sport in Cyprus, and thus, the highest portion of the sponsorship spending is absorbed by the several football properties such as the football clubs and the national championship. Although there is not much empirical evidence relating to sport sponsorship in Cyprus, the term sport sponsorship is most strongly related to football (Michael, 2007), which is the most popular team sport in Cyprus. A study conducted by the Centre for Leisure into Sport and Society, as cited by Theophanous and Kartakoullis (2008), indicated that the football sector constitutes the main pillar of the sport industry in Cyprus, and this is reinforced by the fact that between 2004-2005 the football industry (including sponsorship spending) represented 1.84% of the GDP of Cyprus.

The popularity of the sport of football and associated opportunities provided to the sponsor were further substantiated by a study conducted in 2012 by the University of Nicosia and Laiki Bank, as cited by Zavros (2012). The study indicated that 40.6% of the general population in Cyprus has an interest in football, of which 60.6% are men and 21.9% are women. Probably the most important

outcome of the study is the fact that 80% of the participants have a very positive attitude towards football sponsorship since they believe that it contributes significantly to the development of the sport. Similar findings were also presented by Charalambous-Papamiltiades (2011b), who found that 87.3% of the fans in Cyprus have a positive opinion about sponsorship, while 75% of the respondents believe that the sponsors contribute significantly to society. Based on the above, it is not surprising that football has proved a popular focus for sponsorship in Cyprus, and subsequently it was chosen as the focus of the present study.

A further reason for investigating this research area is the fact that the present research will serve as a pivotal first step in exploring sponsorship decision-making frameworks and actions among a selection of important sponsors and it is expected to generate subsequent invaluable information on possible implications for the Cypriot context in general, but also for other less developed sponsorship contexts within and outside Europe. Any information related to the management of sport sponsorship, the objectives and priorities set by sponsors, the audiences they attempt to reach, the criteria for selecting sponsorships, and the evaluation practices they employ is regarded as allowing sport properties to align with sponsors and to work with them more closely in order to better meet their expectations. Moreover, such information will enable sport properties to solicit and maintain corporate partners, especially in an era where financial burdens make it more difficult for sport properties to survive and grow.

From a methodological point of view, a qualitative design was chosen in order to enable the researcher to investigate in depth and to obtain insights into the underlying mechanisms and structures of the sport sponsorship activity. It is indeed the case that, as the scoping study reported later in this thesis reveals, quantitative methods prevail in the literature. This tendency of researchers to employ quantitative methods to examine a multidimensional phenomenon such as sponsorship was heavily criticised by authors such as Cornwell and Maignan

(1998), Shaw and Amis (2001), Choi, Stotlar and Park (2006), and Yang et al. (2008), who argued that qualitative research designs have the capacity to provide a richer understanding of sponsorship related strategies and practices. Therefore, this paper represents a response to call for qualitative empirical studies on sport sponsorship strategies, and focuses specifically on the relatively immature football sponsorship market in Cyprus.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organised in five chapters. Following this introductory chapter, chapter 2 deals with the rationale for choosing the systematic review method and describes in detail the methodology adopted by the researcher in conducting the systematic review. A total of 971 studies were initially retrieved of which 211 were eventually included in the review based on the refined process adopted and the inclusion criteria set. In addition, this chapter elaborates on the descriptive analysis that followed aiming at creating simple sets of categories based on the articles eventually included in the review, and finally it concentrates on the thematic and construct analysis that followed dealing with identification and documentation of emerging or salient themes, and the development of third order or conceptual themes developed based on methodological issues respectively.

Chapter 3 represents a justification of the methodology adopted for the purposes of this study and outlines in detail the methods employed. In particular, this chapter addresses the research question, the respective ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the study, the methodological tools adopted by the researcher in delivering the research, as well as reliability and validity issues related to the specific study. Specifically, the chapter elaborates on the philosophical foundation underpinning the study, which is critical realism, and the rationale for using this specific paradigm as the framework for approaching the research question of the study, since it is regarded as enabling the researcher to locate the sponsorship phenomenon within the broader social and cultural

context in which it takes place, and to examine and explain the several causal forces impacting the observed phenomenon. In line with the methodological and epistemological assumptions related to critical realism, the researcher favoured the use of retrodution employing both extensive and intensive research designs and using both inductive and deductive approaches. Inductive analysis aims at identifying the underlying structures and mechanisms that generate specific sponsorship practises, and a deductive categorisation of the findings is used to examine the degree to which those mechanisms and patterns exist in the specific sponsorship context.

Chapter 4 aims at developing detailed analytical biography for each of the ten different case studies selected for this research study with a particular focus on the social, political, cultural, and economic forces impacting and shaping sponsorship related decisions and actions. The chapter starts with a within-case analysis addressing issues such as the type of the organisation, the nature of the broader competitive environment and its impact, motivational mechanisms, decision making processes, objectives pursued, audiences targeted through sponsorship, management and leveraging practices employed, and evaluation procedures and methods employed by sponsors. Following the within-case analysis, a cross-case approach follows aiming at determining the inter-organisational relationships, the salient or emerging meta-themes referring to the specific sponsorship and several strategic conclusions with regard to the broader sponsorship context.

Chapter 5 includes the main concluding thoughts seeking to outline the original contribution of this thesis to the body of knowledge relating to sport sponsorship. It is a brief account emphasising the importance of the thesis, the significance of the sound and reliable empirical evidence confirming or rejecting generalised beliefs about sport sponsorship, and the insights acquired about the mechanisms, patterns, structures and processes employed by sponsors in less developed and less mature sponsorship markets such as the Cyprus sport sponsorship context.

Finally, after discussing the limitations of the research, the concluding chapter provides some indications and suggestions for future directions in the sport sponsorship research domain.

Chapter 2- Systematic Review

2.1 Systematic Review Methodology

2.1.1 The Systematic Review Approach

The literature review is essential to the success of any research design. Undertaking a review of the literature is a crucial step towards providing the best available evidence for informing the research process. Conducting a literature review can enable the researcher to map and to assess the existing intellectual territory, to specify a research question to develop the existing body of knowledge further (Tranfield, Denyer & Smart, 2003). The literature review process is an invaluable tool that can be used to manage the diversity of knowledge for a specific academic inquiry (Tranfield et al., 2003). Traditionally, literature reviews in management research, and subsequently in the marketing field, are presented in a narrative form, and thus, have been criticised for being simply descriptive and highly biased reports. According to Hart (1998), literature reviews are written from a particular perspective, and this perspective originates from the school of thought, vocation or ideological standpoint of the reviewer. Similarly, Tranfield et al. (2003) argued that narrative reviews are often based, or influenced, by the implicit biases of the researcher, lack rigor and they have also been condemned for lacking critical assessment. Craik (2006) went further to argue that a literature review represents an opportunity for experts to support their bias using relevant literature. In an attempt to overcome the shortcomings of narrative literature reviews, researchers in social sciences, following the steps of their colleagues in the medical sciences, have made an effort to improve the quality of the review process by synthesising research in a systematic, transparent and reproducible manner.

2.1.2 What is a Systematic Review

Systematic reviews are regarded to be scientific investigations in themselves (Mulrow, 1994) since they differ substantially from traditional narrative reviews in that they attempt to limit bias through a replicable scientific procedure that relies on comprehensive searches, explicit search strategies, and rigorous critical appraisals and synthesis of all relevant studies (Cook, Mulrow & Haynes, 1997). A systematic review begins with an exhaustive literature search of all potentially relevant published and sometimes unpublished studies through the use of predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria in the selection of sources for review. Following this, the included studies are critically evaluated and appraised in terms of methodological rigor. Next, data are abstracted and synthesised, and results are summarised and interpreted using a standardised approach. All these steps and decisions are frequently made independently by more than one reviewer to further limit bias. Evaluation and appraisal of the included studies, as well as the interpretation and research synthesis, are performed in a concise and transparent way, by providing an audit trail of the reviewers' decisions, procedures and conclusions (Cook et al., 1997).

A quantitative systematic review often uses a statistical analysis to combine and summarise the results of different studies, called meta-analysis (Cook et al., 1997; Garg, Hackam & Tonelli, 2008; Kaczorowski, 2009). Meta-analysis is widely regarded as providing 'high-quality' evidence, but the application of this method is feasible when studies are comparable. As Mulrow, Cook and Davidoff (1997) argued, meta-analysis is simply one of the tools that it is used in preparing systematic reviews. When the heterogeneity of study data prevents the use of meta-analysis, such as when data are obtained from qualitative or non-randomised studies, synthesis is achieved through summarising the findings of a group of studies (Tranfield et al., 2003). In this case, the review can be called a qualitative systematic review (Cook et al., 1997).

Although systematic reviews have been used heavily during the last 20 years to inform medical science, this approach has migrated from medicine to other disciplines. According to Petticrew (2001), the use of systematic reviews is rapidly growing outside the fields of health care since they offer important advantages over traditional narrative reviews. In the same vein, Tranfield et al. (2003) suggested the application of specific principles of the systematic review methodology used in the medical sciences to management research in an attempt to counteract bias, and thus enhance “the legitimacy and authority of the resultant evidence” (Tranfield, et al., 2003, p. 208). Because of the significant differences that exist between medical and management fields, however, the approach that is proposed is more flexible, taking into account the exploratory and developmental nature of management reviews. Hence, the protocol that is suggested aims at ensuring that reviews are less open to researcher bias than narrative reviews, whilst not compromising the ability of the researcher to be creative in the literature review process (Tranfield et al., 2003).

For the purposes of the specific study, and given the heterogeneity of studies included in the systematic review, meta-analysis was not regarded as an appropriate tool for synthesising the findings of the review. Hence, the approach adopted was more of a descriptive and thematic nature, and it will be described in detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

2.1.3 Stages of the Systematic Review

Stage I: Planning the Review

Scoping Study

Prior to reaching a decision on undertaking a systematic review, a scoping study was deemed appropriate in order to provide information on the size of the candidate literature and the key topics examined in certain research

areas. Within the management field and sub-fields, scoping studies are regarded as necessary in an attempt to delimit the subject area or topic (Tranfield et al., 2003). Hence, the researcher conducted a brief literature review containing articles, reports, conference papers, and theses published over the last 30 years, in order to examine the feasibility of conducting a systematic review, as well as to define further the proposed topic. This preliminary searching was regarded as essential to the success of the systematic review since it provided information on the relevance and size of the literature on the specific topic. Moreover, it was used to give some indications on the quality of the literature, the databases that were likely to provide the highest yield of relevant items, and raised specific issues with regard to terminology, such as definitions used or indexing (Jones, 2004). The conduction of the scoping study revealed that a systematic review was feasible, and therefore, should *be undertaken*.

Review panel

After the decision to conduct a systematic review, and prior to the beginning the review process, a review panel was formed encompassing experts on the research topic and the systematic review methodology. For the specific study, the panel of experts consisted of Professor Ian Henry - PhD supervisor, Dr Guillaume Bodet - PhD co-supervisor, Louise Fletcher, library and information scientist, Loughborough University, Theodoros Tzitzimbourounis, head librarian, European University Cyprus, and the researcher. The review panel is important in that, it can “direct the process through regular meetings and resolve any disputes over the inclusion and exclusion of studies” (Tranfield et al., 2003, p. 214). Considering that the systematic review process is a complex one involving clarification and refinement, a review team, or review panel, can help minimise bias and increase the likelihood that errors are detected (Green & Higgins, 2008) making the process as objective as possible. The review panel formed for the purposes of the

specific study helped make decisions about inclusion and exclusion criteria, search terms, appropriate databases, and quality of the studies included.

Table 2:1 Systematic Review stages.

Stage I: Planning the Review
Phase 0 - Identification for the need for a review
Phase 1 - Preparation of a proposal for a review
Phase 2 - Development of a review protocol
Stage II - Conducting a review
Phase 3 - Identification of research
Phase 4 - Selection of studies
Phase 5 - Study quality assessment
Phase 6 - Data extraction and monitoring progress
Phase 7 - Data synthesis
Stage III - Reporting and dissemination
Phase 8 - The report and recommendations
Phase 9 - Getting evidence into practice

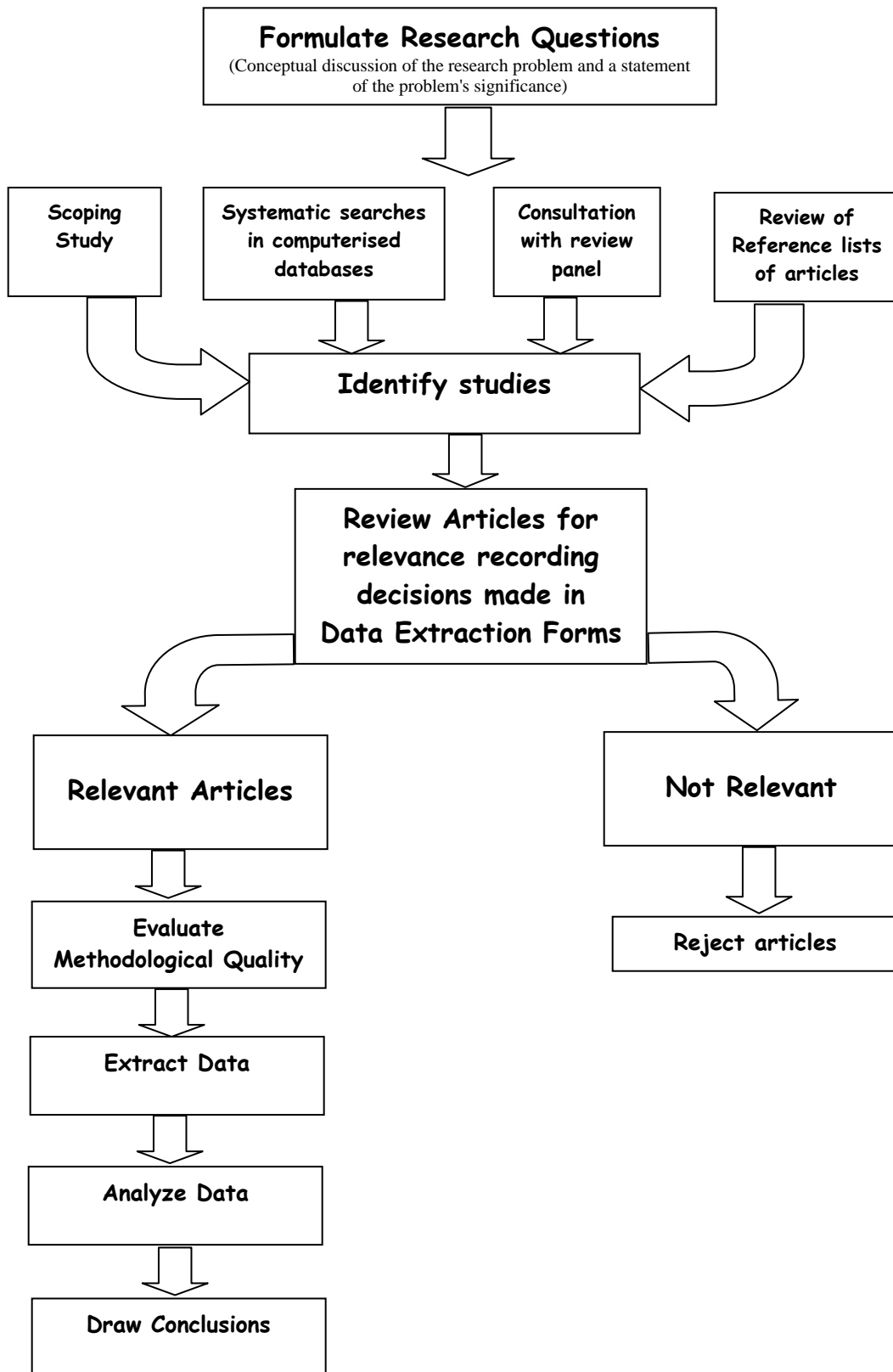
Source: Tranfield et al., 2003 (adapted by the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, 2001).

Review Protocol

When planning the review, another important step is the development of a review protocol, a formal protocol detailing the background, objectives, inclusion criteria, search methods, plan for how the data will be extracted, proposed analytical methods and the way in which the data will be compiled in research synthesis (Grimshaw et al., 2003). A written, detailed review protocol protects against bias, as it defines in advance all the aforementioned issues, so that the results or the expectations of the researchers/reviewing team do not influence the study inclusion or synthesis (Garg et al., 2008).

There are various types of review protocols that can be used, and in many disciplines, protocols are made available by international bodies in an attempt to enhance networking and the exchange of knowledge. In the management discipline, however, the level of formality and standardisation in designing and adopting protocols is usually low, since a tight or strict protocol may inhibit the researchers' capacity to explore, discover and develop ideas (Tranfield et al., 2003). Therefore, protocols used in the management field should state the intentions of the reviewer a priori, but can be modified through the course of the study as far as the changes occurring and the rationale for those changes are stated explicitly (Tranfield et al., 2003). The protocol used for this specific study is outlined below (see figure 2.1), and it is a slightly adapted version of the protocol proposed by Papadopoulos and Rheeder (2000, cited in Aquilina, 2010). A detailed description of the protocol and the decisions and actions taken at every stage is provided in the remaining of the chapter.

Figure 2:1 Systematic Review Protocol.



Source: Adapted version of Papadopoulos & Rheeder (2000, cited in Aquilina, 2010).

Stage II: Conducting the Review

A comprehensive, persevering search is the next step in conducting a systematic review. Although this activity is a demanding and time-consuming procedure, it is fundamental in identifying relevant studies on the topic of interest found in extensive literatures. A systematic search begins with the identification of keywords and search terms emerged from the scoping study and discussions within the review panel (Tranfield et al., 2003). The search strategy, however, should be made explicit, not just to reduce bias, but also to allow for replication - if necessary.

It was decided that, for the purposes of this specific study, the search should be limited to published journals listed in bibliographic databases. The decision regarding the databases to be searched was based on the comments and feedback provided by the members of the review panel, and especially the information specialist, as well as on the preceding scoping study. Nine key bibliographical databases were found to have the greatest coverage of related journals, and these are: SportDiscus (in EBSCO), Web of Science, Communication Abstracts (CSA Illumina), Physical Education Index (CSA Illumina), Academic Search Complete (in EBSCO), Business-ABI Inform Global, PsycInfo (CSA Illumina), Science Direct, and Business Source Complete (in EBSCO). A number of other databases were also initially searched but rejected based on the ground that they produced no additional references to those obtained through the selected databases.

The decision on the final search strategy – the search-terms and strings used – was also reached after a discussion with the panel of experts, but also required some experimentation. The initial scoping searches included several single key words that were regarded as appropriate, but the number of studies identified was enormous. Hence, the scoping study attempted to focus more closely on the topic of interest by combining several key-words, such as “sport* AND sponsorship*

AND emergence*”, or “sport* AND sponsorship* AND motiv*”. This refined search strategy identified few relevant studies in certain databases, while at the same time, excluded some studies of potential interest. Therefore, the final search strategy undertaken combined the more accurate, refined search strategy with a broader search approach – e.g. the use of search terms such as “sport* sponsorship*” or “sponsorship* histor*” or “sponsorship* objective*”. The results and search steps followed are discussed in detail in the following session.

With regard to the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, it was decided that the study should cover the publications comprised between January 1980 and July 2009. The rationale for this decision was that one of the main goals of the study was to explore the development of sponsorship in Cyprus, so the researcher should go back to include studies that explore the sponsorship development process at the global sports stage. Moreover, it was decided that only academic, peer-reviewed studies – 3 pages or more – would be included in the systematic review in an attempt to ensure the quality of the publications. Finally, and for pragmatic reasons, only studies written in English would be included in the systematic review.

Having identified the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, the search-terms and the data sources, the researcher conducted an exhaustive and comprehensive search of all potentially relevant citations. The search terms and strings were used within the “title” and “abstract” fields, not the “keyword” field. The reason that keyword-field searches were not used is that, in many cases, those searches did not produce particularly relevant studies, possibly due to the fact that keywords were not always reflecting the content of the studies. This emerged out from the researcher’s attempt to triangulate this method using several databases to identify articles which were known to meet the review’s inclusion criteria. In contrast, searching titles and abstracts did not seem to exclude any important studies, and hence this method was regarded as satisfactory.

Relevant sources yielded from the aforementioned search method were transferred into the bibliographic software Endnote and were retrieved for a more thorough reading. Moreover, the Endnote program allowed the researcher to identify duplicated studies, while the remaining citations were filtered according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. From these, the final selection was made for the systematic review. The reasons for inclusion and exclusion were reported and stored in the data extraction forms.

Data extraction forms are important components of the systematic review procedure (Handoll & Smith, 2004, Wieseler & McGauran, 2010). Data extraction forms are used to reduce human errors and bias, since they serve as a historical record of the decisions made during the process (Higgins & Deeks, 2008). The forms often contain general information (author, title and publication details), study features and specific information (details and methods) and notes on emerging themes. The development of the data extraction forms, however, is flexible, and may depend upon the nature of the study (Tranfield et al., 2003). Therefore, when designing the data extraction form, the researcher took into consideration the information that would be essential for the completion of the specific study. A limited number of data extraction forms are included in Appendix 1.

It is also recommended that the data extraction process should be undertaken by more than one person in order to increase the chances to detect errors (Grimshaw et al., 2003; Handoll & Smith, 2004; Higgins & Deeks, 2008). Consequently, a large part of the data extraction process in this study was double since it has been undertaken independently by two reviewers and, in some cases by a third assessor – the researcher, supervisor and co-supervisor. The independent reviewers assessed and analysed the studies against the inclusion criteria and the findings were compared and reconciled if required, while discrepancies and disagreements were resolved by discussion.

After extracting the data, the next step involves synthesising data. As already mentioned, a social science systematic review can use different approaches to synthesise the data compared to meta-analysis, since studies in this field rarely address identical problems or measure the phenomenon in the same way. Therefore, and based on the suggestions made by a number of authors who proposed several inductive and interpretive approaches to research synthesis as an alternative option to the statistical, deductive meta-analysis, this study used a descriptive, thematic and construct analysis in synthesising the results.

Stage III: Reporting and Dissemination

According to Tranfield et al. (2003), a social science systematic review might produce a two-stage analysis of the findings. The first stage is “descriptive analysis”, which was achieved using a very simple set of categories (such as the authors, contributions from different geographic locations, orientation of studies, age-profile of the articles, etc.). Following the recommendations made by Tranfield et al. (2003), the researcher’s effort was to provide a descriptive account of the field of study and an audit trail justifying conclusions. The stages of the systematic review process employed for the conduction of the specific study are illustrated in table 2.2.

The second stage of the process used is “thematic analysis”. The researcher used an interpretive approach to data analysis and synthesis which relied on the identification and documentation of emerging or salient themes. In line with the recommendations made by Tranfield et al. (2003), the researcher provided a detailed audit trail back to the core contributions to justify and support the conclusions drawn from the thematic analysis, and attempted to link the emerging themes across the various core contributions and to highlight those associations throughout the reporting process.

An additional stage was undertaken, which is “construct analysis”. An attempt was made to go beyond the contents of the primary studies and to identify issues that are not explicitly reported in the original studies. Third-order themes, or conceptual themes, were developed based on several methodological issues that arose.

Table 2:2 Stages of the systematic review undertaken for the project

Stage 1 – Planning the Review	
Step 1: Defining the field of study - Conducting a scoping study	
	<p>Definition, clarification and refinement of research aims. Review of key papers, Key word selection and review strategy</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>sponsorship*, sport*, history, develop*, patronage, objective*, motiv*, “consumer* response*” “consumer* perception*”</p>
Step 2: Forming a review panel	
	<p>Mary Charalambous-Papamiltiades (researcher)</p> <p>Professor Ian Henry (Supervisor)</p> <p>Dr Guillaume Bodet (Co-supervisor)</p> <p>Louise Fletcher (Library and Information Scientist specialising in matters that concern the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Loughborough University)</p> <p>Theodoros Tzitzimbourounis (Head Librarian, European University Cyprus).</p>
Step 3: Producing a review protocol	
	<p>Defining the research area</p>

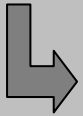
Defining the search strategy (discussion on inclusion and exclusion criteria, appropriate databases, and search-terms)
Discussion on the data extraction forms, data analysis procedure
Outlining the project timetable.



Defining the research area

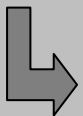
The aims of the systematic review was to

- to identify the several developmental stages of sports sponsorship
- to uncover the mechanisms underlying sport sponsorship activity world-wide
- to highlight tendencies and management practices employed by sponsors world-wide.
- to uncover the existence of possible differences and discrepancies with regard to the sport sponsorship structures and mechanisms that exist in different contexts.



Defining the Search strategy

Several key words were employed to narrow down the focus of the study





Defining inclusion/ exclusion criteria

Time frame: January 1980- July 2009
Peer-reviewed studies
Academic Relevance
Written in English
Length (3 ≥ pages)



Defining appropriate databases

SportDiscus with fulltext (EBSCO), PsycInfo (CSA Illumina), Communication Abstracts (CSA Illumina), Physical Education Index (CSA Illumina), Business Source Complete (EBSCO), Web of Science, Science Direct, Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), Business – ABI Inform Global (ProQuest)

 <p>Defining search terms</p>  <p>Project timetable</p>	<p>Grouping keywords into search strings e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “sport* sponsorship*” - “sponsorship* emergence” - “football* sponsorship*” - “sport* AND sponsorship* AND motiv*” - “sport* AND sponsorship* AND objective*” <p>July 2009 to December 2011</p>
<p>Stage 2 – Conducting the review</p>	
<p>Step 4: Conducting a systematic search</p>	
<p>Search strings used within the “Title” and the “Abstract” searches. The researcher searched the aforementioned databases provided by the Metalib service available online at Loughborough University and databases available online through European University Cyprus.</p>	
<p>Step 5: Evaluating and selecting studies</p>	
<p>Studies were evaluated against inclusion/exclusion criteria, in some cases by more than one assessor. A final decision on the inclusion of studies was reached, after discussions with the members of the review panel.</p>	
<p>Step 6: Creating Data extraction forms</p>	
<p>The reasons for inclusion and exclusion were documented in data extraction forms. The data extraction forms provide a historical record on the decisions made during the review process. Therefore, this process represents a further audit measure since it provides information on the articles assessed, where and when they are published, and the criteria for exclusion form the systematic review.</p>	

For an indicative list of these forms please refer to Appendix 1.

Step 7: Conducting data synthesis

Descriptive, thematic and construct analysis

Stage 3 – Reporting and dissemination

Step 8: Reporting the findings

The findings of the review were reported in three different forms: Descriptive analysis (involving the creation of simple sets of categories), Thematic analysis (involving the creation of emergent themes) and Construct analysis (involving the identification of conceptual themes based on several methodological issues).

Step 9 – Getting evidence into practice

The findings of the systematic review and conclusions will be disseminated in order to inform the academic community and sport sponsorship practitioners.

Results of Keyword Searches

Following a meeting with the panel of experts and based on a series of key-words developed and agreed on, the researcher conducted an initial single keyword search. The results produced through this initial search are presented in table 2.3.

Table 2:3 Single Keyword Search

Key-words	Databases								
	Web of Science	Business Source Complete (EBSCO)	Science Direct	PsycInfo (CSA Illumina)	SportDiscus with Fulltext	Communication Abstracts (CSA Illumina)	Physical Education Index (CSA Illumina)	Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)	Business-ABI Inform-Global
sponsorship*	2838	1480	504	363	624	90	158	2507	879
sport*	44829	5295	7499	8861	44378	414	18757	24337	2964
histor*	>100000	57936	>100000	86325	13744	3871	3940	347523	47188
develop*	>100000	309559	>100000	>100000	44016	8638	12105	1147690	250093
emergence	82655	9689	15680	8925	977	595	209	37429	7014
patronage	3036	765	220	237	56	26	14	1694	689
motiv*	>100000	26730	30193	45764	6731	1469	1996	56472	23891
objective*	>100000	50873	>100000	84213	22944	1083	8948	304872	43734
strateg*	>100000	122773	>100000	98163	13354	2647	4519	254186	107087
evaluation*	>100000	49219	>100000	77860	15813	1796	4439	231437	33659
consumer*	80882	49467	17890	15814	2340	2578	435	34069	45485
response*	>100000	73116	>100000	>100000	32432	3661	9598	586028	48255
reaction*	>100000	18314	>100000	42201	6756	980	1973	337769	12380
attitude*	>100000	24107	22037	63865	6590	2570	1563	61547	20960
perception*	>100000	27997	35467	86289	9355	2949	2654	80836	23929

Due to the large number of studies that resulted by the initial keyword search, the researcher decided to conduct a combined search of two key-words in order to narrow down the returns to more manageable numbers. The search terms were used within the title and abstract searches. For the Web of Science database, however, the search terms were used within the title and topic searches since there is no abstract search option. Furthermore, some or all the exclusion criteria were included in the search process when this was applicable, for example when the database search engine provided the opportunity to do it – e.g. EBSCO database allowed for the use of language, length and time restrictions, as well as

the application of the peer-reviewed criterion. When it was not possible, the researcher had to evaluate the studies against the predetermined criteria. It should be mentioned, however, that with regard to the Web of Science database, there was no option for choosing only academic-peer reviewed publications. The panel of experts, however, decided to include the database in the systematic review process. The rationale for the inclusion was that it was regarded as a well-respected source of data, publishing studies based on rigorous evaluation. The results of the combined search terms are presented in table 2.4.

Table 2:4 Combined Keyword Search

<i>Databases</i>									
Key-words	Web of Science	Business Source Complete (EBSCO)	Science Direct	PsycInfo (CSA Illumina)	SportDiscus with Fulltext	Communication Abstracts (CSA Illumina)	Physical Education Index (CSA Illumina)	Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)	Business- ABI Inform- Global
"sport* sponsorship**"	46	103	6	21	135	3	46	75	50
"sponsorship* emergence"	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
"sponsorship* history"	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
"sponsorship* development**"	1	3	0	0	2	0	0	2	1
"sponsorship* motiv**"	1	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
"sponsorship* objective**"	2	8	1	0	7	0	3	5	2
"football* sponsorship**"	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
"consumer* perception**"	1407	1130	263	436	43	68	4	428	1030
"consumer* attitude**"	827	923	181	323	34	71	8	316	812
"consumer* reaction**"	235	313	76	137	6	23	1	68	250
"consumer* response**"	717	879	181	318	19	97	4	235	757

Considering the small number of hits obtained through the combined keyword search in some of the main categories (*"sponsorship* emergence"*, *"sponsorship* history"*, *"sponsorship* development**"*, *"sponsorship* motiv**"* and *"sponsorship* objective**"*), the researcher, after a discussion with the panel of experts, decided

to conduct an additional search combining three key-words. A search string was developed using the two main key words “*sport**” and “*sponsorship**” connected with the “*AND*” operator, which was used as a meta-category. This, in turn, was combined with the related key words *history**, *develop**, *emergence*, *patronage*, *motiv** *objective**, *strateg**, and *evaluation**. The results of this search are illustrated in table 2.5.

Table 2:5 Results of the three keyword search

Meta - category	Databases								
	Web of Science	Business Source Complete (EBSCO)	Science Direct	PsycInfo (CSA Illumina)	SportDiscus with Fulltext	Communication Abstracts (CSA Illumina)	Physical Education Index (CSA Illumina)	Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)	Business - ABI Inform-Global
Sport* AND Sponsorship* AND									
histor*	11	11	3	2	17	0	6	10	7
develop*	40	53	3	22	70	2	25	46	28
emergence	2	5	0	3	2	0	1	1	2
patronage	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
motiv*	8	7	0	3	11	0	8	7	4
objective*	45	33	2	5	28	1	18	25	22
strateg*	37	50	3	15	56	4	18	32	27
evaluation*	12	24	0	4	24	0	9	8	13

In addition, considering the high number of returns for the sub-categories “*consumer* perception**”, “*consumer* attitude**”, “*consumer* reaction**”, and “*consumer* response**”, the researcher opted for a four key word search. The search string “*sport* AND sponsorship**” was kept as a meta-category but it was amended by adding the key word “*consumer**”, which were in turn combined with the key words *response**, *reaction**, *attitude** and *perception**. The results of this search are presented in table 2.

Table 2:6 Results of the four keyword search

<i>Databases</i>									
Meta -category	Web of Science	Business Source Complete (EBSCO)	Science Direct	PsycInfo (CSA Illumina)	SportDiscus with Fulltext	Communication Abstracts (CSA Illumina)	Physical Education Index (CSA Illumina)	Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)	Business-ABI Inform-Global
Sport* AND Sponsorship* AND consumer AND									
response*	6	8	0	5	7	2	2	3	4
reaction*	4	3	0	3	0	2	0	0	3
attitude*	12	19	1	7	4	2	4	5	11
perception*	6	7	0	2	13	1	5	5	3

The final search yielded over 900 citations, and is presented in table 2.7. The number of returns, however, is misleading considering that many citations appear in more than one database. Hence, the total number of papers was transferred to the *Endnote* reference management software package for further analysis and usage. Furthermore, and based on the protocol adopted, data extraction forms were developed for all the studies that the systematic review returned. The reason is that the researcher was reluctant to rely on the title alone to evaluate the studies in terms of relevance, a widely used strategy especially when the original number of citations is huge. Indeed, the title frequently fails to indicate the research topic, something that was also taken into consideration when conducting the literature search – the search strings were used within the “title” and “abstract” fields. Hence, articles were retrieved based on an abstract analysis and the additional record information documented in the data extraction forms. However, in a number of cases the researcher had to access the full text of the document since a comprehensive or elliptic abstract made it difficult to evaluate the document. Some of the studies were eliminated after looking at the whole document.

In addition, a number of articles whose relevance was not clear *a priori* were classified as C* (for clarification) and their content was discussed during a meeting with some of the members of the panel of experts (supervisor and co-

supervisor). Subsequently, a decision was made on inclusion or exclusion of the studies based on our judgments regarding the relevance of each study.

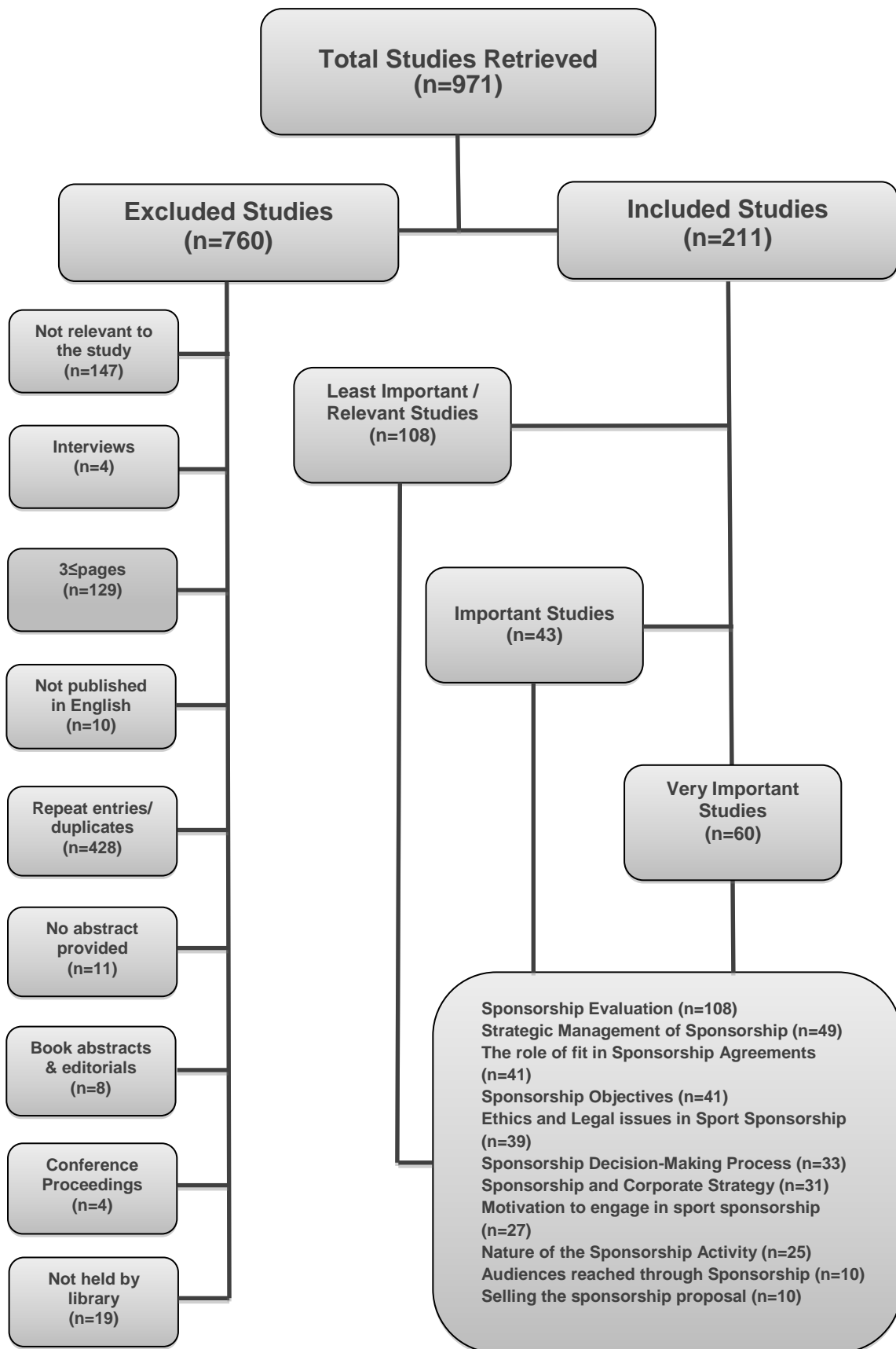
Table 2:7 Final Search Strategy: keywords and search strings employed to produce the citations included in the systematic review)

<i>Databases</i>									
Key-words	Web of Science	Business Source Complete (EBSCO)	Science Direct	PsycInfo (CSA Illumina)	SportDiscus with Fulltext	Communication Abstracts (CSA Illumina)	Physical Education Index (CSA Illumina)	Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)	Business - ABI Inform-Global
"sport* sponsorship**"	46	103	6	21	135	3	46	75	50
"sponsorship* emergence"	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
"sponsorship* history"	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
"sponsorship* development**"	1	3	0	0	2	0	0	2	1
"sponsorship* motiv**"	1	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
"sponsorship* objective**"	2	8	1	0	7	0	3	5	2
"football* sponsorship**"	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Meta-category									
Sport* AND Sponsorship* AND									
histor*	11	11	3	2	17	0	6	10	7
develop*	40	53	3	22	70	2	25	46	28
emergence	2	5	0	3	2	0	1	1	2
patronage	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
motiv*	8	7	0	3	11	0	8	7	4
objective*	45	33	2	5	28	1	18	25	22
strateg*	37	50	3	15	56	4	18	32	27
evaluation*	12	24	0	4	24	0	9	8	13
Meta-category									

Sport* AND Sponsorship* AND consumer AND									
response*	6	8	0	5	7	2	2	3	4
reaction*	4	3	0	3	0	2	0	0	3
attitude*	12	19	1	7	4	2	4	5	11
perception*	6	7	0	2	13	1	5	5	3

Of the 971 citations, 230 were left as relevant after filtering according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The data extraction process allowed the researcher to identify and eliminate 428 repeated entries. Moreover, 10 studies were eliminated on the basis that they were not written in English, 147 were not related to the topic of this study, 11 lacked abstracts, 129 citations were 3 or less than 3 pages length, 4 were sponsorship executives' interviews, 8 were book abstracts or editorials, and 4 were conference proceedings. Many of the studies failed to comply with more than one criterion (e.g. conference proceedings and length, or length and abstract) but, for documentation purposes, only one reason for exclusion was reported. Finally, 19 of the 230 relevant studies were not held by library, resulting in 211 studies included in the systematic review. All relevant information with regard to the number retrieved studies and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion are presented in figure 2.2.

Figure 2:2 Information on Retrieved Studies



2.2 Analysis of the Systematic Review Findings

2.2.1 First Stage: Descriptive Analysis

The first stage in the analysis aims to provide a descriptive analysis of the field through creating simple sets of categories based on the extraction forms. As was expected, the vast majority of research – about 75 papers from the 211 contributions - are from North America (USA and Canada), and only 44 studies focus on Europe. Interestingly, half of the European research efforts refer to the UK sponsorship context, which is much more developed and sophisticated in comparison with many other European countries such as Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, which received clearly much less research attention (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Constantinescu & Szekely, 2009; Girginov & Sandanski, 2004; Samitas, Kenourgios, & Zounis, 2008; Tsiotsou & Alexandris, 2009). In the same vein, much less research has been undertaken or focused on less developed sponsorship contexts outside Europe, such as South Africa (Abratt, Clayton, & Pitt, 1987; Goldman & Johns, 2009; Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004), Korea (Ko, Kim, Claussen, & Kim, 2008; Shin & Turco, 2005), or China (Geng, Burton, & Blakemore, 2002; Söderman & Dolles, 2008; Yang et al., 2008). A smaller, yet important number of studies focused solely on the Australian sport sponsorship scene (21 studies), which is also regarded by several researchers (e.g. Burton et al., 1998; Farrelly, Quester, & Burton, 1997) as less developed in relation to North American sponsorship context. It is also of interest to mention that more than 30 contributions have an international focus or scope (Cornwell, 2008; Olkkonen, 2001; Urbach, 2008; Vignali, 1997), with some of those research papers undertaking comparative research (Burton et al., 1998; Farrelly et al., 1997). Moreover, the literature review revealed that the majority of the contributions were empirical research efforts (154 studies) employing many different methods of investigation, with 57 out of the 211 papers being conceptual papers, some of them analytic and some of them descriptive. Interestingly, the vast majority of the empirical efforts employed a quantitative research

methodology, with only 42 studies relying solely on qualitative research inquiry, and 15 studies employing a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures. It is of interest to mention that much qualitative inquiry comes from the North American context and specifically, 8 qualitative studies refer to the Canadian sports sponsorship environment and 5 come from the USA, whilst 9 qualitative research endeavours focused on the international and global sport context. Although this is hardly surprising, especially when considering that the vast majority of the studies were conducted in North America, when it comes to Canada, of the 14 empirical papers eight rely solely on qualitative research, 3 use both quantitative and qualitative techniques, and only 3 rely on quantitative methodology, suggesting a stronger qualitative orientation of the Canadian sponsorship research culture.

A significant number of the studies included in this systematic review deal with the issue of sponsorship evaluation. Specifically, 108 studies examined solely or partially this topic, almost half of which have been conducted in the USA, indicating that the certain industry is very concerned with the return sponsors get on their sponsorship investment. Moreover, it is interesting that within the sponsorship evaluation research area, half of the studies (54) employed consumer research. The second area that received much attention, albeit much less than sponsorship evaluation, is the strategic management of sport sponsorship (49 studies), followed by two research areas – fit and objectives sought by sponsors – that included 41 studies each. The fourth most heavily researched or discussed sport sponsorship category refers to the ethics and ethical issues involved in sport sponsorship, since it received the attention of 39 studies.

Another interesting finding that emerged from the descriptive analysis is that many studies (70 contributions) examine sponsorship from the perspective of the sponsor, and only 12 articles have focused on the sponsored property, while even less - 6 papers - examine both the sponsor's and the sponsee's perspectives.

Obviously, and from a purely commercial point of view, the sponsor is possibly regarded as a more interesting party to be researched, especially when considering that it is the one investing, and thus requiring more convincing evidence on their investment.

Finally, it is hardly surprising that the sport that enjoys much research interest is football (29 contributions), coming primarily from Australia and the UK. The second most popular sports area was the Olympics, with 17 research papers focusing on this area. Rugby is the third most heavily researched sport, since it received the research attention of 17 contributions, and not surprisingly, this research comes mainly from Australia and New Zealand. Car racing is another sport that appeared as being more prevalent in the systematic review, with 9 contributions, all of them coming from the USA and focusing primarily on NASCAR competition. Other sports such as basketball, action sports, ski, hockey, tennis, golf, and cricket received much less research attention.

2.2.2 Second Stage – Thematic Analysis

The articles gathered were grouped into eleven streams of research/themes. Those themes represent the topics addressed in the sponsorship literature, ranging from definitions and descriptions of the sponsorship activity to the sponsorship management practices employed by sponsors and the ethical and legal issues involved in the sponsorship activity.

The tree diagram that follows (figure 2.3) depicts the eleven emerging or salient themes identified in the systematic review, together with the main sub-themes developed and the references incorporated in each of the themes. A full thematic analysis of the studies is presented in Appendix 3. It is important to mention that many of the 211 studies included in the systematic review were incorporated in more than one theme, either due to arguments made explicit by the author/s or due to categorisations made implicitly based on the content of the study.

Figure 2:3 Tree diagram outlining the emerging and salient themes, the sub-themes and the references incorporated in the thematic analysis of the systematic review

Second Order Themes	Sub Themes	References Incorporated
<p>1. The nature of sponsorship: Perception of sponsorship, Description of the activity, Definitions, Development, Trends</p>	<p>Defining sponsorship – describing the sponsorship activity</p> <p>The development of sport sponsorship – Early and Current Trends</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratton & Taylor (1985) • Mescon & Tilson (1987) • Gross, Traylor & Shuman (1987) • Meenaghan (1991) • Shanklin & Kuzma (1992) • Mason (1999), • Daellenbach, Davies & Ashill (2006) • Davies, Daellenbach & Ashill (2008) • Pegoraro, O'Reilly & Levallet (2009) • Lynn (1987) • Meenaghan (1991) • Cornwell & Maignan (1998) • Walliser (2003) • Cornwell (2008) • Reynaud & Bolos (2008) • Santomier (2008) • Chadwick (2009)

	<p>Sponsorship development in a certain country/industry/sport context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratton & Taylor (1985) • Sandiford (1985) • Gross, Traylor & Shuman (1987) • Meerabeau, Gillett, Kennedy, Adeoba, Byass & Tabi (1991) • Asimakopoulos (1993) • Geng, Burton, & Blakemore (2002) • Cordiner (2002) • Ordish (2005) • Kropp, Lavack, Holden & Dalakas (1999) • Giannoulakis, Stotlar & Chatziefstathiou (2008) • Obsniuk & Smith (2008)
<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>2. Sponsorship and Corporate Strategy</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Development of Corporate and Brand Identity • Approaching sponsorship as a Resource towards building a competitive advantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion, Leitch & Brodie (2003) • Hickman, Lawrence & Ward (2005) • Mueller & Roberts (2008) • Garry, Broderick & Lahiffe (2008) • Cunningham, Cornwell & Coote (2009) • Pichot, Pierre & Burlot (2009) • Amis Pant & Slack (1997) • Amis, Slack & Berrett (1999) • Cornwell, Roy & Steinard (2001a) • Amis (2003) • Söderman & Dolles (2008) • Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou (2009)

- **Sponsorship as a Partnership and Relationship Building Strategy**

- McCarville & Copeland (1994)
- Liu, Srivastava & Woo (1998)
- Olkkonen, Tikkanen & Alajoutsijarvi (2000)
- Olkkonen (2001)
- Geng, Burton, & Blakemore (2002)
- Chadwick (2002)
- Clark, Lachowetz, Irwin and Schimmel (2003)
- Girginov & Sandanski (2004)
- Sam, Batty & Dean (2005)
- Farrelly & Quester (2005)
- Westberg, Stavros, & Wilson (2008)
- Wilson, Stavros, & Westberg (2008)
- Scherer, Falcous & Jackson (2008)
- Yang, Sparks & Li (2008)
- Pichot, Tribou & O'Reilly (2008)
- Goldman & Johns (2009)

3. Managing Sport Sponsorship Strategically

- **Integration and Leveraging Practices**

- *Integrating sponsorship into the broader marketing mix*
- *Development of Sponsorship Management Models integrating sponsorship into the marketing and communications mix*
- *Leveraging as a part of the strategic sponsorship management process – empirical*

- Mescon & Tilson (1987)
- Abratt, Clayton & Pitt (1987)
- Abratt & Grobler (1989)
- Witcher, Craigen, Culligan & Harvey (1991)
- Meenaghan (1991)
- Crowley (1991)
- Irwin & Asimakopoulos (1992)
- Shanklin & Kuzma (1992)
- Furst (1994)
- Thwaites (1993)
- Thwaites (1994)
- Thwaites (1995)

evidence

• *Importance of Leveraging practices for sponsorship success*

- Polonsky, Sandler, Casey, Murphy, Portelli & Van Velzen, (1996)
- Copeland, Frisby & McCarville (1996)
- Vignali (1997)
- Farrelly, Quester & Burton (1997)
- Spence, Abratt & Mattheus (1997)
- Burton, Quester & Farrelly (1998)
- Thwaites & Carruthers (1998)
- Thwaites, Aguilar-Manjarrez, & Kidd, (1998)
- Currie (2000)
- Cornwell, Roy & Steinard (2001a)
- Lavack (2003)
- Van Heerden & du Plessis (2004)
- Chadwick & Thwaites (2004)
- Chadwick & Thwaites (2005)
- McKelvey, McDonald & Cramer (2005)
- Séguin, Teed & O'Reilly (2005)
- Choi, Stotlar & Park (2006)
- Barez, Manion, Schoepfer & Cherian (2007)
- Cornwell (2008)
- Walshe (2008)
- Lamont & Dowell, 2008)
- Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou & Dounis (2008)
- Yang, Sparks & Li (2008)
- Santomier (2008)
- Watt (2008)
- Davies & Tsiantas (2008)
- Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou (2009)
- Ladousse (2009)
- Tripodi & Hiron (2009)

4. The concept of Fit and its importance in sport sponsorship

- **The role of Congruency in Sponsorship Relationships**

- Goldman & Johns (2009)

- Quester & Farrelly (1998)
- Gwinner & Eaton (1999)
- Speed & Thompson (2000)
- Cornwell, Pruitt & Van Ness (2001b)
- Deane, Smith & Adams (2003)
- Grohs, Wagner & Vsetecka (2004)
- Séguin, Teed & O'Reilly (2005).
- Grohs & Reisinger (2005)
- Cornwell, Pruitt & Clark (2005)
- Hickman, Lawrence & Ward (2005)
- Koo, Quarterman, & Jackson (2006a)
- Koo, Quarterman & Flynn (2006b)
- Henseler, Wilson, Götz, & Hautvast, (2007)
- Barez, Manion, Schoepfer & Cherian (2007)
- Mueller & Roberts (2008)
- Alay (2008)
- Coppetti, Wentzel, Tomczak, & Henkel (2009)
- Clark, Cornwell & Pruitt (2009)

- **Determinants of sponsor-event fit**

- Geng, Burton, & Blakemore (2002)
- Garry, Broderick & Lahiffe (2008)
- Gwinner & Bennett (2008)
- Walshe (2008)
- Pichot, Tribou & O'Reilly (2008)
- Coppetti, Wentzel, Tomczak & Henkel (2009)

- **“Fit” as an element of the selection process**

- **The role of “fit” in the sponsorship selling process**

- Irwin & Assimakopoulos (1992)
- Shanklin & Kuzma (1992)
- Thwaites (1993)
- Thwaites (1994)
- Farrelly, Quester & Burton (1997)
- Liu, Srivastava & Woo (1998)
- Thwaites & Carruther (1998)
- Thwaites, Aguilar-Manjarrez, & Kidd, (1998)
- Shaw & Amis (2001)

- Sack & Fried (2001)
- Jowdy & McDonald (2002)
- Doherty & Murray (2007)
- Braunstein, Newman & Beissel (2008)

<p>5. Audiences reached through sponsorship</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crowley (1991) • Meenaghan (1991) • Meerabeau, Gillett, Kennedy, Adeoba, Byass & Tabi (1991) • Thwaites (1993) • Thwaites (1995) • Spence, Abratt & Mattheus (1997) • Thwaites & Carruthers (1998) • Chadwick & Thwaites (2004) • Van Heerden & du Plessis (2004) • Polonsky, Sandler, Casey, Murphy, Portelli & Van Velzen, (1996)
<p>6. Objective Setting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of Objectives pursued by sponsors • Empirical studies identifying the objectives set by sponsors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratton & Taylor (1985) • Abratt, Clayton & Pitt (1987) • Meerabeau, Gillett, Kennedy, Adeoba, Byass & Tabi (1991) • Irwin & Asimakopoulos (1992) • Thwaites (1994) • Hoek (1999) • Abratt, Clayton & Pitt (1987) • Gross, Traylor & Shuman (1987) • Armstrong (1988) • Witcher, Craigen, Culligan & Harvey (1991) • Shanklin & Kuzma (1992) • Thwaites (1993) • Pope & Voges (1994) • Thwaites (1994)

**7. Motivation to engage
in Sponsorship**

- Thwaites (1995)
 - Polonsky, Sandler, Casey, Murphy, Portelli & Van Velzen, (1996)
 - Farrelly, Quester & Burton (1997)
 - Lee, Sandler & Shani (1997)
 - Spence, Abratt & Mattheus (1997)
 - Thwaites, Aguilar-Manjarrez & Kidd, (1998)
 - Thwaites & Carruther (1998)
 - Amis, Slack & Berrett (1999)
 - Westerbeek (2000)
 - Lough & Irwin (2001)
 - Geng, Burton, & Blakemore (2002)
 - Lavack (2003)
 - Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou (2004)
 - Chadwick & Thwaites (2004)
 - Tomasini, Frye & Stotlar (2004)
 - Yu & Mikat (2004)
 - Van Heerden & du Plessis (2004)
 - Chadwick & Thwaites (2005)
 - Hartland, Skinner & Griffiths (2005)
 - Séguin, Teed & O'Reilly (2005)
 - Davies & Tsiantas (2008)
 - Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou, & Dounis (2008)
 - Constantinescu & Szekely (2009)
 - Goldman & Johns (2009)
 - Smolianov & Aiyeku (2009)
-
- Abratt and Grobler (1989)
 - Meerabeau, Gillett, Kennedy, Adeoba, Byass & Tabi (1991)

- Shanklin & Kuzma (1992)
- Pope and Voge's (1994)
- Thwaites (1994)
- Thwaites (1995)
- Copeland, Frisby & McCarville (1996)
- Polonsky, Sandler, Casey, Murphy, Portelli & Van Velzen, (1996)
- Arthur, Scott & Woods (1997)
- Farrelly, Quester & Burton (1997)
- Burton, Quester & Farrelly (1998)
- Thwaites & Carruthers (1998)
- Thwaites, Aguilar-Manjarrez, & Kidd, (1998)
- Amis, Slack & Berrett (1999)
- Berrett & Slack (1999)
- Lough & Irwin (2001)
- Shaw & Amis (2001)
- Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou (2004)
- Chadwick & Thwaites (2004)
- Chadwick & Thwaites (2005)
- Séguin, Teed & O'Reilly (2005)
- Cornwell (2008)
- Garry, Broderick & Lahiffe (2008)
- Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou, & Dounis (2008)
- Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou (2009)
- Constantinescu & Szekely (2009)

**8. Sponsorship Decision-making Process:
Acquisition and selection of sponsorship arrangements**

• **Nature of the selection activity:
Selection procedures & criteria for selection**

- Abratt, Clayton & Pitt (1987)
- Meenaghan (1991)
- Irwin & Assimakopoulos (1992)
- Shanklin & Kuzma (1992)
- Thwaites (1993)
- Furst (1994)
- Thwaites (1994)
- Thwaites (1995)
- Copeland, Frisby & McCarville (1996)
- Cousens & Slack (1996)
- Arthur, Scott & Woods (1997)
- Farrelly, Quester & Burton (1997)
- Wilson (1997)
- Burton, Quester & Farrelly (1998)
- Liu, Srivastava & Woo (1998)
- Thwaites, Aguilar-Manjarrez, & Kidd, (1998)
- Thwaites & Carruthers (1998)
- Westerbeek (2000)
- Shaw & Amis (2001)
- Geng, Burton & Blakemore (2002)
- Westerbeek & Smith (2002)
- Lavack (2003)
- Chadwick & Thwaites (2004)
- Yu & Mikat (2004)
- Chadwick & Thwaites (2005)
- Hansen, Halling & Christensen (2006)
- Cornwell (2008)
- O'Reilly & Foster (2008)

• **Components Secured by sponsors**

- Pope & Voges (1994)
- Polonsky, Sandler, Casey, Murphy,

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portelli & Van Velzen, (1996) • Thwaites & Carruthers (1998) • Tomasini, Frye & Stotlar (2004)
<p style="text-align: center;">9. Selling the Sponsorship Proposal</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berrett & Slack (2001) • Sack & Fried (2001) • Jowdy & McDonald (2002) • Doherty & Murray (2007) • Braunstein, Newman & Beissel (2008) • DeGaris (2008) • Doroghy (2008) • Mueller & Roberts (2008) • Torla (2008) • Constantinescu & Szekely (2009)
<p style="text-align: center;">10. Evaluating Sponsorship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsorship Evaluation Frameworks and Evaluation Practices employed by sponsors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armstrong (1988) • Abratt & Grobler (1989) • Meenaghan (1991) • Witcher, Craigen, Culligan & Harvey (1991) • Shanklin & Kuzma (1992) • Thwaites (1993) • Furst (1994) • Thwaites (1994) • Thwaites (1995) • Copeland, Frisby & McCarville (1996) • Farrelly, Quester & Burton (1997) • Spence, Abratt & Mattheus (1997) • Thwaites & Carruthers (1998) • Thwaites, Aguilar-Manjarrez, & Kidd, (1998)

- **Link between Measurement Methods and Sponsorship Type**

Studies Measuring Sponsorship Effectiveness

- Lavack (2003)
- Chadwick & Thwaites (2004)
- Stotlar (2004)
- Van Heerden & du Plessis (2004)
- Chadwick & Thwaites (2005)
- Séguin, Teed & O'Reilly (2005)
- Ali, Cornwell, Nguyen & Coote (2006)
- Akaoui (2007)
- Doherty & Murray (2007)
- O'Reilly, Nadeau, Seguin & Harrison (2007)
- Davies & Tsiantas (2008)
- DeGaris (2008)
- Lamont & Dowell (2008)
- Papadimitriou et al. (2008)
- Watt (2008)
- O'Reilly & Madill (2009)

- Pope & Voges (1994)
- Smolianov & Aiyeku (2009)

- Wright (1988)
- Polonsky, Sandler, Casey, Murphy, Portelli & Van Velzen, (1996)
- Quester (1997)
- Spence, Abratt & Mattheus (1997)
- Bennett (1999)
- Kropp, Lavack, Holden & Dalakas

**Factors improving or
diminishing the effectiveness of
sport sponsorship –The
underlying mechanisms through
which sponsorship works**

- (1999)
- Nicholls, Roslow & Dublish (1999)
- Cornwell, Roy & Steinard (2001a)
- Bennett, Henson & Zhang (2002)
- Jalleh, Donovan, Giles-Corti & Holman (2002)
- Lyberger & McCarthy (2002)
- Stotlar (2002)
- Chebat & Daoud (2003)
- Irwin, Lachowetz, Comwell & Clark (2003)
- Shin & Turco (2005)
- Christensen (2006)
- Miloch & Lambrecht (2006)
- O'Reilly, Lyberger, McCarthy, Séguin & Nadeau (2008)
- Van Heerden, Kuiper & Saar (2008)
- Hansen, Halling & Christensen (2006)
- Nufer (2009)
- Portlock & Rose (2009)

- Lee, Sandler & Shani (1997)
- McCarville, Flood & Froats (1998)
- Quester & Farrelly (1998)
- Pope (1998)
- Gwinner & Eaton (1999)
- McDaniel (1999)
- Meenaghan & Shipley (1999)
- Nicholls, Roslow & Dublish (1999)
- Cornwell, Relyea, Irwin & Maignan (2000)

- Madrigal (2000)
- Pope & Voges (2000)
- Speed & Thompson (2000)
- Cornwell, Roy & Steinard (2001a)
- Levin, Joiner & Cameron (2001)
- Madrigal (2001)
- Dalakas & Kropp (2002)
- Gwinner & Swanson (2003)
- Kuzma, Veltri, Kuzma, & Miller (2003)
- Grohs, Wagner & Vsetecka (2004)
- Levin, Beasley & Gamble (2004)
- Van Heerden, Kotze & Bruwer (2004)
- Cornwell & Coote (2005)
- Grohs & Reisinger (2005)
- Mason (2005)
- Choi, Stotlar & Park (2006)
- Koo, Quarterman, & Jackson (2006a)
- Koo, Quarterman & Flynn (2006b)
- Miloch & Lambrecht (2006)
- Ruth & Simonin (2006)
- Alexandris, Tsaousi & James (2007)
- Barez, Manion, Schoepfer & Cherian (2007)
- Dees, Bennett & Tsuji (2007)
- Henseler, Wilson, Götz, & Hautvast, (2007)
- Lacey, Sneath, Finney & Close (2007)
- Lings & Owen (2007)
- O'Reilly, Nadeau, Seguin & Harrison (2007)
- Alay (2008)
- Boshoff & Gerber (2008)
- Cornwell (2008)

**Measuring the value of
sponsorship based on
objective/concrete measures**

- Dees & Bennett (2008)
- Dees, Bennett & Villegas (2008)
- Gill (2008)
- Gwinner & Bennett (2008)
- Ko, Kim, Claussen, & Kim (2008)
- O'Reilly, Lyberger, McCarthy, Séguin & Nadeau (2008)
- Smith, Graetz & Westerbeek (2008)
- Bennett, Ferreira, Lee & Polite (2009)
- Ladousse (2009)
- Tripodi & Hirons (2009)
- Tsiotsou & Alexandris (2009)

- Wilson (1997)
- Hoek (1999)
- Currie (2000)
- Cornwell, Pruitt & Van Ness (2001b)
- Miyazaki & Morgan (2001)
- Cornwell, Pruitt & Clark (2005)
- Samitas, Kenourgios, & Zounis (2008)
- Clark, Cornwell & Pruitt (2009)

11. Legal and Ethical Issues in Sport Sponsorship

- **Ambush Marketing**
 - *Ambush Marketing Practices and their Effectiveness*
 - *Actions Combatting Ambush Marketing*
- **Ethical and legal Dimensions of Sport Sponsorship by Unhealthy Products - Alcohol, Tobacco, Unhealthy food, and Gambling Sport Sponsorship**
 - Meenaghan (1994)
 - Meenaghan (1998)
 - O'Sullivan & Murphy (1998)
 - Lyberger & McCarthy (2001)
 - Farrelly, Quester & Greyser (2005)
 - Shin & Turco (2005)
 - McKelvey & Gladden (2006)
 - Cornwell (2008)
 - McKelvey & Grady (2008)
 - Byon & Zhang (2009)
 - Nufer (2009)
 - Portlock & Rose (2009)
 - Ledwith (1984)
 - Stotlar (1992)
 - Furlong (1994)
 - Dzeguze (1998)
 - Kropp, Lavack, Holden & Dalakas (1999)
 - McDaniel & Mason (1999)
 - McDaniel, Kinney & Chalip (2001)
 - Siegel (2001)
 - Dewhirst & Hunter (2002)
 - Chebat & Daoud (2003)
 - Dewhirst & Sparks (2003)
 - Lavack (2003)
 - McKelvey (2004a)
 - McKelvey (2004b)
 - Maher, Wilson, Signal & Thomson (2006)
 - Morrison, Haygood, & Krugman

- **Other risks associated with sport sponsorships that generate legal and ethical concerns**

(2006)

- MacKenzie, Collin & Sriwongcharoen (2007)
- MacLean & Bonington (2008)
- Danyichuk & MacIntosh (2009)

- Roberts (1997)
- Hughes & Shank (2005)
- Fortunato & Richards (2007)
- O'Reilly & Foster (2008)
- Urbach (2008)
- Earle & Groome (2009)

During the second stage of the analysis through a careful reading of the material identified in the search process, a number of emergent themes were identified which allowed for the structure of the material identified to be categorised. This second order analysis involved a lengthy process which was necessary to be able to generalise about the content of the literature identified in a descriptive manner. A full discussion on the emergent themes, the links and the interrelations between papers sourced is provided in Appendix 3.

The section that follows is a brief summary of the thematic analysis outlining the main findings that emerged:

1. Nature of the sponsorship activity
2. Sponsorship and corporate strategy
3. Managing sport sponsorship strategically
4. The concept of fit and its importance in sport sponsorship
5. Audiences reached through sponsorship
6. Objective setting
7. Motivation to engage in sponsorship
8. Sponsorship decision-making process
9. Selling the sponsorship proposal
10. Evaluating sponsorship
11. Legal and ethical issues in sport sponsorship

The analysis indicated that there is a different conceptualisation of sport sponsorship in differently developed contexts (e.g. China and the USA) whilst there is also a difference in sponsorship perceptions, as well as sponsorship management practices, through time. The original charitable and philanthropic conceptualisation of sponsorship (Gratton & Taylor, 1985; Mescon & Tilson, 1987) has given way to a more professional, market – driven sponsorship activity (Cornwell, 2008), despite the fact that for some authors (e.g. Pegoraro, O'Reilly & Levallet, 2009) sponsorship is an agent of corporate social responsibility. Nowadays, sponsorship is used as a means for developing corporate strategy

through its important contribution to the creation of brand and corporate identity as well as corporate culture (Cunningham et al., 2009; Garry et al. 2008; Hickman et al., 2005; Pichot et al., 2009). Furthermore, there is also research demonstrating that sponsorship is used as a resource towards the development of a competitive advantage (Amis, 2003; Amis et al., 1997, 1999; Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009), whilst the sponsorship medium seems to be a well appreciated activity fostering the creation of partnerships and relationship building strategies (Chadwick, 2002; Farrelly & Quester, 2005; Olkkonen, 2001; Olkkonen et al., 2000). Interestingly, there have been some research papers that aimed at exploring the quality of the relationship characterising the partnership between the sponsor and the sponsored property (Westberg, Stavros, & Wilson, 2008; Wilson, Stavros, & Westberg, 2008). In addition, sponsorship had been perceived as a critical sales event that has the capacity to reinforce the relationships with key decision makers in the business-to-business market (Clark, Lachowetz, Irwin & Schimmel, 2003).

The literature also highlighted the importance of sport sponsorship as an integrated part of the marketing mix (Witcher, Craigen, Culligan & Harvey, 1991) and the associated strategic integration practices used by sponsors in an effort to maximise their sponsorship benefits (Cornwell, 2008; Lavack, 2003). This is also illustrated in the development of sponsorship management models that clearly articulate the integration aspect (e.g. Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Meeneghan, 1991; Séguin, Teed & O'Reilly, 2005; Vignali, 1997; Walshe, 2008), as well as in the many empirical studies that describe the leveraging practices employed by sponsors in supporting their sponsorships (e.g. Burton et al., 1998; Cornwell, Roy & Steinard, 2001a; Farrelly et al., 1997; Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009; Polonsky et al., 1996; Séguin et al., 2005). In addition, there had been several research efforts directed towards exploring the role of leveraging practices in improving the value and effectiveness of sport sponsorship (e.g. Barez, Manion, Schoepfer & Cherian, 2007; Davies & Tsiantas, 2008; Goldman & Johns, 2009; Tripodi & Hirons, 2009; Watt, 2008).

Another theme that emerged in the analysis of the systematic review involved the concept of fit. In fact, although “fit” was emphasised in early sponsorship literature (Lynn, 1987), the new media technologies had been regarded as influencing the sponsorship activity and posing different challenges on the management of the sponsorship medium (Chadwick, 2009). Therefore, the concept of fit gained much more attention through time, with a large number of researchers drawing attention on the importance of fit between the sponsor and the sponsored property (e.g. Coppetti, Wentzel, Tomczak, & Henkel, 2009; Grohs & Reisinger, 2005; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Henseler, Wilson, Götz, & Hautvast, 2007; Mueller & Roberts, 2008; Séguin et al. 2005; Speed & Thompson, 2000). According to Séguin et al. (2005), nowadays there is a need for sponsors to customise their sponsorships in an effort to fit the sponsored property, whilst DeGaris (2008) drew attention on the need for sponsees to alter their product in order to better fit the sponsor. This is understandable when considering the favorable impact of fit upon the effectiveness of sport sponsorship that has been demonstrated in many studies (e.g. Alay, 2008; Barez et al., 2007; Koo, Quarterman, & Jackson, 2006a; Quester & Farrelly, 1998). The importance of fit was further demonstrated by the fact a part of the literature focused on examining the factors that determine fit or congruency between the sponsor and the sponsored property. Results indicated that socially-based motives of the sponsor (Garry et al., 2008), brand cohesiveness and sport identification (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008), and interactive leveraging activities that engage the audience and create excitement (Coppetti et al., 2009) have the capacity to significantly and positively impact fit and thus to improve the effectiveness of sponsorship. Based on the above, it is not surprising that ensuring fit became an important element of the sponsorship selection process (Farrelly et al., 1997; Irwin & Assimakopoulos, 1992; Liu, Srivastava & Woo, 1998; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992).

The issue of managing strategically the sponsorship deal is a well-supported theme that emerged from the thematic analysis, and it is also depicted in the

importance that sponsors place on the concept of congruency described above. The review of the literature indicated that sponsors and researchers place much importance on sponsorship management practices, with objective setting being one of the main issues explored in many studies (e.g. Abratt et al., 1987; Goldman & Johns, 2009; Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Lough & Irwin, 2001; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992; Thwaites, 1993,1994; Thwaites, Aguilar-Manjarrez, & Kidd, 1998) together with many other sponsorship management aspects such as audiences reached (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004; Crowley, 1991; Spence, Abratt & Mattheus, 1997; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998), leveraging techniques (Amis et al., 1999; Cornwell et al., 2001a; Farrelly et al., 1997; Raynaud & Bolos, 2008), and motivation of the sponsors (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Arthur, Scott & Woods, 1997; Lough & Irwin, 2001; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998, etc.).

Despite the growing realisation of the importance of a strategic sponsorship management approach, it is indeed, surprising that the majority of the sponsors – even in more developed sponsorship contexts such as the UK – did not set clear and measurable objectives (e.g. Farrelly et. al., 1997; Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou, & Dounis, 2008; Thwaites, 1993, 1994), and it is also the case that sponsors also seemed to employ limited, and sometimes unsophisticated leveraging practices (Amis et al., 1999; Farrelly et al., 1997; Lamont & Dowell, 2008). At the same time, it should be mentioned that the review indicated that the sponsorship management activity became more sophisticated through time, with many sponsors employing more careful screening and selection processes, detailing the components of the sponsorship contract more specifically, enacting several leveraging practices to support their sponsorship, setting more precise and measurable sponsorship objectives, and being driven by more commercial motives to engage in a sponsorship agreement.

Interestingly, a more professional sponsorship management approach seemed to be associated with larger sponsors whilst in contrast, smaller companies seemed

to be less systematic and professional in managing their sponsorship arrangements (Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998). There was also some indication of a more professional sponsorship approach adopted by private sponsors compared to sponsors coming from the public sector (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009). Moreover, the review revealed that there were significant differences in the management of sport sponsorships between more developed and less developed sponsorship contexts (e.g. North America and Australia). It appeared that experienced sponsors operating in more developed contexts use more fully integrated sponsorship practices, employ more cross-functional responsibility and control of the sponsorship activity, and the latter refers not simply to the implementation and evaluation practices but also to the proposal assessment, negotiations and renewal decisions (Burton et al., 1998). The review also revealed that more experienced sponsors (e.g. USA firms) involve middle level managers in the sponsorship decision-making process, whilst in less experienced contexts such as the Australian one, such decisions are made at more executive levels (Burton et al., 1998). Moreover, another interesting finding with regard to the selection process is that the importance placed upon several selection criteria varies significantly, and depends on the industry in which the sponsor operates, with tobacco sponsors for example assigning importance to media exposure primarily due to legislative restrictions (Lavack, 2003), locally oriented sponsors assigning great importance upon the location of the sponsee, and larger companies placing much emphasis on TV coverage when choosing their sponsorship property (Westerbeek, 2000).

The main conclusions drawn from the sponsorship management literature, and more specifically from the literature concerning objective setting, is that media objectives are not of that importance today compared to the past (e.g. Abratt et al., 1987). Instead, sponsors seemed to have moved through time towards realising corporate related objectives (Hartland, Skinner & Griffiths, 2005) with image and awareness objectives appearing as the most prevalent goals (Cornwell

& Maignan, 1998; Walliser, 2003). More recent evidence seems to suggest a shift from image and awareness objectives to more sophisticated goals such as fostering a certain positioning concept within a certain target market (Goldman & Johns, 2009), or the accommodation of internal marketing goals such as generating employee commitment (Cunningham et al., 2009; Pichot, Tribou & O'Reilly, 2008). It is also important to observe that for small companies, sponsorship is essential for reaching their internal marketing goals such as satisfying their workforce, as well as for building good relationships with the business community in which they operate, as demonstrated in the importance they place upon the two aforementioned target groups – employees and business partners (Crowley, 1991).

At the same time, it is significant to mention that there seem to be differences with regard to the objectives set by sponsors coming from different industries. For example, Thwaites (1994) demonstrated that banks set more sophisticated and measurable objectives compared to other financial institutions, and Lavack (2003) found that sponsors operating in the tobacco industry are very interested in achieving certain objectives such as creating corporate goodwill. In addition to the type of the company sponsoring sport, it seems that different objectives are pursued in contexts with different state of sponsorship development. For more developed contexts, for example, such as the UK and Canada, corporate objectives receive much more importance (Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Thwaites et al., 1998) compared to less developed contexts such as the Australian or Greek contexts which place more emphasis on brand related objectives (Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Pope & Voges, 1994). In addition, less developed sponsorship contexts such as Greece and Romania seem to place much more emphasis on sales related and profit oriented objectives (Constantinescu & Szekely, 2009; Papadimitriou et al., 2008). The size of the sponsor also appeared as an important determining factor, since larger sponsors seem to be more inclined towards image related objectives, and smaller sponsors towards sales and community related objectives (e.g. Armstrong, 1988; Gratton & Taylor, 1985;

Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Polonsky et al., 1996). The importance of sales objectives may also be influenced by the location-dependency of the sponsor, as Westerbeek (2000) and Polonsky et al. (1996) argued. Moreover, long-term sponsorships may be predominantly dealing with image related goals and objectives (Armstrong, 1988).

Similarly to objective setting, the motives to engage in a sponsorship agreement seem to vary in differently developed sponsorship contexts, with a more philanthropic orientation in less developed contexts such as Greece (Papadimitriou et al., 2008) and a more commercial motivation in more developed contexts (e.g. Thwaites, 1994; Thwaites et al., 1998). The size of the sponsor prevails once again, with small sponsors entering a sponsorship deal primarily because of personal motives and interests (Polonsky et al., 1996), whilst it is also the case that for certain sponsorship areas such as Olympic sponsorship, emotional and national reasons are very important factors shaping the sponsorship decision (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Constantinescu & Szekely, 2009; Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009). Once again, public companies sponsoring sport seem to be driven by more emotional and much less commercial motives as compared to private sponsors (Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009). In general, the sponsorship investment was found to be driven, by a vast variety of motives, such as overtly commercial reasons – e.g. the need for increased sales and a positive image (Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992), the desire to be a good citizen by supporting a worthy cause, or simply to fulfil altruistic and motives (Berrett & Slack, 1999; Shaw & Amis, 2001; Thwaites and Carruthers, 1998), and personal interest, such as the manager’s personal liking of a certain sport (e.g. Burton et al., 1998; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998). In addition, there was evidence suggesting that corporate involvement in sport sponsorship may be fuelled by a “defensive” rationale (Burton et al. 1998), that is, the intention of a company to invest in sponsorship before a competitor does. Based on the above, and given that the need for customer understanding is getting even greater and even more important in a highly competitive environment, Chadwick

(2009) stressed the need for research addressing issues related to how sponsors – an important customer group for sport providers – decide, purchase and use sponsorships, their motives, their objectives and their priorities.

The lack of professional management practices described in the previous paragraphs was also illustrated in the limited or inappropriate evaluation practices used by sponsors (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004, 2005; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Papadimitriou et al., 2008), despite the fact that the analysis revealed that sponsorship evaluation was the most heavily researched area in the sponsorship literature, and despite the several suggestions made by authors for more appropriate measurement methods (e.g. Akaoui, 2007; Ali, Cornwell, Nguyen & Coote, 2006; Watt, 2008) and for linking measurement methods to the type of sponsorship (Pope & Voges, 1994; Smolianov & Aiyeku, 2009). The lack of a systematic sponsorship evaluation procedure was attributed mainly to the fact that sponsorship is usually employed together with other promotional tools and the carry-over effects from previous marketing activities that make it difficult to isolate and measure the outcomes of sport sponsorship activity (Hoek, 1999; Meenaghan, 1991; Wilson, 1997), something that Amis et al. (1999) described as causal ambiguity. Another important obstacle to the effective measurement of sponsorship outcomes involves the multiplicity of objectives sought through sponsorship (Gratton & Taylor, 1985).

Another part of the sponsorship evaluation literature consists of studies that actually measured the value of sport sponsorship, whilst there had been some efforts to develop models aiming at enabling the process of sponsorship evaluation (e.g. Abratt & Grobler, 1989; Meenaghan, 1991; Stotlar, 2004). In addition, many studies attempted to examine the evaluation practices employed by sponsors (e.g. Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; O'Reilly & Madill 2009; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992; Thwaites, 1993, 1994 etc.) whilst a smaller number of studies aimed at identifying appropriate measurement methods for sponsorship evaluation or linking those methods to certain sponsorship types

(Akaoui, 2007; DeGaris, 2008; Pope & Voges, 1994; Smolianov & Aiyeku, 2009; Watt, 2008).

Interestingly, much evaluation research was directed at the mechanisms underlying the success of sport sponsorship such as the image transfer process (Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999) and the factors that seem to increase this transfer, those being sponsor-event fit (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Koo, Quarterman & Flynn, 2006b), leveraging (Grohs, Wagner & Vsetecka, 2004), fans involvement and identification (Grohs et al., 2004; Koo et al., 2006b; Quester & Farrelly, 1998), and several attitudes such as the attitude towards the sponsor or the event (Alay 2008; Speed & Thompson, 2000). Additional research that shed some light on the factors that increase sponsorship effectiveness indicated that activation and leveraging strategies (Choi et al., 2006; Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006; Quester & Farrelly, 1998; Tripodi & Hirons, 2009) are particularly important. At the same time, the number of sport sponsors and their motives (Ruth & Simonin, 2006), negative information regarding the sponsor (Kuzma, Veltri, Kuzma, & Miller, 2003), and the stage at which a sponsor enters a sponsorship deal (Bennett, Henson & Zhang, 2002; Wright, 1988) appeared as having an impact upon the effectiveness of sport sponsorship.

Finally, another emergent theme was the one dealing with legal and ethical issues in sport sponsorship, with ambush marketing receiving much attention since the researches seemed willing to discuss not only the legal, but also the ethical dimensions of ambushing (e.g. O'Sullivan & Murphy, 1998). This is not surprising, especially when considering the evidence showing that ambushing diminishes the value of sport sponsorship (Byon & Zhang, 2009; Lyberger & McCarthy, 2001; Meenaghan, 1994). Some other legal and ethical issues that arose from the thematic analysis of the literature involved the sponsorship of sport by unhealthy products such as tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy food and gambling entities (e.g. Dewhirst & Hunter, 2002; Ledwith, 1984). Particular concern was expressed by researchers regarding the promotional power of the sponsorship medium and its

capacity to be used as an alternative advertising vehicle, promoting undesired and unhealthy behaviours (Ledwith, 1984; Siegel, 2001). Hence, there had been some voices in the literature calling for stricter legislation regulating this area in order to avoid undesirable effects (McKelvey, 2004b).

2.2.3 Third Stage – Construct Analysis

Third Order Themes – Methodological Constructs

The use of Descriptive versus Analytic studies

It is noteworthy that a large part of the studies identified through the systematic literature review is descriptive in general, lacking conceptual explanations of the mechanisms through which sponsorship works, the way in which sponsorship decisions are made, the impact of sponsorship upon several outcomes, and the objectives pursued and motives triggering the sponsorship activity. Such descriptive articles simply report sponsorship practices or the economic aspects of the sponsorship activity in certain contexts (e.g. Asimakopoulos, 1993; Gratton & Taylor, 1985; Gross, Traylor & Shuman, 1987; Lynn, 1987; Meerabeau et al., 1991; Obsniuk & Smith, 2008; Ordish, 2005) without any intention to provide any explanatory analysis of the trends or the results obtained. In addition, many descriptive studies dealt with objectives and motivation issues and, although those studies (e.g. Polonsky et al. 1996; Thwaites, 1993, Thwaites et al., 1998; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998) provided essential information about the desired objectives pursued by sponsors and the driving forces behind their decision to be involved in sponsorship, they failed to locate their findings within certain frameworks, theories and concepts that can provide conceptual explanations of the results. Within the same descriptive framework, several authors reported the practices and criteria used by sponsors when selecting a sponsorship (e.g. Furst, 1994; Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Liu et al., 1998; Thwaites, 1993, 1994, 1995).

The lack of underlying foundations guiding empirical enquiries was also criticised by many authors (e.g. Sam, Batty & Dean, 2005; Vignali, 1997), and it was indeed highlighted in earlier sponsorship literature reviews (e.g. Walliser, 2003). It is, however, of interest to note that, the systematic review conducted in this research seems to suggest that compared to earlier studies, much more analytical papers

have been published recently. Hence, despite a prevalence of studies lacking conceptual foundations, several authors have attempted to approach the sponsorship phenomenon from an analytic point of view. Interestingly, the review of the literature identified an increasing conceptual grounding in the efforts of several authors to explain sponsorship functioning (e.g. Arthur et al., 1997; Berrett & Slack, 1999; Chadwick, 2002, 2009; Clark et al., 2003; Cornwell, 2008; Cousens & Slack, 1996; Hoek, 1999; Olkkonen et al., 2000; Quester & Farrelly, 1998; Shaw & Amis, 2001).

Exchange theory had been used by authors such as McCarville & Copeland (1994) in order to enlighten the sport sponsorship activity through focusing on the benefits that the two parties can gain, whilst there had been some research efforts attempting to elaborate on the nature of the sponsorship arrangement through the employment of relationship marketing concepts (e.g. Chadwick, 2002; Farrelly & Quester, 2005; Geng et al., 2002; Olkkonen, 2001; Olkkonen et al., 2000), the resource based theory (Amis et al., 1997; Daellenbach, Davies & Ashill, 2006; Davies, Daellenbach & Ashill, 2008; Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009), the network perspective (e.g. Olkkonen, 2001; Olkkonen et al., 2000) and strategic alliance (Farrelly & Quester, 2005). Moreover, many of those analytical efforts are found in the sponsorship evaluation literature, with many authors using social identity theory (e.g. Cornwell & Coote, 2005; Garry et al., 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Madrigal, 2001) in their effort to identify and explain the impact of fan identification upon several sponsorship outcomes.

Treating Objectives and Motives as Synonyms

One of the main methodological concerns generated by the constructive analysis of the studies included in this systematic review is the fact that many authors conducting sponsorship research approached motives and objectives as synonyms (e.g. Abratt et al., 1987; Pope & Voges, 1994). With some exceptions in the literature (e.g. Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou, 2004), many authors such as Amis et al., (1999) Thwaites and Carruthers (1998) and Papadimitriou et

al. (2008), treated the rationale for sponsorship involvement and the objectives pursued by sponsors as the same thing. In fact, in the study conducted by Pope and Voges (1994) objectives are used as motives, with the authors arguing that “the term objective when quoted by previous researchers has in fact been synonymous with motive” (p. 44). This notion is inexact since the literature review in this study identified several motives that cannot be regarded as corporate objectives pursued by sponsors, such as the manager’s personal liking of a certain sport (Burton et al., 1998; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998), the familiarity of the manager with a particular sport, league or team (Burton et al., 1998), the advancement of personal agendas and interests of the manager (Cornwell, Pruitt & Van Ness, 2001b) or altruistic and moral motives aiming at providing help or support to the country as demonstrated by Papadimitriou et al. (2008) and Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004). Hence, it is recommended that the terms motives and objectives should be examined separately in sport sponsorship inquiry.

Predominance of Quantitative methodologies in Sponsorship Literature

It is obvious that the dominant approach in sponsorship research is quantitative since the vast majority of the studies explored in the systematic review employed quantitative measures and methods to examine the sponsorship phenomenon (e.g. Akaoui, 2007; Alexandris, Tsaousi & James, 2007; Bennett et al., 2002; Christensen, 2006; Cunningham et al., 2009; Grohs et al., 2004; Hansen, Halling & Christensen, 2006; Irwin, Lachowetz, Comwell & Clark, 2003; Lough & Irwin, 2001; Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006; Miyazaki & Morgan, 2001; Nicholls, Roslow & Dublish, 1999; Nufer, 2009; Spence et al., 1997; Tomasini, Frye & Stotlar, 2004; Westerbeek, 2000; Westerbeek & Smith, 2002). Apart from the survey methodology relying on the employment of questionnaires, another nomothetic approach that was employed by a small number of researchers (e.g. Byon & Zhang, 2009; Coppetti, et al., 2009; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Kuzma et al., 2003; Levin, Joiner & Cameron, 2001; McCarville, Flood & Froats, 1998; McDaniel,

1999; Ruth & Simonin, 2006) was the experimental or quasi-experimental design. The artificial exposure conditions of the experiment used by some researchers such as McDaniel (1999) and McCarville et al. (1998) however, can be regarded as an important methodological limitation which may have impacted the reliability and validity of the findings, while at the same time limit the generalisability of the results. On the other hand, a methodological strength of this design is that it allows for controlling many external factors such as the impact of advertising.

Although there had been much criticism in the sponsorship literature regarding the prevalence of quantitative methods in exploring a multidimensional phenomenon such as sponsorship, Girginov and Sandanski (2004) in commenting the methodological developments associated with sponsorship argued that those are heavily dependent on the conceptualisation of sponsorship adopted by authors. Specifically, the authors held that for those espousing a traditional marketing approach dealing with the management of the marketing mix would favor nomothetic methods, while the authors advocating a network perspective dealing primarily with the management of the relationships of a whole network “would prefer action-oriented methods (case studies and action research)” (Girginov & Sandanski, 2004, p. 129). Hence, it could be argued that an experiential phenomenon such as sponsorship cannot easily and only be studied and understood through positivistic quantitative approaches. The fact, for example, that many researchers used a pre-determined list of sponsors’ motives and objectives or criteria employed for selecting the property to be sponsored (e.g. Copeland, Frisby & McCarville, 1996, Thwaites et al., 1998 etc.) and asked the respondents to rate their importance when making sponsorship decisions can be regarded as a highly directive method which does not allow the researcher to get in-depth understanding on the respondents’ views and subjective interpretations or conceptions of the sponsorship activity they engage in. Instead, adopting a qualitative perspective in researching sport sponsorship can be proved more constructive and beneficial, albeit that a full detachment of the researcher from the methods, events and analysis of the findings cannot be ensured in an interpretative qualitative research design (Girginov & Sandanski, 2004).

Cornwell and Maignan (1998), for example, argued that there are certain areas of sponsorship research, such as studies examining the strategic aspects and use of sport sponsorship, for which qualitative research is more appropriate for improving our understanding. The use of qualitative enquiry has also been advocated by Yang et al. (2008) who went on to argue that qualitative methods such as observations and audits are essential methods for enhancing “the methodological rigour and value” of sponsorship studies (p. 76). Similarly, Shaw and Amis (2001) felt that qualitative approaches can provide a richer understanding of the sponsorship process, whilst Choi et al. (2006, p. 71) opposed to the use of “quantitative metrics” when measuring the sponsorship experience. Thus, there had been a significant number of studies that used qualitative methods in examining the sponsorship phenomenon, albeit that those studies are significantly less than the quantitative studies. Authors such as Olkkonen (2001), Amis (2003), Girginov & Sandanski, (2004), Farrelly, Quester & Greyser (2005), Daellenbach et al. (2006), Wilson et al. (2008), Westberg et al. (2008), Scherer, Falcous & Jackson, (2008), Yang et al. (2008), Pichot et al. (2009), and Pegoraro et al. (2009) relied on qualitative data collection methods in order to explain the nature of sponsorship and its strategic aspects. Qualitative method was also employed by authors examining the management and leveraging strategies used by sponsors (e.g. Armstrong, 1988; Barez et al., 2007; Choi et al., 2006; Davies & Tsiantas, 2008; Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009; Seguin et al., 2005), as well as by authors investigating the motives or objectives associated with sport sponsorship, and the sponsors’ decision-making process when investing in sponsorship (e.g. Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Berrett & Slack, 1999; Davies & Tsiantas, 2008). Much less qualitative research had been employed in evaluating sponsorship effectiveness (e.g. Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999). Vignali (1997) heavily criticised the predominance of quantitative methods in examining the outcomes of a qualitative activity such as sponsorship. Similarly, Dewk (1993) used the phrase of Lesa Ukman, who argued that sponsorship experts erroneously evaluate

sponsorship “in terms of take offs instead of landings - it's a qualitative not quantitative thing.”

Most of the studies that used a qualitative methodological research design relied on the use of semi-structured interviews (e.g. Amis et al., 1997; Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Berrett & Slack, 1999, 2001; Davies & Tsiantas, 2008; Motion, Leitch & Brodie, 2003; Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009; Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Sequin et al., 2005; Westberg et al., 2008; Wilson et al., 2008). Semi-structured interviews were regarded for instance by Wilson et al. (2008), and Westberg et al. (2008) as the most appropriate tool for investigating the sponsorship phenomenon since they provide respondents with the opportunity to expand on questions and to answer on their own terms, whilst at the same time this technique allows for comparability. Interestingly, only one study in the whole literature review conducted in this research employed an ethnographic research design in examining the sponsorship experience. Ethnography, which is defined by Merriam (1998) as a sociocultural interpretation of the data, was employed by Choi et al. (2006) in their effort to examine the attitudes and cultures of the sport spectators of an event. The study used visual observation (through a photo journal that was created for the event under study) and interviews, and the goal was to conduct “an in-depth field study of naturally occurring behaviour at a sporting event” (Choi et al. 2006, p. 72).

Another much less represented qualitative method employed by authors examining sponsorship is the gathering of data through focus group discussions. Specifically, only Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) relied exclusively on this method for exploring the image transfer process for different sponsorship categories as perceived by consumers, while another study (Pope, 1998) also used focus group discussions in evaluating the results of sport sponsorship through consumption value research, but it was combined with quantitative data collection procedures.

Another interesting methodological characteristic of the studies included in the systematic review is that, regardless whether they have used a quantitative or qualitative methodology, many authors employed a case study method in

approaching and researching sponsorship (e.g. Daellenbach et al., 2006; Doherty & Murrey, 2007; Irwin et al., 2003; Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Sack & Fried, 2001). Goldman and Johns (2009), for example, focused on a single case study in order to examine sport sponsorship, and what is interesting about this paper is that the authors gathered evidence from many different sources, such as press articles, sponsorship reports, figures and other data, interviews, conversations and direct observation of the event. The authors felt that a case study approach would be much more beneficial in investigating sport sponsorship within its real-life context, whilst the variety of evidence gathered had been regarded as very important in constructing valid findings. Moreover, there are several authors who examined sponsorship using a multi-case study method (e.g. Aiyeku, 2009; Berrett & Slack, 2001; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Shaw & Amis, 2001; Smolianov & Aiyeku, 2009; Tripodi & Hirons, 2009). Hence, the focus of those studies had been on examining the sponsorship practices of a certain category of sponsors, such as the study conducted by Papadimitriou et al. (2008) on Grand National Olympic sponsors, or the work carried out by Smolianov and Aiyeku (2009) on the sponsors of the Wimbledon Tennis Tournament in London and the Olympic Games in Sydney.

Focus and Sample Considerations

Some additional points that emerged from the construct analysis of the studies concern the properties explored and sample characteristics. Specifically, most of the studies have focused on the sponsor and its policies, priorities, management practices, objectives and motives, whilst very few studies chose to direct attention to the sponsored property. Some of those authors that focused on investigating the sponsored property and its management efforts in securing or managing a sponsorship deal are Berrett and Slack (2001), Sack and Fried (2001), Jowdy and McDonald, (2002), Tomasini et al. (2004), Sam et al. (2005), Doherty and Murrey, (2007), Wilson and Westberg, (2008), Braunstein, Newman & Beissel, (2008), and McKelvey and Grady, (2008). Interestingly, there had been some research

efforts that explored both parties involved in a sponsorship arrangement - the sponsor and the sponsee – but those are scarcely found in the sponsorship literature included in this systematic review (e.g. Deane, Smith & Adams, 2003; DeGaris, 2008; Farrelly & Quester, 2008; Geng et al., 2002; Goldman & Johns, 2009; Hansen et al., 2006; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Scherer et al., 2008; Séguin et al., 2005). Even more limited research has tried to be more inclusive (e.g. Girginov & Sandanski, 2004) and attempted to investigate all actors involved in a sponsorship deal, such as the sponsor, the sponsee, the media, national governing bodies etc.

In addition to the strong emphasis found on the sponsor, another interesting finding is the prominence of studies that focused upon mature and more commercialised sponsorship contexts, such as the USA, Canada and the UK. Indeed, sponsorship theories and frameworks were primarily constructed based on a “highly commercialized market and related systems of social and cultural values” (Yang et al., 2008, p. 63), whilst less developed and less matured sponsorship contexts with unique characteristics and cultural settings were highly ignored in sponsorship research, despite the fact that those can provide an interesting and highly valued background for sponsorship inquiry. Thus, there had been much less interest upon developing sponsorship environments such as Greece (e.g. Davies & Tsiantas, 2008; Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009; Samitas et al., 2008; Tsiotsou & Alexandris, 2009), China (e.g. Geng et al., 2002; Soderman & Dolles, 2008; Yang et al., 2008), South Africa (Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004), Romania (Constantinescu & Szekely, 2009) or Australia (e.g. Farrelly & Quester, 2005; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Polonsky et al., 1996). Examining, however, sponsorship activities in less commercialised contexts can be proved particularly useful, especially when considering that research has implied differences with regard to sponsorship practices between mature and less mature markets (e.g. Farrelly et al., 1997). Although the majority of the studies paid attention to the countries characterised by more sophisticated sponsorship environments, there have been some international research efforts to examine sponsorship in different contexts (e.g. Armstrong, 1988; Chadwick, 2009; Farrelly

et al., 2005; Giannoulakis, Stotlar & Chatziefstathiou, 2008; Koo et al., 2006a; Ladousse, 2009; Olkkonen, 2001; Santomier, 2008; Shaw & Amis, 2001), with some of them combining more mature and less mature markets (e.g. Akaoui, 2007; Dalakas & Kropp, 2002; Farrelly et al., 1997; Kropp, Lavack, Holden & Dalakas, 1999; Smolianov & Aiyeku, 2009; Vignali, 1997) and some of them undertaking comparative research (e.g. Burton et al. 1998; Dalakas & Kropp, 2002; Farrelly et al., 1997) in order to identify differences in sponsorship management practices.

Moreover, it is worth noting the prevalence of certain sport contexts that received much research attention, especially professional and collegiate sports (e.g. football, the Olympics, and rugby) whereas areas such as the recreational and leisure sectors were not heavily researched. Another methodological characteristic of the sponsorship literature review is that a very large number of authors examined large corporations that act as sponsors, with small businesses receiving much less interest. In fact, very few studies took into consideration small businesses involved in sponsorship (e.g. Cornwell, Pruitt & Clark, 2005; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Polonsky et al., 1996), but given that many small businesses are involved in small scale sport sponsorships, it would be very beneficial to examine their sponsorship activities which may differ from large sponsors' priorities and practices, as research has suggested (Crowley, 1991; Doherty & Murray, 2007; Gratton & Taylor, 1985; Polonsky et al, 1996; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998; Westerbeek, 2000).

Another important methodological finding that emerged from the construct analysis involves sample quality and size issues. Specifically, many studies relied on convenience samples consisting mainly of students (e.g. Bennett et al., 2002; Chebat & Daoud, 2003; Dalakas & Kropp, 2002; Hansen et al., 2006; Lee, Sandler & Shani, 1997; McCarville et al., 1998; McDaniel, 1999; Pope, 1998; Ruth & Simonin, 2006). This type of sample raises concerns regarding the generalizability of the findings to different populations. Although student population is an important target audience for many sponsors, shifting attention to

other age populations or professional groups would be constructive and advantageous for sponsorship research. In addition to the sample quality, sample size issues generate more concerns and it is a methodological area that needs considerable improvements since many studies used a very small sample – approximately 100 participants - (e.g. Chebat & Daoud, 2003; Westerbeek & Smith, 2002), whilst only a few of the studies identified in the literature review focused on a large number of participants – O'Reilly, Lyberger, McCarthy, Séguin & Nadeau (2008), for example, relied on more than 3000 participants for their longitudinal study, Shin & Turco (2005) used more than 1000 respondents, Pope (1998) relied on a sample consisting of 921 individuals, Sack & Fried (2001) on 1400 participants, and Stotlar (2002) on 717 respondents.

Another issue that raises concerns with regard to the sample quality involves the approach to data collection adopted by certain studies. The fact, for example, that some studies relied on on-line research using mainly web-based questionnaires (e.g. Akaoui, 2007; Dees, Bennett & Villegas, 2008; Portlock & Rose, 2009) leads to the conclusion that consumers who are not IT-literate are excluded from the research, creating biases in the sample (Portlock & Rose, 2009). Indeed, Dees et al. (2008) acknowledged that this method may have contributed to the age distribution of the sample that appeared in their study, with young adults being much more well represented since they may have been more familiar or more comfortable with using the required technology. Additional concerns are raised from the fact that some countries may have low internet penetration rates, something that can also result to the exclusion of many individuals from an online study's sample (Akaoui, 2007). Additionally, there is an issue relating to internet penetration across target groups (Akaoui, 2007) which is regarded as an obstacle when the goal is to research target groups that are less familiar with technology (e.g. older population).

An additional problem associated with web-based research is that, the completion of an on-line questionnaire without the presence of the researcher raises significant concerns regarding the reliability of the data gathered. This is what

Akaoui (2007, p. 149) called “the respondent’s elusiveness” which is regarded by the author as resulting in the attention of the respondents becoming distracted and thus affecting the quality of the findings. In addition, the fact that there is no interviewer guiding or controlling the process can allow respondents to have access to external stimulation (Portlock & Rose, 2009), something that is undesirable in some cases, such as when the study is measuring unaided sponsors’ recall for example. Having said this, it is important not to underestimate the advantages of on-line research, such as the fact that data are gathered really quickly, the economic benefit of such a cost-effective method, the ease of targeting certain publics, and elimination of the researcher’s bias that is introduced by the presence of the researcher which, inevitably affects, intentionally or unintentionally, the responses of the participants (Akaoui, 2007). It is also the case that web surveys often produce better response rates (Cobanoglu, Warde & Moreo, 2001). Hence, given the advantages and disadvantages of different data collection approaches, it could be suggested that a more varied approach to data collection would be able to approach a more diversified and representative sample.

Therefore, there had been research endeavours trying to respond to the call for using techniques that allow the collection of a wide scope of information from a large and more representative sample. O’Reilly et al. (2008), for example, employed a modified version of the mall-intercept technique, which involves “randomly selecting respondents in high traffic, representative locations (e.g., suburban malls, downtown street corners)” (p. 399). According to the authors, the advantage of this method is that it is regarded affording opportunities to collect data economically, from a large population, and within a real situation.

A further issue generating sample quality concerns is the fact that there is research in the literature review (e.g. Smith, Graetz & Westerbeek, 2008) that achieved very low response rate, something that, as the authors who conducted the research acknowledged, may had presented “the possibility of a bias due to the self-selection of respondents” (Smith et al. 2008, p. 391). Moreover, there has

been much research that focused on a single sport or a certain event, a fact that may have resulted again in a sample that is not representative, such as the study conducted by Dees & Bennett (2008) which focused on tennis, and thus, the sample consisted mainly of Caucasians with high annual income. Another example of respondents' selection methods that resulted in non-representative sample is the study conducted by Abratt et al. (1987), in which the sponsors were identified from the three TV stations and the English language press in Johannesburg, and thus the study excluded sponsors not covered in the aforementioned media. As a result, the study conducted by Abratt et al. (1987) resulted in the inclusion of larger organisations and the exclusion of smaller sponsors.

Longitudinal Research designs in Sponsorship Literature

The need for longitudinal research designs has been evident in sponsorship literature since a very small number of studies approached sponsorship issues from a longitudinal perspective. Such efforts concentrated mainly in sponsorship evaluation area, and those were made by Wright (1988) in measuring sponsor awareness in football, by O'Reilly et al. (2008) in examining the ability of the Super Bowl to influence the intention of customers to purchase sponsors' products, by Quester (1997) in exploring the value of naming rights in securing sponsorship returns for the Australia formula 1 Grand Prix sponsors, by Quester and Farrelly (1998) when investigating the strength of the association between the brand and the sponsored property, by Tripodi & Hirons (2009) in their effort to investigate the impact of leveraging upon sponsorship awareness levels, and by Lyberger & McCarthy (2002) in evaluating the purchasing behaviour and perceptions towards Super Bowl sponsorship. The value of longitudinal research in conducting sponsorship evaluation studies has also been stressed by authors who did not undertake this mode of research, such as Ali et al. (2006), who advocated the use of the sponsorship measurement index they developed longitudinally in order to provide more potential for understanding sponsorship

effects in the long term. Similarly, a more frequent use of longitudinal designs in evaluating sponsorship effectiveness was encouraged by Walliser (2003), who held that such research would enable researchers to study how sponsor awareness can be retained over time. Likewise, McDaniel (1999) argued that longitudinal research is necessary for testing the match-up effects of several leveraging activities upon sponsorship effectiveness.

Moreover, longitudinal perspectives are essential in providing understanding of the sponsorship development processes, as Olkkonen (2001) argued, and thus, the author suggested the adoption of longitudinal research in examining sponsorship relationships and networks. Interestingly, the need for longitudinal research has also been evident in the literature review conducted by Walliser (2003), who argued that such research designs would be invaluable in understanding how sponsorship works and which are the conditions that are conducive to image transfer between the sponsee and the sponsor.

Measures of Sponsorship Effectiveness

Another area that emerged from the constructive analysis of the literature review is that the vast majority of the studies used awareness and image variables in measuring sponsorship effectiveness. The overreliance on awareness measures can be regarded as a methodological shortcoming, especially when considering that increasing awareness is simply one of the many objectives pursued by sponsors through sponsorship. Despite this, in many studies awareness was used as a surrogate measure of sponsorship effectiveness (e.g. Bennett et al., 2002; Quester, 1997; Tripodi & Hiron, 2009; Wright, 1988), even though in some cases it had been acknowledged that awareness was not the only important indicator of sponsorship success (e.g. Tripodi & Hiron, 2009). Indeed, the most heavily used evaluation methods involved pre- and post- awareness and image surveys (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992; Shin & Turco, 2005), with very few companies utilising sales measures. Hence, it is indeed the case that

there is a need for more sophisticated evaluation methods that include ROI metrics (O'Reilly, Nadeau, Seguin & Harrison, 2007) that can provide more convincing evidence with regard to the effectiveness of sport sponsorship. In addition, given the variety of sponsorship objectives pursued, it would be very beneficial to develop specific tools that focus on each of the goals set by sponsors, including internal marketing goals such as employee commitment and enhancement of internal relationships.

The use of many inappropriate measures and the failure of many authors to develop metrics measuring the goals set by the sponsors were also highlighted by O'Reilly and Madill (2009), who suggested the development of more sophisticated evaluation methods for the sponsorship arrangement. Similar arguments for the development of advanced measurement tools have been voiced by authors such as Shanklin & Kuzma (1992), Thwaites (1993), and Chadwick and Thwaites (2005). One of the few studies in the literature that replied to these calls is the work conducted by Ali et al. (2006), who developed an index intending to capture the whole sponsorship experience by measuring several elements of the communications mix. Although, the authors admitted that their effort contradicts the trend towards developing specific measurement tools for each element of the communications mix, they argued that such an approach, though it is regarded useful, it is very complex and costly. In addition, the authors felt that their measurement tool can be easily adapted for a specific event or a certain sponsoring brand in an effort to be used across various sponsorships.

An exception in the sponsorship evaluation literature is the measure developed by Akaoui (2007), which was a very specific sponsorship evaluation tool that was tailor-made in order to examine the products offered by the official sponsors of the 2006 FIFA World Cup championship. However, such efforts have been very rare in the sponsorship literature, but they can provide much potential for measuring sport sponsorship appropriately.

An additional methodological shortcoming of the sponsorship evaluation literature involves the measurement of image, which is another heavily employed indicator

of sponsorship effectiveness identified in the literature. It should be noted, however, that many of those studies measured corporate image (e.g. Shin & Turco, 2005) whilst other focused on brand image (e.g. Lacey, Sneath, Finney & Close, 2007; Ruth & Simonin, 2006) leading to confusion and misunderstanding with regard to the image outcomes of sport sponsorship. In addition, instead of relying on consumers' attitudes towards the sponsor in the effort to evaluate the sponsor's corporate image, it would be probably more appropriate and correct to measure corporate image by focusing on specific characteristics of a company's personality, as Ko et al. (2008) have argued.

2.3 Conclusions

This chapter provided a three-stage analysis of the studies identified and retrieved through the systematic review process. The first stage comprised first-order themes developed based on a descriptive analysis of the studies. This analysis resulted in the creation of several simple set of categories, some of those being the geographical contribution of studies – with North America contributing the most, and much less research effort directed at less developed countries. Another category involved the sport that gathered most of the research attention, with football being the number one, followed by the Olympics. Moreover, most of the studies employed a positivistic approach to research, with clearly less research using inductive, qualitative research orientation, and focusing primarily on the sponsor and not on the sponsored property.

The second stage of the analysis consisted of a number of emergent themes whilst at the same time attempts were made to link those themes across the various contributions. Some of the most important outcomes of the thematic analysis, which is described in detail in Appendix 3, indicated that sponsorship has evolved into a more professional and market-driven activity through time (Cornwell, 2008), whilst at the same time it is perceived, approached and managed differently in differently developed sponsorship contexts. Nowadays,

sponsorship is regarded as a useful tool for developing corporate and brand identity (Garry et al., 2008; Mueller & Roberts, 2008), whilst there is also a growing realisation of the capacity of the sponsorship medium to be used for internal marketing practices (Hickman et al., 2005; Pichot et al., 2009). Moreover, some authors highlighted the role of sport sponsorship as a resource in the creation of competitive advantage (Amis et al., 1997). The strategic role of sponsorship is also depicted in the fact that it is recognised as a medium encouraging the development of beneficial relationships with key partners (Chadwick, 2002; Farrelly & Quester, 2005; Olkkonen, 2001).

One of the most heavily researched areas in sponsorship literature involves the management of the sponsorship arrangement. Specifically, the importance of integration and leveraging practices was strongly emphasised in the literature, but empirical evidence indicated that the majority of the sponsors employ unsophisticated activation and leveraging practices (Farrelly et al., 1997; Lamont & Dowell, 2008). Another sponsorship management component that received research attention is objective setting, but once again, the analysis revealed that many sponsors fail to set clear and measurable objectives (e.g. Farrelly et al., 1997; Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Thwaites, 1993, 1994). At the same time, it is important to note that there had been significant advances in the management of sponsorship through time, with many sponsors employing more subtle screening and selection processes, incorporating more specific and detailed components in the sponsorship contract, employing more diverse leveraging practices, setting more specific sponsorship objectives, and being driven by more professional motives when entering a sponsorship agreement. A more strategic approach to sport sponsorship is also depicted in the importance that sponsors place upon “fit” or “congruence” with the sponsored property (Séguin et al., 2005), and this is mainly attributed to the fact that many studies revealed a positive impact of fit upon desirable sponsorship outcomes (Alay, 2008; Coppetti et al., 2009; Grohs & Reisinger, 2005).

Interestingly, the approach adopted by sponsors appeared as being influenced by the size and status (private/public) of the sponsor. It is indicative that larger sponsors appeared to approach sponsorship more systematically and professional as compared to smaller sponsors (Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998) and the same applies to private entities as compared to public organisations (Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009). Those differences are depicted in many different aspects of the sponsorship management process, such as the motives mobilising sponsorship decisions, the criteria used to select sponsorships, and the objectives set by sponsors. In addition, there was evidence suggesting sponsorship management differences between more developed and less developed sponsorship contexts. A more professional approach, as depicted in many sponsorship management practices such as motivation, integration, objective setting, cross-functional responsibility, selection and evaluation practices, seemed to exist in relatively more developed sponsorship contexts such as the USA. With regard to objective setting, the analysis suggested that in the past the centrality of media objectives lent itself to more sophisticated corporate related goals (Hartland et al., 2005), such as the development of a positioning concept or the attainment of internal marketing goals. At the same time, it seemed that objectives set by sponsors, as well as the criteria for selecting sponsorship arrangements, vary significantly and depend on the industry. Furthermore, certain objectives appeared to receive more importance in differently developed sponsorship contexts (e.g. brand-related and sales objectives in less developed contexts and corporate related objectives in more developed contexts). Similar differences seemed to exist with regard to the motives for entering a sponsorship arrangement.

Another emergent theme in the sponsorship literature that also received much consideration is sponsorship evaluation. In general terms, evaluation practices employed by sponsors appeared to be limited or inappropriate (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004, 2005; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Papadimitriou et al., 2008), and this trend seemed to be universal since there were no significant variations

regarding the size of the sponsor or the context, except for some more promising findings presented in some of the studies (e.g. Copeland et al., 1996; Séguin et al., 2005; Spence et al., 1997; Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004). Consequently, some authors proposed more appropriate measurement methods, with some voices calling for relating measurement methods to the type of sponsorship (Pope & Voges, 1994; Smolianov & Aiyeku, 2009). Interestingly, much research had been directed at the impact of sponsorship on brand awareness and brand image (e.g. Barez et al. 2007; Bennett et al. 2002; Bennett, 1999; Jalleh, Donovan, Giles-Corti & Holman, 2002); Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006) as well as upon the impact of sponsorship upon purchasing habits or purchasing intentions of consumers (e.g. Barez et al., 2007; Chebat & Daoud, 2003; Lyberger & McCarthy, 2002; Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006). Recently, however, research had been directed at the impact of sponsorship upon several attitudes of the consumers (Chebat & Daoud, 2003; Christensen, 2006; Hansen et al., 2006; Van Heerden, Kuiper & Saar, 2008). In addition, research endeavours were also directed at the underlying mechanisms of successful sponsorships such as the image transfer process (Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999) and other factors that seem to increase this transfer, namely sponsor-event fit, leveraging, fans involvement and identification and attitudes towards the sponsor, or the event.

The thematic analysis of the studies also demonstrated that a smaller, yet significant part of the literature considered the legal and ethical issues associated with sport sponsorship. Ambush marketing was one of the main topics that emerged, and attention was directed towards the ethical as well as the legal dimensions of this practice. Research had also dealt with ambush marketing practices and their effectiveness, and it is indeed the case that evidence suggested that ambushing can have particularly detrimental effects upon official sponsors (McKelvey & Gladden, 2006; Nufer, 2009). Moreover, there is an element in the literature that examined the actions employed by sponsors towards combatting ambush marketing (McKelvey & Grady, 2008; O'Sullivan & Murphy, 1998). Finally, the thematic analysis highlighted the risks associated with the

promotional and advertising value of the sponsorship medium when used for promoting unhealthy sponsoring brands, such as tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy food and gambling entities (Ledwith, 1984; Siegel, 2001), and the need for the enactment of legislation restricting such practices (McKelvey, 2004b).

The third and final stage of the systematic review comprised third-order themes and was defined as construct analysis. In this section a number of methodological constructs were identified and discussed, highlighting several ontological and epistemological issues. The underlying premise for conducting this type of analysis is that it could inform both the methodological and empirical work of the subsequent stages of the research process. One of the main conclusions drawn from this particular analysis involves the lack of underlying foundations that resulted in many descriptive studies that failed to provide conceptual explanations on how sponsorship works, a fact that was criticised by researchers such as Vignali (1997) and Sam et al. (2005). Another important outcome of the constructive analysis is that there is a need for more fruitful methods to investigate the phenomenon of sport sponsorship rather than the predominant quantitative, nomothetic approaches that the vast majority of the researchers relied on. This tendency to explore a qualitative phenomenon such as sponsorship through non-compatible, quantitative approaches generated much criticism in the literature (e.g. Choi et al., 2006; Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Shaw & Amis, 2001; Yang et al., 2008). The rationale for this opposition to quantitative methods is highlighted by Cornwell and Maignan (1998, p. 15) who argued that there are certain aspects of sport sponsorship for which “qualitative research that is holistic might lead to greatest insights”.

Another issue highlighted through the construct analysis is the fact that there is a need for more appropriate sampling methods, with an emphasis on sample quality, since the majority of the studies analysed seemed to rely on a convenience sample raising important concerns with regard to its quality, size and the limitation of sample bias. Furthermore, the fact that less developed

sponsorship contexts have been heavily neglected in the sponsorship literature generated the need for studies to explore the sponsorship phenomenon in less sophisticated, less commercialised and less mature sponsorship contexts, since the sponsorship practices adopted in those contexts may differ greatly from more mature markets.

Finally, the sponsorship literature examined in this review underlined the need for treating objectives and motives separately, and not using the two terms interchangeably. In fact, this practice which was prevalent in the literature, with a few exceptions such as the study carried out by Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004), raises ontological concerns since motives and objectives do not share the same meaning. Thus, it seems that there is a need for separating the two terms when examining the sponsor's practices, objectives and reasons for entering a sponsorship agreement.

Chapter 3– Research Strategy and Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is an outline of the methodology adopted for the conducting of this study. It represents a justification of the methodological design employed, thus the researcher will concentrate on the rationale for making certain methodological choices and the appropriateness of the research design.

The chapter is organised in five sections. First, it addresses the research question that forms the foundation of the study. Second, it addresses the paradigm debate relating to the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the study. Third, it elaborates the methodological tools adopted for the conduct of the study, as well as the sampling methods and the procedures used for gathering the data. Fourth, it discusses reliability and validity issues associated with the study. The final section deals with the processes and tools employed for analysing the data gathered, and summarises the limitations of the study.

3.2 Aims of the Study

The principal aim of this study was to gain insight into the sponsorship decision making and management processes employed by sponsors in a relatively new sponsorship domain, Cyprus, and to identify the extent to which the sponsorship structures and processes identified in the literature are also evident in the particular sponsorship context.

The positivistic, highly structured, empirical methodology of the search strategy element of the systematic review described in detail in chapter 2 and the subsequent inductive and qualitative analysis of the findings suggested the existence of several structures and mechanisms with regard to sport sponsorship, which it seems differ substantially in terms of the development of the sponsorship

environment, as well as the status, size and type of sponsors' industry. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine whether different philosophical and epistemological assumptions, motivations, decision making processes, objectives, management and evaluation processes are also manifested by different sponsors operating in an immature, less developed sponsorship domain such as Cyprus. Specifically, the goal was to explore the sponsorship management practices adopted by sport sponsors in Cyprus. The study attempted to investigate the driving forces impacting the decision of organisations to invest in football sponsorship, and the several mechanisms they employ in managing those sponsorship arrangements, including the priorities and objectives they set, the audiences they attempt to reach, and the way in which they evaluate their investment.

To this end, semi-structured, detailed, in depth interviews were conducted with key decision makers representing companies investing in football clubs competing in Division I of the local championship. The rationale behind the decision to use a qualitative, interpretive approach was that, interviews were regarded by the researcher as the most appropriate research instrument providing rich and suggestive information in understanding the way in which sponsors conceptualise sponsorship and the way they approach it and use it as the platform for reaching certain organisational goals.

3.3 Paradigmatic Assumptions

The methodology that any research endeavour employs in investigating a particular research problem is inevitably affected and guided, consciously or otherwise, by a broader philosophical framework, belief system or world view (Guba, 1990). This philosophical framework underpinning research forms the foundation of inquiry, or research paradigm (Kuhn, 1970, Guba, 1990).

An inquiry or research paradigm is the philosophical framework that guides how the research is to be conducted and is intrinsically linked to ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. Ontology relates to claims about the nature of the reality and its characteristics; epistemology refers to the relationship between the researcher and knowledge, or otherwise the nature of knowledge; and methodological issues concern the way in which knowledge can be attained (Guba, 1990). Hence, Skinner, Tagg & Holloway, (2000) considered paradigms as reflecting different perceptions about the nature of reality, the means by which it can be explored and the extent to which it can be understood. It is important to mention that there is a number of different terms identified in the literature that define each of those paradigms, often used slightly inconsistently by different authors. For the purpose of this study, a brief outline of positivism, constructivism and critical realism paradigms will be provided, always in light of the particular research study.

Positivism assumes that there is an objective reality that is apprehensible (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). For positivism, the source of knowledge must be “open to the senses and able to be observed by others” (Mingers, 2006, p.11). Thus, the positivistic paradigm holds that valid knowledge is knowledge that can be observed, and those observations should be quantifiable. Therefore, positivism relates to an objectivist approach to data collection, with the researcher having a limited and independent role. According to Lincoln et al. (2011) the methodology that is usually associated with positivism is experimental and manipulative, verifying hypotheses and employing quantitative techniques. This implies that advocates of positivism believe that adopting rigid, highly structured and objective research methods can lead to the creation of rational and universal claims that are generalisable. It is indeed the case that existing research on sport sponsorship is dominated by “a very traditional structuralist methodological perspective aiming at nomothetic, quantitative measurement of the main empirical properties of sponsorship related phenomena” (Olkkonen, 2001, p.310). This tendency, as already stated in the previous chapter, has been heavily criticised by

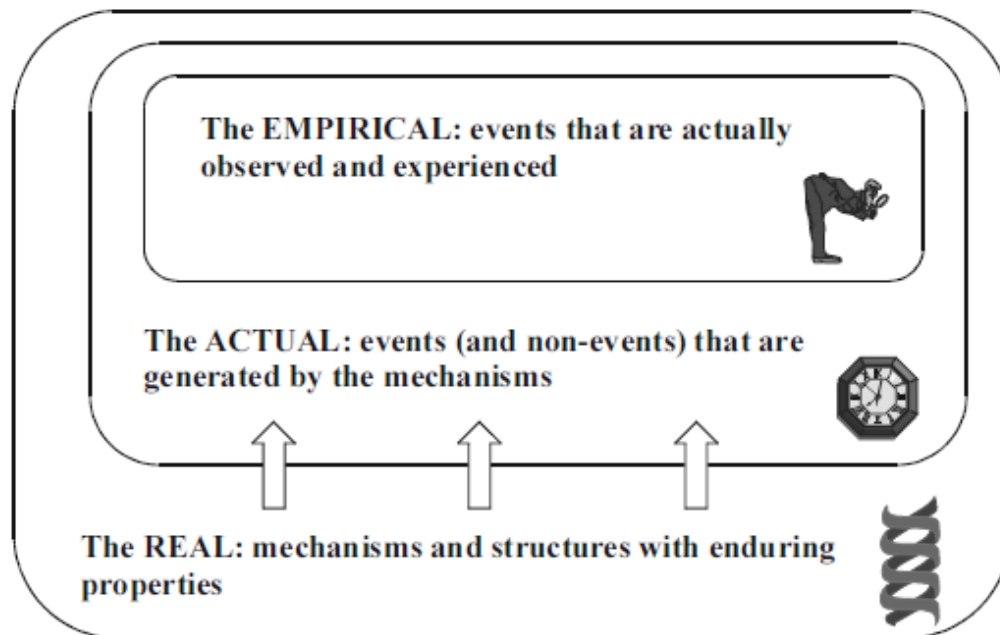
many researchers since it is regarded as being inappropriate to capture an experiential, qualitative phenomenon such as sport sponsorship decision-making. It is indeed the case that the positivistic framework provides limited capacity to the researcher to investigate, explore understand and explain the way in which different sponsors conceptualise and approach sponsorship in a less developed sponsorship context, which forms the basic research question of this study.

At the opposite end of the continuum there is constructivism, where reality is not a logically prior phenomenon. The primary field of interest for constructivist inquirers is the “subjective and intersubjective social knowledge and the active construction and co-creation of such knowledge by human agents that is produced by human consciousness” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p.203). As a consequence, constructivists believe that valid knowledge arises from the relationship between members of a community (Lincoln, 1995). Hence, constructivists refuse to adopt “any permanent, unvarying (or “foundational”) standards by which truth can be universally known” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p.204). This relativist ontology underpinning constructivism is thus associated with “a transactional epistemology, and a hermeneutic, dialectical methodology” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.184). Advocates of constructivism value transactional knowledge and they are inclined towards the production of reconstructed understanding of the social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Drawing on the above, and considering the fact that positivism fails to take into account people perspectives, whilst on the other hand the usefulness of constructivism is also questioned from a management perspective since it seems that there is no reason for examining and learning about management decisions and strategies because contexts and situations are always different, an alternative paradigm will be taken into consideration for the purposes of this study, which is critical realism. Critical realism is a growing intellectual movement in the social sciences which accepts aspects of both positivism and constructivism, whilst at the same time maintaining a strongly realist and critical core (Mingers, 2008). The critical realist paradigm has been established over the last few decades by the

pioneering work of Roy Bhaskar (1978), and one of its basic claims is that reality is “only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible” (Lincoln et al., 2011, p.98). The premise upon which critical realism is built is that the world exists independent of our knowledge of it, since people make ideas about the nature of the world which sometimes can be true and sometimes can be invalid (Sayer, 2000). Therefore, critical realism is regarded as sharing with positivism the premise that “there is a world of events out there that is observable and independent of human consciousness” but at the same time it holds that “knowledge about this world is socially constructed”, rejecting a (uniquely) correspondence theory of truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.13). These claims are build on transcendental realism which is a basic element of the critical realism paradigm and it holds that reality is arranged in different levels. This stratified reality or ontology as suggested by Bhaskar (1978) is distinguished in the empirical, the actual and the real domain. The empirical domain is where observations are made and experienced by observers, and it is separated from the actual domain in which events occur and may not be observed, or may be understood quite differently by observers (Easton, 2010). Those events taking place in the actual domain follow the activation of powers and mechanisms operating in the real domain (see figure 3.1).

Figure 3:1 The Empirical, the Actual, and the Real Domains.



Source: Mingers (2006).

Critical realists believe that what exists in the world is not always what can be observed. In the real domain, causal mechanisms represent the underlying causes of observed events that explain their emergence. Consequently, critical realists believe that the work of the researcher is to go beyond observation and seek to understand the deeper underlying structures and forces shaping reality. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p.13) critical realists believe that “scientific work must go beyond statements of regularity to analysis of the mechanisms, processes, and structures that account for the patterns that are observed”.

For critical realists, as well as for other researchers guided by other paradigms, ontology and epistemology are interrelated (Miller & Tsang, 2010). The realist ontology outlined above and which suggests the existence of a world separated and independent of the researcher’s knowledge associates with “a fallibilist epistemology in which researchers’ knowledge of the world is socially produced”

(Miller & Tsang, 2010, p.144). A fallibilist epistemology acknowledges the fact that our observations and knowledge cannot always be valid since “we do not have pure, unmediated access to this world but that our knowledge must always be locally and historically relative” (Mingers, 2006, p.31). According to Sayer (2000) there is always a hermeneutic or interpretive element in knowledge since meaning has to be understood, it cannot be measured or counted. Therefore, a key epistemological strategy that critical realists recognise is retrodution.

Retrodution is regarded as a creative process enabling the researcher to discover underlying realities. According to Sayer (1992, p.107, cited in Easton, 2010), retrodution is a “...mode of inference in which events are explained by postulating (and identifying) mechanisms which are capable of producing them”. The procedure involves proposing hypothetical mechanisms or structures that, if they existed, would generate the phenomenon that the researcher is able to observe (Mingers, 2006). Therefore, there is a movement from the experiences observed in the empirical domain to the mechanisms, structures and powers enacted in the real domain. In contrast to inductive and deductive methods that attempt to move from the particular to the general and vice versa, retrodution involves moving from the conception of an unexplained phenomenon to the conception of a structure or mechanism that generated the observed phenomenon.

Easton (2010) suggested that for the purpose of a case study, retrodution can be achieved through employing both deductive and inductive methods. An inductive approach can be very useful in postulating underlying mechanisms and unobservable structures, and the existence of these structures can be deductively tested. Therefore, the researcher can use inductively established proposals that he/she can test against can be observed in other settings and confirm, disconfirm or modify claims about the underlying causal mechanisms. In a similar vein, the pluralistic view of research and intervention methods associated with critical realism has also been advocated by several researchers because of the capacity

of different methodologies to focus on different aspects of reality and thus to produce richer understanding of the phenomenon (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000; Miller & Tsang, 2010; Mingers, 2001).

Advocates of critical realism distinguish between extensive and intensive designs, but the two approaches have been regarded as complementary rather than contradictory (Sayer, 2000). Miller and Tsang (2010) have argued that extensive research usually relies on quantitative methodology and its main goal is to test empirical generalities across several cases, whilst intensive research is typically related to qualitative methodology and aims at uncovering the explanatory mechanisms and structures relevant in particular cases. Hence, critical realism encourages the employment of mixed designs consisting of both extensive and intensive research since their different strengths and weaknesses enable the researcher to cope with the complexity of the phenomena under study (Miller & Tsang, 2010).

In the context of this research, critical realism provides a useful framework for approaching the research question set, since the researcher believes that several underlying structures impact significantly on the sponsorship management activities performed by different sponsorship decision makers operating in the particular cultural context. In fact, critical realism, and more specifically a critical realist case approach, has been regarded as fitting particularly well the examination of complex phenomena such as the actions of organisations and inter-organisational relationships (Easton, 2010). The use of critical realism in management research has also been favoured by several authors (e.g. Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2004; Easton, 2010; Marobela, 2006; Tsoukas, 2000), as well as in marketing inquiry (e.g. Hunt, 1992) since it is regarded as advocating new and deeper organisational analysis that examines management causal powers (Tsoukas, 2000).

The application of critical realist perspective is thus useful in that it allows investigation of the sponsorship management practices employed by the sponsorship actors in Cyprus at different layers. It enables the researcher to relate the phenomenon under study with the social context in which these sponsorship arrangements take place, as well as the interrelations between the agents taking part in these practices. An example drawn from this study in which a critical realist analysis of sponsorship decisions will allow inference to the actual and real domains is presented below. A respondent representing a local oil company sponsoring the local club argued that “...*there were no individuals able to support the clubs. Only two or three families were able to do it, and one of them was my family. So this is why it was natural... logical... it was expected (by people) that the more financially powerful individuals would help the rest*”. The above statement suggests that social class and social pressure form important social influences/causal powers that impact on the decision making activity adopted by managers when making sponsorship related decisions. In addition, the aforementioned statement clearly indicates how such causal mechanisms are socially constructed but nevertheless place “real” obligations on individuals.

Another example drawn from this particular study proposes the existence of family structures impacting on, and shaping sponsorship management practices, since according to a respondent representing another local sponsor the main reasons for entering the sponsorship deal were “*mainly emotional and personal factors. Because of the very close and strong relationship between the family and the club*” and he added “as I told you before my grandfather was the founder of the club, and I guess that me and my father will continue to be involved in the management of the club until we no longer have the patience to do it”.

In addition, and in line with the epistemological and methodological suggestions made above, the researcher favoured the use of retrodution employing both extensive and intensive research designs for the purpose of the certain study. Specifically, an extensive research design was employed for conducting a

systematic review of the literature, through a very rigorous, empirical deductive approach to identifying relevant literature (though with an inductive approach to the thematic analysis of that literature), as described in the previous section. The inductive analysis of the evidence produced in the research articles suggested the existence of certain underlying structures, patterns and processes that generate specific sponsorship management practices (e.g. different conceptualisation of sport sponsorship between more and less developed sponsorship contexts, different approaches, motives and objectives between small and large sponsors etc.). An intensive research design followed, which adopted an inductive approach and a qualitative methodology to data collection through the use of in-depth, semi-structured interviews. It is important to mention that the interview structure and the criteria for selecting the cases for investigation were based on a deductive categorisation of the findings that emerged from the inductive analysis of the systematic review. The aim of this intensive multi-case study, which will be described in detail in the following section, was to elicit rich information on the phenomenon under study so as to verify or deny the existence of the underlying structures identified in the literature in the certain developing sponsorship domain.

3.4 Research Design

A research design is the plan or protocol articulating a series of stages or actions for conducting a particular research study (Maxwell, 2005). According to Creswell (2013, p.5) a research design refers to the “entire process of research from conceptualising a problem to writing research questions, and on to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing”. For qualitative research, however, a research design is not perceived as a linear sequential process. Instead, qualitative inquiry may be associated with modifications of the original questions in response to changes and new developments. Therefore, Maxwell (2005) argued that a qualitative research design is a more spontaneous process, involving on-going and interactive activities for setting research questions, collecting and analysing data, addressing validity issues and developing or

assessing theories. For this study to adequately examine in detail the various management mechanisms employed by sponsors in Cyprus, and to address the existence of the particular underlying structures identified in the review of the literature, a case study approach was deemed as most appropriate.

3.4.1 Case Study

Case study research involves the study of a case or cases within a real-life context or setting (Yin, 2009), and it is a common research mode within qualitative inquiry. In fact, a case study is not a methodological choice, as Stake (2005) pointed out, but a choice of what is to be studied, while Yin (2009) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) considered the case study as a strategy of inquiry. A qualitative case study is an approach allowing the researcher to get in-depth data about a particular case under study, but when the intent of the researcher is to focus on various cases, it is known as a collective case study, or multiple case study approach (Creswell, 2013). Case study research is the most popular research strategy used by industrial marketing researchers, and this is logical if we consider that “the main units of analysis are organisations and relationships, which are difficult to access, and complex in structure” (Easton, 2010, p.118). Thus, Easton concluded that examining a single or a small number of such organisational entities can provide the researcher with the capacity to get insights into the nature of phenomena.

Accordingly, the case study has been perceived as a method that is very compatible with critical realist ontological and epistemological assumptions. Easton (2010, p.119) provided a very detailed and well informed discussion on the critical realist paradigm and he argued that the latter “provides both a philosophical justification for case research and a guide to its use in practice”. Building on Sayer’s (1992) arguments that the case study is an intensive research method, Easton was led to the conclusion that case study research is entirely consistent with the critical realist paradigm. He also provided a detailed

description of the processes involved in a critical realist case study, which he perceived as “particularly well suited to relatively clearly bounded, but complex, phenomena such as organisations, interorganisational relationships or nets of connected organisations” (Easton, 2010, p.123).

Drawing on the above, and considering the complexity of the sponsorship phenomenon that forms the basic research question of the present study, qualitative collective case studies were chosen. The reason for choosing a collective case study approach is that, the goal of the study as illustrated in the research question was to examine clearly identifiable cases with boundaries, that is certain organisations acting as football sponsors in a certain context which is Cyprus, and the researcher aimed at providing rich, in-depth understanding of the cases. When those two conditions - the existence of clearly identifiable cases and the need for producing suggestive insights into phenomena – coexist, then a case study is regarded as a particularly appropriate form of inquiry (Creswell, 2013).

One of the common criticisms against the use of case study design lies on the grounds of external validity, that is lack of generalisability, an issue raised because of the potential lack of representativeness emanating from single cases or small sample cases used in collective case studies. However, as Glesne and Peshkin (1992, cited in Creswell, 2013) pointed out, the term generalisability holds little meaning for most qualitative inquirers. Although generalising is important, “it is not necessarily the best way of explaining things” (Marobela, 2006). Yin (1989, p.21, cited in Easton, 2010) has argued that case studies “are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes”, thus the researcher in this case is primarily concerned with generalising theories rather than statistical generalisation. In a similar vein, Stake (2005, p.460) held that “case studies are of value in refining theory, suggesting complexities for further investigation as well as for helping to establish the limits of generalisability”. As Sayer (2000) argued, researchers can learn a lot not only from regularity but also from the irregularity. In addition, the goal of intensive research such as these case

studies which are informed by critical realism is not to include cases that are representative of any population, since the intention is not to produce generalised findings but to explain differences and similarities in terms of generative structures and powers.

3.4.2 Selection of Cases

The second stage in conducting a case study design after identifying the appropriateness of the method for studying the specific research question involves identifying the case or cases to study. As Stake (2005) argued, this is a critical process since achieving the greatest understanding of the phenomenon under the microscope of the researcher depends on choosing the cases well. According to Yin (1994, cited in Easton, 2010) the evidence from multiple case designs is more compelling than single cases, since a multiple case study approach provides the researcher with the opportunity to investigate and explain patterns in different phenomena. Therefore in an attempt to successfully address the research question, the current study focused on ten different organisations acting as main sponsors of clubs competing in Division I of the football championship in Cyprus.

The rationale behind focusing on the “main” sponsors and not including any other types of sponsors is that the rest of the sponsorship categories, regardless of the designation of the sponsor (e.g. sponsor, equipment sponsor, supporter, etc.) were involved in very low budget sponsorships, and thus their decisions and management practices would probably be much differentiated and thus non-comparable with those of principal sponsors. With regard to the number of cases to be studied, as Creswell (2013) argues, that there is no correct answer in response to the question of how many cases should be selected for investigation. For the purposes of this particular study, in selecting the cases to be examined, the researcher took into consideration the types of cases that are useful and promising in relation to answering the research question. Therefore, the cases

were purposefully selected, in an attempt to target organisations that were expected to depict different perspectives on sponsorship management and decision making processes.

Selection of cases was based on certain criteria that emerged from the systematic review analysis. Specifically, the systematic review revealed that different conceptualisations and subsequently different approaches to managing sport sponsorship exist between different kinds of sponsors. Therefore, based on a deductive categorisation of the findings of the systematic review, six criteria were invoked to inform the researcher's selection of the cases for investigation.

i. Size of the organisation

The first criterion related to the factor of organisational size. Due to the differences that emerged in the literature review with regard to the size of the sponsor, the current study aimed at including both large and small organisations in an effort to identify the extent to which those differences apply to the Cypriot sponsorship domain. Although the categorisation of an organisation in terms of size is regarded by the researcher as being context-related, and thus, it is possible that a large organisation for the small country of Cyprus may be regarded as small for larger regions or industries, the criteria used for categorising the sponsors in the current study are the parameters recommended by the European Commission (*Guide to EU definition of SME*, n.d.). Those parameters are: a) the number of employees, and b) either turnover or balance sheet total. Therefore, organisations employing more than 250 employees and having turnover >€ 50 m, or balance sheet total >€ 43 m, were considered as large, whilst organisations employing less than 50 employees or having turnover ≤ € 10 m, or balance sheet total ≤ € 10 m, were considered as small.

ii. Local/International status

The second criterion required that the study would focus on both local and international organisations acting as sponsors. Drawing on the findings of the systematic review which indicated that in certain cases national sponsors were approaching sponsorship on emotional grounds, it was expected that probably there would be a difference between more detached, international sponsors and local sponsors.

iii. Fit between sponsor & sponsee

Another factor taken into consideration when selecting the cases to be included in the study is the fit between the sponsor and the sponsee, since there is much research in the literature suggesting that successful sponsorships are largely defined by the fit between the two sponsorship actors. Therefore, it was speculated by the researcher that fit would be a factor defining the sponsorship management practices that the sponsor would be capable of using when investing in football sponsorship. Hence, both sponsorship arrangements that were regarded as having a natural fit between the two parties as well as sponsorship relationships regarded as exhibiting little fit, or having an unusual fit, or not having a match between the two sponsorship actors, were considered for inclusion.

iv. Private/ Governmental status

The governmental or private status of the organisation was also an aspect that was expected to be related to different sponsorship management approaches and practices as it is suggested in the literature (e.g. Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009). In addition, the findings of the systematic review suggested a strong involvement of the government on sponsorship related decisions when the government had the capacity to influence or direct the activities of the sponsor. It has to be mentioned, however, that for the purpose of the present study, the term governmental was broadened to involve also semi-governmental organisations in which the decision making activity is heavily influenced by the government, as well as cooperative organisations and

municipalities which although they were not governmental organisations, their status was not that of a private body.

v. *Industry-Sector*

Another criterion used when selecting the cases for inclusion in the study was the industry or the sector the sponsors operates in. Drawing on the evidence suggesting that certain types of sponsors demonstrate more professional approach to sport sponsorship (e.g. the financial sector as demonstrated by Thwaites, 1994), the researcher decided that the case studies selected should represent different sectors in an effort to identify the existence or not of such differences in the Cypriot sponsorship domain. Therefore, a number of different sectors were eventually included in the study representing both manufacturing and service industries.

vi. *Single sponsors/Multiple sponsors*

Although the final criterion used is not a factor emanating from the findings of the systematic review, it is important to mention that when examining the possible cases for inclusion in the study, the researcher noticed that the vast majority of the sponsors investing in football sponsorship had chosen to sponsor many different clubs simultaneously. Drawing on the certain observation, and considering the fact that sponsoring at the same time many different clubs that have completely different image and fan base is rather an unusual sponsorship practice, the researcher decided to use the number of the clubs sponsored (single and multiple sponsorships) as a criterion for selecting the cases. The aim was to explore possible sponsorship decision making and management differences between the two groups – single and multiple sponsors. It is possible that sponsorship structures evident in multiple sponsorships would be completely different to the mechanisms and powers motivating single sponsors.

Based on the criteria mentioned above, a total number of ten different organisations were included in the multi case study. Those organisations were

profit and non-profit making entities, large and small sized organisations, having a public or private status, operating at an international and local level, in a variety of industries, investing in single or multiple football sponsorships and having an obvious or unusual fit with the sponsored property. Furthermore, the sample spanned in manufacturing and service industries representing both small organisations and large corporations investing in football club sponsorship in Cyprus. Specifically, the multi case study relied on: a local media agency, an international betting company, an international telecommunications company, a local oil company, a local corporation operating in telecommunications and media sectors, a local distributor of beauty/styling products company, a local company operating in the construction industry, a municipality authority, and two cooperative financial organisations.

3.4.3 Data Collection

After identifying and selecting the cases for investigation, the next step in conducting a qualitative case study is the collection of data, which, according to Creswell (2013) is generally an extensive process. According to the same author, “a hallmark of a good qualitative case study is that it presents an in-depth understanding of the case” (Creswell, 2013, p.98). In order to achieve this, an exploratory qualitative design employing in-depth, semi-structured interviews informed this research. In addition to the semi-structured interviews, the researcher also relied on observations as well as on internal company documents and external publications and newspaper articles in an effort to further support and validate the findings of the study.

An exploratory, design was deemed appropriate in this instance since the Cyprus sport context is a domain lacking empirical knowledge regarding sponsorship arrangements, a fact that favoured the use of a qualitative approach (Yin, 2003). Additionally, the need to generate rich and detailed “thick” descriptions of the sponsorship phenomenon as well as to analyse the dynamics and powers

shaping sponsorship management practices and actions adopted by the different sponsors in Cyprus, created the need for going “inside” those sponsorship relationships and analysing their content and development, a goal that only qualitative methodology could accomplish.

i. Use of Interviews as a methodological tool

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were regarded by the researcher as being the most appropriate tool for investigating the sponsorship management processes employed by sponsors. In-depth interviews were regarded as enabling the researcher to capture the reality as experienced by the individuals engaged in sponsorship management activities, and thus were deemed appropriate to inform the present study. In addition, in-depth interviews were regarded as offering the opportunity to the researcher to fully understand a sponsorship domain with little or no empirical based literature. The main reason for adopting semi-structured interviews was that, this particular methodological tool has the capacity to elicit detailed information on the management practices, motives, objectives, and priorities of sponsor, while at the same time it allows the researcher to maintain a degree of control over the line of questioning (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1995).

According to May (1997), semi-structured interviews allow the respondents to answer on their own terms, while at the same time provide a better structure for comparability. Similarly, Patton (2002, cited in Marshal & Rossman, 2011), refers to this method as *the topical approach*, which involves the researcher using an interview guide providing a list of topics or questions for discussion. According to Marshall and Rossman, this type of interview is the most common in qualitative studies, and one of the strengths of this method is that the researcher uses those topics to help uncover the views of the participants, but at the same time the researcher should respect the way the respondent develops and structures the responses. The use of an interview protocol when conducting an interview, however, was also proposed by Creswell (2013), as he suggested that

researchers should develop some open-ended questions which are a narrowing of the central question and sub-questions in the research study, and those questions have been regarded as the core of the interview protocol. For the purposes of the current research study, the researcher developed an interview protocol consisting of seven broad topics and several sub-questions (the protocol is presented in table 3.1) The development of the protocol was based on a deductive categorisation of the findings of the systematic review, based on which several important sponsorship management decision making processes and practices were identified. The aim of the protocol was to enable the researcher to elicit rich descriptions on the sponsorship management practices adopted by the several sponsors by focusing on several issues and allowing the respondent to expand on questions, whilst at the same time enabling the researcher to undertake further probing when appropriate or needed.

Table 3:1 Interview protocol

Main topics	Subthemes
Sponsorship experience	Experienced / Less experienced sponsors When did they first sponsor a sport? How many years of sponsorship involvement
Motivation	Why – the reason for their investment in football sponsorship/the driving force for entering the sponsorship agreement) Which were the main reasons for getting involved in the sponsorship of the certain club? Why did they decide to use sponsorship? Did they like the sport? Did they have any kind of personal relationship with the club officials? Have they been influenced by other competitors investing in sport (mimetic action?)
Decision-Making Process	Who made the final decision? (Top level, middle level managers, marketing and advertising managers or senior executives? Who are the persons involved in this decision making process? Who initiated this procedure? Who had the idea of sponsoring the certain sport – club. Was there any screening process? Why choosing the certain club? There had been other options? Alternatives? If yes, which sports or clubs? Did they consider FIT? How do they believe that the club / sport

	<p>fit with their company? What kind of fit (image, demographic? Strategic alignment?/ Fit)</p> <p>Which were the most important criteria for selecting the certain club/s?</p> <p>Many alternative options or only the certain one?</p> <p>Which were the components included in the contract?</p> <p>The components of the contract were predetermined, or it was a result of negotiation?</p> <p>Why did they decide to sponsor only one club / or 3,4,5,6 different clubs in the same championship?</p>
Objectives - Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did they try to achieve through the certain sponsorship agreement? • Did they have predetermined goals/objectives? Or those emerged throughout the process / discussions with sport officials? • Mainly corporate or brand related Objectives? • Objectives were measurable / specific? • Importance of objectives
Target Audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which were the main target audiences to be reached through sponsorship? (External customers /internal (employees), Business partners)?
Sponsorship Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did they manage / support their sponsorship investment? Use of any additional activities? Which are those? • How much do they think they spent on additional leveraging activities? • Who is responsible for managing the sponsorship/Which departments/Which levels? Marketing department/Top-level management?
Sponsorship Evaluation	<p>Did they measure the results of their sponsorship investment?</p> <p>How many times per year?</p> <p>What kind of measures did they use? Sales? Image? Attitudes?</p> <p>Who is responsible for measuring the results? Which Department?</p> <p>Measurement against objectives?</p>

Although the goal of the researcher was to learn about those practices from the perspective of the sponsor, through investigating their own views and beliefs about sponsorship, it is also important to acknowledge that the interview is not an impartial and unbiased tool of data gathering. According to Fontana and Frey (2005, p.698) interviews involve “rather active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results”. Thus, it is important for

the researcher to realise that each interview case conducted in this study is located within a context “...of interaction and relation, and the result is as much a product of this social dynamic as it is the product of accurate accounts and replies” (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p.699).

ii. Data Collection Procedure

In depth interviews were conducted with the key individuals responsible for sponsorship activities in the ten organisations constituting the sample of this multi-case study. Originally the idea was to access all key individuals responsible for establishing and maintaining sponsorship arrangements with the clubs, but when conducting preliminary investigation, the researcher realised that there was basically one person in charge for each organisation’s sponsorship investments, and thus this person was regarded as being the most well informed and most appropriate to discuss sponsorship related issues. The interviewees had a variety of titles, with most of them representing top-level management, and only two individuals having middle-level management positions, but all of them were directly involved in sponsorship decisions. Specifically, two of the participants operate at the president and vice president level, two of them serve as general secretaries, three participants hold marketing, communications and PR senior management positions in large organisations, one individual is a regional manager of an international business, and two interviewees operate at the middle-level management having the position of the marketing manager (see table 3.2)

Table 3:2 Roles of key individuals responsible for Sponsorship interviewed in this study

1. Local Media Agency	President
2. Local distributors of beauty/styling products company	Vice President
3. Local Cooperative Bank	General Secretary
4. Municipality	General Secretary
5. Local Corporation operating in Telecommunications and Media sectors	Marketing, Communications and PR Senior management positions
6. International telecommunications Company	Marketing, Communications and PR Senior management positions

7. Local Cooperative bank	Marketing, Communications and PR Senior management positions
8. International Betting Company	Regional Manager
9. Local Company /Construction Industry	Marketing Manager
10. Local Oil Company	Marketing Manager

The researcher attempted to capitalise on the professional relationship she has managed to build with several football sponsors due to her long-term involvement with the football industry (both managerial and research involvement) and most of the contacts with sponsors were first conducted by phone in an effort to identify the person responsible for sponsorship arrangements. In many cases there was also an involvement of the clubs sponsored that enabled the researcher to obtain the name of the contact person in each organisation. A follow up telephone contact was also made with the individual responsible for sport sponsorship in each of the ten targeted organisations. The telephone contact enabled the researcher to state the aims of the research project and the method by which it was being conducted in detail, and to provide additional insights into the goals of the research when needed. All ten organisations originally targeted demonstrated a willingness to participate in the research study, and thus a meeting was subsequently arranged with each individual separately at a mutually convenient time and place. Nine of the ten interviews were carried out at the participants' offices, whilst one of the interviewees offered to meet with the researcher at the latter's workplace (European University Cyprus), where the interview was conducted. Nine of the ten interviews took place between May 2012 and July 2012, whilst the last interview was carried out in October 2012 due to the very heavy schedule of the interviewee, who serves as the vice president of a group of companies in Cyprus.

The interviews were conducted face to face, thus facilitating the eliciting of information on several additional issues raised by the participants and the collection of rich data. Prior to the interview participants were provided with an

interview schedule containing the seven main topics for discussion. This process is consistent with Stake's (1995) recommendations indicating that researchers should distribute brief questions prior to interview to indicate that there is an agenda. In addition, the respondents were assured of confidentiality, and anonymity of the respondent was guaranteed for the duration of the project and in any subsequent publication. A conversation based on open-ended questioning followed, containing a number of prompts in an effort to explore a variety of issues related to sponsorship practices and to gain more complete understanding of the factors influencing their sponsorship related decisions. Although the overall discussion was guided to a large degree by the responses of the individuals being interviewed, the open ended question employed by the researcher coalesced around seven major themes cited in the interview protocol (see table 3.1). The questions were directed toward uncovering the motives that mobilised their sponsorship involvement, the criteria they used when arriving at the decision, the manner in which they were handling sponsorship requests, the goals they were trying to pursue, the target audiences they were trying to reach through sponsorship, and the activities they undertook for managing and evaluating their sponsorship arrangements. Some examples of questions asked include the following: "what is the organisation trying to achieve through sponsoring the certain club/s?", "Who is involved in the decision making process?" "Do you think that the actions of your competitors influenced your decision to sponsor or the kind of sponsorship activity in which you decided to invest?", "Are there any politics involved in your decision to sponsor certain club/s?", "How do you support the particular sponsorship?". It is also important to mention that any new topic of interest that emerged from an interview was incorporated into the protocol used at subsequent interviews, a data collection practice that is regarded as totally acceptable in exploratory research (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Each of the interviews lasted between 30 and 55 minutes, except one interview conducted with the representative of a municipality which lasted 15 minutes. Most of the interviews were conducted in the local language, which is Greek. Provided

that both local and international organisations were included in this multi-case study, the participants were given the opportunity to express their preference with regard to language, and this was done in an effort to enable the interviewees to express themselves and their views in the most fluent way, in order to ensure rich and detailed information. As a result, nine of the ten interviews were conducted in Greek and one in English. With the consent of the interviewees, all interviews were tape-recorded and subsequently translated, when needed. Throughout the translation process, the researcher's aim was to translate the responses of the participants as accurately as possible, and thus, the transcribed interviews contain phrases and expressions used in the Greek language in an effort to remain as close to the meaning of the response as possible and to depict their own perception, their own views, realities and feelings as precisely as possible. Furthermore, interviews were fully transcribed verbatim by the researcher immediately following the interview in order to allow for a comprehensive analysis of the findings.

3.5 Data Analysis

The transcription of the interviews produced 142 pages of text. The transcribed interviews were subsequently sent to the interviewees who were given the opportunity to point out any inaccuracies or misinterpretations. The researcher's concern was to check the veracity of the interviews through the process of member checking proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). As soon as the researcher could confirm that there were no requests for corrections by the interviewees, the data analysis process started.

The researcher's attempt was to conduct a holistic analysis of the data (Yin, 2009) through approaching and analysing each single case entirely, and not specific aspects of it. Detailed descriptions of each case that emerged from this type of analysis will be presented in the next section. In addition, a thematic analysis followed through coding all the data collected. The analytic strategy employed by

the researcher involved the identification of issues within each single case first, followed by the detection of common themes that transcend the cases (Yin, 2009). The goal of the researcher was to pursue a within case analysis thorough understanding the context of the case and the complexity of each single case separately and a subsequent step was the conducting of cross-case analysis which involved a thematic analysis across the cases (Creswell, 2013).

The data collected were coded through the use of the NVivo software package which is specifically designed for the analysis of qualitative data via 'in vivo coding'. Coding involves aggregating the text into small categories of information and assigning a name to the code. Coding is therefore an intellectual activity that involves generating categories and themes, and thus it is regarded as “the formal representation of analytic thinking” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p.212). Although it is important to acknowledge that no mechanism can replace the creativity of the researcher, software programs for data analysis are widely recognised tools that can facilitate the process of data analysis (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). What we need to remember, however, is that whatever the system or program used, coding is an emergent, creative and altering concept and not a merely technical task (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

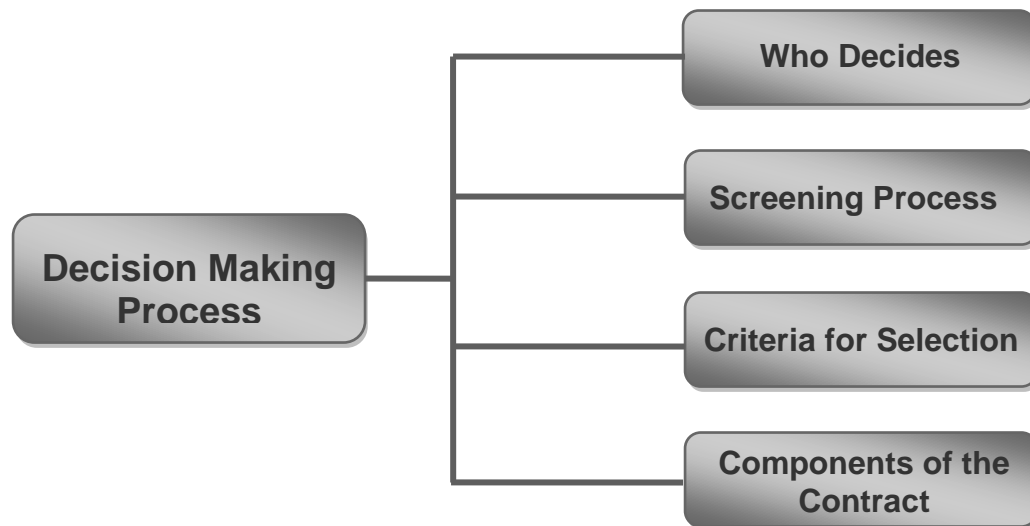
The NVivo software program was utilised by the researcher in an effort to facilitate the process of managing the transcripts since it enables storage of the data, easy access to the codes provided by the researcher, retrieving memos related to the codes, themes or documents (Cresswell, 2013). Therefore, the NVivo program was regarded as a very useful tool offering a systematic format for recording the emergent themes in a hierarchical structure coding under “parent” nodes and “child” nodes (refer to table 3.3). Although the focus was predominantly on inductive coding as direct quotations from the transcripts were critically analysed to discover patterns, identify themes and gain insight into the sponsorship management practices employed by different sponsors in Cyprus, in fact a combination of deductive – inductive approach underpinned data analysis. As

mentioned above, a deductive categorisation of the findings of the systematic review formed the platform for the development of the interview protocol outlining the main topics to be explored. In line with the critical realist paradigm that informed the research study, this deductive categorisation also formed the basis for the creation of pre-existing nodes that guided the coding process.

In fact, Grabtree and Miller (1992, cited in Creswell, 2013) discussed a continuum of coding strategies ranging from prefigured categories to emergent categories, and as Creswell (2013, p.185) held, researchers using prefigured coding schemes are strongly encouraged “to be open to additional codes emerging during the analysis”. Drawing on the above, the deductive coding process guiding the certain study was also heavily enriched by inductive processes that identified a number of emergent themes explaining different decision making processes, priorities and strategic choices made by sponsors when investing in football club sponsorship in Cyprus.

The coding was spread over seven “parent” nodes and more than forty “child” nodes. Nodes are containers that allow the researcher to gather related material in one place in an effort to identify emerging patterns, themes or ideas. Nodes can be created and organised for emerging themes, ideas, concepts, people or organisations. “Child” nodes are sub-nodes of a certain “parent” node. The following example demonstrated in figure 3.2 depicts the way in which the transcriptions of the interviews were coded.

Figure 3:2 An example of a “parent” node and “child” nodes used in NVivo coding



One of the emergent themes had the “parent” node entitled “decision making process” and then a number of “child” nodes such as “who decides”, “screening process”, “criteria for selection” and “components of the contract”. A comprehensive list of all the “parent” and “child” nodes that were incorporated within the NVivo coding system is included in Table 3.3 below. A full discussion of these emergent themes will be presented in chapter 4. It should be noted that the NVivo software program was extremely useful in the analysis stage of this research project since it enabled the researcher to elaborate on each case separately and identify the specific issues emerging for each sponsor, while at the same time it provided the researcher with the capacity to combine the different cases into an amalgam of themes highlighting differences and similarities of sponsorship experiences of those ten organisations investing in football sponsorship in a newly formed sponsorship domain such as Cyprus.

It is important to mention that as familiarity with the data increased, so more inferential and interpretive codes were added by the researcher in identifying particular conceptual linkages (Amis, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This activity was carried out several times and data were continually checked against

each other until no new themes emerged. It should be acknowledged, however, that it is very difficult to identify all of the possible themes and linkages, especially when considering the inherent biases of the researcher that inevitably influence any research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Therefore the effort of the researcher in conducting this certain study was to increase confidence that the major themes were uncovered. In doing so, the coding process was performed twice by the researcher in two different time periods. Specifically, some time after coding all the ten interviews, the coding process was carried out again by the researcher from the beginning in an effort to identify inconsistency of judgments over time. In another attempt to improve validity of the data, a process of “peer debriefing” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) took place, whereby the process of data analysis was laid out to two knowledgeable individuals (supervisor and co-supervisor) in order to get reactions and comments on the coding process, on potential biases of the researcher, and on the rationale underpinning data analysis procedure and the subsequent themes that emerged. In addition, data analysis was provided to three of the participants who were asked to assess the analytic process and resultant findings. All the three actions enhanced the confidence of the researcher that the process followed was credible and thus major themes were identified.

Table 3:3 Emergent themes: “parent” and “child” nodes incorporated within the NVivo coding system.

“Parent” Nodes	“Child” Nodes	“Child” Nodes	Sources	References
Sponsorship experience			10	36
	● Single sponsors		5	9
	● Multiple sponsors		5	10
	● Few years of involvement		4	7
	● Many years of involvement		6	9
Decision making process			10	98
	● Who decides		10	20
	● Screening process		8	10

	● Criteria for selection		9	36
		● Rationale for single/multiple sponsorship	7	16
	● Components of the contract		10	27
Motivation			10	88
	● Social / Community		7	36
	● Personal mot.		4	23
	● Commercial mot.		8	29
Objectives			10	173
	● Emerging obj.		2	2
	● Specific / Measurable		7	13
	● Predetermined		5	8
	● Social obj.		6	17
	● Sales obj.		6	9
	● Public affairs		1	3
	● New customer recruitment		6	18
		● Targeting new segments	2	6
	● Launching new products		3	5
	● Image objectives		8	23
	● Identification obj.		3	8
	● Exposure/publicity		10	26
	● Internal /Employees		3	4
	● Customer satisfaction		2	5
	● B2B partnerships		4	5
	● Brand preference		1	1
	● Awareness obj.		4	10
	● Aligning with local markets		2	3
Target Audiences			9	10

Sponsor. Management /Leveraging			10	68
	● Leveraging activities		9	36
	● Department managing sponsorship		7	15
	● Additional spending		8	9
Sponsorship Evaluation			10	24
	● Sponsors not evaluating		5	6
	● Department evaluating		5	5
	● Evaluation methods		5	9
		● Sales meas.	2	3
		● Publicity	3	5
		● New customers	2	2
		● Brand awareness	2	3
		● Attitude research	3	4

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Although the importance of validation in qualitative studies and more specifically in case studies is unquestionable (Creswell, 2013), the terms used to describe it as well as the procedures proposed by different researchers to establishing it, differ substantially. Lincoln and Guba (1985), for example, proposed terms such as credibility, authenticity, dependability and confirmability to establish the trustworthiness of a research study since those terms were regarded as fitting more appropriately a constructivist paradigm compared to validity and reliability that have been extensively used in quantitative analysis. Given the many perspectives, the researcher will capitalise on suggestions made by Creswell

(2013), who conceptualises validation as an attempt to assess the accuracy of the findings. Creswell considers validation:

as a distinct strength of qualitative research in that the account made through extensive time spent in the field, the detailed thick description, and the closeness of the researcher to participants in the study all add to the value of accuracy of a study (p. 250).

Creswell (2013) also recommended the employment of multiple validation strategies proposed by many different researchers as far as those are able to document the accuracy of the study. Drawing on the above and in order to enhance validation, the study utilised several techniques. Firstly, the researcher has a prolonged engagement in the certain field of study, something that is regarded as contributing significantly to the validity and credibility of the findings. Prolonged engagement is closely associated with the development of trust between the researcher and the participants, as well as with a better understanding of the domain and the culture (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), leading to more accurate results as the researcher is more capable of making decisions about what is salient to the study (Creswell, 2013). In addition, it is important to clarify that the researcher has a long term involvement in sponsorship research and more specifically in football sponsorship, as well as a practical experience within the particular field in Cyprus – the researcher served as a member of the board of APOEL Sport Academy for six years, and she is currently a board member of the Cyprus Sport Management Association dealing with scientific research in sport management related topics, as well as with the organisation of seminars on sport management offered to sport practitioners in Cyprus. In addition, the researcher has been employed by the European University Cyprus as a lecturer in sport management and marketing since January 2005. Clarifying past experiences, possible prejudices and orientations that were likely to have influenced or shaped interpretation of the findings is a crucial step in enhancing validation of a study (Creswell, 2013), since the reader has the opportunity to

understand the researcher's position and assumption that may impact the inquiry. For the purposes of the present study, the researcher believes that her professional background in the field of sport marketing can be regarded as a bias that can strengthen validity of a study, as Merriam (1998) argued. In other words a certain amount of involvement with the domain is positive while balanced by a certain amount of detachment seeking to generate some relative objectivity (Kilminster, 2004).

Furthermore, the researcher employed triangulation in the methodological sense, corroborating evidence gathered from multiple sources such as in-depth interviews, observation and internal and external documents that confirmed and validated the emerging findings. Furthermore, peer debriefing also took place as the whole process as data analysis was provided to knowledgeable colleagues for an external check. Peer debriefing is important in improving validity of the findings since it is a method ensuring that the emergent findings are grounded in the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Member checking was also employed by the researcher as the transcripts were sent to the participants for editing and the researcher confirmed that there were no amendments in the original documents. In addition, data analysis was discussed with three of the participants of the study in order to get their critical observations or interpretations, so as to reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation. Sharing data with participants is regarded as an important activity for establishing the credibility of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as participants are provided with the opportunity to judge the accuracy of the findings. Similarly, Stake (1995) recommends that participants should have an active role in case study research so as to enhance the accuracy of the findings.

Finally, the researcher provided a thick and detailed description of the study and the methodology adopted in an effort to improve transferability of the findings. Although the issue of generalisability of the findings was discussed above and as already mentioned this might be regarded as one of the shortcomings of a qualitative case study, the researcher reiterates the fact that generalising the

findings is not one of the goals of this study. Rather the concern here is to identify different causal mechanisms operating in different types of case explored. At the same time, it should be mentioned that rich and detailed descriptions have been provided in order to enable the reader to transfer information and knowledge to other similar settings sharing similar characteristics and qualities. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), by stating explicitly theoretical parameters, research design and methods “those who make policy or design research studies within those same (or sufficiently similar) parameters can determine whether the cases described can be generalised for new research policy and transferred to other settings” (p. 252).

In addition to the several validation standards employed by the researcher in this study, reliability was also pursued. Reliability refers to techniques and strategies pursuing consistency, that is, if the study were to be conducted by another researcher similar findings would be obtained. Ensuring reliability in qualitative studies is again, a task that is achieved in several different ways. The present study employed several strategies in enhancing reliability of the findings. Firstly, the researcher attempted to enhance reliability through obtaining detailed field notes, by tape-recording the interviews, and by transcribing in detail the whole interview, including pauses and overlaps that according to Creswell (2013) may sometimes indicate apparently trivial but often crucial details. Furthermore, reliability was further enhanced by the fact that the interviewing context was also the same (offices) and the use of an interview guide.

In addition, intra-coder reliability was also employed, with the researcher performing the coding process twice in different time periods. This method provides an estimate of the consistency of judgments within a coder over time, since inconsistency may result from factors such as fatigue, mood or carefulness. In addition to intra-coder reliability, inter-coder reliability was also achieved to a certain degree since part of the coding process has been reviewed extensively and independently by two additional researchers (supervisor and co-supervisor) in

an effort to achieve external checks on the interpretive process. The use of multiple coders to analyse transcript data and conducting inter-coder agreement checks is a technique heavily recommended in qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2013).

Finally, the researcher's efforts to increase reliability of the findings also incorporated the utilisation of a case study protocol (see Appendix 2). A case study protocol consists of an overview of the case study project, field procedures, case study questions, and a guide to the case study report, and it is suggested by Yin (2003) as a crucial tool for enhancing reliability of case study findings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

During the several phases of the research process, the researcher had to consider what ethical issues should be addressed. Ethical issues relate mainly to the relationship between the researcher and the participants as well as to the impact of the study upon the individuals participating in the project. According to Creswell (2013, p.57), "ethical issues in qualitative research can be described as occurring prior to conducting the study, at the beginning of the study, during data collection, in data analysis, in reporting the data, and in publishing a study". For the purpose of this study, the approach of the researcher was to examine the several ethical issues as they applied to different steps undertaken for conducting the research.

Prior to conducting the study, the participants had been contacted and informed about the research, and they voluntarily agreed to participate. Christians (2005) heavily emphasised the fact that participants should agree to participate without physical or psychological coercion, and that their agreement must be based on full and open information about the study. At the beginning of the study, participants were again informed in detail about the structure of the interview through providing them with the interview protocol. In addition, considering that

case study research is characterised by an intense interest in personal views and experiences, this sometimes may place the individual at risk (e.g. of loss of employment). Thus, the researcher took into consideration what Stake (2005) points out, that the researcher has a moral obligation to comply with a disclosing and protective agreement that is usually informal. Furthermore, prior to the study the researcher discussed with participants issues of observation and the intention to use any additional documents available through internal or external sources. In addition, interviewees were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Therefore, the researcher promised to protect the identities of subjects, whilst at the same time they were assured against unwanted exposure. It should be mentioned that a large proportion of the participants did not request anonymity and confidentiality when offered since they felt that disclosure of such information would not harm themselves or their organisation.

During the phase of data collection, the researcher's concern was to build trust with the interviewees and to demonstrate that she respected their site and codes of conduct. Furthermore, participants were informed of how the data would be used, whilst in an effort to avoid exploitation of participants by gathering data and leaving the site without giving back, all interviewees were promised to be provided with a report of the results of the research project so that they might be used for their own improvement. In addition the researcher demonstrated a willingness to provide interviewees with consultation and advice on sport sponsorship issues when needed. Finally, interviewees were given access to sponsorship related projects conducted by the researcher in the past so that they could improve their knowledge on the research topic.

At the phase of data analysis that followed, the researcher managed to provide all participants with their transcripts in an effort to ensure accuracy of the data. In the same vein, the results of the thematic analysis were laid out to participants so as to enhance credibility of the findings. According to Christians (2005, p.145)

“ensuring that data are accurate is a cardinal principle in social science codes as well”, since omissions or misunderstanding are both non-scientific and unethical.

3.8 Summarising Limitations

While the whole foregoing methodological section was a defence of the methodological approach adopted to examine the research questions, in concluding, the researcher must also acknowledge a number of limitations associated with the multi-case study. Firstly, as already mentioned, an inherent limitation of a case study design is that generalisation of the findings is inappropriate. Thus, the goal of the study was not to produce generalised findings, but to develop theoretical insights which may be generalised. The aim of the researcher was to investigate in-depth and examine the underlying structures of sponsorship in a less developed sponsorship domain like Cyprus. Furthermore, instead of generalising from the cases to a wider population, the researcher seeks to illustrate the rich and suggestive insights that can be transferred to other settings sharing similarities with the specific case study.

Another criticism associated with qualitative research design is the failure to meet certain validity and reliability criteria. The researcher should acknowledge that although the study did not meet the traditional positivistic measures of reliability and validity, alternative, more appropriate measures of trustworthiness as suggested by Creswell (2013) have been employed in an effort to ensure accuracy of the findings and reliability of the study. Those measures included member checking, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement in the field of study, methodological triangulation, clarifying researcher’s bias, and rich and thick description of the methodological process and of the findings. The effort to improve reliability included strategies such as the collection and analysis of detailed data, intra and inter-coder agreement, and the utilisation of a case study protocol clearly articulating the processes adopted. Finally, from a methodological point of view the researcher also recognises that the use of retrospective, self-

reported data collected through the interviews may have been influenced by several factors such as respondent bias, poor articulation, or faulty memory recall (Creswell, 2013) and thus efforts were made to avoid these factors.

Chapter 4– Analysis / Discussion

The aim of this chapter is to provide an analytical description of the profile of each organisation examined in this multi-case study. The goal is to construct a biography of each sponsor featuring details related to the social, political and economic context in which those organisations operate. Therefore, the chapter will focus on critically evaluating several contextual issues and the subsequent impact upon sponsorship-related decisions and actions. Specifically, the chapter will attempt to address the type of the organisation, the procedures through which sponsorship decisions were taken, the motives driving those actions, and the nature of the competitive environment and its effects upon those decision-making procedures. In addition, this section will attempt to determine the objectives sponsors are trying to pursue and their importance, the audiences sponsors attempt to reach through the sponsorship vehicle, the activities enacted in managing and implementing sponsorship initiatives, additional spending on leveraging, and the ways in which sponsorships are evaluated. After the within-case analysis, the second part of the chapter will deal with a cross-case analysis (between-case analysis) in which the organisational biographies will be cross-analysed and cross-referenced with one another. The effort is to determine any inter-organisational influences and relationships that impact or explain the sponsorship management practices adopted by sponsors investing in football sponsorship in Cyprus. In addition, the second part of the analysis will attempt to identify the major meta-themes which lead to broader strategic conclusions beyond the scope of normal marketing interest.

4.1 Within-Case Analysis

4.1.1 Case Study 1: International Betting Company

The first case involves a large, international betting company operating in several countries and employing approximately 1400 people. The company is based in the UK and entered the Cyprus market 7 years ago. Immediately after its launching in the country, and when it realised the potential for growth in the Cyprus market, it decided to become committed to sponsoring sports in the country as the regional manager asserted. Therefore, in 2008 it became involved in sponsoring a football club operating in the first division. The following year the company decided to expand its sponsorship activity by sponsoring three different football clubs competing in the same championship and also by engaging in event sponsorship in basketball.

According to the regional manager of the company, the decision to become committed in local sponsorship agreements was based on purely commercial incentives leading to what were clearly business objectives such as building brand awareness, acquiring exposure through TV coverage and building mutually beneficial public affairs with the local market. More specifically, the regional manager admitted during the interview that one of the main drives for engaging in sponsorship agreements was to build good and trusted relationships with the local market in an effort to combat the introduction of new legislation restricting betting and gambling in Cyprus. As he noted: “because there is going to be legislation that is gonna be passed on on-line betting and gambling, so we thought it was, you know, a good idea to be part of the local championship”.

Interestingly, it seems that the sponsorship-related decisions of the company were not driven by any personal or altruistic motives. The prevalence of commercial motives is hardly surprising when considering that the literature review revealed that large companies were found to be more professional and

more systematic with regard to the sponsorship management actions and decisions they undertake (Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998). In addition, the evidence presented in the literature review suggesting that sponsors operating in more developed sponsorship contexts are inclined towards more rational, structured and professional sponsorship related activities (Burton et al., 1998), can also provide a logical argument on the fact that an international betting company that is based in the UK and is involved in sport sponsorship on a global basis appears to be directed by clearly business and marketing oriented motives. The prevalence of commercial motives in the case study can also be explained by the fact that football sponsorship may be connected to the prevalence of a more commercial orientation, as Thwaites's (1995) study found.

The prevalence of rational and business motives is further substantiated by the fact that, the company had not established any personal relationships with sport officials – directors or board members of the clubs - at that time. In addition, the company was not aware of the local market, as the interviewee argued, something that led the company to the decision to hire an agency to help them in choosing appropriate sponsorship partners. What is interesting in this case is the nature of the power within the channel. Specifically, the agency appeared as having a central and extremely influential role, since the decision-making power or negotiation power, was mainly concentrated on the party acting as the intermediary, and not the sponsor. As the regional manager said in the interview:

The media agency was close let's say to the president of the club...he knew that they were in search for a sponsor because it was... that year they had financial problems... and the change of the management team... so he dropped the idea and this is why it was the particular club.

The interviewee also added that the agency was mainly responsible for the sponsorship related decisions since “they have much bigger experience in that [sponsorship] and they were also aware of the Cypriot football clubs... the market”. Therefore, in line with the commercial incentives mobilising their decision to invest in football sponsorship in Cyprus, the company seems to have adopted a

systematic, rational and strategic approach in selecting the sponsorship agreements, something that is primarily depicted in their decision to assign to an agency the task of recruiting the most appropriate sport property for sponsorship. What is interesting in this case, however, is the fact that the agency did not seem to act on a highly and strictly rational basis, since its decision may have had been influenced by personal relationships with the club's officials. Furthermore, in this case study, sponsorship acquisition was not supply-side driven as in most cases (Thwaites, 1994), but it seems that sponsorship opportunities were pursued by the sponsor in its efforts to enhance its competitive position in the market. It is also interesting to note that the company had chosen to invest in multiple sponsorship arrangements for sound and well supported reasons. Considering that the main stated reason for entering into a sponsorship arrangement was to become part of the local championship and to build constructive public affairs, the company had chosen to support three different clubs competing in the same championship but representing a large geographical area in Cyprus – specifically the clubs represent three different cities - and at the same time the sponsor was attempting to convey the message that an international company operating in Cyprus supports local clubs and subsequently supports the sport. This is clearly depicted in the interviewee's statement:

I think the fact that we did [sponsor] three teams at the same time means that it was more the sport that we are interested in... as I said, we do not want to match or work with one team... we do not favour one team only.

This decision may be linked to the nature of the activity the company is dealing with, since betting depends on, and concerns, all clubs. Additionally, the reluctance of the company to support or favour one team can be explained by the broader social and cultural context in Cyprus. It is probably useful to mention that one of the locally specific aspects of sport in Cyprus and more specifically football is the huge level of 'political interference' in the development of the sport. The history of football in Cyprus had been greatly affected by the civil war in Greece in the late 1940s between Nationalists and Communists and its subsequent effect upon all domains of life on the island. As a result, the broader political situation in

Cyprus has given football political dimensions which have resulted in the separation of the football clubs into left and right, according to the political parties (Charalambous-Papamiltiades, 2011a). The politicisation of football is still evident today, with the two most successful clubs in Cyprus being associated with the left and right wings. As a consequence, there has been a traditional hostility between the fans of the two clubs which is vividly demonstrated inside and outside the stadium. Politicisation of football is regarded as one of the main sources of violence and hooliganism today (Peristianis, Kapardis, Loizou, Fakiolas, and Puloukas, 2002). It is therefore not surprising that sponsors can be very hesitant to associate themselves with one of the two clubs or with any other “right” or “leftish” club in the country, since strong identification with such a club can have detrimental effects upon the image of the company and subsequently on product image and sales. Those reservations were clearly stated throughout the interview, as the manager of the company stated that “at that time we did not want to go to one of the two teams, for many reasons... because first of all there is always a rivalry”, and he added “if you connect yourself with one of the two teams then... instantly the other team is an opponent... at least to the people’s eyes”.

Evidently, the international betting company employed sophisticated and rigorous selection processes as illustrated by the overall decision making processes presented by the interviewee, although it is important to take into account the fact that the agency was not acting on an entirely professional approach. A number of criteria were used to enable the company to arrive at the best possible decisions as to the sponsorship opportunities they could exploit. The criteria taken into consideration involved the performance of the clubs, geographical distribution, the cost of the sponsorship in relation to the budget the company could spend, the size of the club in terms of its fan base and the subsequent media coverage that the club was expected to receive. Moreover, and in line with the evidence presented earlier in the literature review indicating that more experienced sponsors tend to engage middle level managers in decision making processes (Burton et al., 1998; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992; Walliser, 2003), the main persons

involved in sponsorship-related decisions in this particular case study were the regional manager and the marketing manager of the company. According to the respondent, although the budget available for marketing spending was decided at the top level management, all the sponsorship related decisions with regard to the selection of the sport properties to be sponsored were undertaken at the lower management level with a substantial involvement of the legal department of the company at the final stages of the sponsorship agreements.

The professional and systematic approach adopted by the company is further illustrated in the comprehensive contract including a large number of components and clauses that define in detail the relationship between the two parties. The interviewee stated that the contract was predetermined as the company is very experienced in sport sponsorship arrangements globally, but the final version of the contract was actually a result of an intensive negotiation between the two parties through the agency representing the sponsor. The contract included terms and conditions such as exclusivity, designation, logo placement, logo size and prominence, signage within the stadium, hospitality opportunities, tickets, right of first refusal, additional advertising, presence of players in PR activities and during social responsibility events organised by the company, and legal clauses regarding future legislation restrictions in the country that could immediately terminate the sponsorship agreement. This final component is interesting in that it is a way to engage partners to lobby for the company as well against the legislation.

It is also important to mention that, as a part of their social responsibility program, and considering the controversial nature of their product and the fact that betting and gambling refer to adult users, the betting company decided not to have their logo placed on the academies and youth sport teams affiliated to their sponsees, despite the fact that there are currently no legal restrictions about this in Cyprus. As the regional manager of the company argued “we did not want to have the presence of a betting company on the junior’s team for example” and he added

“we thought it would be better not to provoke”. This action is better explained when considering their main drive for sponsoring sport in Cyprus, which was closely connected to the objective of pursuing the development of good public relations. Therefore, as a part of a broader strategic effort, the company was trying to avoid any negative or detrimental debates around the issue of gambling and betting. According to the interviewee, “it is more about being proactive, so we would not like to get into a discussion or any problem”.

The aforementioned well-structured and systematic approach towards selecting the sponsorship arrangements demonstrated by the betting company was followed by a rational and well-defined objective setting, as well as by well clarified target audiences to be reached through sponsorship. As the regional manager noted, their sponsorship was directed towards external customers as well as towards the local community. As already mentioned, one of the priorities of the company was to use sponsorship as the platform for building good and mutually beneficial relationships with the local public in order to influence positively public opinion and thus to avoid the enactment of legislation that would be detrimental to on-line betting. Therefore, it is clear that sponsorship was regarded as a very successful means towards exercising positive public relations and lobbying with the local authorities and the fan base of the clubs, and thus to exercise pressure on politicians and decision-making bodies with regard to their decisions on passing legislation restricting their activities in Cyprus. As the regional manager commended:

At a time where legislation is about to pass and people... you know, they do not decide on their own, but obviously it's better for us to be present more and more in the press or on the TV. It works because after all people are the ones that decide who is gonna vote for those laws so it's good to have a good public opinion.

Interestingly, the literature review did not explicitly reveal that lobbying was one of the objectives mentioned by the sponsors, although lobbying is often a component of public relations. It is indeed the case, however, that there is

evidence suggesting that the uniqueness of some industries and the challenges that they are faced with, such as legislative restrictions, shape to a great extent the objectives pursued by sponsors. Lavack (2003) for example found that building political support was one of the main goals pursued by the tobacco industry. Moreover, and similarly to tobacco sponsorship objectives, increasing awareness through increased exposure emanating from media coverage was another highly appreciated objective set by the betting company examined in this case study. This is not surprising when one considers that increasing awareness objectives featured among the most highly pursued goals by sponsors, regardless of the industry they come from (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Davies & Tsiantas, 2008; Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Pope & Voges, 1994; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992; Spence et al., 1997; Thwaites, 1993, 1994). In this particular case, awareness objectives become even more important when considering the legal restrictions on advertising that the betting and gambling industry is faced with. As the interviewee stated:

We are not allowed to have any advertisement on television, because of the nature of the business. I think it is better to do it in this way [through sponsorship]. For us it was the only way, but even if we could choose, even if we had the option to play spots [advertisements] on the TV we would also choose to have sponsorships.

Another important objective pursued by the company was to align with the local market in an effort to compete more effectively with local products. Glocalisation (Robertson, 1992, 1995) is a goal commonly pursued by international companies operating globally since the aim, in this case, is to provide a product that is distributed globally but in a way that fits the local market, culture, customs, beliefs and preferences. As the regional manager of the company admitted:

The other disadvantage that international companies have is that, people sometimes, and especially these days, tend to prefer local products. So, if you just have an international company, that you have it in your mind somewhere far away in London, in an office, and just English people there, dealing with English football... it is much different when you actually see that

these people are here to support the country, and that they do things for the local teams which then goes to the local community.

As is clearly depicted in the above statement, creating goodwill for the business was also an important objective for the international betting company since they strongly and repeatedly emphasised the need to create a positive image within the public in Cyprus through actions that are perceived as supporting the local community. Again this is logical when considering the controversial nature of betting and gambling industry, and this is further supported by evidence found in the literature review suggesting that creating goodwill is an essential goal of industries dealing with unhealthy products such as tobacco (Lavack, 2003). The intention of the company explored in this case study to sweeten their image through sponsorship is further illustrated in the following statement of the regional manager:

When you hear betting, you think about betting shops, obviously you also bring to mind some bad examples, bad guys carrying guns, and mafia. But yes, what we want people to understand is that it is something completely different.

Pursuing image objectives does not seem to align with sponsoring many different sport entities, especially in the particular case that the three clubs sponsored by the betting company have completely different and even contradictory image qualities. What it is useful to mention, however, is that the goal of the company as indicated by the interviewee was to align with the image of the sport of football, which is admittedly the most popular and highly valued sport in Cyprus (Charalambous-Papamitliades, 2013) and not the image of the particular sport properties they decided to sponsor.

In addition to the awareness, public affairs, goodwill, and image objectives, the interview revealed that the company was also focused towards customer recruitment and customer retention, with the latter goal being a much more highly important objective than recruiting new customers as the interviewee emphasised.

An important observation with regard to the objectives set is that, consistent with the evidence demonstrated in the literature review (Hartland et al., 2005, Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Thwaites et al., 1998, Witcher et al., 1991), there is an emphasis on corporate related objectives. In addition, it is also interesting to note that, although it is evident that the company appeared prioritising specific and predetermined goals, similarly to the majority of the sponsors as indicated in the literature review (Farrelly et. al., 1997; Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Thwaites, 1993, 1994), those objectives were not concise, clear and set in a quantifiable manner.

Despite the systematic objective-setting that the company seems to employ when managing its sport sponsorships, when it comes to other sponsorship management activities such as leveraging and activation strategies, it appears that those are very limited or non-existent. According to the regional manager, there were no personnel available to “organise activities and boost the sponsorship”. In fact, the only activities undertaken to support the sponsorship investments was the organisation of several contests on their internet site or the radio allowing their customers to win tickets for the games, and distributions of promotional merchandise within the stadiums, but those activities were not organised on a regular basis. It is indeed surprising that the company did not spend on any additional activities to leverage their investment. Obviously, sponsorship was approached as an isolated communication tool that is not integrated to the marketing communications mix of the company. This is hardly surprising when considering that there is much empirical evidence in the systematic review (e.g. Amis et al., 1999; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Polonsky et al., 1996) indicating a failure of sponsors to integrate sponsorship with other marketing practices, despite the fact that the importance of a well-orchestrated and adequately leveraged sponsorship activity has been highlighted by several conceptual frameworks (Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Meenehan, 1991; Walshe, 2008).

Similarly, in addition to poor management and leveraging activities, the company appeared not to be employing any evaluation methods and tools for measuring the success of their sponsorship investment. What is indeed interesting is that the company held that “it is not something that you can measure”. They believed that it was very difficult to isolate the return generated from sport sponsorship, thus they did not exert any effort in evaluating sponsorship arrangements. This is a widely embraced view, as the systematic literature review revealed, basically due to the fact that sponsorship is usually combined with other promotional activities (Hoek, 1999; Meenaghan, 1991; Wilson, 1997). This is what Amis et al. (1999) described as causal ambiguity, and it is regarded as posing obstacles upon sponsorship evaluation. In addition, the plurality of objectives pursued by sponsors are partially responsible for the fact that sponsorship evaluation remains a challenge for sponsors (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004, 2005; Davies & Tsiantas, 2008; Farrelly et al., 1997; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Thwaites et al., 1998), even in relatively more developed sponsorship contexts that are usually characterised by a more professional approach to sport sponsorship management. Chadwick and Thwaites (2004, 2005) for example, found that despite the significant advances in football sponsorship management in the UK, sponsorship evaluation remained a problematic area for sponsors primarily due to the lack of precise and quantifiable objectives. In addition to this explanation, it could be the case that the company was purposely not pursuing the measurement of the results of their investment due to the fact that lobbying was the main objective pursued, and therefore the results of sponsorship would be visible and obvious - enactment of legislation or not.

4.1.2 Case study 2: Multinational Telecommunications Company

The focus of the second case study is one of the largest telecommunications providers in Cyprus and it is a member of a multinational mobile telecommunications company operating in more than 20 countries in three

continents. The company launched its commercial operations in Cyprus about ten years ago and employs approximately 400 people in Cyprus. The international group is regarded as a very experienced sponsor, not just in terms of its long-term sponsorship involvement but mainly because of the fact that the company has sponsored many football competitions as well as football clubs on a worldwide basis. The commitment demonstrated by the international group towards using sponsorship as a strategic tool for reaching its goals has been regarded as a requirement since its members are operating in several countries including Cyprus. As the communications and PR senior manager of the company revealed “all the operations had to activate a certain sponsorship within the markets in which they operate”. Therefore, two years after its launching in Cyprus, and based on guidance provided by the international group, the company decided to sponsor one of the most successful Division 1 football clubs, and this sponsorship is still active today.

The company appeared to be motivated by purely commercial and business factors when taking sponsorship-related decisions. In a manner similar to the other international sponsor examined in the previous case study, the company did not have any ‘personal relations’ rationale to accommodate when entering the sponsorship:

As a member of an international group, what the company tries to do in the several countries it decides to operate in, it tries to align with the local market. It tries to create the synergies that can bring it close to the particular market. To us, at the time football was... we recognised that for the Cypriot culture it had a central role to play. And we decided that we should have a particular role in Cypriot football. We were looking for the emotional bonding that a few things can give you in Cyprus.

It is interesting to note that, the PR and communications manager of the company said that their decision to sponsor the certain club was not influenced by the competitors’ actions since:

At the time there was not a battle with regard to football sponsorship. Things were smoother at that time with regard to negotiations and everything. The sport sponsorship intensity that exists today was not evident at that time. We definitely saw that, at that time, company X [name of the competitor] was the previous sponsor of the football club. But this had nothing to do with the decision to sponsor. We did not want to create any problem, or to attack [the competitor]. It was a decision made very consciously for the reasons that I mentioned before.

When it comes to the renewal of the sponsorship, however, it was evident that competitive factors did play a central role in the decision to renew. This is not surprising since, based on the open systems view (Perrow, 1970; Thompson, 1967), the company is regarded as an open system that influences and is being influenced by the broader environment including competitive forces involving the actions of competitors. Interestingly, Berrett and Slack (1999) presented important evidence depicting how sponsors respond to the actions of competitors when engaging in sponsorship arrangements, either as a reaction to the competitors' sponsorship initiatives or as a proactive action that can prevent actions by competitors. In the case study, although the company did not explicitly state that the intentions or actions of competitors did have a role to play in their sponsorship-related decisions, there is much evidence in the press dating back to the time of the sponsorship renewal indicating that the club had probably been involved in sponsorship negotiations with the major competitor of the multinational telecommunications company in an effort to ensure a bigger sponsorship deal. This, in turn, had generated several institutional pressures upon the company to offer a bigger sponsorship amount for renewing the sponsorship deal with the club, something that eventually did happen and according to the press, this was probably the biggest football club sponsorship deal signed in Cyprus.

At the same time, the interviewee admitted that the decision to become involved in football sponsorship was highly guided by the international group. As she said "we also had instructions by the group that we move to football". It is probably interesting to note that at the same time, the international group was involved in negotiations for sponsoring a global football event, in which they eventually

succeeded, and thus part of the job of the sponsor was to promote the international sponsorship arrangements within the country of Cyprus as well as to enact sponsorship linking the company to the sport of football. Apart from the decision to endorse football-related sponsorships, however, the selection process was assigned primarily to the company operating in Cyprus and the international group was simply kept informed about their decisions as indicated by the interviewee. According to her arguments, “based on an examination of what was available in the market at the time, we saw that the highest visibility, the best emotional bonding, the best return on investment could be given by football”. In addition, the interviewee indicated that the original proposal was developed by the marketing department in cooperation with several other functional sections such as the finance department, and it was subsequently submitted to the top-level management in Cyprus for approval. The decision-making process outlined by the respondent seems to fit with the independent approach to sponsorship decision-making as described by Cousens & Slack (1996) in which a national division of a multinational company is given total freedom to control the sponsorship selection process. This approach has been regarded as encouraging the range of creative sponsorship activities that is specifically designed to fit the specific needs of the local business and enabling the latter to establish good relationships with the local community (Cousens & Slack, 1996).

In addition to the above, the decision-making process that the company followed in choosing its sponsorship partner was systematic, well-structured and professional. Specifically, the company seems to have used a rational process based on screening procedures and clear and well defined criteria enabling them to choose the most appropriate sponsee. Interestingly, the company had to choose between two of the most successful clubs in Cyprus, which are the two clubs representing the right and left wings and whose relations have been characterised by a traditional mutual resentment and antagonism, as mentioned in the previous case study. Unfortunately, the fact that those clubs, but also sport in general, is used by politicians in Cyprus as a platform for their political agendas

(Charalambous-Papamiltiades, 2011a) is a factor which fuels hostility especially between the fans of the two clubs. Contrary to the widely shared view in Cyprus that it is dangerous for a sponsor to be associated with one of the two clubs, the multinational telecommunications company examined in this study decided to choose the club with a better fit to their image, audiences and products. According to the interviewee, the main reason for pursuing a single sponsorship was that:

We believe that sponsoring many different teams limits sponsorship potential. If you really want to have an alignment for both the followers and the brand, I believe that being everywhere will end up being nowhere. Thus, we have chosen to sponsor one club, and through this particular club, to really invest. And we continue to believe that. There were some concerns regarding the brand, and maybe the creation of other perceptions [negative perceptions] around the brand through sponsorship, but we felt that through appropriate activation and appropriate activities around the sponsorship we could mediate that.

However, the company was concerned about the hostility and a possible reaction of the fans of the other clubs:

We thought of this [hostility]. It is what I said earlier. There was a concern, because we were new sport sponsors, so, about the effect it [a single sponsorship] was going to have on our brand. Because, as you know, Cypriot football has to do with politics, political parties etc.

One of the main selection criteria employed by the sponsor was the performance of the club. In addition, the interview revealed that they also considered the size of the fan base but more importantly the characteristics of the fan base, and media coverage. What was clear throughout the interview is that the company was looking for a strategic fit between the company and sponsored property, and this is depicted in the fact that the interviewee emphasised that key criteria for selecting the sponsorship involved an image match with the brand, audience match, and the spending power of the audience reached through sponsorship. As the PR and communications manager commented:

We were looking for a club with followers, competing in the first division, so that it could match our increasing performance in the market at that time. We examined several clubs. We found that we wanted to have a brand alignment with club X [name of the football club]... I mean the brand match... with regard to the audience of the specific club and the emotional bonding with it.

More specifically, reaching a certain target audience was one of the essential conditions for selecting the sponsored property, as illustrated in the statement that follows:

It was related to the audience that we were looking for at that time. We saw that the business audience belonged to the specific club [name of the club] and we wanted to reach that audience at that time, and this had a central role in deciding to sponsor the club.

The crucial role of target audience fit is also illustrated in the following comments:

We have seen, based on research, that the club had followers who were achievers in our segmentation language. And “achievers” was a target audience that, at the particular time we eagerly wanted, it was an audience whose spending power was very high, so we wanted high value customers, and we thought that this was [sponsorship of the specific club] a nice way to approach... to reach them.

Together with target audience fit, the company was also pursuing an image fit between the brand and the sponsored property:

Brand match, as I said earlier. I mean, we were a relatively new company in the market. The club was rising in the national championship at that time, and we wanted to... we were the “challengers” brand, and we considered the specific club as having the same image. And we believed that, ok... and with the right audience matching, we believed that here is the alignment we were looking for.

Ensuring fit with the sponsored property has been regarded as an essential component of the sponsorship selection process, and this is logical if we consider that the literature review in this study provided much evidence suggesting that fit, or congruency between the sponsor and the sponsee is a factor that can actually

define the success of a particular sponsorship (Barez et al., 2007; Grohs & Reisinger, 2005; Grohs et al., 2004; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999, Koo et al., 2006b; Mason, 2005.). Therefore, it is indeed surprising that the multinational company examined in this study seems to be one of the rare cases explored in this multi-case study that appeared to place such an emphasis on fit when selecting their sponsored properties. However, considering fit at the selection stage seems to be a characteristic of a more comprehensive and strategic approach to sport sponsorship that has been evident in more developed contexts such as the USA (Farrelly et al., 1997; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992), the UK (Liu et al., 1998; Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Thwaites & Carruther, 1998), and Canada (Thwaites et al., 1998). Hence, it could be the case that for an experienced multinational company involved in many different sponsorship arrangements with prestigious clubs and competitions world-wide, it is reasonable to assign importance to a strategic alignment with their sponsored property as part of a more experienced, systematic, rational and strategic sponsorship approach. Furthermore, the complexity of the particular context, especially in relation to the politicisation of football, is another factor that is regarded as raising a need for the adoption of strategic decision-making.

In addition to the concept of fit, other signs illustrating the well-structured decision-making and selection process employed by the telecommunications company were reflected in the fact that it was guided by clear motives, it considered alternative sponsorship opportunities, and the selection was based on concrete and well defined criteria being linked to specific objectives. All the aforementioned factors are regarded as being essential components of a systematic and proactive approach to sponsorship selection (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005; Furst, 1994). In addition, many of the criteria employed in the particular case study correspond to the recommendations made by Irwin and Assimakopoulos (1992) for an appropriate sponsorship selection that can be rationally located within the broader marketing plan of the company. Moreover, it seems to coincide with suggestions made by Meenaghan (1991) who argued that the sponsorship decisions should

reflect the company's vision and the products the company promotes, and that it should provide the vehicle to fulfil organisational objectives.

This latter point is further supported by the fact that the company had managed to pursue several contractual components aiming at enabling the company to reach their objectives, such as size and prominence of logos and hospitality opportunities provided through the sponsorship arrangement. The components of the contract that featured among the most important requirements of the sponsor, however, were exclusivity as well as designation issues:

What we wanted definitely to clarify is how our level of sponsorship is distinguished from the rest of the sponsors - shirt sponsors, club sponsors etc. So, we clarified that the mega sponsor of the club was differentiated from the rest of the sponsors.

The company also placed much weight on coverage and visibility issues, as well as on the longevity of the sponsorship arrangement. According to the respondent, the company intended to invest in the long-term to maximise the returns from this sponsorship: "from the very beginning of the sponsorship we stressed that we were not talking about a one-year or two-year sponsorship. Instead, it was a long-term investment". Another component upon which the company placed much importance was related to sponsorship management activities and practices. Specifically, the company was not only concerned with the opportunities provided for managing their investment in the best possible way, but it was also very proactive with regard to the club's contribution in the management of sponsorship. As the PR and communications manager commented:

Some other elements of the contract included the rights that we have, especially regarding sponsorship activation, their [the club's] involvement in the plan that is developed at the beginning of the year and how sponsorship is activated. It has to do with content related issues.

The importance assigned to sponsorship activation and leveraging activities at the selection stage is indeed impressive, especially when considering the evidence

provided earlier in the literature review indicating that sponsorship leveraging is poorly conducted in most of the sponsorship cases (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005; Thwaites 1994, 1995; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998; Thwaites et al., 1998; Yang et al., 2008).

The realisation of the company with regard to the crucial role of leveraging practices in the success of sport sponsorship is also attested by the solid, rigorous and comprehensive activation plan as presented by the marketing department, as well as by the actual activities undertaken throughout their long-lasting sponsorship involvement. Evidently, the general consensus within the company is that the activation plan should coincide with the objectives pursued by the company, as evidenced by the internal documents provided by the marketing department indicating detailed actions and initiatives for each single objective. The use of varied leveraging practices that correspond to the different objectives set by sponsors is not very commonly found in the sport sponsorship literature, apart from some singular exceptions such as the study conducted by Séguin et al. (2005). Interestingly, one of the three large corporations that adopted such an approach was a telecommunications company, suggesting that this particular sector may be keener to adopt an advanced and systematic approach to sport sponsorship. Similar findings were reported by Papadimitriou and Apostolopoulou (2009) who found that the telecommunications sector adopted more dynamic sponsorship leveraging programs and sponsors in this sector were more able to approach sponsorship as a means to create competitive advantage.

In addition to frequently employed leveraging practices such as advertising, use of symbols and logos to the sponsor's products and services, hospitality opportunities to key clients, organisation of events, sponsorship-themed products and packages, and several other promotional activities conducted within the stadium using promo-teams and competitions, the focus of the company explored in this case study was upon activities conveying a sense of exclusivity to their customers that can generate excitement within their customer base. In the words

of the PR and communications manager, they wanted to offer “something that will be able to excite our subscribers... something that will demonstrate that, it is not just a logo on a T-shirt”, and she added “we try to give them the excitement that is compatible with the personalities of both brands”.

In order to excite our customer base, in all of the important moments of the club [name of the club] we are giving the opportunity to our subscribers to be part of this excitement... of this moment! And this is activated through several actions...through the traditional media, through Facebook, through various means.

Interactive activities that have the capacity to produce excitement and enthusiasm, as well as to connect the sponsor more strongly to the sponsored property are regarded as being very effective and convincing (Stotlar & Park, 2006). In addition, integrating technological advances into the overall sponsorship activity, as depicted in this particular case-study, can prove to be particularly beneficial according to Currie (2000), especially when considering that the company operates within the high-tech industry. Finally, it is remarkable that the company decided to direct their leveraging activities towards employees as well, and they appeared to be particularly proud of the fact that employees were highly engaged in leveraging the sponsorship. The interviewee held that “the way that we activate the sponsorship... it is not only external, but it is also internal... many of the returns we get from sponsorship are distributed internally”, referring mainly to the hospitality opportunities provided to employees, the distribution of tickets within the workforce of the company and the conduction of internally directed, sponsorship related contests.

Unlike the sponsorship selection process, the company relied heavily on the experience and guidance of the international group when managing and leveraging their sponsorship activity. The company felt that the synergies offered by the international group were invaluable in planning and implementing sponsorship activity. The PR and communications manager held that the international group “gave us the experience and the learning with regard to how a

sponsorship can be activated... how a football sponsorship can be activated at many different levels” primarily due to the expertise they have gained through the sponsorship of a global football competition. In fact, the global event sponsorship by the international group had been characterised by the company as “the turning point with regard to the experience in how to handle a football sponsorship” since the company admitted that before that, their approach was much less professional involving “some ad hoc activities”.

Despite the fact that the management of the sponsorship arrangement was primarily allocated to the marketing department, the company believed that it is a matter which should concern the whole organisation, ranging from top-level management to first line employees: “there is involvement... there is a perception, from top-level to lower level management that the sponsorship involves all of us, it is something we need to honour, and to take advantage of”. Allocation of sponsorship management to the marketing department, however, may have led to the integration of sponsorship with the broader marketing mix and the subsequent emphasis on well-coordinated leveraging activities presented above, as Witcher et al. (1991) have argued. In addition, there is evidence suggesting that sponsors of a professional sport may tend to approach sponsorship as an integral part of the marketing mix, assigning sponsorship management responsibility to the marketing department (Witcher et al., 1991).

Interestingly, and in contrast to the plethora of studies identifying very limited or even non-existent additional spending on supportive activities (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005; Thwaites 1994, 1995; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998; Thwaites et al., 1998; Yang et al., 2008), the company appeared to realise the necessity for additional spending on leveraging and activation activities, with the percentage that they sought to reach being at least 75% of their initial sponsorship investment. As the marketing department admitted, however, at the moment the amount of money they spend on leveraging practices represented approximately 50% of their initial spending.

As already demonstrated by the well-coordinated leveraging plan that was developed according to certain objectives pursued by the company, it is clear that the company had managed to set specific predetermined goals to be reached through sponsorship. This was also evident in internal documents provided by the marketing department articulating a list of corporate and brand related objectives. Interestingly, the company developed six different categories of objectives namely: visibility/coverage, consumer connection, strategic value, community enrichment, business to business development, and staff response, and those categories were assigned a certain weight according to their perceived importance. Admittedly, this case study was probably one of the few cases where arguments on solid, specific and concrete objective setting were substantiated by the actions of the sponsor.

When considering the particular objectives stated implicitly or explicitly throughout the interview, it is interesting to observe that the objective related to glocalisation¹ (Robertson, 1992), as described earlier, was one of the essential priorities of the company. This is reasonable if we consider the multinational nature of the business and the emerging need to become part of the local market. As indicated by the interviewee, the company was trying to pursue strategies able to align the company with the local market, and this particular sponsorship was regarded as the most effective vehicle to achieve this, mainly due to the potential of football to generate positive emotions and feelings within the fan base. Indeed, there is evidence suggesting that the emotional attachment of football fans in Cyprus is particularly beneficial towards the sponsor, since it was found to be positively related to several positive attitudes towards the sponsor (Charalambous-Papamiltiades, 2011b).

¹ Although glocalisation was introduced by Robertson as an analytic or “heuristic” concept, in terms of management practice, both glocal factors and local contexts are essential. Therefore, glocalisation, as an approach, has been considered as a normative or prescriptive concept.

Among other important objectives set was also visibility of the company and its products, a goal pursued through the extensive media coverage that this particular football club enjoys mainly because of its performance, as stated by the interviewee. In addition, targeting specific markets with high spending power, such as business customers and individual consumers, was also a highly ranked objective. Furthermore, building corporate and brand image featured among the priorities set by the sponsor, and this is also depicted in the fact that the company opted for a single sponsorship deal in football, choosing the property that was regarded as best matching the desired image for the company. The company felt that “the reason that a company is involved in sport sponsorship is to align their brand values with another brand [the sport property’s brand]. Otherwise there is no reason for doing that”. This is important when considering that many sponsors may claim that they are trying to reach image-related goals, but these claims do not coincide with sponsoring many different clubs having completely different images.

More specifically, the company intended to use sport sponsorship towards the development of a certain positioning concept that would be able to differentiate the company from competitors. The interviewee explained that this goal was regarded as the strategic value offered by sponsorship, which, in her own words is “the value sponsorship gives us in the perceptual map in the market... the fact that sponsorship creates positive perceptions around my brand, and this differentiates my company from competition”. Therefore, sponsorship was used as the means for creating “a positioning that is related to the positioning concept of the club” and she added “we felt that we have made a good choice”.

Additionally to the above goals, building company and brand awareness and creating affinity with customers that could eventually be translated into purchase intent, featured among the essential objectives pursued by the company. According to Madrigal (2000), it is indeed the case that favorable purchase intentions of fans are more likely to occur when connection and attachment with

the customer increases, something that can be achieved through leveraging activities incorporating affinity programs that are conducive to strengthening sponsor-sponsee relationships.

Among the highly appreciated objectives mentioned by the sponsor in this case study was also the creation of good business to business relationships, building strategic alliances, lobbying and PR. Interestingly, the interviewee recounted that sponsorship could also be used for pursuing internal marketing objectives, the so called “employee response” goals. According to the respondent, “both internal communication and external communication are extremely important. If employees believe in your action... your brand... then you have a story to tell. Otherwise you cannot succeed” and she added “we wanted it [the sponsorship] to be something that makes them feel proud... the “feel good” factor”. The emphasis on internal marketing objectives is also illustrated in the statement that follows:

There was a huge demand for being in football. We have seen that internally. OK... now, if it was going to be Omonia, or Apoel, or Anorthosis, or... it was secondary, I can't say. All of us knew that it was going to be the one or the other club. The important thing was that your company has a presence, and thus signifying that your company is a big company that has the financial power. So we are talking about a financially solid business that can have a presence in this [in football sponsorship].

Based on the literature review, albeit the capacity of sponsorship towards achieving employee-related objectives such as enhanced employee commitment (Hickman et al., 2005), improved internal communication, increased company pride, and employee motivation and satisfaction (Cunningham et al., 2009; Pichot et al., 2008, 2009), it is only recently that sponsors have realised the potential of sponsorship medium towards internal marketing goals, and this was associated with a more sophisticated and professional approach to sport sponsorship management. Finally, the multinational telecommunications company was concerned with the achievement of community-related, social objectives that have the capacity to enhance the corporate social responsibility profile of the company. Specifically, the respondent commented that:

A football sponsorship does not concern only football as such... there is a community around this, called football. Hence, reinforcing one of the clubs of Cypriot football means reinforcing football in general in Cyprus. You give impetus to a certain club to do better and to strengthen Cypriot football in general.

The company also felt that their huge investment in football sponsorship was also responsible for the increased football sponsorship investment that today the sector enjoys. In the words of the interviewee, “the increase in sponsorship spending... this is an impact! We played a major role, I believe, with regard to football and the amount of spending in sport sponsorships...football sponsorships”.

It is obvious that the multinational telecommunications company had objectives that were predetermined, clear, formal, detailed, concrete, specific, and set in a measurable manner. In fact, those objectives formed the basis for subsequent sponsorship evaluation. According to the interviewee, assigning weight to the objectives had to do not only with their importance but also with the ability of the company to measure those goals. This is interesting, especially when considering that the literature review revealed that the majority of sponsors fail to set precise and measurable objectives that can facilitate sponsorship evaluation (e.g. Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Farrelly et. al., 1997; Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Thwaites & Carruther, 1998). Concise evaluation of sponsorship returns, however, cannot be achieved without the existence of specific and measurable goals set in advance.

Interestingly, the company started evaluating their sponsorship investment a few years after they entered this sponsorship agreement. Recently, however, they appeared to be adopting a constant, comprehensive and well-structured evaluation process employing many different measures of performance and corresponding to the variety of objectives set. As the interviewee explained, “all the objectives were taken into consideration. The fact that we decided to use a

certain formula to measure... to quantify... because there are some KPIs [key performance indicators] in sponsorship and we would like to see the return". This is contrary to the trend identified in the sponsorship literature suggesting the use of limited evaluation practices by sponsors (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004, 2005; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; O'Reilly & Madill, 2009; Papadimitriou et al., 2008). This can be attributed once again to the expertise and more advanced sponsorship related knowledge acquired by the company due to the intensive sponsorship involvement of the international group and the guidance provided to them. It is indeed the case that large, international sponsors that have been traditionally involved in sport sponsorship are more likely to use sophisticated, tailor-made approaches to measuring the outcome of their investment (Spence et al., 1997).

According to the marketing department, evaluation of sponsorship is carried out internally by the research department of the business in cooperation with the marketing department, which is also the main department responsible for managing the sponsorship arrangement. As the interviewee indicated, the company relied on both quantitative and qualitative measures. Specifically, their measurements varied substantially, incorporating media coverage measures, sales indicators, image-related evaluation through attitudinal research, connection with customers through evaluating the emotional attachment, awareness research, and employee satisfaction and motivation research. Application of different measurement tools estimating the impact of sport sponsorship have been advocated by many authors such as Chadwick and Thwaites (2005), Shanklin and Kuzma (1992), Thwaites (1993, 1995) and Thwaites et al. (1998), since in addition to the inadequate efforts demonstrated by several sponsors in evaluating their sponsorships, in many cases inappropriate and very limited tools are employed for evaluation purposes (O'Reilly et al., 2007).

Finally, it is interesting to note that, in accordance with the broader systematic sponsorship selection, management and evaluation processes adopted by the company, it is evident that the sponsor was very clear in defining the target

audiences it wanted to reach. As already depicted in the statements provided by the marketing department, and in line with evidence found in the systematic review (e.g. Crowley, 1991; Meerabeau et al., 1991; Polonsky et al., 1996; Spence et al., 1997; Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004) external customers - both individual and business customers - formed the main target audience the company was trying to access. Furthermore, sponsorship was regarded as a very useful vehicle for accessing males since "it is very difficult to approach males through the media... in the market. Definitely it is very difficult through the media. Males are not loyal to several traditional media". In addition to external customers, the sponsorship was regarded as an excellent opportunity to reach business partners and to establish a network of relationships that could be beneficial to the business. Finally, employees were also considered as an important target audience, supporting further the evidence presented above which indicated that one of the main objectives pursued by the company was to accommodate internal marketing goals. The emphasis placed upon employees as an essential corporate audience was illustrated in the intentions of the company to use sponsorship in an effort to increase employee commitment, pride and loyalty. Moreover, PR and communications manager the company commented that:

We first try to "sell" something to our employees and then to the externals. If we cannot sell it to our employees nobody will buy it. We have seen it many times. If they do not buy it nobody will

Indeed, employees have been recognised as an essential corporate public (Meenaghan, 1991; Thwaites, 1993, 1995) and thus sport sponsorship is increasingly used nowadays as a means for improving employee morale and loyalty. It should be mentioned, however, that for many sponsors, the workforce is not a priority target group (e.g. Polonsky et al., 1996; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998; Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004), but in this case study, it seems that the size of the sponsor, the fact that they relied heavily on the provision of services, and the expertise gained through prolonged sponsorship involvement, formed basic factors for realising the importance of internal targets and their significant contribution to the success and growth of the business.

4.1.3 Case study 3: Semi-Governmental Telecommunications Company

The third case study involves a large, semi-governmental² organisation which is the leading provider of telecommunications services and facilities in Cyprus. The organisation operates under a particular brand name and several sub-brand names depending on the kind of service they provide (e.g. mobile services, digital and interactive television services, etc.). The organisation currently operates both locally and overseas, expanding its operations in the Greek and UK markets through the creation of subsidiary companies, and more recently, targeting Central and Eastern European markets. The current sponsorship policy of the company is intensive involving many different sports, but most of the sponsorship activities concentrate on football. In fact, the company currently sponsors fifteen football clubs competing in the first and second division, local and national football competitions, as well as international competitions such as the Champions League and Europa League. This is due primarily to the popularity of the sport in the country of Cyprus and the capacity of football to reach the mass audience. According to the organisation:

We are a football-loving nation. All the research that we are aware of through the various partnerships we have, [we know that] the impact of football upon the Cypriots is great. The numbers are huge, and we are a point of reference in international publications as well. I can also give you some numbers... those have been published, so there is no problem to share it with you. 40% of the Cypriots are interested about football! 60% of those are men, and 22% are women, meaning that the percentage is getting bigger for women. So, we are a football-loving nation. The company wants to communicate with the public regarding the certain products and services it offers and, given that they are interested [the public] in football, we are using it as a vehicle.

In addition, the rationale for sponsoring a big number of clubs is, according to the company, the fact that, as a national organisation, they wanted “to support all the

² Although the organisation is classified as semi-governmental, the status of this entity can be regarded as public. It was established in accordance with the Public Corporate Bodies laws, and it is entirely governmental in terms of ownership (its budget has to be approved by the Parliament).

regions” and to “engage with fans on a nationwide basis”. Interestingly, the company admitted that they do not have “the luxury” to engage with a single club, referring mainly to the hostility between clubs as described in the previous case-studies and the inherent danger of associating with only one football club. The company emphasised the fact that they should be “balanced” in their sponsorship efforts in order to avoid negative reactions from the fans. In the words of the interviewee, “in the past, we used to sponsor a single club, and there were very severe reactions of the opponent fans. They even said that they were going to stop purchasing services from the company”.

This severe sponsorship involvement illustrated above has been taking place for the last decade. Maybe it is of interest to observe that the organisation was established in 1955 and it was the sole actor in the industry for many decades. Therefore, telecommunications remained firmly under the monopoly control of the state-owned company, until the liberalisation of telecommunications in Cyprus that took place in 2003. The changing scene with regard mainly to the competitive environment that followed the entrance of privately owned telecommunication companies in the industry, as well as the changes with regard to the legal, social and political environment brought partly due the fact that Cyprus became a full member of the European Union in 2004, urged the organisation to reposition itself as an integrated electronic communications provider (“Cyta,” 2012). Therefore, it is not a surprise that it was in 2004 that the company decided to enter dynamically this “new ball game” of sponsorship according to the marketing and communications services manager of the company. Before 2004, the company was engaged in some minor sponsorship involvement that was primarily under their social responsibility program. After 2004, and partially due to the introduction of Cable TV, the company “consciously decided that football should be our main competitive advantage”. As the interviewee admitted “for cable TV, football is the main competitive advantage, and this applies world-wide. The success of the Cable TV platforms is highly dependent on football”.

Although the entrance of new actors in the industry was not mentioned by the interviewee as a factor forcing them to act more strategically, he did mention the fact that one of the primary motivations for engaging in sport sponsorship was that the company had to introduce new products and services and that:

There was a requirement for commercial actions because, sport in general and especially sport sponsorship, due to the huge impact that it has upon the public, is a very good vehicle to pass the messages to the mass, in which we are very interested.

It is evident that the primary motivation for entering into sport sponsorships was strategic at large, aiming at securing their leading position in the market and maintaining competitive advantage over new entrants. It is interesting to observe, however, that, although the motives for sponsoring successful clubs competing in the first division was purely commercial, this was not the case for lower division clubs. It seems that in the second case the company is driven by social and altruistic incentives, as clearly depicted in the words of the interviewee:

With regard to the smaller clubs, [we do it] in order to facilitate the existence of football. Because, I strongly believe that we are the main financier of Cypriot football. I mean, in case that our company withdraws, the Cypriot football will not continue to exist. Hence, some of the clubs are supported in order to be able to continue. And this is why we invest in clubs competing in the second division.

It is also important to note that, it seems that the year 2004 was a benchmark with regard to motivation as well, since the company admitted that there was a departure from the originally social incentives driving their decision to more strategic, commercial and rational motives for investing more intensively in football sponsorship. Before 2004, the company felt that, as a governmental organisation, they were more obliged to provide social support, as illustrated in the words of the interviewee:

There was some [sponsorship] involvement before, within mainly our social responsibility program. Because, as a semi-governmental organisation, we

are very sensitive with regard to social support and social responsibility issues. Thus, sport has always been one of the pillars of social support.

The existence of social and emotional motives guiding sponsorship related decisions is not a surprise when we consider the state-owned status of the company. In accordance with the evidence provided in the literature review, publicly owned organisations are more likely to be driven by emotional motives when entering sponsorship arrangements as Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004) and Papadimitriou and Apostolopoulou (2009) demonstrated. It is probably not a surprise that the two studies mentioned above were conducted in the Greek context that shares ample similarities with the Cyprus context. It could be, for example, that the sense of obligation to support the country through sport sponsorship is due to the very small size of the country of Cyprus, and the related emotional drives that may have an impact upon such decisions. In addition, cultural, social and political factors could also be at stake in a country that is still divided due to the Turkish invasion in 1974 and the resultant 180000 Greek Cypriots refugees who had to evacuate 36.2% of the island that was occupied by the Turks in the north of the republic of Cyprus ("Cyprus Press and Information Office", n.d). It is also important to mention that many of the football clubs that exist in Cyprus were home clubs of the areas forcibly evacuated by the Turks, and today they appear as competing on behalf of their home locality but having "temporary residence" in the areas that are non-occupied. All these factors can represent causal mechanisms signifying the underlying causes of the motives observed as influencing the decision of sponsors to invest in football sponsorship in Cyprus.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that, although not explicitly mentioned in the interview, it seems that in addition to the rational and emotional motives stated above, there are some well-hidden motives for choosing specific clubs to be sponsored by the company. In fact, there has always been criticism in the press with regard to the decisions made by this particular semi-governmental organisation related to its decision to sponsor specific football clubs. As the

interviewee stated “despite the rumors” there was no other factor impacting their sponsorship related decisions. In another point, however, the interviewee commented that “for this kind of organisation [semi-governmental] politics always play a part... although, nowadays, most of our decisions are a result of technocratic research” referring primarily to the decision to sponsor a very big number of clubs. We should perhaps reemphasise here that, sport in Cyprus has traditionally been a vehicle for serving political agendas (Charalambous-Papamiltiades, 2011a). In addition, considering the fact that the boards of directors of all semi-governmental organisations in Cyprus are appointed by the President of the Republic of Cyprus, is a factor generating criticism with regard to the fact that those organisations are often used by the board members as a means for serving political interests (Charalambous-Papamiltiades, 2011a).

Beyond the motives featuring political orientation, It is of interest to note that the actions of the competitors of the company did not explicitly feature as primarily influencing their decision to become involved in sport sponsorship:

We always monitor competitors, but we do respect their commercial actions. We try not to imitate their actions... in that... they did it so we should do it as well. What we do, and it does not only concern sponsorships, is something that serves our goals, our strategy, and our marketing plan. And, yes, in cases where we take the same actions as competitors, for example sport sponsorships, we try to differentiate and to have a more intense action.

Having said this, it is important to note that, as already mentioned in the previous case study, there was much evidence in the press recently indicating a very intensive action of the state-owned telecommunications company towards securing the sponsorship agreement that their major competitor had with a certain football club at the time of the renewal of the agreement. In particular, electronic sources (e.g. Kostouris, 2012) indicated that the state-owned organisation offered a much bigger sponsorship deal in an effort to take their main competitor out of this prestigious sponsorship with the most successful football club in Cyprus. This evidence suggests that it is likely that the company was in fact, strongly

influenced, but not willing to admit that mimetic pressures (Berrett & Slack, 1999; Shaw & Amis, 2001) did have a role to play in deciding the kind of sponsorship activity undertaken. In fact, during the interview, but not in this point of discussion, the interviewee tried to provide a justification for the actions published in the newspapers:

What happened recently, for example, with the club... it was in the newspapers... the truth is that the club came to us and they told us that the sponsorship with the competitor [the name of the business] had finished. They were interested, we asked them if they are sure that it is finished and if the other sponsor was aware of the fact that the club approached us... because we do not want to intervene in the competitor's job... we are not interested in this game. And they [the club] said yes, they submitted a proposal... it was very demanding...we submitted a counterproposal... and eventually, it seems that they were just playing a game in order to increase the rights, and the competitor [name of the business] proceeded [signed].

It is of interest to observe that the factors motivating the decision of the company to invest in sport sponsorship seemed to have an impact upon the whole decision-making process that followed. When rational and purely commercial factors fuelled the decision of the company to sponsor football clubs and events, that is, sponsorships taking place after 2004 involving more successful clubs competing in the first division, a well-defined, systematic and rational decision making process seemed to accompany this action. Specifically, the company had developed and applied a list of certain criteria that guide the screening process, enabling them to arrive at the best possible decisions. Interestingly, the company receives many sponsorship proposals every year by a large number of clubs, and those proposals are evaluated against the criteria set. Those criteria include financial requirements, longevity of the relationship, the size of the fan base, loyalty of fans towards the club, and the performance of the club in terms of local competitions but also in terms of participation in European leagues. This last criterion is, nowadays, assigned much importance according to the interviewee. In addition, geographic coverage is another determinant factor since the company wishes to have a presence on a national basis, and thus they sponsor clubs from different cities.

Finally, another essential criterion employed when selecting their sponsees is the capacity of the club to support the management and the leveraging of the sponsorship, something that is referred to as “the management mechanisms that the clubs have” or “the supportive activities that we can jointly undertake”. The importance placed upon this criterion partially portrays a realisation of the essential role of leveraging upon the success of a sponsorship arrangement, and this is further supported by the fact that when the sponsored properties did not possess the necessary means for appropriate sponsorship management, the company decided to undertake an educational role in improving those skills: “truth be told, three or four are the clubs that can respond to our requirements. Because they have a marketing department, they have a PR department, they realise that they use sports management”, and she added:

This is why we also undertook an educational role, which we will announce soon. This year we called all the clubs [we sponsor]... more specifically it was two days ago, and we started educating them with regard to undertaking activities together [sponsorship support activities]. And we had a very positive response.

It is also important to note that the interview revealed a consideration of fit when selecting the sponsored property, but the company appeared as being concerned primarily with demographic match with the fans in choosing their sponsorship partners. It is indeed the case that image fit could not be regarded as a determinant factor influencing the selection process since the fifteen different clubs the company sponsors do not share similarities with regard to the image qualities they convey, making it hard for the sponsor to attempt to align with a certain image.

The decision with regard to sponsorship involvement is taken at the top level, with much lower input of the marketing and PR departments. Specifically, after the marketing and PR departments evaluate the proposals against selection criteria, suggestions are forwarded to a committee consisting of high level management,

including the CEO, and members of the board. It could be the case that for a less developed sponsorship context such as Cyprus, central decision making is not a surprise since the literature review indicated a reliance on top level decision making and control in contexts characterised by less familiarity and experience with regard to sponsorship (Burton et al.,1998; Farrelly et al., 1997; Walliser, 2003). Furthermore, it could be the case that for a state-owned, highly bureaucratic organisation, sponsorship related decision-making could not escape the broader organisational reality of a heavily centralised authority and control. Finally, considering once again the amalgamation of factors – including politics – mobilising sponsorship engagement in a semi-governmental organisation in Cyprus, it is not surprising that top level management appears determined to maintain the full control over sponsorship decisions.

In order to enable the reader to better understand the actions and decisions of this semi-governmental organisation, it would be helpful to contextualise the case study within the broader political scene in Cyprus, which is characterised by political clientelism that has penetrated all aspects of life, including sports. Political clientelism, which describes “a mechanism through which political parties and their representatives can obtain political support in exchange for selectively allocating benefits through state institutions” (Hopkin, 2006, p. 16) is a reality the dynamics of which have traditionally underpinned the activities of the whole state. Clientelistic relationships in the Republic of Cyprus have resulted from the actions of politicians and political parties during the various presidencies, who “have managed to establish their far reaching control over many aspects of Cypriot society through a highly sophisticated system of favours (*rusfeti*)” (Faustmann, 2010, p.269). According to Faustmann, “the primary but by far not only areas where clientelistic relationships are formed through *rusfeti* are the public sector and the semi-governmental organisations where parties and politicians are most capable of exercising influence” (p. 269). Therefore, the intervention of the top level management in choosing the properties to be sponsored may signify the

effort of the head of the organisation to use it as the means for nurturing clientelistic relations with the clubs to be sponsored.

With regard to the components of the contract secured through the negotiation processes, the organisation appeared to be very concerned with exposure issues, elaborating on issues regarding size and prominence of logos, and placement of logos within the stadium. In addition, they seemed to place much emphasis on the opportunities offered by the club with regard to supportive and leveraging activities, and this is congruent with the emphasis placed on this factor when selecting their sponsorship arrangements as indicated above as well as the education provided to the sponsees who do not possess the necessary management skills. Additional components included in the several sponsorship contracts signed by the organisation involved additional advertising opportunities provided by the clubs, provision of tickets, hospitality opportunities, and a special reference was also made with regard to the financial penalties secured in case of a partial or full breach of the contract. With regard to exclusivity, the organisation did mention that this was actually a component of the contract, but they clarified that this applied only for the particular designation of sponsor status that the main sponsor has, explaining that exclusivity is not a requirement for example if a competitor is about to sign as another category sponsor (e.g. supporter). The basic prerequisite, as the interviewee indicated, is that the existing sponsor is informed about the intention to sign a competitor as a sponsor.

In congruence with the components of the contract, as well as with the leading role of the company within the market – according to the interviewee the company has the largest market share regarding the various services they offer, ranging from 60% to 80% - the primary objective to be reached through sport sponsorship was to retain customers. Therefore, customer satisfaction was assigned a huge weight by the company, and this is logical if we consider the important relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011). As the respondent indicated:

Retaining customers is the main objective, and increasing their satisfaction as well. So, through increasing their satisfaction and through giving them the opportunity to have unique experiences through football... because it is not only the service you offer. You have to build a lifestyle brand. You manage to keep them. We want our customers to be satisfied.

These findings seem to align with claims made by Crowley (1991) indicating that that sponsorship can be a very useful retentive medium able to foster the development of positive and beneficial relationships with existing customers. In addition to keeping customers, exposure through media coverage was also mentioned as an important objective. It is also of interest to note that, the sponsor's objectives varied depending on the timing of the introduction of the sponsorship deal. The interviewee admitted that in 2004 when sponsorship was actually triggered by the introduction of new services, brand awareness was the main objective pursued, whilst today there is a shift from awareness objectives to building brand preference that can result in purchasing behaviour. In the words of the interviewee, the main goal is "remembering [the brand], choosing, acting". Despite the clearly defined objectives set by the company, it is notable to mention that those objectives were not established in measurable form, at least until recently. However, a notable effort is being made by the company to be realised in the very near future, and concerns the creation of a new department responsible for coordinating all sponsorship activities in an effort to set more precise and measurable goals that would allow for evaluation, as the marketing and communications services manager indicated.

As depicted in objectives set and in congruence with the vast majority of the sponsors on a global basis (Crowley, 1991; Meerabeau et al., 1991) the main audiences targeted by the company through sponsorship were external customers. Specifically, the company was trying to reach a certain individual customer group "the male fans of the clubs we sponsor, of this certain age range – 24 to 40 years old, because at this age they have very strong telecommunication needs and very high usage as well", and business customers.

In addition, the company was clearly fostering the creation of constructive and beneficial relationships with the media and particularly with sport journalists. As indicated by the interviewee “because one of our targets is to get high profile publicity, to be regular and on-going... with the activities we undertake, and journalists are essential in this”. This is not surprising since the media have been acknowledged as an important public to be targeted through sponsorship (Thwaites, 1993, 1995; Meenaghan, 1991) mainly due to their ability to develop or shape opinions and attitudes, and as Meenaghan (1991) argued, sport sponsorship is a very effective vehicle towards building goodwill among opinion formers. In the words of the interviewee “they [journalists] send our messages out there, and we have established very good relationships [with them]”.

Interestingly, employees were not considered as a group to be targeted through sponsorship by the state-owned telecommunications company. Although this is the case for a large number of sponsors world-wide, as indicated in the literature review (e.g. Polonsky et al.,1996; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998; Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004), there is also another explanation that can be provided in relation to this specific case study. Considering the existing situation with regard to employment factors and relationships, employee satisfaction does not feature among the priorities set by governmental and semi-governmental organisations in Cyprus. In fact, it is indeed the case that employees working for such organisations in Cyprus are regarded as much more privileged and well remunerated than employees working in the private sector (Pasiardis, 2011). Those factors, together with the very low workload that employees enjoy and the job security offered in the public sector in Cyprus are regarded as being the main driving forces for the vast majority of Cypriots whose dream is to get a job in the governmental sector. At the same time, there is no effort exerted by such organisations to improve their productivity and performance through the heavily used activities and schemes employed in the private sector for such purposes. It is indeed the case that, according to the Cyprus Productivity Centre, productivity of the public sector is very low (“Sigmalive”, 2010). Therefore, it is really unusual

for these kinds of organisations to consider their employees as a public to satisfy, and subsequently as a target audience to be reached through sponsorship, such as the case study explored here.

With regard to the management of sponsorships, it seems that the company did not employ any creative initiatives for leveraging their investment, and it did not appear to spend much additional money on sponsorship activation. The main leveraging activities mentioned by the company are:

Events, contests, lottery, writing articles in the press, organisation of our own events so as to promote our sport content, branding within the stadiums, in the club's shops, merchandising with the clubs.

Although poor leveraging is a widely observed reality in sport sponsorship literature, as indicated in case study one, this seems to be inconsistent with the fact that the mechanisms the clubs have for managing the sponsorship were cited as an essential criterion for sponsorship selection. It should be mentioned, however, that for the company, the primary responsibility for the management of sponsorship is assigned to the clubs. This is probably the reason that they exert much effort on educating the clubs on how to manage the sponsorship. According to the interviewee:

Based on the contracts that we have with the clubs, the clubs have many obligations to us... thus many of those actions are done without extra cost. The only requirement is our involvement for implementing [the actions]... So, many of the actions are done by the clubs... It is regarded their responsibility... the money that we invest is for enhancing our exposure inside the stadiums, for the stadiums that are not the clubs' home but instead there are other companies managing them, and for actions to be done by us. I mean, if we are going to participate at an event organised by the club and we want to give some gifts, or to organise some contests, it is up to us.

It is also of interest to note that, although the management of sponsorship is claimed to be allocated to several departments such as the marketing, PR, or the communications department, suggesting at first glance a realisation of the

integration of sponsorship within the broader marketing mix, it is also the case that top level management is “always aware and involved in this [the management of sport sponsorship]”. The prominent role of senior executives in managing and controlling the sponsorship process is, as mentioned earlier, a characteristic of less mature markets lacking sponsorship familiarity (Walliser, 2003), but at the same time, it could be an illustration of the bureaucratic control exercised in governmental and semi-governmental organisations in Cyprus. The latter explanation seems likely, especially when considering the involvement of political factors in decisions and the clientelistic approach adopted by such organisations described above that are regarded as contributing to central decision-making and control.

In line with the weak approach adopted for managing and leveraging the sponsorship arrangements, the company also did not employ adequate and proper sponsorship evaluation practices. As the respondent admitted, not all of the objectives set were measurable, and measurement was carried out on a sporadic basis and not in a systematic way: “we will measure the results starting from the next football season... I would rather not talk about the previous measurements since I believe that those were not solely impacted by our activities in football [sponsorship activity]”. It is the intension of the business, however, to exert a methodical effort towards measuring the outcomes of its sponsorships, and this is also illustrated by the plan to set up a new department dealing exclusively with sponsorship. According to the interviewee, “one of the goals of the new department that was created [for dealing specifically with sponsorship] is... to be measurable [the objectives]” and she added “now, it [the measurement] will be very specific. The exposure that we get from sponsorship, the response of the fans to certain commercial activities, all of those will be measured from now on”.

4.1.4 Case study 4: Local Oil Company

The fourth case study features several sponsorship agreements signed between a variety of local football clubs and a local oil company dealing with a wide range of petroleum operations. The company is the largest Cypriot oil company operating a nationwide retail network of 95 service stations. It supplies and markets motor, industrial, domestic, marine, and aviation fuels. The company was founded more than 50 years ago as a private company, but during the last few years the company became public and it is listed on the Cyprus Stock Exchange. The company has a long-term sponsorship involvement and experience, since it has been sponsoring football clubs for the last 30 years and it is also involved in basketball and sailing sponsorship. With regard to football sponsorship, the company sponsors 5 different football clubs competing in the first division and various other smaller clubs competing in the second and third division. Interestingly, this case study has depicted a totally different approach to sport sponsorship as compared to the preceding case studies explored in this research. Specifically, in this case study sponsorship was regarded as being more about patronage and philanthropy rather than a professional, mutually beneficial arrangement between two parties. This conceptualisation of sponsorship was strongly depicted throughout the several sponsorship activities and stages discussed throughout the interview, such as the motives guiding sponsorship decisions as well as the various sponsorship management and evaluation practices.

Starting with the factors mobilising the company to invest in sport sponsorship, it is of interest to observe that past, as well as more recent decisions to get involved in sponsorship arrangements relied almost exclusively on personal interest that was strongly connected, according to the interviewee, to philanthropic motives. As indicated by the respondent, some of the company's board members were actively involved in the administration of some of the clubs sponsored, with two of them serving as presidents, and thus there was a strong personal relationship with the sponsored properties. In addition, it is of interest to mention that the same

applies to the other two sports the company sponsors, namely sailing and basketball. In both cases, the presidents of the clubs were also members of the top-level management or the board of the company. Personal interest had often been cited by authors as a factor fuelling sponsorship engagement (e.g. Burton et al., 1998; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998), especially in less developed sponsorship contexts (e.g. Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Constantinescu & Szekely, 2009), but according to Cornwell, Pruitt & Van Ness (2001b), personal motives are less prevalent today than in the past. With regard to the particular case study, it could be the case that sponsorship was used as the means for promoting personal agendas and interests, such as acquiring a prestigious position within a very popular sport sector such as football. Indeed, Cornwell (2008) and Cornwell et al. (2001b) argued that personal motives sometimes represent managers' egos or the advancement of the personal agendas of executives.

According to the marketing assistant manager of the company, however, the personal interest demonstrated by the members of the board was clearly connected to altruistic and philanthropic factors. As she commented, "the motivation to engage is our interest, our passion our personal interest" and she added "the interest of the family has always been pure, sheer... this is why even now, 50 years after the establishment of the company we say that sport is within our DNA". At this point it is probably important to consider that the vast majority of the board members of the company come from a single family, as does the majority of the top-level management as well. Therefore, throughout the whole interview the respondent, who was also a member of the family, tended to identify the actions of the family with the actions of the company. As she stated, "we loved football... our club. Our team was the specific club [the name of the club]. So, it was natural that, as a well-known business family in the city [name of the city], we would help the local club". Additionally, the respondent indicated that, apart from the main clubs competing in the first division, they also "help other clubs that lack resources".

The philanthropic nature of sponsorship in this case study is also strongly emphasised by the fact that at the early stages of sport sponsorship the company did not appear as the sponsor, but rather, it was simply providing the club with money in order to survive and grow. According to the interviewee, “it was natural that we would sponsor... unofficially... because at that time there was no exposure”, and she added “it was the love they had for the team... the sheer, pure love... without expecting to get a benefit”. It is clear from the above statements that sponsorship was not regarded as a commercial activity able to provide the organisation with tangible benefits. This conceptualisation of sponsorship is congruent with early sponsorship trends that regarded sponsorship as one of the many philanthropic actions or charitable activities to be undertaken by a company (Gratton & Taylor, 1985; Mescon & Tilson, 1987), but they do not coincide with professional, market-driven approaches to sport sponsorship that are prevalent today (Cornwell, 2008). As Meerabeau et al. (1991) and Arthur et al. (1997) argued, sponsorship has evolved through time to more professional and legitimate business activity.

It is helpful to mention, however, that as the systematic review of the literature revealed, there is a different conceptualisation of sport sponsorship in differently developed contexts, with a more philanthropic orientation in less developed markets such as China (Geng et al., 2002), Greece (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Asimakopoulos, 1993), or Romania (Constantinescu & Szekely, 2009) as compared to more developed markets such as Canada (Copeland et al., 1996; Thwaites et al., 1998). Therefore, it is not that surprising that sponsorship in a clearly less developed context such as Cyprus seems to be characterised by purely philanthropic intentions, especially when considering that the sponsor is a local business. As the interviewee stated:

We were supporting because we felt that we are a Cypriot company, and we are one of the few large companies in the particular city [name of the city]. The city always been one of the poorest cities in Cyprus, and there were not

many companies able to support. And this is why we were not able to move forward [as a city], from a sports perspective. There were no individuals able to support the clubs. Only two or three families were able to do it, and one of them was my family. So this is why it was natural... logical... it was expected that the more financially powerful would help the rest.

In order to understand the “local” factor and the importance it placed upon organisational decisions in this case study, it is essential to consider the broader cultural context in Cyprus in which “localism” has a central and highly influential role. According to Peristianis et al. (2002), the central role of localism is a phenomenon observed in many countries and it is regarded as being the outcome of globalisation and its various effects, namely the decreasing authority of the state and the resulting channelling of this authority to both larger multinational organisations (e.g. the European Union) or smaller, local authorities (e.g. local self-governments). Especially with regard to Cypriot sports, localisation, together with politicisation, are regarded as being today the two main forces highly impacting the football sector (Peristianis et al., 2002), and subsequently the sport sponsorship-related decisions of potential sponsors. Geographical representation of clubs and associated feelings of localism are very well depicted in the particular case study. In addition, local identification featured among the primary motivating factors for sponsoring a particular club in a second city in Cyprus, since according to the respondent, “half of the family lives there, and thus it was logical”.

Although the prevalence of social and community-related motives was clearly depicted throughout the interview, in more recent sponsorship decisions there were also some signs of marketing related factors influencing the decision-making process:

Another reason was that, the different regions and villages, they have their own clubs in the first or second division (...). If the municipality, or the president of the community for example will ask us to [to support them], and because of the nature of the business we are in... we have petrol stations... when the station is owned, or it is supported by a certain individual within the certain community or municipality, then we say that we will help [financially], and this is part of your marketing activity. We have moved from the

philanthropic... not philanthropic... it is not charity... but it is not simply a social aid. It is not simply help.

Additional arguments declaring a marketing orientation were also made throughout the interview:

Yes, it was marketing... and this is how many of them [the clubs] understand it today... and it has to be done in the right way. When clubs apply today for sponsorship, when they ask us to help them, I advise them to expose the sponsorship (...). Because it is not charity anymore. It used to be charity, it's not charity anymore.

Despite the claims for the existence of marketing related motives in more recent sponsorship-related decisions, it was vividly demonstrated that, the main driving forces were social and community related factors, triggered by an obligation of the company towards the community in which they live and operate. As the respondent reiterated, "we were helping, and we will continue to help, because we feel that we have to", and, referring to sponsorship, she added, "it is our social offering".

Even the language used to describe the sponsorship activity throughout the interview, such as the words "help", "offer" and "support" instead of "invest" for example in sponsorship, portrayed a social orientation which clearly suggested that sponsorship was perceived as a corporate social responsibility action.

With regard to the rationale behind the company's decision to sponsor several clubs, it seems that, similar to the preceding cases, examining the actions of companies being involved in multiple sponsorships, rivalry between the clubs and subsequently between the fans is the main reason underpinning this decision. As already mentioned, rivalry between the fans continues to the present day, and it is mainly due to the politicisation of football as well as to the growing localisation that is recently regarded as replacing the dominant role of politics in the fans' culture (Peristianis et al., 2002). As the respondent indicated, the company was

actually “forced” by the particular social and cultural factors to get involved in multiple sponsorships:

Unfortunately, when you are a big company and you sponsor two or three clubs, you are obliged to expand... because there are dangers associated with being a single sponsor (...). You may be treated with hostility from the other clubs. From the clubs, and eventually from their fans. When they ask you to sponsor and you refuse, then they become negative towards your products. And we have seen that (...). But, it was also a decision... policy of the company to help many of them, so that there are no negative implications. Many sponsors that have connected their name to certain clubs, they had been faced negatively (...). So, we had to be very careful, and subtle.

As was probably to be expected, the company did not appear to be influenced by the actions of its competitors, and this is indeed the case since the company is the only one from the specific industry serving as football sponsor. As the respondent indicated, the competitors’ actions had nothing to do with their decision to sponsor the clubs, but instead, “it was clearly because of our passion, our love for football”. In a similar vein, it was not a surprise that the decision to become involved in sport sponsorship was taken at the highest level by the board of directors which consisted of members of the same family, since according to evidence cited earlier, concentration of decision-making authority at the top-level is a characteristic of less developed sponsorship contexts (Burton et al., 1998; Farrelly et al., 1997; Walliser, 2003).

The lack of strategic direction when making sponsorship-related decisions was also demonstrated by the fact that, although the respondent indicated several times throughout the interview that as a “humanistic company” they had to support several clubs, it is interesting that there was no effort towards using sponsorship to shape the specific corporate identity and corporate image, despite the heavily recognised potential of sponsorship to do that (Garry et al., 2008; Hickman et al., 2005; Pichot et al., 2009). Specifically, the company seemed to believe that sponsorship was an outcome of its humanistic and altruistic culture, and not as a means towards building or enhancing this culture. As the interviewee

indicated “It is a humanistic company, and thus, it helps” and she added “we tried again, in the past, to see why we do it... but it was simply logical”.

In line with the broader sponsorship approach demonstrated above, the criteria used for choosing sponsorship partners were neither sophisticated, nor numerous. Interestingly, the respondent admitted that the personal as well as business relationships they had with particular clubs served not only as motivating factors but also as selection criteria. As the interviewee noted, “if it is a club that we have to support... if there is a personal relationship... we are in Cyprus and we know each other... those are pressures to do it [sponsorship]”. It is indeed surprising that the role of demographic fit with the fan base “was minor” in choosing the clubs to be sponsored. In contrast, the size of the fan base of the club featured among the most important factors, along with the loyalty of the fans towards the club. To them, fan identification with the club was regarded an important factor since they first decided to sponsor one of the left-wing clubs basically due to the capacity of the club to influence and guide the behaviour of their fans. As the interviewee stated, “the club’s followers are disciplined” and she added “the more devoted the fans, the higher the appreciation they demonstrate towards the sponsor”. Interestingly, identification was not mentioned as a criterion for selection in the systematic review of the literature, but there is much evidence in the literature indicating that fan identification is an important determinant of sponsorship effectiveness (Barez et al., 2007; Cornwell & Coote, 2005; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Levin, Beasley & Gamble, 2004; Madrigal, 2000, 2001), and thus it is probably helpful to regard this as a criterion for selection.

Another interesting finding of this case study is that, because of the rivalry mentioned earlier between the right and left-wing clubs, the company used the so called “need for a balance” as another criterion for selecting the sponsorship properties. Specifically, they felt that because of the dangers associated with sponsoring only one of the two major opposing clubs, they decided to proceed with a sponsorship agreement with the right-wing club as well, despite the fact

that the fans of this club were regarded as “sceptical”, “intolerant”, and “difficult”. It should be mentioned, however, that research indicated that these right-wing fans were very strongly identified with their club (Charalambous-Papamiltiades, 2011b), but there is a strongly embedded belief in Cyprus that the fans of the left-wing club are more easily influenced and even manipulated by the left-wing party and subsequently by the administration of the club, since the two are regarded as strongly interconnected.

The less professional approach of the company towards sport sponsorship was also evidenced by the fact that, according to the interviewee, until recently the company did not have a written agreement with their sponsored properties featuring details of their sponsorship arrangement. Although today there is a contract that is signed between the two parties, the respondent indicated that this contract was developed by the club to be sponsored, although the final draft was a result of negotiations between the two. The main components secured by the company were exposure through the internet site of the club and the social media, the provision of free tickets, and signage within the stadiums. The size and prominence of logos were factors not discussed prior to signing the contract. Interestingly, although the interviewee argued that the partners discussed exclusivity issues, when she was asked whether exclusivity was a component of the contract she replied that “ohm... it is a given... this is how it happens”, signifying that exclusivity is not actually included in the contract. In fact, the respondent said that in a specific case, the company had been tolerant as, “sometimes, another petrol station, of another company is also supporting [sponsoring]”. This is hardly surprising when considering that the nature of the sponsorship agreement signed by the particular company is more a matter of patronage than of purely commercial action. This is further supported by the emphasis placed during the interview upon components that are related to philanthropic and social responsibility issues, since one of the important provisions of the contract was “[the club] to provide us with players, so that we visit together hospitals... for philanthropic purposes”.

Congruent with the above social approach to sponsorship, the responsibility for managing the sponsorship arrangement was assigned solely upon the PR department, and this was an action that was based upon the company's conceptualisation of sponsorship. As the respondent indicated:

Let me tell you why sponsorships should be under the PR department. Because, one of my responsibilities and duties [as the PR manager] is social offering. And, football... sport in general... is a cultural thing. It is for the welfare of the society. And this is depicted in the messages of sport... against racism, against violence, against drugs... Sport actually helps... those are the messages.

Therefore, the unrefined management activities adopted by the company were not unexpected in this case study, especially when considering the broader trend identified in the systematic review indicating that unprofessional and inadequate management practices are employed even by sponsors investing in mature sponsorship markets (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004, 2005; Thwaites, 1994,1995). Specifically, as the respondent pointed out, the company did not spend any additional money on leveraging its sponsorships. In addition, the management of sponsorships signed with small clubs lacking resources and expertise, as well as the management of sponsorship agreements signed a few years ago, were at primitive stages since the main discussions with the clubs were limited to signage placement within the stadiums. With regard to the agreements signed with bigger and more experienced clubs, the company has been mainly directed towards the organisation of events of social and philanthropic character together with the clubs. In addition, the company appeared willing to provide smaller clubs with advice on how to manage the sponsorship, but this advice was provided "on a friendly basis and it mainly concerned direction on how the clubs could communicate with their fans and the development of messages encouraging the fans to support the sponsor. What is clear from the above statement as well as from the whole interview, is that the company felt that responsibility for managing the sponsorship deal was almost exclusively assigned to the sponsees and not

the sponsor, and this is a further illustration of the unprofessional approach adopted by the company. As the interviewee asserted, the company did not take any additional activities to support their sponsorships since “we do not do it... we expect them [the clubs] to do it, if they want to”. This amateur sponsorship management approach is further depicted in the fact that the company was not aware that its logo did not appear on the internet site of one of the clubs sponsored, and when the interviewee was informed about this, she said “I believe yes [it does appear]”.

Albeit the social and philanthropic nature of sport sponsorship as depicted in the motives, selection processes and management-related activities of the company, it seems that with regard to the objectives pursued, there was a more commercial orientation, despite the fact that those objectives were not determined until the last 2 years. As the interviewee stated, the most important goal the company attempted to achieve was media exposure, followed by an increase in sales. Interestingly, the importance placed upon media objectives does not coincide with recent trends identified in the systematic review suggesting a shift from media-related goals to more sophisticated, corporate-related goals such as image and reputation (Hartland et al., 2005). In addition, it is worth noting that the emphasis on sales-related goals demonstrated in this study can be partially explained by the fact that Cyprus is a less developed sponsorship context since, according to the systematic review, the prevalence of sales and profit-oriented goals is a characteristic of less developed sponsorship contexts such as Greece and Romania (Constantinescu & Szekely, 2009; Papadimitriou et al., 2008).

Although the interviewee denied that social-related objectives were set by the company, probably in an effort to demonstrate a more marketing-oriented sponsorship approach, it is indeed the case that throughout the interview social-philanthropic-community goals were prevailing. This is further substantiated by the fact that one of the main provisions of the contract was the obligation of the club to participate in social and philanthropic events. Furthermore, it is also

illustrated in the main leveraging activity undertaken by the company, which was the organisation or participation in philanthropic and social events.

Additional, but clearly less important objectives pursued by the company were, image-related goals and launching new products. Regarding the former, the interviewee reiterated the dangers associated with sponsoring a single club and the emergent need for spreading sponsorship into several properties since “image can be destroyed through a club (...) and thus, I believe that the name of a sponsor should not be very connected to a certain club”. Those statements are inconsistent with the arguments made by many authors suggesting that corporate image should be enhanced through activities that strongly relate and connect to the club sponsored (Barez et al., 2007; Grohs et al., 2004) so that sponsorship can be effective and successful. However, the findings of this study should be viewed in light of the cultural context in Cyprus and the hostility and rivalry described earlier between the fans of rival clubs due to localisation and severe politicisation of football. Thus, the hesitance to connect strongly with particular clubs may be due to the fear the company felt in front of a negative image transfer.

In line with the objectives set by the company, the main audiences reached through sponsorship were external customers, and more specifically the company was trying to reach young customers who did not have developed brand preference towards other products so as “to cultivate” certain attitudes and purchasing behaviours. In a similar manner to the previous case study of a national telecommunications provider, employees were not regarded as an audience to be reached through sponsorship. In contrast, it seems that for the specific company, there was not a realisation of the importance of employee satisfaction and motivation in the success of a business. This conclusion is clearly depicted in the response of the interviewee: “Look. Today, I believe that they [employees] should be happy simply because they have a job”. As already mentioned, the workforce is indeed a relatively neglected public to communicate with through sponsorship, and it is indeed the case that this applies to more

developed sponsorship markets such as the UK (e.g. Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998) as well as to less mature contexts such as Australia (Polonsky et al., 1996). At the same time, the rising unemployment rate in Cyprus can also be regarded as a factor nurturing such beliefs. Additionally, it is worth considering the fact that the specific sector does not strongly rely on highly-skilled employees, and this can also form part of the explanation of the fact that the employee appeared to be a neglected target market for the sponsor.

The general picture of a less systematic and less sophisticated approach to sport sponsorship was further confirmed by a total absence of any kind of sponsorship-related evaluation measures. As the interviewee commented, there was no attempt to measure sponsorship outcomes since the company believed that measurement was not attainable. This is further illustrated in the fact that, although the objectives the company set in the last two years were formalised as mentioned before, those objectives were not specific in a way allowing for evaluation. The amateur approach to sponsorship adopted by this particular company is also highlighted in the fact that there was even no effort to monitor whether the contractual agreement was applied. The sponsees, for example, were not asked by the company to submit any report on the provisions agreed between the two parties, as the respondent indicated. Moreover, when asked how the company ensured that the provisions of the contract with regard to exposure, for example, were met, the interviewee replied that “we believe that they are implementing the agreed... that they will expose the sponsors”. The fact mentioned earlier, however, that the logo of the company was not placed on the official site of one of the sponsees, clearly demonstrates the detrimental effect of the absence of sponsorship monitoring and evaluation.

4.1.5 Case study 5: Cooperative Savings Bank “A”

The fifth organisation under the microscope of this multi-case study research was a large, local, cooperative savings bank of a specific city in Cyprus. The company

is at the moment the largest cooperative banking organisation in Cyprus operating more than 25 branches within the specific city. The organisation was established more than 60 years ago by a group of local progressive pioneers who were also shop owners, and its initial mission was to promote mutual assistance and cooperation among the shop keepers in the specific city and to help the residents of the area to find solutions to their financial problems (Anonymous³, n.d., a). In the 1990s, the organisation had grown impressively, but it was by the turn of the century that it had become a very powerful cooperative banking organisation mainly due to a series of mergers with a number of smaller cooperative banks and cooperative societies in the particular region. It is interesting to note, however, that the organisation had had an intensive sponsorship involvement during the last 30 years. In particular, the cooperative bank sponsors many different sports events and clubs including volleyball, tennis, basketball and recreational sports. In addition, it is the main sponsor of the three local football clubs competing in the first and second division.

In a manner similar to that in the preceding case study, the stated prime reason for engaging in sport sponsorship arrangements was social. As the marketing director of the bank indicated, sport sponsorship had been a “part of our educational and cultural offering”, and she added “we cannot exclude sport sponsorship from the social responsibility program, because, in the past, the existence of sport clubs was based upon [the contribution of] several large organisations. And, we have always been sponsors of the local clubs”. The social and humanitarian nature of sport sponsorship in this case study is further illustrated in the following statement:

After the organisation became profitable and it had the capacity to give back to the city... because there is also a provision in the charter of the organisation that part of the profits will be redistributed to various bodies, such as organisations, sport clubs, municipalities, several events (...). The organisation has always been a sponsor of several events, all the

³ The source is not mentioned in an effort to protect confidentiality of the organisation examined in this case study.

municipalities of the city, clubs, charity organisations, organisations for children with disabilities, festivals... anything related to education... education and culture.

What is clear from the above statements is that, in this case study, there is a lack of personal factors mobilising sponsorship-related decisions. Unlike the previous case study in which there was a strong involvement of personal interests which had been related to philanthropic motives, the cooperative bank seemed to be driven primarily by their duty to the local society, the community in which they operate and grow. This is better viewed in light of the nature of the organisation as well as its history as described briefly above. As already mentioned, the bank operates under the cooperative movement in Cyprus, and thus it was expected to foster the principles and values of the cooperative movement which, according to the Co-Operative Societies' Supervision and Development Authority (2004), entail its contribution to the prosperity of the society, mutual assistance, and solidarity.

The communal-social nature of sport sponsorship is further depicted in the rationale of the organisation for sponsoring many different clubs, since the interviewee argued that "within our broader sport offering policy, I believe it would not be appropriate to exclude any of the three clubs of the city". The above statements depict once again the importance of localism within the broader Cypriot culture and more specifically within the sport culture (Peristianis et al., 2002) as also shown in the previous case study. Moreover, the philanthropic incentives of the sponsor are also demonstrated in their decision to withdraw their logo while still being a supporter of a particular club "because of the large, multimillion sponsorship that they wanted to sign with the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority". Their decision to withdraw was taken "in order not to deprive the club of revenue generated through that sponsorship, because we are talking about some millions".

In addition, it seemed that the rivalry and hostility between the clubs that was also evident in the previous cases studies did have a role to play in the decision of the cooperative bank to sponsor all the local clubs, something that is understandable

when considering the amalgamation of politics with sport that was described in the previous case studies. Having said this, it is also the case that, as the interviewee indicated, in some cases sponsorship could emerge as a result of pressures emanating from the social and business network of the executive, and this is a practice further substantiated by evidence provided in the systematic review (Berrett & Slack, 1999). Accommodating business relations was, indeed, found to be one of the main goals pursued through sport sponsorship (Gratton & Taylor, 1985; Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Thwaites, 1994; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998). These kinds of motives, however, did not seem to prevail in the sponsorship related decisions made by the cooperative bank, since the latter appeared to be much more heavily guided by social and community factors, as indicated above.

Despite the prevalence of philanthropic and humanistic motives guiding the organisation's decision to invest in sport sponsorship, it seemed that the actions that followed were incorporated into a well-orchestrated and strategic effort of the organisation to reposition within the market and to create a modified and modern profile in an attempt to attract new customer segments. Although this combination of philanthropic and more strategic approaches to sport sponsorship is not identified as very common in the literature review, it is worth mentioning that there is some evidence depicting that philanthropic engagement can be accompanied by fully integrated and strategic sponsorship management practices (Séguin et al., 2005). In this particular case study, the interviewee admitted that once the bank realised that it could take advantage of its sponsorship involvement for strategic purposes, a systematic and well-structured objective setting procedure was initiated.

With regard to the objectives pursued, it is not surprising that social responsibility objectives featured among the most important goals to be achieved through sponsorship. As the interviewee suggested, one of the priorities of the bank was

“to demonstrate that our organisation supports sport, education and culture”, and she added that the goal of the company was to pass the message that:

It is always by the side of all citizens regardless of the club they support, and that we will continue supporting this part of cultural part... because we consider sport as an integral part of the culture and development of a country. We cannot ignore sport. Sport has also educational and cultural aspects.

When considering the nature of the organisation, social responsibility goals are logical to prevail. It is indeed the case that, institutional pressures (Berrett & Slack, 1999) emanating probably from the expectations of other organisations operating within the same community could have had generated a need to demonstrate corporate citizenship and social responsibility within the local community. In fact, the pursuance of “good citizenship” and social responsibility objectives was commonly stated by a variety of sponsors, as the systematic review of the literature indicated (e.g. Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Asimakopoulos, 1993; Davies & Tsiantas, 2008; Lough & Irwin, 2001). At the same time, it is also important to note that a social or philanthropic orientation of sponsorship is not counterproductive. Instead, as Speed and Thompson (2000) found, a sheerer and altruistic orientation of sponsorship can achieve more desirable outcomes than a more commercial orientation.

In addition to the social objectives, sponsorship was regarded as the platform for reaching a new segment in the market, and it was a part of “a broader campaign aiming at reaching young customers... young people”. At the same time, the company attempted to retain existing customers “by reminding the older we are here to cover their own needs as well”. This evidence strongly coincides with evidence cited by Crowley (1991) suggesting that sponsorship was perceived to be an important tool for retaining exiting customers through reinforcing good relationships with them, as well as a very useful tool for attracting new customers. In fact, accessing a certain segment in the market was an objective assigned much importance by the bank. As the interviewee commented, based on research conducted by the bank, their customers were primarily old individuals, and thus

they wanted to keep them, but at the same time to target a younger group in the market. Therefore, another objective set that was regarded contributing significantly towards the achievement of this goal was to change the corporate image of the organisation. In fact, image objectives were highly valued by the bank, since “without the particular image the organisation cannot penetrate the target market group it wants to enter in”. According to the respondent, as a part of the cooperative movement in Cyprus, the cooperative bank was regarded as “something old-fashioned”. Therefore, sponsorship was considered to be a very useful tool of an aggressive campaign “within sport clubs, professional environments consisting of young people”, which was a part of a broader strategic effort of the business to transform “into something more modern”. As the interviewee argued, “we achieved this through penetrating into football, sport areas, and through modern communications media such as Facebook, internet, etc.”.

The importance placed upon image objectives coincides with the evidence provided in the systematic review (e.g. Lee, Sandler & Shani, 1997; Skinner & Griffiths, 2005) indicating that such objectives had been a priority for sponsors. In addition, it should be emphasised that there is much evidence in the literature indicating the effectiveness of sport sponsorship towards attaining image and reputation goals (Amis 2003; Amis et al., 1997; Copeland et al., 1996; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Papadimitriou et al., 2008).

As already portrayed by the main objectives pursued by the cooperative bank, the main target audience reached through sponsorship consisted of external customers, both individual and business customers. According to the interviewee, sponsorship provided the bank with the opportunity to establish a network with “large customers and companies which were probably much more difficult to access through another avenue... but we did that through the networking created because of the sponsorships”. Interestingly, and in line with much evidence presented in the systematic review of the literature (e.g. Meerabeau et al., 1991;

Thwaites et al., 1998; Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004), employees were not regarded by the local, cooperative bank as a target to be reached through sponsorship. This is also in line with evidence presented earlier in this multi-case study research indicating that both local sponsors explored before – the state-owned telecommunications company as well as the local oil company – did not seem to realise the potential of sponsorship to reach internal targets, or it is likely that internal publics were generally neglected by local sponsors in Cyprus. This is something that raises concerns however, suggesting that local sponsors in Cyprus should realise that employees represent an important stakeholder group, and that sponsorship should also be communicated internally in an effort to improve its effectiveness. As Van Heerden and du Plessis (2004) have argued, overlooking the importance of communicating sponsorship internally can have negative implications upon the image of the sponsor, whilst concentrating on external customers solely “indicates a lack of focus and poor planning” (Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004, p. 78).

With regard to the selection process the bank employed, it is of interest to note that, at the time of the sponsorship selections, the company did not appear to have any predetermined goals to be achieved. As mentioned above, the decisions to sponsor the clubs were primarily based on social and community motives, and it was only recently that the business decided “to take advantage of this and to promote the organisation through the sport sponsorships”. In fact, as the respondent commented:

Probably, at that time the organisation did not have the need for advertising, or reminding people that “we are here as well”. Because in the past, the organisation did not have competitors (...). In the past, we were not considering banks as competitors, and so did the banks. We entered into the competition game in the last few years... together with the stock market rise... the real estate growth... the booming... and then the crisis [1998 and after]. So, everyone is now trying to safeguard their organisation, their profits, and to get higher market share.

It is evident from the above statements that, external environmental forces and competitive pressures did play a major role on the bank's decision to start using sponsorship on a more strategic basis. As the literature review demonstrated, competitive factors can have an important influence upon sponsorship decision-making in a variety of industrial sectors with some of those being proactive or reactive actions toward the strategies adopted by competitors (Berrett & Slack, 1999). Although, it is clear that in this case study the organisation did not seem to be influenced by mimetic pressures (Berrett & Slack, 1999) forcing them to respond to sponsorship-related decisions of competitors since as the interviewee indicated banks are far behind them with regard to sport sponsorship investment. It is the case, however, that the broader competitive environment, the new status of the cooperative bank (since 2008 it became an accredited cooperative credit organisation and it is the only cooperative banking organisation operating without the monitoring of the Body of Cooperative Societies) and the fact that it had entered an industry with a big number of competitors exercising aggressive marketing activities, forced them to become more competitive through using sport sponsorship on a more systematic and professional basis.

With regard to the decision-making process, it is of interest to observe that, similarly to the two preceding case studies of local sponsors, decision-making power once again was gathered at the head of the organisation, with a committee consisting of board members and top-level management taking sponsorship investment decisions. As already mentioned, this can be attributed to the relatively less mature sponsorship context in which the company operates (Burton et al., 1998; Farrelly et al., 1997; Walliser, 2003), but it could be also the case that the bureaucratic status of a financial organisation such as the cooperative bank was not conducive to less centralised decision-making. The sponsorship proposal, however, was prepared by the marketing department and after being approached by the club and it was then submitted to the committee for the final decision. Interestingly, the marketing department had no input in the final decision. Its role was rather restricted to the development of a proposal and the potential for

exploitation of the certain sponsorship which was based on certain criteria, as the respondent said.

The main criteria employed for selecting the sponsorship partners were, according to the respondent, the potential of the sponsorship arrangement to be used as a promotional platform in order to build both corporate awareness and product awareness, and congruency between the target group of the clubs and the main customer groups of the business. As the interviewee commented, sponsorship was regarded as the avenue for passing a certain message to the target audience the company pursued since there is a basic requirement that “the target market of the clubs we sponsor fits to a large percentage the people that we would like to inform about the different loan products that we have and would probably fit their needs”. Consideration of fit with target audience should be a basic factor of the selection procedure as Irwin and Assimakopoulos (1992) argued in the sponsorship selection framework they proposed, and it is indeed the case that in some contexts, the emphasis on fit had been evident since the late 1980s (Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992). As the systematic review of the literature demonstrated, consideration of fit is even more vividly demonstrated in mature and more developed sponsorship markets such as North America (Farrelly et al., 1997), UK, (Liu et al., 1998; Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Thwaites & Carruther, 1998) and Canada (Thwaites et al., 1998).

Additional criteria for selection mentioned by the interviewee included the sponsorship budget available, the existence of other sponsors of the club having conflicting interests, and a consideration of the alignment between the values and beliefs of the business and the sport property to be sponsored. As the respondent said, the decision was also based on whether the clubs “comply with ethical rules... I cannot sponsor the sport club of a casino let’s say... if the officials of the club are not reliable and creditworthy...”. This evidence complies with the findings presented in the systematic review of the literature by Shaw and Amis (2001), who found that the fit between corporate values and the philosophy of the

sport property was given much importance in the sponsorship selection decision. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the arguments regarding consideration of congruency between the corporate culture and the sponsee's values and beliefs, as well as the aforementioned emphasis on target market congruency, are regarded as inconsistent with the fact that, as the interviewee held earlier, the philanthropic and humanitarian philosophy of the bank made it difficult to deny sponsorship money to "any of the three clubs of the city". This notion was further substantiated by an additional criterion mentioned by the interviewee, which was the club's lack of resources: "if it is a poor club... and thus it is unable to get sponsorship", then the company would consider sponsoring the specific club.

The social aspect of sponsorship-related decisions was also demonstrated in the components of the contracts signed with the sponsor. Exclusivity, for example, did not feature among the provisions of the contract since as the interviewee stated, "we cannot deprive them [the club] of the opportunity to have sponsorships raised from other banks given that they rely heavily on sponsorship revenue". In addition, there was no draft of a contract that the company was employing. Rather, each agreement was based on different grounds depending on the uniqueness of each club sponsored and it was a product of negotiations with the club. Additional components of the contract included sponsor designation, web-site exposure as well as signage within the facilities and stadiums, involvement of the club's players in promotional events, distribution of promotions within the stadium, size and placement of logos, the development and delivery of messages during matches identifying the sponsor to the club, and the potential of the club for managing the sponsorship arrangement.

As is evident from the above provisions of the contract, the cooperative bank placed much emphasis on sponsorship management and leveraging practices. Despite the fact that the statements of the interviewee indicated that the company was determined to undertake several leveraging activities in an effort to make

their sponsorship succeed, additional spending on leveraging did not exceed 10% of the original investment, and the activities undertaken were not sophisticated, nor many. The function responsible for managing the sponsorship arrangement was the marketing department, and the sponsorship leveraging plan included additional TV, Radio and web advertising, signage within the stadium, the organisation of contests and lottery during matches, distribution of promotional material within the stadium, and organisation of several events. It is worth noting that the company assigned much weight to the development of messages as well as to the efforts to communicate those messages within the field during matches. As the respondent indicated, “through repetitive messages, both verbal and visual, the fan can get the message” and she added that the goal is that the fans should be able to:

capture it through many different ways... verbally, visually, through the TV, on the player... I mean, it is a very important thing that I have not noticed earlier... the fact that they [the fans] should directly relate the players of their team - the goal achiever, the chief - with the sponsor.

It is clear from the above statements that there was much emphasis placed upon messages that connect strongly the sponsor to the sponsored property, and this is very important, especially when considering evidence presented in the systematic review of the literature indicating that visual and textual messages have the capacity to shape the relationship sponsors can have with the fan base of the sponsee, something that can lead to the creation or enhancement of identification of the sponsor with the fans of a sponsored property (Gill, 2008). As the author argued, the association can foster a perception of unity and bond between the fans and the sponsor, and this is something that allows the sponsor to invest on the psychological connection and commitment of fans towards the club. It is indeed the case that, as Coppetti et al. (2009) argued, even sponsorships that are regarded as providing ‘low fit’, and thus having less potential to be effective, can be successful if the sponsor develops a clear and coherent message that is effectively communicated to the fans.

Finally, with regard to the evaluation practices employed as a part of the broader sponsorship management approach adopted by the cooperative bank, it seemed that once again the difficulty associated with measuring sponsorship results was the main factor hampering the capacity of the sponsor to evaluate sponsorship. As the interviewee stated, it was “very difficult” to measure the impact of their sponsorship arrangements, but it has to be mentioned that there had been reasonable efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of their integrated marketing communications towards reaching organisational goals. In fact, those measurements did take place at least once a year and sometimes reaching three measurements per year. However, the respondent strongly emphasised the difficulty associated with isolating the results of sponsorship from those of the overall marketing communications plan, since sponsorship was one of the various marketing activities used for reaching organisational goals. Therefore, sponsorship effectiveness was actually measured as a component of their overall campaign measurement. Inadequate measurement, however, is once again prevalent in this case study, and this is congruent with the majority of the studies in the sponsorship literature (O'Reilly & Madill, 2009). Specifically, in this case study, all measurement efforts were concentrated on the number and demographic profile of new customers. Despite the fact that one of the main objectives stated by the respondent earlier was a change in corporate image, there were no efforts to identify perceptions with regard to certain image qualities communicated to their publics.

4.1.6 Case study 6: Cooperative Credit Society “B”

The sixth case study refers to a local cooperative credit society of a specific community in Cyprus and its long-lasting sponsorship arrangement with the local club of the community. The cooperative credit society was established almost a century ago by a group of farmers, residents of the local community. The vision of the organisation was to create a community free of oppression, usury and economic exploitation of the residents, and to set the foundations for the creation

of an organisation serving the wider society with dignity, humanity, mutual understanding and equal opportunities (Anonymous⁴, n.d., b). The main activity undertaken by the organisation was the provision of low-interest loans to the residents of the community, despite the fact that for the first 10 years of its operation the economic condition of the residents did not allow for any savings. By the middle of the twentieth century the cooperative credit society started growing, and, apart from the financial services provided, today the organisation is also determined to contribute substantially to the sport and cultural development of the community. Therefore, it was probably not a surprise that, as a part of the organisation's broader social offering, the organisation had been involved in a long-lasting sponsorship arrangement with the local club. In fact, the cooperative credit society has been the sponsor of the local club for almost two decades, and it supports financially, as the Secretary General stated, not only the football club, but also all the other sports offered under the umbrella of the local sports club of the specific community.

Congruent with the aforementioned vision of the organisation, the motivation to engage in sport sponsorship was primarily philanthropic, since social and community factors appeared as having a substantial impact upon the decision of the company. At the same time, commercial motives were also stated by the respondent, and it is indeed the case that those were more explicitly and heavily emphasised by the interviewee. For example, the Secretary General of the cooperative credit society initially indicated that "the motive is the return. We get what we give" and he added "the bank is a business, it is not a philanthropic organisation. So, it is a give and take. We got the exposure, we give the money". It could be the case that the organisation decided to shift from philanthropic to commercial motives, or that it used the cooperative nature of the organisation to achieve commercial purposes. The existence of commercial motives was also depicted in the following statement:

⁴ The source is not mentioned in an effort to protect confidentiality of the organisation examined in this case study.

What influenced us more was the TV... firstly the existence of many TV channels, secondly the live broadcasting of matches from LTV and My-vision mainly, and thirdly the increase of sport sections in newspapers in which the clubs are displayed, and thus we are getting directly or indirectly exposure and advertising.

Throughout the discussion, however, it became obvious that social and philanthropic motives were stronger driving forces for sponsoring the club. As the respondent indicated “we entered because it was something that belongs to us”. Furthermore, when the respondent was asked whether the company would sponsor any other local club, if existing, the response was “it is given...yes”, whilst the response to the question whether the business would sponsor any other club outside their community, was the following:

We would never think of this because the second element is missing, which is the local... I mean, we enter because it is a local club... the self-evident [factor], and we enter because we have a return. In Nicosia, for example, we are going to have only the return, we will not have the local factor, so there is no reason to enter.

Evidently, the above statements strongly suggest that local and community reasons were actually prevailing. Interestingly, throughout the interview the interviewee admitted that:

We entered because we consider this as an obligation we have in terms of philanthropy, but, because of the return that philanthropy generated, we decided to continue. And, the amount we pay is clearly more than the return we generate, but, because of the fact that we entered primarily for philanthropic reasons, we believe that the extra amount that we pay... as philanthropy.

The emphasis on the local factor is, once again, hardly surprising when considering the broader culture in Cyprus as well as the central role that “localism” has, and this is further supported by the fact that all the aforementioned case studies examining the actions of local sponsors identified the highly influential role of localisation upon sponsorship-related decisions. In this case study, however, local factor is probably assigned more importance when

considering that the specific community in which the cooperative credit society operates in an area in Cyprus which is relatively neglected, from an economic and developmental point of view, since central government is primarily concerned with the large cities in Cyprus in which the major infrastructure as well as developmental projects usually take place (Christophorou, 2010). Therefore, it is logical to assume that, in a small community like this, which depends more heavily on agriculture, the “local” factor is expected to have an even more prominent role in the decisions and actions of people and companies, including the sponsorship related decisions made by this particular organisation. The patronage nature of this sponsorship is further illustrated in the fact that, in a way similar to the previous case study, the cooperative credit society decided to withdraw their logo from the shirt of the first division football club whilst not decreasing the sponsorship amount they offered, so that the club could generate more money from an additional sponsor.

Although the dominance of altruistic and community motives demonstrated by the cooperative credit society, as well as by the previous case study of the cooperative savings bank, do not seem to coincide with evidence provided in the systematic review indicating that financial companies were more professional in their sponsorship approach and they did not seem to be guided by philanthropic factors as compared to other industries (Thwaites, 1994), it is probably the case that the cultural and social conditions described above, as well as the specific cooperative status of the two financial organisations, did have a role to play with regard to the prevalence of a philanthropic orientation.

Once again, the decision to become involved in sport sponsorship was taken at the board level, probably for the reasons mentioned in the previous case study, namely the bureaucratic and central decision-making authority characterising this kind of organisation, or due to the relatively immature market in which sponsorship took place since it is generally characterised by centralised sponsorship decision-making (Farrelly et al., 1997; Walliser, 2003). In addition,

the decision-making process that followed did not demonstrate any signs of professionalism. Specifically, the respondent indicated that their decision was not based on any kind of criteria since at the time of the commencement of their sponsorship involvement the situation was very different:

football was an amateur sport... players' compensation was minimum... we mainly covered the expenses in term of the sports equipment and football kits... basically, our sponsorship during the initial stages involved the purchase of sport equipment (...). It was again disproportionate the amount we used to pay at that time - 70,000 to 80,000 pounds at that time - and the exposure we got back.

The amateur and patronage nature of this sponsorship arrangement was further depicted in the fact that, although at the original stages of the sponsorship there was a contract regulating the sponsorship relationship between the two parties, today the sponsor felt that there is no need for a contract since the relationship between the two "is defined by customary law... I mean... there is no reason to write them down. We know them very well" and he added "it is like the first contract is renewed... moreover, a contract is not for the benefit of the club. They will get less... because they always get something more". Although the respondent was hesitant to reveal the real situation/condition, the financial dependence of the club upon the bank was clear – the bank had provided the club with a huge loan, whilst at the same time the bank was the main financier of the club – there was no need for an official agreement between the two parties since negotiation power in this dyadic relationship was clearly concentrated on the sponsor's part, with the sponsor feeling powerful enough to define the parameters of this relationship.

Despite this power, the sponsor did not seem to intend to exploit this sponsorship to its full potential. Even at the time when a contract existed, there were no detailed provisions shaping the sponsorship arrangement. As the respondent indicated, "we simply had an agreement so that we could know approximately... the agreement concerned basically what we [the sponsor] were going to provide them with", and he added "with regard to what we were going to get back, it was

basically shirt advertising and advertising on the uniform of the support staff and coaching team”. As the Secretary General explained:

There were provisions [in the contract] and, they [the club] had terms securing the amount that we would pay [for the apparel and sport equipment]. It could not be less than 70,000 pounds. In the case that it was lower than 70,000 pounds, we had to pay the difference in cash. And we also had the right of first choice with regard to where the signage would be placed. We had to pay for the signage of course, but we had the right to choose the place for the signage before the rest of the sponsors.

Additionally, the respondent referred to the fact that the company secured exposure achieved through its logo presence on the correspondence of the club. As illustrated once again, the sponsorship approach adopted in this case study was amateurish, coinciding fully with the supportive and philanthropic philosophical ground upon which it was decided and selected. The patronage nature of the sponsorship was further illustrated in the fact that the sponsor did not ask for exclusivity, but, as the interviewee emphasised, it exerted pressures upon the sponsee “to get additional sponsors as well... even a bank” in order to improve their revenues. These actions clearly suggest that altruistic aspects prevail over commercial ones, since the main concern of the sponsor was how the club could generate more revenues, even at the expense of the benefits offered to the sponsor. However this could also be regarded as a way to reduce their involvement in the future.

The philosophical grounds of this sponsorship arrangement are further illustrated in the objectives set by the sponsor. An emphasis was placed upon corporate citizenship and social responsibility objectives, since, when the respondent was asked to rank the objectives pursued according to their importance, he replied “I continue to believe that the number one is that we provide help to a certain effort”. The dominance of social-related goals observed in this case study as well as in the previous case studies examining the actions of local sponsors is not unexpected, especially when considering that evidence cited in the systematic review of the literature provided very similar findings for similar cultural contexts.

Specifically, the study conducted by Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004) indicated that Greek sponsors investing in the Olympic Games also highlighted the importance of corporate citizenship as a goal to be pursued, and this tendency, as the authors argued, refers to the broader Greek context. It could be argued that, because of the relatively more collectivistic cultures that Greece (The Hofstede Centre, n.d.), and subsequently Cyprus have, there is a stronger emphasis on community and group goals as compared to more individualistic cultures that have a stronger sense of competition and personal interest. At the same time, it is worth noting that emphasis on group goals, team-spirit, solidarity and support are values that probably emanate from the long-term history and challenges that both, Greece and Cyprus, had been faced with, mainly due to the very small size of the country as well as due to the several wars they have had to deal with because of their strategic geographic location. In order to deal with such conditions, it might be argued, people had to develop a strong sense of team identity, communal sensitivity and cooperation, values that had deeply pervaded the culture of the country. In fact, solidarity, joint action for the common well-being, collaboration and mutual assistance are regarded as being deeply imprinted in people's conscience and are in fact close to the defining values adopted by the cooperative movement (Co-Operative Societies' Supervision and Development Authority, 2004). Thus it is perhaps not surprising that those values are still illustrated today in the activities undertaken by people and companies, such as the local sponsors of this multi-case study.

In addition to the social goals, the cooperative credit society also appeared to be concerned with image related goals, but it is interesting to observe that it appeared to be trying to avoid negative consequences of a possible withdrawal from the sponsorship at some point in the future. As the respondent indicated "the problem is that, if we quit sponsorship, this will have a very negative impact upon the image of the business, and thus we are obliged to stay in a *theatre of the absurd* which football today is". In addition to image-related goals, another objective set by the company was exposure, both at a local as well as at a

nationwide level. Moreover, the respondent emphasised the importance of customer satisfaction as a goal to be attained through sponsorship, since he commented that “what I did gain is that my customers are satisfied by my [sponsorship] presence” and he added “they consider our support to the club as something extremely important”.

In line with the broader unsophisticated and non-systematic approach to sport sponsorship demonstrated by this particular sponsor, the objectives mentioned above were, according to the respondent, not pre-determined, nor specific or measurable. Rather, those goals were set in “more general” terms. Similarly, the target audiences to be reached through sponsorship were not defined by the company. When the respondent was asked, for example, about the groups that could be targeted through their sponsorship investment, he admitted that “we do not have... we do not deal with this....we have never been concerned with that”. This response substantiates further the amateur approach to sponsorship demonstrated earlier.

It should be mentioned, however, that throughout the discussion, it did emerge that, the main target public was external customers, and more specifically young customers, but this particular public was actually targeted through various marketing efforts, not simply sponsorship. As the respondent indicated “the goal with regard to reaching young people is a general objective of the cooperative system. I mean, we have a problem in that area”, and he added that sponsorship is “part of the effort to reach the young people... one way to reach the young people... so that the young people are aware of the cooperative bank... such as the school savings program, so is sponsorship”. Those statements support further the evidence cited earlier which suggested that the relatively out-dated image of the cooperative system in Cyprus had created the need for approaching and attracting younger customers, thus it is not surprising that this particular segment formed the main target audience for both cooperative organisations explored in this study.

The primitive nature of this sponsorship arrangement is further depicted in the literally non-existent activation and leveraging practices of the cooperative credit society. Specifically, the company did not spend any additional money on managing the sponsorship, and the main activities undertaken such as events were organised solely by the club, and they were financed as part of the overall sponsorship amount provided to the club. As the respondent said, “The goal is to provide them with 120,000 euros per year. If this particular amount is not covered by the activities and events they organise [the club], then we provide them with cash [up to the agreed amount]”. As probably expected, the process concerning “the flow of money devoted to sponsorship” was monitored and controlled by top-level management, but the role of the sponsor was confined to observing “whether the money was devoted to the predetermined areas [events, several activities, equipment etc.]”.

In addition to the non-existent management and leveraging activities, the sponsor admitted that, since the beginning of its sponsorship involvement in 1995, it had not exerted any effort on evaluating sponsorship return. The Secretary General of the organisation said that “we haven’t done any research... we haven’t tried to measure the benefit we get”, and he added “the benefit we get is something that we can see here... in practice... I mean the recognition that we have”. It is very interesting however to mention that, the truth behind the decision not to evaluate sponsorship was the fact that, as the respondent disclosed “anyway... even in case that we do not have a benefit, there is no chance to quit sponsorship easily. It is very difficult to unhook ourselves from this”. These arguments strongly suggest that, sponsorship in this case study was not regarded as an investment but rather, as an obligation to the community from which the company will find it very difficult to escape. In the words of the respondent, “I repeat that we entered into a jumble that... you understand given that you are involved in sports... But, we have a certain opinion about this. We believe that it is insane... I mean sport [sponsorship] involvement”.

4.1.7 Case study 7: Municipality Authority

The seventh case study focused on a municipality authority of a specific area in Cyprus which has been involved for more than two decades in sport sponsorship. The specific area was formerly a small village which had been transformed into a municipality in the mid 1980s. Although the area was relatively deprived, since it was mainly dependent upon agriculture, during the last few decades it became a prosperous place which is more heavily dependent upon tourism, since it is located in one of the most beautiful places in Cyprus and it is close to the sea. The municipality has been sponsoring the local football club which competes in the first division of the local championship, but it also “supports financially”, as the General Secretary said, all the other sports offered by the sport club, such as volleyball, basketball and handball. In addition, it sponsors the second local football club that represents the specific area, which competes in the fourth division. The sponsorship involvement of the municipality involves both, cash and in-kind sponsorship. The latter includes the provision of public facilities such as the stadium and other training facilities, as well as the maintenance expenses of those facilities which are covered by the sponsor.

The premise upon which this particular sponsorship involvement is built is completely different to the aforementioned sponsorship approaches examined in the previous case studies. In this case, the municipality authority acted upon a paternalistic basis, driven by, and acting upon, completely social, communal and philanthropic backgrounds. Starting with the motives guiding sponsorship involvement, the General Secretary of the municipality strongly emphasised that it was a matter of obligation to the community. He used words such as “duty” to describe the feelings of obligation triggering sponsorship engagement, which is clearly depicted in the following statement:

It is our club. It provides exposure for [our place/area]... so we ought to support it. We felt that it is a part of us... as a municipality... it is a part of

[the area/place]. So we believed, and we still believe, that it is our duty to support this club (...) not because it provides exposure for [our place/area] but... simply because it is our own club.

The interviewee also clarified that there were no personal factors intervening and influencing the decision to sponsor the local club. Instead, he argued that “regardless [of who was on] the club’s board, regardless [of the make-up of] the municipal council, there has always been a bond... regardless of the persons involved”. The paternalistic nature of this sponsorship agreement is further substantiated by the fact that, although the respondent admitted that through this particular sponsorship the municipality was actually satisfying the expectations of the citizens, he felt that this benefit was never taken into consideration when deciding their sponsorship involvement. Instead, he insisted that “it was an obligation... it is [the club] like our child... it is a part of us”.

The paternalistic approach to sponsorship adopted by the municipality was further substantiated by the unique decision-making process that followed. According to the respondent, there was no discussion or argument for or against the sponsorship involvement or the annual renewal of the sponsorship. In fact, “the support of the club was taken for granted”. The patronage nature of sponsorship was additionally depicted in the fact that there was no contract regulating the sponsorship agreement between the two parties since as the respondent indicated there was no need for a contract. In his own words “there is no reason” to have a sponsorship contract with the club since:

It is given... it is our responsibility (to sponsor the club). It is a part of us. On the other hand, we cannot have a contract. We are not a profit-making organisation so that to have a contract with the club in order to provide them with the sponsorship... such as a private company does... our relationship is not like that.

Interestingly, there was not even a verbal agreement between the municipality and the club. When the respondent was asked about specific provisions such as logo size and placement, he said that the municipality authority “never discussed

those things” and he added that exposure was “taken for granted”, highlighting once again the fact that responsibility and decision-making authority with regard to the provisions offered to the sponsor was totally assigned to the club.

Aligned with the approach described above, the sponsor appeared not to be concerned with the benefits associated with the sponsorship agreement. Specifically, the respondent was really hesitant to refer to the word “objectives”, a fact that implies that the sponsor was purposely avoiding any diminishing of the social and philanthropic nature of this sponsorship with terms that imply a more commercial and professional approach. Even when the respondent did mention the obvious benefit associated with the exposure provided through sponsorship and its possible impact upon the attraction of internal tourism, he clarified that: “no...this is not the case...this is not our purpose...I made it very clear! It is not... we do not do it in order to attract tourists”. He emphasised the fact that this was not an objective set by the municipality in advance, but it was a welcome benefit that accompanied the sponsorship. In the interviewee’s own words, “It simply happens... that it is a positive outcome” and he added “it is not the purpose... it is a side effect... it is something that comes thorough the sponsorship... indirectly”.

Similarly, the municipal authority did not undertake any activity towards leveraging the sponsorship, and this is not surprising when considering its broader approach to sport sponsorship. Specifically, the respondent admitted that it “simply appears as a sponsor”, without organising any event or action aiming at connecting to the club. In the same vein, there was no effort exerted by the sponsor to evaluate the return from its sponsorship, but this is regarded as a consequence of the non-existent sponsorship objectives, as described above. With regard to sponsorship evaluation, the interviewee held that:

If we were a private company, yes we would have done it. But, as I said before, our purpose is not this one. Our purpose is to support our club. Now... if we have gained something from this... OK. But, no, we did not measure it and we will not do it.

The patronage character of sport sponsorship which is prevalent in this case study is not surprising, especially when considering the type of organisation acting as the sponsor. It is rather logical to assume that the municipal authority of a small place like this would be prone to adopt policies and practices depicting a concern for the welfare of the community, and probably it was rather expected that sponsorship of the local club would be used as a means for serving this purpose. Considering the importance placed upon sports and more specifically upon football in Cyprus (Charalambous-Papamiltiades, 2013) as well as the prominent role of localism described in the previous case studies, sponsorship of the local club was probably seen by the municipal authority as an excellent vehicle for demonstrating its concern for the society in which it is embedded. Emphasis on localism was clearly illustrated in the words of the General Secretary of the municipality authority, who admitted that whatever the performance or the achievements of the local club, the municipality would continue offering the sponsorship, since it was a matter of “both localism and followership”. In addition, considering the broader collectivistic cultural context in which this sponsorship took place and the related emphasis upon the principles of solidarity, communal sensitivity and cooperation, as described in the previous case study, it was again expected that a municipality authority would be *de facto* involved in supporting financially the local club that represents the area on a nationwide basis.

Additionally to the above explanations, it is worth considering the evidence presented in the systematic review of the literature with regard to Greek culture indicating philanthropic and communal grounds upon which sponsors coming from the public sector tend to act. Interestingly, Papadimitriou and Apostolopoulou (2009) found that sponsors coming from the public sector (e.g. governmental and semi-governmental organisations) appeared to base their sponsorship arrangements upon historical and national association, and not upon commercial aspects. Similarly, Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004) found that less professional approaches were employed by public sector sponsors, whilst the latter had been primarily driven by national and emotional factors. More

specifically, the authors found that there was a great sense of responsibility and obligation to the nation, and that sponsorship at a national level was approached as a duty to support the country. Considering the very similar circumstances found in this particular case study, it could be the case that the sponsorship involvement of the municipality authority can be seen as a microcosm of the broader Cypriot and Greek cultures fostering feelings of duty and local pride when a national or local effort is supported.

4.1.8 Case study 8: Local Company- Distributor of beauty/styling products

The eighth case study features a very long-lasting sponsorship agreement which was initiated more than 50 years ago between a mid-sized local company operating as an importer/distributor and a local football club. The company is currently dealing with importing a wide variety of products ranging from shoes to styling products. It started operating in the 1950s, and since its expansion that took place in the 1960s, it has been involved in this long-term sponsorship with the football club. As the vice-president of the company, and son of the president of the company stated, this was the only sponsorship activity undertaken during all of those years.

This case study is also unique with regard to the sponsor's approach to sport sponsorship. Specifically, despite the private status of the business which had been suggested in the literature as a factor closely related to a more professional approach to sport sponsorship (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009), the sponsor appeared as approaching it in a totally amateurish and non-systematic manner. The unique character of this sponsorship was further developed by the fact that the sponsor appeared to be totally aware of the potential that a professional approach to sponsorship could have, since the respondent was a well-educated business person who was familiar with the principles of business and marketing as well as the benefits associated with sponsorship given that the latter is approached and managed

appropriately so as to explore its full potential. This was evident throughout the interview where it was explicitly stated by the respondent.

Starting with the factors mobilising the decision to sponsor this particular club, the respondent indicated clearly that this sponsorship was triggered by “emotional and personal motives”. Interestingly, the grandfather of the respondent was one of the founders of the club, whilst his father was still serving as its president of the club and the interviewee was a member of the board and spokesperson for the club. Therefore, it is evident that there is a strong emotional bonding with the club, and this formed the main incentive for supporting the club financially through sponsorship. As the respondent explained, there was no commercial motive influencing the decision to sponsor the club, and this is clearly depicted in the following statement:

Because of the very close and strong relationship between the family and the club (...) you can realise that our involvement was not based on any corporate related logic or reasoning aiming at the return that we could have from the sponsorship of the club. We never expected a return for this. We are still not expecting a return. After all, if we wanted to have a return we would invest our money on club A, or Club B, or Club C [other more successful clubs]. If our aim was related to a corporate benefit that we could have from our football sponsorship involvement. But, this is not our goal, so you can realise that it is clearly personal and emotional [the motive].

The importance of emotional factors was highlighted several times throughout the interview, and personal interest was reported as something that was clearly connected to the emotional motives that guided this decision. It should be stated, however, that, as in an earlier previous case study (discussed above) which focused on the actions of a local oil company, the sponsorship of the club was used by the sponsor as the platform for serving personal agendas, coinciding with what Cornwell (2008) and Cornwell et al (2001b) argued. In this case, sponsorship was used as the means for acquiring the position of a sport official which is usually associated with increased media attention and exposure which can, in turn, be conducive to the achievement of professional or personal ambitions.

In addition to the motives portraying the amateurish character of this specific sponsorship, the respondent admitted throughout the interview that the sponsor did not conceptualise this financial support “as sponsorship” but rather “I consider this more as a donation. Because when donating money you do not expect any return, and you do not have the return as the motive... thus... yes, I consider this as a donation”. In fact, the interviewee admitted that for internal company purposes “my accountant perceives that, and it is reported [in the books] as a sponsorship” but the reality is that:

It is a donation. I feel like I donate money, because the product that I use [the sports product offered by the club] is a small product... it is a product with very limited awareness, a product without many followers... it is a product that does not have a bright future. But, this is the product we love, this is the product we die for, this is our own club.

It is interesting to note once again that, this case study is unique in terms of the philanthropic and paternalistic way in which it was approached, despite the awareness demonstrated by the sponsor with regard to the potential of sport sponsorship to generate certain outcomes. The realisation with regard to the effectiveness of sport sponsorship as a part of the broader marketing mix was vividly demonstrated in the following statement:

I would prefer to accumulate all the money we spent up to the moment – I do not know how much it is – and invest it on clubs such as Club A or Club B that compete at the European level. It would be much better for the company. I believe that advertisements on the press generate no return... I am strongly opposed to press advertisements. TV on the other hand is ridiculously and provocatively expensive considering the viewership of the Cyprus TV channels. This is the truth. And the radio has lost the qualified radio producers that it used to have, and as a result the quality of the radio is affected negatively at the moment. (...). I conclude by saying that, yes, I believe that nowadays, the best advertising and marketing option for a company is football sponsorship involvement as well as outdoor advertising.

Additionally, the sponsor’s awareness with regard to the potential of sport sponsorship was highlighted several times throughout the interview:

The fact is that football, as a commercial platform, is one of the most popular world-widely... It is a multi-billion dollar market (...). So, I wish that... we were in another place, that the size of the country and the size of the club was larger, allowing us to have a discussion based on another, more professional background involving actual evaluations of my investment, but this is not the case... not only concerning the management of the specific club we sponsor, but also all the other small clubs (...). In our case, we know that we could have a return... good return. It is a large group of companies and, in case that we decide to invest heavily and through a detailed marketing plan to club A, for example, we will definitely have a return. 100%! Tangible return... return regarding turnover, consumer consumption, traffic in my stores... everywhere (...). I want you to know that we are aware of that mistake. We know that the money we spend on sponsorship is actually thrown away. It is like actually like opening the window and throwing away the money. It's one and the same. I mean, giving the money to the specific club or throwing the money out of the window is one and the same for us... as a company.

Despite the sponsor's realisation that the specific sponsorship approach adopted was naïve, unsophisticated, non-systematic and immature, it is of interest to observe once again the personal and emotional aspect of this specific case. The respondent indicated that the reason for not choosing to invest in another club having the potential to generate more return for the company was the following:

We did not do it because... as I will not vote for a certain presidential candidate in February [when the elections for the president of Cyprus will take place] I would never sponsor any other club... I mean, it is clear (...). It's a matter of preference (...). It is ideological, it is a matter of followership, it is fanatical, personal... childish... many things.

The emotional aspects of this sponsorship arrangement were further depicted in the fact that the respondent used the word "seduction" to describe the reasons for sponsoring the club:

I feel like a 75 year-old man who is seduced by a 20 year-old girl and he travels around the world with her buying her presents. How I can explain this... this is how I feel. Whatever the case, the reasons for this action [sponsorship] are very specific.

Considering the patronage nature of this sponsorship, it is not a surprise that the decision to invest was taken at the top level management, with the president and vice president of the company being the only persons involved in this process. Of course, the concentration of decision-making authority at the top-level was highly facilitated by the fact that the company is a business which is managed by members of the same family, and thus it was much easier to arrive easily and without constraints, to the decision to sponsor or to continue sponsoring a club without having financial or business expectations from this activity. As the respondent admitted, the company knew that “the money we provide the club with is much more as compared to the product to which we invest (...). Thus, we can never have the equivalent return. But, as I told you earlier this is not our motive”, and he added:

It was a clearly personal decision of the owner and the CEO of the company to fund... or sponsor a football club so that the latter could manage its expenses. We did not have any decision making processes through which we could choose the sport or football property so that we could promote our companies and products (...). So, yes, the decision was taken by the two of us, and there was no need for a meeting.

Evidently, there was no formal decision-making process, nor an intention to use sponsorship for any business purposes. Even the renewal of the agreement was made on a habitual basis. As the respondent described it:

There is an intention [from the company to sponsor] and there is also a perception of the members of the club that there is no chance that [the name of the owner of the company] is not going to give money to the club... not to subsidise... not to fund the club. Thus, even in case that I do to undertake any action, by the mid-summer I will definitely have a call by the club asking me [to sponsor].

In line with the above, the respondent admitted that, as the vice-president of the company and at the same time as the spokesperson of the club, he was the main person involved in this procedure:

I am responsible for all of this. I am the person that interacts with both, the club and all of the club's sponsors. Because of the position that I have in the

board of directors [of the club] there is a strange relationship... I mean... I try to convince myself to sponsor the club. Do you understand what I am saying? It is a bit funny...

It is of interest to note that this admittedly bizarre decision-making process was employed mainly because of the emotional bonding and personal involvement with the sponsee. As the interviewee stated, if the company were to choose to use sponsorship for commercial purposes, a much more systematic, rational and professional approach would have been adopted:

In the case that, and this is a hypothetical scenario... if we were to get involved with a stronger product, a larger and stronger club, yes, a particular department would be responsible for identifying the benefits, the advantages and disadvantages. There would be a continuous monitoring of the return that we would like to have from the sponsorship, and the decision would be taken by more individuals, collectively, since it would be a larger and very significant project (...) hypothetically speaking, we would apply all the rational and correct procedures that we have to use in order to implement a significant project [sponsorship].

Although the decision-making process was definitely unprofessional and non-systematic, there were some signs of rationality with regard to the selection of the brand the logo of which would appear as the sponsoring brand. Those criteria involved the fit between the product and the sponsee, and the stage of the product in the product lifecycle with the accompanied requirements generated for certain promotional efforts. According to the respondent:

There is indeed a disorder and "irrationality" [with regard to the sponsorship strategy], but there is also a procedure in place. This procedure takes into consideration... I mean I take into consideration, since I am the person that takes the decisions... I take into consideration the factors related to the football product. I mean the age groups to which it refers, the professional groups (...). I have chosen the brands that we thought they should have more intensive promotion at a particular time, depending on their stage in the product life cycle. For example, specific products [name of product X and product Y] were chosen as the main promotional brands for the last two years because in the first case the international company has re-launched in the last two years about 50% of its product portfolio. Hence, we have to promote to the market a quite large number of new products. The changes are in terms of innovation, redesign, as well as the chemical formula [content]

of the product. With regard to the second brand, the main reason for choosing it is because it is consistent with... the brand concept is consistent with sport since, the particular brand has traditionally been involved in football (...). And therefore, we feel that there should be a consistency between the brand concept and the areas that it uses for advertising and promotional purposes.

Although fit has widely been regarded as an important criterion for selecting the sponsored property (Irwin & Assimakopoulos, 1992; Liu et al., 1998; Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Walliser, 2003), in this case study fit was used as a criterion for choosing the brand to be associated with the sponsored property and not vice versa. This is clearly another unique element of this specific case study, since the sponsored property was chosen *ex ante* and the question that followed was which brand would fit more appropriately the sponsored property which had been already chosen.

In line with the overall decision-making process described above, although the sponsor did have a contract with the sponsored property, the components of this contract were limited and unsophisticated once again. For example, as the respondent said, one of the main provisions of the sponsorship contract was exposure secured primarily “through the internet and the letterheads”, indicating that exposure gained was limited to the presence of the logo of the sponsor on the official web-site of the club and the letterhead of the club’s correspondence. Additional components included the provision of one “official football kit” and “two season tickets”. Furthermore, there was no exclusivity clause in the contract, and as the interviewee admitted, if a competitor was willing to invest on sponsoring the club “I would quit, offering them the opportunity to sponsor, but at the same time I was going to donate the same amount of money to the club. Honestly. This is what I was going to do” and he added “I could not deprive the club of money coming from sponsorship. I would do something else... I would find the way to offer the money”. Although this phenomenon is new in the sponsorship related literature, it is something that was also observed earlier in one of the cases examined, when the cooperative bank’s representative admitted that they would

do the same in order to allow the sponsee to increase its revenues. This altruistic and generous intention depicts once again the patronage nature of this sponsorship arrangement which is further illustrated in the contract signed between the two parties.

Despite the prevalence of a paternalistic and highly unsystematic approach of the sponsor to this specific sponsorship deal which was evident in the motives, decision-making process and components of the sponsorship contract, it seems that, retrospectively, the sponsor had decided to use the sponsorship arrangement to assist in the attainment of certain goals. The most important objective set by the sponsor was brand awareness, and this is possibly the only one set in advance, as implicitly stated by the interviewee's responses with regard to the criteria for selecting the sponsoring brands which are provided above. Furthermore, the significance of brand awareness was also strongly and directly emphasised by the respondent, who ranked it as the number one goal pursued by the sponsor. The emphasis on brand related goals is not a new phenomenon for less developed sponsorship contexts, as the systematic review of the literature highlighted (Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Pope & Voges, 1994). In addition, it is interesting to note that brand awareness is regarded as being the main benefit to be realised through sponsorship for Greek sponsors, who operate in a very similar to the Cypriot cultural context and sponsorship market. Furthermore, sponsorship has been considered by many authors globally as an essential brand building strategy (Amis 2003; Amis et al., 1997; Copeland et al., 1996; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Ladousse, 2009; Papadimitriou et al., 2008). Therefore, the emphasis placed in this specific case study upon brand awareness goals is not surprising.

In addition to brand awareness, another important goal set by the sponsor in this case study was the enhancement of "the profile of the business... the prestige of the business". Interestingly, there was no consideration of the achievement of internal goals such as employee relations, despite the fact that the respondent indicated that the season tickets were distributed internally to the employees of the company for hospitality purposes. The interviewee clarified, however, that this

practice was not within a broader attempt of the company to keep its employees satisfied, since it was “clearly a matter of kindness, affection and friendship”. This finding is in contrast to evidence provided in the systematic review suggesting that the attainment of internal marketing goals through sponsorship is essential for small companies (Crowley, 1991), but it could be the case that, the unprofessional approach adopted by the specific sponsor in this case study did not allow room for the pursuit of more sophisticated sponsorship objectives such as the attainment of internal marketing goals, upon which there has been a recent shift, as indicated in the systematic review of the literature (Cunningham et al., 2009; Pichot et al., 2008). In addition, it could be the case that in less developed sponsorship contexts such as Cyprus, sponsors are not primarily concerned with more advanced goals such as employee satisfaction.

As portrayed by the objective setting process, and similarly to the other local sponsors explored in this multi-case study, it was clear that the company was not concerned at all with the internal target market. Therefore, it seems once again that employees were not deemed by the local sponsors in Cyprus to constitute an important stakeholder group, and this is something that indicated a poor strategic direction of sponsorship. This is in line with evidence gathered in relatively less mature sponsorship markets such as South Africa (Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004) and Australia (Polonsky et al., 1996). Instead, the interviewee stated that the main target market that was clearly and actively accessed through sponsorship was the external customer market. As already mentioned in previous case studies, however, although this is in line with many studies demonstrating that existing and potential customers were regarded as being the main publics reached through the sponsorship medium (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004; Crowley, 1991; Meerabeau et al., 1991; Spence et al., 1997; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998), this illustrates once again the superficial approach to sponsorship adopted by this specific business which appeared to be ignoring all the other publics that could be reached and communicated with through sponsorship. It is of interest to mention that the respondent realised the potential of sponsorship to build good and

beneficial relationships with the business community in which the sponsor operates, and this is important since business partners were indeed mentioned by many authors as an important target market to be reached through sponsorship (e.g. Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004; Crowley, 1991). At the same time, the interviewee admitted that this target market was considered to be reached “internally and subconsciously” since the sponsorship agreement they currently had with this particular club was not regarded as providing much potential for investing in it in order to build mutually beneficial business to business relationships.

As with the overall sponsorship management approach outlined above, it was probably expected that there were no leveraging, nor evaluation practices applied for the sponsorship activity undertaken by the local intermediary. As the respondent admitted “we provide them with the money in July, and we do nothing through the year... No-th-ing [*emphasising the word*]” except “a couple of signage in the stadium”. Similarly, the company did not undertake any evaluation to measure the return generated through sponsorship, since the respondent held that the company knew that the specific sponsorship arrangement could not generate any results. In the interviewee’s words, this sponsorship produced “nothing... never! Never and nothing”. This conclusion was based upon the feedback generated through “informal surveys” regarding how informed the customer was about the company’s products. As the interviewee said:

I know whether a certain client was motivated by the advertisement of the styling product during the match ... I know the effect of this [sponsorship], and it is marginal. I would not say non-existent, but I will say it is marginal.

Even more interesting is the following statement, which undoubtedly depicts once again the paternalistic nature of this sponsorship which is obvious in almost all sponsorship activities undertaken by the sponsor:

The fact that we do not evaluate [the sponsorship] is not a matter of inadequate practices or poor perception. There is no reason to evaluate. It is

like sponsoring a small team created by my brother or my son. Whatever happens, it will keep going on. Nothing is going to change. Even if the club drops to the second division, my family will continue to sponsor this possibly very weak club, but it is the club that we love. It is like a small cat that I have that is blind and dirty but I love it more than anything else in my life. It is just like that.

4.1.9 Case study 9: Interior Contracts Company (Construction Industry)

The next case study explores a sponsorship agreement between a local, small company operating in the construction industry and a football club. More specifically, the sponsor is a subsidiary company dealing with interior contracts and it is owned by a larger group of companies operating in the construction sector in different areas. Apart from local business, the company deals with the export of its products internationally, while it aims to constantly present innovative decorative products and dry construction materials. The sponsorship agreement between the company and the club started in 2011 and it is the only sponsorship agreement ever signed by the sponsor. Though, the company had used sport as the platform for advertising its products and services since 2004. As the marketing manager stated, during the last decade it was “advertised through various clubs in various stadiums”.

This sponsorship arrangement is different to the other cases explored in this multi-case study since it is the only one that relies exclusively on the provision of services by the sponsor. Another unique aspect of this sponsorship agreement is that the local sponsor had chosen not to support a local football club, but instead, it had decided to become involved in sponsoring a club representing another regional area. Considering the prevalence of localism described in the previous case studies, this is indeed surprising and unexpected, especially since the sponsor is a small local business which relates mainly to the local area. Interestingly, the respondent felt that in order to prevent the business from experiencing any negative consequences from the decision to sponsor a non-local club, the company had to try “be very objective... not fanatic” suggesting that

they had to adopt a more neutral approach to sponsorship and not trying to identify strongly with the sponsee to demonstrate that the company is a fan “of football” and not a strong supporter of the club. This is possibly a unique finding in the sponsorship related literature since the effort exerted by sponsors is normally to seek to be strongly identified with the sponsored property in order to draw upon the psychological connection of the fans with the sponsee (Gill, 2008). With regard to this specific case study, the effort to remain neutral despite the fact that the sponsor invested some money in this sponsorship agreement that logically should be directed towards creating a linkage between the two entities (Cornwell et. al., 2001b; Mescon & Tilson, 1987) raises serious concerns with regard to the conceptualisation of sponsorship which seemed to lack a professional orientation.

This was firstly illustrated in the underlying premises of this sponsorship arrangement relating to the motivation that triggered the specific sponsor to become involved in this sponsorship arrangement. The main motive mentioned by the marketing manager was the personal interest the owner had in the specific club which was strongly connected to altruistic and philanthropic motives. As the respondent indicated, based on the owner’s involvement with the club’s officials, the company became aware of the financial difficulties the club was faced with and it decided to help the club. The patronage nature of this sponsorship was even more vividly demonstrated by the fact that the company had never thought of using sponsorship as a marketing tool in the past. The mobilising factor was the fact that the owner was a strong supporter of the club, so he decided to combine the forthcoming business relationship – the interior contracts company was subcontracted to undertake the renovation of the main building of the club – with a sponsoring agreement involving the provision of free services as a return for a sponsorship designation as a main sponsor of the club. As the respondent indicated, the owner of the company “liked the club” and he was “a fanatic fan of the club”, but at the same time he considered this sponsorship as “a good opportunity to advertise the company accordingly”.

Although at a first glance it seemed that there was some indication of business related motives as well, it should be mentioned that the respondent clarified that the main drive was the “help” and “support” provided to the club. In addition, the amateur and non-sophisticated sponsorship approach is further substantiated by the fact that the sponsorship was described in this case study as advertising. In fact, the two terms were used interchangeably, suggesting that the respondent conceptualised the two different components of the marketing mix as one and the same. It is of interest to mention, however, that sponsorship is clearly differentiated from advertising, mainly due to the fact that the message delivered through advertising is heavily controlled by the advertiser (Gross et al., 1987 Walliser, 2003) whilst messages delivered through sponsorship are subject to several communication barriers (Walliser, 2003). Moreover, sponsorship messages are directed towards a wide variety of audiences whilst their effectiveness is regarded as being higher due to the perceived goodwill in consumer’s minds (Jones & Dearsley, 1989, cited in Thwaites, 1994).

The non-professional approach of this sponsorship agreement was further illustrated in the overall decision-making process. As the marketing manager admitted, the marketing specialist had no contribution in the decision to become a sponsor, but instead this decision was taken solely by the owner of the company. In line with the above, there was no screening process since there was no proposal involving any other clubs as the choice was based solely on the personal interest of the owner in the specific club. Interestingly, the marketing manager admitted the only criterion used for choosing the sponsorship “was to help the club”. This finding leads once again to the conclusion that there was an obvious mis-conceptualisation of sponsorship in this case study. In particular, it seemed that, in line with early sponsorship literature (e.g. Gratton & Taylor, 1985; Mescon & Tilson, 1987), sponsorship was perceived as a philanthropic and charitable contribution and not as a mutually beneficial promotional activity that has the capacity to be used as a resource towards building a competitive advantage (Amis, 2003; Amis et al., 1997, 1999; Cornwell et al., 2001a).

The poor conceptualisation of sponsorship as a marketing tool demonstrated above was further supported by the fact that, although there was a sponsorship contract between the two parties, the components were limited to the provision of a VIP box, logo placement and additional advertising within the stadium. Not surprisingly, the sponsor did not clarify issues such as logo prominence and size before signing the contract. Instead, as the interviewee commented, the club was “very flexible” and responsive to the requirement of the sponsor that were made after the sponsorship deal. Obviously, there was much room for communication and agreement between the two parties, possibly due to the minimal requirements of the sponsor as demonstrated throughout the interview. This is further depicted by the fact that the sponsor did not include any provision with regard to securing exclusivity since they felt that it was something that the club “would realise that, regarding this issue, it would be unfair to have another [similar] company advertised [through sponsorship]”.

In contrast to the non-systematic approach to sport sponsorship demonstrated above, the company appeared as being directed towards the achievement of certain goals such as corporate and brand awareness, media exposure, the recruitment of new customers and the creation of good business relationships. With regard to corporate awareness, the respondent commented that it was the main goal set by the sponsor since there was another competitor operating in the same industry with a very similar corporate name, thus there was a need to differentiate the company and sponsorship was regarded as a useful means to achieve this. Brand awareness was ranked as the second goal in terms of importance. It is indeed the case that the systematic review of the literature indicated that there is a stronger emphasis upon corporate related objectives (Hartland et al., 2005) even in relatively less developed sponsorship contexts such as South Africa (e.g. Spence et al., 1997). At the same time, however, it has to be mentioned that corporate related goals can be regarded as a part of a strategic and more well-orchestrated approach to sponsorship, which was not the

case in this case study. In contrast, it seemed that objective setting was an ad-hoc activity and probably the emphasis on corporate awareness was primarily and solely based on the competitor sharing a similar corporate name and not upon a realisation of sponsorship's contribution to the development of an effective corporate strategy. This is further substantiated by the fact that those goals were not set in a quantifiable manner allowing monitoring and evaluation.

In line with the goals set by the sponsor, the main publics reached through the specific sponsorship agreement were external customers and business partners. With regard to the external customers, the sponsor attempted to access a specific target market consisting of young individuals ranging between 25 and 45 years old. According to the respondent, the specific demographic target market was regarded as fitting the image that the products of the company. As she stated: "because our products are more modern design, juvenile... so we try to reach young people that they want to renovate their place". As the interviewee clarified, this was the main target market fostered by the company, and sponsorship of the club was deemed as helpful in the broader promotional effort of the company towards accessing the specific demographic group. As the interviewee explained:

When people visit the stadium, they are more relaxed... they can pay more attention... I mean, when you approach a young business person... 35- 40 years old, if you call them in order to inform them about your company, they may probably not pay attention. Whilst, if you are there... in their place... [inside the stadium] when they go there to relax... in their place, then you will get much more attention.

In a manner similar to the above arguments, sponsorship has indeed been regarded as a communication vehicle which has the capacity to create an informal atmosphere, and thus it is thought to be able to reach a more receptive audience and to communicate the sponsor's message more effectively (Santomier, 2008).

The emphasis upon external customers demonstrated in this case study was not unexpected, especially when considering the emphasis placed upon the specific public by the majority of the sponsors examined in this multi-case study. What is

surprising, however, is the attempt of the sponsor to use sponsorship as the platform for creating good business relationships with partners. As already mentioned in the previous case studies, partners have been realised as an important target market to be reached through sponsorship, but in this case study, the realisation and attempts demonstrated by the sponsor to access this public were regarded as demonstrating a more systematic and professional approach to sponsorship, which did not coincide with the overall amateurish and non-professional sponsorship activities described above. It seemed that for this small, interior contracts company, sponsorship was well appreciated in fostering and developing strong relationships with business partners, and this is logical if we consider the reliance of this type of business upon the local business community. This explanation is further substantiated by evidence provided in the systematic review of the literature indicating that one of the four categories of sponsors created based on audience orientation was the business community oriented sponsors, and this category represented small, industrial goods companies mainly because of its heavy reliance upon the business community (Crowley, 1991).

Aligned with the broader approach adopted by the sponsor, the sponsorship leveraging activity undertaken was marginal. Specifically, the respondent claimed that additional spending on sponsorship activation practices ranged “between 2% to 5%” of the original sponsorship investment, and the persons involved in sponsorship related management practices were both, the owner and the marketing manager of the company. The activities mentioned by the respondent, however, involved mainly actions such as securing a certain logo size for the shirt or the various other places upon which the sponsor’s logo could appear, signage within the stadium, organisation of some contests through the social media, and distribution of promotional material during some of the club’s matches. This admittedly weak and inactive approach to sponsorship leveraging may be explained by the arguments made and presented earlier in this case study, which indicated that the sponsor did not actually want to be strongly identified with the sponsored property in an effort to remain “neutral”. As the interviewee commented:

we try not to be very fanatic... like other teams... even on the Facebook, when we are advertised, we try to be... at least I try to be objective. I mean I do not want to be fanatic towards the club. I prefer to demonstrate that we are football fans...

This reasoning, however, seemed to be in significant contradistinction with a professional sponsorship approach that would be able to produce significant results for the sponsor, since the effort should be towards activities enhancing identification and connection to the sponsee in order to invest in the psychological attachment of the fans that could lead to positive attitudes and purchasing behaviour.

Along the same lines, evaluation of sponsorship in this case study was non-existent. According to the respondent, the main obstacle with regard to measuring sponsorship results was the financial cost involved in this process since the company did not have a research department, and therefore the measurement was going to be assigned to an external partner indicating probably a higher cost. At the same time, the respondent indicated that the company was able to monitor at least the level of customer recruitment that was based on sponsorship:

But we see the results on a daily basis. For example, the web site traffic... There is a program on Google that can monitor... for example, a certain number of new visitors came from the club... several promotional activities on Facebook generate a certain number of visitors. We are also informed about the customers visiting the show-room... where do they come from... which are their sources of information.

It has to be mentioned, however, that the methods used for monitoring customer recruitment were non-professional, non-systematic, on a random basis, and thus non-reliable. As the respondent indicated, this was done primarily on an experiential basis. In her own words, "I can monitor the traffic on the website and the person in the show room can monitor the customers [visiting the show room]." Despite the lack of a reliable evaluation method, the interviewee was convinced,

and this was obvious throughout the interview, that the sponsorship did produce positive results:

We see that there is a reaction... much response. After we distributed the leaflets, people were coming [in the store] saying “*we saw your products in the field*”, and that was fortunate. We always ask customers how they found out about us (...). We are advertised on their [the club’s] website, and we see that most of the company’s contacts come from the club... from their website.

4.1.10 Case study 10: Local Media Corporation

The last case study explored in this research featured several long-term sponsorship agreements between a local subscriber-TV corporation and eight football clubs competing in the first division of the Cypriot championship. The corporation is at the moment the leading subscriber-TV business in Cyprus and it was originally formed as a limited liability company at the beginning of the 1990s which aimed to spearhead the development of a TV group as the first pay-TV in Cyprus. The business was gradually expanded to include a large number of TV related areas through several partnerships, mergers, acquisitions and joint ventures. Today, the corporation deals with several areas such as programming and scheduling services, the commercial exploitation of airtime commercial sales on the channels, the production of movies, television programs and commercials, subtitling, dubbing and translation of movies and TV programs, and the sale of goods on TV (tele-shopping). More than a decade ago, the corporation signed a contract with the Cyprus Athletic Federation involving the promotion of Cyprus as a training ground for athletes and teams for the 2004 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

As demonstrated by the aforementioned actions, the corporation represents one of the important players of the sport scene in Cyprus, and its activities were not restricted within the broadcasting services. Therefore, it was not surprising that the company became involved in sport sponsorship only a few years after its

establishment. Almost two decades ago the media corporation started signing several sponsoring agreements, with the vast majority being within the football sector. Specifically, the business signed sponsorship agreements with eight of the fourteen clubs competing in the first division championship, with the Cyprus Football Association, and with the Cyprus Association of Football Referees. Interestingly, most of the sponsorship agreements initiated in the 1990s with the football clubs are still active today through renewals that followed the three- or five-year sponsorship contracts, leading to the conclusion that this particular business is an experienced actor in the Cyprus football sponsorship context.

Additionally, all the sponsorship arrangements involved the provision of both cash and in-kind services. Specifically, the president of the corporation clarified that the in-kind services consisted of many different coverage and exposure methods such as:

free TV time, or when the clubs organise certain events we have to cover them... or when they would like to produce a DVD for a certain occasion, because for example they won the championship... and a weekly service in a way during the championship... that has to do with the production of the DVDs concerning the clubs competing. I mean, they contact us when they compete against a certain club, and... we have created a system through which... at least the clubs that we cooperate with... of course we also do it for the other clubs, but we provide them with DVD copies of the opponent... within the context of creating good relations...

This case study is different when compared to the majority of the local sponsors explored in this research since it is probably the only one that appeared to be based on sound professional grounds. This inference draws primarily upon the motives guiding the several sponsorship decisions made by the sponsor, which seemed to represent purely commercial factors. As the president of the corporation commented, the business decided to enter the sport sponsorship market for strategic reasons:

Basically, we started sponsoring sport in 1996, when the company entered dynamically I would say the market of broadcasting rights. To us, sponsoring

and broadcasting rights go hand in hand. That is, in almost all of our contracts there is a provision for sport sponsorship.

It is of interest to note that the company had never entered an individual sponsorship agreement outside of broadcasting deals. This is indicative of a strategic activity that considered sponsorship and broadcasting rights as accommodating each other. As the respondent argued, “we consider the two intertwined”. The commercial aspects of the motivation triggering the sponsorship deals was more clearly depicted in the fact that the respondent considered sponsorship as serving the interests of both the club and the company since it was used as the means for increasing the return the company could have from the broadcasting rights agreement. The prevalence of commercial factors and the lack of any personal motives was not only evident in the interview provided by the president of the corporation, but it was also depicted in the fact that, despite that the corporation being one of the main stockholders of a very successful football club in Cyprus, the decision was to sponsor all football clubs with which the company managed to sign a broadcasting agreement. Thus, it was obvious that the motives were clearly business-related.

The commercial orientation of this sponsorship was further depicted in the criteria employed for selecting the eight clubs to be sponsored. As the interviewee commented, those criteria were purely business and professional, and were related mainly to the broadcasting agreement. In the words of the respondent, “I repeat that, to us, the main criterion is the broadcasting rights. Thus, it depends on this. It depends on whether we want to and whether we can have a broadcasting contract with the certain clubs”. This was also the reason for this multi sponsorship agreement. Therefore, it seemed that, in contrast to the other cases explored before for which the reason for avoiding a sponsorship agreement with a single club was the hostility between the fans of the various clubs, in this case study multi-sponsorship agreements were based on business reasoning.

Interestingly, despite the signs of a professional and strictly commercial approach to sponsorship, once again the decision-making power was located at the top management level since the interviewee said that the decision was taken by the president and the executive director of the company. This finding does not coincide with evidence from the systematic review of the literature suggesting that the involvement of additional departments and people in the sponsorship decision-making process is indicative of a more systematic and well-integrated sponsorship approach (Burton et al., 1998; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992). At the same time it should be mentioned that the involvement of lower level managers in this process was found to be a characteristic of mature sponsorship markets such as the USA (Walliser, 2003). Therefore, it was not that surprising that in the developing sponsorship context of Cyprus, decision-making power was gathered at a very high management level. It should be mentioned, however, that as the respondent indicated, the marketing department became very important after the decision was made, and that it was fully aware of the provisions of the contract in order to be able to deliver the agreement.

Additionally to the above, the components of the contract provided additional signs of a professional and more systematic approach to sponsorship that the specific sponsor seemed to adopt as compared to all other local sponsors explored earlier in this research. Specifically, the interviewee argued that the contract was a result of negotiations with each club separately, but the attempt was always to include very detailed clauses that would enable the creation of a mutually beneficial and “peaceful” cooperation:

In order to avoid misunderstandings, we try to have provisions in the contracts that are clear. So, we know that we can have, for example, signage of a certain size at a certain place in the club’s stadium... very specific provisions.

Components of the contract regulated issues such as signage within the stadium, and the training facilities, media exposure, logo placement, size and prominence, the provision of free tickets and a sky-box for hospitality purposes, and the

delivery of several promotional activities by both the club and the sponsor. Interestingly, the company appeared to be very much concerned with exclusivity, and this was one of the primary components of the contracts signed since it was regarded as the foundation of the sponsorship agreement between the two parties. As the interviewee commented, "it is obvious that... I do not believe that there is any company that is going to accept this". This assumption, however, was proved to be false since, according to the previous case studies explored in this study, many local sponsors did not ask for exclusivity when signing the contracts, a fact that clearly suggests a lack of professional orientation with regard to the sponsorship agreement. In this case study, the respondent emphasised that the attempt was to create and maintain a very good relationship with the sponsee, and a detailed and well-specified contract was regarded as the means to achieve this. In addition, the respondent felt that, in order to develop and maintain a long-term relationship with the sponsees, the company appeared to be very flexible with regard to negotiations and being ready to provide additional opportunities to the sponsored property:

I have to say that our intention was mainly to avoid any misunderstandings. And because of the experience we had, our intention was to be proactive and to forecast as many things as possible so as to avoid misunderstandings. At the same time, I have to say that it was many times that a club came up with a requirement, and by mutual consent, we said... ok, despite the fact that this is not our... you can do it with another company as well so as not to miss the chance for generating additional revenue. My policy was to build very good relationships with the clubs, and I believe the company had helped a lot, for all these years.

Interestingly, (McCarville & Copeland, 1994) agreed that a long-term relationship is developed and enhanced actually by benefits and rewards that are open to negotiation and change. Therefore, it seemed that the effort of the sponsor in this case was in the right direction, since as McCarville & Copeland added, this practice indicates a power balance between the two sponsorship parties which is thought to be more conducive to the creation of satisfaction, and subsequently to the enhancement of the relationship.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that the sponsor felt strongly that this long-term relationship with the clubs was the main factor leading to an impressive development of the football sponsorship context within the last two decades. As the respondent said, “I believe that any well-intentioned person could see the impressive progress that happened in the area of broadcasting rights and sponsorships if they compare the situation now and then”. The above argument is further substantiated by Scherer et al., (2008) who shed light on the commodification of sport and the crucial role of media and corporate alliances in adding value to the sport. Specifically, the authors’ paper highlighted an interesting transmission of power from the sponsor to the sponsee, and the subsequent enrichment of the latter so that to enhance its bargaining power in negotiations with the media and other sponsors. The authors argued that although the media agency is regarded as being in the most powerful position in this interplay, the equity added to the sponsored property through a very powerful actor, the sponsor, is able to change the power balance within this system, leading to a stronger, more desirable sponsored property which is more attractive to the media and which can negotiate better financial agreements. Given that in this specific case study the media agency was both, the broadcaster and the sponsor, the interviewee was justified in claiming that the role of the company and its long-term sponsorship involvement was indeed crucial to the development of the sponsorship market.

The importance placed upon the creation of a long-lasting and constructive relationship with the sponsored properties seemed to be in line with the objectives pursued through the sponsorship medium. As the interviewee argued:

The most important thing is to identify the company with the fans of the clubs. To convince them that the company is always by their side [supports the club]. It is proven that the fans actually support those who support their club.

Obviously, identification between the sponsor and the sponsee featured as one of the main priorities of the sponsor, and this is regarded as being another indication

of a systematic and professional approach to sponsorship that this company seemed to have adopted. As the systematic review of the literature indicated, identification or alignment between the sponsor and the sponsee is a crucial issue that can improve the potential the sponsorship has (Gill, 2008). The potential of identification towards the creation of positive attitudes and behaviour was something that was recognised by the sponsor, as illustrated the above statement. The sponsor's awareness about sponsorship related issues could be attributed to the marketing background of the president of the company, which in turn could be regarded as being responsible for the adoption of a well-informed, highly structured and systematic sponsorship approach.

In addition to the goal of creating and enhancing identification, the interviewee indicated that another essential objective pursued through sponsorship was the enhancement of corporate image. As the respondent indicated, "the perception that you create, from a communicational perspective... the perceived value that you create for the company, is extremely important". The interviewee explained that the goal was to create an image of a very successful company that with a socially responsible profile. According to the interviewee, the several sponsorship agreements signed aimed at building an image of a business that:

...is by the side of the clubs, that the company is receiving but it is also giving to the clubs and it helps them achieve their goals... that it is a company that is close to football and sport, that it is a player in the market. It is important to make people feel that the company is a player with regard to broadcasting rights, and therefore in the paid TV sector.

As already mentioned in the previous study, the prevalence of corporate related goals is a relatively new trend identified in the literature review and it seems to have replaced the dominance of media related goals that was evident in the past. At the same time, an orientation towards the attainment of more refined goals such as enhancing the corporate image is perceived to be an indication of a comprehensive and systematic approach to sponsorship which can serve as the basis for the establishment of corporate credibility and subsequently the

development of corporate identity (Garry et al., 2008). Furthermore, considering the fact that the specific case study involves a large corporation, the emphasis placed upon image related goals is not surprising, especially when considering that the systematic review of the literature indicated that the size of the sponsor can be an important determining factor, with larger sponsors being more inclined towards image related objectives (e.g. Armstrong, 1988; Gratton & Taylor, 1985). Additionally, the importance placed upon image related goals may be explained by the length of the sponsorship agreements in this case study since there is some early evidence on sponsorship (e.g. Armstrong, 1988) suggesting that longer sponsorship relations seemed to be strongly directed towards image related goals.

Interestingly, an increase in sales also featured as an extremely important goal to be achieved through sponsorship. The emphasis on sales related goals that was explicitly reported in the interview was further substantiated by the fact that the only public which the sponsor sought to access through sponsorship consisted of external customers. As the respondent indicated, an increase in sales was thought to be achieved through various promotional activities that aimed at generating subscribers, as well as through the aforementioned objectives that were related to enhancing identification and corporate image. It is worth noting that sales objectives did not seem to prevail in the systematic review of the literature as a priority for sponsors (see Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Thwaites & Carruther, 1998; Witcher et al., 1991; Yu & Mikat, 2004). At the same time, it is important to observe that for less developed sponsorship contexts that are similar to the Cypriot context, for example Greece and Romania, sales and profit goals seemed to be prevalent (Constantinescu & Szekely, 2009; Papadimitriou et al., 2008). Furthermore, the emphasis on sales goals may be related to the nature of the service sold, since, for a TV channel there is a direct impact upon sales. At this point it is probably important to note that there is some evidence in the systematic review of the literature suggesting that the goals to be achieved through sponsorship may be influenced by normative pressures resulting from

education and training of sponsorship decision-makers. Specifically, according to Berrett and Slack (1999), a more rational and economic orientation which usually involves more tangible and quantifiable benefits such as profit and sales objectives is thought to result from a strong natural science bias in the training of decision-makers.

In addition to sales goals, another objective mentioned by the sponsor was an increase in exposure gained through sponsorship. As the respondent indicated:

I would say that, because of the fact that we are a TV platform, so, exposure is something that is given in a way... but, the exposure we get from other TV stations is very important as well. Therefore, exposure is another very important thing.

Interestingly, the importance assigned to exposure was mainly related to the potential of the particular goals to be measured, as the interviewee indicated:

Exposure is another very important thing, and it is also measurable. You can measure it. The fact, for example, that all the TV stations broadcasting football highlights on Sunday evening, using parts [parts of the sport news produced by LTV] and For example, the fact that we are on the shirt of the referee, it is given than the referee will appear in some clips [slides broadcasted by TV]. Therefore, we get exposure from this. Or, when we have signage in the stadium... for example. All these [exposure] are measurable, are evaluated... you can quantify them.

Obviously, evaluation of the objectives appeared to be of major importance for the sponsor, and thus, the attempt of the company was to set objectives that were specific and measurable. According to the interviewee, "given the experience we have for all these years, we can realise... we can quantify the value of each promotional activity". Therefore, it was not surprising that the company made several attempts to evaluate its sponsorship arrangement, though it has to be mentioned that those attempts were not made on an annual basis as the respondent admitted. At the same time, it is worth noting that sponsorship evaluation was performed both internally and externally through the use of an

agency, something that depicted the importance placed upon measuring the outcomes generated through sponsorship:

Yes, we have done some research. One of the things that the marketing department has to do is to try to measure some of these returns to see the outcome they generate, and we have also used a research company, a research agency that has done research for us, and the findings were really important.

In line with the objectives set, evaluation of sponsorship in this case study involved mainly direct sales measures. The measurement of sales generated through sponsorship is regarded as being a relatively difficult task, and thus, many studies examined in the systematic review had chosen to identify the impact of sponsorship upon purchasing habits or purchasing intentions of consumers (e.g. Barez et al., 2007; Chebat & Daoud, 2003; Cornwell & Coote, 2005; Lyberger & McCarthy, 2002; Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006; O'Reilly et al., 2008; Shin & Turco, 2005; Stotlar, 2002). In this case study, however, the emphasis placed upon estimating direct sales through sponsorship was regarded as being an achievable task:

It is easy for us, because of the systems that we use, we could easily find out, based on our own systems, the direct sales created... We knew for example that the promotional activity made with Club A and the issue of the card [affinity program with Club A] brought to us a certain amount of customers.

Another sponsorship measure used by the sponsor in this case study involved exposure generated through sponsorship. It is indeed the case that media coverage and exposure measures appeared to prevail in the literature review (Abratt & Grobler, 1989; Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004, 2005; Davies & Tsiantas, 2008; Thwaites, 1994, 1995; Thwaites et al., 1998; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998; Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004), but at the same time it is important to note that this measurement method is not regarded as being a sophisticated technique which can provide useful insight into the effectiveness of sport sponsorship and its subsequent potential to attain certain goals. In this case study, it is indeed encouraging that exposure methods were not used as the main measurement tool

but instead, these had been combined with several other techniques suggesting a somewhat more refined and experienced sponsorship management approach.

Interestingly, the sponsor also employed some attitudinal research through a questionnaire measuring corporate image and perceptions towards the company. As the respondent indicated, the goal of the evaluation methods employed was “to realise whether certain benefits were indeed, generating a return... or... we have seen that some of them, for example, were not that effective”. The somewhat more professional approach to sponsorship evaluation that was demonstrated in this case study can be attributed again to the large size of the corporation, since according to the literature review, larger sponsors appeared to be more systematic in the evaluation of their sponsorship arrangements (O'Reilly & Madill 2009; Thwaites, 1993; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998) as compared with smaller sponsors. Additionally, the review of the literature indicated that long-term sponsorship arrangements such as the sponsorship deals examined in this case study, may be associated with more advanced sponsorship evaluation processes (Pope & Voges, 1994), whilst the same seems to apply when companies sponsor successful clubs or teams compared to less successful entities (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004). The latter point is also of relevance in this case study since within the eight sponsorship deals signed by the media corporation, four of them involved the most successful clubs in the Cypriot Championship. The more systematic sponsorship evaluation process depicted in this case study may also be related to the employment of a research agency which is expected to be associated with more advanced and professional measurement methods.

In contrast to the well-structured practices outlined above, and despite the fact that the company appeared to be very concerned with additional leveraging activities that would increase the capacity of the sponsorship medium, once again sponsorship leveraging was inadequate. In fact, additional money spent on sponsorship activation and leveraging was marginal, with the interviewee admitting that additional spending involved only a couple of ad-hoc activities. At

the same time, the interviewee appeared as highly appreciating the value of sponsorship management practices, and thus, the company seemed to exert decent efforts to leverage its sponsorship investment. The activities undertaken, however, were not sophisticated, or numerous. Leveraging of the specific sponsorships involved mainly the organisation of an event involving blood donation, additional advertising through signage, securing exposure through the press conferences, and several social events. Maybe some actions that depict a relatively more refined leveraging approach included the organisation of several promotional activities within and outside the stadium in collaboration with the clubs “that are mutually beneficial, such as the club bringing new subscribers for the company and getting a certain amount of money from those actions”. Moreover, an indication of an important leveraging effort was the enactment of an affinity program with the most successful football club in Cyprus aimed at enhancing the relationship between the two sponsorship parties, but this information was not elicited through the interview but rather it was based on external sources of information used for the purposes of the present study. Given that the sponsor is at the same time a media agency, it could be the case that the sponsorship leveraging program employed could be much more innovative and effective. Interestingly, the systematic review of the literature provided some evidence suggesting that cooperation between the media, event organisers and the sponsor can be particularly effective in creating a distinctive and creative activation program incorporating fascinating entertainment aspects which can be particularly attractive and effective (Goldman & Johns, 2009).

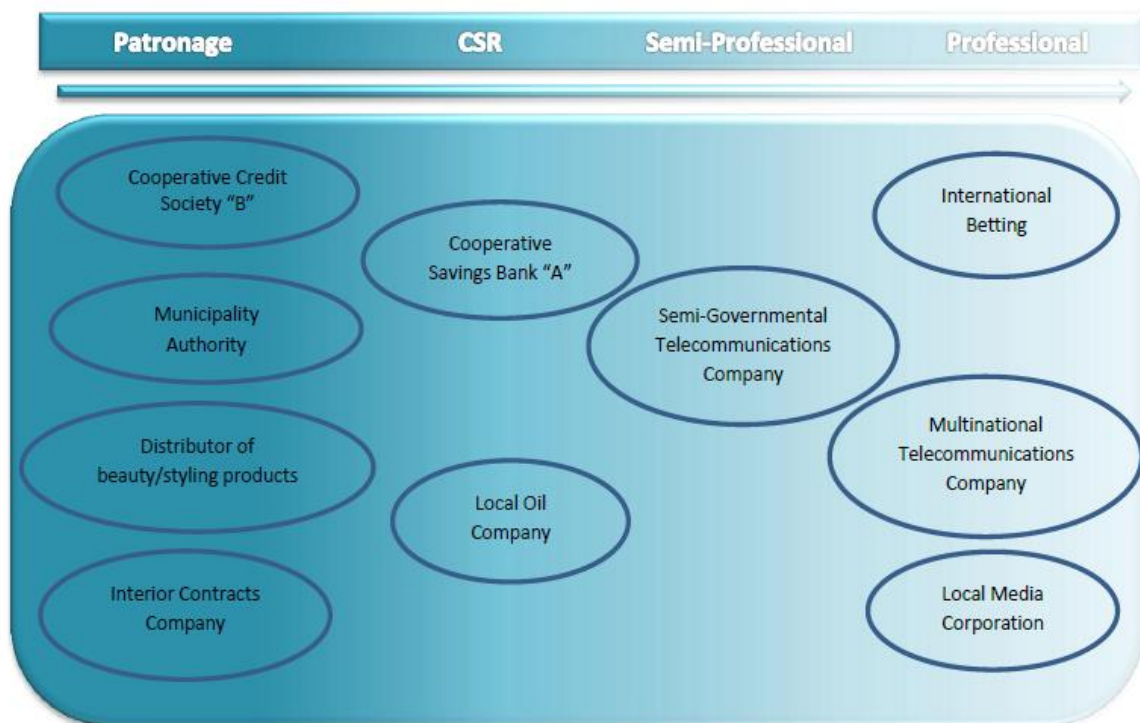
4.2 Between-Case Analysis, Meta-Themes Development and Strategic Conclusions

4.2.1 Between-Case analysis

Based on the findings that emerged from the within-case analysis of the ten different sponsors explored in this study, the most important outcome involves the

fact that diverse sponsorship approaches seem to exist within the same sponsorship context. More specifically, despite the assertions generated from the systematic review of the literature that suggested the existence of different sport sponsorship approaches for differently developed sponsorship contexts, this study demonstrated that within the same immature, less developed sponsorship environment, sponsors seemed to adopt a wide variety of sponsorship related practices. In particular, the findings indicated the existence of a sponsorship continuum which consisted of four different approaches to sport sponsorship, ranging from purely philanthropic and patronage activities to strictly commercial and highly professional practices (see figure 4.1).

Figure 4:1 Continuum of Sponsorship Approaches evident in the Cypriot Sport Context



The sponsorship approach located on the left side of the continuum involves purely altruistic and philanthropic activities which are regarded as representing patronage rather than sponsorship. Sponsors adopting this approach represent different industries, with one of them being a municipal authority, the other one being a cooperative credit society, whilst surprisingly the other two sponsors

operate in the private sector. For those sponsors, sponsorship was regarded as public funding or as a donation. In fact, as already described in the within-case analysis, those words were used by the respondents to describe the sponsorship activity they were involved in. For those sponsors, the primary motivating factors for engaging in sponsorship were philanthropic, altruistic, social, community, personal, and/or emotional. In some cases, the driving forces were emanating from a sense of obligation, or duty, to provide philanthropic support to the community in which those organisations operate. In addition, the decision to become involved in sponsorship was always being taken at a top management level, by the president or the owner of the organisation.

The patronage nature of this kind of sponsorship was also depicted in the absence of sponsorship selection criteria, as well as in the absence of a contract regulating the sponsorship arrangement. Interestingly, in one of the cases the respondent admitted that components of the agreement were not even verbally discussed. Even in cases where a contract did exist for typical purposes, such as in the cases concerning the distributor of beauty/styling products and the interior contracts company, the components of this contract were inadequate and unsophisticated, posing minimal requirements upon the sponsee. Furthermore, the annual renewal of the contract was made on a habitual basis. Interestingly, there was no exclusivity clause regulating the sponsorship agreement, with two of the sponsors admitting that they even exerted pressures upon the sponsee to get additional funding from other companies, including competitors. Additionally to the philanthropic and paternalistic nature of these sponsorship arrangements, this action depicts an unwillingness of the sponsor to further commit to the sponsorship agreement, possibly due to the fact that the main motives for engaging were attributed to the feelings of “duty” and “obligation” the sponsors had to provide support for the clubs.

Another common characteristic of those altruistic and philanthropic sponsorship activities involved the lack of sponsorship-related objectives, and even when

some goals were set, those where neither predetermined nor specific and measurable. Interestingly, when an image objective was mentioned by the cooperative bank “B” this primarily involved an attempt to avoid the negative impact of a sponsorship withdrawal upon the image of the company. This is regarded as being connected once again to the social and community pressures that played a major role in triggering sponsorship involvement. Finally, another commonality identified in this specific sponsorship approach was the fact that the sponsors did not undertake any activation and leveraging action, nor did they attempt to evaluate the sponsorship activity.

Moving to the right side of the continuum, the next sponsorship approach identified in this research involves a CSR (corporate social responsibility) conceptualisation of sponsorship. Although the distinction between patronage and CSR approaches is regarded as being subtle, for the purposes of this research the main distinguishing feature of this approach involved the focus of the sponsors upon social and community related goals as well as upon a more orchestrated attempt to achieve those goals. More specifically, two sponsors fall within the CSR approach to sponsorship, the local oil company and the cooperative savings bank “A” (see figure 4.1). The main factors mobilising sponsorship investment in this case represented social and community related motives, shaped by the duty to help and support the local society. Interestingly, the terms used to describe sponsorship activity were “social offering” and “cultural offering”, depicting clearly the CSR approach to sport sponsorship demonstrated by both organisations within this category.

The social and communal nature of sport sponsorship was further depicted in several other elements of the sponsorship management activities undertaken, such as the selection processes, the components of the contract, the objectives pursued, and the leveraging practices employed by the sponsors. In particular, sponsors adopting this approach to sponsorship appeared to be employing more formal decision-making processes and the criteria for selection incorporated a

social element, something that was also evident in the components of the contract. The local oil company, for example, placed much emphasis on a contractual provision securing the participation of the club's players in social and philanthropic events. Similarly, the cooperative savings bank "A" indicated that exclusivity provision was not secured in the contract since the attempt was not to deny the club the opportunity to raise money through other banks, suggesting once again that sponsorship was regarded as a social offering rather than an investment.

The social nature of sponsorship was further portrayed by the centrality and importance of social responsibility objectives, as well as by the emphasis sponsors placed upon leveraging activities of a social character. Moreover, in the case of the oil company, responsibility for sponsorship management activities was assigned to the PR department, suggesting that sponsorship was approached as a public relations activity falling within the broader corporate social responsibility program of the company. This was also explicitly admitted by the respondent who felt that sponsorship management should fit in the activities undertaken by the PR department since it was regarded as a "social offering" and thus as an activity enacted "for the welfare of the society". Having said this, it should be mentioned that the CSR sponsorship approach was once again characterised by limited and unsophisticated leveraging, whilst evaluation practices in one of the two cases was totally absent whereas in the second case there was some indication of a willingness to incorporate sponsorship evaluation within the broader evaluation of the marketing campaign.

The next approach to sponsorship identified in the present study is the semi-professional, involving rational and systematic sponsorship related activities which incorporate some less professional sport sponsorship aspects. Only one company falls within this particular category - the semi-governmental telecommunications company (see figure 4.1). The main sponsorship motivations identified in this sponsorship approach involve the prevalence of both commercial and social motives. In specific, it seems that for certain sponsorship arrangements the

organisation was driven by purely professional factors, whilst for sponsorships involving low success clubs, social and community-related and altruistic motives were predominant. In addition, this approach appeared as being characterised by a concrete and comprehensive decision-making process that incorporated several selection criteria, including a consideration of demographic fit with the sponsored property's fan base.

In addition, the sponsorship contract included detailed and well-specified components minimising the risks involved in sport sponsorship, whilst exclusivity clauses were also evident in this approach. It is interesting to note, however, that one of the less professional aspects of this kind of sponsorship is the fact that sponsorship-related decisions were taken at the top management level, with much less involvement of the middle management level, something that is regarded as characterising sponsors being less familiar and less experienced with regard to sport sponsorship (Burton et al., 1998; Farrelly et al., 1997; Walliser, 2003). In contrast to the above, many of the objectives pursued were clearly defined and varied according to the stage in which sport sponsorship was going through (e.g. although at the early stages the emphasis was upon brand awareness at later stages the emphasis moved to building brand preference and retaining customers), suggesting a more systematic and well-coordinated sponsorship management approach. At the same time, those objectives were not set in a way allowing for evaluation. Moreover, more refined and more sophisticated goals such as internal marketing objectives were not deemed important goals to be reached through sport sponsorship, indicating once again an inability of the sponsor to exploit sport sponsorship to its full potential.

In addition to the above, the main target audiences reached involved external customers and the media, but ignorance of the variety of publics that can be accessed through sport sponsorship indicates a superficial and less systematic sponsorship approach. Other sponsorship aspects identified in this category which depict a poor and weak sponsorship management activity included

insufficient leveraging which was also closely monitored by the top management level, a fact that is regarded as portraying a less systematic approach characterised by a lack of familiarity and thus of sponsorship-related knowledge (Walliser, 2003). Along the same lines, inadequate and inappropriate sponsorship evaluation practices complete the picture of a semi-professional sponsorship approach.

The fourth sponsorship classification that one can find in this specific sponsorship context is what is identified on the right side of the continuum as a “professional approach” to sport sponsorship. This category consists of sponsors who approached sponsorship on a purely systematic, methodical and organised basis. This is a conclusion which was built upon the evidence gathered concerning almost all aspects of the sport sponsorship activity. In specific, sponsors aspiring to this approach – a multinational telecommunications company, an international betting company and a local media corporation – appeared to be driven by motives representing purely commercial factors and being based on sound professional grounds, without the interference of any personal, emotional or philanthropic elements. Moreover, the strategic aspect of this approach was further depicted in the decision-making process employed by the sponsors, which consisted of concrete and well defined business criteria being linked to specific objectives pursued, enabling them to choose the most appropriate sponsee. The rigorous selection processes employed relied on the use of sophisticated criteria such as target audience fit and image fit with the sponsored properties, and it was further depicted in the decision of the international betting company to use an agency in an effort to ensure a rational and strategic approach in selecting the sponsorship agreements.

Interestingly, another defining characteristic of this professional approach to sport sponsorship is the decentralisation of decision-making authority and control which was evident in the two sponsorship cases enacted by the international sponsors. In addition to the above, the refined selection process described above involved

the use of a comprehensive and well-specified contract including several components aiming at regulating many different issues, such as ensuring exclusivity and longevity of the sponsorship agreement. Another indication of a professional approach to sport sponsorship is the fact that the components of the contract were closely connected to the other elements of the sponsorship arrangement, such as the objectives sponsors wanted to pursue.

With regard to the objectives, sponsors aspiring to this approach were very concerned with setting specific predetermined goals that would also enable evaluation of sport sponsorship. A common objective set by the two international companies is the use of sponsorship to contribute towards the achievement of globalisation goals - adapting to the local market and creating affairs with the local community in an effort to compete more effectively with the local businesses. Moreover, the orientation of the sponsors towards more refined and sophisticated goals is also regarded as indicative of a systematic sponsorship approach. Such goals included creating goodwill for the business, building awareness and image, developing a certain positioning concept, creating good relationships with the general public, creating affinity with customers, developing good business to business relationships, building strategic alliances, lobbying, PR as well as customer recruitment and customer retention. It is interesting to emphasise the importance placed upon the realisation of corporate related objectives, which is also regarded as being a characteristic of a more comprehensive approach to sport sponsorship, as well as the pursuance of internal marketing goals demonstrated by the multinational telecommunications company.

In addition to the above, the professional approach to sport sponsorship located at the right side of the continuum also involved sponsors identifying well clarified target audiences to be reached through sponsorship, which went beyond the consideration of external customers, and included local authorities, media, politicians, business partners and employees. Congruent with the aforementioned elements of this specific sponsorship approach, leveraging activity enacted by

sponsors also appeared as being more vigorous, at least with regard to two of the three sponsors that fall within this classification. In particular, apart from the international betting company which, despite the importance it assigned to leveraging activities, cited a lack of human resources to deliver such a program, the rest of the sponsors appeared willing to adopt several activation and leveraging actions. More specifically, the local media corporation exhibited some decent efforts to leverage its sponsorship arrangement with 8 clubs, whilst the international telecommunications company appeared to spend additional money - 75% of the original sponsorship investment – upon leveraging activities, and it adopted an inspiring leveraging program that was strongly related to the objectives set by the sponsor incorporating interactive activities having the capacity to produce excitement and enthusiasm.

As was the case for leveraging, evaluation was also exercised in a more formal and concrete way. The scene with regard to the evaluation of sport sponsorship is, though, identical to leveraging. Although the international betting company did not undertake an organised effort towards measuring the results of its sponsorship investments, the other two sponsors adopted a solid, rigorous and comprehensive evaluation plan that corresponded to the variety of objectives set. Evaluation actions included attitudinal research, sales measures, media coverage indicators, employee satisfaction research, and motivation research.

4.2.2 Strategic Conclusions – Meta themes

Glocalisation

Considering the wide variety of approaches to sport sponsorship adopted by the sponsors in this study, a subsequent step in this chapter is to highlight the various meta-themes or strategic conclusions raised from the analysis of the findings. Interestingly, this case study of the Cypriot sport economy involved the manifestation of both rational and sophisticated sponsorship arrangements adopted mainly by the international sponsors, whilst at the same time modes of

much less rationality and sophistication were depicted by sponsors of the local market. Interestingly, the analysis of the findings revealed the interdependence of global and local processes within the sponsorship-related practices, suggesting that sponsorship arrangements in this specific context are marked culturally by processes of “glocalisation” (Robertson, 1992). Sponsorship practices enacted by both local and international sponsors had been redefined and adapted by the local culture so as to better fit the particular aspects, characteristics and needs of the local sport context in which those sponsorships take place.

The concept of glocalisation and glocalisation processes were particularly useful in enabling the reader to understand the amalgamation of sponsorship processes outlined above and to perceive sponsorship activity as a “glocal” process which encompasses the response of local, that is Cypriot society (and in some cases communities) to the introduction of what are proposed as rational sponsorship practices that work globally, and thus should be universally applied. Instead of looking at sponsorship as a globalised product that is imposed in a specific context, this study suggested that a more fruitful approach is an approach that recognises “the capacities of ‘the local’ to redefine, selectively accept, reject or transform, global flows of products and services” (Amara & Henry, 2004, p. 2). Therefore, approaching sponsorship as a “glocal” process enables the reader to understand how localism, political clientelism, interpersonal relations, and other cultural factors intervened to create unique and “tailor-made” approaches to sponsorship depicted in this case study.

It would be helpful though to locate sport sponsorship within the broader process of modernisation of football in Cyprus that took place in the 1990s. This process had been reinforced by the rapid growth of privately-owned media and the introduction of subscriber-TV which contributed significantly to a gradual shift from amateurism to professionalism, especially through the increasingly growing broadcasting rights diffused to the sport of football. Football was thus moving towards a market oriented economy and this was further enforced by the

government's efforts to decrease the financial reliance of sport and football in particular upon the state. The clubs started being organised as "limited liability companies", and thus, the process of modernisation had to be connected to a more professional football model, forcing sport officials to turn to more rational, scientific and business related practices that would enable them acquire the funding necessary to respond to the requirements of this model, such as the rapid growth of transfer fees and player salaries.

Throughout the process of modernisation of football, the dynamics of globalisation were manifest, and this is hardly surprising when considering that sport and especially football is regarded as being "epicentral to contemporary globalisation processes" (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004, p. 561). It is indeed the case that even the diffusion of sport world-wide itself has been regarded by many authors as a product of, and as a vehicle for, globalisation processes (Maguire 1993). At the same time, Amara and Henry (2004, p. 2) have argued that the process of globalisation is often portrayed "as involving the spread of Western liberal values and Western norms of sports practice and organization", and they added that "this is most explicit in work on theories of modernization and sport", an approach which these authors reject since it fails to recognise the influence of local factors and their capacity to recontextualise global processes and products. Espousing the view expressed by Göle (1997), the authors stress the need to rethink the concept of modernity and its western origin and they advocated a local modernity approach which "seeks a more exclusive and pluralist reflection towards modernity" that has both local and western manifestations (Amara & Henry, 2004, p. 3).

Similar arguments have been made by Giulianotti and Robertson (2004) in their discussion of the cultural elements on football globalisation. The authors conceptualised glocalisation projects as "the constitutive features of contemporary globalisation" (Robertson 1995, p. 41), and they elaborated on "the interdependencies of the local/particular and the global/universal, and on how

these are reflected in processes of glocalization” (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004, p. 546). According to the authors, glocalisation processes have always been displayed within football’s realms, whilst they endorsed the view expressed by Robertson (1995) indicating that glocalisation is a term that enables us to capture the way in which the synergies between the local and the global differ according to particular cultural circumstances.

Based on the above, and considering the traditional notion of the modernisation of football in Cyprus it might have been expected that practices related to the football market in Cyprus, such as football sponsorship, would also have been characterised by rational, scientific, coherent, rigid and professional procedures. In contrast, local modernity and glocalisation processes have been vividly expressed in sponsorship related projects in Cyprus, depicting several Mediterranean cultural nuances such as localism, nationalism, political clientelism, and strong reliance on personal relations in public spheres. Sponsorship arrangements seemed to have been heavily impacted by the structure of the sponsors’ industry, the organisational structure and corporate culture, as well as by the structure and local specificity of the football market in Cyprus.

Cultural Nuances

Community Pressures

As evidenced in the vast majority of the sponsorship arrangements examined in this multi-case study, local sponsors in many instances appeared to be heavily guided by an “obligation” or “duty” to support the football clubs and subsequently the community in which those organisations operate and grow. It was obvious that social pressures had a pivotal role in the decision of those sponsors to invest in sport sponsorship, and in some cases those pressures were explicitly expressed by the respondents, such as the representative of the local oil company who said that sponsorship was an activity undertaken because “it was expected that the

more financially powerful would help the rest". Interestingly, some sponsors appeared to be driven solely by those pressures since they were not willing to commit to their sponsorships. It is indicative that the representative of the municipality authority felt like "it is very difficult to unhook ourselves from this [sponsorship]". Therefore, it is not surprising that the majority of the sponsors examined in this case study did not attempt to secure exclusivity when signing the sponsorship contract, which is another peculiarity of the sponsorship activity undertaken in Cyprus.

The social pressures mentioned above can be seen as emanating from the enhanced feelings of nationalism and localism described in the previous section which are regarded as being related to the small size, as well as the history of the country. In particular, Cyprus is a relatively newly established nation which became an independent state in 1960. As a result of the Cyprus Convention In 1878, the island of Cyprus had been given to the United Kingdom as a protectorate from the Ottoman Empire in exchange for United Kingdom's military support to the Ottoman Empire (Library of Congress Country Studies, n.d.). Cyprus gained its independence from the United Kingdom, after an anti-British campaign by the Greek-Cypriot "EOKA" (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) and following a long-term liberation struggle against British Colonial hegemony. The years that followed were not tranquil since in 1974 the Greek military junta and its Greek-Cypriot collaborators carried out a coup against the democratically elected president of Cyprus, an action that was used by Turkey as a pretext to protect the Turkish Cypriots of the Island. Therefore, in a two-phase invasion that followed, Turkey occupied 36,2% of the sovereign territory of the Republic and forcibly expelled about 180.000 Greek Cypriots from their homes (Cyprus Press and Information Office, n.d.).

Turkey's invasion brought economic ruin to the northern part of the island which was occupied, and at the same time the economic, cultural and social conditions for the part of the island that remained free were devastating. Therefore, it took a

long time for Cypriots to recover from the negative consequences of the Turkish Invasion, whilst the political problem is still unresolved, creating feelings of injustice and resentment among many Cypriots. Considering the history of the island and the difficulties Cypriots were faced with, it was reasonable that values such as communal sensitivity, cooperation and support would be intensified in Cypriot culture. It is indeed the case that one of the main characteristics of Cypriot culture is a strong sense of solidarity, and this is exactly what enabled the Cypriots to overcome the difficulties they had been faced with (Richter, n.d.). Within this cultural context, it was perhaps logical for the more wealthy Cypriots to support the less privileged people around them, and this provides some explanation for the increased feelings of obligation and duty mentioned above as well as the social pressures triggering several supportive activities. The aforementioned factors are regarded as responsible for the creation of increased feelings of nationalism and localism, something that was evident in all aspects of their activities, including sport sponsorship as indicated above. In addition, the small size of the country and the subsequent limited power that it can exercise in several fields, especially those concerning the international arena is another factor that can be regarded as promoting the deeply shared feelings of nationalism and localism described above.

Additionally to the special “obligational” character of many sponsorship deals, another cultural aspect that seemed to have affected the sponsorship-related activity in Cyprus is that of the politicisation of football which has been described in detail in the analysis of the cases examined in this thesis. As already mentioned, politicisation of sport and more specifically football is a deeply rooted phenomenon in Cyprus that goes back to the development of the sport which had been greatly affected by the civil war in Greece since the two cultures have always been closely intertwined. Politicisation of football is manifested in every aspect of the sport, and thus it is not surprising that sponsorship activity in Cyprus appeared to be heavily influenced by the political aspects of the sport of football. Given that the political dimensions of the sport are regarded as being the main

source of violence associated with football and the rivalry between the football fans (Peristianis et al., 2002), it is to be expected that the sponsorship-related decisions of the sponsors would involve actions directed towards avoiding or limiting potential negative consequences of associating strongly with a certain club. Therefore, phenomena that seem to be unique and unusual for the global sponsorship domain, such as avoiding becoming very committed with a particular club, associating with the image of the sport and not the image of the specific club, and getting involved in multiple sponsorships within the same championship, can be viewed within, and explained from, a broader cultural standpoint.

Clientelism

Another cultural feature that is evident in sponsorship activity in Cyprus is that of political clientelism as well as the broader clientelistic and strong personal relations that characterise the Mediterranean culture (among others) and which have the capacity to heavily influence decision-making. Starting with political clientelism, which was already described in the case study examining the sponsorship activity of the semi-governmental telecommunications company, it is indeed the case that sport sponsorship has been to some extent shaped by the broader political system that exists in Cyprus and the associated clientelistic relationships that political parties have developed and relied upon in an effort to maintain control (Faustmann, 2010).

Political clientelism is regarded as a common phenomenon in southern European states (Ferrera, 1996; Sotiropoulos, 2007). For the Cypriot context, the roots of political patronage and clientelism were mainly attributed to the Ottoman Empire. According to Richter (n.d.), the only political organisation that existed during the Ottoman exploitation and repression period for people was a patron-client structure called the *muchtar* system, and this is regarded as the historical basis of today's clientelism. For Faustman (2010), the limited scope of political activity allowed to Cypriots by the British rulers during the first half of the British Colonial period allowed the creation of links between local power holders and their

electorate which were responsible for the perpetuation of the earlier established political clientelistic networks. Those links and clientelistic networks were largely destroyed during the second half of the British Colonial period, but after the independence of the island in 1960 “a refined system of political patronage by powerful politicians became one of the most important features of Cypriot society” (Faustman, 2010, p. 273).

The small size of the Cypriot society is also regarded as being responsible for the creation of paternalistic and clientelistic relations, since “in small societies, personal connections inevitably become vital for the interaction of the individual with the state and the promotion of personal goals” (Faustman, 2010, p. 270). Additionally, Gilmore (1982) argued that Mediterranean societies nurture conditions that are ideal for the development of patron-client ties, and thus patronage represents a distinctive feature of Mediterranean politics. Although there is not much research exploring the impact of political clientelism and patronage on the sport sector, it is logical to assume that the sport field, as an aspect of the broader culture, cannot escape this reality. In fact, research conducted by Henry and Nassis (1999, p. 55) in Greece, with which Cyprus shares many cultural similarities, indicated that “clientelism is a persistent feature of social and political relations in Greece and affects a wide range of policy fields including sport”. It is indeed the case that, in this study examining sponsorship in Cyprus, political clientelism was even more vividly demonstrated in the action performed by the semi-governmental organisation, and this is hardly surprising since Faustmann (2010) indicated that with regard to the Cypriot context, the public and semi-governmental sectors are more conducive for politicians willing to exercise influence through political clientelism.

In addition to the above, clientelistic and personal relations, as part of a broader Mediterranean culture, seem to have penetrated all aspects of the society in Cyprus including the sport field. A vivid example illustrating the involvement of those factors in the sponsorship activity conducted in the Cypriot football market

is that of an international sponsor employing a professional sport agency for choosing the most appropriate partner. Although the intention of the sponsor was to employ strictly professional approaches and procedures so as to make rational judgments with regard to attaining the best possible sponsorship partner, the impact of local cultural factors in these processes was clearly manifest. The interpersonal and clientelistic relations of the local agent represented an obstacle to this rational procedure, suggesting that there is a tension between rational theories of management and social practices. Despite the attempt of the sponsor to buy industry-specialist knowledge and an 'objective analysis' in order to guide sponsorship activities, in fact what was purchased was a sponsorship deal based on personal relations between actors from the agency and from the football club. Those actions demonstrate how cultural factors that are deeply embedded in a specific society can interact with international processes and thus, redefine and alter those practices to fit the local context.

Structure of the Local Football Industry

Sponsorship activity undertaken in Cyprus was also influenced by the structure of the Cypriot football industry. The main peculiarity of the Cypriot Football League is the fact that, considering the size of the country, there are many clubs competing in the first division – fourteen to be specific – whilst at the same time there is no competitive balance in the national league. Only three of the fourteen clubs compete for the championship title each year, and this has been the case for a number of years, leading to a competitive imbalance in turn resulting in a reduction of interest in the football industry (Kartakoullis & Theophanous, 2009).

As a result of this competitive imbalance, there is a huge gap between the more successful and the weak clubs with regard to the financial resources available to them. It is indicative that, as Kartakoullis and Theophanous (2009) found, in the 2005-2006 season a total of 507,000 tickets were sold with 337,661 - 66% of the total - being utilised by the 5 larger/more successful clubs. Considering that ticket sales provide the most important source of revenue for football clubs in Cyprus,

followed by income generated from commercial activities including sponsorship, membership fees or financial support from fans/friends, and broadcasting rights (Kartakoullis & Theophanous, 2009), the discrepancies between weak and large football clubs are substantial. It was thus logical to assume that, with regard to the present study, the interest of the sponsors would be concentrated on the first-group clubs, and more specifically on the three clubs that regularly compete for the championship, since those clubs are the most successful. In contrast, this study identified an absence of such a practice, with the majority of the main sponsors examined in this multi-case study investing in multiple sponsorships rather than on a single sponsorship investment. It seems the problems that weak clubs are confronted with due to the competitive imbalance described above, and especially the competition and financial challenges that those clubs are faced with because of the fact that they cannot compete with the three favorites on equal terms (Kartakoullis & Theophanous, 2009), have had an impact on the type of sponsorship enacted by sponsors in Cyprus, especially by local entities. It is indeed the case that, sponsoring many different clubs competing in the same championship is not common practice in sport sponsorship, but with regard to the Cypriot context, the reason for multiple sponsorship involvement lies in the patronage and philanthropic nature of sponsorship demonstrated by many sponsors in this study. Therefore, the inequalities generated due to the structure of the national league can be regarded as fueling the enactment of sponsorship arrangements in an effort to support the weakest clubs in order to survive and to continue competing in the first division of the league. As already mentioned in the analysis of the cases, many sponsors appeared to be willing to continue sponsoring certain clubs regardless of their performance on the field. It is also the case, however, that sponsors investing in the largest and most successful clubs also choose a multiple-sponsorship approach, a phenomenon which can be explained by the heavy politicisation of football mentioned earlier and the associated rivalry between the clubs, a factor that has been regarded as potentially detrimental to many sponsors in this study.

Structure of the Sponsor's Industry

Another factor that appeared to influence the sponsorship mechanisms and processes employed by sponsors in the Cypriot sport context is the structure of the sponsor's industry. More specifically, the level of competition within the Cyprus market is a factor that seems to have a substantial impact upon the sponsorship approach sponsors adopted. The context of industries characterised by high levels of competition, such as the telecommunications sector, seemed to have imposed a need upon sponsors to adopt a more professional and rational sponsorship approach, and to use sponsorship as the means for improving their competitive position in the industry. As illustrated in figure 4.1, the sponsors operating in the telecommunications industry were two of the four sponsors that adopted more professional, structured and concrete sponsorship procedures. Interestingly, the within-case analysis indicated that because of the heavily competitive nature of the specific industry, those sponsors used sponsorship in a defensive as well as in an offensive way, so as to secure their position in the market. It is probably helpful to remind the reader that the local telecommunications company (case study 3), which is also the leading company in the industry, tried to marginalise the international telecommunications company (case study 2), through an attempt to "break" the continuation of the sponsorship agreement of the latter with the most successful football club in Cyprus in an effort to counter its increasingly dominant position.

In addition, the impact of the structure of the sponsor's industry is also demonstrated in the efforts of the two international sponsors – the telecommunications company and the betting company – to use sponsorship as the tool for developing "public affairs with the local market" (betting company), or to "align with the local market" (telecommunications company). Given that the betting industry is also one of the most heavily competitive industries in Cyprus, mainly due to inadequate legislation providing no restrictions on on-line betting before the introduction of the 2012 Betting Act (Ioannides, 2012), it seems that high levels of competition forced sponsors to use all the tools at their disposal,

including using sponsorship in a more sophisticated way to assist in reaching their strategic goals.

In contrast, the approach adopted by sponsors operating in less competitive industries, such as the local oil company and the interior contracts company which operate mainly in the industrial sector, is characterised by much less professionalisation and sophistication. Both sponsors mentioned above approached sponsorship either as a tool fostering corporate social responsibility, or in a totally philanthropic and charitable manner. Therefore, the levels of competition within an industry could be regarded as important forces shaping the sponsorship management practices of sponsors in the specific context.

What is surprising with regard to the findings of this study is the approach adopted by sponsors operating in the financial industry, which is another highly competitive industry in Cyprus. Both cooperative organisations (case studies 5 and 6) demonstrated very low levels of sophistication in enacting and managing their sponsorship arrangements, something that did not coincide with evidence provided in the literature review (e.g. Thwaites, 1994). It should be mentioned, however, that in this study, the two financial organisations examined are banks operating under the cooperative movement in Cyprus, which was built upon the principles and values of mutual assistance, solidarity and support (Co-Operative Societies' Supervision and Development Authority, 2004). Therefore, it seems that the impact of the communal and social nature of those sponsors may well have countered the potential influence of the structure of the industry in which those sponsors operate.

Organisational Culture and Structure

Considering the above, it is obvious that another causal mechanism underlying the sponsorship activity undertaken in the specific context is the organisational culture. The humanistic and supportive culture nurtured by the cooperative movement's principles and values described above was regarded as having an

important impact upon the type of sponsorship pursued by sponsors in this case study. Therefore, it is not surprising that such an organisational culture appeared to be associated with fostering a corporate social responsibility, or with a philanthropic and patronage conceptualisation of sponsorship (see figure 4.1).

Another illustration of the impact of the organisational culture upon the sponsorship approach adopted involves the case of the international betting company. The sponsor in this case is a company dealing with a product that is regarded as being at least controversial (MacLean & Bonington, 2008) and even unhealthy (Maher, Wilson, Signal & Thomson, 2006; Richards, Darling & Reader, 2005). Therefore, there has been much debate in the literature with regard to the ethical and legal dimensions of sport sponsorship by unhealthy products. Firstly, due to the fact that those sponsorships conflict significantly with the values supposedly promoted by sport, but also because of the capacity of sport sponsorship to encourage unhealthy behavior (Ledwith, 1984; McKelvey, 2004a,b). Interestingly, McKelvey (2004b) considered the increasing exposure of people to messages promoting gambling as being responsible for fueling further adolescents' gambling habit. Considering the above, it is not surprising that the international betting company attempted to use sponsorship as the means for lobbying with the local community – politicians, fans, and several decision-making authorities – in an effort to increase their legitimacy and thus to engage those partners to oppose the enactment of legislation. The sponsor in this case used sponsorship in a strategic manner, so as to legitimise a controversial and much debated issue: the issue of betting and gambling. The power underlying sponsorship management in this case is regarded once again as emanating from the corporate culture and the associated values, principles and beliefs that the organisational members share in the specific organisational context.

In addition to the organisational culture, organisational structure also appeared as being an important power underlying the approach to sport sponsorship adopted by sponsors in this case study. In many of the cases explored, a rigid bureaucratic

organisational structure was in fact one of the determining factors shaping the sponsorship related activities undertaken by the sponsor. Organisations characterised by centralised authority and control were more prone to gather sponsorship decision-making power at the top level. Therefore, sponsorship-related decisions were taken primarily by the board of directors or the owner of the business. This involves not only the decision to engage in sport sponsorship, but also decisions regarding the management of the sponsorship arrangement. It is indeed the case that in bureaucratic organisations, senior executives and board members had a prominent role in managing and controlling the sponsorship process, with peripheral departments such as those responsible for marketing or PR, being marginalised from this process.

Centralisation of authority is not only a structural component, but it is also regarded as being an element of the organisational culture. Hofstede's (1980) work on national and organisational cultures is probably the dominant paradigm, although this paradigm is significantly criticised and challenged by many analysts (e.g. Jones, 2007; McSweeney, 2002) and for a number of reasons (i.e. assuming cultural homogeneity, using one-company approach to study an entire cultural system of a country, political influences due to the timing of the survey, inappropriateness of the survey method for determining cultural disparity, etc.). Nevertheless, many authors continue to defend Hofstede's work as the most insightful inter-cultural analysis. Hofstede's analysis is thus regarded to be extremely illuminating with regard to the authority and power that people are willing to accept within a society. *Power distance*, the term used to describe "the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 2011, p. 9), is one of the six dimensions for studying and comparing national cultures. Hofstede's work was conducted in the work environment of a specific organisation in 50 different countries in an effort to identify cultural features that shape business behaviour. Considering Hofstede's model, the organisational cultures that are prevalent in this multi case-study to be characterised by high power

distance, since the sponsorship decision-making process described above seems to be autocratic and paternalistic, whilst lower level management of those bureaucratic and hierarchical organisations seem to easily accept the top-down authority and control.

Although there is no research classifying Cyprus on the six cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede, it is important to note that a very similar cultural context, the Greek one, was classified by The Hofstede Centre (n.d.) as belonging to the higher side of the power distance dimension. This indicates that the Greek society, and thus we can speculate that this applies to the Cypriot society too, is a society that heavily respects hierarchy and in which authority and inequality of power are acceptable. Therefore, centralisation of authority and control with regard to sponsorship-related decisions that was demonstrated in this multi case study can be explained from a cultural point of view, mainly through the prevalence of a hierarchically organised society in which an element of acceptance of authority and power are evident.

Chapter 5– Conclusions

This final chapter aims at providing an overview of the concluding thoughts derived from the research data generated, synthesised and analysed in the present thesis. The goal of this study was twofold: firstly, the study aimed to identify the sponsorship management practices employed on an international basis and to reveal the existence of differences and discrepancies as they relate to the sponsorship mechanisms and structures that exist in different contexts. This goal was intended to be achieved through a systematic review of the literature. The second aim of the study was to use the findings derived from the systematic review in order to gain insights from the sponsorship management practices employed by sponsors in a relatively under-developed sponsorship context, Cyprus, and to identify the extent to which the sponsorship structures and processes identified in the literature are also evident in the particular sponsorship context.

Therefore, the study relied on a combination of inductive and deductive approaches. More specifically, the inductive analysis of the findings of the systematic review was used to reveal current knowledge in relation to the existence of those sponsorship mechanisms and to postulate the underlying structures that exist in a relatively less mature sponsorship context. Subsequently, a deductive approach was used to examine those mechanisms and structures so as to confirm or disconfirm those claims and beliefs with regard to sport sponsorship.

Based on the above, this chapter focuses on the contribution of this study to sport sponsorship knowledge and the theoretical insights developed based on the analysis of the systematic review findings as well as on the exploratory research that followed which concentrated on the sponsorship management practices employed by sponsors in a non-mature sponsorship context. In addition, this

chapter reflects on the main limitations associated with the study, not only in terms of methodological design but also in terms of findings. Finally, future research directions relating to the research findings produced in this thesis are presented.

5.1 Research Study Contributions

The contributions of this thesis to the existing sport sponsorship literature have been substantial and diverse. Starting with the first part of the study, the most important contribution of the systematic review of the literature is the fact that it provided empirical evidence confirming, rejecting or altering broadly embraced claims and beliefs in relation to sport sponsorship and the sport sponsorship literature. Therefore, in addition to providing the foundation for the broader thesis, the systematic review is a standalone piece of work substantially contributing to the body of knowledge through developing and deepening our understanding of the sport sponsorship field. In addition, the empirical evidence provided was based on a rigorous, concrete, and highly structured method that intended to minimise personal bias and thus to increase objectivity of the research findings. As already described in chapter two, the systematic review methodology adopted in this study involved a replicable scientific procedure which encompassed comprehensive searches, employing explicit search strategies that provided transparency, and involved rigorous critical judgments and synthesis of all relevant studies (Cook et al., 1997). The aforementioned actions are thus regarded as improving the reliability of the systematic review findings.

With regard to the findings of the systematic review, the study provided more insight into the different sponsorship management practices that exist in different contexts. In particular, the findings suggested that different practices are used by different sponsors, and that sponsors operating in dissimilar contexts may be driven by different motives, pursue diverse goals, employ distinct selection criteria and procedures, and engage in different management and evaluation practices.

Therefore, the findings of the systematic review are invaluable for sport properties and sponsors, especially for those organisations investing in sponsorship agreements in more than one country or in diverse sports. Moreover, invaluable insights into the sponsorship management processes provided by the findings of the systematic review enable both sponsors and practitioners to develop informed and academically adequate explanations of sport sponsorship, frameworks for attracting and selecting sport sponsorships, as well as appropriate models enabling the sponsorship evaluation process. In-depth understanding of the sponsorship management practices can also enable sport properties in the process of soliciting and maintaining sponsorship support. In addition, understanding critical sponsorship management parameters will enable sport properties to work more closely with their sponsors so as to facilitate the achievement of sponsors' goals and to build strong and mutually beneficial sponsorship relationships.

Another significant contribution related to the findings of the systematic review is the fact that those can be used to inform further empirical work, since the findings highlighted sponsorship areas and topics deserving more research attention. More specifically, the systematic review indicated that less developed sponsorship contexts within and outside Europe had been under-researched, with the vast majority of the studies focusing on North America, Canada and the UK. This trend, however, had resulted in the development of sponsorship frameworks and models that correspond mainly to markets that are heavily commercialised and to their associated systems and cultural values (Yang et al., 2008) whilst at the same time less mature contexts and their related cultural settings did not consistently provide a platform for sponsorship research. Furthermore, the findings revealed the need for further research to provide conceptual explanations on how sponsorship works (Sam et al., 2005; Vignali, 1997), since the largest part of the literature review produced descriptive papers lacking underlying theoretical foundations.

From a methodological point of view, it was evident that there is much room for the employment of qualitative methodological designs that have the capacity to provide deeper insight into the sponsorship management practices than the prevailing nomothetic approach adopted by researchers. The use of qualitative research designs is regarded as being particularly appropriate for specific research areas such as the investigation of the strategic aspects of sport sponsorship (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998), but also for improving the value and accuracy of sponsorship studies (Yang et al., 2008).

The systematic review also indicated that some sponsorship related topics had been heavily researched, such as the sponsorship evaluation area as well as the several components of the sponsorship management process including objective setting and fit. However it was also apparent that other sponsorship-related topics had been under-represented in the literature, and this forms an important implication for researchers willing to investigate the phenomenon of sport sponsorship. Another interesting finding of the review that could also inform future research is the fact that the vast majority of empirical studies has examined sponsorship from the perspective of the sponsor. Interestingly, very few studies investigated sponsorship in relation to the sponsored property, suggesting that the specific research area had been broadly neglected in the literature. At the same time it is important to note that research attention has been mainly directed at large corporations, ignoring small sponsors that may exhibit different sponsorship approaches and practices.

In addition to the above, it is also of interest to observe that many sports have also been under-represented, since football and the Olympics have been the most heavily researched sporting activities, followed by rugby in Australia and New Zealand, and car racing in the USA. Furthermore, the systematic review highlighted the need for conducting longitudinal research which is capable of enriching our understanding of the value of sponsorship and its long-term effects (Ali et al., 2006), for improving our knowledge of the sponsorship development processes (Oikkonen, 2001), and for understanding how sponsorship works

(Walliser, 2003). Finally, it seems that there is also a need for more research that relies on experimental and semi-experimental designs, since only a few studies (e.g. Byon & Zhang, 2009; Coppetti et al., 2009; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; McCarville et al., 1998; McDaniel, 1999; Ruth & Simonin, 2006) have invested in the potential offered by this specific mode of research.

With regard to the second part of the study, the empirical evidence generated in a relatively immature sponsorship market, Cyprus, has managed to make a remarkable contribution to the sport sponsorship literature. Firstly, it managed to fill the gap identified in the systematic review with regard to the investigation of less mature sponsorship markets. This research focused on a less-developed and less commercialised market which is characterised by a different cultural system. Therefore, the importance of the study is that it investigated sponsorship management practices and the underlying mechanisms and structures impacting sponsorship related decisions in a context that was neglected in the literature. The study aimed to use this context as the platform for testing whether the sponsorship frameworks, structures and processes identified in the literature review also correspond to those found in different, less commercialised, less mature sponsorship contexts characterised by different social and cultural values.

Additionally, considering the gaps identified in the systematic review of the literature, the study significantly contributed in that it represented a qualitative methodological response to the gap identified in respect of qualitative inquiry which is regarded as providing richer understanding of the sponsorship phenomenon (e.g. Choi et al., 2006; Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Shaw & Amis, 2001; Yang et al., 2008). Furthermore, this research is regarded as fulfilling another gap identified in the literature review since it focused on both small and large sponsors in an effort to identify potential differences in the sponsorship management approaches adopted between the two types of organisations. An additional significant contribution of the study is that it provided conceptual explanations which were based on theoretical foundations in approaching and investigating the sponsorship activity. Specifically, the study went beyond the

sponsorship phenomenon in order to identify the causal mechanisms and structures that generated the observed phenomenon. The main underlying mechanisms impacting the sponsorship activity to emerge in this study involved mainly processes of glocalisation indicating the impact of several cultural powers such as the politicisation of football, interpersonal and clientelistic relations, nationalism, localism, centralisation of authority and control, and the structure of the local football industry. In addition, the structure of the sponsor's industry as well as the organisational structure and culture of the sponsoring entity also appeared as significant influences in the sponsorship activity.

These findings are important in that they have significant strategic implications and are relevant to the broader sponsorship context. It is anticipated that academia, sponsors and sport organisations will be able to benefit from this thesis. From a practical perspective, the findings of the multi-case study are valuable in that they provide explanations that are particularly helpful for both sport practitioners and sponsors operating in similarly developed sponsorship markets. Therefore, information and knowledge generated through this particular study can be transferred to other similar settings sharing similar characteristics, values, qualities, and systems.

5.2 Limitations

Whilst we would claim that the contribution of this doctoral thesis to the sport sponsorship field is significant, it is also the case that, as with any form of research, this study also exhibits a number of limitations. Starting with the systematic review of the literature, although the aim of the researcher was to include as many studies relating to sport sponsorship as possible, the review can not be regarded as truly global. The criteria employed for selecting the studies (e.g. the language criterion – only studies published in English) explain why the majority of contributions come from the USA, Canada and the UK. It is important to note that sponsorship has traditionally been of great interest to researchers in

Europe, and more specifically in France and Germany (Walliser, 2003). Therefore, one of the important limitations of this study is that the work of researchers published in other languages is not considered.

With regard to the second part of this thesis – the multi-case studies – the main methodological limitations, as described in detail in the research strategy and methods chapter, involve primarily the difficulty in generalising the findings. Lack of statistical generalisation is an inherent limitation of a qualitative case-study method, but it should be emphasised once again that the intention of the study was not to produce findings that could be generalised to a broader population in a statistical sense, but instead, to provide rich insights with regard to sport sponsorship that can be transferred to similar settings. This is what Yin (2009, p. 38-9) refers to as “analytic generalisation” which involves identifying the presence or lack of patterns anticipated in the data on the basis of theory, thus permitting the case study to contribute to theory testing and development.

Another methodological issue which is central to qualitative inquiry involves the concerns with regard to reliability and validity issues. In this study adopting measures of reliability and validity as proposed by positivistic inquiry would be inappropriate. Instead, the study has sought to employ several actions to improve the trustworthiness of the data collection and analysis in the qualitative case studies, such as member checking, peer debriefing, methodological triangulation, and rich and thick description of the methodological process and of the findings. In addition, reliability of the findings is regarded as being enhanced through several actions such as detailed data collection and analysis, intra and inter-coder agreement, and the employment of a comprehensive case study protocol. A potential limitation related to the present study was that the retrospective nature of the data collected through the interview may have been influenced by respondent bias, poor articulation or faulty memory recall. Therefore, efforts were made to avoid or limit the impact of these factors.

A limitation of the findings of this study relates to the limited range of cases, which consisted of the main sponsors investing in one sport and one competition, the

first Division Football Championship in Cyprus. Therefore, it should be acknowledged that different kinds of sponsors, operating in different sponsorship contexts may employ different sponsorship approaches. However, given that the study was designed to improve understanding and knowledge about a specific type of sponsor in a particular context, analytic generalisation of the findings may be limited.

However, although focusing on a single sport may mean a lack of focus on a significant number of sponsors investing in different sports whose priorities, objectives and practices may be significantly different from football sponsors, it should be acknowledged that the majority of the sponsorship activity in Cyprus is absorbed by the football industry. As already mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, football was regarded as the most appropriate sport to focus in the Cypriot context, since it is the only sport in Cyprus that is commercialised and therefore attracting the attention of a significant number of larger sponsors.

5.3 Future Research Directions

Analysis of the findings of this thesis suggests a number of issues that go beyond the scope of this study. These issues can form the basis for further research in the field of sport sponsorship. Starting with the systematic review of the literature that formed the first part of this thesis, the findings highlighted the need for examining sport sponsorship in differently developed sponsorship contexts. Despite the fact that the primary research conducted in this study focused on a less developed sponsorship context such as Cyprus and begun to elicit information on sport sponsorship practices that are evident in this specific cultural context, it is evident that there is a need for much more research in similar sponsorship fields. It would be interesting, for example, to identify whether the continuum of sponsorship approaches that emerged in this study – ranging from patronage to strictly professional approaches – applies to Cyprus only, or to less developed contexts in general.

Additional research in similarly developed sponsorship contexts can enable the development of solid and sound arguments about sport sponsorship. Moreover, the systematic review highlighted the need for additional qualitative studies, experimental and quasi-experimental designs, and for longitudinal research efforts, that can make a significant contribution to capturing the essence of sport sponsorship.

Despite the fact that the second part of the study was guided by a range of issues raised in the systematic review in an effort to address relatively unexplored areas associated with sport sponsorship, it is clear that there is a need for more research examining underlying causal relationships in sport sponsorship. More studies need to investigate the mechanisms and structures impacting and shaping the sponsorship phenomenon since such attempts have been limited in the literature.

An additional issue raised in this research is the need for conducting studies that will examine sponsorship from the perspective of the sponsee. Although sponsorship had been heavily explored from the perspective of the sponsor, more research is required to identify the sponsorship efforts, approaches, and practices adopted by sport properties and the challenges they are faced with in their attempt to recruit, manage and retain sponsorships. The view of the sport property seeking sponsorship investment was comparatively absent in the literature, but such insights may be regarded as being particularly important in deepening and enriching of our understanding of the sponsorship phenomenon. In fact, the approach adopted by the sponsee is regarded as being complementary to the much more developed work examining the approach of the sponsor. Investigating the sport property's sponsorship recruitment and management practices is the other neglected side of the coin which, if investigated to the same degree would provide a much fuller picture of the sport sponsorship activity.

Furthermore, future research should take into consideration different categories of sponsors, as well as a wider variety of sports. As already mentioned above,

football, which formed the focus of the present study, is a sport which has been heavily explored in the literature. Therefore, future research should attempt to examine sport sponsorship in a wider sporting context that could be characterised by different sporting cultures, and thus the sponsors and the sponsorship related practices may differ substantially. A further research direction could be towards examining the sponsorship related actions adopted by different categories of sponsors. In this study, the focus has been directed towards the main sponsors of the clubs competing in the first division Championship, but it could be the case that different categories of sponsors may develop different expectations, and thus different sponsorship management approaches.

Finally, another possible area for investigation within the same context (Cyprus) could be a quantitative methodological design comparing fans' perceptions based on the four types of sponsorship identified in this study illustrated in the sponsorship continuum, something that is going to build on the findings of the present study and enrich our understanding of the specific sponsorship context.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Data Extraction Forms

Title	Abstract	Authors	Year	Database	Inclusion/Exclusion & Criterion
<p>Delineating the outcomes of sponsorship</p>	<p>The purpose of this paper is to propose a model in which fans' team attachment is the determinant of three sponsorship outcomes: sponsor image, purchase intentions, and word of mouth. Furthermore, following the sponsorship literature, the role of sport fans' involvement on the development of team attachment was examined. The findings supported the premise that highly attached fans are more likely to develop positive image for their team sponsor, exhibit higher intentions for purchasing and recommending the sponsor's products.</p>	<p>Tsiotsou Rodoula; Alexandris Konstantinos</p>	<p>2009</p>	<p>ABI Inform Global (ProQuest)</p>	<p>Include</p>
<p>A Case Study of How One Company Uses Sports Sponsorship to Reach A Female Audience</p>	<p>This article presents a case study of a company which uses sports sponsorship to reach a female audience. However, an agency have been successful, in approaching companies, such as the Burroughs Wellcome Co., directly, after reading an article about how one of its key brands, Sudafed, had sponsored a regional tennis event, which did not appear to be on target with the goals and objectives, as set forth in the article. Terry Stevens, the general manager for the consumer health division, was quoted in the article, so we wrote him and suggested that since his company was new to the event sponsorship area, the agency might be of assistance to him. They followed up with a telephone call to Stevens, and he passed their letter on to Rob Fritz, the manager of sales operations, and asked the agency to contact Fritz. The agency spent several hours discussing the needs of the different brands sold by the consumer health division, and Rob asked it to submit a proposal to him outlining the services which the agency would offer and fee arrangement. Since Sudafed was the leading brand and had the most money to spend, the agency concentrated most of its efforts on Sudafed.</p>	<p>Allen S. Furst</p>	<p>1994</p>	<p>SPORTDiscus</p>	<p>Include</p>

Evaluation of a multi-component community tobacco intervention in three remote Australian Aboriginal communities	The purpose of this study is to assess the effect of community tobacco interventions in Aboriginal communities. The study consisted of a pre- and post-study of the effect of a multi-component tobacco intervention conducted in six Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory (NT). The intervention included sports sponsorship, health promotion campaigns, training health professionals in the delivery of smoking cessation advice, school education about tobacco, and policy on smoke-free public places. The study was conducted in three intervention communities and three matched control communities. Surveys were used to measure changes in prevalence of tobacco use, changes in knowledge, and attitudes to cessation in intervention communities. Results showed that tobacco consumption decreased in one intervention community compared with the matched control community; the trends of consumption (as measured by tobacco ordered through points of sale) in these communities were significantly different (t =-4.5, 95% CI -33.6 - -12.5, p£0.01).	G. Ivers Rowena; Castro Anthony; Parfitt David; H. D'Abbs Peter; L. Richmond Robyn	2006	ABI Inform Global (ProQuest)	Exclude Academic Relevance (Not related to my topic)
A Conceptual Model of the Corporate Decision-Making Process of Sport Sponsorship Acquisition	The general acceptance of sport sponsorship by corporate and sporting worlds alike has led to a situation whereby corporations receive from hundreds to thousands of unsolicited proposals annually. Despite this, there is a general lack of systematic research into sport sponsorship with little information in existence as to how corporations decide between alternative properties. In an attempt to address this situation, this paper develops a conceptual model of the sport sponsorship acquisition Process based on the basic tenets of organizational purchasing behavior, contemporary literature on sport sponsorship, and the results of a qualitative study. It is anticipated that the Sport Sponsorship Acquisition Model will form the basis for further scholarly research to ascertain the precise nature of the acquisition process. ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR	David Arthur; Don Scott; Terry Woods	1997	Business Source Complete (EBSCO)	Include
He Shoots, He Sells!	The new Sports Sponsorship & Sales Center will look a lot like the ESPN Sports Center, with an academic twist. Instead of serving as a forum for sports fans arguing about the latest controversial call, Hankamer School of Business' version will be designed for Sports Sponsorship & Sales (S3) majors to use in preparation for their careers. The S3 major has several unique needs. From the beginning of the program, students are taught that the foot-in- the-door job in sports sponsorships is inside sales. Though the major only began in 2004, with its first students slated to graduate in Aug 2006 after	Keys Amanda	2006	ABI Inform Global (ProQuest)	Exclude 3≤pages

completing their internships, the program is quite sought after and boasts the highest grade point average in the School of Business.

<p>The Relationship Between Major-League Sports' Official Sponsorship Announcements and the Stock Prices of Sponsoring Firms</p>	<p>This study presents analysis of the impact of "official product" sports sponsorships with the National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Hockey League (NHL), the National Basketball Association (NBA), and the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) on the stock prices of sponsoring firms. The primary finding of the study is that, in the main, announcements were accompanied by increases in shareholder wealth. The 53 sponsors analyzed experienced mean increases in stock valuations of about \$257 million. A multiple regression analysis of firm-specific stock price changes and selected corporate and sponsorship attributes indicates that official product sponsorships with the NBA, NHL, and PGA and those with smaller market shares were associated with the largest gains in share prices. Although corporate cashflow (a proxy for agency conflicts) is statistically unrelated to shareholder approval, sponsorships by high-technology companies were associated with stronger stock price reactions than otherwise. Finally, product congruence with the sponsored sport was positively related to changes in stock prices. [PUBLICATION ABSTRACT]</p>	<p>T. Bettina Cornwell; W. Pruitt Stephen; M. Clark John</p>	<p>2005</p>	<p>ABI Inform Global (ProQuest)</p>	<p>Include</p>
<p>A Comparison of Sponsorship Potential of the Most Popular Sports in Slovenia during 1998 and 2003</p>	<p>The purpose of the study was to examine the changes in the sponsorship potential of particular sports according to the importance in fulfilling the marketing goals of companies. The sample of measured subjects included 494 potential sponsors - managers of Slovenian companies, the questionnaire used was identical to the questionnaire used in the research by Bednarik et al. (1998). The results show that in general only a small number of sports in Slovenia are interesting for sponsors, with the top sports being basketball, football, alpine skiing, ski jumping and handball. In comparison with the results of earlier research, most noticeable are increased interest for football and smaller interest for alpine skiing. In order to attract sponsors, sports organisations will have to use more strategic approach in presenting the sponsorship possibilities to companies. They will also have to develop some new products and services, which will manage to fulfil the goals of potential sponsors.</p>	<p>G. Jurak; J. Bednarik; E. Kolar; M. Kolenec; M. Kovac</p>	<p>2008</p>	<p>Web Of Science</p>	<p>Exclude 3≤pages</p>

The Relationship Between Major-League Sports' Official Sponsorship Announcements and the Stock Prices of Sponsoring Firms	This study presents analysis of the impact of "official product" sports sponsorships with the National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Hockey League (NHL), the National Basketball Association (NBA), and the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) on the stock prices of sponsoring firms. The primary finding of the study is that, in the main, announcements were accompanied by increases in shareholder wealth. The 53 sponsors analyzed experienced mean increases in stock valuations of about \$257 million. A multiple regression analysis of firm-specific stock price changes and selected corporate and sponsorship attributes indicates that official product sponsorships with the NBA, NHL, and PGA and those with smaller market shares were associated with the largest gains in share prices. Although corporate cashflow (a proxy for agency conflicts) is statistically unrelated to shareholder approval, sponsorships by high-technology companies were associated with stronger stock price reactions than otherwise. Finally, product congruence with the sponsored sport was positively related to changes in stock prices. [PUBLICATION ABSTRACT]	T. Bettina Cornwell; W. Pruitt Stephen; M. Clark John	2005	ABI Inform Global (ProQuest)	Include
Attitudinal constructs towards sponsorship Scale development using three global sporting events	As an element of the promotional mix, sponsorship has been a stepchild when it comes to a careful understanding of how it works and its effect on consumers. While the promotional element of advertising has been carefully researched (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989), sponsorship has rarely undergone systematic study. It is usually mentioned as war stories of specific examples which worked well for a company. A comprehensive model of sponsorship is not currently available in the literature. It is the aim of the current research to investigate consumer attitude constructs towards sponsorship and develop scales to measure these constructs.	Myung-Soo Lee; Dennis M. Sandler; David Shani	1997	ABI Inform Global (ProQuest)	Include
Olympic Sponsorship Activation and the Creation of Competitive Advantage	The present study explores the leveraging activities of the Grand National sponsors of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games and attempts to apply a resource-based view in their assessment. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with seven of the ten Grand National sponsors and through a systematic review of secondary sources. The more active sponsors invested in and utilized a number of leveraging methods, including advertising, sales promotions, and special events. Furthermore, they seemed superior to the less active sponsors in the use of their tangible and intangible resources as well as the capabilities of their organization. On the other hand, the less	D. Papadimitriou; A. Apostolopoulou	2009	ABI Inform Global (ProQuest)	Include

active sponsors appeared to have missed the opportunity to utilize their Olympic sponsorship to gain a competitive advantage. This article concludes with suggestions to companies investing in sport sponsorship for effective exploitation of acquired sponsorship rights. [PUBLICATION ABSTRACT]

An alternative approach to sponsorship in choosing talented sportsmen	"In this study this issue is rather handled theoretically, with the emphasis put on the importance of sponsorship while and after choosing the talented sportsmen. It is also aimed to figure out how the firms or institutions are evaluated by the target group in terms of their involvement in sponsorship activities. Finally, some implications were put forward based on the evaluations regarding the place of sponsorship in current sponsorship law in terms of choosing talented sportsmen. (English) [ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]	Tamer Karademir Bilal Çoban Sebahattin Devecioğ lu M.Emin KafkasBekir Mendeş	2009	Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)	Exclude Not in English
British American Tobacco and Formula One motor racing	Sponsorship of sport has become central to the marketing operations of transnational tobacco companies as more direct forms of tobacco advertising have been curtailed by regulation. Tobacco sponsorship of motor sports remains an efficient way to reach boys and young men. The influence of tobacco companies has contributed to races increasingly being held in emerging markets throughout Asia that have minimal regulation or negotiated exemptions; races in more regulated countries such as Austria, Belgium, and Canada have been threatened or withdrawn. In 1999, a new development emerged, when British American Tobacco (BAT) established its own Formula One racing team, British American Racing. Sponsorship of Formula One motor racing by tobacco companies is thus a powerful challenge to public health legislation aimed at reducing smoking. BATs decision to launch the British American Racing car was a strategic decision to accomplish several business goals. it played a key part in the strategy of internationalizing its brands by providing extended television exposure, creating merchandising opportunities targeting young adults, and reaching key emerging Asian markets through planned race sponsorship. Both the BAT documents and the recent events highlight how Formula One has become a core feature in the ongoing globalization of the tobacco pandemic. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2009 APA)	Joshua Carlyle; Jeff Collin; Monique E. Muggli; Richard D. Hurt	2004	PsycINFO	Exclude 3≤ pages

An Analysis of the Influence of Competitive and Institutional Pressures on Corporate Sponsorship Decisions	Sport sponsorship is frequently described as a strategic activity, and thus, it is influenced by both competitive and institutional forces. Using a sample of 28 Canadian companies, this study explores the influence of competitive and institutional pressures on those individuals who make decisions about their company's sport sponsorship initiatives. The results show that the sponsorship activities of rival companies were influential in a company's sponsorship choices. This was particularly the case in highly concentrated industries. We also show some evidence of a first-mover advantage in sponsorship decision-making but found preemptive strategies to yield little competitive advantage. In addition to these pressures from the competitive environment, institutional pressures from companies in the same geographic area, in the form of mimetic activity, in the form of involvement in social networks, and through the occupational training of the decision makers- -all played a role in the choices made about what activities to sponsor. [ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]	Tim Berrett; Trevor Slack	1999	Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)	Include
An analysis of volume consumption, consumer interest and perceptions of sport sponsorship as they relate to the Super Bowl	The Consumer Perception Index (CPI) was utilized to measure consumer perceptions surrounding the 1998 and 2000 Super Bowls specific to volume consumption, and perceptions toward sponsorship, advertising, commercialization, and purchase behavior. Results of t-tests suggest a growing trend in consumer apathy toward sponsorship of the Super Bowl. Though consumer interest in the Super Bowl remains high, complexities surrounding growth and clutter continue to impact consumer differentiation of sponsorship and advertising.	M. R. Lyberger; L. McCarthy	2002	SPORTDiscus	Include
An interview with Bill Moos, University of Oregon Athletic Director	Since moving to the University of Oregon in July 1995, William "Bill" Moos has presided over what many consider to be the most successful era of the University's storied athletic history, overseeing the development of more than \$120 million in facilities and athletic department improvements. A bold visionary who believes you must consistently commit to excellence, he has utilized marketing and sponsorship, including securing an all-sports contract with Nike, to take Oregon to new heights. Here he talks to Rick Burton, Executive Director of the Warsaw Sports Marketing Center.	R. Burton	2002	SPORTDiscus	Exclude Non Academic, peer-reviewed Publication (Interview)
Athens' Olympic Games 2004 impact on sponsors' stock	The sponsorship of major sporting events involves an ongoing commitment by business partners (sponsors) who need to evaluate the	Samitas, A.	2008	Business Source Complete	Include

returns	<p>returns of their investments. This article addresses this evaluation by employing event study analysis and bootstrapping in order to assess the market value of business sponsorship of the Olympic Games 2004. The events tested are the announcement of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games sponsorships and the opening ceremony. The empirical results indicate the marginal positive impact that sponsorship announcements cause in international and national sponsors' stock returns. Sponsorship announcements are more influential for small size firms' stock returns since they react more positive compared to larger ones. [PUBLICATION ABSTRACT]</p>	(EBSCO)
Attitudes Toward Sponsorship at a State Sports Festival	<p>Commercial sponsorship of major sporting events is perceived as a growing trend and as adding value to corporate sponsors. The effectiveness of sport sponsorship has been examined through a variety of lens including advertising, schema theory, and attitude theory. This study examined consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions toward commercial sponsors at a state sports festival. The findings showed that questionnaire respondents held favorable attitudes toward the event, commercial sponsorship of the event, and behavioral intent (purchasing). It was also found that attitudes toward commercialization and attitudes toward the event were both significant predictors of consumer purchase intentions at the state festival. Event managers and sport marketers should focus on providing a gratifying experience for attendees because this positive encounter will generally lead to corporate-sponsor support by participants through purchasing habits and revisiting the event.</p>	<p>W. Dees; G. Bennett; Y. Tsuji 2007 Physical Education Index (CSA Illumina) Exclude 3≤ pages</p>
Beliefs about tobacco industry (mal)practices and youth smoking behaviour: insight for future tobacco control campaigns (Canada)	<p>Objective To examine how student beliefs about tobacco industry behaviour and marketing practices were related to occasional and regular smoking among 9th to 12th graders. These findings can provide insight for developing new tobacco industry denormalization messages for youth smoking populations. Methods Cross-sectional data were collected from 14,767 grade 9 to 12 students attending 22 secondary schools within one Public Health Region of Canada using the Tobacco Module of School Health Action, Planning and Evaluation System (SHAPES). Logistic regression analyses were used to determine if different beliefs about tobacco companies were able to differentiate never smokers from occasional smokers, and occasional smokers from regular smokers. Results Occasional and regular smoking behaviour was significantly related to student beliefs about</p>	<p>S. T. Leatherdale; R. Sparks; V. A. Kirsh 2006 Web Of Science Exclude Academic Relevance (Not related to my topic)</p>

tobacco companies doing good things in the community, manipulating young people to think smoking is cool, advertising to youth, and using athletes and sports sponsorships to get young people to smoke. Conclusions This study identified that beliefs about tobacco industry behaviour and marketing practices were related to youth smoking behaviour. In order to address the unique needs of smoking youth, discussions for future tobacco industry denormalization campaigns should consider messages tailored to focus on corporate social responsibility, sport and cultural event sponsorship and industry manipulation.

Building Brand Image Through Event Sponsorship: The Role of Image Transfer

Past sponsorship research has primarily focused on awareness building strategies, and has virtually ignored brand image issues. As a result, little guidance is available for firms that seek to use sponsorship opportunities to aid in brand positioning. This study reports the results of an experiment using undergraduate student subjects, who assessed the degree to which a sporting event's image was transferred to a brand through event sponsorship activity. Subjects in the sponsorship pairing treatment were more likely to report similarities on brand-event personality components than subjects who were not exposed to the event-brand sponsorship link, thus supporting the notion that sponsorship results in image transfer. Further, we found that when event and brand are matched on either an image or functional basis the transfer process is enhanced. Management implications for sporting event sponsorship and future research directions are discussed. ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR

Kevin P. Gwinner;
John Eaton

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Business-to-Business Relationships and Sport: Using Sponsorship as a Critical Sales Event

To date, research on sponsorship in general, and sport sponsorship in particular, has focused on sponsorship effects (Business-to-Consumer) and the managerial uses of sponsorship. This paper addresses a gap in the sport sponsorship literature by examining sport sponsorship from a Business-to-Business (B2B) perspective, and the use of sport sponsorship as a Critical Sales Event to help the B2B sales force move customers through the relationship life cycle stages proposed by Dwyer, Shurr and Oh (1987). The authors propose and discuss a framework for implementing Critical Sales Events into the relationship marketing life cycle using sport sponsorship; discuss how sport sponsorship can impact buyer-seller relations at pertinent stages of the life cycle; and provide recommendations for future research.

John Clark; Tony
Lachowetz;
Richard L. Irwin;
Kurt Schimmel

2003

Academic
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[ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]

Cause-Related Sport Sponsorship: An Assessment of Spectator Beliefs, Attitudes, and Behavioral Intentions	Marketing communications utilizing a non-profit cause (i.e., the sponsorship of a nonprofit cause) have emerged as a mainstream practice as practitioners respond to rising consumer expectations of corporate social responsibility (CSRI). The increasing popularity of cause-related marketing programs (CRMPS) can be attributed to the integration of sponsorship in many organizations' sport marketing strategy. The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes, beliefs, and purchase intentions of consumers exposed to a firm's sponsorship of a sporting event associated with a non-profit organization. A survey instrument was developed by a panel of experts, pre-tested, revised, and completed by 442 event spectators. Results suggested consumers' attitudes, beliefs, and purchase intentions toward the sponsoring company were positively impacted by the firm's involvement with cause-related marketing. ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR	Richard L. Irwin; Tony Lachowetz; T. Bettina Comwell; John S. Clark	2003	Business Source Complete (EBSCO)	Include
Contemporary sports marketing: Issues, challenges and opportunities	The term sports marketing developed in the US as a way to analyze and implement strategies in which innovative as well as tried and true marketing techniques are used to financially support amateur and professional sports. With costs increasing, purveyors of sports must look for additional revenue beyond ticket sales and television fees. This article reviews the various aspects of the sports marketing mix including sponsorships, partnerships, the athlete, as well as the upcoming role of the Internet.	Coleman Linda Jane;Kelkar Mayuresh;A. Goodof David	2001	ABI Inform Global (ProQuest)	Exclude Academic Relevance (Not related to my topic)
Achieving a Sustainable Competitive Advantage: A Resource-Based View of Sport Sponsorship	This study demonstrates that a recent development in the strategic management literature, the resource-based view of the firm, has great utility for furthering our understanding of sport sponsorship. The paper provides a theoretical framework to explain the application of the approach to sponsorship. Illustration and greater insight are then provided through the presentation of two case studies. These are used to identify the salient characteristics of agreements made by two international companies, each of which has been extensively involved in spun sponsorship but with varying degrees of success. The resource-based approach is used to demonstrate that the disparate returns of the companies' sponsorship investments could have been	John Amis; Naragan Pant; Trevor Slack	1997	Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)	Include

anticipated. As such, as well as providing a conceptual extension to the sponsorship literature, the paper also offers a route for more empirical analyses of potential sponsorship opportunities. [ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]

Corporation's Objectives for Web Sponsorship and Advertising on Professional Sport Team Web Sites	This research identifies and quantifies key corporate WWW objectives.	C. C. Yu; R. P. Mikat	2004	Physical Education Index (CSA Illumina)	Include
Does tobacco sports sponsorship on television act as advertising to children?	A REPRESENTATIVE survey of 880 children in first, third, and fifth years was carried out in five secondary schools in one education authority using an anonymous questionnaire. It was found that children were most aware of the cigarette brands which are most frequently associated with sponsored sporting events on TV. Children's TV viewing of a recent snooker championship sponsored by one cigarette manufacturer was positively correlated with the proportion of children associating that brand, and other brands used in TV sponsorship, with sport. Following a snooker championship sponsored by another cigarette manufacturer, a second survey was carried out on a new sample showing that awareness of this brand, and the proportion of children associating it with sport, had increased from the first survey. This demonstrates that the TV sports sponsorship by tobacco manufacturers acts as cigarette advertising to children and therefore circumvents the law banning cigarette advertisements on TV.	Frank Ledwith	1984	Physical Education Index (CSA Illumina)	Include
Effect of sports tournament sponsorship fit on brand equity	The article focuses on the causes of the sports sponsorship conflicts and the possible measures for its prevention. It states that contract is important in sports transactions for it serves as the foundational legal document that guarantees the validity of sports sponsorship. Accordingly, conflicts may arise from the sports contracts signed by the holder of sports events and those signed by other participants due to the multi-dimensionality of sports events and limit of resources.	Yong, Ma	2009	SPORTDiscus	Exclude Not in English
Good things come to those who wait: the strategic management	The purpose of this study was to investigate the ways in which sport is used in the management and development of the key intangible	J. Amis	2003	SPORTDiscus	Include

of image and reputation at Guinness	resources of image and reputation at a major transnational firm. While image and reputation have been acknowledged as vitally important in the development of competitive advantage, there has been a distinct lack of study of the ways in which these resources are actively managed, particularly across international settings; the role that sport can play in this process is similarly ill-understood. Utilizing qualitative data collected from a variety of sources, including interviews, video, documents, internal presentations, electronic media and various popular press and academic publications, the ways in which sport plays a central role in the development of image and reputation at Guinness were uncovered. The utilization of sport through direct sponsorship, advertising and on-trade promotions, and the ways in which sports are selected and managed to promote a consistent brand image and support an established reputation in ways that are globally coherent yet locally resonant are highlighted.				
Player transgressions and the management of the sport sponsor relationship	Player transgressions in sport relate to on- or off-field incidents that are out of the ordinary and may bring negative repercussions for stakeholders as a result of their association with the team, athlete or sport. Based on a series of depth interviews conducted with executives representing major Australian team-based sporting organizations, this paper outlines the effects that these incidents can have on relationships with sponsors from a sport organization perspective. The findings serve to develop a conceptual model that illustrates that the impact of transgressions is determined by a number of factors, which are discussed. The paper further presents a number of implications for the sport organization's public relations strategy, given that the role of public relations has evolved from primarily a communications focus to a more strategic management of relationships with various publics and stakeholders. (C) 2008 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.	B. Wilson; C. Stavros; K. Westberg	2008	Web Of Science	Include
Reconciling Sports Sponsorship Exclusivity with Antitrust Law	The article examines the practice of sponsorship in comparison to the philosophical intent of antitrust policy. It introduces essential elements of the antitrust laws in the U.S. and discusses the alignment of those particular principles with advertising sponsorship practice. It notes that sponsorship has developed into a viable strategy for many corporations that wish to secure measurable brand exposure due to declining television ratings and increasing range of media options.	John A. Fortunato; Jef Richards	2007	Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)	Include

**Research on Valuation Targets
System of Sports Sponsorship**

The article discusses the result of a study concerning valuation targets system of sports sponsorship in China. The paper proposes sponsor valuation system with different target levels and a mathematical model of sports sponsorship evaluation. It also puts forward recommendations for decision making of sports sponsors.

Bo Liu

2008

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Appendix 2 – Case Study Protocol

Case study protocol		
	Paradigm informing the study	<p>Critical Realism: Shares with positivism the premise that there is a subjective, observable and independent reality but also claims that knowledge about it is socially constructed</p> <p>Reality is stratified into three levels:</p> <p>The Empirical: events that are observed and experienced</p> <p>The Actual: events that are generated by mechanisms</p> <p>The Real: mechanisms and structures shaping events</p> <p>Retrodution: Involved both deductive and inductive approaches: A key epistemological process enabling the researcher to discover underlying realities: postulating hypothetical mechanisms that if they existed would generate the phenomenon we can observe.</p>
	Research Question	<p>Based on Critical Realism paradigm: The investigation of the underlying mechanisms and structures shaping the decision of sponsors in Cyprus, the several mechanisms they employ in managing their sponsorship arrangements. In addition the study aimed to examine the extent to which the sponsorship structures and mechanisms identified in the systematic review of the literature exist in a newly developed sponsorship context</p>
	Research Design	<p>Qualitative case study: A multi case study including ten (10) different cases of sponsors investing in football club sponsorship in Cyprus</p>
	Selection of Cases	<p>Based on six criteria that emerged from a deductive categorisation of the findings of the systematic literature review (<i>namely, size of the organisation, local/international status, fit between sponsor/sponsee, private/governmental status, industry-sector, single sponsors/multiple sponsors</i>)</p>

	Data collection	<p>An exploratory design using in-depth semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis (internal company documents and external documents)</p> <p>Interview protocol: Developed based on a deductive categorisation of the findings of the systematic review. It consisted of seven main topics: <i>Sponsorship experience, motivation, decision-making process, Objectives, target audiences, sponsorship management and leveraging, and sponsorship evaluation.</i></p> <p>Data collection process: Interviews conducted in person, lasting between 15 and 55 minutes, tape-recorded</p>
	Data Analysis	<p>Use of NVivo software program.</p> <p>Holistic analysis of the data. Within case analysis and between case analysis.</p> <p>Creation of seven parent nodes and more than 40 child nodes</p>
	Validation and reliability strategies	<p>Intra- coder reliability (Coding process performed twice (intra-coder agreement)</p> <p>Peer debriefing on the codes and analysis (inter-coder reliability)</p> <p>Prolonged engagement of the researcher in the field of study</p> <p>Member checking</p> <p>Methodological triangulation</p> <p>Rich and thick description of the process</p> <p>Clarification of researcher's bias</p> <p>Use of case study protocol</p>

Appendix 3 – Thematic Analysis of the Systematic Review

The 211 articles included in the systematic review of the literature were grouped into eleven streams of research/themes. Those are the following:

12. Nature of the sponsorship activity
13. Sponsorship and corporate strategy
14. Managing sport sponsorship strategically
15. The concept of fit and its importance in sport sponsorship
16. Audiences reached through sponsorship
17. Objective setting
18. Motivation to engage in sponsorship
19. Sponsorship decision-making process
20. Selling the sponsorship proposal
21. Evaluating sponsorship
22. Legal and ethical issues in sport sponsorship

The section that follows is a comprehensive analysis of the studies incorporated in the systematic review.

1 The nature of sponsorship: Perception of sponsorship, Description of the activity, Definitions, Development, Trends

1.1 Defining Sponsorship – Describing the Sponsorship Activity

Early sponsorship literature involved several attempts to define the sponsorship medium, describe its development, locate it within the organisation's marketing activities and distinguish it from other promotional communications. Drawing on the sponsorship definition provided in the Howell report which regarded sponsorship as "the support of a sport, sports event, sports organisation or competition by an outside body or person for the mutual benefit of both parties",

as well as on the conclusion of the report conceptualising sponsorship as serving a public interest, Gratton and Taylor (1985) resembled the sponsorship activity to a type of “private market charitable support” (p. 53).

Equally, Mescon and Tilson (1987) conceptualised sport sponsorship as a charitable contribution that is departing from traditional giving to a more professional “market-driven strategic management, bottom-line approach to philanthropy” (p. 49). According to the authors, this new form of philanthropy has evolved into an essential component of strategic management that strongly emphasises “a return for the charitable dollar” (Mescon & Tilson, 1987, p. 50). Contrary to the arguments made above, for many authors sponsorship is clearly distinguished from philanthropy or charity. Gross, Traylor and Shuman (1987) clarified that sponsorship is distinct from patronage since the latter is based on charity, which is an altruistic activity, whilst sponsorship is a form of promotion which involves “a definite understanding of a linkage for mutual benefit” (p. 9) between the sponsor and the sponsee. Moreover, the authors differentiated sponsorship from advertising, considering the latter as “a paid communication in which the medium and message are controlled by the advertiser” (Gross et al., 1987, p. 9).

For Walliser (2003), advertising and sponsorship share the same objectives, but what distinguishes the two activities is that the message is delivered in a different way. The systematic review conducted by the author identified advertising messages as more direct and explicit and subject to control, whilst sponsorship messages have been regarded as able to overcome several communication barriers and target a variety of publics. Alike, Hastings (1984, cited in Thwaites, 1994) further distinguishes sponsorship from advertising in terms of audience reaction, motivation and implementation issues, whilst the latter medium is regarded more effective than the former because of the perceived goodwill in consumers’ minds (Jones & Dearsley, 1989, cited in Thwaites, 1994).

In a similar vein, many authors defined sponsorship through distinguishing the sponsorship medium from other promotional and communicational efforts. Meenaghan (1991) points out that “sponsorship must be viewed as an element of marketing communications within the broader context of the marketing mix” and that it “fits quite naturally alongside advertising, public relations, personal selling and sales promotion” (p. 39) in achieving marketing communications objectives. Similarly, Shanklin and Kuzma (1992) commented that sport sponsorship “is almost always considered part of the marketing arena” (p. 60), whilst it is clear for the authors that philanthropy and sponsorship pursue different goals, with the latter being perceived as an attractive promotional vehicle.

For Mason (1999), sponsorship is one form of selling the sports product. This paper focused on the unique nature of professional sports league which, although initially was produced to provide entertainment for spectators, it emerged into a very promising environment enabling the realisation of several marketing objectives for many different clients, and sold to different groups including corporate sponsors. Mason (1999) held that corporate sponsorship is one of the most significant revenue sources for professional leagues with extensive spending from corporations resulting into the massive growth of the professional league industry over the past few decades. The uncertainty of the game’s outcome and the intensity of the experience are only some of the factors that make this product very attractive to the fans and the media, and thus to corporate sponsors. Moreover, the banning of cigarette advertisements on TV in 1965 was another important factor that led to the impressive growth of league sponsorship in the UK. Interestingly, Mason argued that offering financial support for the right to be affiliated with a league and its products is a common practice, but it not a recent phenomenon, since such practices have been reported since 1861, when a small Australian company supported financially the costs of a cricket tour (Whannel, 1992, cited in Mason, 1999). The author also noted that sponsorship is a commercial and not philanthropic activity, with the main driving forces resulting in sponsorship being the ability of sport to get significant exposure. As Mason

(1999) held, corporations affiliating with a league “are aligning their own business interests with that of the reputation of the league and its product, in order to increase their own financial well-being” (p. 413).

Daellenbach, Davies and Ashill (2006) had a look at the nature of sponsorship using multiple perspectives in an attempt to present them as complementary views illuminating different aspects of the sponsorship relationship. The different frames were explored within a New Zealand non-profit sponsorship context, each of which contributed in a different way in the conceptualisation of sponsorship. Starting with *the life-cycle perspective* highlighting the organisational developments that impact the nature of organisational behaviour and response, the authors found that at the birth stage of the sponsorship arrangement, where survival is the primary concern, it is often accompanied by more creative and innovative behaviour directed at developing guidelines for reaching sponsorship decisions and considering opportunities for exposure. The Growth stage, that is characterised by changes in organisational processes in an effort to cope with the increasing organisational complexity, was found to be related to a high level of sponsorship communication efforts. The Maturity stage appeared to be associated with the sponsor’s realisation that the sponsorship message has become a part of the sponsee’s organisational culture and values. The next stage, commitment to chosen domain, was accordingly found to be associated with policies and actions demonstrating commitment and greater efficiencies in resource usage, which was followed by a gradual winding down of the relationship that eventually reached the final stage which is the ending of the relationship.

The second framework examined by Daellenbach et al. (2006) was that of the *resource based view* (Amis et al., 1997). Subsequently, Daellenbach and colleagues considered the intangible aspects of brand image and reputation as being essential factors impacting sponsorship formation and durability. The case study explored by their study demonstrated the sponsor’s attempts to build a unique and non-imitable association transforming the sponsorship relationship

into a valuable resource. The *resource dependency perspective* formed the third framework used in this study, drawing attention to the dependency of the sponsor to the sponsored property as a resource provider “contributing to reputation, legitimacy, corporate image, brand equity and acting as a conduit between the firm and its existing and potential market and other external organizations” (Daellenbach et al., 2006, p. 80). The role of the sponsee as a resource provider in the case study involved the development of a certain image, brand equity, credibility to the sponsor’s message, and the provision of a direct channel for reaching the sponsee’s target audience (Daellenbach et al., 2006).

Institutional theory was the fourth perspective employed by Daellenbach et al. (2006) in their attempt to locate the sponsorship relationship in a context that is influenced by normative rules shaping organisations’ behavior. Accordingly, both of the sponsorship parties in the case study demonstrated through the choice of their partners a congruence of values and norms, reflecting the institutionalised rules legitimised by their social and business environments (Daellenbach et al., 2006). Finally, *Social Network Theory* was used by the authors as the platform for explaining how the actions and decisions of the two sponsorship actors may be embedded in social networks, and how those actions may be influenced and enabled by the organisation’s corresponding network. Using this perspective the case study showed how relatively resource-poor sponsored organisations and sponsors can benefit from their partners in their network who may be regarded as important resource suppliers.

In a similar vein, Davies, Daellenbach and Ashill (2008) reflected once again on the discussion on a meta-framework encompassing multiple framing to develop informing insights into the nature of sport sponsorship. This time, the authors used the sponsorship of a New Zealand rugby competition as an illustration of the use of four different perspectives in exploring and understanding sport sponsorship: the *resource based view*, the *resource dependency perspective*, *institutional theory* and *social network theory* (Davies et al., 2008). Drawing from

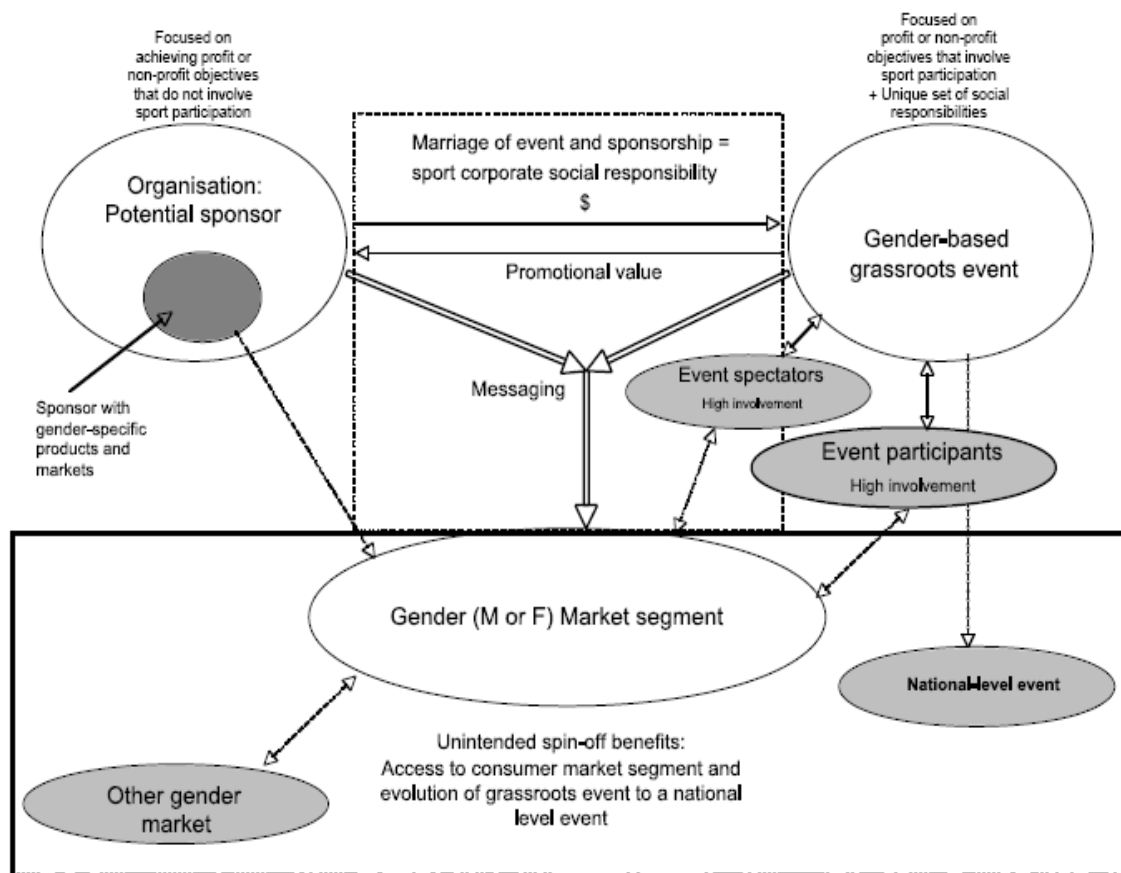
the resource based theory, the authors outlined the way in which the two parties benefitted from a reciprocal exchange of resources: the rugby union managed to provide the sponsor (Air New Zealand) access to “a unique and non-inimitable sponsorship property” with an iconic status and brand image constituting a resource of reputational benefit for the sponsor (Davies et al., 2008, p. 190), while the sponsor provided other kinds of resources in addition to image, including services and promotional expertise.

The *resource dependency perspective* was used to explain the way in which the sponsored event (National Provincial Championship of Rugby) not simply provided resources to the sponsor, but also acted as a link between the sponsor and other organisations able to provide services and resources. Hence, the authors considered the event as “a vehicle for co-opting resources from other independent, yet affiliated organizations” (Davies et al., 2008, p. 191). *Institutional theory* reflected the way in which both actors of the sponsorship relationship benefitted from the association achieved through sponsorship. The authors demonstrated once again how useful *Social network theory* is in explaining that relatively weak parties can benefit strategically by building network exchange structures with partners. In concluding, the authors noted that “each of these frames highlights and shadows different features of a sponsorship relationship” (Davies et al., 2008, p. 197) and thus, they suggested the employment of additional frameworks and perspectives in sponsorship research in an effort to provide a more extensive understanding of the sponsorship activity.

An alternative conceptualisation of sponsorship was presented by Pegoraro, O'Reilly and Levallet (2009), who constructed a framework conceptualising sponsorship as an agent of *corporate social responsibility* (CSR), and used a qualitative case study in an effort to test the proposed framework. The study was carried out in a non-profit, amateur sports context (a gender-based, grassroots event). Drawing on several definitions considering CSR as involving a wider social concern and the treatment of several stakeholders, the authors contented that a

corporation relating – through sponsorship – to a non-profit gender-based event can achieve sport-related CSR. The framework (see figure 1.1) they developed attempts to explain the process in the following way: “gender-based grassroots sponsorship, as a discretionary CSR activity, utilises cause-related marketing where a for-profit organisation partners with a non-profit organisation, creating a mutually beneficial relationship designed to increase sales of a particular corporate product and to generate financial support for the non-profit organisation” (Pegoraro et al., 2009, p. 144). Subsequently, and according to the framework, the sponsor provides funding to the event in return for the opportunity to showcase its products and services and for several additional benefits such as awareness and reaching additional market niches.

Figure 1.1: Framework conceptualising sponsorship as an agent of corporate social responsibility



Source: Pegoraro et al., 2009

The qualitative exploratory study used to assess the conceptual model relied on interviews with all the 7 race directors of the Women's' Triathlon Series held in the USA. The results revealed that the key success factors for organisers of grassroots events include a systematic approach to attracting, developing, servicing and retaining sponsors. In particular, the employment of specialised and targeted promotional strategies (e.g. one-to-one local networking) and formal evaluation methods are recommended in order to build long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships (Pegoraro et al., 2009)

1.2 The Development of Sport Sponsorship – Early and Current trends

Several studies examined sponsorship by describing sponsorship trends, or by focusing on its development in a given context. In a paper reviewing early trends in sport sponsorship in the USA, Lynn (1987) realised that the success of the sponsorship medium depends on “matching the right sport with the right mix of public relations objectives” (p. 16). However, several cases of sport sponsorship presented in this narrative paper indicated that the main concern of the sponsors at that time was to seek “a natural tie-in that associates their name with a prestigious property” (Lynn, 1987, p. 16), but some of them failed to appropriately leverage their sponsorship activity and frequently overlooked opportunities to involve all marketing chains.

Moreover, the trends illustrated in the late 1980s placed title sponsorship at the top of the most popular sponsorship vehicles, and the Olympics as the most popular event, providing packages with amenities and entertainment opportunities that were well appreciated by the sponsors who were “trying to increase their benefits beyond publicity and image creation or enhancement to business and employee entertainment, creating a new hook for consumer promotion, maintaining or increasing market share, and creating goodwill and interest in a new or test market” (Lynn, 1987, p. 16). IBM's sponsorship of baseball, for

example, was directed towards increasing sales and improving community relations, whilst Golf Illustrated magazine was focused on building community alliances and a public service identity. Gradually, lesser known sports were also emerging as marketing platforms for sponsors wishing to reach smaller target audiences and market niches, whilst participation sports (e.g. cycling) started attracting corporate attention and support. Moreover, the expansion of cable TV evidenced in the 1980s and the increasing coverage offered to several sports created new opportunities for corporate sponsors. The author concluded by emphasising the need for a more comprehensive leveraging approach involving the injection of adequate resources to support the sponsorship deal.

Meenaghan (1991), in his paper examining the importance of sponsorship as a marketing communications variable, tried to shed some light on the developments of sport sponsorship evidenced in the 1980s and the several fundamental changes that the activity had undergone. According to him, the main reasons that resulted in a substantial growth in sponsorship activity were the restrictive policies on tobacco and alcohol marketing activities, the increasing cost of advertising combined with inefficiencies associated with it (e.g. clutter), the increasingly recognised ability of sponsorship to be used as a marketing vehicle, the new opportunities that emerged due to increased leisure activity undertaken by individuals, and the greater interest of the media to cover sporting events.

Starting with the patterns of expenditure, Meenaghan (1991) observed that although sports remained the largest sector absorbing sponsorship investments, new opportunities seemed to arise in emerging areas such as music, broadcast sponsorship and cause-related marketing activities. Furthermore, sponsors representing many different sectors (i.e. financial institutions, building societies and high-tech companies) started entering sponsorship agreements following the successful involvement of tobacco and alcohol companies that were the first movers in the sponsorship industry. Another important development noticed by Meenaghan (1991) is that sponsorship involvement started being supported by

increasingly sophisticated services, with agencies and consultants representing a constantly growing number of clients (potential sponsors). The author asserted at that time that the increased commercialisation of sports, the growth of media and the increasing sophistication in sponsorship approaches adopted by sponsors would lead to a remarkable growth in sponsorship activity.

In another paper reviewing the developments of sponsorship, Cornwell and Maignan (1998) classified the studies chosen for consideration into five streams of investigation, each one related to a certain aspect of the sponsorship activity. The five streams identified referred to a) *the nature of sponsorship* - dealing with definition issues, description of the activity and development of the sponsorship process, b) *the managerial aspects of sponsorship* – including motivation and objective issues, functional responsibility, budget allocation and audiences to be reached, c) *measurement of sponsorship effects*, d) *the strategic use of sponsorship*, and e) *legal and ethical considerations in sponsorship* (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998). The main conclusions drawn from the thorough examination of the articles were the lack of established measurement practices able to detect the impact of sponsorship upon various publics, a poor understanding of the relationship between objectives and results, and, more importantly, according to the authors, a lack of underlying conceptual frameworks and theories which can guide scholarly inquiry.

Walliser (2003) extended and updated the review conducted by Cornwell and Maignan (1998) to include more recent research inquiry and studies published in a wider range of journals. Interestingly, the author concluded that there had been significant advances in sponsorship research within the period 1996 to 2001, mainly in the areas of sponsorship evaluation and management. Specifically, Walliser (2003) noted that studies addressing the integration of sponsorship into the broader communications or marketing mix had increased significantly at both the conceptual and empirical level, with many studies exploring the impact of

sponsorship when leveraged by other elements of an integrated communications strategy.

Furthermore, and with regard to the sponsorship management process, there had been some developments regarding objective setting, but the most notable improvements Walliser (2003) identified involve the areas of evaluation and control. Specifically, the development of new frameworks used for the evaluation of sponsorship led the author to the conclusion that the call for holistic evaluations made by Cornwell and Maignan (1998) had been partly answered. Moreover, the author highlighted the shift in sponsorship evaluation literature towards conducting studies confirming earlier findings, studies using causal modeling to study the relationships between several variables at a time, studies focusing on the combined use of advertising with other promotional efforts, and to studies that “increasingly investigate the internal processes going on in the receiver’s mind” (Walliser, 2003, p. 21). Finally, Walliser found an increased theoretical foundation triggering sponsorship research, such as relationship marketing, the network perspective, congruency theory, etc. providing richer explanations on how sponsorship works.

Cornwell (2008) elaborated on the development of sponsorship “as a mainstay of marketing communications” (p. 41) and described the main reasons contributing to the growing utilisation of sponsorship and the related decreasing reliance on traditional advertising, which was evident during the last decade. Although the impact of technological advances and economic factors is widely accepted as the main driving force behind this trend, Cornwell (2008) suggested that “it is the intersection of these drivers with changed lifestyles and values of individuals and communities that is making this trend irreversible” (p. 41). In particular, the author felt that growing participation in sport-related activities evidenced in the USA, UK and in other European countries during the last decades and the resulting growing emotional connection to sport events, combined with technologically advanced communications (wireless, self-selected communication mediums etc.) have all

contributed to the expansion of sport sponsorship, which has been considered having an input in the decline of advertising. Additionally, the author argued that the “irreversible trend toward sponsorship” was impacted by the companies themselves and the “developing infrastructure surrounding the sponsorship activities” (Cornwell, 2008, p. 42), such as the development of processes and policies dealing with sponsorship, and the establishment of intermediaries offering several sponsorship-related activities such as sponsorship evaluation, matching services, proposal management, event marketing and planning etc.

Reynaud and Bolos (2008) attributed the growth of sport sponsorship to the growing importance of sport and the subsequent power that sport properties enjoy because of the media attention they receive, making them “powerful ambassadors for a brand or product endorsement in marketing campaigns” (Reynaud & Bolos, 2008, p. 32). Moreover, the authors argued that the increasing number of sport competitions and the emergence of mega-sporting events have resulted in a sport platform that is more productive, and sometimes tailor-made according to the needs of the media. As a result, sports can reach huge target audiences, and thus are made particularly valuable to sponsorship investors. Finally, another important contributor to the growth of sport sponsorship, is the significant progress made in the sponsorship evaluation field, which in turn has resulted in measurable returns that can more easily convince sponsors about the benefits of the sponsorship arrangement.

Santomier (2008) relied on a systematic review of the literature to illuminate “the current state of development of global sport sponsorship” (p. 17), and noticed that there had been a remarkable increase during the last decade, basically due to increasing media fragmentation, marketing clutter, and the need to engage consumers at the creation of the product (service) and its delivery. According to the author, the new interactive approaches facilitate brands to “focus on dialogues rather than on campaigns” (Santomier, 2008, p. 18), and sponsorship is regarded as a conducive vehicle to this process. The review identifies four principal factors

that facilitated the rapid growth of global sport sponsorship, namely globalisation, consumer behavior, permission and technology (Kolah, 2006, cited in Santomier, 2008). Globalisation of sport, which was regarded encouraged by the new media technologies and the interest expressed by global brands toward sponsoring, clearly impacted the growth of global sport sponsorship.

The altering nature of consumer behaviour, and the importance placed upon consumer input and understanding in the business' attempt to to create a "total experience" resulted in the adoption of interactive marketing approaches focusing on direct communication and collaboration with consumers, and sport sponsorship was conceived as having an important role in this process (Kolah, 2006, cited in Santomier, 2008). Furthermore, new technologies allow consumers to filter the messages they receive, leading brand managers to the position of seeking permission (consent) of the customer to communicate their message. These developments resulted to the constantly increasing employment of non-traditional communication vehicles, such as sponsorship, which through the creation of a less formal climate can reach a more receptive audience and convey messages more effectively. Finally, the growth of global sport sponsorship was attributed to the technological advances "that have created a proliferation of means to reach, and interact with, an audience" (Santomier, 2008) and sport sponsorship has served as an ideal platform for implementing initiatives encouraging dynamic interaction and relationship building with customers.

In one of the most recent papers focusing on the topic, Chadwick (2009) elaborated on the major changes that have altered the nature of sport today, and deployed the many opportunities that have been created by the remarkable development of sport offering academicians and practitioners several topics for investigation. Specifically, Chadwick discussed the development of sport throughout the twentieth century and the trends evidenced in the twenty-first century (i.e. advances in technology, media changes, internationalisation and globalisation) that contributed to the post-commercialisation of sport as described

by Beech (2004, cited in Chadwick, 2009). The issues of uncertainty of the outcomes, competitive balance of competitions, collaboration between sport actors, and performance measurement are the main elements that create a unique aspect of sport, posing at the same time challenges upon sport managers regarding the way in which those elements are managed.

Moreover, the constantly growing importance of the new media technologies in the sport network, which also impacted remarkably the sports market dynamics with resources being gathered in certain sports, together with the issue of appropriate governance and regulation of sport structures, are some of the key challenges for sport managers, who need the support of scholars in order to address those issues. One of the functional areas impacted by the aforementioned factors and deserving consideration, according to Chadwick (2009), is the development of sport sponsorship and the related issues of managing sponsorship deals, protection offered to the sponsors, endorsements and image rights, ambushing and clutter issues, and fragmentation of the rights market. The need for better customer understanding is growing, and thus “issues pertaining to the ways in which customers – fans, spectators or otherwise – actually consume sport and what motivates them to do so” (Chadwick, 2009, p. 198) need to be urgently addressed. Hence, as one of the main customers targeted by sport providers, sponsors and their motives, the way in which they purchase and use the sponsorship, should clearly form the focus of research inquiry. As Chadwick argued, the main challenge posed by such sponsorship related issues involve the need to approach sponsorship as a “form of partnership/collaboration rather than a transaction”, emphasising at the same time the need for effective activation and leveraging strategies that add value to the sponsorship deal.

1.3 Sponsorship Development in a certain country/industry/sport context

Gratton and Taylor (1985) provided a thorough investigation of the sponsorship activity through describing the development of the sponsorship medium in a mature sponsorship market such as the UK. The author investigated and reported expenditures on sponsorship activity since the 1970s. The figures presented are impressive, although representing simply estimates of the sponsorship activity, mainly due to a reluctance of the sponsors and sponsees to reveal the size of the financial commitment, as well as to the fact that much sponsorship expenditure is “hidden” since it involves arrangements between small local sports and small sponsors. Specifically, sponsorship expenditure seemed to increase from 2.5 million pounds in 1971 to 100.2 million pounds in 1983. The authors attributed the growth on governmental action - the setting up of the Sports Sponsorship Advisory Service – and the increased television exposure of certain sports. The leading sponsored activity was motor sport, followed by horse-racing, which was replaced by football in 1982, whilst the main industries involved in sponsorship were the tobacco, alcoholic drinks, soft drinks, oil companies, financial institutions and broad leisure companies. Unlike Greece, the UK experience was indicative of a more sophisticated approach to sponsorship with companies pursuing a multiplicity of objectives and clearly more research endeavors to investigate sponsorship.

A detailed investigation of the development of sponsorship in more mature markets was also provided by Gross et al. (1987), who described the evolution of sponsorship in the United States in the 1980s and reported considerable growth in sponsorship spending, primarily due to advertising clutter and increasing TV advertising costs, and the tobacco TV advertising banning since the 1960s. Gross et al. argued that in the USA and Canada the most well represented industries involved in sponsorship agreements were the food and beverage, fast food, oil, banking, tobacco, alcohol and automotive, ranging from small to large, consumer and industrial firms. The sports that received most of sponsorship support in the

USA were golf, marathons, auto races, skiing, sailing and tennis. Moreover, the authors observed that strategic matching of sponsors and sponsored properties were “still in the process of development” and consistency mainly involved obvious fits between the two sponsorship actors, whilst in the most successful sponsorship arrangements the relationship was extended to involve employees and trade activities.

Asimakopoulos (1993) focused on describing the development of sponsorship in a developing country such as Greece. The author offered a rich and detailed evaluation of sponsorship at the macro level, providing information on the growth of sponsorship expenditure, the reasons that contributed to this growth – e.g. the decreasing reliance on state funding, the gradual commercialisation of sports in Greece and the legislation enacted that contributed to the professionalisation of several sports. Asimakopoulos also described the several problems associated with those trends, focusing mainly on the “lack of appropriately organised club and governmental sport structures, and the lack of sport management/marketing education and professionals” (Asimakopoulos, 1993, p. 46). Despite those problems, the author pointed out that sponsorship had increased significantly in a five-year period (1988-1992), with professional basketball and football being the most heavily sponsored sports in the country, and the most sponsorship spending coming from consumer product companies and less from the service sector. However, event and athlete sponsorships were very limited at the time in Greece, and so was sponsorship related research.

Geng et al. (2002) examined the evolution of sponsorship in China through conducting a gap analysis aiming at identifying differences between sport organisations and corporations using sport sponsorship. The major finding was that despite the willingness of many international corporations to invest in sport sponsorship, the development of the sponsorship activity in China was hampered by the philosophical gap that separated sponsorship providers from sponsorship receivers. Specifically, Geng et al. found that the differences between sport-

centered mind-sets representing the sport organisations seeking for sponsorship opportunities, and marketing-centered sponsors threaten the success of sponsorship programs in China, since those differences are depicted in divergent attitudes regarding sponsorship objectives and implementation actions, creating problems and generating conflicts when the two opposing mind-sets attempt to work together for a sponsorship activity. More specifically, Geng and colleagues found that sport organisations expected sponsorship for philanthropic purposes, whilst for corporations it was an activity having a marketing and promotional purpose.

As the authors argued, the obstacles to the development of sport sponsorship can better be understood when locating this activity into the broader Chinese sport culture that espouses the values and beliefs depicting China's distinct socialism, and which clearly do not coincide with corporations' capitalistic attitudes and goals pursued through sponsorship. The Chinese sport system, which featured a government-budget orientation, would need time, according to the authors, to transform "into a more cooperative model integrating sport into marketing" (Geng et al., 2002, p. 21), leading to the conclusion that some sponsorship arrangement were probably not compatible at that time with the economic, political and culture scene.

In another paper focusing in China's sport market, Ordish (2005) described the constantly increasing sponsorship investment by international corporations which was mainly attributed to the increasing popularity of sports among Chinese consumers and to the increasing involvement of China in hosting prestigious international sport events. However, the author addressed the main problems that accompany sponsorship investments in China, and which are closely related to the relatively new sport marketing environment characterised by actors who are "inexperienced in the complexities of sponsorship arrangements" (Ordish, 2005, p. 34). Hence, the author raised awareness about the issues deserving

consideration when sponsors intend to enter the Chinese sport sponsorship market, such as managing risks carefully and protecting their brands.

Specifically, some of the main concerns for sponsors involve identifying the rights in the sponsorship deal, ensuring that they are adequately protected (e.g. protecting trademarks and rights), and signing a clear and detailed contract specifying the two parties' rights and obligations, since ambush marketing is one of the main risks associated with Chinese sport sponsorship (Ordish, 2005). Moreover, the author emphasised the state intervention in managing athletes' commercial rights (nearly all athletes in China were supported by governmental organisations) which led to sponsorship agreements needing a state approval. Yang et al. (2008) empirically confirmed the arguments made by Ordish (2005). Interviews conducted with 19 executives representing local and international sponsors investing in China highlighted the importance that sponsors place upon fostering good relationships with the government, which is vital for successful sponsorships. Furthermore, one of the main sponsors' concerns involved the poor execution of sponsorship arrangements by sport properties, which is attributed to the lack of qualified professionals, to policy changes resulting from the lack of policy continuation and the lack of rules and policies regulating and reinforcing the successful delivery of sponsorship deals (Yang et al., 2008). An additional risk associated with sport sponsorship in China, as demonstrated by Yang and colleagues, is that many sponsorships were not adequately leveraged. Interestingly, the study demonstrated that cultural differences were not assumed by international sponsors as being a serious obstacle to establishing successful sport sponsorship relationships in China.

There is also literature on the development of sponsorship in specific industries. Meerabeau, Gillett, Kennedy, Adeoba, Byass and Tabi (1991) described in detail sport sponsorship in the UK and Europe drinks industry, and this is hardly surprising considering that alcoholic and non-alcoholic companies featured among firms investing heavily on sponsorship in the 1980s (Gratton & Taylor,

1985; Gross et al., 1987). Indeed, according to the authors, at the beginning of the 1990s the alcoholic drinks industry was the second sector after financial services, in their sponsorship spend. Sports sponsorship was regarded particularly useful and successful in targeting young male customers, and the image association was heavily used in enhancing acceptability of several drinks including no-alcohol and low alcohol beers (Meerabeau et al., 1991). It is of interest to note that in the early 1980s most of the sponsorship activity was brand-directed, with the sponsored property being closely related to a certain product or product line, whilst in the late 1980s the approach to sponsorship grew to involve a corporate orientation in which sponsorship was also related to corporate image and reputation. The authors also discussed the consequences of legislation related to advertising banning, which were regarded as limiting other promotional activities for the drinks industry and thus encouraging sponsorship as an alternative promotional medium. Meerabeau et al. (1991) also described the advances related to the evaluation of sponsorship in the UK, with the most notable developments being the involvement of market research firms that led to greater sophistication in measuring sponsorship outcomes. Additionally, indicative of constantly increasing sophistication of sponsorship in the 1990s, was the involvement of legal specialists in sponsorships, the fact that sponsors started considering the audience profile they were reaching of more importance than its size, and the importance placed upon congruency between the product's image and the event sponsored.

In another paper focusing specifically on sponsorship enacted by beer and tobacco companies, Kropp, Lavack, Holden and Dalakas (1999) argued that this type of sponsorship was one of the oldest sponsorship investments in the USA, Canada and Australia. Specifically, tobacco sponsorship of sport began in the late 19th century in the US and in the early 20th century in Australia, and it was still a significantly growing industry. According to the authors, this trend was attributed to the fact that sponsorship had been regarded as “useful as a supplement to regular advertising” (Kropp et al., 1999, p. 50), especially for alcohol and tobacco

companies that may be confronted with limitations or complete banning of direct advertising. According to the authors, sponsorship “provides a legal loophole for circumventing the ad ban” (Kropp et al., 1999, p. 51), but there are certain places, such as Australia, that sport sponsorship by tobacco companies is also banned, offering a huge avenue for alcohol companies and specifically beer companies to be significantly involved in sport sponsorship. Moreover, the attractiveness of sport sponsorship is based on the many audience access opportunities it provides, such as pre-event advertising and publicity, during the event, during live or delayed broadcasting of the event and through post-event reporting (Kropp et al., 1999). Furthermore, the growth of sport sponsorship by beer and tobacco companies was further fuelled by the fact that the transnational structure of the industries fits perfectly with international sporting events and the subsequent opportunities offered to enter restricted countries through an investment in a less restrictive context.

Another area of sponsorship that received attention is Olympic sponsorship. Giannoulakis, Stotlar and Chatziefstathiou (2008) discussed the significance of corporate sponsorship to the viability of the Olympic Movement as well as the challenges posed to the Olympic sponsorship program through the years. The realisation – by the IOC – that corporate sponsors could turn the Olympic Games into a substantially profitable activity led to a constantly increasing reliance on corporate involvement, and a more sophisticated approach to managing their sponsorship relationships, such as undertaking actions to protect sponsors from ambushers, limiting the number of Olympic sponsors and offering them special treatment and benefits (e.g. category exclusivity, PR and promotional opportunities, use of marks and designations, access to tickets and hospitality etc.). As the cost of Olympic sponsorship continues to increase, the paper illustrated that sponsors appear more strategic in their approach by integrating their sponsorship investment into their global marketing efforts.

Moreover, Giannoulakis et al. (2008) argued that the main challenges that corporations are faced with involve the lack of clear objectives that can serve for evaluating effectively the sponsorship returns, since despite their huge investments some of them “appear indecisive when it comes to their expectations from sponsoring the Olympic Games” (p. 262). Furthermore, another major challenge described by the authors is that the global aspect of the games may be associated by the sponsor’s image and marketing strategy being conceived differently by the diverse public reached through the Olympics. Additional challenges involved clutter issues, ambush marketing, brand management, doping etc. (Sequin, 2002, cited in Giannoulakis et al., 2008). Hence, the IOC adopted several policy initiatives for limiting the threats associated with the Games and introduced a series of marketing campaigns in an attempt to inform people about the benefits of Olympic sponsorship, including several market research endeavors projecting highly positive consumer attitudes towards Olympic sponsors. In concluding, the authors suggested that the IOC had to “review its current sponsorship strategy and reduce the amount of clutter at all levels” (Giannoulakis et al., 2008, p. 268), whilst at the same time they expressed concerns whether the heavily commercialised nature of modern Olympics could continue to serve as the vehicle for the transmission of Olympic ideals and values.

Another sporting context that recently received the attention of researchers with regard to the nature and the levels of sponsorship activity is community-based, grassroots sport, which is admittedly, one of the least studied areas in the sport sponsorship literature. Obsniuk and Smith (2008) undertook a descriptive study in order to provide information on the sponsorship activity utilised in grassroots sport programs in 20 states of the USA. Responses to a web-based questionnaire from a convenience sample consisting of 205 individuals having key positions at grassroots baseball and softball programs (e.g. directors, managers, sponsorship coordinators etc.), indicate that the most common type of sponsorship received was uniform sponsorship (69.6%), followed by facility sponsorship (e.g.

scoreboard, outfield signs) and equipment support. League sponsorship was the least utilised sponsorship type.

In addition, the findings of Obsniuk and Smith (2008) revealed that 76.7% of the sample relied on some form of sponsorship. Interestingly, the percentage was larger (86.36%) for programs that existed for more than 20 years, suggesting that older programs regarded sponsorship necessary in order to continue offering their services, or even that their existence was mainly attributed to their use of sponsorship (Obsniuk & Smith, 2008). Furthermore, nearly half of the programs receiving sponsorship support did not have a formal sponsorship package to attract potential sponsors, suggesting a lack of professional approach to sponsorship. Thus, it is hardly surprising that those programs appeared receiving much less sponsorship support compared to those programs offering a sponsorship package. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the vast majority of the sporting programs did not have a contract signed with the sponsor, something that further illustrates the non-strategic approach to sponsorship of grassroots sports in the USA.

Another sporting industry described in the literature with regard to sponsorship is boxing, which, according to Cordiner (2002) was ignored by corporate sponsors. The main reasons why sponsors have reservations in entering the professional boxing industry is its inherent brutality and the controversies surrounding the sport, which can reflect negatively on the sponsor. Cordiner acknowledged that the contentious history of the sport raised issues regarding its credibility as a sponsorship vehicle – indiscretions and criminal acts associated with athletes such as Mike Tyson – and led sponsors to turn to other less threatening sponsorship options. Moreover, Cordiner emphasised the role of media in increasing the sponsorship potential of the sport, and presented two cases of athletes (Mike Tyson in the 1980s and Oscar De La Hoya) illustrating how a “carefully constructed media myth and marketing strategy” can attract sponsorship attention (Cordiner, 2002, p. 177). Finally, the author favoured boxing as a

sponsorship medium in terms of benefits it can offer to the sponsors, including the ability of the sport to reach young males, a target market difficult to reach through other promotional activities, the provision of a less cluttered environment in which the sponsor message can make an impact, and the unique mix of glamour and danger associate with boxing which can be used for building sponsors' brands.

In his paper describing the reluctance of cricket towards professionalisation in the UK, which eventually ended in 1962 with the abolition of the amateur status of the sport, Sandiford (1985) discussed the several financial problems that the sport experienced – basically due to the gradual decline of paying customers, and the aggressive search for sponsors. According to the author, the “big breakthrough occurred in 1963 with the introduction of the knock-out competition sponsored by the Gillette Company” (Sandiford, 1985, p. 274), and this sponsorship was depicting the attempts of the sport to be promoted as an entertainment industry. Sponsorship funds increased significantly through the years, with sponsors offering £80,000 in 1972 to county cricket, whilst the amount had reached £100,000 in 1975, and £130,000 in 1978 (Sandiford, 1985). The remarkable increase in sponsorship investments benefitted significantly the sport and became the leading source of revenue for clubs. The developments in cricket sponsorship as well as the broader professionalisation of the sport led to changes in the sport's administrative structure, with newly hired expert businessmen running the teams and displaying a professional and more sophisticated approach in their negotiations with sponsors and in the promotion and protection of their players (Sandiford, 1985).

2. Sponsorship and Corporate Strategy

The studies composing the second broad theme that emerged in the literature review refer to the strategic importance of sport sponsorship as illustrated in its contribution towards the development of corporate identity, its role in the broader corporate strategy and the creation of competitive advantage, as well as in the

creation of partnerships and strategic alliances that make businesses more competitive in the marketplace.

2.1 The Development of Corporate and Brand Identity

The literature that investigated the contribution of sport sponsorship towards enhancing corporate image and creating corporate identity is, indeed, limited. A recent study conducted by Cunningham et al. (2009), attempted to examine the link between sponsorship and corporate strategy from this perspective. Building on past theory on corporate image and organisational identity, the authors attempted to explore the way in which corporate identity translates into sponsorship policy – if it does – which in turn helps the sponsor to build a certain corporate image. The empirical results of this study provide some preliminary evidence that organisational identity – as expressed in mission statement – influences the type of sponsorship an organisation will undertake. With regard to sport, it was found that firms holding a strong success orientation (financially driven firms) engage in sponsorships of individual athletes, while firms stressing the importance of employees demonstrated a propensity to sponsor team sports (Cunningham et al., 2009).

The latter findings align with earlier research (Hickman et al., 2005) demonstrating that team sponsorships are highly conducive to internal marketing practices. In their study, the authors consider internal marketing, defined as the managerial strategy designed to motivate and enable employees to adopt a heightened customer orientation (Varey, 1995, cited in Hickman et al., 2005), as an important strategic tool for achieving corporate objectives. The results of this quantitative study with 502 employees of a NASCAR team's primary sponsor demonstrated that "employee perception, attitude and behaviour are positively affected by sport sponsorship by means of affinity with the sport team" (Hickman et al., 2005, p. 154). Based on this premise, the authors contend that the role of sport sponsorship is strategic in that it can be used by companies to shape identity and corporate culture through employing it as a vehicle to communicate company

values to employees and as a way to create a bond between employees and customers.

In the same vein, Pichot et al. (2009) explored how the practice of sport – including sport sponsorship – is used and integrated within the framework of employee management policies. The study relied on 14 interviews with decision-makers on sport policies in companies and focused on defining how several sporting means are used to increase employee commitment, motivation and cohesion. The findings suggested that sponsorship is used by companies as a vehicle for communicating the values or desired image both externally and internally, to promote a wanted image, build staff loyalty, create a sense of belonging, or reinforce adherence to the company. According to the authors, the shift in sponsorship actions internally can also have secondary functions such as problem resolution and the management of conflicts. The authors concluded that “sport in business is a contributor to defining a company’s identity by highlighting intangible and human resources” (Pichot et al., 2009, p. 137).

The role of sponsorship in shaping corporate identity was also explored by Garry et al. (2008). The findings presented by this study suggest that the reason for involvement in sports sponsorship have the potential to affect corporate identity development and corporate image. Embracing the view that sponsorship decisions encompass certain aspects of corporate identity, the authors found that an important driving force for some sponsors engaged in motorcycling sponsorship was the social association with the sport, which can serve as a platform for the reinforcement of the company’s visual identity within a certain industry and its publics and the establishment of corporate credibility “through a social association and sub-cultural connection with a key stakeholder group” (Garry et al., 2008, p. 972). Having said this, it should be mentioned that not all sponsors aspire to the corporate role of sponsorship. Van Heerden and du Plessis (2004) provided some evidence indicating that sponsors in South Africa place more emphasis on how sponsorship fits into the product/brand/service plan than how it fits into the overall corporate communication plan, suggesting that the

contribution of sponsorship to the development of corporate identity is not universally recognised.

In a similar vein, Motion, Leitch and Brodie (2003) investigated the role of sport sponsorship in building a joint identity between the sponsoring and the sponsored brand. Using identity theory, which offers “a more strategic and holistic framework for understanding corporate brands” (Motion et al, 2003, p. 1081), the authors considered corporate brand as expressing an organisation’s identity, and thus differing significantly from product brands in their strategic orientation and management. Moreover, the authors moved beyond exchange theory and considered sponsorship as a co-branding strategy enabling “value to be extracted from the relationship at a variety of levels” (Motion et al., 2001, p. 1083). Building on these notions, the qualitative case study they adopted examined the co-branding of Adidas and New Zealand Rugby Union. The findings indicated that sponsorship is an essential co-branding strategy that can be very useful in shaping or redefining corporate identity, but the management of this strategy requires that brand values are deployed and aligned in order to serve as the starting points for articulating and establishing a common corporate identity. Furthermore, the authors demonstrated that brand equity emerges from the marketing communications campaign that incorporates the joint values in an attempt to communicate the messages to the stakeholders. However, as the authors argued, the communication associations “need to link particular associations at an ideological, strategic, tactical and emotional level” in order to be effective (Motion et al., 2001, p. 1091). In concluding, Motion and colleagues held that co-branding enhances equity development through the reach it provides not only to potential customers but also to the partner’s stakeholder network including media, governmental agencies and local communities.

Building mainly on brand equity theory and blending several other theoretical constructs, Mueller and Roberts (2008) offered an alternative conceptualisation of sponsorship relationship which is “juxtaposed from traditional sponsorship” (p.

169) since it suggests that the sport entity performs as the parent brand and the sponsor as a product extension. Their suggestion is that the sport entity should not be regarded as an information channel delivering a sponsor's marketing message, but rather, a compatibility partner. This new paradigm involves a "shift from deliverables to brand development at the sport-entity level" (Mueller & Roberts, 2008, p. 156) and considers the sports brand as having a character and traits that attract the attention of corporate sponsors. Borrowing from *brand equity theory*, the authors suggested that sport entities should explore the brand attributes that enhance brand identity and equity in order to better position themselves in commanding sponsorship. The authors regarded each sport property as having "a unique set of exploitable sponsorship components" (Mueller & Roberts, 2008, p. 161) that should build upon in an effort to develop powerful brand message which in turn could be promoted to both consumers and corporations. The paper presented several cases of sport properties that have been successful in leveraging their brands (NASCAR, Danica Patrick etc.) and creating clear identities and strong brand equity, and cases that have been unsuccessful in their sponsorships since they sought sponsorship partners before building their brand. Hence, the authors emphasised that sport marketers should realise the power of their brand, especially when considering that literature has clearly suggested "the power of image and attitude transfer from sport to sponsor" (Mueller & Roberts, 2008, p. 169). Paying considerable attention to the concept of fit and its ability to generate positive response from consumers that eventually could influence their purchasing behaviour, the authors argued that sports properties should "develop marketing sales packages that target corporations with compatible, and desirable, brand attributes that eventually serve as brand extensions" (Mueller & Roberts, 2008, p. 158).

2.2 Approaching Sponsorship as a Resource towards Building a Competitive Advantage

Apart from the significant role of sponsorship in developing corporate and brand identity that was described above, another part of sponsorship literature that

depicts the strategic importance of sport sponsorship involves the research on sponsorship's capacity to strengthen the competitive position of the sponsor. An area of sport sponsorship research that started to gain attention in the late 1990s is the application of a resource-based view in the study of managing and leveraging sport sponsorships. Amis et al. (1997) made one of the first efforts to consider sport sponsorship as a resource that can enable a company to create a competitive advantage. The underlying principle of the resource-based view is that competitive advantage emerges through the accumulation and deployment of proprietary resources. The authors give particular attention to the exploitation of intangible resources – such as image or reputation – since these resources are regarded as having the potential to provide a long-term, sustainable competitive advantage to a firm. According to Amis et al. (1997), those resources are highly valuable in that they depreciate relatively slowly, and they are extremely firm-specific. Moreover, there is a heavily endorsed view that those invaluable resources can be developed through sport sponsorship (McDonald, 1991; Meenaghan, 1983).

Building on past work on resource-based theory and competitive advantage, Amis et al. (1997) attempted to evaluate sponsorship as a resource in terms of four criteria: 1) the degree to which the sponsorship agreement represents a heterogeneous distribution of resources (i.e. scarcity associated with sponsorship); 2) the extent to which sponsorship can be imitated or otherwise replicated (i.e. imperfect imitability); 3) the degree to which sponsorship can remain bound to the firm over a prolonged period and thus it is not available to a competitor (i.e. imperfect mobility); and 4) the degree to which sponsorship offers *ex-ante* limits to competition, such as the limited competition arising from risks and the uncertainty associated with this condition (e.g. athletes banned because of doping). The authors concluded that the resource-based approach has been shown “to provide useful insight into what constitutes a sport sponsorship opportunity capable of providing a sustainable competitive advantage” (Amis et al., 1997, p. 94). The results demonstrated that these four preconditions are not

only interdependent, but also that this interdependence may form the basis for a sustainable competitive advantage. They also acknowledged that their paper can claim an *ex-post facto* justification of the viability of the resource-based approach, and they stressed the need for further empirical research examining the key characteristics of various sponsorship agreements and their compliance with the four antecedent conditions outlined in their paper.

In another effort to look at sponsorship from a strategic resource perspective, Amis et al. (1999) proposed that sponsorship should be developed into a “distinctive competence”, that is “a resource which has been developed and leveraged sufficiently such that it is capable of providing, either on its own or in combination with other resources, a position of sustainable competitive advantage” (p. 252). Building on previously published work, Amis et al. contended that for sponsorship to be developed into a distinctive competence it must meet three conditions: 1) it should improve the perceived customer value of the product or service offered by the firm; 2) it must differentiate the firm from its competitors; and 3) it should have the ability to be extended and be usable to a variety of areas through several leveraging activities. The results of this study - obtained through semi-structured interviews with sponsorship decision-makers of 28 national and multinational Canadian firms demonstrated that the firms that considered their sponsorship agreement as successful had managed to develop their sponsorship into a distinctive competence, while the firms involved in unsuccessful sponsorship deals had failed to do so. In conclusion, the authors commented that although transforming the sponsorship agreement into a distinctive competence is an extremely demanding procedure, it is a “potentially valuable tool” that contributes significantly to the achievement of a sustainable competitive advantage (Amis et al., 1999, p. 269).

Amis (2003) continued the discussion on the development of a sustainable competitive advantage and the role of sport sponsorship in this process, through a case study analysis of a major transnational firm. Invoking the resource-based

view outlined earlier, Amis (2003) reiterated the assertion made earlier by Amis et al. (1999) that intangible resources such as image and reputation are vital for the development of sustainable competitive advantage. Adopting a qualitative approach, and relying on data collected from a variety of sources, the author attempted to explore how sport was used to develop those highly valued intangible resources, and “the ways in which sports are selected and managed to promote a consistent brand image and support an established reputation” (Amis, 2003, p. 189). Results indicated that the role of sport, which in this specific case-study is used in three different ways - through direct sponsorship, advertising, and sport related on-trade promotions - was crucial and illuminating in the creation of a position of sustainable competitive advantage.

The theoretical perspective that views sponsorship as a distinctive competence was further substantiated by Cornwell, Roy and Steinard (2001a) through investigating the perceptions and management inputs of 50 corporate sponsorship managers. The authors attempted “to consider those managerially relevant elements that contribute to building brand equity and that might be enhanced by sponsorship”, and thus, they selected eight elements from Aaker’s (1996, cited in Cornwell et al., 2001a) conceptualisation of brand equity. Not surprisingly, the results indicated that sponsorship under active management can contribute significantly in differentiating a brand from its competitors and adding financial value to the brand, lending additional support to the conceptualisation of sponsorship as a resource that can lead to the creation of a competitive advantage.

Papadimitriou and Apostolopoulou (2009) attempted to assist further the process of understanding how sport sponsorship can be approached as a resource in the pursuit of competitive advantage through examining “how Greek corporations that signed on as Grand National sponsors of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games exploited their sponsorship agreements to achieve corporate objectives and develop a position of competitive advantage” (Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou

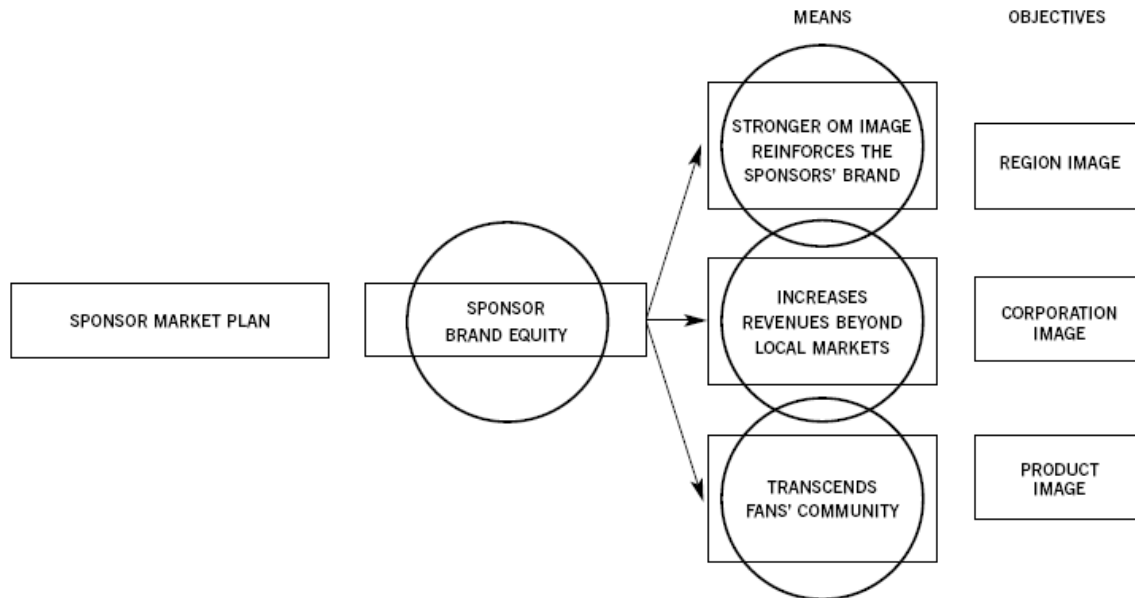
2009, p. 97). Results obtained through semi-structured interviews and through a systematic review of secondary sources indicated that seven of the ten corporations explored appeared very active in their sponsorship activation and clearly had a plan to use the sponsorship in order to create a competitive advantage. Examples of successful approaches came from the private sector, and specifically from the financial, brewing and telecommunications sectors. In contrast, three of the corporations appeared to be less active in their leveraging strategies and seemed to have missed the opportunity to approach sponsorship as a resource. Not surprisingly, those sponsors were all coming from the public sector and their inactive approach was better understood when considering that they decided to enter the sponsorship agreement for historical and national reasons, and not for commercial.

Papadimitriou and Apostolopoulou (2009) discussed Fahy et al.s' (2004) theoretical framework that relates organisational resources obtained through a sponsorship deal to organisational competitive advantage, and used it in the interpretation of their findings. The authors observed that the most active companies differed substantially from the less active sponsors in the use of their tangible and intangible resources as well as the capabilities of their organisation. The first category devoted significant tangible resources - financial and other resources - to create value from their sponsorship (i.e. investing in advertising initiatives and creating promo tours). Furthermore, although all the firms in the study seemed to realise the importance of the intangible assets that can be built as a result of the sponsorship relationship and placed some effort on capitalising on the Games in order to achieve brand equity-related outcomes, the most active sponsors demonstrated clarity in their corporate brand objectives and superior brand building initiatives which were communicating the link to the Games and were highlighting the contribution to this national effort (Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009). In addition, the more active sponsors seemed to recognise the importance of sponsorship in building additional intangible assets such as client networking and hospitality programs, as well as the creation of a

“caring and community-driven image” (Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009, p. 110). In regards to capabilities, the sponsors in this study demonstrated different levels of experience in activating the sponsorship agreement. In specific, more active sponsors established entirely new departments for the coordination and management of the sponsorship deal. Moreover, those sponsors had demonstrated long commitment in sponsoring sporting properties and they had “attempted to preserve the competitive advantage gained from the Olympics over time by entering in new sponsorship agreements following 2004” (Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009, p. 112).

Another study pursuing the same goal was carried out by Söderman and Dolles (2008). Building on the *brand equity concept* as defined by Aaker (1996) and Fahy et al.’s (2004) conceptualisation of sponsorship as a potential source of competitive advantage, the authors developed a conceptual framework (see figure 2.1) that links Olympic sponsorship to brand equity factors and objectives highlighting the strategic importance of the sponsorship medium. The model indicates that “a sponsor market plan is the requisite for sponsor brand equity” (Söderman & Dolles, 2008, p. 99), and that the association with the Olympic image has the capacity to create a stronger sponsor brand, to increase revenues for the sponsor through differentiating the brand and increasing sales, and to attract new customers transcending the fans’ community.

Figure 2.1 Sponsorship Model linking Olympic sponsorship to brand equity factors and objectives



Source: Söderman and Dolles (2008)

The model consists of three means and three objectives. The strategic factors, or means, are: the sponsor’s brand, which is thought to be one of the most valuable assets for a business, revenue creation, and new customer creation (Söderman & Dolles, 2008). As seen in figure 2.1, the three goals pursued are the development of product image, corporate image, and region image. The applicability of the model developed by the authors was tested through an exploratory research aiming to identify the factors of importance for the 36 sponsors of the 2008 Olympic Games in a 7-year period preceding the Games. Specifically, the model was applied as “a diagnostic measure” of how the sponsors have created value in the dimensions provided by the model (Söderman & Dolles, 2008, p. 101). The study used 200 randomly selected clippings, advertisements, newspaper articles, web articles and press releases published in China from January 2005 to July 2006, depicting the actions of the sponsors during that period.

A qualitative content analysis undertaken by Söderman and Dolles (2008), which was also supported by local (Chinese) experts, revealed very interesting

findings. Notably, only some of the sponsors undertook sponsorship-linked marketing activities aiming at strengthening the brand equity as proposed by the model. Specifically, western sponsors appeared taking the opportunity to establish strategies aligned with the Games and adopting a strong co-branding approach. Many of the national sponsors had been inactive and expressed little interest in developing a co-branding strategy. The authors were led to the conclusion that the unique cultural and structural environment of China may have impacted the lack of strategic direction of some national sponsors since, for many of them, the authors assumed that sponsorship was not self-imposed but rather government-appointed, with the government aiming at sharing the financial burden of the Games with giant companies that enjoy increased profits in a monopolised context granted by the government.

2.3 Sponsorship as a Partnership and Relationship Building Strategy

During the last decade there have been several calls for the adoption of a relationship marketing paradigm in understanding the strategic role of the sponsorship phenomenon (Chadwick, 2002; Farrelly & Quester, 2005; Geng et al., 2002; Olkkonen, 2001; Olkkonen et al., 2000). Several authors (McCarville & Copeland, 1994; Olkkonen, 2001; Olkkonen et al., 2000) stressed the importance of developing and maintaining stable, long-term, mutually beneficial sponsorship partnerships characterised by reciprocal commitment. Cornwell and Maignan (1998) blamed the academic and practitioner focus on objective setting and evaluation issues for restricting the development of the sponsorship research agenda, and suggested that researchers' interest should shift to the dynamics of the sponsorship partnership that involves creating bonds and alliances between partners. In a similar vein, Olkkonen et al. (2000) and Olkkonen (2001) regretted the concentration of sponsorship discourse on definition, objective and evaluation issues, accusing most existing studies to be very "managerially oriented" (Olkkonen et al., 2000, p. 13) with an emphasis on the sponsor's viewpoint. Furthermore, the authors considered the contemporary literature (e.g. Farrelly et al., 1997; Meenaghan, 1991; Meerabeau et al., 1991; Thwaites, Aguilar-Manjarrez,

& Kidd, 1998) to have theoretically and methodologically narrow perspectives and to be highly normative and prescriptive, neglecting at the same time the dynamics of sponsorship relationships.

McCarville and Copeland (1994) made one of the earliest attempts to discuss sport sponsorship using exchange theory, and offered propositions intended to further expand our understanding of sponsorship and guide the practitioners' actions. Their theoretical endeavour involved the development of ten propositions that needed to be tested in order to be empirically verified, or used to guide research efforts in the sport sponsorship context (see table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Propositions Guiding Sport Sponsorship Research Efforts

<i>Proposition 1:</i> Sponsorship proposals offered to partners who have been rewarded by past partnerships will be more successful than will those directed to sponsorship neophytes.
<i>Proposition 2:</i> The potential for exchange is enhanced when sponsorship proposals include terms that proved rewarding in the past.
<i>Proposition 3:</i> The potential for exchange is enhanced when particularistic resources can be directed toward specific target markets.
<i>Proposition 4:</i> The potential for exchange is enhanced by increased probabilities of success
<i>Proposition 5:</i> The value placed on a single sponsorship opportunity is diminished as competing opportunities are made available.
<i>Proposition 6:</i> Reliance on a limited number of rewards will lead to satiation and devaluation of those rewards.
<i>Proposition 7:</i> The potential for exchange is enhanced when partners are offered multiple reward opportunities in exchange for their resources.
<i>Proposition 8:</i> The potential for ongoing exchange is enhanced if reward allocation schemes are open to negotiation over time.
<i>Proposition 9:</i> The potential for ongoing exchange is diminished by third party ambush marketing efforts.
<i>Proposition 10:</i> The potential for ongoing exchange is enhanced by a balance of power in a sponsorship relationship.

Source: McCarville and Copeland (1994)

Drawing on the concept of rationality, which forms one of the basic assumptions of exchange theory, McCarville and Copeland (1994) proposed that satisfaction of sponsors related to past sponsorship agreements, rewards directed to certain target groups of interest to the sponsor, and increased probability of success are factors that enhance the potential for exchange offered by sport sponsorship. Moreover, building on the concept of marginal utility, which refers to the relationship between access to rewards and the value assigned to them (McClosky, 1982, cited in McCarville & Copeland, 1994) the authors proposed that the value of sponsorship is diminished, especially when new opportunities are made available, or when the rewards offered through sponsorship are limited. According to the authors, the sponsee should offer rewards that are valued, and “both partners should attempt to diversify the benefits they provide and the sources of the benefits they seek” (McCarville & Copeland, 1994, p. 111). Finally, relying on the concept of fairness, the authors suggested that a long term relationship is enhanced by rewards that are open to negotiation and change, as well as by a power balance between the two parties since they believe that balanced exchanges in which mutual dependence exists are more likely to lead to satisfaction for both partners (McCarville & Copeland, 1994).

Expanding on the principles of exchange theory described by McCarville and Copeland (1994), Sam, Batty and Dean (2005) used *transaction cost theory* drawn from economics literature to discuss a conceptual framework shedding light on the “costs involved in negotiating, developing and monitoring sponsorship exchanges” (Sam et al., 2005, p. 2). Hence, the authors discussed the dimensions of the sponsorship arrangement that make it problematic or risky, especially from the perspective of the sponsored property, and recommended the application of *transaction cost theory* for future empirical research. The study identified three sources of costs applicable to sport sponsorship. The first refers to *planning and safeguarding costs*, which basically include the costs of positioning the sport property for attracting potential sponsors, the costs of posturing, or otherwise creating an appropriate fit with the sponsor, and the costs involving the process of identifying sponsors, preparing the sponsorship proposal, conducting

meetings with the sponsors and legal costs for finalising the agreement (Sam et al., 2005). The second source of transaction costs was categorised as *adapting and servicing costs*, and involved the costs incurred by communication, costs related to coordination, and negotiation costs that usually involve problems, conflicts and unforeseen circumstances emanating primarily from divergent goals and objectives, different priorities or different cultures. The third type of transaction costs identified by Sam and colleagues was *monitoring and evaluation costs*, and referred mainly to evaluation costs measuring and quantifying the results of sponsorship, and to the costs associated with countering the activities of ambushers.

In concluding, Sam et al. (2005) paid attention to some salient issues emerging from their conceptual discussion on sport sponsorship. The authors referred to the “intangible costs, such as a perceived loss of autonomy for the sport organisation or an erosion of public goodwill because of the sponsor’s image” (Sam et al., 2005, p. 9), and the fact that sponsor’s expectation are constantly rising, increasing at the same time the costs incurred by the property. Finally, the author considered the issue of governance that arises from sponsorship decisions since those basically involve choices about governing mechanisms, and are based on “a network of interacting rules, practices and protocols set by organizations involved” (Sam et al., 2005, p. 11). Costs relating sponsorship transactions and the issue of governance were recommended as topics for future empirical inquiry in order to further understand the sponsorship context.

There are some studies in the literature that viewed sponsorship as an inter-organisational process. Those studies (Chadwick, 2002; Farrelly & Quester, 2005; Olkkonen, 2001; Olkkonen et al., 2000) moved beyond the conceptualisation of sponsorship as a discrete transaction involving a given product that is exchanged for a certain price, and considered sponsorship as social or relational exchange that includes a “tacit expectation of future reciprocity” (Sam et al., 2005, p. 4). The nature of the relationship between sponsors and sponsees formed the focus of

the study carried out by Liu, Srivastava and Woo (1998), who tried to shed light on some aspects of this relationship in an effort to determine the business skills and techniques that can be transferred between the two parties. The authors used a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques to examine the practices of 26 organisations sponsoring a variety of sports in the UK (football, tennis, golf, cricket, rugby and athletics), and found that 29% of the respondents appeared providing a “considerable amount of assistance to their associated sports or event” (Liu et al., 1998, p. 104), including marketing specialist expertise, management assistance, software assistance, and assistance and support in organising and promoting the event.

The study demonstrated that this direct sponsor’s involvement and support to the club was directed towards the creation of a mutually beneficial relationship: through helping the sport to become more successful the sponsor would receive back “an added marketing tool and greater consumer awareness for its own particular brand and range of products and services” (Liu et al., 1998, p. 104). Indeed, evidence showed that the transfer of different types of business skills from business to sports “helped in leveling out the feast and famine approach to managing sports” (Liu et al., 1998, p. 108), and encouraged sporting bodies to consider themselves as contemporary businesses. The reciprocity of the beneficial relationship is clearly depicted in the benefits obtained by the two parties: the sponsor receives marketing specific advantages such as brand awareness, corporate hospitality, awareness, image, sales opportunities and on-going promotion, while the main benefits offered to the sport in addition to the financial support included the security of its future and longevity, increased interest in the sport, and greater participation (Liu et al., 1998).

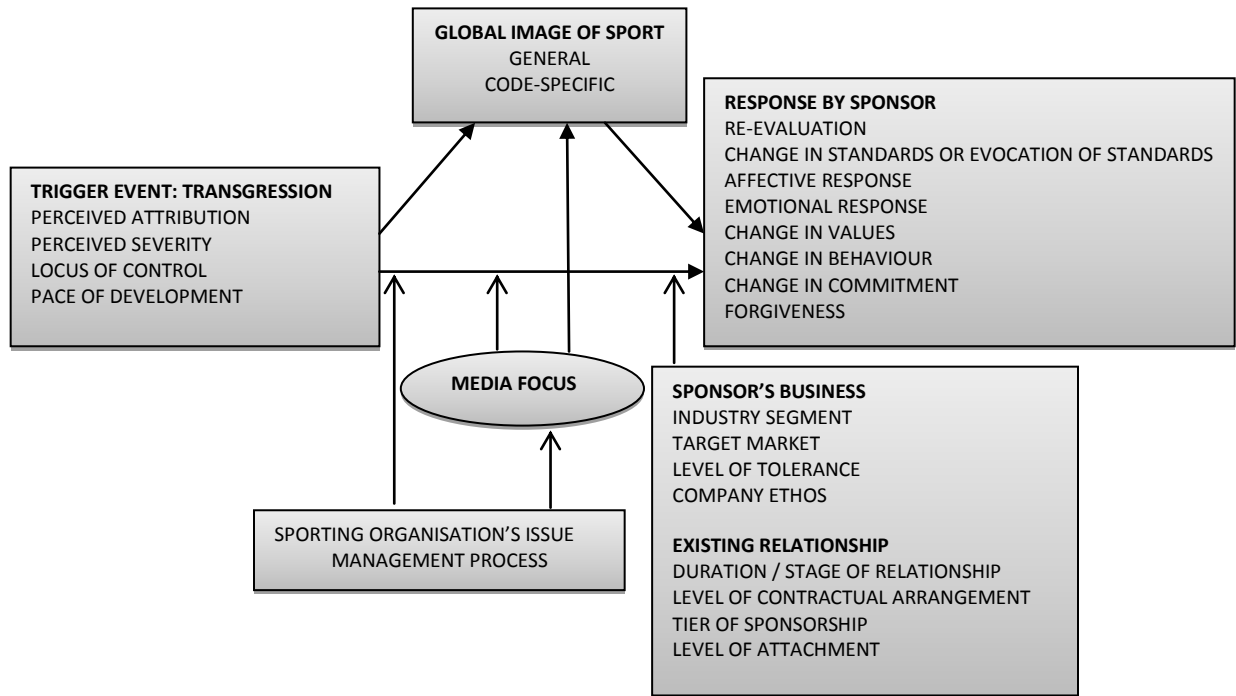
Interestingly, there have been also some research attempts to explore the quality of the relationship between the sponsor and the sponsored property (Westberg, Stavros, & Wilson, 2008; Wilson, Stavros, & Westberg, 2008). Drawing on relationship marketing and crisis management literature, Westberg et al. (2008) used semi-structured interviews to investigate the perceptions of sport executives

representing a variety of Australian team-based sporting organisations (cricket, rugby union, rugby league, soccer, basketball and Australian football) on the impact of player transgressions upon the business relationship between the sponsor and the sporting organisation (Westberg et al., 2008). In fact, according to the authors, player transgressions were regarded as having the potential to seriously impact and damage the sponsorship partnership through negatively influencing the image of the sponsor. The results of the study indicated that there are two types of player transgressions (on- and off-field) and that although sponsors expect teams to hold players accountable for both types of transgressions, the off-field transgressions are of major concern since they are regarded as having the potential to attract community and media attention, making them more difficult to manage.

In addition to the nature of the incident, the results also revealed that some other important factors that influence the reaction of the sponsors to a transgression include “the sponsor’s type of business and the existing relationship between the parties” (Westberg et al., 2008, p. 130). In particular, the sponsor’s response was regarded as being more severe and negative when the sponsor’s scope of activities was closely related with the nature of the transgression, when the audiences were influenced by the incident, and when the corporate image and values conflicted importantly with the inappropriate action conducted. Moreover, the reaction of the sponsor seemed moderated by the strength of the relationship that existed between the two sponsorship parties, with the respondents emphasising the importance of commitment, communication and information sharing in dealing with the problem more effectively. In addition, extensive media attention was regarded as increasing the severity of the sponsors’ response. Finally, the authors suggested that sponsors’ response was mediated by the sport organisation’s management process to deal with the incident, with formal management procedures generating less severe responses. The results of this study were used for the development of a conceptual model “uniquely

contextualised for player transgressions” (Westberg et al., 2008, p. 125) (see figure 2.2)

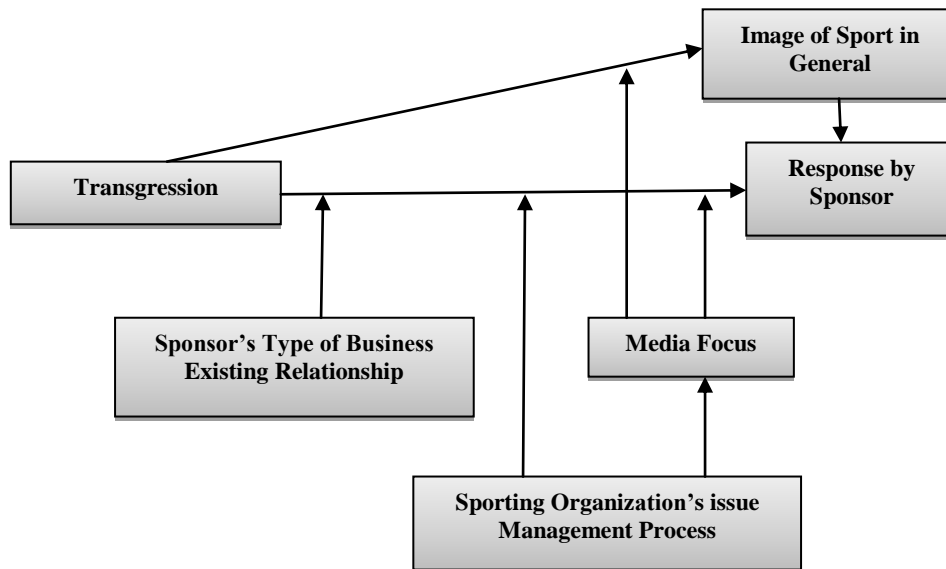
Figure 2.2 Player transgression and sponsor response model



Source: Westberg et al. (2008).

The key themes that emerged from this study were also used by Wilson et al. (2008) in order to construct another model depicting the factors influencing sponsor response to transgressions (see figure 2.3) which was intended to provide useful insights into the dynamics of sport sponsor relationships, and to guide effective management of sponsorships and player transgressions in sport.

Figure 0.3 Conceptual Model - Factors influencing sponsor response to transgressions



Source: Wilson et al. (2008).

Specifically, Wilson et al. (2008) strongly advocated “the involvement of public relations in the management of sponsor relationships as well as the prevention and management of player transgressions” especially with regard to the “strategic selection of sponsors, the management of sponsor expectations, effective communication strategies, transgression prevention, media management and environmental scanning” (p. 103). Some indicative actions could involve PR specialists in the sponsorship recruitment process in order to strategically select and associate with appropriate sponsors considering image congruency factors and fit, understanding sponsors’ expectations regarding acceptable behaviour and tactics that can enable the adoption of a proactive approach to crisis management, establishing on-going communication processes that foster the exchange of ideas, constant flow of information and listening, which are all regarded essential to the development of commitment and trust between the two parties. In addition, the authors favoured the establishment of management processes that are proactive to enable the sport organisation anticipate and prevent transgressions (e.g. the introduction of codes of conduct, training

sessions) and create a culture that is not conducive to wrongdoings. Conducting environmental scanning, which can be facilitated through a “collective, conciliatory approach to sharing industry information and best practice” undertaken by major sport organisation (Wilson et al., 2008, p. 105) can be especially helpful in preventing transgressions. Finally, cultivating positive relationships with the media through open communication and dissemination of information is another PR activity that is regarded remarkably important in the effective management of a negative incident. All the aforementioned actions can, according to Wilson et al. (2008) nurture a more strategic management of relationships with key publics and stakeholders.

Borrowing from relationship marketing paradigm, Olkkonen and colleagues adopted an interaction/network approach in an attempt to provide a novel perspective of sponsorship and to “paint a more in-depth picture of sponsorship as a social phenomenon” (Olkkonen et al., 2000, p. 14). The authors drew attention to the need to move away from the mass communication elements that are emphasised in current sponsorship discourse and which consider sponsorship as simply one operational element that can be used to influence buyer’s responses. Rather, the authors suggested alternative perspectives that built on the relational aspects of sponsorship, such as the interactive approach which concentrates mainly on dyadic relationships between the sponsor and the sponsored property, and the network approach that incorporates networks of relationships among several actors in the sponsorship net. Both approaches stress the importance of exchange and interaction, and the relationships that emerge from the aforementioned frameworks are assumed to be a result of interpersonal communication, since they are developed on organisational, departmental or personal level with individuals being “inevitably the basic interactants in all possible collective actor configurations” (Olkkonen et al., 2000, p. 14).

In an empirical attempt to broaden understanding of the sponsorship phenomenon, Olkkonen (2001) went beyond the interaction approach and the

associated dyadic, long-term exchange processes and relationship formation between organisations to suggest that the network approach would be more appropriate when exploring complex interactive phenomena such as sponsorship. Hence, the author suggested that sponsors need to assess not only the sponsored property and its resources, but also its network identity, that is, the corresponding network of related organisations with which the property is exchanging resources of various types such as the media, governmental organisations, etc. According to this view, sponsorship cannot be managed in isolation from the other relationships, activities and resources ties involved in this arrangement. Hence, the author suggested that sponsors can, and should try to build constructive relationships with this corresponding network in order to take advantage of their own resources and capabilities as well as “their own networks of value adding relationships” (Olkkonen, 2001, p. 309). The case study clearly demonstrated that the network approach is a useful tool in strategic and operational sponsorship planning, since it can help sponsors to adopt a broader, holistic view of their sponsorship operation and realise the crucial relationships and resources in the sponsorship net in an effort to maximise the gains of their sponsorship investment.

In a similar vein, Chadwick (2002) also approached sponsorship as a relationship and not simply as a transaction. Therefore, the author argued that sponsors need to adopt “a strategic partnership approach to managing their relationships with sports properties if they are to realise a continuing stream of benefits from a contract” (Chadwick, 2002, p. 258). Relying on the key features of the *relationship marketing paradigm*, the study emphasised the need to move away from the simple transactional view of sponsorship and highlighted the important role of commitment between collaborative partners in building stable mutually beneficial, long-term partnerships. A review of several case studies identified that shared values, relationship termination costs and perceived relationship benefits are key factors in establishing commitment since the literature demonstrated that when they were applied, beneficial relationship outcomes emerged. The most important outcomes observed were sponsors’ propensity to continue in a sponsorship

relationship, partnership acquiescence, and enhanced co-operation which are demonstrated through a willingness to work to preserve their relationship and achieve mutually acceptable goals. The author infers that the qualitative beneficial outcomes of commitment are conducive in achieving quantitative outcomes of sponsorships that sponsors are keen to secure. Whilst commitment is fundamental, the author admitted that it does not just happen. Rather, it emerges from a carefully selected and managed agreement.

Similarly, Farrelly and Quester (2005) considered sponsorship relationships as having the potential to develop into co-marketing alliances between the sponsor and the sponsored property since parties to the sponsorship agreement share resources, mainly in the form of intangible assets such as brand image and corporate reputation. The authors believed that sponsorship provides an on-going value for both the sponsor and the sport property, since “the potential for symbiotic exchange clearly exists in the sponsorship relationship, as resources critical to performance can be derived from the interplay between partners” (Farrelly & Quester, 2005, p. 57).

In their attempt to investigate the conditions fostering or preventing the realisation of sponsorship as a strategic or co-marketing alliance, Farrelly and Quester (2005) examined factors that are fundamental to alliance effectiveness and longevity, such as strategic compatibility, goal convergence, commitment, trust and satisfaction (economic and non-economic). Evidence gathered through a series of in-depth interviews with parties from both sides of the sponsorship relationship revealed that sport properties tend to act in an opportunistic manner and are often the passive, less strategic party in the sponsorship. Specifically, results demonstrated that a lack of sports property commitment is a major factor preventing the development of sponsorship into a co-marketing alliance. Given that the majority of sport organisations worldwide are primarily governed by volunteers, it is maybe the case that the lack of strategic direction is partly attributed to this factor, especially when considering evidence suggesting that volunteers are less proactive and strategic in their sponsorship management

practices such as encouraging leveraging support (Lamont & Dowell, 2008). In addition, Farrelly and Quester (2005) found that perceived inequities in commitment may reduce sponsor's economic satisfaction, while "discrepancies in the strategic intent of the partners" and inadequate time and effort to establish goal convergence in the early stages of the sponsorship relationship are also regarded as major obstacles that limit the development of sponsorship into a viable co-marketing alliance (Farrelly & Quester, 2005, p. 61). In concluding, the authors suggested that sport properties should actively embrace a more strategic approach and invest greater effort into the sponsorship relationship in an attempt to build a mutually beneficial marketing alliance.

Similar concerns regarding the need to conceptualise sponsorship as a partnership have been voiced by Geng et al. (2002). Based on the findings of a study exploring the application of sport sponsorship in China, and building on a clear call for a business approach to sponsorship, the authors proposed a relational sponsorship management framework outlining five key principles for successful sport sponsorship programs. According to their proposal, a successful sponsorship should be built upon: a) the principle of mutual benefit; b) the principle of partnership that is expected to accommodate the interests of both parties involved in this exchange process; c) the principle of cost effectiveness which can be ensured through a carefully designed implementation plans; d) the principle of cooperation which will serve as the platform for building shared values, shared culture and compatible philosophies and beliefs; and e) the principle of process orientation. The latter refers to the effective management of the available resources which requires an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses and competitive capabilities of the sponsorship deal, a strategic orientation and planning, and a commitment to the abovementioned strategy that is demonstrated by both parties.

Adding to the work presented above that explored sponsorship from the network, partnership and alliance perspectives, Girginov and Sandanski (2004) raised

awareness about the political aspect of sponsorship and suggested a policy network-based view of sponsorship in an attempt to analyse empirically the underlying processes of the politics of sport sponsorship using the Sofia Aerobics Grand Prix 2001 as the platform for their qualitative investigation. Congruently with Olkkonen (2001), the authors criticised the dyadic transactional perception of sport sponsorship as neglecting the interests of other important factors such as the media, government and mediating agencies. Instead, they viewed sponsorship as an exchange mechanism that possesses social, political and economic aspects, and signifies “relations of privilege and social control, and it is concerned with power” (Girginov & Sandanski, 2004, p. 123). Drawing on the concepts of modern commodity form and policy networks, the authors approached and investigated sponsorship as an economic and political incident based on exchange that is governed and regulated by rules devised by the agents involved in this process to serve the interests of all parties. Moreover, this exchange, according to Girginov and Sandanski (2004) is regarded as facilitating the “commodification of sporting properties, that is, the transformation of their use value into exchange value” (p. 127). The results substantiated the policy-network based view of sponsorship proposed, since they revealed that sponsorship is a social relation between private, public and voluntary actors fostering their diverse interests. Specifically, Girginov and Sandanski (2004) found that the sponsorship deal:

was arranged in a social, political and economic environment, characterized by the lack of specific norms guiding the behavior of participants and was driven instead by cultural values, by an immature market and by a sports policy community controlled by a powerful state actor, the State Agency for Youth and Sport. (p. 142)

One of the processes in shaping the politics of sport sponsorship presented in this study included the transformation of aerobics into a commodity to be exchanged. Specifically, the intangible property rights, as well as the audience of the sport had been treated as a commodity to be sold to the interested parties, with the owners of the event (the federation) attempting to transform the value of

the event into utility for the members of the network. Another process evidenced in this study was the formation of alliances in the network mobilised by the Aerobic Union Bulgaria, the focal actor in the network. The alliances aimed at state and commercial support, and emerged as a result of the four preconditions for establishing networks in sponsorship: competition for resources, collective representation of the network members' interests, state intervention, and intervention by international governing bodies (Girginov & Sandanski, 2004). The network formed in this certain case consisted of more than 20 actors and their involvement ranged from loose interactions (e.g. meetings and personal networking) to consultation and even bargaining resulting from unequal power relations (Girginov & Sandanski 2004). A third process indicative of the politics of sport sponsorship is the activity of resource allocation, which involved political judgments and calculations. Hence, the authors were led to the conclusion that sport sponsorship is not a solely business scenario, but instead, a public policy issue.

In a similar vein, Scherer, Falcous and Jackson (2008) explored the relationship and interdependence of various interest groups in relation to the national sport of rugby union in New Zealand/Aotearoa. Drawing on in-depth interviews with the rugby union's marketing manager and the marketing manager of the main sponsor (Adidas), they shed light on the complexities, uneven power relations, and dynamic interdependencies between three main actors of the rugby union sporting context (the sporting organisation, the main sponsor and the media conglomerate) and provided illuminating insight "into the strategies of these organisations with respect to their interrelated (but not interchangeable) commercial objectives" (Scherer et al., 2008, p. 50). The paper illuminated the intensified commodification of the sport and the pivotal role of media and corporate alliances in adding equity to the sport. Moreover, the authors criticised the commercial value imposed upon the sport for changing the aspects of its production and consumption in order to reach affluent and corporate audiences. In documenting the relationship between the sponsor and the sponsored property,

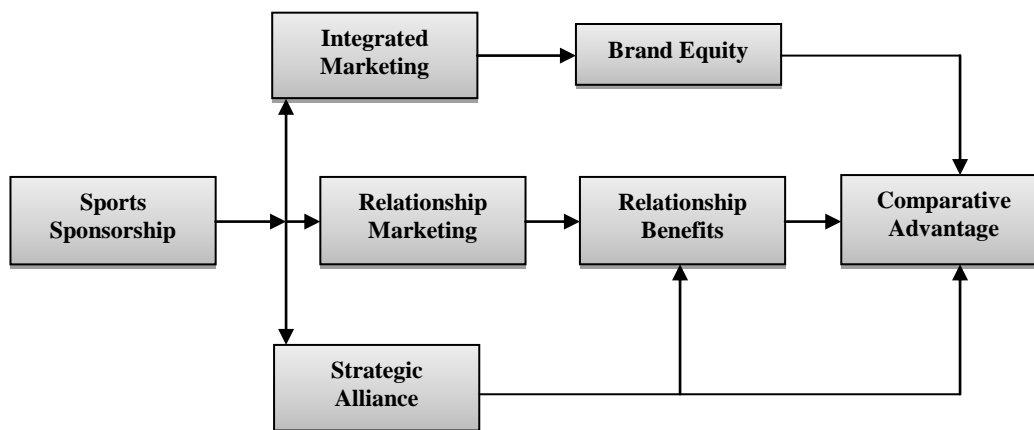
the authors commended on its symbiotic nature since it was framed by both actors as partnership, projecting to a “collective affinity of a corporate alliance” (Scherer et al., 2008, p. 55) that can serve the interests of both groups, and indicating the mutual benefits that can be gained and the mutual reliance of the parties involved. At the same time, the authors noted the relative power of corporations compared to sporting entities which is resulting from the increasing financial dependence of the latter upon the former’s revenues. Hence, although this partnership was regarded as providing important benefits to the actors involved, it was “constituted by disproportionate and fluctuating power relations” (Scherer et al., 2008, p. 62). The dynamic interplay of power relations is well illustrated in this study, with evidence demonstrating a shift in power relations as a result of the sponsorship deal: although the media corporation was in a more powerful position as the main financial provider and the channel through which the sport could be sold, sponsorship with Adidas led to an increased bargaining power for the sporting union through adding equity to the sponsee, which in turn made the sport brand more attracted and desirable to the media.

Within the same framework, Goldman and Johns (2009) relied on the partnership approach to examine sponsorship in South Africa. The authors used a single case study approach to investigate through a variety of sources an effective sport sponsorship case in terms of the employment of a partnership approach between the key actors. In particular, the study explored the strategy, activation and execution of a successful launch of a new cricket format integrating additional elements of entertainment. Interestingly, the study documented a well-coordinated design and execution of the event, with the main actors – the sponsored property, the sponsor and the media partner (the broadcaster) – working together, using joint decision-making, sharing goals and responsibility, and implementing a creative sponsorship activation program that benefitted significantly all the partners (Goldman & Johns, 2009). These findings are, indeed, both surprising and much promising, especially when considering that the study took place in an

emerging market context like South Africa, which is also characterised by significant cultural diversity.

In a similar vein, Yang et al. (2008) built upon three different paradigms in an effort to investigate the strategic aspects of sponsorship in another less mature sponsorship market such as China. Approaching sponsorship as a distinctive competence able to build significant strategic partnerships, the authors relied on the concepts of integrated marketing, relationship marketing and strategic alliance in order to construct “a more useful and compelling conceptual framework” for sport sponsorship analysis (Yang et al., 2008, p. 67) (see figure 2.4). The authors used a document analysis methodology and in-depth interviews with senior managers of international and domestic corporations, and found that, contrary to evidence presented earlier by Söderman and Dolles (2008) in the same national context, sport sponsorship in this case seemed to be guided by a strategic investment philosophy by both local and international sponsors. Specifically, the authors found that the sport sponsorship medium was regarded as being very important in increasing brand equity, and the sponsors held that they had “incorporated the sponsorship into their strategic planning which helped position and achieve their corporate objectives” (Yang et al., 2008, p. 69).

Figure 2.4 Conceptual model of strategic investment of sports sponsorship

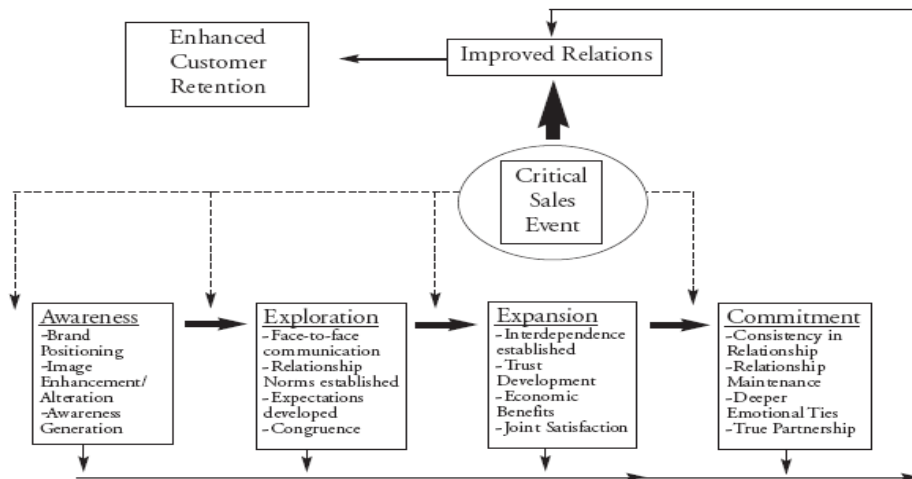


Source: Yang et al. (2008).

Moreover, Yang et al. (2008) further confirmed the relationship building aspect of sport sponsorship, with the sponsors explored entering into sponsorship agreements with the goal of developing partnership relationships with sport properties to realise mutual benefits. Interestingly, the sponsors appeared realising that the relationship networks of sport properties can bring a lot of additional resources to the sponsor, but successful sponsorships depend “on how the interactive, dynamic and interdependent network relationships are managed” (Yang et al., 2008, p. 72). An additional element that emerged from the study is that forging relationships with government is essential for sponsors acting in China, since the government intervention is remarkable given that the government is usually the owner, and rights fees holder, of many sport properties.

Clark, Lachowetz, Irwin and Schimmel (2003) also relied on relationship marketing paradigm, but they offered an alternative framework representing sport sponsorship as a critical sales event that facilitates and reinforces “deeper, more positive relationships with targeted key decision makers” operating in the business-to-business market (Clark et al., 2003, p. 130). Drawing on relationship marketing theory, for which mutual trust and commitment between buyers and sellers are essential (Sharma, 2001), and considering the stages of the relationship life cycle introduced by Dwyer, Schurr and Oh (1987, cited in Clark et al., 2003), the authors constructed a framework in which sport sponsorship is regarded as an effective method that can be employed by sellers (sponsors in this case) in order to enhance relationships at every stage of the relationship cycle, and thus strengthen relational selling between organisations (Clark et al., 2003). Starting with the awareness stage of the cycle, which principally involves activities conveying the benefits of the product to the buyer, Clark et al. argued that sponsorship and ancillary sponsorship events and activities can be used to “implicitly and explicitly communicate the positioning of the brand or company” (p. 136), mainly through the preferred placement of advertising during the sporting event (see figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5 Framework for Implementing Critical Sales Events into the Relationship Marketing Life Cycle



Source: Clark et al. (2003)

According to the authors, sponsorship may serve to create the impetus for the initial meeting and make the buyer more receptive to the seller’s proposals. At the exploration stage, where the actors examine the potential for extending their relationship and start develop expectations, sponsorship can offer excellent opportunities for constructive interaction that can facilitate communicational progress. At the expansion stage, in which the relationship becomes more interdependent, “sport sponsorship provides a rich environment to facilitate the expansion” (Clark et al., 2003, p. 138), since a sporting event can offer joint satisfaction that can enable the development of trust between the two parties. In the commitment phase, where true relationships have been established and characterised by effective communication and understanding, sponsorship and related activities can serve as “overt demonstrations of the economic and emotional resources spent by the salesperson and the salesperson’s company to establish and maintain the relationship with the customer” (Clark et al., 2003, p. 139). Appropriate use of sponsorship can extend, according to the authors, the commitment stage so that the dissolution stage, in which the relationship ends because of dissatisfaction of the client, is not reached. As the authors held, the framework is important for both sponsors and sport event providers, since it can help the former group to choose the events that serve the interests of their key

clients, and it can facilitate the latter group to recruit sponsors through designing and delivering sponsorship packages that provide sponsors the opportunity to move their customers through the stages of the relationship life cycle.

The importance of providing events that can serve as sophisticated marketing platforms was further emphasised by Raynaud and Bolos (2008) who held that a sport should be governed and organised “in a way that encompasses all stakeholders’ needs and requirements” (p. 34), through blending sport, business and entertainment, so that sponsors can integrate their brands in the most effective and positive way.

In another paper drawing on relationship marketing paradigm, Pichot, Tribou and O'Reilly (2008) approached sponsorship from a completely different perspective. In their commentary exploring sponsorship as a relationship building strategy, they focused on the internal communication and human resource management functions involved in sport sponsorship arrangements, and they strongly advocated the use of the sponsorship medium as the vehicle for achieving internal marketing outcomes (e.g. employee motivation and commitment). The authors emphasised the fact that the image value pursued through sponsorship can be transferred to both the internal (employees, sales force, management) and external (clients and other stakeholders) audiences, and a coherent positioning of sponsorship should also be directed internally and externally (Pichot et al., 2008).

The authors drew attention on the importance of considering sponsees as partners, who are, in the end, enabling the sponsor to meet together with the external objectives the internal goals of establishing good relationships with employees, enhancing employee motivation and creating company pride. Additionally, the authors argued that the sport partner will enable the sponsor position itself as a socially responsible organisation, something that, according to Pichot (1999, cited in Pichot et al., 2008) will be reinforced through developing a synergy of internal and external communication actions. In closing their analysis,

the authors presented several cases illustrating successful internal communication strategies associated with sport sponsorships, such as involving employees directly in the sponsorship, involving decentralised units in the partnership, employees invited to enjoy sport sponsorship hospitality etc.

3. Managing Sport Sponsorship Strategically

3.1 Integration and Leveraging Practices

Integrating sponsorship into the broader marketing mix

The strategic importance of sport sponsorship is not only demonstrated in the literature examining the role of the sponsorship medium in the development of corporate strategy that was described in the previous section, but it is also clearly demonstrated in the constantly strengthening position that it holds in the promotional mix. In fact, the strategic function of sport sponsorship seems to have been recognised many years ago. References in early sponsorship literature indicate that a movement towards a more market-driven approach had been evidenced since the mid-80s. Mescon and Tilson (1987) provided some evidence illustrating several attempts of sponsors to integrate sports sponsorship with the company's marketing efforts. Specifically, the authors presented several cases incorporating sponsorship-related objective setting, integration with other elements of the marketing mix and attempts to capitalise on the linkage created between the product and the sponsored property. In concluding, Mescon and Tilson (1987) argued that companies started exploring the potential offered by sponsorship in an attempt to obtain a tangible return for their contributions. It is important to mention however that that sponsorship was regarded as simply one of the many philanthropic activities undertaken by a company, or as a program of "charitable giving" (Mescon & Tilson, 1987, p. 51), while the professionalisation of sponsorship was seen as being a part of a broader trend towards the adoption of a "new-style philanthropy" (Mescon & Tilson, 1987, p. 49), which according to the authors, it is a philanthropy that had developed into a vital component of corporate strategic management.

In a similar vein, Abratt and Grobler (1989), building on the arguments made by Lapin (1987, cited in Abratt & Grobler, 1989) that the initial sponsorship fee paid by the sponsor is not the end of the sponsorship activity, but the beginning, espoused the view that sponsorship needs to be supported by additional promotional activities such as advertising, publicity, several incentive programs, free sampling, as well as community activities. Their empirical findings gathered from 28 South African sponsors investing in several sports such as cricket, football, rugby and horse racing, indicated that although all the elements of the promotional mix were involved in sponsorship, the most heavily employed was PR, followed by advertising.

Additionally, Witcher, Craigen, Culligan and Harvey (1991) held that the increase in sponsorship spending evidenced in the UK during the 1980s has been accompanied by an increased professionalism in sponsorship management and that sponsorship was then seen as an essential marketing mix ingredient. Their empirical findings, however, did not seem to support that notion since the functional responsibility for various types of sponsorship investment was primarily assigned to the PR department, and not the marketing department, raising concerns about the realisation of sponsorship as a part of the marketing mix. Interestingly, the findings suggested that functional control of sponsorship had an impact on integration, objectives pursued and evaluation of the sponsorship medium since the closer the relationship to the marketing function the more detailed the objectives and evaluation criteria for sponsorship (Witcher et al., 1991). For the sponsors of professional sport, the marketing function was more concerned with sport sponsorship, suggesting a more integrated approach adopted by sport sponsors compared to other types of sponsorship.

Arguments regarding the importance of integration were also made by Cornwell and Maignan (1998) who held that “superior outcomes of sponsorships can be expected when sponsorship is used as an activity that provides a focus for all

other corporate communications” (p. 18). In fact, one of the earliest attempts exploring the development of sponsorship as a marketing communications option available to management was made by Meenaghan (1991). The author held that sponsorship should be seen as an element of the marketing communications mix since it “fits quite naturally alongside advertising, public relations personal selling and sales promotion in that its basic function lies in achieving marketing communications objectives” (Meenaghan, 1991, p. 39). Hence, the author suggested that the manager’s task is to use sponsorship along with other marketing communication methods in a cost-effective way, and he paralleled this action to “the different sections of an orchestra being integrated to ensure the best possible overall performance” (Meenaghan, 1991, p. 39).

Strategic integration practices employed by sponsors were also evident in a study conducted by Lavack (2003). Specifically, Lavack focused on the sponsorship management practices employed by tobacco sponsors, and it seems that the promotional restrictions that this kind of sponsor was faced with, posed additional needs for a professional, highly integrated and highly coordinated approach to managing their sponsorship arrangements. Thus, it is not surprising that the study indicated extensive pre- and post- promotion of sporting events applied by tobacco sponsors in an attempt to increase the exposure and media coverage they get through their sponsorships, in an effort to overcome the legal obstacles with regard to advertising their products.

In a similar vein, Cornwell (2008) held that

Understanding interactions with other linked entities and other linked information generally is important to sponsorship because sponsorship embeds the brand in a vast field of possible information nodes (e.g., player jerseys, time clocks, scoreboards), often with little direction on how to meaningfully link them to the brand. (p. 47)

For Cornwell, sponsorship is an underprivileged medium compared to advertising in that, in order for the sponsorship message to be complete, it needs to be leveraged.

Despite the arguments made by several authors emphasising the need for integration, it has to be mentioned that there had been several voices challenging the sponsorship integration conception, such as Pope and Voges (1994) who held that “attempts to categorize this medium as a specific type within the communications mix are misguided” (p. 45). Conversely, the authors suggested that the array of mechanism and components of the sponsorship activity seems to cover all elements of that mix and thus allowing sponsorship to be regarded as a means of utilising different elements of the communications mix “be they personal selling, advertising, sales promotions or public relations (Pope & Voges, 1994, p. 45). In a similar vein, Shaklin and Kuzma (1992) estimated that sponsorship would evolve into a separate activity within the marketing mix, like advertising and sales promotions.

Development of Sponsorship Management Models integrating sponsorship into the marketing and communications mix

There have been several voices in the sport sponsorship literature suggesting the adoption of several actions enabling a more strategic and systematic approach to the management of the sponsorship medium. Most of them emphasise the importance of integration outlined in the above section, and one of those is the sponsorship management framework outlined by Meenaghan (1991). As already mentioned, Meenaghan argued that sponsorship should be approached as an important component of the marketing communication mix that is well integrated into the other communicational elements. Moreover, the author clarified that sponsorship can be used to communicate the sponsor’s messages to a wide variety of audiences, and suggested that the selection of the sponsorship agreement should be based on certain criteria and objectives. Furthermore, Meenaghan drew attention to implementation issues, and argued that sponsorship should be implemented as part of a marketing campaign, and thus supported by additional advertising and promotions, while the evaluation of

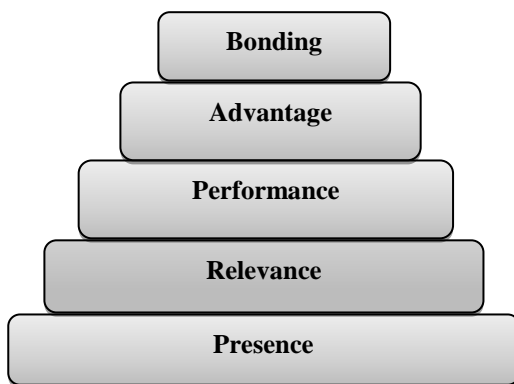
sponsorship, according to the strategic model outlined by Meenaghan (1991) should be carried out against the objectives set.

Similarly to Meenaghan (1991), Irwin and Asimakopoulos (1992) also approached sponsorship as a vital corporate communication tool that “should be treated both professionally and commercially” (p. 50). The importance of sponsorship as an integral part of the communication mix is well illustrated in the six-step framework of sport sponsorship management offered by the authors, since the model begins with a proposed review of the corporate marketing plan and objectives of the business before setting and prioritising the sponsorship objectives. The framework continues with the establishment of clear evaluation criteria and assignment of relative weighting based on the aforementioned prioritisation, followed by a screening and selection of the proposals, implementation of selected sponsorship and evaluation of the sponsorship’s effectiveness in achieving prescribed objectives. In a similar vein, Gross et al. (1987), reflecting on the early developments associated with sponsorship in the USA, pointed out that coordination between the sponsored property and the wider promotional effort is essential to successful sponsorships. Moreover, the authors held that in order to be successful, sponsorship should be accompanied by an explicit, written statement of the objectives to be sought, whilst consistency between the objectives, message, and the audience is vital for successful sponsorship investments.

Walshe (2008) offered an alternative sponsorship management framework that is also built around the communicational aspect of the sponsorship medium. Using the Millward Brown brand pyramid construct (see figure 3.1), the author contemplated sponsorship as an important communication tool that can be used for creating “presence”, or otherwise building awareness and making the product known to the market, creating “relevance” and making it appealing to the target market, improving the “performance” of a brand through associations with trustworthy partners, reminding customers about the “advantages” of a brand and

differentiating the brand from those of competitors, and finally, creating bonding that will result in loyalty and superiority over competitors' brands (Walshe, 2008). Building on the several stages that a brand goes through, and recognising that sponsorship is a key ingredient of many marketing recipes, the author asserted that appropriate use of sponsorship is "part art and part science" (Walshe, 2008, p. 43), and he argued that the starting point for the sponsorship management approach is the brand.

Figure 3.1 The Millward Brown Brand Pyramid



Source: Walshe (2008).

For Walshe, a critical factor to be taken into consideration when planning and communicating the sponsorship message is the mood of the consumer at the different stages which is going to influence their receptiveness, behaviour and consequently the effectiveness of sponsorship. Moreover, the author stresses the importance of fit in this process, and emphasised that creativity is central in producing affinity and emotional responses that improve the effectiveness of the sponsorship medium. Finally, the author argued that values and beliefs are essential in creating fit, and concluded that managing the sponsorship mix "is about skilfully aligning the issues facing the brand with an appropriate property or properties that can be imaginatively and interestingly intertwined with the brand message across relevant spaces that reach appropriate targets" (Walshe, 2008, p. 48).

The importance of sponsorship integration with the broader marketing mix was also depicted in the model proposed by Séguin, Teed and O'Reilly (2005). Their qualitative inquiry resulted in the creation of a framework outlining the best practices that should guide the sponsorship management process. (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Top Ten Best Practices leading to a successful sport sponsorship

1.	A significant investment in human and financial resources in leveraging (3:1 to sponsorship value) the investment in the sponsorship
2.	Clearly defined objectives (both the sponsor and sponsee)
3.	Integration with the sponsor's overall marketing mix
4.	A consideration of customer interests (drive sales, build brand, etc.)
5.	The need for strong long-term relationships
6.	The requirement of ongoing television coverage on a major network
7.	A good fit between the sponsor's objectives and the sponsee's product(s)
8.	The incorporation of branding as a sponsorship objective
9.	Hospitality as a prominent leveraging technique
10.	Cross-promotion with associate sponsors

Source: Séguin et al., 2005

The creation of the model was based on three specific examples of successful sponsorship for Canadian amateur sports organisations, and the findings generally supported the key success factors identified in earlier research. Specifically, the results clearly demonstrated that successful sponsorships should be accompanied by, inter alia, clearly defined objectives, integration with the overall marketing mix, and a good fit between the sponsor and the sponsee.

Another theoretical model that integrates the element of sport sponsorship into the marketing mix was provided by Vignali (1997). With the intention to simplify the coordination of the several elements of the marketing mix, including sponsorship and its variables, the author proposed the MIXMAP framework, which categorises the product in two different models: the Product Life Cycle and the Boston Consulting Group matrix. The idea is to transfer the position of the variables from the former model to the latter. According to the author, this positioning is very important in that it “enables the sponsor to combine the product-class, brand and economic environment to decide the intensity of the different elements and their variables” which in turn impacts decisions regarding the sponsored sport, its performance, and its connection to the objectives of the marketing mix elements (Vignali, 1997, p. 192). Vignali used a multinational, qualitative survey as the platform for assessing the developed theory, and he concluded that the positioning of the research data into the different matrices has positive implications, such as enabling controlling the results of the strategy and the tactics used to reach the objectives, and vice-versa - using the desired objectives to define appropriate strategies and tactics. Hence, the model is regarded a practical tool that helps improving sport sponsorship effectiveness and success.

Leveraging as a part of the strategic sponsorship management process – empirical evidence

Although the importance of a well-integrated and adequately-leveraged sponsorship activity has been widely recognised, the empirical evidence gathered with regard to sponsorship management practices is contradicting. The essential role of leveraging, for example, is clearly depicted in the study conducted by Cornwell et al. (2001a). Embracing the notion that “orchestration accentuates that the communication goals of sponsorships are realised only through thoughtful management and considerable leverage of the sponsorship investment” (Cornwell et al., 2001a, p. 41), the authors explored the views of 50 corporate sponsorship managers through a quantitative instrument employed in a two-stage survey (in

1996 and 1997), and found that increased leverage significantly contributed to differentiating the brand from its competitors and adding financial value to the firm. Similarly, Raynaud and Bolos (2008), argued that a strategic sponsorship management approach is usually employed today, with companies spending a considerable amount of time and research to set targets and goals to be realised through sponsorship. In presenting an overview of Eurosport's⁵ experience of the increasing importance of sport in the marketing mix, the authors argued that companies today employ sophisticated and rigorous sponsorship selection processes engaging research, budgeting and extensive negotiation activities, and invest heavily on activation and leveraging activities, which, according to Raynaud and Bolos (2008) need to be centralised and managed from a single point – usually the department in charge for the sponsorship deal.

Contrary to those arguments, there is much empirical evidence illustrating that many companies ignore the essential role of sponsorship in the marketing communications mix. Amis et al. (1999) have provided evidence suggesting that national and multinational Canadian firms are often involved in sport sponsorship without integrating the activity in other marketing practices. Early evidence on sport sponsorship (e.g. Armstrong, 1988) demonstrated that only a few of the 17 international corporations were found to support their sponsorship with any activity, something that was attributed to the fact that most of the sponsorships were at the initial stages, and thus they were expected to be more adequately leveraged in the future.

In a similar vein, Polonsky et al. (1996) found that sponsorship investments by small businesses in Australia were not well integrated into the firms' promotional mix strategies. Interestingly, the majority of the respondents in this study considered sport sponsorship as an advertising or PR activity. It is also worth mentioning that few of those small businesses used their sponsorship arrangement in their other promotional activities, and when they did it was in

⁵ A pan-European sports multimedia platform

advertising and publicity activities. Furthermore, Polonsky et al. found that responsibility for the sponsorship arrangement was mainly taken by the owner or manager of the business, whilst sales managers, management boards, shareholders and staff appeared having a less prominent influential role in this process, substantiating further the lack of a strategic integrated approach to sponsorship.

Farrelly et al. (1997) continued that discussion by investigating the level of integration of sports sponsorship into the broader marketing function of Australian and North American firms. The study examined the assumption whether North America was a more mature market compared to Australia, and whether this maturity “would translate into a greater degree of management sophistication, and in particular, a greater degree of integration within the organisation and the broader marketing effort” (Farrelly et al., 1997, p. 171). The results of this study suggested that there are differences with regard to the level integration and leveraging practices among countries. The study employed a quantitative methodology to measure several factors that are regarded projecting a strategic approach to sports sponsorship such as “sponsorship management responsibility, selection and review process, sponsorship planning procedures including objective setting, integration and evaluation, and the amount invested in related marketing activities, as well as future sponsorship activity” (Farrelly et al., 1997, p. 172).

The findings revealed that more time and effort were spent by sponsors on negotiating deals than in integration and planning activities. There is, however, evidence illustrating that North American firms made greater attempts at developing sponsorship programs that are “synergistic with broader corporate goals” (Farrelly et al., 1997, p. 176), supporting the notion that sponsorship is perceived as a more strategic tool in North America than in Australia. Findings suggested that the majority of Australian businesses approached sponsorship as a solely communication-focused tool. In contrast, regarding North American

sponsors, the functional responsibility was taken by marketing departments, advertising departments and product/brand managers, suggesting “stronger integration by way of more cross-functional communication” (Farrelly et al., 1997, p. 175). The North American firms also appeared to spend more on sponsorship-related activities - for every dollar spent on sponsorship an average of between \$1-2 was spent on related activities - while the Australian firms seemed to have invested only half of this amount to activities that supported sponsorship. The lack of attention to performance measures demonstrated by both North American and Australian firms however raise some concerns regarding the realisation of the strategic role of sponsorship in pursuing corporate and marketing objectives.

Likewise, Burton et al. (1998) found that for North American companies, sponsorship was more fully integrated to the broader marketing mix compared to Australian companies. Integration was assessed according to the importance attributed to factors such as fit with the corporate plan, sponsorship assessment and review of past sponsorship performance. Data were gathered through a questionnaire administered to 102 North American (U.S. and Canadian) and Australian companies from a variety of industries. The realisation of sponsorship’s contribution to corporate image by North American firms reflected that they “think more holistically about the benefits sponsorship brings to their marketing mix” (Burton et al., 1998, p. 29). Moreover North American sponsors appeared being more aware of how to use integration activities to support their sponsorship, and they were successful in getting organisational divisions involved and committed to the appeal of sponsorship. The stronger integration of sponsorship in the communication mix was evidenced by more cross-functional responsibility and control of the sponsorship activity, since the number of sponsors assigning sponsorship functional responsibility to the marketing or advertising department or the product/brand management was significantly higher for North American sponsors compared to Australian sponsors and this involved not simply the implementation and evaluation responsibility, but also proposal assessment, negotiations and renewal decisions (Burton et al., 1998).

In a similar vein, another study carried out in Australia (i.e. Lamont & Dowell, 2008) found that sponsorship practices adopted by small and mid-size business revealed that the small and mid-size businesses investing in sport tourism events in Australia did not seem to be aware of the importance of leveraging, neither did their sponsorship partners. It should be mentioned, however, that paid/professional event organisers appeared as being more proactive than the non-professionals (i.e. volunteers) in encouraging sponsor's leveraging. Although, sponsors employed very limited and unsophisticated leveraging support, with the main activities involving distribution of promotional material, themed media advertising and in-store promotions related to the sponsored event.

Contrary to Australian sponsors' practices, evidence gathered in Canada by Copeland, Frisby and McCarville (1996) demonstrated that Canadian corporations viewed sport sponsorship as part of a wider communication mix, and appeared to actively support their sponsorship with multiple forms of communication practices: advertising (86,9%), public relations activities (78.9%), consumer (67,6%) and trade promotions (53,5%), and sales force promotions (52,1%). Moreover, the integration was further evidenced in that the majority of the firms (57%) assigned sponsorship responsibility to the marketing, sales, or public relations departments, and 16% to the advertising function. It has to be mentioned, however, that the sample consisted of large corporations, and thus the integration of sport sponsorship that is evident here may not be the case for smaller businesses. Interestingly, all corporations emphasised the commercial aspect of sponsorship, while none of them considered sponsorship as a philanthropic activity (Copeland et al., 1996). However, the authors questioned the strategic role of sport sponsorship in Canada, partially because very few corporations (only 8%) assigned sponsorship functional responsibility to a specific department or manager, as well as because the sponsors investing in different types of sponsorship did not seem to differentiate their approach according to the type of sponsorship they choose. These findings do not coincide with the evidence

presented by Witcher et al. (1991), who found that professional sport was the most supported activity in the UK based on a sample of 54 large national and local corporations.

Likewise, data gathered in the USA from the responses of 180 executives at *Fortune* 1000 companies demonstrated that only 17% of those sponsors formed a sponsorship department, whilst the functional responsibility for sponsorship was taken primarily by the PR and advertising departments (Shaklin & Kuzma, 1992). According to the authors, most companies with little experience in sponsorship initially place sponsorship function under the umbrella of the advertising or sales promotion functions, whilst as the sponsors become more experienced they treat sponsorship as a distinct element of the marketing communications mix. Generally, the results provided by Shaklin and Kuzma suggest that the functional approach to sponsorship is similar among many different countries. This is further illustrated by the evidence presented by Abratt et al. (1987) in a study carried out in South Africa. The results showed that only 13% of the 45 large firms constituting the sample in this study had a separate sponsorship department dealing with their sponsorship investment. Instead, for the majority of the respondents (60%), the marketing manager was held responsible for sport sponsorship management, lending some support to the view that sponsorship was regarded as an integral part of the marketing mix. Abratt et al. found that the main activities employed by sponsors to leverage their sponsorship were the placement of posters and banners at the sport stadium, and TV and other media coverage. The realisation of the strategic nature of sport sponsorship, however, seems to be undermined by the fact that, contrary to the findings presented by Copeland et al. (1996), 64% of the sponsors in this study regarded sponsorship as having an altruistic nature to some extent.

In another study carried out in South Africa, Spence, Abratt and Mattheus (1997) found that integrating the sponsorship medium into the sponsor's communication mix was essential in reaching the sponsorship objectives set by the business. The

findings obtained from 10 large corporations sponsoring the 1995 Rugby World Cup demonstrated that most of the sponsors achieved this integration of the elements of the communication mix, combining sponsorship with advertising, public relations/publicity, and sales promotions. This, in turn, resulted in more successful sponsorship arrangements (Spence et al., 1997).

Additional empirical studies relating to the aforementioned factors of integration with the wider marketing and communication mix, functional responsibility, selection procedures, objective setting, implementation and evaluation, have depicted both professional and amateur approaches to sponsorship management (Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou, & Dounis, 2008; Thwaites, 1994, 1995; Thwaites et al. 1998; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998). One of the case-studies describing the adoption of professional sponsorship management practices was presented by Furst (1994), who referred to the aspects of a sophisticated management program provided by an agency responsible for running a sponsorship deal of a key customer (sponsor). Specifically, Furst (1994), who was a consultant representing a professional agency, elaborated on the various actions undertaken by his company in identifying and clarifying the objectives pursued by the client, in defining the target audience, in selecting the appropriate event, in negotiating the components of the agreement, in organising and delivering the leveraging and hospitality program for the key trade customers, and in pro-actively controlling the sponsorship program.

Papadimitriou et al. (2008) explored the national companies that served as Grand National Sponsors of the 2004 Olympic Games, and attempted to examine the role of sponsorship in sponsors' brand management efforts and the degree to which the sponsorship was accompanied by "strategic planning and systematic leveraging activities" (Papadimitriou et al., 2008, p. 215). Their analysis was framed around five factors that had been proposed in past research (e.g. Arthur, et al., 1998, Cornwell, 1995) as indicators of a strategic sport sponsorship approach. Those elements are: sponsors' goals and objectives, resources

allocated to the acquisition and activation of the sponsorship, leveraging initiatives, evaluation plans, and incorporation of the sponsorship in the overall corporate strategy and brand management efforts.

Surprisingly, the findings of Papadimitriou et al. (2008) indicated that although the sponsors were large corporations involved in expensive sponsorship agreements, the majority of them failed to approach their sponsorship as a valuable resource able to create a strong competitive advantage. Only a small number of the sponsors approached their sponsorship in a strategic way. Moreover, the results provide further evidence supporting the notion that sport sponsorship can be used as a brand building tool through the creation of positive brand associations. This was supported not only by the stated objectives of the sponsors but also through the allocation of resources in activating and leveraging their sponsorship relationships (Papadimitriou et al., 2008). Specific leveraging initiatives employed by the Olympic sponsors in this study included the use of Olympic symbols and logos on sponsors' products and packages, the introduction of new Olympic-themed products, Olympic-themed sales promotions, and hospitality programs for key partners. It is notable, however, that Papadimitriou and colleagues found that the sponsors relied heavily on mass media advertising (TV and newspapers), whilst the Internet did not seem to be a prevalent method of communication for the majority of the sponsors explored.

Similar findings were presented by Papadimitriou and Apostolopoulou (2009), who found that seven of the ten sponsors of the 2004 Olympic Games were particularly active in leveraging their sponsorship investment utilising a number of leveraging methods such as media advertising (electronic and print), sales promotions, publications, special events, introduction of new products/services, customer hospitality, and employee programs. Interestingly, all the seven sponsors were private companies, and they were clearly more systematic and professional compared to the less active sponsors who were all public companies.

In the same vein, Séguin et al. (2005) found that the approach adopted by the three large Canadian corporations investigated in their study was strategic at large, with objectives that were aligned with the broader corporate strategy of the businesses, extensive use of leveraging activities by all the three sponsors, and examples illustrating the development of sponsorship into a distinctive competence. Interestingly, the study revealed the companies investigated used quite different leveraging activities that corresponded to their different objectives and different nature of their sponsorship investment (Séguin et al., 2005). In the case of the telecommunications company, although the stated prime reason for sponsorship engagement was philanthropic, the corporation managed to use “a fully integrated marketing programme to leverage its associations” (Séguin et al., 2005, p. 81). It is also of interest to note that the sponsorship objectives were closely related to the corporate philosophy of the company, something that resulted in a workforce that was highly engaged and supportive of the sponsorship initiatives and the leveraging activities employed. Moreover, this sponsor approached sponsorship as a distinctive competence through the adoption of a program that was unique, difficult to imitate, supportive of corporate image, fully leveraged, and in line with strategic objectives of the firm (Séguin et al., 2005).

The insurance company examined in Séguin et al.'s (2005) paper invested heavily on leveraging activities by spending three times the initial sponsorship fee on leveraging using a variety of strategies including media relations, promotional activities, athletes' appearances, special events etc. In addition, the authors found that the company adopted a comprehensive internal promotional plan in order to communicate with a variety of audiences such as distributors, brokers and consultants. Furthermore, hospitality was a key element of the leveraging plan since it was regarded as essential in strengthening the relationships with partners and employees. In implementing the hospitality program, Séguin and colleagues found that the company promoted and educated all the organisational divisions

about the various hospitality opportunities, and worked closely with the sport organisation to ensure the provision of an environment that is conducive to hospitality programs and activities. Similarly, the evidence gathered demonstrated that the company operating in the construction industry (building materials/insulation) also employed a comprehensive and integrated promotional plan to leverage its sponsorship activity by using both internally and externally driven strategies to reach clients, employees and retailers. Moreover, the authors held that this company invested both human and financial resources in developing a long-term leveraging strategy to maximise its sponsorship returns.

In another Canada-based study, Thwaites et al. (1998) found that the funds injected on additional leveraging activities by Canadian companies from a broad range of industrial and commercial sectors, varied significantly. Although the evidence suggested increased leverage by some companies, the expenditure was found to fall well below the levels advocated in early sponsorship literature. Meenaghan (1991) for example, argued that “a figure of at least equal value to the direct fee payment must be used in leveraging the original sponsorship investment” (p. 43), and Gross et al. (1987) mentioned that there had been examples of sponsors in North America (e.g. Anheuser-Busch) spending three times the original sponsorship investment. Furthermore, Currie (2000) argued that in the late 1990s there had been a massive increase in sponsorship leveraging reaching as much as ten times the sponsorship rights fees payment, with international sponsors such as Coca-Cola, McDonald's and Carlsberg committing between five and ten times their initial investment in securing the sponsorship deal. Despite those promising findings, Thwaites and colleagues found that 37% of the Canadian companies studied failed to introduce any additional spending to leverage the association. Interestingly, 61.4% of sponsors considered sport sponsorship as a part of the broader communication mix since they “claim to use sport sponsorship together with other communication activities” (Thwaites et al., 1998, p. 44). However, the relatively small allocation of the overall communication budget on sponsorship (39% of the companies invested up to 5% on sponsorship)

as well the central role of the marketing manager in the sponsorship decision which is translated into a lesser role of the senior executives and board of directors, may signify a less strategic approach to sponsorship. This is further supported by the fact that most of the companies did not actively seek sponsorship opportunities - only 57% appeared to set quantifiable objectives - while the techniques they use for evaluating their investment were not regarded as sophisticated or universally applied.

Likewise, poor leveraging practices seem to be a characteristic common to many different environments and cultural contexts. Yang et al. (2008) found that one of the main risks perceived by corporations investing in sport sponsorship in China prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, was the fact that many sponsorships were under-leveraged, primarily due to the fact that many businesses consider their sponsorship activity as a turn-key promotional medium that do not need additional support, whilst some other do not have the expertise and abilities to integrate their sponsorship into the marketing communications mix. It should be mentioned however, that Yang et al.'s study gave some very clear signs of "a strategic investment philosophy" (Yang et al., 2008, p. 70) since there was some evidence of corporations investing two to ten times the initial sponsorship fee to additional promotion, suggesting a realisation of the importance of leveraging in sponsorship success. Those examples, however, were rare, simply sweetening the general picture of underleveraged sponsorship arrangements in this emerging market.

Criticism of inadequate leveraging activities have also been voiced earlier (i.e. Thwaites, 1993, 1994, 1995), surprisingly relating to more mature and developed markets, such as the UK. The finding of a study conducted by Thwaites (1993) which was based on a quantitative research design, revealed that sponsorship was a relatively underestimated ingredient of the marketing mix in the UK, since overall sponsorship expenditure represented approximately 8% of the communication budgets of building societies compared to 60% for advertising. Furthermore, only 37% of the sponsors integrated sponsorship with advertising,

sales promotions and PR, while 44% used sponsorship as a totally independent medium. Moreover, indicative of the lack of sponsorship integration is the fact that the sponsors in this study did not seem to clearly capture the way in which sports sponsorship would contribute to their overall communication objectives.

Similar findings regarding the management practices and leveraging initiatives associated with sponsorship in the UK were presented by Thwaites (1994). Although the study gave some indications of a professional approach to the management and leveraging activities adopted by some financial institutions demonstrated mainly through the integration of sponsorship with other elements of the communication mix, spending on leveraging activities, clear objectives and evaluation, the general conclusion drawn from the study was that sponsorship was approached in a non-strategic and unprofessional way, and it was “unhinged from broader strategic considerations” (Thwaites, 1994, p. 759). This was illustrated by a lack of integration with other elements of the marketing communication mix and a failure to leverage sponsorship with supplementary expenditure. In fact, 48% of respondents treated sponsorship as a medium on its own. Moreover, the study demonstrated that only 24% of the sponsors set up a separate sponsorship department, whilst 31 different job titles appeared to be assigned functional responsibility for the sponsorship deal, suggesting a wide range of different approaches to sport sponsorship.

Thwaites (1995) tried to determine the extent to which a systematic framework of sponsorship management is endorsed in practice by companies associating with English professional football clubs. In specific, 43% of sponsors allocated no additional funding while 50% increased the original investment by a quarter (Thwaites, 1995). The results of this study, however, seem to be more promising with regard to the way in which football sponsorship was approached in the UK, since the evidence demonstrated that there was a senior level input to the sponsorship process, while the vast majority of the sponsors had been proactive in seeking sponsorship opportunities. It should be mentioned, however, that only

four of the thirty sponsors had a sponsorship department assuming responsibility for the sponsorship activity, while the majority of the sponsors devolved responsibility to the marketing or PR department. Moreover, the author criticised the imprecise objectives that did not allow evaluation, the non-sophisticated and limited evaluation techniques, and the lack of effective integration with other communication mix elements, which imply a failure to employ a comprehensive management framework to maximise the effectiveness of sponsorship.

More recent evidence with regard to the English professional football (i.e. Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004) is quite interesting. Using the results of the football investigation provided by Thwaites (1995) as a benchmark, the authors compared the findings and tried to identify any progress in sponsorship management practices. The findings of their study demonstrated that the management of football sponsorship “has undoubtedly become more considered and professional” in many aspects compared to earlier evidence (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004, p. 56). For example, despite the widespread absence of objective setting amongst sponsors and the limited range of evaluation techniques, sponsors appeared employing more informed and more careful screening and selection processes, detailing the contents of contracts more specifically and including several related activities to support their sponsorship, and being more prepared to spend on leveraging activities (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004). Precisely, the authors found that the number of corporations failing to allocate additional funds to leveraging activities decreased to 24% compared to 43% in the earlier study, while 58% devoted up to an additional 25% of the original investment, 15% spent between 26%-50%, while a very small percentage (3%) invested additional 50% of the contract value. However, the authors criticised the continuing sponsors’ failure to manage their sponsorship strategically despite the aforementioned signs of progress. In concluding, they directed attention to the potential of sport sponsorship to become a relationship building, network and resource strategy.

Less promising findings were presented though by Chadwick and Thwaites (2005). In another study focusing on football sponsorship in the UK, the authors found that although a significant majority of sponsors acknowledged the importance of leveraging, 24% of them allocated no additional expenditure to leveraging activities, and 58% claimed they had spent only up to 25% of contract deal on supportive activities. Utilising the sponsorship management model provided by Irwin and Asimakopoulos (1992) outlined earlier, and modifying it in the light of Thwaites' study (1995), Chadwick and Thwaites investigated the management of sponsorship in the UK across six stages: objective setting, screening and selection, contract content, execution of the deal, evaluation, and critical success factors.

The study examined the sponsorship management practices of sponsors associating with the top two English professional football leagues, and the results obtained through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods revealed that, contrary to expectations, professionalisation of football sponsorship was "still under way" (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005, p. 337). The authors concluded that there was little evidence to suggest significant advances in the management of sponsorship practices. Short term-deals, a lack of commitment that often relies on sponsors' unawareness of the longer-term benefits of the sponsorship deal, failure to pursue specific objectives combined with a lack of appropriate evaluation measures, little communication between the two parties, and inadequate leveraging provide support to the aforementioned argument. Moreover, the authors criticised corporations for being "lazy in developing their managerial practices, seduced by the appeal of soccer" and probably due to the naïve assumption that sponsorships inevitably lead to tangible benefits (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005, p. 334). Hence, this study stressed the need to move away from a short-term transactional perspective and realise that sport sponsorship is a corporate activity with the potential to fulfill, in addition to the communicational targets, "a much greater and more powerful strategic, network, and relationship marketing role" (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005, p. 337).

In an earlier study carried out by Thwaites and Carruthers (1998) there were some more heartening sponsorship management findings. The study found substantial differences in the management and leveraging approaches employed by rugby union sponsors. According to the authors, a more professional approach to management and leveraging strategies was found to be associated with large firms, which also tended to set specific objectives and to apply appropriate evaluation techniques. In contrast, smaller firms which were driven primarily by personal motives and did not adopt commercial criteria, failed to adopt a systematic approach to leveraging their investment. In particular, the study revealed that for the majority of sponsors the management of, and responsibility for, the sponsorship agreement was devoted to a variety of functional areas - with the marketing function being the predominant one - while most of them employed very few leveraging activities to support their sponsorship. The most popular forms of support activity were in the area of hospitality, signs and banners. Interestingly, the study revealed that additional expenditure on leveraging activities was inadequate and in some cases even non-existent (62% of the Rugby Union and 70% of the Rugby League sample did not invest any additional budget on leveraging their sponsorship).

A study carried out by Crowley (1991) in Ireland examining the main leveraging practices employed by sponsors found that the main promotion instrument used to substantiate sponsorship investment was media coverage. Moreover, the responses from 70 marketers from companies involved in a variety of sponsorship types, ranging from sport to education and arts, demonstrated that the second most popular promotional tool was attaching the name of the company to the event title (i.e. naming), followed by providing hospitality to guests. Interestingly, Crowley (1991) found that different sponsors prefer certain leveraging activities. Corporate hospitality, for example, was regarded as the most important promotion for industrial goods companies, possibly due to the fact that those companies are more concerned with building strong business-to-business relationships, and that

sponsorship can be utilised very effectively in reaching this goal. In contrast, title event and media coverage were deemed more important to consumer goods companies, maybe due their concern for reaching mass markets in comparison with industrial companies.

Van Heerden and du Plessis (2004) revealed that the main sport sponsorship management activities seen as important by sponsors in South Africa were objective setting and evaluation, and that more than half of a sponsorship manager's time was "devoted to sponsorship planning, integrating other marketing communication areas into sponsorship programmes, and creating and finalizing sponsorship deals" (Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004, p. 76). The most common marketing mix variables used to leverage the sponsorship activity covered corporate image, branding and public relations. In contrast, sales promotions activities, personal selling, and direct marketing have been regarded as being of lesser importance in leveraging the sponsorship medium. The authors also found that sponsors had been unable to measure the cross-impact effect - or leverage effect - between their sponsorships and some communication variables due to the lack of measurement tools.

Importance of Leveraging practices for sponsorship success

The leveraging activities employed by sponsors were, up to the point, discussed and explored within the broader sponsorship management process enacted by sponsors, as one of the many aspects of this activity. The importance of leveraging and the several types of leveraging activities employed by sponsors was the basic question to be addressed by many authors. Thus, the following studies focused exclusively on leveraging practices and their role in sponsorship effectiveness.

Davies and Tsiantas (2008) explored the leveraging activities that can maximise the likelihood of a successful sponsorship. Taking into account characteristics of

the sponsoring brand such as the level of involvement as well as the type of influence on the purchasing decision - cognitive or affective - the authors proposed a framework - the Optimal Leveraging Activity model – to guide the selection of the most appropriate leveraging strategies. The results of their study examining the leveraging strategies employed by sponsors of the 2004 Athens Olympics reflected the suggestions provided in the proposed model. Specifically, the results demonstrated that for high involvement products (for which purchase is associated with an investment of substantial time and effort), sponsors spent more on leveraging activities (between 50%-100% of sponsorship spending), and implemented an array of marketing and communicational activities aiming at increasing awareness, enhancing brand image, creating a strong and enduring association with the Olympics, differentiating the company from competitors, and integrating sponsorship with long-term strategy.

Such leveraging initiatives involved issuing Athens 2004 credit card, acting as one of the ticket distribution channels, sponsoring top athletes, having employees involved in Olympic volunteerism, hosting key international clients, competitions, Olympic sports travelling exhibitions etc. (Davies & Tsiantas, 2008). In contrast, the authors found that for low involvement products – for which purchase may be habitual or on impulse - sponsors spent considerably less for leveraging their sponsorship investment (less than 10%) and did not try to strongly promote corporate identity. Those sponsors employed leveraging activities aiming at generating initial awareness and stimulating sales and product trial, such as selling their products at Olympic venues, advertising, Olympic branding on packaging, competitions for customers and sales promotions.

In a similar vein, Tripodi and Hirons (2009) attempted to explore the importance of several leveraging activities undertaken by the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Their study provided some additional evidence demonstrating that the leveraging strategies employed by sponsors have the potential to raise sponsorship awareness levels and at the same time minimise the negative consequences of

ambush marketing employed by competitors. The findings suggested that several promotional and communicational mediums such as related advertising campaigns, above the line activities, Olympic-themed in-store merchandising, as well as hospitality programs, were successful in raising sponsorship awareness levels and thus improving the effectiveness of sponsorship investment. The authors concluded that the impact and success of sponsorship resides in the ability of the sponsor to activate and coordinate a communication program that supports sponsorship.

Likewise, Goldman and Johns (2009) found that an innovative activation program involving creative above-the-line and below-the-line communication executions was proved very effective in reaching the sponsorship objectives of the Standard Bank Pro20 Cricket tournament. Mega billboards placed strategically in the whole country (South Africa), a national radio-activation strategy, several promotional activities held at major branches of the sponsor, universities, nightclubs, shopping centers, a dedicated online environment providing information on fixtures, event activities etc., key events, were some of the leveraging activities introduced to support the sponsorship. The key element of this study was that all the major partners (the media, event organisers and the sponsor) had an input in creating a unique activation program that was reinforced by the modifications made to the game in order to create this new version of cricket tournament incorporating fascinating entertainment aspects (Goldman & Johns, 2009).

The impact of leveraging activities upon the effectiveness of sport sponsorship has also been documented by Barez, Manion, Schoepfer and Cherian (2007). This study explored twenty-seven global cases of effective sports sponsorship enacted by companies serving many different industries and audiences, and concluded that, among other factors, sponsorship leverage was one of the main forces shaping consumer response to sponsorship. Specifically, the authors argued that, in order to be effective, sponsorship should be accompanied by additional promotional activities designed to enhance consumers' motivation to

attend, process, and follow up on sponsorship stimuli, to increase the total number of opportunities generated to associate the sponsor with the activity (more exposure communicating the sponsorship association), and to enhance the ability of the consumer to interpret the message delivered through sponsorship. In fact, facilitating the interpretation process is, according to Barez et al. essential in the case of sponsorship, since Hastings (1984, cited in Barez et al., 2007) argued that the message is usually communicated by implication through the sponsorship medium, in contrast to other communication mediums that make the connection clearer.

Another case depicting that the synergistic effects of several promotional efforts are well appreciated by some sponsors is the approach adopted by MasterCard in sponsoring the Major League Baseball (MLB). In their attempt to avoid treating the investment as an “isolated sponsorship effort” (McKelvey, McDonald and Cramer, 2005, p. 253), MasterCard created and introduced a promotional campaign called “Memorable Moments”, that was intended to be fully integrated in order to maximise the benefits derived through the sponsorship agreement. The campaign consisted of several supportive activities such as events organised to serve as promotional platforms, several promotional and public relation activities, brand advertising activities, the Internet, and a fully integrated media plan consisting of several mass and highly targeted media vehicles.

In the same vein, Watt (2008) offered a comprehensive discussion on the effectiveness of sponsorship messages which are delivered through sponsorship, and supported by leveraging activities, especially when the latter engage the participant, spectator, or the community. According to Watt, the sponsorship effectiveness does not depend on what is sponsored, but on how the sponsorship is managed, and thus today, activation and leveraging programs are “strategised, budgeted and agreed” prior to sponsorship as opposed to the older approach of sponsoring the property and then deciding on how to leverage it in order to improve sponsorship outcomes (Watt, 2008, p. 265).

For Watt, successful sponsorships have managed to activate their investments through a variety of leveraging initiatives involving the participant of the event, the fan watching the event, or the broader community actors including local businesses and organisations. The author presented some convincing examples of initiatives that engaged the aforementioned parties based on one-to-one interactions and the creation of a personal relationship with potential customers. For example, Flora's sponsorship of the Comrades Marathon in South Africa was accompanied by actions such as offering free cholesterol testing to runners and the public attending the event, and other forms of a continual communication with no overt selling or brand message, that resulted in people exhibiting high degrees of loyalty and even becoming ambassadors of the brand, "spreading the word via personal endorsement" (Watt, 2008, p. 265). Furthermore, the author observed that leveraging strategies engaging the broader community in which sponsorship is carried out, and leveraging activities integrating social and environmental issues, entail a social responsibility aspect and are more effective in convincing "today's media-savvy consumers" (Watt, 2008, p. 266).

Currie (2000), on the other hand, concentrated on the advances in technology and the way in which they could be integrated into the overall sponsorship activity. Recognising that the sponsorship industry is extremely dependent on the media, and considering at the same time the rapidly expanding nature of the latter that has resulted in more advanced and more efficient communication channels, the author held that new opportunities are created for the sponsorship management activity. The paper presented Vodafone's sponsorship of Manchester United as an example of how companies entered sponsorships and used advanced technology "to make the sponsorship work at all levels" (Currie, 2000, p. 159). Taking into consideration the traditional model outlining the way sponsorship works (i.e. branding -> recognition -> awareness -> incentive -> desire -> purchase), the author acknowledged that getting the consumer to move from

desire to purchase is the most difficult task. Therefore, he speculated that this final link in the sponsorship model would be significantly strengthened and fastened by new and advanced technology and specifically through the Internet and the development of WAP phone technology.

The author argued that as people get more familiar with the new technology, and as distribution and supply of certain products is further improved because of those technological advances, companies would identify the sponsorship medium as a way of increasing their revenues through an improved and instant interactive association between them and the customer (Currie, 2000). In addition, the example presented in the study demonstrated how the sponsee (Manchester United) can benefit from sponsors able to incorporate new technologies in their sponsorship practices. According to Currie, some of these benefits could be offering better communication and better links between the club and fans, developing and providing improved services for fans enabling them to access services and information on the club, offering fans access to a whole range of new information and enabling them to order merchandise items directly via their mobile phone.

Currie's (2000) arguments about the role of technology in managing and leveraging sponsorship agreements seemed to be verified a few years later. Ladousse (2009), executive director of Lenovo EMEA, in her paper outlining the main activation techniques used by the organisation to leverage their Formula 1 and Olympic sponsorships, described a powerful and creative leveraging program relying upon the latest technological advances. Both sponsorships appeared to be heavily leveraged by the company through an integrated approach including hospitality programs and a wide range of media and communication techniques to support the sponsorship activities. Moreover, innovative marketing and communications programs have been adopted, such as the mobile airport marketing tour, aiming at increasing customer awareness of, and interaction with, the company's products, and a points-based sales incentive for corporate and

sales people. Furthermore, the activation program employed highlighted its technology contributions to its partners. For example, the Olympic sponsorship was leveraged in a way that highlighted Lenovo's technology leadership, innovation and excellence, by providing expert support and the "technology backbone for the Games" (Ladousse, 2009, p. 202). Additional notable examples include the provision of support to the management team in logistics, networking, race planning, relationships with partners and customers etc., the development of a customised supercomputer solution for ATT-Williams, and the design of the mobile wireless computing technology for the race team.

Similarly, the results of a systematic review carried out by Santomier (2008) indicate that "a new paradigm is emerging in sports sponsorship which involves thematically linked, integrated, strategic global marketing initiatives driven by new media applications" (p. 16). An analysis of the studies included in the review revealed that new media technologies such as broadband, internet websites, personal digital assistants (PDAs), iPods, iPhones and interactive TV (iTV), have changed the way in which sport is produced and consumed, have altered the way in which brands reach and interact with their audiences, and thus, have inevitably transformed the way in which sport sponsorship is created, delivered and managed. New media serve as the platform for the expansion of "synergistic marketing communication" (Santomier, 2008, p. 18) and enable sponsors to communicate more effectively and more convincingly with their customers through interactive programs facilitating relationship marketing and allowing for the development of products and services specific to their needs. The author presented some examples of sponsors (i.e. Gillette and American Express) which employed new media initiatives and interactive campaigns to leverage their sponsorships.

The need for employing interactive leveraging activities was also stressed by Choi et al. (2006). In their attempt to investigate the effectiveness of various activation strategies adopted by the sponsor of an action sport activity through a qualitative ethnographic design, they found that interactive actions were perceived by the

fans attending the event as much more effective and convincing. Specifically, Choi et al. indicated that the research itself was perceived by the respondents as a well appreciated marketing communication method able to educate customers about the specific aspects of the product, leading to the conclusion that qualitative research can be used by sponsors as an effective, interactive marketing tool.

4. The concept of Fit and its importance in Sport Sponsorship

4.1 The role of Congruency in Sponsorship Relationships

In addition to the essential role of integration and leveraging as demonstrated in the management models and practices outlined above, a significant number of sponsorship researchers have also drawn attention on the importance of fit between the sponsor and the sponsored property (e.g. Coppetti, Wentzel, Tomczak, & Henkel, 2009; Grohs & Reisinger, 2005; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Henseler, Wilson, Götz, & Hautvast, 2007; Mueller & Roberts, 2008; Séguin et al. 2005; Speed & Thompson, 2000). They have used, however, numerous words to describe the concept of sponsor-sponsee fit, such as congruency, relatedness, synergy, similarity, closeness, proximity, match, or link. Generally, many researchers distinguish between image fit (referring to the image attributes that the two actors share), target market fit (involving the similarity of their audiences) and functional fit (the thematic relatedness between the two parties).

The need for undertaking congruent sponsorships had been voiced in early sponsorship literature. Lynn (1987) held that although companies were looking for sponsorship opportunities that naturally tie with the company's image and target audience, she also commended that they were not always successful, with many sponsorship deals being actually "ego buys" since "people love being around athletes, celebrities, and big shots" (Lynn, 1987, p. 16). In another early paper that concentrated on the sponsorship scene in North America, Gross et al. indicated that most of the sponsorship arrangements of that time had natural fits

that were “fairly obvious on the surface” (Gross et al. 1987, p. 10) and based on a product-audience matching. The concept of matching has become of major concern over time, and it is the reason why some sports which are inherently violent and exhibiting a controversial image, i.e. boxing, struggle to recruit sponsors (Cordiner, 2002). When Adidas, for example stated its association with boxing, it managed to make it clear that it was an individual arrangement with a boxer (Naseem Hamed) and not an indication of wider involvement in boxing, which they saw as not being cohesive with their overall brand image (Cordiner, 2002).

Nowadays, the concept of fit has become an integral part of sponsorship, and this is empirically substantiated in sponsorship literature. Séguin et al. (2005), in the search for the best sponsorship management practices based on successful sponsorships of Canadian amateur sport organisations, found that securing sponsor-sponsee fit was within the ten key management practices leading to successful sponsorship relationships. Specifically, Séguin et al. provided evidence suggesting the need for customising sponsorships in order to secure a strong fit between the sponsor and the sponsored property. In fact, the cases examined in their study revealed that both sponsors and sponsees were “keenly interested in how the sponsorship ‘fit’ impacts their image and, in turn, brand” (Séguin et al., 2005, p. 82).

Mueller and Roberts’ (2008) conceptualisation of the sport property as the parent brand and the sponsor as the extension brand places strong emphasis on fit and its importance in the relationship between the two parties. Holding that “consumer evaluation of brand extensions is determined primarily by the quality of the parent brand and the fit between the original and extension product categories” (Mueller & Roberts’s, 2008:164), the authors argued that sponsors should realise that image congruency is imperative for reaching their brand positioning objectives. Conversely, the authors held that incongruent sponsorship relationships may prove harmful to the sponsor’s brand equity, especially when the relationship

produces incongruence between missions and target audiences. Low fit sponsorships could also “dilute brand identity” (Mueller & Roberts, 2008, p. 161). However, the authors argued that the sponsorship parties involved in a low-fit environment still have a chance to enhance the effectiveness of their relationship by creating and enhancing fit, mainly by marketing the elements that are compatible with the sponsor’s goals and objectives. Paying considerable attention to the concept of fit and its ability to generate positive response from consumers that eventually could influence their purchasing behaviour, the authors argued that sports properties, after determining and strengthening their brands, should “develop marketing sales packages that target corporations with compatible, and desirable, brand attributes that eventually serve as brand extensions” (Mueller & Roberts, 2008, p. 158).

The important favorable impact of fit upon consumer responses such as awareness, image etc. has been frequently studied in sponsorship literature. The studies doing so, had commonly relied on schema theory, based on the assumption that the schema that consumers hold about a sport property might be integrated into the brand’s schema as a result of the salient associations that match between the property and the sponsoring brand (Coppetti et al., 2009). Subsequently, these associations are regarded to benefit the sponsor’s brand which is going to exhibit attributes not possessed through engaging in a sponsorship relationship. Hence, the majority of the studies in this field have examined the effectiveness of congruent sponsorships. Perceived fit has been shown to positively impact respondents’ recall and recognition (Koo, Quarterman, & Jackson, 2006a; Quester & Farrelly, 1998), image transfer from the sport property to the sponsor (Grohs & Reisinger, 2005; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999), likeability, credibility of the sponsor (Alay, 2008; Speed & Thompson, 2000), consumers’ purchasing behaviour (Alay, 2008), and the financial performance of the sponsor as shown in share prices (Cornwell, Pruitt, & Clark, 2005; Cornwell, Pruitt & Van Ness, 2001b). Grohs and Reisinger (2005) found event-sponsor fit as being “the main driver of the strength of image transfer” (p. 42). The same study

indicated the moderating effect of congruency since there was an interaction between fit and exposure, with higher exposure leading to increased image transfer only when there was a strong congruency between the event and the sponsor. Similarly, Gwinner and Eaton (1999) demonstrated that image-related and functional-related congruency between the sponsor and the sponsee increase image transfer. Specifically, this study found that the personality attributes that were related to the three events explored in this study were transferred more readily when there was functional- or image-fit between the sponsoring brand and the event, whilst low congruency appeared hampering image transfer.

Speed and Thompson (2000) found that fit was, among other factors, an important determinant of sponsorship value as demonstrated in a multidimensional measure of sponsorship effectiveness assessing interest toward, favor of, and usage of sponsoring products. Furthermore, this study revealed a moderating role of fit with regard to personal liking of the event and event status. Specifically, the findings suggested that the response of consumers with a strong personal liking for an event was higher when there was a sponsor-event fit. Surprisingly, the interaction of fit with the event status indicated a reverse relationship, with the effectiveness of sponsorship being lower when there was a good sponsor-event in a high status event. Speed and Thompson (2000), however, argued that this finding could be explained by the fact that consumers perceive a congruent sponsorship with a high status event as insincere and more commercially motivated, which consequently could have muted the response to the sponsor. Hence, the authors were led to the conclusion that “in sponsorship, a degree of incongruence may act as a signal of philanthropic intentions” (Speed & Thompson, 2000, p. 236).

Another study that produced unexpected results with regard to the moderating role of fit is the one carried out by Henseler et al. (2007) in the football sector. Specifically, the managers engaged in sponsoring football clubs in the

Netherlands perceived fit as having a significant direct effect upon brand equity but the moderating role of fit was significantly negative. The authors held that, contrary to expectations, and contrary to research suggesting a positive moderating role of fit, the managers in this study appeared to believe that “if the level of sponsorship is high enough, fit matters less” (Henseler et al., 2007, p. 327), suggesting additionally that a low fit between the sponsor and the sponsee can be substituted by a greater sponsorship investment. This is an important factor to be taken into consideration by sport administrators and sponsors when selecting and negotiating sponsorship deals.

Alay (2008) found that the respondents’ interest toward the sponsor, favour towards the sponsoring brands and usage of the sponsors’ products were increased significantly by the sponsor-event fit, as well as the interaction between fit and the status of the sponsored event. Moreover, the interaction of fit with attitudes such as personal liking of the event, attitude toward the sponsor and image of the sponsor also impacted significantly participants’ responses as demonstrated in their interest towards and favour of the sponsors’ products. Interestingly, congruency appeared also positively impacting the efficiency of sponsorship related advertising, as depicted in a study examining the intuitive notion that schemas that consumers possess influence their reactions to advertising leveraging sport sponsorships (McDaniel, 1999).

The impact of image congruency upon the effectiveness sport sponsorship has also been substantiated by Koo et al. (2006a), who found that perceived image fit between the sponsors of the of FIFA World Cup and the sport had increased brand awareness of the sponsoring brands. Almost identical findings with regards to the impact of image fit were also reported by Koo, Quarterman & Flynn (2006b) in the College Bowl context, since image congruency was positively related to brand attitudes as well as correct identification of the sponsor. In a similar vein, Grohs, Wagner and Vsetecka’s (2004) study, which referred to the six sponsors of the 2001 Alpine Ski World Championships in Austria, found that fit was one of the

dominant factors predicting sponsor recall, and that it had the capacity to significantly increase the magnitude of image transfer between the sponsor and the property.

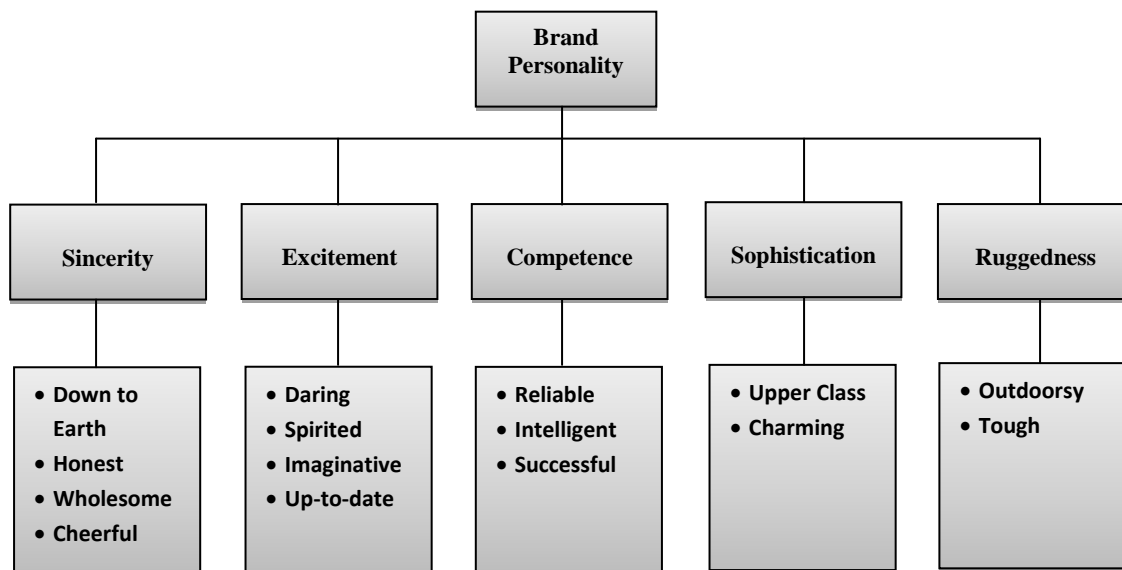
The results generated by Quester and Farrelly (1998) in the Australian Formula One context further confirmed the essential role of fit in improving sponsor recall. The mode of fit explored in this study was the natural affinity between the sponsor-event scope of activities (otherwise functional sponsor-event fit), which was proved to significantly, positively and strongly influence the effectiveness of sponsors exhibiting relatedness to the car racing industry. Congruent findings were also reported by the study carried out by Gwinner and Bennett (2008), which, similarly to Speed and Thompson (2000), adopted a fit measure allowing respondents to consider fit in their own terms, and found that fit significantly impacted attitudes toward the sponsor.

Another study that revealed the central role of fit in the effectiveness of sport sponsorship was carried out by Barez et al. (2007). An examination of 27 global sponsorship cases of effective sport sponsorships indicated that one of the determinants of sponsorship effectiveness was the match between the sponsor and the sponsored property since source congruency contributed significantly to the potential of sponsorship to deliver communication objectives. Target market congruency appeared as being “a basic condition for successful sponsorship communication, while image congruency and functional similarity can be directly attributed to the strength, favourability, and uniqueness of image associations communicated” (Barez et al., 2007, p. 69-70). Hence, the authors indicated that sponsorship produced meaningful results only when the target market had a need or preference (based on its geographic, demographic and psychographic characteristics) for the commercial interest of the sponsor. As indicated above, image congruency appeared important to the development of favourable associations between the sponsored property and the sponsor’s brand. Finally, functional congruency, which involves the degree of similarity between the two

sponsorship partners on the basis of commercial interest, categorised as direct (when the participants use the products) and indirect (when the product contributes to the implementation of the activity), was regarded essential in the development of brand image “by producing unique user or usage associations” (Barez et al., 2007, p. 71).

Triggered by the plethora of evidence suggesting the important role of fit in enhancing the efficiency of sport sponsorship, Deane, Smith and Adams (2003) explored the congruency between a golf event (Ryder Cup) and a sponsor (IBM) and found that their brand personalities were not compatible. The study drew on the brand personality framework proposed by Aaker (1997) which refers to the characteristics associated with a brand and which was used as a measure of image (see figure 4.1). The authors adapted the original brand personality scale developed by Aaker (1997) in order to measure the personality of the two brands involved in the sponsorship relationship using a stratified sample of 109 experienced golfers.

Figure 4.1 Brand Personality Framework



Source: Aaker (1997)

Deane et al.'s (2003) findings indicated that the brand personalities of the event and the sponsor differed greatly. The Ryder Cup event was most closely aligned to the "excitement" factor, whilst IMB was perceived more closely related to the "competence" factor (Deane et al., 2003). The only characteristic that both brands seemed to share was that of "sincerity" as indicated by 18% of the respondents. The findings led the authors to the conclusion that, if the sponsor wanted to improve the outcomes of the sponsorship, it should work towards building a personality that would be more closely matched to the personality of the event, or choose to sponsor events that are more closely related to its own brand personality. Conversely, event organisers should either pursue associations with businesses that are more suited to their image, or should work closely with the sponsor and try, through a range of promotional campaigns, to build the desired associations (Deane et al., 2003).

In addition to the well substantiated attitudinal and behavioral gains of fit described above, congruency appeared leading share price gains for sponsors. Cornwell et al.'s (2001b) research investigating the factors that impact the performance of auto-racing sponsorship found that sponsors that were congruent with the automotive industry had more significant gains in their share prices than low-fit sponsors. These findings suggest that, in addition to the consumer, congruency was also significant to another sponsorship audience, the shareholder.

In a similar vein, Cornwell et al. (2005) found that product fit with the sponsored sport was positively related to changes in stock prices. The authors examined congruency within a broader study exploring the impact of sponsorship announcements upon the financial performance of firms that sponsored the leagues of the five most popular professional sports in the USA (baseball, basketball, football, hockey, and golf). It should be noted however, that congruent sponsorship in this study was broadly defined as an activity in which the sponsor's product: a) had a direct relationship (used by participants for example) to the

sponsored sport; b) was seen or used while attending or watching the event; and c) was clearly consistent with an active sporting lifestyle (Cornwell et al., 2005). Interestingly, the authors found that stock market participants believed that congruent sponsorships, even when loosely defined, increased share prices more than sponsorships with no linkage to the sport. In fact, unrelated sponsorships “were perceived significantly less favourably by stock market investors than those with reasonably direct ties to the sponsored sport” (Cornwell et al., 2005, p. 410). Almost identical findings were presented by Clark, Cornwell and Pruitt (2009) who found that stock market participants felt that sponsor-sport fit in tennis, golf and auto-racing events increased share prices more compared to low congruent sponsorships. Specifically, the announcement of congruent sponsorships resulted in share price gains of 3.4% higher than the low fit-sponsorships (Clark et al., 2009).

Apart from the sponsorship efficiency improvements concerning external marketing goals, there is also some evidence suggesting that congruency can positively impact internal marketing goals. Specifically, Hickman et al. (2005) provided evidence suggesting that congruent sponsorships built on common values between sponsors and sponsees can serve internal marketing goals since they can positively influence the perceptions of employees toward sponsorship. Although the impact of fit was not directly tested by the authors, they felt that the positive influence of sponsorship upon the internal audience (employees) was partially due to the fact that the study examined a sponsorship relationship with a close functional fit between the two parties (a trucking company and a NASCAR team).

4.2 Determinants of Sponsor-Event Fit

Although most research examined the impact of fit upon sponsorship effectiveness, there is also research examining the factors that determine congruency. In a study dealing with the factors enhancing sponsor-event fit, Garry

et al. (2008) found that fit could be affected by “sub-cultural, tribal connection and variations in self and social identification among sponsors” (p. 959). Their study demonstrated that sponsorship motivation influences the development of sponsorship relationships as well as the sponsor-event fit, in a complex way. Specifically, their qualitative study in motorcycling revealed that there was a strong sponsor-event fit for sponsors demonstrating strong tribal associations with the sport and being more philanthropically oriented, was associated with expectations of mutuality and trust-building. Hence, the authors concluded that “socially-based motives may generate a strong sponsor-event fit but may equally encourage behaviours such as increased mutuality and reciprocity in decision-making”. They added that both sponsor-event fit and mutual decision-making were “conducive to commitment and long-term successful sponsor relationships” (Garry et al., 2008, p. 972). Similarly, Geng et al. (2002) proposed a sponsorship management approach in which the sponsor-sponsee philosophies, ethical beliefs, values and cultures should be compatible in order to establish successful sponsorship relationships.

Furthermore, Gwinner and Bennett (2008) presented results indicating that brand cohesiveness and sport identification influence perceived sponsor-event fit. Specifically, brand cohesiveness, which is regarded as leading to higher brand knowledge, appeared to increase perceived fit. An increase in fit also resulted from increased sport identification. These findings are of much significance to both sport organisations selecting sponsorship relationships and sponsors, since they suggest that some effective ways to improve sponsorship success through increasing sponsor-sponsee congruency are found in initiatives involving both of these variables (identification and brand cohesiveness). In addition, Gwinner and Bennett stressed the importance of creative communicating strategies that enhance consumers’ perception of fit, especially when fit is salient. The need for the employment of creative initiatives that build on consumers’ passion and excitement and strengthen the perception of fit between sponsors and sponsees was also emphasised by Walshe (2008). Although appreciating the importance of

matching the sponsor brand to the sponsored property, the author felt that relatedness does not have to be obvious, arguing that some of the best sponsorship relationships have been signed with “completely misfitting pairs” (Walshe , 2008, p. 46).

In a similar vein, Pichot et al. (2008) argued that “proximity to the sport audience is an important consideration for the brands of sponsors who have no direct relationship with the sport sponsee” (Pichot et al., 2008, p. 415). Hence, the authors held that brands with no link to the sport can use the actual sponsorship relationship in order to build the needed associations to increase relatedness to the sport. The authors proposed actions that enhance the brand visibility and creative initiatives that offer experiential opportunities to customers. Specifically, and referring to the theory of “encoding variation” (Unnava & Burnkrant, 1991, cited in Pichot et al., 2008), they argued that a differentiated marketing approach using all elements of the communication mix in various contexts at different times would lead to enhanced communication efficiency and increase target market cognition, which in turn increase proximity in “in an effort to gain customer loyalty” (Pichot et al., 2008, p. 415). In addition to target market proximity, the authors commended on the development of brand proximity in the attempt to bring the brand closer to the supporters of the sport and create a relationship that can build on fans’ emotional attachment to the sport/team/club/event, and therefore to create loyal customers.

Coppetti et al. (2009) were also concerned with low congruent sponsorships and their effectiveness. Given that congruency is indicated as a critical factor for sponsorship success, and driven by the fact that many brands do not possess obvious and evident link to sport properties, the authors examined whether “the negative effects of low congruence can be mitigated through communication and leverage of the sponsorship” (Coppetti et al., 2009, p. 18). Building on *schema theory*, which had been used as the theoretical context by many studies exploring the positive impact of fit upon sponsorship effectiveness, the authors speculated

that, for sponsorships not possessing logical links, a communication strategy aiming to enhance perceived congruency and provide relational meaning through emphasising the non-salient associations would be helpful in creating “a link between the schemas held about the event and the brand” (Coppetti et al., 2009, p. 19). For the authors, it is the responsibility of the marketer to explain the associations to the audience. Indeed, the results of an experimental design using 301 students exposed to a music event and its sponsor, and a field experiment with 329 respondents conducted in a sports event (skiing) in Switzerland, indicated that a clear and explicit articulation of the sponsorship lead to significantly more positive attitudes toward the sponsored brand.

The experimental design’s findings also revealed that interactive leveraging activities employed by sponsors that engage the audience and create excitement can significantly and positively impact the effectiveness of non-congruent sponsorships as demonstrated in attitudes toward sponsorship, attitudes toward the sponsor brands and image transfer variables. These findings were partially supported by the field experiment, which depicted that audience participation can significantly improve image transfer and evaluations of sponsor brands (Coppetti et al., 2009). Interestingly, the study found that image transfer can be significantly enhanced through various methods, even when the sponsorship is not congruent. Overall, the results of Copetti and colleagues’ study indicated that low-fitting sponsorships are not determined to fail if the sponsor develops an articulating message to be communicated to the consumers through various promotional methods. Moreover, emphasising interactive supportive activities that create exciting and memorable experiences for customers is another avenue to successful sponsorships.

4.3 “Fit” as an element of the selection process

Given the importance of congruency upon the outcomes of a sponsorship relationship, it is not surprising that, according to Shanklin and Kuzma (1992),

ensuring fit with the sponsored event became one of the primary concerns of sponsors in the late 1980s when choosing events to invest in. Specifically, target audience fit was central in the selection activity in the USA, with Chrysler signing horse-racing sponsorship to get access to “millions of demographically desirable upscale television viewers” (Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992, p. 64). Moreover, the sponsee’s fit with the corporate image of the sponsor appeared as being an essential condition in the selection process employed by sponsors in the UK (Liu et al., 1998). In a similar vein, Farrelly et al. (1997) found that assessment of fit with the corporate plan was an essential prerequisite for selecting the property to be sponsored, especially for North American companies compared to Australian sponsors in this study. Congruent findings with regard to the central role of fit in the selection process were presented by Thwaites and Carruther (1998), who found that demographic match with rugby spectators was essential for selecting rugby as the property to be sponsored. The role of fit is so essential in the selection process that some sponsors intervene and make recommendations to the sport property to alter their programs in order to become more congruent with the sponsors’ requirements (Furst, 1994).

The concept of fit is central in the comprehensive model proposed by Irwin and Assimakopoulos (1992) outlining 47 criteria for evaluating sponsorship proposals, whilst the existence of fit as a vital selection criterion was mentioned by a large number of researchers, according to Walliser (2003). Liu et al. (1998) found that image fit was a prerequisite for all the 26 sponsors examined in their study regardless the differences observed in the criteria they used in the sponsorship selection process. Similarly, image fit featured among the most important selection criteria employed by building societies (Thwaites, 1993, 1994), insurance companies and financial organisations investing in UK based sports (Thwaites, 1994), as well as for leading Canadian companies sponsoring sport (Thwaites et al., 1998). Additionally, Shaw and Amis (2001) found that a match-up between the values and beliefs of the firm and the sport property was given much weight in the decision regarding which property to sponsor. As already discussed

in the sponsorship selection part of this thematic analysis, the fit concept seems however to have shifted from matching the demographic characteristics to matching the interests of the target audience (Jowdy & McDonald, 2002).

4.4. The role of “fit” in the sponsorship selling process

Considering the importance sponsors place upon the selection of congruent sponsorships, as well as the evidence that clearly indicated that relatedness between sponsors and sponsored properties improves significantly the effectiveness of a sponsorship deal, it is rather expected that sport properties turn their attention to the concept of fit when developing proposals and selling sponsorships. In the USA, it was since the late 1980s that sports properties were attempting to attract sponsors with substantial demographic information about the fans attending events, as well as extensive lifestyle and psychographic information that would recruit congruent sponsors (Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992). In a similar vein, Doherty and Murray’s (2007) case study on the sponsorship practices employed by a non-profit sport organisation (Synchro Canada) demonstrated that the sponsorship acquisition process was guided by a match with potential sponsors’ image and target market similarity.

Furthermore, in Jowdy and McDonald’s (2002) proposal to adopt “eduselling” techniques when selling sponsorship to corporations, searching potential sponsors’ practices, goals and objectives in order to target those that fit the sport property’s philosophy is the first, and one of the most important steps described in this approach. In addition, the authors held that congruency should also be communicated to the potential sponsor through educating them about the relatedness and the opportunities it generates. The centrality of fit in this process is further substantiated by the fact that sponsorships often need to be customised and tailored in order to match the needs of a particular sponsor (Jowdy & McDonald’s, 2002). Similarly, accessing sponsors that fit the audience reached through the sport property was an essential action described in the five-step

process of sponsorship acquisition that emerged in the study carried out by Sack and Fried (2001). Converging arguments were also made by Mueller and Roberts (2008), who held that in the attempt to create products of value (sport brands in this case) to be offered for sponsorship, sport marketers should emphasise the components of the sport that are compatible with potential sponsors' interests and objectives.

In the research carried out by Braunstein, Newman and Beissel (2008), the role of relatedness in selling a sponsorship deal was the central concept to be explored. Specifically, the study examined the processes adopted by a racing team in an effort to secure sponsorships based on synergistic fit. Qualitative insight provided by the members of the NASCAR racing team revealed descent attempts in the sponsorship acquisition process towards acquiring the desired fit between the driver, the team and the sponsor. Indeed, the study found that the fit between those three entities "may mean the difference between success and failure for an organization" (Braunstein et al., 2008, p. 231). The most interesting finding of the study, however, is that this match-up process was particularly dynamic and sometimes messy.

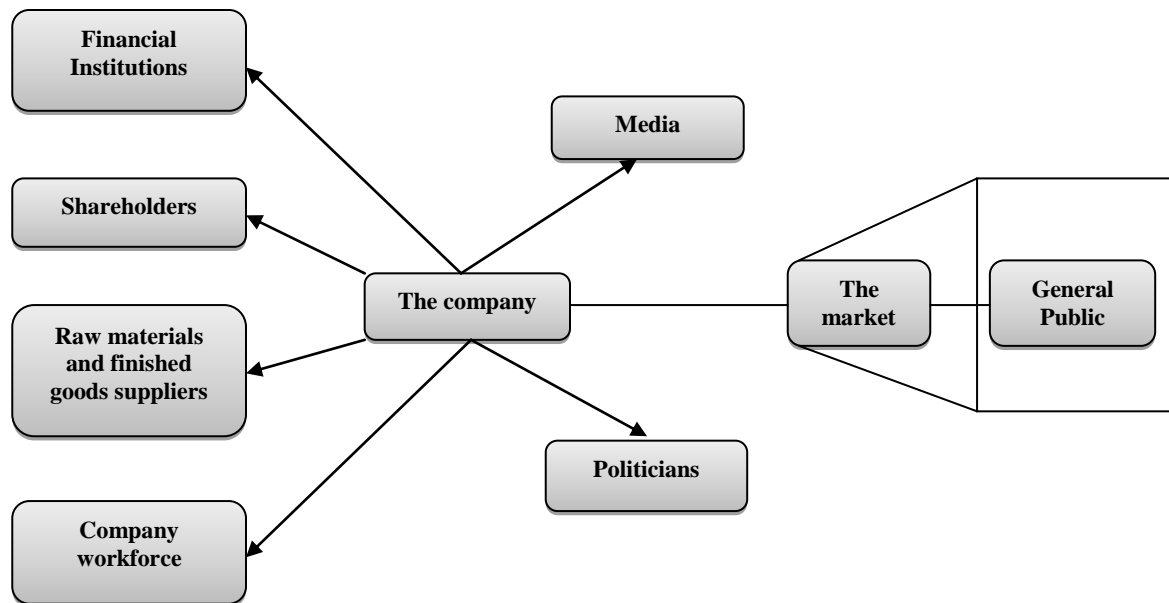
5 Audiences Reached Through Sponsorship

Businesses have a wide variety of audiences, and sponsorship had been realised as an effective medium through which those audiences can be reached. Hence, this is another area in the sponsorship literature that received much attention. Gross et al. (1987) pointed out that one of the important advantages of sponsorship is that it can be used to reach "specific segments of the audience, such as shareholders, very affluent buyers, investors, heavy users, or certain lifestyle groups, that are often difficult to reach through other media" (p. 9). Similarly, Jalleh, Donovan, Giles-Corti and Holman (2002) argued that, although commercial sponsorships are regarded as primarily directed towards consumers, "they may have direct or indirect positive effects on other target groups, such as

staff, distributors, potential employees, community leaders, politicians, and other relevant stakeholders” (p. 37). Moreover, sponsorship is regarded as probably the only marketing communication activity that can reach all those major publics in a single campaign (Meenaghan, 1994). However, according to Cornwell and Maignan’s (1998, p. 13) comprehensive literature review, research failed to address the question about “which type of sponsorship is most capable of reaching diversified publics”.

Meenaghan (1991) provided a well-developed framework reflecting that sponsorship can reach both internal and external target audiences (see figure 5.1). According to this author, employees are increasingly recognised as an essential corporate public. Hence, contemporary businesses directed their attention to developing programs aiming at creating a strong corporate culture, and sponsorship’s role is critical in these programs since it is very useful “in fostering staff pride, rewarding effort and in articulating the values of the organization to its staff” (Meenaghan, 1991, p. 40), with the end goal of improving employee morale and creating a loyal workforce. Moreover, the author held that sponsorship can be employed in building goodwill among decision makers and opinion formers such as business associates, politicians, government, trade union officials and the media, and it also offers excellent hospitality opportunities to these publics, making sponsorship “more subtle in its effects than other methods of marketing communications” (Meengahan, 1991, p. 40).

Figure 5.1 Corporate audiences for commercial sponsorship



Source: Meenaghan (1991).

Similarly, Thwaites (1993, 1995) acknowledged that sponsorship provides a mechanism for reaching a variety of constituencies, such as existing and potential customers, staff, suppliers, channel intermediaries, shareholders, the media, pressure groups, local community etc.

Evidence supporting the above arguments was provided by Meerabeau et al. (1991) for UK tennis sponsorship. Specifically, potential and existing customers as well as the general public were perceived by a wide variety of respondents (i.e., sponsors, employees, customers, participants etc.) as being the main audiences reached through sponsorship. Employees, opinion leaders and suppliers received less support, whilst shareholders were the least supported public reached through sponsorship (Meerabeau et al., 1991).

In a similar vein, and reflecting on Meenaghan's (1991) conceptualisation of sponsorship audiences, Crowley (1991) drew attention on the issue of audience priority, through exploring the importance which sponsors attach to their various publics. Crowley's findings were based on quantitative data collected using 70 senior marketing personnel of major companies operating in Ireland. The respondents represented companies involved in many different types of sponsorship, i.e. sports, arts, education, etc. Interestingly, the results indicated that existing customers and potential customers were deemed the most important targets, suggesting that sponsorship is seen primarily as a retentive medium able to maintain and reinforce good relationships with existing customers, but that it is also regarded as a medium that can be employed in campaigns aiming at attracting new customers. However, it is worth noting that the scores given to the other target groups are not negligible, substantiating the notion that sponsorship has the power to expose the sponsor to a wide range of audiences (Crowley, 1991).

Crowley (1991) also observed that particular audiences were more highly appreciated by certain sponsors. Moreover, the author demonstrated that company size, consumer or industrial focus, and export orientation, influence the importance placed upon particular publics. Further analysis of Crowley's (1991) findings illustrated the existence of four different types of sponsors based on audience orientation: 1) *Customer orientated* - more than 75% of the respondents felt within this category, hence the characteristics of this group were indistinguishable from the general sample. 2) *General public orientated* – this category consisted mainly by consumer goods companies which were foreign-owned and export-oriented. 3) *Worker orientated* – predominantly small, export-oriented companies formed this category. 4) *Business community orientated* – represented by small, industrial good companies. Obviously, for small companies sponsorship is regarded a valuable tool reaching their internal marketing goals and satisfying their workforce. Moreover, for small, industrial companies it seems that sponsorship is well appreciated in building strong relationships with business

partners, and this is logical considering their reliance on the business community. In addition, some interesting results were provided with regard to the priority that different sponsors attach to different publics. For instance, sponsors in the agriculture and food sector placed more emphasis on reaching suppliers, whilst the retail sector seemed to prioritise the workforce and the local community.

Crowley (1991) also demonstrated that the priority attached to the various audiences relates to the promotional activities employed by sponsors. Specifically, media coverage was given more importance by sponsors having a general public orientation, demonstrating the necessity of media coverage in addressing this public. Moreover, the general public oriented group appeared more inclined towards using exposure to attendance practices, such as exclusive rights ensuring distribution, trial and other sales promotions in the area that the sponsorship takes place. Non-surprisingly, the employment of guest hospitality activities was not embraced by companies in this category, suggesting that guest entertainment is more appreciated by sponsors seeking a relationship with more specific and identifiable publics than the general public. This is further confirmed by the importance placed on this promotional activity by sponsors seeking to reach the business community.

Moreover, for the business oriented group, perimeter advertising was also a very important promotional activity, as it was also for the employee-oriented sponsors. Finally, for the sponsors prioritising their workforce as the main target audience reached through sponsorship, amending the sponsored event title to illustrate the sponsor-sponsee association was a highly appreciated promotional instrument. In addition, this group of sponsors was more interested in using the so called "Heard of the action" activities that refers to the right of the sponsor to use its name or logo on the participant's equipment (Crowley, 1991). Moreover, exposure to participants also received much support by employee oriented sponsors "pointing perhaps to company sponsorship of recreational activities undertaken by employees" (Crowley, 1991, p. 20).

Thwaites and Carruthers (1998), on the other hand, found that there may be some differences with regard to the audiences reached through sponsoring different sporting activities. The study demonstrated once again the importance of potential and existing customers. It is important to note, however, that the local community was seen as an important target audience for both rugby league and football sponsors, but not for rugby union and horse racing sponsors. The workforce did not appear to be deemed as an important public to communicate with through sponsorship, regardless of the sport.

Consistently to the findings outlined above, customers were ranked as the most important target audience for companies sponsoring professional football clubs in the UK (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004). Furthermore, this study demonstrated that the general public, the business community and the workforce of the business were also regarded significant publics, substantiating further the local trade, and internal marketing impact of sport sponsorship (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004). A new target audience that emerged in this study is that of global TV markets, depicting the multi-national importance of the sponsored activity.

In another study, Spence et al. (1997) found that the main target audiences for the companies sponsoring the 1995 Rugby World Cup in South Africa were potential and existing customers, the general public and companies' employees. The local community, suppliers, shareholders and business community were not deemed of much importance to the sponsors in this study, may be due to the fact that all sponsors were large, international companies. Similarly, the prevalence of potential and existing customers as a target audience was also evident in the study carried out by Thwaites et al. (1998) which explored the views and practices of 102 large Canadian companies. Moreover, for those sponsors the local community and the general public were also perceived of much importance, something that can be attributed to cultural differences that influence corporate priorities and practices. In line with the evidence presented by Spence et al.

(1997), suppliers and shareholders were not regarded as a priority for the leading Canadian companies of this study.

In a similar vein, Van Heerden and du Plessis (2004) found that both potential and existing customers were regarded as being the most important audience for the 43 members of the South African marketing industry body investigated in this study. Clearly, the respondents placed a lower emphasis on employees as a target audience, leading the authors to the conclusion that South African decision makers should recognise that staff is an important stakeholder group, and that sponsoring an activity without addressing communication to employees “can seriously harm the image of the sponsor” (Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004, p. 80). Instead, the authors argued that setting customers as the main target audience “indicates a lack of focus and poor planning” (Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004, p. 78).

The scene does not seem to differ in Australia, since Polonsky et al. (1996) found that potential and existing customers as well as the general public were regarded as the most important groups to be targeted for small companies sponsoring rugby league teams. The business community followed far behind in importance whilst employees were not considered as a priority target audience (only 22% of the sponsors mentioned this target public). Suppliers and financial bodies were mentioned as audiences by 11% of the sponsors, depicting that they are clearly of less importance.

6 Objective setting

6.1 Types of Objectives Pursued by Sponsors

Another sponsorship management area that received considerable research attention deals with objective setting. According to Thwaites (1994, p. 745) “the flexible nature of sponsorship is such that it can be used to support a multiplicity

of objectives". Thus, it is not surprising that the sponsorship literature has paid remarkable attention to the objectives that can be realised through a sponsorship relationship. Indeed, there have been many research endeavors focusing on the capacity of sport sponsorship to fulfill a variety of objectives such as increased corporate awareness (Abratt et al., 1987; Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992; Spence et al., 1997; Thwaites, 1993;1994), product/brand awareness (Davies & Tsiantas, 2008; Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Pope & Voges, 1994; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992), image objectives (Abratt, et al., 1987; Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Lough & Irwin, 2001; Meerabeau et al., 1991; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992; Thwaites, 1994; Thwaites et al.,1998, Witcher et al., 1991), increased sales and market share goals (Lough & Irwin, 2001; Polonsky et al., 1996; Séguin et al., 2005; Tomasini, Frye & Stotlar, 2004; Westerbeek, 2000), improved customer relations and hospitality opportunities (Goldman & Johns, 2009; Spence et al., 1997; Thwaites, 1995) and internal marketing objectives such as improved employee relations and motivation (Goldman & Johns, 2009; Lough & Irwin, 2001; Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004; Witcher et al., 1991; Yu & Mikat, 2004).

In addition, sponsorship seems to be used in order to pursue "good citizenship" and social responsibility objectives (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Asimakopoulos, 1993; Davies & Tsiantas, 2008; Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Lough & Irwin, 2001), as well as to forge business and trade relations (Gratton & Taylor, 1985; Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Thwaites, 1994; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998). Moreover, there is evidence suggesting that sport sponsorship can be effective in achieving objectives related to brand image and reputation (Amis 2003; Amis et al., 1997; Copeland et al., 1996; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Papadimitriou et al., 2008) and thus enabling the sponsor to gain competitive advantage in the marketplace. Ladousse (2009) held that sport sponsorship is essential to the sponsor's brand-building strategy not only by fostering brand awareness, but also by associating the brand with the values closest to the company. Furthermore, sponsorship is able to pursue the development of brand

proximity and brand loyalty through bringing the product closer to its target market and developing a relationship with the fans of a sport (Pichot et al., 2008). In fact, Watt (2008) went on to argue that as the role of sponsorship is getting greater in the marketing communications mix “its greatest objective will be to engage audiences and communicate those relevant messages personally to more targeted audiences” (p. 259).

There have been several efforts to classify sponsorship objectives into several categories. Early sponsorship literature (e.g. Meenaghan, 1983) distinguished between broad corporate objectives dealing with corporate image issues, marketing objectives related to brand and product promotion or sales goals, and media objectives involving coverage purposes. In their paper describing the development of sponsorship in the UK during the 1980s, Gratton and Taylor (1985) referred to the five main objectives pursued through sponsorship, namely publicity, corporate image enhancement, public relations, contacting the local community, achieving entertainment opportunities and establishing good trade relations. Congruently, Meerabeau et al. (1991) cited evidence suggesting that the main reasons for sponsorship involvement in the UK were corporate-related (i.e. coverage and image reasons).

Irwin and Asimakopoulos (1992) distinguished between corporate-related and brand-related objectives (see table 6.1). According to the authors, sport sponsorship is invaluable in increasing public awareness of the company, changing public perceptions and building strong corporate image through the mass coverage it provides and the positive association with sport properties. Furthermore, the authors comment that sport sponsorship provides an excellent opportunity to involve with and improve the community and thus enhance the corporate social responsibility profile. Building relationships with other businesses and trade customers as well as demonstrating goodwill were other objectives that can be pursued mainly through the provision of guest hospitality accommodations and client entertainment which are usually associated with sponsoring sports (Irwin and Asimakopoulos, 1992). In addition, the authors argued that sponsorship

is especially beneficial in enhancing good staff relations and motivation, as well as in combating competition, mainly through ensuring exclusivity to prevent competitors from entering into a particular sport. Moreover, for these authors, sponsorship is an excellent vehicle to increase sales and market share, either through retail sales during a sponsored event through opportunities with new customers attracted by several sponsorship investments. Finally, Irwin and Asimakopoulos advocated that companies can invest on exposure to the target market as well as on target market match in order to realise several product related objectives such as increasing target market awareness or altering the image of a product.

Table 6.1 Examples of Sport Sponsorship Objectives found in the literature (e.g. in Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992, Irwin & Sutton, 1994).

Corporate-related Objectives
Increase General Public Awareness of the Company and its Services
Enhance Company Image
Alter Public Perception
Involvement with the Local Community
Build Trade Relations
Demonstrate Trade Goodwill
Enhance Employee Relations and Motivation
Block competition
Product/Brand-related Objectives
Increase / enhance Target Market Awareness
Identify/Build image within the target market (positioning)
Increase Sales / Market Share

A similar categorisation of sponsorship objectives was also developed by Thwaites (1994). Based on previously published work on sponsorship (Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992, Crowley, 1991, Witcher et. al., 1991), Thwaites (1994) provided a taxonomy of brand and corporate objectives pursued through sponsorship (see table 6.2) recognising at the same time that some objectives can be appropriate to both brand and corporate level.

Table 6.2 Characteristics and objectives of brand and corporate sponsorship

Brand	Corporate
Characteristics	
Short-term	Longer-term
Market-led	Corporate affairs-led
Decided at brand-level	Decided at Board level
Pay-back tightly quantified	More speculative
Aimed at brand users	Aimed at opinion formers
Objectives	
Media coverage	Community involvement
Sales leads	Public awareness
Sales/market share	Increase/change public perception/image
Target market awareness	Build goodwill among opinion formers/trade relations
Guest hospitality	Staff relations/recruitment

Source: Thwaites (1994).

In one of the early papers on sponsorship, Abratt, et al. (1987) relied on academic writings as well as on practical findings to develop 5 categories of corporate objectives under the following headings: 1) Product-related objectives, 2) Sales objectives, 3) Media coverage – exposure, 4) Guest hospitality, and 5) Personal objectives, also known as the “hobby motive”. Another interesting categorisation of sponsorship objectives was provided by Smolianov and Aiyeku (2009). Taking into account the steps that guide the consumers along the purchasing behaviour process, the authors identified four main objective categories namely: 1) exposure related objectives; 2) processing - or awareness -related goals; 3) image related objectives and 4) objectives aiming at changing the behaviour of the market towards purchasing the brand. It should be mentioned, however, that the existence of different categorisations of sponsorship objectives, often due to different wording to describe the same objectives, seems to create misunderstanding and inconsistency within the literature and the industry.

6.2 Empirical studies Identifying the Objectives set by Sponsors

One of the earlier papers examining the objectives set by sponsors was provided by Abratt, et al. (1987), who conducted an empirical investigation to identify how corporate objectives inform the sponsorship decision making process of large corporations involved in sport sponsorship. Their quantitative methodology, supported by interviews conducted with a number of corporations, revealed that the main objectives sought by sponsors in South Africa were media objective (i.e. TV coverage and exposure) followed by improvement of corporate image, building awareness of the company and the potential of spectators as customers (Abratt et al., 1987). Objectives such as promoting staff/employee morale, demonstrating concern for public interest, and serving the personal interest of the chief executives (the “hobby motive”) received much less support. Additional evidence cited in another early paper in sponsorship literature (Gross et al., 1987) has shown that sport sponsorship was used as the vehicle for reaching a broad array of objectives by North American sponsors, such as building community and employee relations, enhancing employee motivation, achieving sales force incentives, improving product awareness and product positioning, serving sales and sampling goals enhancing ad campaign, and providing client entertainment. Although sport sponsorship was used for achieving all these brand-related, sales-related, community-related and employee-related goals, it was surprisingly not used for serving corporate purposes such as increasing corporate image, creating corporate awareness or building and establishing financial relations.

Interestingly, literature on objectives indicated a clear shift from emphasising media objectives, as demonstrated by Abratt et al. (1987), to emphasising corporate objectives such as corporate image (Lee, Sandler & Shani, 1997). The fact that objective priorities changed over time was also noticed by Hartland, Skinner and Griffiths (2005). Specifically, the authors observed that there has been a recent shift in the importance assigned to several objectives by sponsors, with corporate objectives such as awareness, image and reputation, being stated

as the lead priority, followed by marketing objectives, media objectives and personal objectives.

Shanklin and Kuzma (1992), for example, found that for the sponsors of the Special Olympics, increasing corporate or brand awareness and improving corporate image were the most important objectives pursued, whilst no other goals came close in importance. Congruently, Spence et al.'s (1997) study, which was conducted in South Africa using the 1995 Rugby World Cup 1995 as platform case study, found that the most highly valued objectives for the 10 studied sponsors were increasing awareness and improving corporate image. In addition, the results of this quantitative study illustrated that advertising exposure, the creation of goodwill and loyalty, sales increases and client hospitality were also well appreciated objectives. In line with Abratt et al. (1987), community involvement and social responsibility goals were not strongly supported by the sponsors. This convergence of objectives may be due to the similarity of the sample, since in both cases the sponsors were large corporations since the event was the third largest sporting event worldwide, after the Olympic Games and the Soccer World Cup respectively, when the research was conducted (Spence et al., 1997).

It is indeed the case that image and awareness objectives seem to be the most prevalent goals pursued by sponsors as illustrated in the reviews conducted by Cornwell and Maignan (1998) and Walliser (2003). This is explained, according to Hoek (1999) by the fact that the dominant approach used by many practitioners when setting sponsorship objectives is the cognitive model that emphasises cognitive and attitudinal goals of awareness, image, and purchase intentions. This trend is also well illustrated in the majority of the studies measuring the objectives achieved through sponsorship. However, as Hoek (1999) argued, there is a need to set objectives that focus on certain behavioural sponsorship outcomes such as “prompting trial; increasing repeat purchase; encouraging donations; generating enquiries, or reinforcing current behavioural patterns in the face of competitive activity” (Hoek, 1999, p. 4).

Interestingly, more recent studies on sport sponsorship indicate a shift from the most prevalent image and awareness objectives to more sophisticated goals. For example, Goldman and Johns (2009) found that for the main sponsor of the Standard Bank Pro20 Cricket tournament host in South Africa, the main objectives were “to demonstrate to their chosen target audience that their brand was progressive and able to constantly evolve” (p. 129). Specifically, the objectives involved shifting the positioning of their brand within the young market in South Africa, enhancing the Banks’ appeal and relevance, and developing a new cricket experience that attracts new audiences to an exciting version of the game (Goldman & Johns, 2009). Moreover, the sponsors felt that the sponsorship could serve internal marketing objectives providing hospitality opportunities for stakeholders, clients and staff. Indeed, there is evidence demonstrating that sponsorship is an essential tool to be used for internal marketing purposes with Hickman et al. (2005) illustrating that the sponsorship medium has the capacity to enhance employee commitment.

In a similar manner, Pichot et al. (2008) held that sponsorship can become a particularly effective internal communication strategy that can pursue a variety of objectives such as transmitting and communicating the company’s plans and goals to the employees, enhancing employee commitment, boosting company pride, building and enhancing employee relationships, and motivating and involving employees in company activities. Cunningham et al. (2009) empirically advocated the usefulness of sponsorship in forging internal marketing goals through motivating and boosting morale within the workforce, either implicitly or explicitly. Along the same lines, Pichot et al. (2009) provided evidence demonstrating that sponsorship can be a very effective medium for developing human relations within a business, through communicating certain values aiming at increasing employee satisfaction, loyalty, and a sense of belonging to the company.

The majority of the studies in the sponsorship literature that examined sponsors’ objectives approached objective setting not as a distinct activity but as a part of a

professional sponsorship management process (e.g. Farrelly et al., 1997; Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Thwaites et al., 1998). In fact, objective setting is regarded as an essential element of the sponsorship management process since “it serves as a basis for evaluating sponsorship effectiveness, can provide a focal point for managing and leveraging associated activities and ensures integration between elements of the communication mix, marketing mix and broader corporate objectives” (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004, p. 43). Despite those arguments, sport sponsorship literature illustrated a failure to develop and prioritise specific objectives, with many sponsors entering a sponsorship deal without any clear, formal, concise, appropriate, realistic and measurable objectives in mind (Farrelly et. al., 1997; Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Thwaites, 1993, 1994). According to Papadimitriou et al. (2008, p. 214), “a few companies make those investments with confined understanding of the range of benefits involved and how those benefits can be realized”; “this is depicted on their objectives and the poor rationale for involvement”. Furthermore, Doherty and Murray (2007) indicated that the non-profit swimming organisation (Synchro Canada) they explored “was often obliged to investigate the company's interests and priorities” since “many of the (typically smaller) companies it dealt with tended not to have sponsorship objectives” (p. 53).

Thwaites (1993) explored objective setting as a component of the sponsorship management process employed by building societies investing in sponsorship in the UK. Results were obtained through a quantitative methodological design, and indicated that many of the sponsors developed objectives that were not clear and set in very broad terms that did not facilitate evaluation. In addition, sponsors highlighted the importance of sponsorship in pursuing corporate awareness and community involvement, while they also considered important the contribution of sports sponsorship in increasing media attention and corporate hospitality. In contrast, sports sponsorship's role in achieving brand related objectives such as creating new, or increasing existing, product awareness was, again, seen as marginal by the sponsors.

Thwaites' (1994) study reported almost identical findings. The author focused on the sponsorship management process employed by financial institutions sponsoring sport properties in the UK. Using a quantitative research design, the author found that although there were some signs of a more professional approach to objective setting demonstrated by the banks in this sample, the general conclusion drawn was "a lack of clarity in developing focused objectives capable of subsequent evaluation" (Thwaites, 1994, p. 760). More specifically, banks seemed to pursue a more specified range of objectives and focus on the overtly commercial objectives which were also used for evaluation purposes. At the same time "quasi-philanthropic objectives, such as community involvement" were very loosely monitored by banks (Thwaites, 1994, p. 759). Objectives such as portraying a sense of responsibility, gaining contact with the local community and securing a favourable image in the media were common to all the banks explored in this study.

In contrast, other financial institutions such as insurance companies and building societies failed to develop objectives in quantifiable terms, despite the fact that insurance companies exhibited a clearer view of how their sponsorships would contribute to overall communication objectives compared to building societies (Thwaites, 1994). Moreover, the findings demonstrated that the contribution of sports sponsorship towards achieving particular objectives was seen as greater for the corporate rather than the brand level. Specifically, building societies and insurance companies saw greater scope for sponsorship as a medium for pursuing increased corporate awareness, increased media attention, community involvement, corporate hospitality and increased sales. At the same time, the respondents representing the specific companies felt that sponsorship may contribute less towards increasing current or new product awareness, or changing the product image.

In contrast, Pope and Voges (1994) found that increasing product awareness was of major importance for the majority of the Australian motor sport sponsors they

studied, while improving corporate image received much less weight. Those findings may, once again, reflect cultural differences, or a different state of sponsorship development in Australia. In addition, the authors found that most of the companies involved for a longer period in a sponsorship arrangement stated that they set objectives and attempt to evaluate them, contrary to the sponsors engaged for shorter periods (less than 3 years).

More promising results have been presented by Thwaites et al. (1998). The vast majority of sponsors (82.2%) in their sample that was recruited using a list of the largest companies in Canada, set specific and clear objectives for their sport sponsorship, but only 57% formulated their objectives in a quantifiable manner. The study illustrated once again that the most popular objectives pursued by sponsors were predominantly corporate rather than product focused, and included community involvement, enhancement of company image and company awareness. It is of interest to observe that, in line with earlier evidence (Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Witcher et al., 1991), increasing sales was clearly important but not featuring among the most highly valued sponsorship objectives.

In the same manner, Yu and Mikat (2004) found that corporations sponsoring or advertising on professional sport web sites in the USA (i.e. NBA, NFL, and NHL) were primarily concerned with increasing public awareness of the company, increasing product awareness and enhancing company image. Moreover, the findings of this quantitative study lend less support to sales and market share objectives, while internal marketing objectives such as enhancing employee's relations and motivation were assigned much lower degree of importance, maybe due to the specificities of such a sponsorship. Moreover, it is worth noting that Yu and Mikat found that imitating the sponsorship actions of competitors, termed as "following the trend", was an objective that received very little support, suggesting that the sponsors explored in this study were more professionals, and avoided being involved in sponsorship simply because someone else did it. In contrast, an earlier study conducted by Spence et al. (1997) found that an important reason to

get involved in sponsoring the 1995 Rugby World Cup held in South Africa was competitor's involvement in sport.

Additional findings presented by Thwaites and Carruther (1998) generally replicated those presented earlier (Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Thwaites et al., 1998). This study focused on UK rugby league and rugby union sponsorship, but it is worthwhile to mention that it seemed to treat motives and objectives in the same way since the authors use the two terms interchangeably. The findings presented here reiterate that fact that increase in sales is not regarded as the prime objective for sponsors, while, once again, there seemed to be a prevalence of corporate related objectives such as improving public awareness, enhancing company image, and building business and trade relations. While both rugby league and rugby union sponsors appeared having a broad range of goals when entering a sponsorship agreement (see table 6.3), the authors were led to the conclusion that this was a "post facto justification for many of them, as only 55% of league sponsors and 45% of union sponsors actually set specific objectives" (Thwaites & Carruther, 1998, p. 214).

Deeper analysis of the results revealed that two different models of rugby union sponsorship existed. The first one refers to larger companies with separate sponsorship departments that have very limited personal objectives (the authors refer to this as the *hobby motive*), set specific and measurable sponsorship objectives, and they generally adopt a more systematic approach to sponsorship management and implementation which is also depicted in the application of a proactive approach to accessing sponsorship opportunities, more appropriate evaluation techniques and application of leveraging strategies. The second model is illustrative of companies that exhibit personal objectives, the sponsorship objectives they set are informal, imprecise and thus non-measurable, and generally adopt a much less professional, reactive approach to sponsorship management. Even more interestingly, the authors also identified another group of sponsors who do not adopt any commercial criteria, and are rather "driven

almost entirely by the hobby motive”, and they do not employ any framework for managing their sponsorship (Thwaites & Carruther, 1998, p. 216).

Table 6.3 Motives and Objectives for sponsoring the Rugby League and Rugby Union Clubs

Increase public awareness
Alter public perception of company
Enhance company image
Increase target market awareness
Enhance staff relations and motivation
Increase sales
Build business and trade relationships
Increase media attention
Guest hospitality
Community involvement
Personal objectives (hobby motive)

Source: Thwaites and Carruther (1998)

Almost identical findings have been presented in another quantitative study that focused on football sponsorship (Thwaites, 1995). The nature and focus of sponsorship objectives in the UK were two of the topics explored in this study, which also attempted to make comparisons between Premier League and First Division club sponsors. The study demonstrated again a corporate orientation regarding the objectives set, with increasing awareness, media coverage, community benefit, trade relations and hospitality being the most highly valued by sponsors. It is also worthy to note that, according to this study, football sponsorship was used towards improving staff pride and motivation, since the aforementioned objective received even more support than the sales objective. Although it can be concluded that sponsors engage in football sponsorships with rather more refined objectives, once again, the general conclusion drawn from the study was that objectives set were broad and did not allow future measurement.

It is also of interest to observe that different types of sponsors seem to pursue different objectives. An analysis of internal company documents of the British-American Tobacco Company (BAT) from a 40-year span (early 1950s to mid-

1990s) conducted by Lavack (2003) indicated that the unique characteristics and challenges that the tobacco industry was faced with, especially with regard to the legal restrictions about advertising their products, have had a huge impact upon the objectives pursued by tobacco companies. Creating goodwill, for example, appeared as one of the priorities associated with sport sponsorship by the certain tobacco company since such kind of sponsorship was regarded “as a means of giving something back to the community which, in turn, results in earning the esteem of the general public” (Lavack, 2003, p. 107). Enhancing community relations, building political support and enhancing corporate image also appeared as being essential goals pursued by tobacco sponsors. Moreover, increasing brand recognition and recall through gaining media exposure of their brands are also highly appreciated objectives that are becoming even more important. Thus, it is not surprising that taking advantage of loopholes in regulations emerged as an important goal that tobacco companies have tried achieve through their sponsorship contracts, an objective that is unique to the tobacco industry and maybe to industries dealing with unhealthy products for which promotion is regulated through legislation (e.g. alcohol brands).

The prevalence of corporate-oriented objectives observed in the above studies has also been evidenced in the findings presented by Witcher et al. (1991) and Hartland et al. (2005). Witcher et al. (1991) found that corporate image was the main objective sought by the 54 large, UK-based corporations studied. Interestingly, although this research design identified significant differences in objectives for different types of sponsorship (sport, art and community sponsorship), promoting corporate image featured as the most important goal for both sport and arts sponsorship. Brand awareness was also an important objective for sport sponsorship, as well as TV and radio exposure. In contrast, enhancement of community relations was not a priority for sport sponsors. Another finding is that sales objectives also appeared as being clearly of less importance, yet essential for sport sponsors, but not for other kind of sponsors such as art sponsors. Interestingly, employee-related objectives did not receive

much support in this quantitative study, indicating that internal marketing was not a priority for the corporations investing in arts or sport sponsorship in the UK.

Hartland et al. (2005) found that another corporate-related objective (improving client relationships) was a priority for all sponsors explored in their study. Driven by the recent shift of conceptual emphasis in marketing towards more relational approaches mentioned earlier (e.g. Olkkonen, 2001), and drawing on the capacity of sport sponsorship to offer relationship building opportunities that can also serve and accommodate corporate objectives, the authors aimed at examining whether sports sponsors were pursuing the right objectives. A questionnaire administered to the sponsors of a Welsh Rugby Football Club revealed that while rugby sponsorship is regarded as having a key role in developing client relationships, only a few sponsors had set specific relationship marketing objectives for their sponsorship activity.

Research findings provided by Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004) concur with past research in that there was limited evidence to indicate that the objectives set by sponsors were “specific, measurable, and trackable” (p. 190). In contrast, profit-oriented goals were assigned much more significance in this study. This study asked seven of the 10 Grand National sponsors of the 2004 Athens Olympics to reflect upon their objectives, and results demonstrated that, in consistence with past research (e.g. Lough & Irwin, 2001) almost all companies in the sample were concerned with sales and market share objectives. It should be mentioned, however, that many studies have found that sales objectives do not feature among the most important objectives pursued by sponsors (i.e. Spence et al., 1997; Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Thwaites et al., 1998). It could be the case that the findings of Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou involving a completely different sponsorship context (Olympic Sponsorship), or that the length of the agreement had an impact on the objectives pursued. The latter speculation is supported by the fact that long-term sponsorships are predominantly dealing with image related goals and objectives (Armstrong, 1988).

Another interesting finding of the study of Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004) is that although improving employee relations did emerge as an objective in this study, it did not seem to be highly rated by sponsors. In contrast, enhancing the image of the company and raising awareness of the brand or the company appeared as important goals for national sponsors. Furthermore, philanthropic objectives or altruistic goals such as demonstrating corporate citizenship and social responsibility were also highlighted as important by almost half of the respondents in this study. This can be explained by the altruistic orientation of Olympic sponsorship in Greece as illustrated in the findings regarding the reasons for which sponsors decided to invest in Olympic sponsorship. In fact, this tendency does not seem to refer only to Olympic sponsorship, but to the broader Greek context. It seems that for Greek companies, corporate citizenship is of great importance since, according to Asimakopoulos (1993), social responsibility is the major reason companies promote their involvement in sport sponsorship, while, in consistence with the aforementioned evidence, increasing brand and company awareness are the main benefits that Greek companies see through their sport sponsorship involvement.

Papadimitriou et al. (2008) also found that the goals and objectives sought by sponsors in their study were not, in most cases, specific or measurable. The multiple case study approach based on semi-structured interviews that the authors adopted to investigate Olympic Sponsorship management practices indicated that the objectives sought by the Grand National Olympic sponsors of the 2004 Olympic Games generally fell into two categories: profit oriented and brand oriented. The former category mainly included sales and market share increases, while the latter involved creating brand awareness and recognition (e.g. a new name), developing positive brand associations, enhancing brand image (e.g. a more positive customer- or service-oriented image) and fostering brand loyalty. Moreover, the authors identified another two categories: one reflecting mainly altruistic reasons and moral benefits pursued through

sponsorship, and a second one focusing on employee relations and motivation which, referred to as “internal branding” objectives (Papadimitriou et al., 2008, p. 217). Objectives found in the latter category included strengthening employee relations, uniting employees behind common effort, and integrating two company cultures. Interestingly, only two of the sponsors in this study considered sponsorship as a platform to promote corporate objectives. Rather, the findings suggested that sponsorship was mainly used as a brand building tool.

In view of the above findings, Davies and Tsiantas (2008) asked some of the national sponsors of the 2004 Olympics to reflect upon their objectives, while, driven by the claim made by Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004) that the objectives of national sponsors might change over time, they compared the findings from the earlier study in order to identify changes between pre- and post-Olympic stated goals. Moreover the authors contended that realistic sponsorship objectives would differ according to the characteristics of the sponsoring brand. The results of the study confirmed the above argument since, for low involvement products objectives focused more on product placement, point of sale and distribution, while for high involvement products stated goals were more related to differentiation, awareness increase and positive associations with the Olympic image and values. It is important to note that for all the sponsors in this study, enhancing corporate image was a vital sponsorship objective. In addition, the sponsors believed that their Olympic sponsorship enabled the development of a socially responsible profile.

With regard to the argument concerning possible differences between pre- and post- Olympic goals, Davies and Tsiantas (2008) found that those have been minor and involved the addition of brand loyalty which was an objective mentioned by three sponsors, and the creation of a customer database which seems to be pursued by two of the sponsors (see table 6.4). Specifically, this qualitative methodological design revealed that all sponsors had objectives related to brand awareness and image, and all of them reported that sales and

market share objectives were also sought through their sponsorship. It is also of interest to observe that internal company objectives such as improving employee relations and motivation were essential for four of the six sponsors who participated in this study. Finally, it is worthwhile to mention that the companies who cited the most sponsorship objectives were those who have invested the most on leveraging and have made use of the most leveraging activities (Davies & Tsiantas, 2008) suggesting that those companies had approached sponsorship in a more professional and systematic way.

Table 6.4 Sponsorship objectives, as stated after Athens Olympic Games

	ALPHA	COSMOTE	DELTA	FAGE	OLYMPIC AIRWAYS	ERT
Increase brand awareness	*	*			*	*
Awareness/Positioning of new products/services	*	*	*	*		
Corporate image	*	*	*	*	*	*
Brand image	*			*		
Competitive advantage	*	*			*	*
Brand loyalty	*	*			*	*
Increase sales/market share	*	*	*	*	*	*
Post-Olympic legacy					*	
Internal company objectives	*	*		*		*
Introduce new distribution systems		*	*	*		
Create customer database	*	*				

Source: Davies and Tsiantas (2008)

In another Olympic sponsorship study carried out in Romania, Constantinescu and Szekely (2009) found that the most prevalent objectives for the sponsors of the Romanian Olympic Movement were notoriety increase and sales improvements. It is admittedly one of the few studies for which sales objectives were given that importance. Image enhancement received less support, but it did appear among the sponsors' priorities. The impact through the mass media, market share increase and reaching certain target markets received considerably less support by the respondents, depicting possibly a less mature sponsorship context.

Lough and Irwin (2001) provided findings that generally mirror the emphasis on sales and profit goals as outlined above. The authors employed a questionnaire developed to ascertain the importance of each sport sponsorship objective identified in the literature in an attempt to identify differences between women's sport sponsorship and general sport sponsorship in the USA. Results demonstrated that corporate sport sponsors desire measurable outcomes, and specifically they were mostly interested in achieving profit-oriented goals (increasing sales and market share), increasing target market awareness, enhancing company image, and increasing public awareness of the company. Objectives such as demonstrating community involvement, building trade relations and goodwill, social responsibility and blocking the competition – that is, restricting the access that competitors have on sponsorship - were also regarded as important. Philanthropic goals and employee related objectives received less support. With regard to female sport sponsorship, the comparative analysis found that minor differences exist between women's sport and general sport sponsorship objectives, with decision-makers being more concerned with image building and increasing awareness of the target audience. Further analysis of the research findings revealed that although “public service” objectives (i.e. community involvement, social responsibility, and corporate philanthropy) were regarded of least importance to the general sample of respondents, for decision-makers involved in female sponsorship this factor was of significantly greater importance.

Similarly to the findings presented above (e.g. Lough & Irwin, 2001; Witcher et al., 1991; Yu & Mikat, 2004) employee-related objectives were not considered of much importance by companies sponsoring several sports in South Africa (Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004). Results gathered through a questionnaire measuring the perceptions and attitudes of 43 companies-members of the South African Association of Marketers indicated that sponsors placed more emphasis on awareness, media coverage and corporate image-related objectives, while in

general, respondents confirmed that the objectives they set fit into the five categories identified by several studies namely corporate, brand-related, sales, media, and hospitality. Contrary to several allegations found in the literature regarding the existence of altruistic goals in sports sponsorship (e.g. Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004), philanthropic objectives and non-profit objectives were regarded as least important in this study. The authors recommended, however, that South African sponsorship managers should set more concrete and measurable objectives and that they should also broaden the scope of objectives they pursue.

In an attempt to investigate successful and unsuccessful sponsorships in Canada, Amis et al. (1999) approached sponsorship as a resource and suggested that it could achieve objectives such as enhanced image and reputation which can, in turn, provide a company with competitive advantage. Semi-structured interviews revealed that successful sponsors seemed to realise the potential of sports sponsorship to accommodate certain marketing goals such as building brand awareness, building or altering brand image, and developing business relationships. As a respondent stated, sponsorship was a "wonderful opportunity to match clubs with branches to try to get (...) the family's business, kid's business; [to develop] a business relationship" (Amis et al. 1999, p. 260), while for another marketer, it was regarded as being the vehicle to build brand image since they felt that the certain sponsorship "was a good fit for the image of the brand we wanted (...) a nice upper level, clean, good looking sport" (Amis et al. 1999, p. 261). In a similar vein, another company intended to use sponsorship to build brand awareness and publicise its name change. It is of interest to mention that the less successful sponsors seemed to consider sponsorship as having a community and social orientation and thus they did not seem to link their investment into any brand or corporate objectives.

At this point it is worth mentioning that although Séguin et al. (2005) also identified the existence of community related objectives in their qualitative study

carried out in Canada, those were not adopted by less successful sponsors, and, surprisingly, the objectives were strongly linked to the corporate orientation of the business and very well supported by a comprehensive and integrated approach to sport sponsorship. In addition to the societal objectives that emerged in their study, additional sponsorship objectives included increasing brand awareness, building reputation of financial strength, strengthening relationships with key audiences (e.g. distributors, consultants, employees), and improving sales. Interestingly, Séguin et al. (2005) noticed that there was evidence suggesting a fundamental shift in the objectives sought over time, with the initial emphasis on brand awareness evolving to sales oriented objectives.

The shift of objectives sought between the initial and latter stages was also evidenced in early sponsorship studies (e.g. Armstrong, 1988) which found that longer sponsorship relationships evolve from awareness to image related objectives. Moreover, Armstrong (1988), who investigated the strategies of 17 American, European and Far East electronics manufacturers using in-depth interviews, found that although the sport sponsorship objectives of those sponsors were very similar, larger corporations were more inclined towards pursuing image improvement rather than awareness building. Gratton and Taylor (1985) also argued that larger companies involved in UK-based sport sponsorship were more inclined towards achieving image related objectives. In addition, this early evidence in the sport sponsorship literature provided by Armstrong depicted market related differences with regard to objectives sought. Specifically, in European markets sponsorship was approached as an exposure strategy able to increase brand awareness, whilst in the USA market it was regarded as a medium to improve, change or maintain corporate and brand image. According to Armstrong (1985), however, sponsorship in Europe at that time was much less commercial, whilst in the USA it was much more widespread and expensive.

Another study that focused on a comparative examination of sponsorship practices is the research conducted by Farrelly et al. (1997), who investigated

sponsorship management practices adopted by North American and Australian firms. The authors reported limited objective setting by sponsors. Results obtained through in-depth interviews and a questionnaire, showed that although the approach to sponsorship adopted by North American sponsors was more strategic in many senses, Australian companies treated objective setting in a more systematic way since the objectives set were “significantly correlated with the establishment of measurement details and schedules” (Farrelly et al., 1997, p. 175) and with the evaluation processes employed by the sponsors.

In another study that explored the Australian sponsorship context, results demonstrated that businesses investing in rugby sponsorship set objectives with two major focuses: creating and enhancing brand, product or corporate image, and increasing customer base (Polonsky et al., 1996). Structured interviews with decision makers in 28 small businesses revealed that gaining an increase in sales, enhancing image, and gaining participants and spectators as customers featured among the most mentioned objectives. Furthermore, another objective which appeared of great importance for small businesses engaged in sport sponsorship in Australia was community-oriented since sponsorship was perceived as an excellent opportunity to participate actively in the community and increase community cooperation. Congruently, Gratton and Taylor (1985) argued that contact with the local community was an objective most likely to be associated with small sponsorship deals undertaken by smaller companies at the local level in the UK. In a similar vein, Lamont and Dowell’s (2008) findings based on semi-structured interviews with small and mid-size companies sponsoring sport tourism events in Australia indicated that local community support, together with obtaining media exposure, were the most frequently cited objectives sought.

Moreover, the prevalence of sales objectives that was found by Polonsky et al. (1996) in the study described above could have been influenced by the geographic location of the sponsors, although it is something that the authors did not explore in their study. However, it would be interesting at this point to refer to

evidence provided by Westerbeek (2000) suggesting that location dependency of the sponsor – which was defined as the distance between the sponsor’s head office and the sponsored property, and the percentage of financial turnover achieved in the area surrounding the sport facility – may define different objectives pursued. In particular, Westerbeek found that location-dependent sponsors of a football club in Australia were more inclined towards direct sales, whilst location-independent sponsors were directed more towards exposure, brand positioning and corporate hospitality. Interestingly, location-dependent sponsors were primarily small, local businesses, whilst location-independent sponsors were larger organisations with a less local orientation; something that may have impacted the differences in the objectives sought. Then, it could also be the case for the small businesses explored by Polonsky et al. (1996) that were also location dependent, and therefore they appeared as emphasising sales objectives.

Major mind-set differences between sport organisations’ administrators and business officials regarding the role and purpose of sport sponsorship were identified by Geng et al. (2002). The authors conducted a gap analysis in order to answer why sport organisations in China were having difficulties in finding new sponsors. Their study revealed that in the sport setting, organisations were more likely to expect sponsorships for philanthropic purposes, while the majority of the corporations in the sample viewed sponsorship as having a marketing-promotion purpose, such as improving relations with consumers, testing new products, creating an advantage over competitors, developing company image, creating sales opportunities and generating free publicity. As Geng et al. (2002) argued, those “divergent attitudes concerning the objectives of sport sponsorship” (p. 29) were part of a larger philosophical gap that separated the sponsors and the sporting properties, and this could be partially explained by the political context in China and the fact that the government could often require private organisations to support a particular sporting event, and thus sponsorship can be easily

misconceived by sport organisations as a philanthropic and not as a commercial activity.

Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) also found that companies exhibited a widespread failure to pursue specific goals since only 54% of the sponsors participating in their study appeared setting any objectives. The findings, which derived from face-to-face interviews and the administration of a questionnaire, are both surprising and disappointing considering that this investigation took place in football, a sport that has become heavily commercial in recent years. Moreover, the sample in this study consisted of companies sponsoring the top two English professional leagues, something that is nurturing expectations for a more professional and systematic approach to sport sponsorship. The authors argued that this is possibly a depiction of a more pragmatic approach associated with evolutionary sponsorship management styles where objectives emerge instead of being set in advance. Moreover, the authors concluded that the failure to formulate objectives may be explained by the limited timescale within which sponsorship decisions are made, acknowledging at the same time the power of the sport of football over decision making. This power is well illustrated in the fact that “what should be a rational economic decision sometimes therefore becomes a personal one, motivated by a desire to be associated with soccer” (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005, p. 329). In addition, the findings demonstrated that even when objectives were set, these were more marketing-oriented, a fact that clearly enhances the communicational role of sponsorship, but probably downgrades its’ strategic function.

A similar study focusing on shirt-football sponsorship in the UK conducted earlier by the same authors (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004) produced similar findings with regard to objective setting, since only 49% of the sponsors stated that they did not set any objectives. The authors inferred that sponsors are likely to naively equate the popularity of the sport with the likelihood of sponsorship success, and thus approaching sponsorship in an opportunistic and not in a strategic way. However,

the sponsors who did set objectives (51%) suggested that football sponsorship could be used as a vehicle for achieving both corporate and brand objectives. The most frequently cited objectives were: generating public awareness, attracting media attention, increase product awareness levels, enhancing corporate image, and reinforcing target market perceptions. Objectives such as building business and trade relations, employee motivation and community involvement seemed also to be important for sponsors but received less support by shirt sponsors in British football, who formed the sample of the study (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004). In line with many other studies (Abratt et al., 1987; Thwaites, 1995; Thwaites & Carruther, 1998), this study demonstrated that personal objectives were largely absent. Although this development is positive and promising, the findings contradict with those presented a year after by the same authors in the same context (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005), but it could be because of the different sample examined in the two studies - Chadwick and Thwaites (2004) focused exclusively on shirt sponsors who may be driven by different factors and rationale. Chadwick and Thwaites (2004) concluded that with regard to objective setting, although sponsorship seems to be an important part of the marketing communication mix, this “denies the wider strategic role sponsorship can fulfil, indicating that organisations have still to employ it as a form of relationship, resource, or network strategy” (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004, p. 54).

Tomasini et al. (2004) investigated the sport sponsorship objectives as perceived by sport administrators of NCAA Division I in an attempt to examine the nature of communication and understanding the relationship between sport officials and their sponsors. Using a quantitative methodological instrument requesting data from the athletic departments of all universities competing in Division I, the authors gathered evidence from 116 senior marketing administrators that reflected twelve objectives pursued by corporate sponsors. In all the three divisions explored (IA, IAA and IAAA), improving visibility and awareness, increasing sales, advertising opportunities and promotional/sampling opportunities were the most frequently cited objectives. As the authors argued, these data

compare favourably with industry data across all sponsorship categories, suggesting that sport administrators are generally aware of the main goals their sponsors try to achieve. This is further supported by the fact that more than 80% of administrators in this study reported that sponsors had communicated their objectives for the sponsorship arrangement.

In contrast, the same study (Tomasini et al., 2004) found that 15.7% of the respondents admitted that they were not aware of their sponsors' objectives. This was further illustrated in the fact that those respondents had broad and less cohesive opinions regarding sponsors goals, and the importance they placed on each objective did not coincide with general trends in the industry, nor with the views of the administrators that reportedly knew their sponsors' outcomes. In addition, image building, establishing business-to-business relationships, increasing brand loyalty and association with a successful program were also objectives that received support in the study. Interestingly, philanthropic and social objectives were not perceived among the main objectives pursued by sponsors.

Smolianov and Aiyeku (2009) investigated corporate objectives from another perspective. The authors relied on the consumer's purchasing behavior process in an attempt to define the factors that lead to increased corporate sales. Within this framework, they examined sponsors' corporate objectives and evaluation measures integrating sports event sponsorship and television advertising. A theoretical model derived from exploratory research of academic literature was validated by an expert panel consisting of 16 key industry players such as academics, consultants and corporate executives. Afterwards, and in an attempt to test the constructed theoretical framework, a collective case study approach was employed involving 12 different cases based on observations of broadcasts, interviews with 24 practitioners, secondary data and internal corporate documents.

Results revealed that the practitioners' level of objective use was not consistent with importance of the objectives as rated by the experts' panel for integrated sponsorship and advertising (Smolianov & Aiyeku, 2009). Specifically, communication-effects objectives measured through attitude and intention to purchase, were given the most importance rating by experts, followed by processing as expressed in recognition and recall rates. The third most important category, according to experts, was sales related, while exposure objectives were given the least support in this study. In contrast, Smolianov and Aiyeku found that exposure objectives and measures were the most heavily used by practitioners, followed by processing or awareness related objectives, communication-effects objectives and sales oriented objectives. Interestingly, the study demonstrated that practitioners' level of objective use appeared coinciding with both consumer behaviour theory and views of experts holding that there is a need to use all four objectives in sequence since they are regarded as incremental: exposure is needed in order to create awareness, which is in turn needed for attitude change, which in turn can lead to action (Smolianov & Aiyeku, 2009). Another interesting finding is that 6 of the 12 explored campaigns which had set and measured all four objectives were successful in reaching those objectives and eventually increasing sales of their brands. In contrast, 3 of the 12 analysed campaigns failed to set objectives and evaluate sponsorship and advertising in integration, while only one of the cases investigated in this study failed to achieve any goal. Hence, the authors concluded that in order to be successful, campaigns should rely on a "systematic and sequential use of buying behavior objectives" (Smolianov & Aiyeku, 2009, p. 85).

7 Motivation to Engage in Sponsorship

Apart from the obviously heavily researched area of objective setting in sport sponsorship, another topic that received considerable theoretical and empirical interest involves the factors that motivate corporations to be engaged in sport sponsorship. Substantial efforts have been made to identify the drives that trigger

this involvement. In fact, most of the studies described in the previous section exploring the objectives of sponsors were also concerned with the rationale for corporate sponsorship involvement. It is indeed surprising, however, that a clear rationale for sponsoring a certain property appeared to be lacking for a large number of sponsorship investments. The literature on this topic reveals that the decision to invest in sport sponsorship could be based on a variety of rational and emotional motives (e.g. Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Arthur, Scott & Woods, 1997; Lough & Irwin, 2001; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998). Those motives appeared to range from purely commercial (e.g. improving sales and creating positive image) (Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992), to social (the desire to be a good citizen by supporting a worthy cause), or altruistic and philanthropic (Berrett & Slack, 1999; Shaw & Amis, 2001; Thwaites and Carruthers, 1998). Furthermore, a “defensive” rationale, which is a term referring to the intention of a company to invest in sponsorship before a competitor does (Burton et al. 1998), is another motivational factor mentioned in the literature. Moreover, there is evidence suggesting that personal interest, such as the manager’s personal liking of a certain sport (e.g. Burton et al., 1998; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998) can also form an important driving force mobilising sponsorship activity. It is worth noting however that the majority of researchers that have attempted to identify the motives of business’s investment in sponsorship treated motives and objectives as the same thing (e.g. Amis et. al., 1999; Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998). Personal interest, however, which has been identified by many studies as a motive for involvement in sport sponsorship cannot be perceived as a business objective, although it can be regarded as being further fuelled by commercial gain.

Burton et al. (1998, p. 31) held that sponsorship sometimes took place “because a chief executive had a personal interest in a sport or because a sports marketer was familiar with and fond of a particular league, team or event”. In their interviews with International Special Olympics Sponsors, Shanklin and Kuzma (1992), found that most of the sponsors were driven by commercial motives (such

as achieving media exposure and entertaining clients), whilst some of the respondents claimed philanthropic and personal reasons (e.g. because a top level manager had a handicapped child). Furthermore, personal motives may also reflect the advancement of the personal agendas and interests of top executives, since according to Cornwell et al. (2001b) sport sponsorships offer significant opportunities for senior managers to “indulge their personal preferences at the expense of common shareholders” (p. 18) through enjoying many privileges as a result of their firm’s sponsorship activities. Though, the authors argued that those personal motives are less prevalent today than in the past. Identical arguments were also made by Cornwell (2008) who held that agency effects or management egos may represent reasons for making a sponsorship deal. Along the same lines, early evidence (Meerabeau et al., 1991) suggested that the UK sponsorship activities seemed to have reached a more professional and less personal character since the early 1990s, since the board input did not appear as an important reason for getting involved in sport sponsorship.

In a similar vein, Arthur et al. (1997) argued that sport sponsorship seems to have evolved from a corporate social behavior used by executives to achieve a “tingly feeling” into a legitimate business activity. However, the authors admitted that sponsorship is probably less rationally motivated than believed, with “heuristic strategies at play in some situations” such as generalized impressions or previous successful contacts (Arthur et al., 1997, p. 230). Moreover, the authors suggested that the fact that many actors are involved in the sponsorship purchasing decision inevitably results into a complex situation with attempts to serve several personal agendas comprised of individual and organisational objectives involving various rational and emotional factors. Similarly, Cornwell (2008, p. 46) distinguished between “management egos” and “agency effects” which seem to influence sponsorship decision-making. Agency effects are regarded referring to non-owner managers utilising sponsorship to serve their own interests and take advantage of the sponsorship benefits (e.g. season box seats for their own use) instead of serving the interests of the organisational shareholders.

In their research endeavor to get a detailed insight into the development of sport sponsorship as a distinctive competence, Amis et al. (1999) were particularly interested in uncovering why sponsors became involved in a sponsorship agreement. Interestingly, the qualitative research's findings obtained through semi-structured interviews revealed that motives are related to the success of a business, or it could be the case that different motives may lead to different success levels regarding the sponsorship investment. Specifically, the companies considering their sponsorships as unsuccessful were driven by less commercial motives, such as resource availability or a senior executive's interest - which was described by the authors as "the personal whim of the chairman" (Amis et al., 1999, p. 264) and the need to invest in the community. Conversely, companies that had been successful in their sponsorships were clearly motivated by commercial motives such as the need to publicise their name change, to develop good business relationships, to recapture their lost market shares, and the need to create a good image fit between the sports property and their products.

Business oriented motives seem to prevail also in the study conducted by Abratt and Grobler (1989). Specifically, the authors found that for the sponsors of various sports in South Africa, the main reason for getting involved in such an activity was to enhance their promotional activities. What is interesting in this study, however, is that social responsibility reasons were also mentioned as driving the sponsorship activity for more than half of the respondents, whilst philanthropic reasons were reported by 18% of the sponsors, suggesting that they play a less prominent, yet important role in triggering sponsorship activity. Conversely, for Pope and Voge's (1994) study carried out in Australia, the majority of the companies engaged in motor sports sponsorships appeared being driven by sheer commercial factors such as the chance to achieve product awareness, company image, product positioning and access to a certain target market. Managerial interest in the sport did not seem to influence the sponsorship

decision for the vast majority of the sample, although it was identified as a motive by 2 of the 16 sponsors explored in this study.

Thwaites and Carruthers (1998) found that the motives behind the decision to invest in Rugby sponsorship may vary from sheer commercial or marketing reasons (internal or external), to more altruistic or community motives. Moreover, the authors found that sponsors may be guided by emotional or personal reasons to sponsor sport, what they termed as the “hobby motive” (Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998, p. 213). In line with the findings presented by Amis et al. (1999), the authors found that a less systematic, less professional approach to rugby sponsorship was associated with a prevalence of personal motives when choosing or implementing the sponsorship, such as a manager’s personal liking for the sport. Interestingly, there was evidence in this study indicating that “giving something back for the many happy years he (the manager) spent with the club as a player” (Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998, p. 211) was the main motive for entering in a rugby union sponsorship deal.

Papadimitriou et al. (2008) also found that altruistic and moral motives were laid behind the involvement of some Grand National Olympic Sponsors in the 2004 sponsorship program. According to this study, a number of sponsors were driven by the need to assist the efforts of the organising committee in this national effort of great importance and the moral and ethical satisfaction emerging from this support. These findings coincide with qualitative evidence presented by Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004), who explored the motives of seven national Olympic sponsors prior to the Olympic Games, and found that there was a great sense of obligation to support the country (Greece) in this great challenge and to become part of a national effort. Although there was some indication of strategic reasons for entering the sponsorship program mentioned by three of the seven sponsors, the main motives underlying sponsorship decisions were highlighting a sense of responsibility and a duty to the country. Surprisingly, feelings of honour and pride seemed to outweigh concerns regarding whether the

sponsorship fitted with broader corporate objectives. It was the case that, for some of the respondents, sponsorship was regarded as a “cost” rather than an “investment” (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004, p. 186). As the authors have argued, those findings may be explained by the long historical association of the country with the Games and the related interference of emotional factors, as well as by the small size of the country and the challenge of hosting such a huge, global event. Moreover, the findings can be seen in light of the admittedly less developed and less sophisticated sponsorship practices that are employed in Greece (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004, Papadimitriou et al., 2008).

In line with the above evidence, Papadimitriou and Apostolopoulou (2009) also found that for 3 of the 10 national Olympic sponsors explored in their study the decision to enter the sponsorship agreement was driven by historical and national reasons since the sponsors felt that they had been obliged to support their country. Interestingly, those motivational factors seemed to impact the decision of sponsors coming from the public sector, and not those coming from the private one, who had a clearly commercial orientation.

In another study exploring Olympic sponsorship motives, Constantinescu and Szekely (2009) acknowledged that sponsorship motives and processes are incoherent and vary substantially among countries that have different market and economic background. In their research endeavour to examine several sponsorship practices undertaken in Romania - including the factors that drive businesses' interest to invest in Olympic sponsorship - the authors conducted personal interviews with 12 sponsors of the Romanian Olympic Movement, and they found that one of the most important drivers was their intention to promote the development of sport in the country. Personal interest in sport also emerged as an important reason for sponsorship involvement. Hence, it can be seen that, in line with Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou (2004), sponsors associated with the Olympic Movement in less developed countries are clearly not driven primarily by commercial and marketing motives, but by the desire to contribute and support

the community and the development of sport. Notoriety was another very important motive revealed in this study, while more marketing-driven reasons, such as image improvement, received less support.

In contrast, Thwaites et al. (1998) provided evidence suggesting that for leading Canadian companies investing in sport sponsorship the “hobby motive” is still persisted in a number of companies, but was less prominent than it traditionally was. The authors found that the majority of the sponsors in this study were driven by overtly commercial motives, and they also noted that there has been a prevalent trend towards community-related motives. In concluding, the authors commented that philanthropic motives for sponsorship involvement were in decline and sports organisations should realise this new reality in order to prepare themselves to better respond to an increasingly commercial environment. This conclusion was further substantiated by Thwaites (1994), who found that for the banking sector investing in sport sponsorship in the UK, the first underlying reason for involvement was “unashamedly commercial and based on clear business objectives”, while the second was “more subtle and relates to social responsibility and community involvement” (Thwaites, 1994, p. 758). In the same manner, Thwaites (1995) found that personal motivations were attributed very low scores in his study concerning UK football sponsorship, suggesting that this kind of sponsorship may have had a more commercial orientation.

Although it is heartening to note that philanthropic and personal factors are increasingly less important in sponsoring sports, Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) provided evidence demonstrating that the “hobby motive” was still fuelling sponsorship decisions even in a heavily commercial sport such as football. The qualitative findings of this study demonstrated that for some companies, the decision to sponsor a football team was based primarily on the support of the manager for a certain club “and only secondarily on commercial considerations” (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005, p. 332). Having said this, it is worth noting that the findings of earlier studies exploring football sponsorship in the UK (e.g. Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004; Thwaites, 1995) are contradicting since in both of the

aforementioned quantitative studies the “hobby motive”, or personal agendas of senior executives, did not seem to have a significant impact on the sponsorship decision.

Contrary to those promising findings indicating that commercial reasons are mainly behind sponsors’ decisions, Farrelly et al. (1997) found, thank to in-depth interviews conducted with managers of 10 large North American and Australian organisations investing in sports sponsorship, a lack of a clear rationale for involvement in sponsorship, which was further translated into limited planning and objective setting. Similarly, Polonsky et al. (1996) found that many small businesses engaged in Rugby sponsorship in Australia admitted that they entered sponsorship arrangements “at least partly because of “management” interest in the Rugby League” (Polonsky et al., 1996, p. 130). Aligned with the findings described above, Copeland et al. (1996) found that, despite the fact that their sample consisted of large Canadian corporations, there was some evidence of companies choosing sponsorship merely on an emotional basis with no figures to back it up” (Copeland et al., 1996, p. 43).

Although sponsorship motivation was mainly categorised as commercial, altruistic, and personal, there is evidence showing greater variation than previously noted. Garry et al. (2008), for example, suggested that other motivational factors may coexist with commercial or altruistic considerations. Drawing on social psychology and specifically on self-identification, social identity, and tribal marketing literature, the authors explored the concept of tribal support as a motivational factor for sponsorship participation. Specifically, they proposed that “people may engage in activities to support a particular social community or “tribe” where that “tribe” is congruent with their own self-definition and identity” (Garry et al., 2008, p. 961). Qualitative findings showed that in some cases, companies involved in motorcycling sponsorship were motivated by strong sub-cultural, tribal connection and social identification with the team, something that had a further impact upon the relationship with the sports property and the management of their sponsorship

arrangement. Indeed, a proportion of sponsors appeared having prior interest in motorcycle racing. The emotional attachment demonstrated by some sponsors could “impinge on rational sponsorship decision making” as demonstrated in many statements of the respondents (Garry et al., 2008, p. 965). On the other hand, the results of this study suggest that sponsorship motivation that derives from sub-cultural connections, social associations and tribal connection can encourage mutuality, reciprocity and commitment over time, reinforcing bonding and synergy that are conducive to the establishment of an enduring and successful sponsorship relationship.

Interesting results regarding the reasons why companies enter into a sponsorship agreement have been presented by Shaw and Amis (2001). Employing a qualitative methodological design, the authors investigated the motives of two companies acting as the sponsors of two international women’s sport teams in an attempt to identify the reasons for the disparity between female and male sponsorship investments. The findings suggested that both commercial and personal factors influence sponsorship decisions, such as the values and beliefs of senior executives, mimetic pressures (that is the tendency to imitate the actions of other sponsors perceived to be successful), and media representation of sports which clearly favors male sports. It is important to note that, although for one of the companies the motives for entering into their sponsorship arrangement were clearly depicting a rational economic decision, for the second sponsor the motivation to engage in sponsorship was primarily philanthropic, since the investment was not regarded as “commercial sponsorship” but rather as “something nice to do” (Shaw & Amis, 2001, p. 231). Likewise, the study conducted by Séguin et al. (2005) identified both commercial and personal rationales for sponsorship involvement. According to the authors, for one of the three large corporations explored in their qualitative study, sponsorship was driven by the “CEO’s personal interest in sport and his strong belief of the positive effect that sport has on youth and on society” (Séguin et al., 2005, p. 80). Despite the philanthropic motives, however, this specific sponsor appeared using a

sophisticated and comprehensive marketing approach to leverage its sponsorship. These findings substantiate the arguments of Lough and Irwin (2001) who suggested that sport properties should provide business building opportunities to sponsors since, as their study revealed, the motivation for investing in women's sport in the USA was primarily business-centered.

In addition to the motives described above, Berrett and Slack (1999) found that the rationale for starting a sponsorship activity is influenced by several competitive and institutional-based pressures. Adopting the open-systems view that considers the organisation influencing and being influenced by the environment in which it operates, and building on concepts emerging from institutional theories, the study employed a qualitative approach in order to investigate the impact of external environmental forces upon sponsorship decision-making. The interviews conducted with 28 Canada-based corporations reflecting different industrial sectors provided considerable evidence that competitive factors form important motivational forces. Corporations in this study demonstrated "varying modes of response to competitor action (or its potential) in their sponsorship activities" (Berrett & Slack, 1999, p. 122), such as reacting to sponsorship initiatives adopted by direct competitors, or being proactive in their sponsorship activity in an attempt to gain a competitive advantage and block major competition.

Furthermore, the findings of Berrett and Slack (1999) demonstrated that the motives underlying sponsorship investment may involve institutional influences. Specifically, there was evidence suggesting that strong institutional pressures emanating from the actions of companies operating in the same geographic area were "forcing" companies to demonstrate corporate citizenship and social responsibility within the community. In addition, sponsorship decision-making appeared being strongly influenced by mimetic pressures as well as by pressures emerging from the executive's social network. Indeed, there was evidence demonstrating that in some cases the decision to be involved in a sponsorship agreement was based on personal friendships of high-ranking corporate officials.

Finally, findings revealed that the reasons for sponsorship involvement may be influenced by normative pressures resulting from formal education and training of sponsorship decision-makers. According to the authors, a strong natural science bias in the training of some decision-makers was depicted in the presence of rational economic motives such as profit and sales potential of the sponsorship investment, while for other decision-makers motives involved less tangible and quantifiable benefits sought.

8. Sponsorship Decision-making Process: Acquisition and Selection of Sponsorship Arrangements

8.1 Nature of the Selection Activity: Selection Procedures & Criteria for Selection

In addition to the heavily researched areas of sponsorship objectives and motives another significant, but clearly less accumulative, body of sport sponsorship research has concentrated on the processes used by sponsors to select the sponsorship activity they will engage in (e.g. Arthur et al., 1997; Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005; Copeland et al., 1996; Cousens & Slack, 1996; Farrelly et al., 1997; Geng et al., 2002; Irwin & Assimakopoulos, 1992; Meenaghan, 1991; Shaw & Amis, 2001; Thwaites, 1993, 1994; Thwaites et al., 1998; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998). Most of the studies attempted to develop useful guidelines for sponsorship selection through the articulation of a list of criteria that sponsors should consider when screening and evaluating sponsorship proposals (e.g. Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992), while others examined the level of management that is primarily responsible for the selection process (e.g. Burton et al., 1998; Farrelly et al., 1997) or the areas of sponsorship activity that were regarded acceptable or having the most potential for success (e.g. Hansen, Halling & Christensen, 2006; Meenaghan, 1991). According to Arthur et al. (1997), however, much of this literature is prescriptive in nature, providing descriptive accounts of the criteria to be used when choosing among sponsorship alternatives.

According to Shanklin and Kuzma (1992) in the 80s companies tended to select sponsorship “intuitively simply because an upper level executive happened to be a rabid fan” (p. 64). Similarly, Burton et al. (1998, p. 33) held that “many sponsorship agreements, particularly in the United States, have been sealed after only minimal strategic or evaluative review”. In the same manner, Thwaites (1994) argued that the acquisition of sponsorship had often been supply-side driven with little evidence of proactivity reported with regard to the sponsor. The rapid growth of sport sponsorship and the associated expansion of the amounts invested in the activity, however, forced managers to identify sponsorship opportunities that enhance the organisation’s competitive position. The need for more sophisticated and rigorous selection processes became even more important as corporations began to receive a great number of sponsorship proposals. Philips, for example, reported that in 1984 they had received 10,000 sponsorship requests (Kohl & Otker, 1985, cited in Meenaghan, 1991) whilst Copeland et al. (1996) found that one third of the 75 Canadian corporations they examined had received over 100 requests per annum for sponsorship financial support exceeding Can \$1,000. Shanklin and Kuzma (1992) felt that sponsorship development lead sponsors to become more selective and systematic in choosing the property to invest in, often insisting in becoming title sponsors and ensuring fit with the property’s audience profiles. Jowdy and McDonald (2002) argued that through time, the concept of fit shifted from matching brand objectives and demographics to matching the interests of customers. Indeed, Thwaites and Carruthers (1998) found that the main reason for sponsors to choose rugby as a sponsorship vehicle was the match between rugby spectators and the target market of sponsors. Deane et al. (2003, p. 204) went further to argue that “the process of event selection must take into consideration the shared brand personality of both the event and sponsor”. In a similar manner, Wilson (1997) argued that finding the appropriate sport to be sponsored, which is also capable of enhancing the image of the sponsor or the brand, is a major concern to potential sponsors when selecting their investment.

The author cited evidence suggesting that the effort is directed at selecting the sport property which is viewed by consumers as promoting the desirable image.

It is of interest to mention that Walliser's (2003) systematic review of sponsorship literature revealed a different level of management involvement in sponsorship decision-making, which was dependent on the familiarity and experience different sponsors have with sponsorship. Specifically, the review indicated that more experienced sponsors (e.g. USA firms) tended to involve middle level managers in the decision-making process, compared to less experienced companies (e.g. Australian sponsors) that tended to involve high-level managers. Almost identical findings were reported by Burton et al. (1998), who found that there was a difference in the selection approach adopted between highly experienced and less experienced countries with regard to sponsorship. Specifically, based on a sample of 102 North American and Australian companies, sponsorship assessment and selection decisions in North America were frequently made by marketing and advertising managers rather than by senior executives, while in Australia, such decisions were taken at more executive levels. Similarly, according to evidence cited in Shanklin and Kuzma (1992) based on a survey of 180 executives at Fortune 1000 companies (USA companies), the final selection of events to be sponsored was made primarily by the marketing or advertising department (94%), whilst the role of the chief executive officer or president of the company (84%) was still significant.

In a similar vein, Farrelly et al. (1997) provided evidence indicating that the decision-making process regarding the selection of sponsorship was more systematic as for North American sponsors as compared to Australian ones. The findings of Farrelly et al., derived through a questionnaire administered to 116 sport sponsors, revealed significant differences in several aspects of the decision-making process between the two countries. Specifically, with regard to the level of involvement in expenditure related to decision-making, the findings indicated that the North American sponsors' marketing and advertising departments, as well as

the product/brand managers were significantly more involved in proposal assessment compared to the Australian sample, suggesting a “stronger integration by way of more cross-functional communication” for North American sponsors (Farrelly et al., 1997, p. 175). In addition, other factors that appeared being involved in the initial sponsorship planning process were the level of fit with the corporate plan, and the degree to which the property could contribute to brand or corporate image, both of them being significantly more indicative of the North American sponsors’ planning process as compared to the Australian sponsors’ decision-making processes.

Alike, Yu and Mikat (2004) found that the decision to engage in web sponsorship on professional sport team web sites in the USA was primarily taken by the marketing manager (53.1%). General managers (20.4%) and advertising managers (12.2%) were the next key decision-makers, whilst the chief executives had a minor role in this process (6.1%). The marginal contribution of the top level management in the selection process may have resulted because of the lower financial scope of this particular kind of sponsorship compared to other types of sponsorship spending.

Comparable practices have been found to be applied in the Canadian sponsorship context, as well as in South Africa. Specifically, Thwaites et al. (1998) found a significant involvement of the marketing manager in the selection process and a lesser role of senior executives with regard to Canadian companies investing in sport sponsorship. Identical practices have been reported by Abratt et al. (1987), who indicated that the sponsorship selection decision in their sample consisting of South African sponsors was mainly influenced by marketing managers (69%) and to a lesser degree (40%) by chief executives. Those findings may suggest, according to Thwaites et al. (1998) either a less prominent role of the hobby motive in the selection process, or a less strategic approach to sponsorship. Examining however the findings in the light of the evidence presented above by Farrelly et al. (1997) and Burton et al. (1998), the former

explanation seems more fruitful since the importance of the marketing manager suggests a higher integration of sponsorship in the marketing mix, implying a more systematic and beneficial approach to sponsorship.

Surprisingly, Thwaites (1995) found that the decision to engage in football sponsorship in the UK was primarily taken by the Board of directors, and to a lesser extent by the chief executive. Marketing, PR and advertising managers had even lower input in this process. Analogous findings were reported in the rugby sponsorship context by Thwaites and Carruthers (1998). Specifically, the authors found that the selection decision was primarily taken by senior management, with the key influence coming from board directors (65%) in the rugby league context and the chief executive (56%) in the rugby union context. Although Thwaites (1995) speculated that the central role of top level management may indicate the importance of the sponsorship decision, it could also be a reflection of the hobby motive in sponsorship selection, or an indication of a lower degree of integration that characterises the UK sponsorship context (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005; Thwaites, 1994; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998).

Apart from the level of management involved in the sponsorship decision-making activity, a greater emphasis has been devoted on examining the nature of the sponsorship acquisition and selection process. For Cornwell (2008), managerial decision-making in sponsorship could be understood through the application of choice-modeling approaches, since they are regarded as shedding light on the process through which “managers make trade-offs when considering sponsorship opportunities with differing characteristics” (Cornwell, 2008, p. 46). Additionally, the author argued that the application of best/worst scaling is also very useful in that it enables managers to evaluate several sponsorship alternatives simultaneously in order to decide which is the best option. For Cornwell, the advantage of such an approach is that it yields much information on the alternatives and it is a relatively easy task to perform.

Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) conceptualised the sponsorship screening and selection activity as a structured process through which sponsorship proposals are considered, involving both proactive and reactive policies, being linked to objectives, able to employ tangible measures of effectiveness and guided by clear motives for sponsorship engagement. Furst (1994) presented a systematic and proactive approach to sponsorship selection incorporating all the actions described later by Chadwick and Thwaites (2005). The author elaborated on a case depicting how an agency was involved in selecting the sport property to be sponsored, and the main steps employed in this case involved the establishment of the Sudafed's – the sponsoring brand – sponsorship objectives, a definition of the target audience, the development of a "threshold test and promoter worksheet" (Furst, 1994, p. 37) that would enable the assessment of several sponsorship opportunities and the selection process.

Specifically, the threshold test described by Furst (1994) included 20 important issues that a potential sponsor should consider when assessing a sponsorship opportunity, with key decision-makers ranking each question on a 1-5 scale in an effort to identify sponsorship opportunities deserving further consideration. Those are gone through an evaluation using the promoter worksheet which allows decision-makers to do their "diligence on the event and persons involved and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the program" (Furst, 1994, p. 36). What deserves consideration in this consulting paper is the fact that the potential sponsor – or the agent representing the sponsor – can intervene in this process and make suggestions and recommendations to modify the program to be sponsored in order to better meet the needs of the sponsor. The concept of customising the program to fit in with the certain requirements of the sponsor was emphasised by DeGaris (2008), who also addressed the need for academics to direct attention on research that illuminates the process of determining appropriate sponsorship types for selection.

For Meenaghan (1991), the existence of a sponsorship policy that clearly articulates acceptable and unacceptable areas of activity (e.g. avoiding sponsoring politically sensitive activities, controversial sports etc.) provides an effective method for evaluating and selecting appropriate sponsorship relationships. The author held that the sponsorship policy should be “company-specific and reflect that company’s vision of itself and its products” (Meenaghan, 1991, p. 41). The policy could be employed in the initial screening stage, which should be followed by specific and pre-determined selection criteria, namely: the ability of sponsorship to fulfil objectives; coverage of the defined target audience (demographic, geographic and psychographic – lifestyle); the level of target market coverage and exposure, involving media coverage, on-site fans and participants; and financial considerations (Meenaghan, 1991).

In a similar search for the appropriate type of sponsorship, Hansen et al. (2006) proposed the use of individuals’ emotions toward potential sponsees as an indicator of the effectiveness of sponsorship, and thus, as a condition applied when choosing among alternative properties to be sponsored. The authors quantitatively examined the emotions of students towards 27 parties to be sponsored and they found that sports properties, as well as social aid organisations, represent very good sponsorship opportunities based on the emotions that they generated to the respondents. Such kind of information can be used, according to the authors, prior to selection in order to enable the sponsor to make a decision regarding the most appropriate sponsorship opportunity available. Apart from the attitudes of consumers towards the sponsored property, Speed and Thompson (2000) suggested that attitudes towards the sponsor and perceived sincerity should also inform the sponsorship selection since their study found them to be important determinants of sponsorship response.

In their qualitative inquiry focusing on the motives that mobilise sponsorship investment in two international women’s sport teams, Shaw and Amis (2001) found that the values and beliefs of managers inevitably impact the factors that

guide the decision regarding who and what to sponsor. Specifically, the main conditions emerging from the importance placed upon certain values were the provision of corporate hospitality opportunities, a good fit between the values and beliefs of the firm and the sport property, and the opportunity provided to build a good corporate citizen profile. Moreover, the study revealed that media coverage was an important determinant of the sponsorship selection process. Finally, the case studies provided some evidence suggesting that the selection of a certain sponsorship deal was guided by target market reach offered by the sport team, as well as by trends in the industry, indicating that mimetic behaviour is another factor that can impact sponsorship selection (Shaw & Amis, 2001).

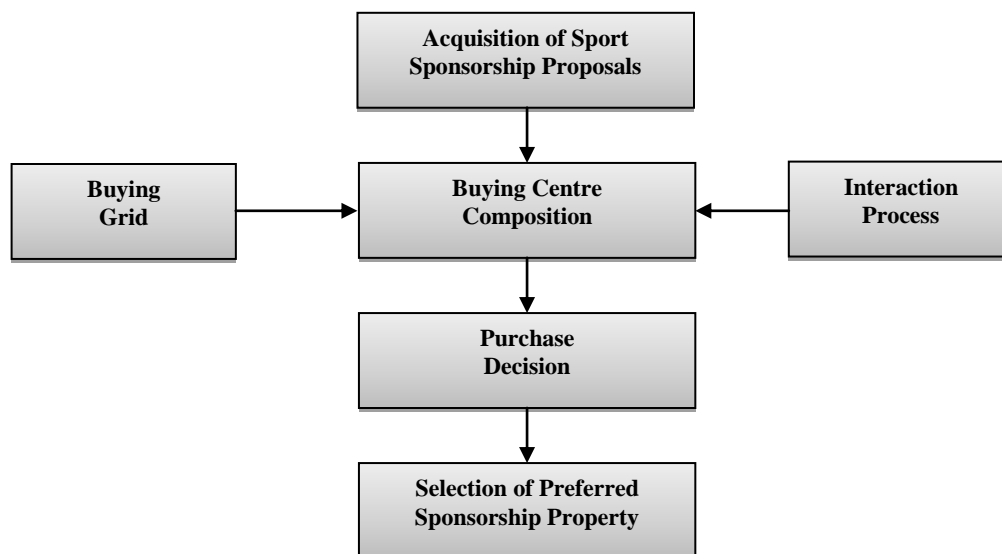
The determinant role of values and beliefs in the decision-making process was also demonstrated by Cousens and Slack (1996). Their qualitative inquiry investigating the processes adopted by 16 individuals representing 11 fast food franchisees in their attempt to secure sponsorship deals revealed three distinct decision-making approaches: the independent approach, the communal approach and the controlled approach. The three approaches are characterised by varying degrees of control and are regarded to exist along a continuum “from total franchisee control of decision making to a situation in which the autonomy of the local outlet is eliminated” (Cousens & Slack, 1996, p. 169). The independent approach, which was adopted by two of the eleven companies, involved a total control of the franchisee over the sponsorship selection decision-making. It was found to be associated with values and beliefs supporting individualism and entrepreneurship and seem to be reflected in the whole decision-making activity of the organisation. This value system encouraged franchisees to be “different” and to establish relationships with the community in their way. Hence it is not surprising that these organisations tended to solicit sponsorships of local team sport that enabled them to reach their particular goals (i.e. in-store traffic).

The second approach along the continuum is the communal one, adopted by five companies, and characterised by joint decision-making and more balanced

control since it was based on a value system emphasising cooperation and group decision-making (Cousens & Slack, 1996). In this case the proposals were initially screened by the local franchisees which then, were involved in consultation meeting with national offices but were allocated significant freedom to decide about the sponsorship selection. The controlled approach, adopted by four franchisees, involved an eliminated sponsorship decision-making activity, basically heavily directed by the head offices. This approach was regarded a part of a broader centralised decision-making activity, and it is thought to be less conducive to selecting creative sponsorship programs that are tailor-made according to the specific needs of the local businesses (Cousens & Slack, 1996).

Apart from the values that impact the sponsorship selection process, there has been some discussion in the literature on how this process can be explained using organisational buying behaviour concepts and theories. Specifically, Arthur et al. (1997) relied on buying behaviour, as well as upon a qualitative study investigating the decision-making process adopted by 10 corporations sponsoring a regional sporting event in Australia, in order to establish a sports sponsorship acquisition process (see Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1 The Sport Sponsorship Acquisition Model



Source: Arthur et al. (1997).

According to the model proposed by Arthur et al. (1997), the initial stage involves receiving the proposal, which could be a proactive process with the potential sponsor activating the sponsorship search. However, as the authors held, it is commonly a reactive process since evidence indicates that the annual rate of proposals received by some businesses range from hundreds to thousands. The following stage of the model describes the assessment of the proposal which is usually an interactive process. The authors incorporated in this stage the buying centre concept referring to the several organisational actors that can influence the outcomes of the decision-making activity, namely: users – the people who use the product to be purchased, gatekeepers – those who control the flow of information, influencers – people who influence the purchasing decision by their supply of information and setting of buying specifications, deciders – those who actually make the buying decision, and buyers – those with the formal authority to select and purchase the product (Webster & Wind, 1972, cited in Arthur et al.,1997). In addition, the buying grid tenet explaining the information that is needed at different types of sponsorship buying (new sponsorship, straight re-buy and modified re-buy) was also introduced in the model and drew attention to the fact that a number of factors such as the complexity of the decision, the newness of the buying situation and the investment required by the sponsor can modify the composition of the buying centre (Arthur et al.,1997) The next stage in the model is the actual purchasing decision, which is thought to be influenced by rational and emotional factors. The final stage refers to the selection of preferred sport property to be sponsored, a decision that is eventually communicated to the property holders and the stakeholders of the sponsor. The model is regarded as being a useful framework for further investigation “via a description of the major dimensions of the process of sport sponsorship procurement” (Arthur et al., 1997, p. 230-231).

As depicted in the studies provided above, there is much variation in the sport sponsorship literature as to how particular sponsorships are selected. Irwin and

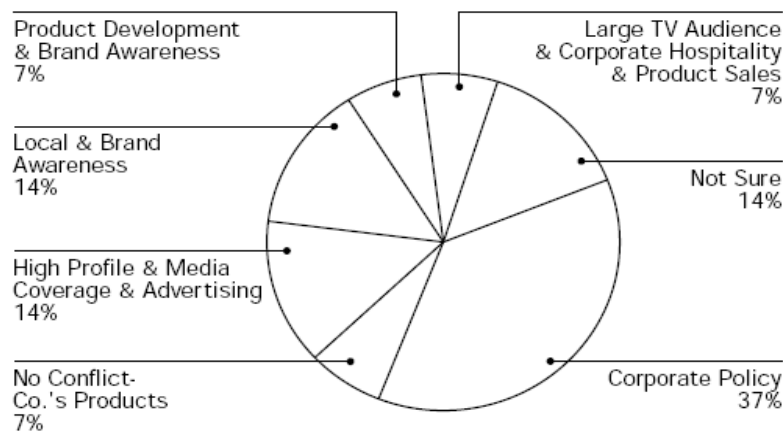
Assimakopoulos (1992) proposed a useful model outlining how selection of the property to be sponsored should be rationally located within the broader corporate marketing plan. The authors' suggestion aimed at enabling sponsors to analyse and evaluate sport sponsorship proposals in an objective fashion. Specifically, they provided a comprehensive list of 47 criteria under seven dimensions that should be used in assessing the potential for a successful sponsorship investment, followed by a specific weighting and grading process that prioritises the criteria in relation to corporate related and product/brand related sponsorship objectives. The dimensions included in the model are: budget considerations (involving criteria such as affordability and cost effectiveness); positioning and image (e.g. image fit); market targeting (e.g. coverage criteria and demographic fit); integrated communications (e.g. signage opportunities, sales promotions and hospitality); competition considerations (e.g. competitors' interest and ambush market avoidance); strategies (e.g. level of involvement and exclusivity); and event management (e.g. event profile and legal status).

In particular, the model involves a four-step screening process: grading the selected proposal criteria, scoring the selected proposal criteria, summative scoring of the proposal, and ranking the evaluated sponsorship proposals. The model assumes that a weighting system ranging from 1 (extremely insignificant) to 10 (extremely significant) should be employed for the criteria that the sponsor considers applicable to corporate- and brand-objective priorities, followed by a scoring method assigning grades (ranging from -4 – extremely weak to +4 – extremely strong) to each weighted criteria, based on the sponsor's judgement of the under examination proposal's potential to fulfil those criteria. The model is intended to enable potential sponsors to treat their sponsorships "professionally and commercially" (Irwin & Assimakopoulos, 1992, p. 50) and facilitate comparisons among proposals in a systematic fashion.

It should be mentioned that there has been much discussion in the literature regarding the criteria that should inform the sponsorship selection activity.

According to a review conducted by Walliser (2003), a vast variety of selection criteria has been observed, such as sponsor’s products and sponsored activity fit, target market fit, the popularity and image of the property considered for sponsorship, the properties’ willingness to cooperate on a long-term basis, quality of the relationship between sponsor and sponsee, geographic reach through sponsorship, budget considerations, type of rights received, and opportunities for sponsorship integration into the marketing mix. Interestingly, there has been some evidence indicating that corporate policy concerns have also been at stake when selecting the sponsorship to be engaged with. Specifically, research conducted by Liu et al. (1998) examining the sponsorship practices of 26 sport sponsoring organisations in the UK indicated that the most heavily considered criterion for sponsorship selection was the contribution of the certain sport to the establishment of an overall corporate policy, which was mentioned by 37% of the respondents (see figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2 Criteria for sponsorship selection



Source: Liu et al. (1998)

Other extensively-used criteria within the sponsorship selection process were the ability of the chosen sport to generate local and brand awareness, and the profile of the sports property and the resulting media coverage that it enjoys, factors that have been regarded “portraying a fruitful and confident relationship between both

associated parties to the consumer” (Liu et al., 1998, p. 106). Moreover, the ability of the sponsee to cause an increase in sales, to provide corporate hospitality opportunities, and to assist its product development within the marketplace were also conditions which received notable support, albeit lower compared to the other factors. It is surprising that 14% of the respondents were unsure about the criteria employed by their organisations, whilst 7% were willing to engage in a sponsorship agreement as far as there was no conflict between the sponsee and the sponsor’s products or those of competitors (Liu et al. 1998). These findings suggested a less strategic sponsorship approach which is indeed unexpected when considering that the majority of the sponsors were concentrating in football and tennis, two considerably professional sporting contexts in one of the most mature sponsorship markets in Europe – UK. Interestingly, the authors held that whatever the conditions employed by sponsors in the selection process “it was crucial that the sport being sponsored had to fit in with the corporate image of the organisation that was offering the assistance” (Liu et al., 1998, p. 106).

Although it is evident that media coverage and the opportunities created for increasing awareness and image of the sponsors’ brands seem to be important for all types of sponsorship, it seems that for some industries such as the tobacco industry, the importance of the certain criteria is even greater, especially due to the legislative restrictions that the tobacco industry is faced with. Thus, it is not surprising that, an analysis of internal documents of the British-American Tobacco Company operating in more than 80 countries revealed that, when choosing their sponsorships, they place much emphasis upon the ability of the sport to receive substantial media exposure, as well as upon the opportunities offered by the event organisers for co-marketing and advertising activities with the other sponsors of the event (Lavack, 2003). Such a practice is invaluable in advertising-restricted markets such as the tobacco industry, since the exposure tobacco brands get through the advertising activities of other sponsors (e.g. a sponsor of motor-racing attaching the logo and image of the tobacco brand on their advertisements) is essential in meeting their objectives. Additional important

criteria that emerged in the study conducted by Lavack (2003) involved the fit between the event image and the image of the brand, the statue of the event, and on-site event communications provided by the organisers.

In another study exploring the selection of sponsorship arrangements, Thwaites (1993) found that the most highly influential factors regarding the sponsorship choice employed by building societies in the UK were the ability provided by the sport property to link the sponsor's name to the event, the provision of a clean event image, provision of a sole sponsorship arrangement, and a good fit with the brand/corporate image (see table 8.1). Audience related criteria such as the size and profile of the audience reached through the event appeared having an essential impact on sponsorship selection process. Moreover, TV coverage, although impacting decision-making to a certain degree, did not surprisingly feature among the most essential factors taken into consideration when choosing the property to be sponsored.

Table 8.1 Key influences on the choice of Sports Sponsorship

	Building societies (National, Regional and small)
Sponsors name can be linked to the event	5.8 (1)
Event has a clean image	5.3 (2)
Sole sponsorship available	5.1 (3)
Provides good fit with brand/corporate positioning	4.7 (4)
Audience profile can be determined	4.5 (5)
Audience size can be measured	4.4 (6)
Can be incorporated in mainstream advertising and sales promotion	3.8 (7)
TV coverage available	3.5 (8)
Figures represent mean scores based on a 7 point scale 1= no influence 7=major influence Rankings shown in parentheses Low scoring criteria are omitted from the table	

Source: Thwaites (1993)

Moreover, Thwaites (1993) found that a reactive approach to sponsorship acquisition was employed by the vast majority of building societies, since 77% of them simply responded to the proposals of the property owners. The author felt that this was a major concern in itself, since very few societies employed a systematic and strategic attempt to identify promising events to invest in.

More promising findings with regard to proactivity in the approach adopted to secure sponsorship deals were reported by Thwaites (1994) in another study conducted in the UK. The author found that the insurance companies in this study appeared as being proactive (53%) in identifying and selecting sponsorship events. However, only 19% of the building societies adopted a similar approach. With regard to the importance of the criteria employed for selection, the scene does not seem to change compared to Thwaites (1993) findings, since linking sponsor's name to the event, a clean image, sole sponsorship availability, fit and audience related criteria featured among the most highly influential factors in the selection process. The author commended on the low priority assigned to links with advertising and promotion criteria, which were accompanied, based on the results of this study, by a lack of integration with other communication activities (Thwaites, 1994).

Very similar selection criteria were found to be employed by leading Canadian companies sponsoring sport, as demonstrated by Thwaites et al. (1998). The study found that factors impacting the choice of sponsorship varied considerably, with event's clear image, ability provided to link the sponsor's name to the event, existence of fit resulting in positioning opportunities, clearly determined audience profile and ability to measure audience size, featuring among the most important criteria for selection (see table 8.2). Once again, the importance of media exposure and coverage was downgraded in this study, something that does not coincide with evidence found in other studies (e.g. Liu et al., 1998, Shaw & Amis, 2001) nor with studies regarding media coverage as one of the most important objectives sought by sponsors (e.g. Abratt et al., 1987; Meerabeau et al., 1991),

suggesting that the sponsorship scene may be different across different markets. It should be mentioned, however, that the sponsorship acquirement activity evidenced in this study was reactive for 61.4% of the sponsors, indicating that a more proactive approach to sponsorship acquisition should be employed by leading Canadian companies in searching and identifying sponsorship opportunities if they would like to avoid missing potentially beneficial sponsorship relationships.

Table 8.2 Key Criteria in the choice of Sport Sponsorship

Criteria	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Event has clean image	43	6.16	0.97
Sponsors name can be linked to event	43	5.91	1.32
Provides a good fit with product/corporate positioning	42	5.88	1.35
Audience profile can be determined	43	5.63	1.46
Audience size can be measured	43	5.53	1.62
Can be incorporated with mainstream advertising, sales promotion etc.	43	4.95	1.68
Sole sponsorship available	41	4.83	2.18
Television coverage available	43	4.60	1.89
Contract available for at least three years	42	3.17	1.86
Represents new event rather than existing one	42	2.95	1.68
Little dialogue necessary with organisers	43	2.93	1.55

Source: Thwaites et al. (1998).

In another study focusing on the Canadian sponsorship scene, Copeland et al. (1996) administered a questionnaire to 112 Canadian corporations sponsoring sport properties in order to shed light on their sponsorship management practices. The results regarding the selection process indicated that the importance placed upon the predetermined 37 criteria explored in this study favoured exclusivity, which was rank as the most essential factor, followed by increased awareness, the ability to reinforce image, provision of signage opportunities at the event,

access to spectators and the ability to generate sales and product/service trial (see table 8.3). Interestingly, the factors which were assigned importance as selection criteria were also used as post-event evaluation criteria, suggesting that this kind of information may be used as guidelines when sport providers develop sponsorship proposals. Perhaps the most important finding of the study was that, although the sponsors appeared to be involved in a variety of sponsorship levels ranging from elite to professional and grassroots sports, and many of them supporting all the three sport endeavours, they did not differentiate their selection criteria to comply with the different types of sponsorship they were involved in. In fact, the only significant differences found with regard to the different levels of sponsorship involved national TV and print coverage, which was more valued by companies sponsoring elite and professional sport, and community relations criteria which were more important to sponsors of grassroots sport (Copeland et al. 1996). According to the authors, this “same-criteria-fits-all” approach may be reflective of an inexperienced and non-systematic approach to sponsorship acquisition (Copeland et al. 1996, p. 42).

Table 8.3 Importance ratings of sponsorship selection criteria

Rank - Criterion	Rank - Criterion	Rank - Criterion
1. Exclusivity	14. Regional TV coverage	27. Employee motivation
2. Increased awareness	15. Hospitality opportunities	28. Ability to conduct spinoffs
3. Reinforce image	16. National print coverage	29. Cross promotional opportunities
4. Signage at event	17. Continuity *	30. On-site display of products
5. Spectator targeted	18. Local radio coverage	31. Growth opportunities with event
6. Increased sales/trial	19. Local TV coverage	32. Flexibility ***
7. Ability to quantify results	20. Point-of-sale opportunities	33. Co-sponsorship opportunities
8. National TV coverage	21. Fit within advertising plan	
9. Community relations	22. Charity association	

10. Regional print coverage	23. Wholesaler/distribution interest	34. "Hands-on" involvement
11. Local print coverage	24. Extendable **	35. Sampling opportunities
12. Ownership of the event	25. Participant targeted	36. "Turnkey" event management
13. Retailer interest	26. Regional radio coverage	37. National radio coverage

*Notes *Ability to repeat the sponsorship several times within a given market; **Ability to repeat the sponsorship in other markets; ***Capacity to alter components of the event.*

Source: Copeland et al. (1996).

Significant selection criteria for both the sport organisations and the companies investing in sport sponsorship in China included, according to Geng et al. (2002, p. 24), "the popularity and image of sports, the strength of the relationships between the two groups and the formal partnership negotiations". There were, however, differences in the influential role of those criteria between the two groups, with sports properties considering the image of sports strongly impacting sponsorship selection decisions, whilst the cost of sponsorship did not seem to be regarded as a major concern to them. Business corporations still consider the image and popularity of the sport as an important selection factor. Interestingly, domestic businesses place more emphasis on the quality of the relationship between the two parties and the creation of formal partnerships compared to international corporations.

For the UK football sponsorship context, Thwaites (1995) revealed that although several criteria were employed for selecting the club to be sponsored (i.e. profile of the club, potential for success, family philosophy and employee support), the most highly influential factor was location – closeness to the headquarters of the sponsor, or located within target markets of the sponsor – especially for regionally focused sponsors. In addition, Thwaites (1995) reported significantly more optimistic findings with regard to proactivity in this study. Specifically, 78% of the companies sponsoring football clubs in the UK made a formal approach to a club attempting to secure a sponsorship deal. It should be noted, however, that

potential sponsors tended not to compare several options before arriving at a decision since 67% of them considered only one club and only 22% compared several opportunities.

Unfortunately, Chadwick and Thwaites (2005), who also focused on UK football sponsorship, did not report the same promising findings with regard to proactivity, since the majority of the sponsors in this study – companies sponsoring UK professional football clubs – had been reactive in sponsorship acquisition (61%). The main criterion for selecting sponsorship deals employed by sponsors was primarily the locality of the club in relation to the sponsor's premises, a factor mentioned by 71% of the respondents. In addition, the status of the football club was also a determinant of their decision since it was identified by 44% of the sponsors, as well as the existing relationship with the football club. The latter factor was the only one differentiating the results obtained through an earlier research conducted in 1993 in the same field, to which the authors compared the findings with (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004).

In the same manner, Thwaites and Carruthers (1998) indicated that the approach to sponsorship selection was mainly reactive as reflected by 64% companies sponsoring the leading English rugby union clubs. Moreover, the authors found that for the sponsors in their sample, the prime reason for selecting rugby was the demographic match between their target markets and spectator profiles. Another important factor that influenced the selection process of sponsors – who were drawn from a number of industries but with a strong representation of the brewing industry – was, once again, the geographic location of the club. These findings, combined with the evidence presented earlier by Thwaites (1995) and Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) in football, indicate that location is important to many sponsors, regardless the sport they choose to invest in. Moreover, personal contact with the club also appeared influencing the selection decision-making process.

Location appeared to be of much significance in the study conducted by Westerbeek (2000). The findings of this study suggested that that sponsorship decision making is influenced by the location of the sports property, especially for the sponsors that are regarded *location-dependent* in terms of turnover generated in the area around the sport facility. The author explored these relationships through a questionnaire administered to 34 of the 54 sponsors of a Melbourne-based football club. In particular, the study indicated that the sponsors having higher turnover in the area around the sponsee appeared more willing to continue the sponsorship arrangement and renew the sponsorship contract (Westerbeek, 2000). Not surprisingly, for the location independent sponsors, the main factor impacting their decision regarding the type of sponsorship to invest in was TV coverage, but it should be mentioned that this category of sponsors consisted primarily of larger companies investing larger amount in sponsorships and being less locally oriented (Westerbeek, 2000). Hence, it seems logical that TV coverage is regarded as a more conducive communicational vehicle to reach their target markets.

Building upon the findings of the study conducted by Westerbeek (2000), Westerbeek and Smith (2002, p. 143) attempted to “further explore and quantify the concept of location dependency”. This follow up study constructed three measures defining location dependency namely size (in terms of turnover), location (in terms of turnover percentage) and location (in terms of distribution outlets). The questionnaire developed for the purposes of the study gathered evidence from 102 sponsors in Australia – 57 from companies sponsoring football clubs and 45 from sponsors of rugby clubs. Factor analysis used to identify constructs that could be related to the concept of location revealed five factors reinforcing the notion of location dependency, namely atmosphere, location, corporate exposure, location features and access to central business (Westerbeek & Smith, 2002). The findings demonstrated that location dependency is an important factor to consider when sponsors assess the attractiveness of a sponsorship opportunity. More specifically, the findings

revealed that location-independent sponsors consider exposure as being of major importance in their sponsorship selection process, whilst location-dependent sponsors find location and location features as having a major role to play in their sponsorship decision. Overall, the findings suggest that the sport facility can have an important role in the evaluation and assessment of a sponsorship opportunity by a potential sponsor.

The evaluation and selection process of potential sponsors was also a topic examined by O'Reilly and Foster (2008). However, the authors focused on certain types of sponsorships that were regarded as high-risk. This study aimed at developing an evaluation framework consisting of two parts (pre- and post-sponsorship actions) aiming at mitigating the risks involved in certain types of sponsorship. The first part of the framework, which is the one dealing with selection issues, proposed that a careful consideration of the various risks associated with different kinds of sponsees is essential (e.g. hooliganism, declining performance, high-risk role models, political violence, terrorism, drugs or doping, fraud, suicide, etc.). According to the framework, the sponsor should consider the potential negative outcomes associated with the sponsee, think of alternative options, or, re-assess the sponsorship opportunity by comparing alternative options. The goal of this stage is to minimise the potential risks and reduce the sponsor's risk-exposure in order to avoid devaluing their brand through a sponsorship deal (O'Reilly & Foster, 2008).

8.2 Components Secured by Sponsors

Contrary to the growing body of literature that explored the selection criteria employed by sponsors, the components pursued by companies in order to be included in the sponsorship deal to be signed is an admittedly less researched area. As demonstrated in the previous section, sponsors place much emphasis on several elements that are thought to enable the sponsor obtaining its objectives, such as media coverage (Liu et al., 1998; Shaw & Amis, 2001; Thwaites, 1993),

exclusivity and signage (Copeland et al., 1996), or hospitality opportunities (Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992). Therefore, there has been some research interest on the components that a sponsorship contract involves, but most of this inquiry has been part of broader research questions exploring management practices employed, and objectives pursued, by sponsors (e.g. Polonsky et al. 1996; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998).

Literature exploring the components of several sponsorship contracts revealed mixed results. The components included in the contracts signed by UK rugby league and rugby union sponsors, for example, indicated that program and perimeter advertising, logo placement on the club's printouts, and corporate hospitality were the main items of the sponsorship contracts (see table 8.4) according to Thwaites and Carruthers (1998). As illustrated in the contracts' components negotiated, rugby union sponsors adopted a less professional approach to sponsorship compared to rugby league sponsors since all the four components were underrepresented in union contracts (only 69% of the contracts included the provision of corporate hospitality, only 75% agreed on logo placement on literature, and only 88% secured perimeter advertising). In both rugby league and rugby union sponsorships it seems that program advertising was the most important component of the sponsorship agreement.

Table 8.4 Items included in the contract

Item	Rugby league (n=20)	Rugby Union (n=16)
Program advertising	100%	94%
Perimeter advertising	95%	88%
Logo on club literature	90%	75%
Corporate hospitality	90%	69%

Source: Thwaites and Carruthers (1998).

For small organisations engaged in local rugby team sponsorship in Australia the components involved mainly perimeter advertising and name on clothing or

equipment (both components were rated by 94.4% of the respondents), public address announcements (rated by 88.9%), involvement in presentations, VIP treatment and media coverage (Polonsky et al., 1996). It seems that the components rated by sponsors differ greatly in different geographical contexts, or that small sponsors may place emphasis on different components.

In another study which was carried out in the USA Intercollegiate sport environment, Tomasini et al. (2004) found that the most common request made by corporate sponsors accompanying NCCA Division I sponsorship agreements involved mainly free tickets to events, an element that was highly appreciated in all three divisions explored in this study, signifying that free tickets is a component that is important even for events that are not national or global. The next most common component requested by sponsors was signage/advertisements.

Pope and Voges (1994) examined which were the most widely used components by companies sponsoring motor sport in Australia, and they found that client entertainment at races (hospitality component) and signs on vehicles and equipment were the most commonly utilised sponsorship elements, followed by assigning their name to the event/race/team, and identification in PR material. Interestingly, those components were used heavily by all sponsors regardless their sponsorship agreement's longevity. Another widely endorsed element involved promotional displays at races, which was used mostly by sponsors engaged in agreements of 3 years or less.

9. Selling the Sponsorship Proposal

Despite the constantly growing literature on acquisition and selection practices employed by sponsors, the area of attracting sponsors and selling sponsorship from the perspective of the sport property is a well-defined research area. Berrett and Slack (2001) attempted to shed some light on "how organizations are positioning themselves in their efforts to attract sponsors" (p. 21) through the

development of a conceptual framework uncovering the factors that strengthen the ability of a sport organisation to generate funding through sponsorship. The continually decreasing reliance on governmental funding that non-profit sport organisations in Canada were confronted with, and the subsequent turn to corporate support, changed the scene and posed the need for the adoption of a more strategic approach to sponsorship acquisition. It is the characteristics of this new emerging strategic process that the study intended to explore, locating them in the broader literature of strategic management and identifying a variety of different strategic types.

Semi-structured interviews conducted with marketing personnel representing 34 Canadian national sport organisations (NSOs) and 6 professional sponsorship consultants revealed that many exogenous factors were influencing sponsorship generating success, including organisational size, international ranking, existence of related policies, time commitment, and use of internal and external expertise (Berrett & Slack, 2001). The two key environmental factors that appeared to impact considerably the NSOs' ability to acquire sponsors were media exposure and participation rates, confirming further the importance of exposure as an objective sought by many sponsors (e.g. Meenaghan, 1991; Witcher et al., 1991), and the role of the access provided to participants in the sponsorship decision-making process (e.g. Meenaghan, 1991).

In addition, the framework provided by Berrett and Slack (2001) classified sport organisations into five strategic types based on their relative levels of exposure and participation, namely: 1) internal marketers (low participation and minimal exposure); 2) media focusers (low participation and moderate exposure); 3) participant focusers (high participation and low exposure); 4) augmenters (high participation and moderate exposure); and 5) elaborators (high participation and extensive exposure). Examples of sports that fall within the elaborators category characterised by both factors predicating sponsorship success are soccer and curling, the latter mainly because of its tradition in certain parts of the country

(Berrett & Slack, 2001). The authors proposed the use of the framework, which is in essence “a typology of sponsorship strategies based on the context in which the NSOs operated” (Berrett & Slack, 2001, p. 37), in assessing the ability of the sport organisations to influence the main determinants of sponsorship selling success through short term and long-term strategies. For example, in an effort to better position themselves towards attracting increased funding from sponsors, a “media focuser” organisation may focus on expanding their reach in terms of viewers through additional advertising in other media outlets (short-term strategy), or an organisation could employ long-term policies aiming at increasing both exposure and participation rates (a longer-term strategy) in an effort to move the organisation to another strategic group (Berrett & Slack, 2001). After all, the authors emphasised that the framework was not static. The typology offered through the framework is helpful in identifying characteristics common to different organisations that would enable investigation of the strategies and factor defining success, but considering that the actions of organisations are contingent to their environment, and that there are different forces surrounding the environment of each sport organisation, the strategic approaches that are necessary for success may differ considerably in different sporting contexts.

In another case study investigating the sponsorship acquisition process employed by a national sport organisation in Canada, Doherty and Murray (2007) adopted the view that if sponsorship is regarded as a strategic alliance, then the sport property should design a strategic sponsorship acquisition process that reflects the objectives of potential sponsors. Specifically, the authors held that sport organisations should target businesses that are suitable, by identifying “what companies align with the sport's image and target market, and whether prospective sponsors have the necessary resources available to the sport organization” (Doherty & Murray, 2007, p. 51). This requires an examination of the objectives pursued by potential sponsors, the factors that trigger their engagement, and the ways in which they select sponsorship arrangements. The next step outlined by the authors is the development of a detailed proposal including essential information such as the rationale for sponsorship involvement,

information on the target markets reached through the sport property (e.g. demographics and psychographics), components offered by the property etc. After an agreement has been signed, Doherty and Murray (2007) argued that a working plan, which should be the outcome of a joint decision-making activity, should be established outlining specific sponsorship activities and helping to ensure flexibility, quality, and balance of power. Finally, the authors held that the establishment of a sponsorship partnership should be sealed by a clear articulation of the evaluation process that will be able to ensure that the sponsor's objectives and goals have been met.

Building on the above arguments, Doherty and Murray (2007) examined the sponsorship acquisition process employed by Synchron Canada, a non-profit national governing body for synchronised swimming, and they found out that many of the practices for establishing a successful sponsorship partnership have been employed. Some examples of these practices have been: a) the emphasis given to defining a desired image for the sport before targeting potential sponsors; b) the provision of information related to its audience; c) clarification of the benefits provided to potential sponsors; d) explanation of the financial and other objectives achieved through the sponsorship medium; and e) provision of leveraging opportunities. In addition, it is important that the sport organisation pursue sponsors that fit with its image and target audience. However, despite its decent efforts to identify the objectives set by the sponsors, Synchron Canada found out that smaller sponsors were not guided by certain objectives and sponsorship selection criteria compared to the larger companies that were more likely to have such policies.

In one of the scarce papers found in the literature focusing on the processes sport properties employ to sell sponsorship to corporations, Sack and Fried (2001) used a USA major women's tennis event to describe the strategies used in the sponsorship acquisition process. The event was regarded as being an excellent platform for this investigation since approximately 70% of its total revenue relied

on corporate sponsorship. The study formed a part of a broader fan survey of 1400 spectators of the event, in which the authors had the opportunity to observe the sponsorship selling process employed by event organisers. In addition to observation, results gathered through documents provided by the sport property (i.e. actual drafts of corporate sponsorship proposals) and through interviews with administrators responsible for corporate sponsorship acquisition (Sack & Fried, 2001).

The results indicated that “selling sponsorships requires a great deal of persistence and creativity” (Sack & Fried, 2001, p. 75). Particularly, the study revealed that this process involves mainly five basic steps – which do not necessarily involve a sequential order – that appeared to be clearly “data driven”, substantiating the arguments made by Morris and Irwin (1996, cited in Sack & Fried, 2001). The five steps that emerged are the following: knowing the audience, finding sponsors to fit the audience, making contact with potential sponsors, developing a sponsorship proposal, and closing the deal. However, the authors clarified that these elements “do not necessarily follow a step-by-step sequence and may go on simultaneously” (Sack & Fried, 2001, p. 70). With regard to the audience knowledge, it was evident that event organisers relied on both secondary and primary data sources to define the demographic characteristics as well as the purchasing behaviour demonstrated by their audience. Interestingly, the instruments designed to elicit such kind of information took into account past or potential sponsors.

The search for sponsors to fit audience, in this case study, was primarily performed by a sponsorship team supervised by the tournament director (Sack & Fried, 2001). This activity involved primarily prospecting for potential sponsors and researching prospects before any contact was made. Again, the data involving psychographic and demographic profiles of fans were central to this sponsor classification process. For example, an important target group consisted of companies focusing on women, since the profile of the fan based was regarded

fitting perfectly with this target group. Another factor considered at this stage was the location of the sponsor, with companies having local headquarters being very desirable, a fact that acknowledges the importance of location in the selection process demonstrated in many studies (e.g. Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005; Thwaites, 1995; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998; Westerbeek, 2000; Westerbeek & Smith, 2002).

The next step described by Sack and Fried (2001) involved the process by which organisers communicated with potential sponsors through an initial contact followed by informal networking mainly through cocktail parties, aiming primarily at generating excitement and interest. The goal of this action was to identify the goals and objectives of the company and to discuss the advantages provided to the sponsor through the event – e.g. media coverage, sales promotions, by relying on concrete data. Once interest by potential sponsors is determined, the following step is packaging the sponsorship proposal and creating several generic packages including different components. However, the authors realised that customisation of packages according to the needs and expectations of specific companies were regarded as a crucial element in securing sponsorship. Furthermore, the study revealed the importance of the provision of interactive promotional opportunities that “allow sponsors and consumers to interact in a far more exciting environment than a store or a showroom” (Sack & Fried, 2001, p. 74).

The final step in the sponsorship acquisition process (Sack & Fried, 2001) is closing the deal, which is the result of discussions and negotiations. The authors found that two catalysts are the amount of competition within a product category that can press the sponsor sign the agreement and the tournament deadlines for inclusion in printed material. However, possibly the most important element in this process involves the actions that contribute to the development of long-term relationships with companies that are based on mutual trust. Overall, the results highlighted the fact that the sponsorship acquisition process is a constant activity

that requires creativity and relies on the development of partnership relationships of quality. Moreover, sex appeared as being of remarkable importance in this study, and it is logical when considering the growing financial power of female customers and their central decision-making role in product purchase, as well as their growing interests in sport.

In a similar vein, Jowdy and McDonald (2002) drew attention on the need for sport marketers to design and “offer unique marketing platforms that attract corporate sponsors” (p. 248), especially nowadays that competition for securing sponsors has intensified. This need is even larger for certain types of sport that enjoy lower exposure from TV, such as minor leagues. The authors recommended the adoption of more sophisticated sales strategies such as relationship marketing and “eduselling” techniques aiming at building long-term, beneficial relationships with customers – the sponsors in this case – and educating them about the opportunities generated through sponsorship. The concept of “eduselling” (Sutton, Lachowetz and Clark, 2000) refers to a selling technique that invests on personal interaction, and combines several actions such as “needs assessment, relationship building, customer education and after-marketing in a process that begins while identifying targeted sponsors and continues throughout the partnership” (Jowdy & McDonald, 2002, p. 249). The framework consists of nine steps (see table 9.1), but the authors focus on the four steps that they consider of major importance for minor leagues and small scale events that find it more difficult to recruit sponsors. Those actions involve: 1) identifying potential sponsors based on an evaluation of their objectives, identity and certain needs; 2) offering opportunities to potential sponsors to experience the product to be offered in an attempt to improve their understanding of the product and probably their interest; 3) designing a sponsorship package based on the particular needs of the sponsor in an effort to fit their requirements and desires; and 4) undertaking after-marketing activities aiming at increasing loyalty of the sponsors, strengthening the partnership, educating further about the product and probably increasing renewal rates.

Table 9.1 The nine steps involved in the “educelling” process

(1) prospect identification
(2) preparing "how to" guides
(3) partnering with prospect
(4) prospect experiencing the product
(5) designing follow-up procedures
(6) making the offer
(7) closing the deal
(8) aftermarketing sales and follow-up
(9) <i>the evaluation and feedback loop</i>

Source: Sutton et al. (2000, cited in Jowdy & McDonald, 2002)

Jowdy and McDonald (2002) used a case study of a golf event’s (the FUTURES GolfTour) efforts to recruit potential sponsors in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of “eduselling”. In specific, the authors depicted the efforts of the organisers towards educating prospects about the fit between the sport property and the sponsor and about appropriate leveraging, informing them about the benefits offered through the sponsorship event, and tailoring the event to fit the sponsors’ needs. The importance of fit in the selling procedure conducted by event organisers was also emphasised by Deane et al. (2003), while customising the event in order to respond to the certain needs of the sponsor seems to be essential, especially when considering that sponsors seem to be particularly fond of this activity (Furst, 1994).

The role of fit in the sponsorship selling process was also central in the paper presented by Braunstein et al. (2008). Drawing on literature suggesting that successful sponsorship relationships are those characterised by a fit among the various actors involved in this process, the authors used a case study involving the practices and procedures of a particular NASCAR team’s (BAM racing) to conduct an in-depth qualitative investigation of “the importance of and approach to fit in terms of sponsor match-up” (Braunstein et al. 2008, p. 220). Semi-structured and in-depth interviews conducted with most members of the BAM

racing team aimed at identifying the complex, triangulated relationship between the team, the driver and the sponsor.

What was evident in the study is that the procedure was characterised by a dynamic interplay of several organisational and environmental variables that intervened to create a messy, match-up dynamic process in seeking an effective, synergistic fit. Overall, the findings reinforced the tenet of fit indicating that “a symbiotic triangulated relationship bears a more fruitful result for all pertinent entities” (Braunstein et al., 2008, p. 231). Specifically, congruency between the three main parties – the sponsor, the team and the driver – had been an essential factor in the organisation’s success (Braunstein et al., 2008). Although the processes employed in this case-study were “less formulaic and rational than early theorising on ‘match-up’ might suggest (Braunstein et al., 2008, p. 223), the study indicated clearly that achieving a successful fit is “neither coincidence nor accident” (Braunstein et al., 2008, p. 221). However, the authors concluded that the match-up-process embedded in the sponsorship selling decision-making process was much more complicated and dynamic than considered before.

In another paper describing the sales strategies appropriate for sponsorship selling, Torla (2008) suggested several steps that can “put a property in the most advantageous position to be successful in attracting corporate sponsorship investment” (p. 57). The author, who is a sponsorship consultant, held that the property has first of all to define what will be offered to the sponsor partner, based on a thorough evaluation of the assets, benefits and capabilities of its product. However, it is also important to recognise sponsor’s requirements and expectations that, although vary according to the industry, some of the universally endorsed benefits that are often used as the yardstick for evaluating proposals are: ability to reach target audience; capacity to enhance brand’s image and positioning in the market; provision of an environment driving sales; cost effectiveness; and method for measuring sponsorship success (Torla, 2008).

The next step described by the author is the creation of audiovisual material introducing the property, its audience and the benefits that it can offer, and the development of a policy determining potential sponsors considering how they fit to the property. The companies to be targeted may be active sponsors, companies based or selling in the location close to the property, current sponsors of similar properties or other properties in the same geographical area, and companies based on their target audience. All those actions involved the pre-sales stage.

The next stage, the sales action, initiates, according to Torla (2008) with conducting personal contacts with the sponsorship decision-makers of the targeted companies. The initial contact, which usually involves a brief explanation of the project, should always be accompanied by a follow up contact in which the property reinforces its position and provides clarity on the issue, and by a second follow up aiming at providing a detailed explanation of the sponsorship proposal after providing the potential sponsor with the audio-visual material. Finally, a sales presentation highlighting the value added through sponsorship, the benefits offered and the audiences reached, sponsorship returns and measurement methods, will hopefully precede negotiations and modifications of the proposal to reflect the sponsor's needs, so that a final agreement will be reached. However, Torla (2008) emphasises the fact that retaining sponsors is another major challenge for properties, hence the provision of proper service that would keep sponsors satisfied is another essential action towards establishing mutually beneficial partnerships with the sponsors.

In a similar vein, DeGaris (2008) argued that one of the main challenges for sport marketers is "the need to demonstrate their value to prospective sponsors" (p. 14). Hence, the author advocated the conduction of research that can enable the process of recruiting sponsors and selling sponsorship deals. In particular, research can provide evidence of the unique identity of the property offered for sponsorship purposes and the brand association with which sponsors may be interested relating their products, services or companies. Moreover, research can

provide invaluable information for the creation of sponsorship packages that better meet the needs of the sponsors, or evidence on attractive audiences and “potentially fertile markets” (DeGaris, 2008, p. 14). Furthermore, the author favoured the use of research as a tool enabling the renewal process, or even as negotiation tool aiming at achieving more favourable contracts, mainly through the provision of detailed fulfilment reports with convincing evidence of the sponsorship performance.

Mueller and Roberts (2008) also emphasised the need to create brands of value in order to attract corporate sponsorship. Specifically, the authors argued that sport entities should realise that, in order to be effective, they need to build on their unique and powerful attributes in order to build strong brand equity that will have the capacity to add to the equity of the sponsor brand. The authors argued that sports entities must determine their brand, make it powerful, and then identify potential sponsors “that pose the best opportunity for congruence in a marketing partnership” (Mueller & Roberts, 2008, p. 156). In doing so, they should concentrate on market components that are congruent with sponsor’s objectives, since sport entities offering compatible attributes are viewed “as a better value in achieving a higher purchase response from targeted consumers” (Mueller & Roberts, 2008, p. 157).

Doroghy (2008) examined the essential role of acquiring a well-run sponsorship program when a city bids for hosting a major event such as the Olympics. For Olympic Bid Committees, which have grown to become extremely sophisticated and strategic, achieving worthy sponsorship deals will enable them to succeed not simply through the provision of adequate funding, but also through “demonstrating strong corporate support and through engaging leaders in the business community and the general public in the bid process” (Doroghy, 2008, p. 364). According to the author, Olympic Bid sponsorship is essential in that it can be used as the vehicle for creating interest and excitement among the public, mainly through sponsors incorporating the bid’s message in their promotional campaigns

and becoming supporters and ambassadors of the bid. Thus, attracting and recruiting the right sponsors enhances the credibility of the bid, and at the same time, the expertise and knowledge of the sponsors on certain topics can be incorporated in the proposal making it stronger. Consequently, selling sponsorship for the Olympic Bid is regarded a distinctive process.

For Romney (2004, cited in Doroghy, 2008), selling sponsorship for the Olympics entails an emotional element because of the uniqueness of the brand emerging from the qualities and values that represents, which are typified and packaged in order to be distributed to corporations willing to buy them. What is important for Olympic Bid Committees is to “fully understand potential conflicts and how marketing categories are defined before embarking on sponsorship acquisition” (Doroghy, 2008, p. 366) since there is a need to protect the long-term partners of the IOC and their exclusive rights, as well as the partners of National Olympic Committee of their own country. At the same time, property sellers have to keep in mind that the package to be offered to corporate buyers should be carefully designed to establish a “value chain” (Doroghy, 2008, p. 369) determining specific rights, benefits and networking opportunities for sponsors. The uniqueness of Olympic sponsorship selection process is further illustrated in the fact that certain National Olympic Committees are using several processes when selecting sponsors that ensure coordination with the IOC sponsorship program and to avoid conflicts. The Romanian Olympic and Sports Committee, for example, employs quantitative and qualitative indexes when selling sponsorship, such as the size of the company, turnover, importance in the industry, market share, company values and image etc. (Constantinescu & Szekely, 2009).

10. Evaluating Sponsorship

Although the processes adopted by sport properties when selling sponsorship arrangements is a weakly researched topic in the sponsorship literature, there are certain areas of sponsorship that have gained substantially more attention. One of

those is sponsorship evaluation. Indeed, a remarkable number of studies concentrated their efforts on examining the effectiveness of sport sponsorship (i.e. Barez et al. 2007; Bennett, Henson & Zhang, 2002; Bennett, 1999; Chebat & Daoud, 2003; Clark et al., 2009; Cornwell & Coote, 2005; Cornwell et al., 2005; Cornwell et al., 2001b; Jalleh et al., 2002; Lyberger & McCarthy, 2002; Madrigal, 2001; Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006; Nufer, 2009; Quester, 1997; Shin & Turco, 2005; Spence et al., 1997; Stotlar, 2002; Tripodi & Hirons, 2009; Wright, 1988) as well as the role of several factors such as congruency, fan identification, and leveraging on improving the value of sport sponsorship (Choi et al., 2006; Cornwell & Coote, 2005; Grohs & Reisinger, 2005; Gwinner & Bennett, 2008; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Koo et al., 2006a; Madrigal, 2000;2001; Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006; Quester & Farrelly, 1998; Speed & Thompson, 2000)

Apart from the studies that actually measured the value of sport sponsorship, there had been some efforts to develop models aiming at enabling the process of sponsorship evaluation (e.g. Abratt & Grobler, 1989; Meenaghan, 1991; Stotlar, 2004). Additionally, a substantial part of the literature focused on examining the evaluation practices which are usually employed by sponsors (e.g. Armstrong, 1988; Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; O'Reilly & Madill 2009; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992; Thwaites, 1993, 1994, 1995; Thwaites et al., 1998; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998; Witcher et al., 1991) and to a lesser extent attention was directed at identifying appropriate measurement methods for sponsorship evaluation or linking those methods to certain sponsorship types (Akaoui, 2007; DeGaris, 2008; Pope & Voges, 1994; Smolianov & Aiyeku, 2009; Watt, 2008).

Early sponsorship literature identified evaluation as a controversial, challenging, and particularly complicated sponsorship activity, mainly due to the plurality of objectives pursued by sponsors. Thus, it is hardly surprising that a large percentage of sponsorships were not evaluated. According to Gardner and Shumman (1988), nearly 50% of corporations did not evaluate the impact of their

sponsorship investment. Similarly, Gross et al. (1987) indicated that measuring sponsorship effectiveness in North America had been “haphazard and anecdotal” (p. 13). Yet, the authors provided some bright examples of businesses running awareness and attitude surveys in an attempt to monitor the effects of their investments. The lack of evaluation methods was attributed to the early stages of sponsorship, the unique nature of this medium, and on the reluctance of sponsorship providers to be held accountable for their effects. The authors believed that as sponsorship spending was growing, there would be an increase in the importance and attention given to measurements of sponsorship effectiveness.

A different picture with regard to sponsorship evaluation was also described by Meerabeau et al. (1991) with regard to the UK market. Although there had been a significant increase in the agencies involved in sponsorship evaluation with accompanied advances in the evaluation methods and practices for many sponsors, the authors shed light on the need to formulate precise objectives and methods by which those objectives will be monitored. Similarly, Burton et al. called for the employment of quantifiable sponsorship performance measures such as pre- and post-event awareness and attitude measures, sales ratios or new account reports, that would enable sponsors “to better ensure a consistency of approach irrespective of the magnitude of the investment” (Burton et al., 1998, p. 30), especially in more well-developed sponsorship environments in which sponsors delegate sponsorship decision-making and implementation to mid-level executives with a lower involvement of the top level management.

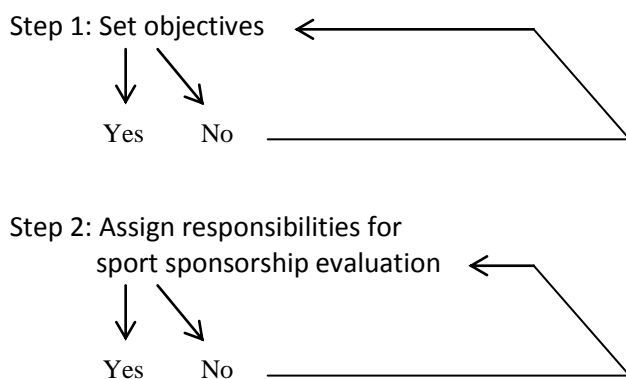
Surprisingly, more recent literature on sport sponsorship evaluation is not very promising (e.g. Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004, 2005; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Papadimitriou et al., 2008), indicating that evaluation remains a challenge for sponsors. Driven by the failure demonstrated by sponsors to evaluate their sponsorship arrangements through appropriate measures, there have been some studies in the sponsorship literature attempting to develop frameworks and

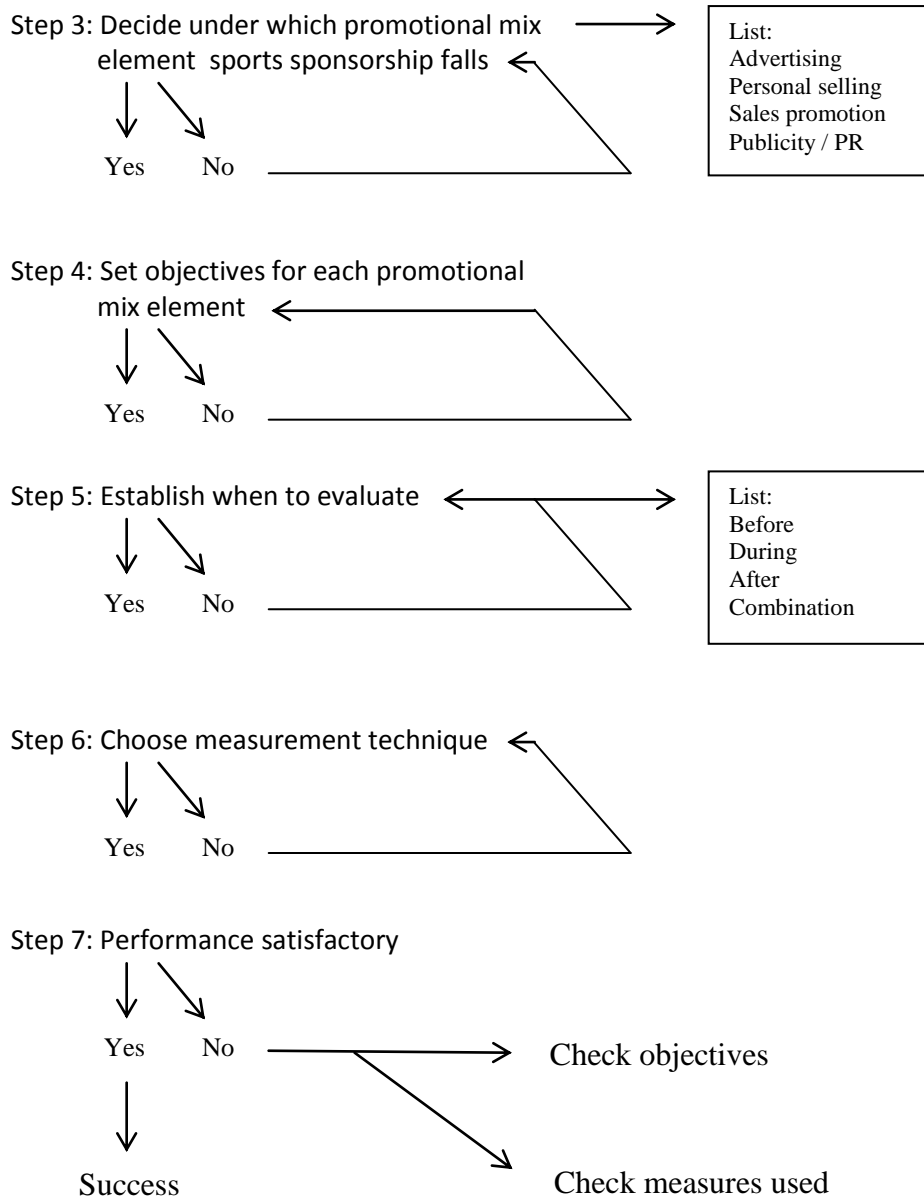
models aiming at enabling the sponsors to measure the success of their sponsorship arrangement.

10.1 Sponsorship Evaluation Frameworks and Evaluation Practices employed by sponsors

One of the earliest frameworks on sponsorship evaluation processes was developed by Abratt and Grobler (1989). The model introduced by the authors consisted of seven steps (see figure 10.1). The starting point of the proposed model is the setting of objectives which is thought to guide the whole process, followed by the assignment of a person responsible for the sponsorship evaluation process. The third step involves articulating the additional promotional mix elements for supporting the sponsorship activity, followed by objective setting for each promotional mix element. Step five involves decisions on when to employ the evaluation methods and the sixth step refers to decisions on how to measure the sponsorship effectiveness. Finally, the seventh step involves comparing the results with the predetermined goals and objectives in order to decide whether sponsorship has been successful or not.

Figure 10.1 A framework for the evaluation of the effectiveness of sports sponsorship





Source: Abratt and Grobler (1989).

Meenaghan (1991) suggested that evaluation takes place at three stages: a) at the outset in order to identify the current position of the sponsor in terms of several objectives such as image and awareness, b) Interim measurement that can determine movement on the chosen objectives intended to be achieved through sponsorship, and c) final evaluation measuring performance against the goals and objectives set. Moreover, the author recommended five methods for

measuring sponsorship effectiveness, including media coverage and exposure gained (e.g. measuring the duration of TV coverage, column inches, and monitoring radio coverage), communications effectiveness as depicted in awareness and attitudes measures, and sales effectiveness. In addition, Meenaghan (1991) suggested that feedback gathered by guests, employees, participants, spectators and event organisers can also provide a useful measure of effectiveness. Finally, a cost-benefit analysis based on the opinion of senior management was also mentioned as a useful tool for evaluating sponsorship, especially when the motive for involvement is less of a commercial and more of a philanthropic nature.

Stotlar (2004) proposed a conceptual model of sponsorship evaluation that emanates from the types of the objectives pursued. The first part of the sponsorship evaluation model – the filter stage – consists of the sponsor’s objectives and the “exploitable commercial potential” of the sport property that will enable the achievement of those (Stotlar, 2004, p. 62). The second stage describes the components of the sponsorship agreement that will be activated in order to facilitate the goals to be pursued, and the third stage refers to the determination of key performance indicators and the development of an evaluation protocol, deriving from and tied to each objective and activated component. As Stotlar argued, evaluation of sponsorship effectiveness should be customised and tailor-made according to the needs of each sponsor.

Those theoretical arguments are well illustrated in an earlier case-study describing the actions of a professional agency in evaluating the effectiveness of a major customer’s sport sponsorship investment (Furst, 1994). The author clearly articulated that the evaluation process started from defining the sponsor’s objectives and expectations, which had been used as the benchmark to which the results had been compared to. Specifically, Furst described the employment of several different activities measuring different goals such as trade relationships, media exposure and sales. In addition, the author described the several

components of the certain agreement which have been agreed upon, based on the objectives pursued by the sponsors, but also the way in which evaluation was used as the platform for negotiations and subsequent renewal of the sponsorship agreement (Furst, 1994).

Empirical studies examining the evaluation patterns of different types of sponsors involved in a wide range of sport sponsorships revealed that few sponsors evaluate the effectiveness of their sponsorship arrangements in any systematic fashion. Many authors argued that this failure lies in the difficulty of attributing the outcomes to a single promotional tool such as sponsorship, mainly due to the simultaneous use of marketing communications and carry-over effects from previous marketing activities (Hoek, 1999; Meenaghan, 1991; Wilson, 1997). Amis et al. (1999) referred to this problem as a causal ambiguity, which makes it difficult to separate the results of sponsorship from those of other marketing efforts. Furthermore, the multiplicity of objectives sought is regarded as another factor imposing difficulty upon monitoring the success of sponsorship (Gratton & Taylor, 1985). Indeed, Amis et al. attributed this difficulty to the indirect gains of sponsorship which are difficult to quantify.

Many of the studies attempting to explore the measurement practices employed by sponsors approached sponsorship evaluation as an ingredient of a sponsorship management process, and thus the topic of sponsorship measurement was not the main question of the study but part of the investigation (e.g. Armstrong, 1988; Farrelly et al., 1997; Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Polonsky et al. 1996; Thwaites, 1993, 1995; Thwaites et al., 1998). It is remarkable that a lack of sophisticated evaluation practices depicted in the literature seems to be universal, since the studies presented in this section did not demonstrate significant variations with regard to the national context, type of sport or size and type of sponsor, except from some more encouraging findings presented by some studies (e.g. Copeland et al., 1996; Séguin et al., 2005; Spence et al., 1997; Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004). Furthermore, the literature indicated that a

somewhat more sophisticated approach to evaluation may be adopted by larger organisations as well as by national and international sponsors (O'Reilly & Madill 2009; Thwaites, 1993; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998) as compared to smaller, local sponsors. Additionally, there is some indication that sponsors who are involved for a longer period in sponsorship may approach the evaluation process in a more advanced and systematic way (Pope & Voges, 1994). It seems to also apply when companies sponsor successful clubs or teams compared to less successful (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004). The majority of the sponsors, however, appeared using unsophisticated techniques (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Thwaites, 1993, 1994, 1995; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998), with media coverage and exposure measures prevailing in the literature (Abratt & Grobler, 1989; Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004, 2005; Davies & Tsiantas, 2008; Thwaites, 1994, 1995; Thwaites et al., 1998; Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998; Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004).

It is indeed surprising that, despite the significant resources invested by companies on sponsorship arrangements, most sponsors fail to employ formal evaluations. Armstrong (1988), for example, found that contrary to expectations, most of the 17 American, European and Far Eastern leading companies in the electronic industry researched in this study did not measure in a consistent and systematic way their sponsorship investment. In-depth interviews revealed that only a minority of the sample “have attempted any objective evaluation such as conducting surveys of their target audience, or tracking of audience awareness / recognition of their sponsorships” (Armstrong, 1988, p. 101), despite the fact that the sponsors in this study were familiar with sophisticated, scientific techniques used to measure the results of other promotional activities. Interestingly, the majority of the sponsors appeared to intuitively believe that their investment was effective because of its potential to generate awareness, and mainly because of its capacity to enhance the brand image.

Similar findings had been presented by Witcher et al. (1991), who found that a large portion (about 30%) of the corporations explored in their study carried out in the UK failed to employ any method to evaluate the effectiveness of their sponsorship. The rest of the sponsors used several measures such as awareness tools and media coverage surveys. Interestingly, the authors found that most of the more systematic evaluative work had been done in the sport and arts sponsorship context, while for community sponsorship projects evaluation was almost non-existent.

The problems associated with evaluating sport sponsorship were also recognised by tobacco sponsors, which are regarded adopting quite sophisticated and professional approaches in managing their sponsorship deals (Lavack, 2003). The analysis of industry data conducted for the purposes of this study revealed that the main method employed by tobacco sponsors in measuring the impact of their sport sponsorships involved TV coverage in terms of viewing audience of the event. Broadcast airtime, however, and press coverage are not the sole benefits pursued by tobacco sponsors, as demonstrated in the same study (Lavack, 2003).

Shanklin and Kuzma (1992) argued that the weakest link in sponsorship programs is the failure to measure results, with companies spending much without knowing how to determine the outcomes. The authors estimated that 60% of the sponsors they surveyed made “some kind of formal effort to quantify program effectiveness” (Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992, p. 65), whilst just 3% claimed to employ elaborate evaluation activities. The most common evaluation methods in Shanklin and Kuzma’s study involved pre- and post- awareness and image surveys, with very few companies utilising sales measures. Drawing on some creative and successful evaluation methods employed by some sponsors, the authors recommended the use of test marketing, sweepstake redemptions and other measurable traffic in addition to the most commonly used awareness image and attitudes methods.

Abratt and Grobler (1989) attempted to find out how South African sponsors evaluate their sponsorship arrangements based on the responses of 28 companies sponsoring cricket, football, rugby and horse racing. The study demonstrated that, contrary to the authors' initial proposition, South African sponsors seemed to employ several evaluation methods for measuring the results of their sponsorship investments, including awareness and attitude measures, publicity, media coverage and exposure, sales and television advertising gained from the sponsored events, client reaction and participation etc. However, the sponsors did not use a formal, comprehensive evaluation system for their sport sponsorships, since media exposure was the most evaluated activity albeit it is simply one aspect of sport sponsorship. Espousing the view that sponsorship can be very effective because of the publicity resulting from sponsorship involvement as well as the goodwill associated with such an investment, Abratt and Grobler suggested that the establishment of formal evaluation processes able to identify and measure the impact of sponsorship is essential.

Interestingly, Farrelly et al. (1997, p. 179) found a "lack of attention to performance measures" exhibited by both North American and Australian sponsors. Specifically, the findings demonstrated that the majority of respondents (72.2% of North American sponsors and 55% of Australian sponsors) spent less than 10 cents for every dollar spent on sponsorship on performance measurements of specific sports sponsorship. Although the North American sponsors appeared being significantly more involved in implementation and evaluation procedures compared to the Australian sponsors, the authors found that "the establishment of measurement details and schedules were considered less significant" (Farrelly et al., 1997, p. 175). In the same vein, Thwaites (1993) identified several deficiencies with regard to the evaluation methods employed by UK building societies involved in sponsorship activities. Only 12 out of the 27 sports sponsors in this study indicated that they assessed the effectiveness of their investment, while national and regional sponsors appeared being more inclined towards evaluation than local sponsors. The methods adopted, however,

“were not particularly sophisticated” (Thwaites, 1993, p. 37), and involved the collection of press cuttings, guest feedback, goodwill from corporate hospitality, and impact on sales. In concluding, the authors argued that sponsors should utilise a more systematic, professional approach involving the introduction of objective measures and more sophisticated evaluation and control systems.

Additional findings on sport sponsorship revealed that many of the financial institutions in the UK (banks, building societies and insurance companies) investing in sports sponsorship are “unclear as to whether it is, or is not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of sport sponsorship programs” (Thwaites, 1994, p. 757). The results demonstrated, once again, that although there had been some descent attempts to measure the effects of sponsorship – expressed mainly by the insurance companies examined in this study and involving a wide range of evaluation techniques – the majority of the respondents used methods that are largely unsophisticated. Moreover, although there was some evidence implying the use of some forms of qualitative assessment, media coverage appeared as the most popular and heavily employed method for evaluating sponsorship by both insurance companies and building societies. Banks seemed to use a more systematic and rigorous approach to sponsorship which was also reflected in the assessment practices, although these tended to measure overtly commercial objectives.

A lack of rigorous, systematic evaluation techniques has also been reported by Thwaites et al. (1998) who examined the approach adopted by one hundred and two leading Canadian companies sponsoring sports properties. Although it seems promising that the vast majority of the sponsors (86.4%) in this study made some attempt to estimate the effectiveness of their sponsorship, the authors argue that the methods they use are not universally applied. Measuring media coverage or exposure was the most commonly practiced method, while communication effectiveness and sales increases are also measures used by Canadian sponsors to evaluate their sponsorship activities.

Almost identical findings have been presented by Thwaites and Carruthers (1998). Although the majority of sponsors engaged in rugby sponsorship attempted to evaluate their investment, the study underlined the employment of non-sophisticated evaluation approaches that are used “intermittently” (Thwaites & Carruthers, 1998, p. 214). Guest feedback and media coverage were the most common evaluation tools utilised. Furthermore, the results illustrated the existence of completely different approaches to sponsorship evaluation. The first one was mainly employed by large companies and involved the adoption of appropriate evaluation techniques which were a part of a broader professional and systematic approach to sponsorship. In the second approach evaluation undertaken by smaller sponsors was either absent or taken in an ad hoc manner and was associated with a weak, amateurish framework for the management of the sponsorship arrangement.

Likewise, Lamont and Dowell (2008) also found that the small and mid-sized businesses investing in relatively small, regional sport tourism events in Australia used to employ informal and non-systematic evaluation methods, which also constituted a part of a broader unsophisticated approach to the management of their sponsorship which was usually created as a response to the request of the event provider, or as a result of personal contacts. Most of the sponsors in this study relied on “casual conversation” (Lamont & Dowell, 2008, p. 260), with event providers during an informal meeting usually undertaken after the event, and on press coverage generated as a result of the event sponsorship.

The general picture of sponsorship evaluation presented above was additionally reflected in the findings provided by Papadimitriou et al. (2008) with regard to Olympic sponsorship. The authors were drawn to the conclusion that assessment of the effectiveness of sponsorship was not an area the Olympic sponsors devoted much energy. Specifically, the sponsors provided very general and vague responses on evaluation procedures and measures, while those that appeared having some evaluation plans seemed to concentrate on sales measures,

company awareness/recognition, perceived image, and conducting a cost-benefit analysis after the Games. The lack of established evaluation procedures may be related to the fact that the objectives that emerged in this study were rather general and not specific, making evaluation efforts even more difficult. It is, however, surprising that companies can be involved in such a costly investment such as Olympic sponsorship, without being especially scrupulous and systematic in measuring the outcomes of their investment.

In a similar vein, Davies and Tsiantas (2008) found that only three of the ten 2004 Grand Olympic Sponsors spent between 1% and 5% of their sponsorship fee on evaluation, while the rest of them spent no additional money on measuring the returns of their sponsorship arrangement. Moreover, all the sponsors were engaged in media exposure measurement, while only the three sponsors that invested more on evaluation appeared using additional measurement techniques such as print media analysis and some consumer research. Sales monitoring and internal feedback have also been mentioned as evaluation methods by two of the ten sponsors. Yet, it is interesting to observe that all companies perceived their sponsorship to be successful, especially in reaching their sales and marketing objectives, as well as their corporate image and goodwill goals.

Another sponsorship context that produced relatively unexpected results with regard to sponsorship evaluation practices is the football industry. It would be expected, for example, that sponsors deciding to invest in football sponsorship, which is one of the most expensive types of sponsorship in sport, would be much interested in measuring and justifying their investment. In contrast, Chadwick and Thwaites (2004), found that although there have been significant advances in the management of sponsorship in football in many aspects, compared to a study undertaken in early 90s, there have been no remarkable changes with regards to evaluation methods and techniques employed by sponsors. Although all sponsors of UK professional football clubs explored in this study appeared to evaluate their investments, this contradicted with the relatively small number of sponsors that

set specific and measurable objectives. Hence the authors considered the role of evaluation questionable and wondered “where objectives are absent, on what basis sponsorships are managed and evaluated” (Chadwick and Thwaites, 2004, p. 50).

There was, however, evidence suggesting that the sponsors of more successful clubs were more sophisticated in their evaluation approach employing both pre- and post- sponsorship evaluation methods (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004). In contrast, a less systematic approach was adopted by sponsors of smaller and less successful clubs who failed to adopt either post- or pre- and post- evaluation techniques. Moreover, and in consistence with earlier findings, media coverage and exposure remained the most popular and most commonly used techniques in assessing the effectiveness of sponsorship (93% of the respondents have used this method). The authors were led to the conclusion that sponsors should shift to a wider range of more rigorous methods and techniques for assessing the effects of sponsorship.

Almost identical findings – a widespread absence of clear objectives set by sponsors accompanied by claims about the use of evaluation practices and a reliance on media recognition measures – have been reported by Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) who examined corporations investing in football sponsorship in the UK. In concluding, the authors highlighted the need for more professional and coherent evaluation practices employing both quantitative and qualitative indicators, and based on assessment criteria that “reflect broader, long-term, and possibly less tangible outcomes” (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005, p. 335).

Earlier findings obtained from the football industry (Thwaites, 1995) also emphasised the need for more frequent and more sophisticated evaluation practices to be applied by sponsors. According to the author, only 66% of the respondents actually attempted to evaluate their sponsorship, albeit focusing on a range of measurement methods and tools. Despite some descent measurement endeavors, however, the study showed that the objectives initially set by a

significant portion of the sponsors were not conducive to evaluation. Moreover, although in some cases the evaluation method employed seemed to measure the objectives set, the use of techniques was limited. Once again, media coverage seems to be the prevalent evaluation method, but as the author argued, more emphasis should be placed on estimating the effectiveness of increased exposure (Thwaites, 1995). Albeit less frequently employed, additional evaluation involved monitoring guest feedback and measuring communication effectiveness in terms of awareness. In concluding, the impression gained from this study is that the sponsors of professional football employ a relatively uncommitted approach to evaluating the impact of their sponsorship arrangements. The author criticised the fact that evaluation techniques were not particularly sophisticated, and the quality of analysis both in terms of depth and frequency.

More positive signs of sponsorship evaluation were presented by Copeland et al. (1996). Specifically, the authors used an open-ended question which was addressed to 112 large Canadian corporations involved in several types of national sponsorships about their post-event evaluation practices. Content analysis undertaken to discover trends in the qualitative data, demonstrated that the majority of the respondents (61.5%) identified awareness, exposure and media coverage as the key evaluation indicators, while sales measures were also cited by 46.2% of the sponsors as being one of the three most important factors illustrating sponsorship success. Interestingly, this study found that another highly valued evaluation indicator was the feedback provided by trade partners, while image measures did seem to be very popular measures since only 10.8% of the respondents favoured their use in measuring sponsorship success. Despite the encouraging findings regarding evaluation, Copeland et al. concluded that sponsorship evaluation was not always a rational process.

Some positive signs with regard to evaluation were also cited by Séguin et al. (2005), whose qualitative inquiry revealed that the three corporations explored in their case study used very different approaches. One of the sponsors

incorporated a comprehensive evaluation method relying on media audit, feedback from partners, questionnaires etc. In contrast, the second sponsor relied simply on informal feedback from customers, and the third sponsor did not apply any form of evaluation. These findings were surprising, especially when considering that all the three sponsors appeared to approach sponsorship as a strategic tool, employed significant leveraging and managed to link their sponsorship objectives to the broader corporate goals of the business. Séguin et al. speculated that maybe the variety of objectives sought and the diversity of leveraging strategies may have posed additional difficulties on measuring sponsorship results (Hoek, 1999; Meenaghan, 1991; Wilson, 1997).

More heartening evidence with regard to the practice of sponsorship evaluation was presented by Spence et al. (1997), who found that all the ten corporations in their sample sponsoring the 1995 Rugby World Cup had used a third party (e.g. an agency) to evaluate their sponsorship, and although the main tool was made of awareness measures, some of them used also market research and sales volumes as indicators of sponsorship success. The positive indications of sponsorship evaluation depicted in this study may rely on the fact that those sponsors were international companies with some of them having a long term tradition in sport sponsorship involvement (e.g. Coca Cola, Visa, Toyota), and therefore had been more experienced and more sophisticated in their approach. This explanation is further substantiated by the systematic leveraging and integration practices that these sponsors adopted, leading to the establishment of successful sponsorships (Spence et al., 1997).

Similarly, evaluation was deemed very important in the study provided by Van Heerden and du Plessis (2004), since their investigation on sponsorship in South Africa showed that sponsors regarded the assessment of their sponsorship effects as one of the main aspects in the management of their sport sponsorships. Yet, sponsorship managers did not seem to spend enough time on evaluative tasks since the results indicated that they devoted less than 15% of their time on

sponsorship assessment activities. Moreover, the study demonstrated that “the range of measurement tools available is not adequate to enable sponsors to clearly and accurately measure the effectiveness of their sponsorships” (Van Heerden & du Plessis, 2004, p. 84), with the sponsors relying on the measurement of awareness and exposure. Indeed, the findings indicated a tendency towards the use of assessment methods that are also employed in the measurement of other communication components such as advertising or public relations (e.g. media reach, press cuts, viewership demographics, dollar value of publicity expressed in advertising rates). It is of interest to observe that although some measurement tools have been regarded as important (such as cross impacts between sponsorships and sales; measuring customer reaction; cross impacts between sponsorships and public relations; and cross impact between sponsorships and advertising) the sponsors did not appear applying them in measuring the effects of their sponsorships, maybe due to a lack of access, the difficulty of use, or familiarity to the certain tools.

Doherty and Murray (2007) also concentrated on sponsorship evaluation practices, but they attempted to do so from a different perspective. Specifically, the authors examined the efforts exerted by a non-profit sport organisation aiming at enabling sponsors' evaluation, and this was done within a broader research design focusing on its sponsorship recruitment process. Interestingly, the sport organisation appeared providing the sponsors with an annual evaluation report about the championship describing the benefits that the sponsors receive as well as their dollar value (e.g. event signage, sponsors' logo visibility through media coverage, etc.) in an attempt to substantiate the sponsor's return on investment. A formal assessment of the impact of sponsorship was not undertaken, however, and specific evaluation criteria were absent, regardless the nature of sponsorship.

As it is clearly demonstrated in the studies presented above, the main problem associated with sponsorship evaluation is the use of limited or inappropriate methods of measurement, a conclusion to which O'Reilly and Madill's (2009)

review of sponsorship literature also arrived at. Their effort was directed towards identifying the metrics and methods used by researchers in measuring sponsorship outcomes, and they heavily criticised the failure of many sponsors “to ground metrics in the objectives of interest” (O'Reilly & Madill, 2009, p. 217). Furthermore, the authors found that in many cases inappropriate measurement tools were applied, or appropriate measures were applied erroneously. Their secondary data analysis revealed five areas of sponsorship requiring certain methods for measurement, namely recognition/recall/awareness, attitude/image, brand/service/product effects, media output, and behaviour. Moreover, their review identified an extensive range of objectives and metrics available, but as the authors argued, the vast majority of the studies focus on awareness measures, ignoring many other sponsorship objectives. The primary data gathered through interviews conducted with 14 experts in the sport sponsorship field were generally consistent with the literature reviewed. The most common practice mentioned by the experts, however, was sales measurement or purchase intentions, followed by media measurements and consumer surveys. Moreover, the experts believed that more sophisticated evaluation processes were employed by mega-sponsors due to resource availability.

In concluding, O'Reilly and Madill (2009) highlighted the need for the development of measurement metrics and methods based on the uniqueness of sponsorship instead of borrowing evaluation techniques from other promotional means such as advertising. In the same vein, O'Reilly, Nadeau, Seguin and Harrison (2007) acknowledged that erroneous measurement or inappropriate tools are often used for evaluating sponsorship outcomes, and they concluded that more sophisticated tools are needed to estimate the impact of sponsorship, including ROI metrics that are able to give more grounded and less biased results (O'Reilly et al., 2007).

As a response to the several calls for advanced and different measurements in sponsorship coming from authors such as Chadwick and Thwaites (2005), Shanklin and Kuzma (1992), Thwaites (1993, 1995) and Thwaites et al. (1998),

Ali, Cornwell, Nguyen and Coote (2006) developed an activity index intended to “capture the consumer’s extended experience with sport” (p. 115), through addressing questions related to consumer participation’s impact upon several sponsorship outcomes. Instead of examining the contribution of each communication element of a sponsorship-linked marketing communication program, this research attempted to capture “the whole of the consumer’s experience surrounding a sponsored event” (Ali et al., 2006, p. 122). Drawing on consumer behaviour literature, and considering evidence suggesting an impact of several individual level variables such as involvement and prior experience upon sponsorship effectiveness, the authors speculated that engagement in activities related to the sponsored event – including pre, post and on-going activities – might be linked to sponsor-related behaviours. The development of the index was based on the data collected through 6 semi-structured interviews aiming at revealing all possible activities associated with a rugby sporting event, and the study was conducted prior to the Rugby World Cup held in Australia. The indicators for the index were determined through a content analysis of the qualitative data and the themes that emerged.

A second survey using a convenience sample of 108 individuals visiting a university sport centre was employed for the development and testing of the index (Ali et al., 2006). In addition to the formative index items, the questionnaire also used purchase intention measures and other sponsorship-related outcomes of interest. This research highlighted the variety of consumer activities that can be used to connect with consumers in a sporting context, benefiting both event organisers and sponsors. The index will facilitate understanding regarding which activities contribute to the experience of consumers, with sponsors utilising such information for measuring and improving the effectiveness of their investments, and event providers using it for designing activities that improve the quality of the consumer experience (Ali et al., 2006).

In a similar vein, Watt (2008) argued that the most important analysis of the effectiveness of sponsorship involves measuring how targeted individuals such as event participants and spectators, and community actors in which sponsorship takes place (such as local businesses) are engaged in the sponsorship activity, and, more particularly, measuring “their connectedness to the event or team and its sponsors” (Watt, 2008, p. 265). Using a successful sponsorship investment (Flora’s sponsorship of the Comrades Marathon in South Africa) as an example, the author reflected on a sophisticated leveraging approach adopted by the sponsor engaging highly the individuals and community actors involved, and commented that “the most important aspect of measuring the success of the Flora sponsorship was not media impressions or logo exposure, it became the measurement of participation by runners and spectators alike in the various on-site sponsorship activations, product sales and the loyalty of those *communities* engaged directly by the sponsorship” (Watt, 2008, p. 263).

Another tool designed to evaluate the effectiveness of sport sponsorship is a modified version of the Market Contact Audit™ (MCA™) originally developed by Chattopadhyay and Laborie (2005, cited in Akaoui, 2007). This modified tool was tailor-made in order to best suit the FIFA 2006 World Cup championship context and it was intended to examine the 14 product categories pertaining to the major official sponsors of the cup and their key non-sponsoring competitors (Akaoui, 2007). Therefore, the study focused on 28 different brands which were examined through the administration of an online questionnaire completed by more than 7000 respondents across 10 different countries (Brazil, China, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Spain, United Kingdom, and United States) before and after the World Cup. Moreover, the Audit involved the evaluation of six different World Cup sponsorship contacts (activities such as “sponsoring the World Cup”, “sponsoring special events during the World Cup”, “seen on TV within sports programs”, “packaging with FIFA emblem” etc.) as compared to 29 standard contacts common to global brands, such as mass media advertising, branded websites, mail contacts etc.

The results of this research are quite interesting in that sponsorship contacts did not appear being more influential than non-sponsorship contacts with the general public, and only marginally more effective among males and individuals more interested in football. In addition, the weak pre-event and during the event impact of the sponsorship contacts observed was short-lived and declined immediately after the event was over. Furthermore, just four of the 14 sponsors used the event to “boost brand experience” before the event, and these were actually the sponsors who realised a benefit after the event. Interestingly, only one sponsor used the World Cup to create a remarkable advantage, whilst the majority of the sponsors failed to benefit from their investment, leading the author to the conclusion that the way sponsorships are managed is much more significant than the event itself.

Similarly to Akaoui (2007), DeGaris (2008) also felt that there is a need compare sponsorship to other marketing communications, especially advertising, when conducting research evaluating the sponsorship activity. In his paper suggesting ways in which the academic community can fruitfully connect to the practice of sponsorship, the author also recommended the conduction of studies that provide competitive intelligence to sport sponsors “by measuring competitors’ sponsorship performance and brand positioning, thereby identifying areas sponsors can avoid or should put resources behind” (DeGaris, 2008, p. 16).

10.2 Link between Measurement Methods and Sponsorship Type

Pope and Voges (1994) examined whether there was a link between the evaluation methods employed by sponsors and the form of sponsorship they were engaged in (e.g. the length of the sponsorship involvement), or the motives and objectives they had. The study examined companies sponsoring motor sport in Australia, and the results revealed that most of the sponsors who set objectives also incorporated some form of evaluation, with media audit being reported as the

most heavily used method. It is of interest to mention that the majority of the sponsors employing evaluation procedures believed that their sponsorships had an impact on sales, despite the fact that sales measures were not employed by 10 of the 11 sponsors of the study. The finding provided also some evidence suggesting that longer term sponsors are involved in more sophisticated evaluative methods such as sampled surveys. In concluding, the authors argued that, instead of objectives defining the evaluation method to be employed, the study has shown that objectives are selected “to make use of existing evaluative methods” (Pope & Voges, 1994, p. 44).

Smolianov and Aiyeku (2009) investigated how integrated TV advertising and event sponsorship should be evaluated. Drawing on consumer behavior steps, the authors suggested a framework consisting of four objectives and evaluation methods which are regarded essential for all companies promoting their products through televised sports. The case studies explored provided support to the proposed framework. Exposure objectives and measures such as size of audience and number of promotional messages were included in ten of the twelve campaigns analysed, followed by awareness objectives as measured by recognition and recall rates, which appeared in nine campaigns. Communication-effects objectives as demonstrated in attitude and intention to purchase the brand were included in eight cases, while objectives aiming at changing consumer behaviour were employed by seven cases and measured through sales, market share and profit indicators. Interestingly, the interviews revealed that the companies that had set and measured all four objectives were successful in reaching those objectives and eventually increasing sales of their brands.

10.3 Studies Measuring Sponsorship Effectiveness

A quite large proportion of the sponsorship evaluation literature focused on examining various indicators of sponsorship success. The majority of the studies assessed sponsorship effectiveness through focusing on the impact of

sponsorship on brand awareness and brand image (e.g. Barez et al. 2007; Bennett et al. 2002; Bennett, 1999; Jalleh et al., 2002; Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006; Nufer, 2009; Quester, 1997; Shin & Turco, 2005; Spence et al., 1997; Stotlar, 2002; Tripodi & Hirons, 2009; Wright, 1988). In addition, there is much research devoted to identifying the impact of sponsorship upon purchasing habits or purchasing intentions of consumers (e.g. Barez et al., 2007; Chebat & Daoud, 2003; Cornwell & Coote, 2005; Lyberger & McCarthy, 2002; Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006; O'Reilly, Lyberger, McCarthy, Séguin & Nadeau, 2008; Shin & Turco, 2005; Stotlar, 2002), whilst considerable less research has been focused on more tangible outcomes such as an increase in sponsors' stock prices as a result of sponsorship (e.g. Clark et al., 2009; Cornwell et al., 2005; Cornwell et al., 2001b).

Some of these studies have been descriptive in nature, measuring the impact of sponsorship upon several outcomes (e.g. Nufer, 2009; Quester, 1997), whilst others attempted to examine how sponsorship works by developing theoretical frameworks (e.g. Cornwell, 2008; Grohs et al., 2004; Mason, 2005; Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999; Pope, 1998). Recently, there have been several research endeavours exploring the impact of sponsorship towards several attitudes of the consumers (e.g. Chebat & Daoud, 2003; Christensen, 2006; Hansen et al., 2006; Jalleh et al., 2002, Lyberger & McCarthy, 2002; Van Heerden, Kuiper & Saar, 2008), whereas it is noteworthy that researchers have begun to extensively examine the impact of several consumer attitudes toward sponsorship (e.g. Dees, Bennett & Tsuji, 2007; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Lee et al., 1997; Madrigal, 2001; Speed & Thompson 2000; Tsiotsou & Alexandris, 2009). Indeed, the number of empirical investigations attempting to identify several factors that may have an impact or a moderating effect on sponsorship success is growing, with much of the attention being concentrated on fan identification (Cornwell & Coote, 2005; Gwinner & Bennett, 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Levin, Beasley & Gamble, 2004; Madrigal, 2000, 2001), sport involvement (e.g. Alexandris, Tsaousi & James, 2007; Bennett, Ferreira, Lee & Polite, 2009; Boshoff & Gerber, 2008; Dees, Bennett & Villegas, 2008; Ko et al., 2008), sponsor-sponsee fit (Barez et al.,

2007; Grohs & Reisinger, 2005; Grohs et al., 2004; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Koo et al., 2006a; Koo, Quarterman & Flynn, 2006b; Speed & Thompson, 2000) and activation or leveraging actions (Choi et al., 2006; McCarville, Flood & Froats, 1998; Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006; O'Reilly et al., 2007; Quester & Farrelly, 1998; Tripodi & Hirons, 2009). Additional factors that appeared having an impact – positive or negative – upon the effectiveness of sport sponsorship were the number of sport sponsors and their motives (Ruth & Simonin, 2006), negative information regarding the sponsor (Kuzma, Veltri, Kuzma, & Miller, 2003) as well as the stage at which a sponsor enters a sponsorship deal (Bennett et al., 2002; Wright, 1988).

One of the recent studies examining the effectiveness of sport sponsorship was carried out by Nufer (2009). The author concentrated on measuring the effectiveness of the 2006 FIFA World Cup sponsorship in Germany using more than 2000 teenagers as respondents, and found that the effectiveness of some sponsorships were remarkable, as demonstrated in the unaided recall and image values employed in this study. Not surprisingly, those sponsorships were enacted by traditional sport sponsors such as Adidas, McDonalds and Coca-Cola, implying that possibly those sponsors had the expertise and experience of managing more effectively their sponsorship agreements. In contrast, some of the official sponsors, despite the lucrative amounts invested, achieved very low recall and image rates, suggesting that they failed to employ appropriate practices in order to leverage their investments or that several ambush marketing activities compromised the effects of event sponsorship. However, this notion was not substantiated by Portlock and Rose (2009) who found that the UK consumers who were exposed to the 2006 FIFA World Cup were able to distinguish between sponsors and ambushers since all the sponsors in their sample achieved high levels of correct unaided recall compared to non-sponsors. Moreover, a high number of respondents could correctly recognise the brands in terms of their correct connection to the event (Portlock & Rose, 2009).

In another study focusing on football, the findings revealed that sponsorship during the 2002 FIFA World Cup led to higher purchase intentions for sponsors' products, and that it positively enhanced the corporate image and brand awareness of most of the World Cup sponsors (Shin & Turco, 2005). What is important to mention, is the large sample of the study (more than 1000 Korean residents and spectators) that filled out a pre and post event questionnaire through a main survey. However, the levels of corporate image and purchase intentions were lower for sponsors that have not been particularly active in their promotions, providing further support to the importance of leveraging the sponsorship deal. Moreover, the study found that prior use of a sponsor's product as well as the sponsor's corporate image were important factors that influenced consumer purchase intentions.

In one of the earliest attitudinal research studies conducted to examine sponsorship awareness in football, Wright (1988) measured the levels of spontaneous awareness achieved by sponsors involved in league or club sponsorship in Great Britain over four surveys conducted from August 1986 to January 1988. The results of this survey depicted that "a major sponsor can make a long-term impact if it enters a sport at an early stage" (Wright, 1988, p. 105). Moreover, prompted measures of awareness demonstrated that the successful performance of the sponsored property may impact sponsors' awareness since the sponsor of Liverpool FC achieved considerably higher level of awareness than that of any other club at a time when Liverpool was demonstrating continual success in the field. However, the author argued that awareness levels seem to be susceptible to seasonal variations, suggesting that the results are comparable only when studies are conducted at the same period. In addition, the study demonstrated that much of the general public had difficulty in spontaneously identifying sponsors' names, while in some this procedure came down to "intelligent guesswork" (Wright, 1988, p.106). Interestingly, and based on the results of several additional studies conducted by the same author in Great Britain, Wright mentioned that alcoholic drinks and cigarette manufacturers

achieve very low awareness rates in respect to any sport, while petrol companies are likely to be associated – in the mind of the respondents – with motor sport. Those findings imply that consumers identify more easily sponsors that fit with the sport property they sponsor, and that inherently unhealthy products such as alcoholic and tobacco sponsors do not seem to be congruent with an often perceived inherently healthy product such as sport.

Additionally, Bennett (1999) provided evidence suggesting that sponsorship is effective not only for enhancing awareness and recall levels, but also for creating *false consensus*, which is described as the tendency that people have to regard their views and beliefs as normal and customary among peers. Data were gathered in the field of football through a pre- and post- match survey using a quasi-random systematic sampling. Evidence demonstrated that committed supporters of the three football clubs explored in this study (Arsenal, Chelsea and Wimbledon) achieved higher recall rates compared to occasional supporters, suggesting either a positive impact of loyalty and team attachment, or a positive relationship between exposure and recall. Interestingly, false consensus was evident among fans of all three teams and was substantial even among occasional supporters “reinforcing the usefulness of sponsorship for strengthening a brand image among the public at large” (Bennett, 1999, p. 310). It is of interest to observe that all three teams’ fans thought that much higher percentage of other supporters purchased sponsoring firms’ products. As the author argued, false consensus is extremely important since it is thought to benefit sponsors in many ways: through influencing a person’s evaluation of a sponsoring team, shaping attitudes towards the sponsor/brand/products, rationalising judgments related to the sponsor, and even improving memory and recall of the sponsor’s message.

Stotlar (2002) measured awareness and recognition levels of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games and the United States Olympic Committee’s sponsors using 717 US individuals selected through mall intercept techniques. The survey results revealed that the recall rates achieved by Olympic sponsors in this study were

consistently lower than other studies employing similar methodologies in sport (Stotlar, 2002), leading the author to the conclusion that possibly the fact that his study collected data from non-attendees may have impacted the results. Instead, recognition rates were found to be comparable to data found in other studies, with TOP sponsors being identified by more than 50% of the respondents, and USOG sponsors enjoying 50-70% recognition rates (Stotlar, 2002). The fact, however, that some companies have been incorrectly identified as Olympic sponsors was attributed mainly to the “clutter” factor associated with their intensive promotional activities or their previous relatedness to an event through sponsorship. Another interesting finding is that 82% of the respondents indicated that “Olympic sponsorship had no effect on their purchasing habits” (Stotlar, 2002, p. 40), underestimating the impact of positive attitudes on purchasing behaviour stated in other studies (e.g. Dees & Bennett, 2008; Madrigal, 2001). The author drew attention to the fact that awareness is simply one of the many sponsorship objectives pursued by sponsors, and thus, measuring awareness “paints only a part of the picture” (Stotlar, 2002, p. 43).

Additional results with regard to the effectiveness of sport sponsorship were presented by Jalleh et al. (2002). Specifically, pre- and post-tests employed during two different sporting events – Australian rules football and motor racing – demonstrated that sport sponsorship can influence both brand awareness and brand attitude, and that the impact is higher for social organisations serving as sponsors compared to commercial sponsors (Jalleh et al., 2002). The authors concluded that the superiority of this type of sponsorship is partly explained by the fact that it is relatively rare compared with the number of commercial sponsors investing in sport sponsorship, but also by the severe leveraging actions employed by health sponsors.

In another study exploring the effectiveness of sport sponsorship by different types of sponsors, the results demonstrated that the university students composing the sample in this study had more favourable attitudes toward beer

companies being involved in sport sponsorships compared to tobacco companies, maybe due to the greater social acceptability of drinking compared to smoking (Kropp et al. 1999). Not surprisingly, smokers had a more positive attitude toward tobacco sponsorship than non-smokers, and conversely for beer drinkers. The authors attributed these findings to a “desire for cognitive consistency” (Kropp et al, 1999, p. 55). Given the impact of attitudes upon purchasing intentions demonstrated in many studies, these findings generate concerns since those types of sponsorship can facilitate and reinforce alcohol drinking and smoking. It is of interest to observe that both smokers and non-smokers in the Australian sample of this multi-cultural study (Canada, Australia and USA) demonstrated negative attitudes toward tobacco sponsorships, maybe due to the fact that tobacco sponsorship of sports has been illegal in Australia for many years, leading to the conclusion that legal initiatives and policies can shape attitudes and behaviours.

Another study exploring the effects of sport sponsorship by tobacco companies (Chebat & Daoud, 2003), suggested that the effects are both attitudinal and behavioural. The study examined the impact of sponsorship upon brand related aspects such as brand personality and brand identification. The F1 Grand Prix that took place in Montreal served as case study, and 10 cigarette brands – 8 sponsoring the event and 2 non-sponsors – were included in the study. Evidence obtained through the administration of a questionnaire to children (pupils of a primary school) before and after the Grand Prix demonstrated that both brand personality and brand identification were enhanced by the event, but paradoxically, both sponsoring and non-sponsoring brands benefitted from this effect. According to the authors, however, there is evidence suggesting that a tobacco company’s promotional effort can benefit other brands. It is also worthwhile to mention that the event also affected cigarette consumption, but this effect was stronger when interest for racing was higher, brand identification was higher, and adolescents were male.

Attitudes and emotions towards the sponsors were also explored by Christensen (2006), and the results of this study yielded marked differences in consumer reactions towards sponsorship of properties of different natures. Interestingly, both consumer attitudes and emotions were much more positive towards the sponsors of sports institutions compared to the sponsors of other types of organisations such as cultural or charitable institutions, providing additional support to the potential of sport sponsorship towards the achievement of organisational goals.

In a similar vein, Hansen et al. (2006) found sport sponsorship to be a more effective promotional vehicle as compared to other forms of sponsorship such as cultural, social and TV-program sponsorships. This study examined how emotional responses of individual towards potential sponsored properties of different types may be useful indicators of sponsorship effectiveness. The results were gathered through a quantitative methodological design with 169 students of a university in Denmark which constituted the convenience sample of this study. The data obtained through a self-administered questionnaire demonstrated that sport properties seem to be effective sponsorship platforms since they scored high on arousal and attention. Moreover, the findings revealed that “liking, awareness and inclination to behave on behalf of the sponsorship are important indicators of sponsorship effectiveness” (Hansen et al. 2006, p. 514), suggesting the introduction of emotional concepts and measures in research evaluating sponsorship arrangements.

Interestingly, it seems that sport sponsorship when connected to a social or charitable cause can be particularly effective. This is what Irwin, Lachowetz, Comwell and Clark (2003) found when they explored the impact of sponsoring a cause-related sport event. The authors indicated that this type of sponsorship can create positive attitudes and beliefs towards the sponsor, and that it can favourably impact consumers' intention to purchase sponsors' products and services, despite the fact that some price sensitive consumers were primarily

driven by price and not by the impact of sponsorship. Moreover, the data, which have been gathered through a quantitative instrument administered to 422 participants, suggested some differences with regard to sex. Interestingly, this exploratory case study examining the responses of several attendees of a charitable golf tournament indicated that female respondents not simply reported more favourable beliefs and attitudes towards cause-related sponsorship, but they also appeared willing to pay more for purchasing a product or service from the sponsor of the event. These findings suggest that cause-related sponsorships may be especially useful in reaching the female audience market. Additionally, sponsorship decision-makers – both providers and investors – should consider introducing cause-related, charitable initiatives in their sport sponsorship packages in an attempt to add value to the sponsorship arrangement.

Apart from the studies researching the consumer's perspective in measuring sponsorship value, there is also some research focusing on the perceptions of the sponsor with regard to the efficiency of sponsorship. Polonsky et al. (1996), for example, examined perceived sponsorship effectiveness in relation to the most important objectives set by small companies investing in sports sponsorship in Australia. The results showed that their sponsorship activities had been regarded as very effective in achieving image related objectives (both brand- and company-related), reaching and influencing customers, achieving community related goals and increasing sales. In contrast, the respondents did not think that their sponsorships were neither effective in providing entertainment to their guests, nor in reaching publics who are inaccessible through other mediums. Examining perceived sponsorship effectiveness is regarded essential since it has been suggested as a key factor in the relationship between the sponsor and the property. Specifically, there is evidence suggesting that perceived sponsorship effectiveness is a condition leading to longer-term sponsorship agreements (Pope & Voges, 1994).

The effectiveness of sport sponsorship as perceived by managers enacting and running sponsorship activities was also supported by Cornwell et al. (2001a). The findings of a survey examining several sport sponsorships, but with a strong representation of motor-sports and golf sponsorships, provided support for the essential role of the sponsorship medium in achieving several outcomes. Specifically, sponsorships were perceived by managers to contribute significantly to the creation of corporate image, brand image, and brand awareness. Alike, Shanklin and Kuzma (1992) found that sponsors seemed to be pleased with their sponsorship activities, since the vast majority of sponsors – large companies sponsoring Special Olympics – regarded sponsorship as providing fair value, and many appeared at least moderately satisfied with their sponsorship investment.

Despite the wide recognition of the sport sponsorship value as a promotional platform described above, it seems that certain sports may be more effective than other in delivering certain sponsorship outcomes as suggested in the findings provided by Nicholls, Roslow and Dublisch (1999). Their study employed two separate versions of a questionnaire measuring brand recall and brand preference which had been administered to two independent samples – 562 spectators attending the Ryder golf tournament and 200 spectators at the Lipton tennis tournament. The authors found that spectators' brand recall and brand preference were in favor of brands sponsoring the tennis tournament than for those sponsoring the golf tournament, suggesting that tennis is possibly a better sponsorship vehicle compared to golf. It is worthwhile to note that the highest recall and preference ratings were recorded for the largest, better known sponsors, while smaller regional and local sponsors achieved very low scores on both recall and preference (Nicholls et al., 1999). These findings coincide with other evidence demonstrating that larger sponsors achieve better sponsorship results (e.g Clark et al., 2009) and are indicative of a better sponsorship approach adopted by larger businesses that have the resources and the expertise on activating and managing their sponsorships.

The notion that some types of sport sponsorship may be more efficient than others was also supported by Van Heerden et al. (2008). The authors examined the capacity of two different types of sport sponsorship (event sponsorship and celebrity endorsement) to act as promotional activities influencing consumers' pre-purchase attitudes. In particular, the survey relied on the responses of 201 university students in South Africa to measure the effect of sport event and sport celebrity endorsement on customers' perceptions of key brand and manufacturer related variables such as brand quality, product uniqueness, manufacturer esteem and social responsibility (Van Heerden et al., 2008). Results indicated that sport event sponsorship appeared as having "a greater effect on respondents' pre-purchase attitudes than sport celebrity endorsement" (Van Heerden et al., 2008, p. 161), leading to the conclusion that it is a more effective promotional tool and thus "a more viable option to invest in" (Van Heerden et al., 2008, p. 162). Specifically, event sponsorship significantly influenced the perception of participants about manufacturer's esteem, product uniqueness and citizenship, whilst celebrity endorsement appeared as having a significant effect on uniqueness and esteem, but not on brand quality.

Interestingly, and in contrast to the evidence highlighting the effectiveness of sport sponsorship described in the studies above, Quester (1997) presented some less promising findings. Using a longitudinal, quantitative methodological design that compared the responses of 250 randomly selected individuals – excluding the respondents who attended the event – the author examined the effectiveness of sponsorship of the Australian Formula One Grand Prix over three consecutive years – 1991-1993. The findings indicate that recognition rates of official sponsors did not increase significantly after the sponsored event. In fact, as Quester (1997, p. 106) argued, the finding showed "an unexpected and counter-intuitive pattern, with a substantial number of sponsors registering an actual decrease in their recognition scores", while a substantial number of non-sponsors (who acted as the control group in this study) enjoyed an increase in their recognition rates. According to the author, those patterns can be attributed to the relevant low

involvement of some sponsors with their sponsorships, and to the actions of some ambushers and “incidental ambushers” - due to the inherent affinity of their industry and car racing (e.g. tire manufacturers, petrol businesses etc.). Furthermore, the findings suggested that naming rights may be more effective in delivering awareness gains compared to other forms of sponsorship since six of the ten sponsors who registered increases in recognition scores were involved in naming rights agreements. Overall, the results made sponsorship practitioners more skeptical about the positive returns of sponsorship.

Mixed results with regard to awareness levels were also presented by Spence et al. (1997). The authors measured awareness through aided and unaided recall measures using a convenience sample of 200 spectators of the 1995 Rugby World Cup, held in South Africa. The results of this study were not as conclusive, since some of the sponsors achieved high levels of awareness, whilst others failed to reach the intended goals. Almost similar findings were also observed for usage of sponsors’ products. Although the majority of the sponsors were more effective than non-sponsors of the event, the well-performing companies were those representing well-known brands, whilst the least known brands did not achieve high recognition by spectators.

Poor recognition rates were also presented by Bennett et al., (2002), leading the authors to the conclusion that action sports’ sponsorships were not effective in delivering the intended promotional messages. Conversely, the authors held that the low recognition scores that most of the sponsors achieved may be indicative of a decay that may have occurred after a period of time, since the survey was not conducted during the action sports events, but well after the events had taken place. The sample of this study, consisting of 367 middle and high school students and 960 undergraduate students, reported high recognition rates for Mountain Dew and ESPN, sponsors of the X Games that was also the event that respondents were the most familiar with. However, analysis of the findings indicated that the accuracy of sponsorship recognition was not significantly

related to familiarity or viewing frequency, discarding the idea expressed by Bennett (1999) that familiarity and exposure improve recognition. Moreover, that fact both highly recognised sponsors were “the first-entry companies into the market that have leveraged their sponsorship through supporting media” (Bennett et al., 2002, p. 182) further substantiated the notion that entering a sponsorship at an early stage can be proved more effective (Wright, 1988), as well as the importance of leveraging in increasing the outcomes of sponsorship.

In a similar vein, relatively low recognition and recall rates were also reported by Miloch and Lambrecht (2006). In addition, this study on grassroots sport indicated that sponsorship was not able to significantly influence participants’ purchasing intentions, despite the fact that younger individuals were more likely to purchase sponsors’ products. These findings are in line with early evidence on purchasing intentions (Meerabeau et al., 1991) demonstrating that sport sponsorship was not able to influence the buying habits of the vast majority of the public examined.

Alike, Lyberger and McCarthy (2002) reported non-encouraging findings regarding the effectiveness of sponsorship not simply with regard to purchasing intentions but also to consumer perceptions. The authors found “a growing trend in consumer apathy toward sponsorship of the Super Bowl, which is arguably America’s biggest commercial sport event” (Lyberger & McCarthy, 2002, p. 442). Data were gathered through a quantitative instrument – the Consumer Perception Index – which was developed in order to measure consumer perceptions of sponsorship. The study sought to identify longitudinal relations by contrasting response items relative to the 1998 and 2000 Super Bowls. Interestingly, the attitudes toward the sponsors of the events were not favourable, and, even more importantly, sponsorship appeared having less of an impact on purchase patterns as demonstrated in the comparison between the two events. Given that consumers’ interest in the event was constantly high and awareness of new products as well as information associate with sponsorship did seem to increase

over time, it is indeed surprising that there was a decrease in the intentions to purchase sponsors' products.

The ability of Super Bowl sponsorship to influence the intentions of potential consumers to purchase sponsors' products was also questioned in a study conducted by O'Reilly et al. (2008). Adopting a longitudinal design examining the impact of sponsorship and advertising on consumer opinion, the authors used five consecutive Super Bowls (from 1998 to 2006) to investigate the perceptions of a total of 3444 respondents using a modified version of the mall-intercept technique. The findings indicated that sponsorship of the Super Bowl had a moderate effect on purchase intentions, suggesting that this kind of sponsorship is probably less likely to encourage sales. Moreover, congruently with the evidence provided by Lyberger and McCarthy (2002), the increases in purchase intentions were not achieved over time indicating that "there is potential volatility in the responses to promotional stimuli over time at mega-special-events" (O'Reilly et al., 2008, p. 406).

10.4 Factors improving or diminishing the effectiveness of sport sponsorship –The underlying mechanisms through which sponsorship works

In addition to the studies measuring solely the impact of sponsorship upon several desirable outcomes, there is also literature exploring the impact of several factors upon sponsorship effectiveness, including examinations of the interrelations between several sponsorship outcomes. It is of interest to observe for example that the value of sport sponsorship, as demonstrated in the studies described above, should not be taken for granted since there is evidence suggesting that exposure of the sport sponsor to negative information can diminish the effectiveness of the sponsorship investment. Specifically, Kuzma et al. (2003) found that attitudes toward the sponsor, attitudes toward sponsorship and purchase intentions were significantly and negatively influenced by negative information about the sponsor. The authors relied on data gathered in a non-

sponsored university using 102 students who were loyal to Nike, measuring their attitudes toward Nike sponsoring collegiate sports. The case study illustrated that there was a significant difference between measures employed before and after the exposure of students to negative information about the sponsor – the criticisms involved poor labour practices in overseas factories, exploitation of student athletes etc. Hence, the study indicated the importance of consumers in the sponsorship relationship, and demonstrated that unethical or illegal practices resulting in negative information about the sponsor can be especially harmful to an expensive sponsorship investment.

Alternatively, Ruth and Simonin (2006) found that consumers' attitudes and behaviors are influenced by both, the number of companies sponsoring an event and the perceived motives of the sponsors. Drawing on the "multibrand phenomenon in sponsorship" (Ruth & Simonin, 2006, p. 7) and the possible impact of several brands simultaneously utilising the sponsorship medium as a promotional platform, the authors used two case studies to investigate the moderating effect of the number of event sponsors and their motives on sponsorship effectiveness as those are demonstrated in consumer attitudes toward the sponsor and the event, event attendance and credibility. Using the X-Games as a platform, the authors conducted experiments in which participants (university staff and students) were exposed to marketing materials such as booklets containing several ads, and were asked to respond to a questionnaire measuring sponsorship effectiveness.

Interestingly, the first case-study revealed that the 147 participants preferred events sponsored by a large number of companies, and that sponsors motives and number significantly influenced people's attitudes toward the event, likelihood of attending the event, and adverts' credibility, but not the attitudes toward the sponsor. Overall, a good-will orientation, instead of a sales orientation, seemed to positively impact the aforementioned customer attitudes, but only when an event was supported by a single sponsor. Instead, an increasing number of sponsors

appeared diluting the benefits obtained from a perceived goodwill orientation, and conversely, appeared strengthening events associated with a sales-oriented motivation (Ruth & Simonin, 2006). The findings from the second case study, which was conducted using similar procedures and 197 participants, but also included an examination of the impact of the event stigma⁶ upon sponsorship effectiveness, indicated a negative impact of stigma upon people's attitudes toward the event, which is reduced by a higher number of sponsors joining the event, but had no impact upon ad credibility or the attitudes toward the sponsor. The significance of the study lies in the fact that the event organisers – especially those that are stigmatised - can build on these findings to reduce the consequences resulting from negative stereotypes associated with the event. In addition, considering the sponsors' motives which are communicated to the customers is another issue to which sponsors and organisers should place attention upon.

Nicholls et al. (1999), on the other hand, investigated possible interrelations between brand recall and brand preference, and found a strong relationship between the two factors. Specifically, the authors found that the two factors evolve together - when recall was high, preference tended to be high, and conversely. Interestingly, correlations between recall and preference were high regardless of whether the brands explored were sponsoring brands or non-sponsoring brands, leading the authors to the conclusion that “event sponsorship may need to be utilised in cooperation with other marketing tools to help increase preference” (Nicholls et al., 1999, p. 384).

Another interrelationship explored in the literature is the one between exposure and recall, and was the focus of the study conducted by Van Heerden, Kotze and Bruwer (2004). The authors tried to identify possible relationships between exposure and sponsorship recall using a convenience sample of 120 students of

⁶ Stigma has been described by Goffman (1963) as being linked with an “identity spoiled” because it encompasses a negative or controversial aspect or characteristic “that deviates from expectations and discredits through negative evaluations and associations” (Ruth & Simonin, 2006, p. 9)

a university who watched the 2003 Cricket World Cup. Contrary to expectations, the results of this study did not seem to support a positive relationship between exposure and recall, further substantiating the evidence provided by Bennett et al. (2002). Specifically, the findings indicated that respondents who were able to recall three of the four main global sponsors of the event explored in this study did not have a higher level of media exposure than those who were not able to recall these companies as sponsors (Van Heerden, et al., 2004). With regard to the fourth sponsor (LG), the significantly higher levels of media exposure demonstrated by the respondents who were able to recall the sponsor compared to those unable to recall were primarily attributed to the remarkable leveraging strategy adopted by LG before and after the event, highlighting once again the importance of leveraging in enhancing the impact of sport sponsorship. The crucial role of leveraging in maximising sponsorship returns is further substantiated by Ladousse (2009), the executive director of Lenovo, who argued that the comprehensive and integrated approach adopted by the company to leverage its Olympic sponsorship was essential in achieving remarkable sponsorship outcomes, such as significant increases in brand awareness and image values.

Leveraging and its impact upon sponsorship effectiveness was the main research question of the study conducted by Tripodi and Hirons (2009). Specifically, the authors explored Olympic sponsors' leveraging strategies and competitors' ambush marketing tactics and attempted to assess them in terms of sponsorship awareness levels, recognising at the same time that awareness "is only one measure that may be important in the evaluation mix" (Tripodi & Hirons, 2009, p. 125). Results gathered through a quantitative, longitudinal methodological design involving 1000 Australians revealed that leveraging activities enacted and applied in a well-coordinated promotional and communication program have the potential to improve sponsorship effectiveness as demonstrated in consumers' recognition levels.

Choi et al. (2006) also evaluated the effectiveness of leveraging activation programs but they did it from another perspective. They explored whether the displays of logos, signs, and other interactive initiatives employed by the major sponsor of an action sports event (LG Electronics), matched the interests of the audience reached. Espousing the view that quantitative designs cannot reveal invaluable information regarding fans' attitudes and perceptions about the activities of sponsors, the authors adopted an ethnographic qualitative approach employing visual observation (a photo journal) and in-depth interviews in an effort to capture fans' experience. Driven by constructionist's arguments holding that "meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting" (Crotty, 1998, cited in Choi et al., 2006, p. 72), the authors used the data collected through discussions and interviews with 17 adult spectators attending the 2004 LG Action Sports Championships in Los Angeles, in order to find out which leveraging activities were noticed by the sampled fans and the way in which they were interpreted.

Interestingly, the results indicated that, although consumers noticed most of the traditional activation components employed by the sponsor (e.g. logos and banners, demonstrations, related graffiti, music stage, Girls, Inflatable, Product Demonstration Tent, public announcement and on-site personnel), respondents "rarely placed any importance on them" (Choi et al., 2006, p. 79). Instead, the findings revealed that more interactive initiatives such as getting the product actively in the hands of consumers through contemporary ownership, conducting one-to-one marketing and utilising on site qualitative research activities as a sport marketing tool can be more effective in impacting the experience of the fan. Surprisingly, the data showed that the research experience of the fans "clearly educated consumers about the product - its features, functions and usage" (Choi et al, 2006, p. 79), lending support to the important utility of research, as an interactive marketing tool, in the hands of sponsors perusing meaningful activation programs.

In a similar vein, Miloch and Lambrecht, (2006) found that several activation and leveraging activities may have positively impacted recall and recognition levels achieved by sponsors. Specifically, the authors examined the effectiveness of grassroots events that do not appeal to mass audiences through questionnaires administered to 492 randomly selected participants of a grassroots sport event. Interestingly, the findings indicated that recall and recognition rates were lower compared to other sponsorship awareness studies, suggesting that participants and spectators of this type of events may differ from those of larger events, or maybe that the sponsors involved in this type of sponsorship may not exert much additional effort in communicating their messages to the participants and spectators. Indeed, the study provided evidence demonstrating that sponsors activating several leveraging strategies (e.g. sampling, souvenirs etc.) achieved higher recall and recognition rates. Moreover, location of signage was important since both recall and recognition rates were higher for sponsors having their signage located in highly visible areas. Moreover, Miloch and Lambrecht, (2006) found that individuals who were more interested in the event were more likely to recall and recognise sponsors, suggesting that involvement is an important determinant of sport sponsorship impact. These findings were further confirmed by Portlock and Rose (2009) who found that the respondents' ability to correctly identify the sponsors of the 2006 FIFA World Cup was increased together with increases in event involvement.

Similar findings were cited by Quester and Farrelly (1998), who found that the sponsor's active involvement with the event can positively impact the association between the sponsor's brand and the event sponsored. These findings suggest that sponsors should undertake activities and initiatives depicting a strong and persuasive association in the consumers' minds when leveraging their sponsorship investment. These results were obtained through a longitudinal study that used as a platform the Australian Formula One Grand Prix. Additional findings provided by the same study seem to suggest that perceived fit between the sponsor and the event may increase the effectiveness of sport sponsorship,

since affinity of sponsor's domain of activity with the sponsored event appeared strengthening the association between the event and the sponsor's brands, as demonstrated by unaided and aided recall measures.

What it is clear from the results presented in the aforementioned studies is that leveraging is an important determinant of sponsorship success. Therefore, it is not surprising that there had been some research endeavors in the sponsorship literature to measure the impact of sponsorship through measuring the effect of some promotional activities that accompany the sponsorship activity. O'Reilly et al. (2007) attempted to evaluate two in-stadium sponsorships of the Canadian Football League's Grey Cup utilising a four-stage consumer survey involving the administration of two in-game questionnaires as well as a pre- and post- game instrument. The results of this study were mixed in that some evidence appeared to substantiate the effectiveness of sponsorship, as illustrated in the evaluation of several promotional activities related to the sponsorships, while other observations raised concerns regarding the accuracy of the evaluation process (O'Reilly et al., 2007). Specifically, the results obtained during the game demonstrated that consumer awareness and knowledge about a product is enhanced through the support of in-stadium vignettes employed by sponsors. In addition, pre- and post- event data evaluating the effect of all in-stadium promotions employed by the sponsors have shown that sponsorship is not always effective. However, and as the authors recognised, the promotional activities explored in this study "were improperly defined as sponsorship when they were in fact advertising" (O'Reilly et al., 2007, p. 195), leading to the conclusion that in many cases sponsorship is not evaluated properly.

Varied findings with regard to the impact of several promotional activities related to sponsorship were also reported by McCarville et al. (1998). Their study monitored the reactions of 163 university students to sponsor's promotional efforts in an experimental setting involving a hypothetical, non-profit sporting event. Interestingly, the results indicated that none of the promotions examined –

dissemination of basic information about the sponsor, discount coupons, and trial samples – was able to improve the impressions and attitudes of consumers toward the sponsor. However, the findings were more promising with regard to the sponsor's products. Specifically, trial appeared as being more effective than the other promotions since the participants who were able to sample the product improved their perceptions of the sponsor's product and were more likely to purchase that product. The findings of this study indicate that, although sport sponsorship can generate substantial returns under certain circumstances, "the act of sponsorship does not conclusively suggest such efficiency" (McCarville et al., 1998, p. 58), unless it is appropriately leveraged and supported by the right promotional efforts.

McDaniel (1999) also attempted to measure the effectiveness of sport sponsorship indirectly, through evaluating consumer reactions to advertising leveraging sport sponsorship. His experimental methodological design employed artificial exposure conditions that were used to explore the effect of advertising placement and brand/event match upon the attitudes of a convenience sample consisting of 216 undergraduate students of a US university. Assuming that sponsorship advertising is similar to endorser advertising, the author relied on advertising schema theory that was expected to explain matchup effects in sponsorship. The data obtained through the employment of a pre-test and post-test design using a fictional sponsorship relationship between an automobile brand and three different sporting events - PBA Bowler's Tour, NHL hockey, and the Olympics. The results provided partial support to the notion that fit between a brand and a sport event can improve the effectiveness of sport sponsorship related advertising. Moreover, media vehicle selection was also found to have an impact, albeit moderate, upon the reaction of consumers towards sponsorship advertising. The study also explored the influence of sex upon sponsorship, and this hypothesis received the strongest support, since female consumers reported significantly more positive attitudes toward sponsorship advertisements than male consumers, and this difference cannot be attributed to the involvement factor

since pre-test measurements detected no significant differences with regard to involvement levels.

A moderate impact of sponsorship related advertising was also reported by O'Reilly et al. (2008). The authors argued that sponsorship should be used in combination with advertising, since, according to their longitudinal study on Super Bowl competitions, both strategies can have an effect on purchase intentions. However, the study identified a “moderate strength of intentions around buying goods advertised during the Super Bowl and willingness to pay higher prices for sponsors’ products” (O'Reilly et al., 2008, p. 404). Moreover, this impact was not long lasting, raising concerns regarding the positive outcomes of Super Bowl sponsorship.

Despite the decent attempts made by several authors to broaden the understanding on sponsorship effectiveness by examining the impact of several factors influencing it, the lack of theoretical underpinning guiding investigations about consumers’ reactions to sponsorship was one of the main weaknesses identified in Cornwell and Maignan’s (1998) systematic review of the sponsorship literature. The authors proposed the adoption of several theoretical frameworks from cognitive psychology, such as *congruence theory* and *memory structure*, which can help researchers to address the issue of how sponsorship works.

In response to this need, Pope (1998) provided some preliminary findings supporting the contention that sponsorship effectiveness, as demonstrated in purchasing choice, is a function of multiple values, and that these values can be influenced by sponsorship awareness levels. Drawing on the theoretical concepts of awareness, consumer choice processes and consumption values (i.e. functional, social, emotional, conditional and epistemic) that affect motivations to purchase, and using a mix-method methodological design recommended for collection and analysis of data in consumption value research, the author gathered responses from 921 university students towards several sponsoring

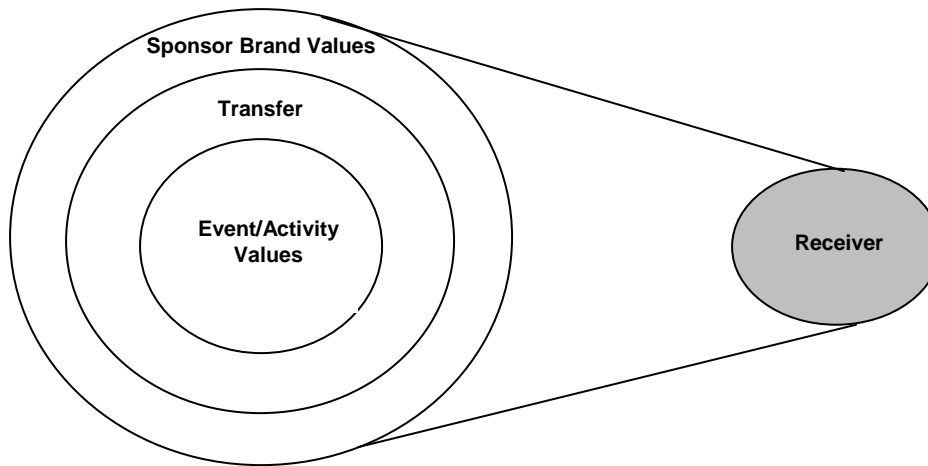
brands in five product categories. Overall, the results demonstrated that, while sponsorship seems to have the potential to alter consumption values relating to brands and product categories, “there is no guarantee that aspects of those values that are affected will necessarily be those that discriminate between brands, or necessarily impact on product use” (Pope, 1998, p. 132). Hence, although sport sponsorship may change attitudes towards a brand or product category, it may not necessarily influence purchase behavior. Based on the above, the author suggested that sponsorship managers should be clear about which values they want to influence and should manage their sponsorship activities accordingly.

Alternatively, and in an effort to upgrade the understanding on how sponsorship-linked communication works, Cornwell (2008) provided some theoretical background based on *information processing theory*, which is the main psychological construct underlying many marketing communication theories. The author utilised the concepts of “associative networks” and “spreading activation” to discuss how knowledge is stored in memory and how activation and retrieval of stored information take place. For Cornwell, how knowledge for a brand and other linked entities interact is essential for sponsorship since the activity “embeds the brand in a vast field of possible information nodes (e.g., player jerseys, time clocks, scoreboards), often with little direction on how to meaningfully link them to the brand” (Cornwell, 2008, p. 47). Unlike advertising, sponsorship is an “impoverished media” (Cornwell, 2008, p. 47) that needs the support of leveraging activities to deliver the message to the consumer. Building upon the associative network concept, the author described the way in which the relationships between the various entities influence memory (see hypothetical associative network, figure 10.2). Moreover, drawing on the aforementioned theories, as well as upon the concepts of relational and item information, Cornwell developed several propositions regarding how knowledge networks contribute to consumer understanding and behaviour, and guiding future research on the evaluation of sponsorship (see table 10.1).

Another attempt to explore the mechanisms by which sponsorship works was made by Mason (2005), who proposed that sponsorship has the capacity to influence one or more of the three components of attitudes, namely cognitive (beliefs), affective (evaluative emotional attachments) and behavioural, which can eventually impact consumer behaviour. According to the author, sponsorship can affect the cognitive component of an attitude by altering brand beliefs and perceptions, and that it can also impact the affective component by creating positive associations between the sponsored properties and the company's products through the "halo effect" which can lead to positive evaluations resulting in positive behaviours (Mason, 2005). The author also argued that highly involved fans are more receptive to attitude changes, and that a good fit between the sponsored property and the sponsor is needed in creating consumers' affective associations.

Alternatively, Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) attempted to shed light on the sponsorship effectiveness mechanism through concentrating on the image transfer process (see figure 10.3). Using the concepts of *media effect*, which had been regarded as being parallel to the sponsorship category (i.e. sport, social art etc.), and *media vehicle* which was considered as being analogous to the sponsored activity, the authors examined through a focus group research the images transferred by different types of sponsorship. Building on communication theory, Meenaghan and Shipley (1999, p. 333) perceived sponsorship as representing both the medium "that it simultaneously attracts, and provides access to, an audience" and the message, since the latter is strongly embedded in the event or the activity sponsored. In fact, the authors argued that "in a sponsorship both the sponsor and sponsored activity become involved in a symbiotic relationship with a transference of inherent values from the activity to the sponsor", and regarded sponsorship as providing the sponsored brand the opportunity "to live in the reflection of the sponsored activity" (Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999, p. 335).

Figure 10.3 The sponsorship image transfer process.



Source: Meenaghan & Shipley (1999).

Based on these premises, the authors reflected on a study undertaken by Meenaghan (1994) and concentrated on a part of this study in order to illuminate the discussion on the image values delivered by different sponsorship categories. The findings – gathered primarily through focus group discussions with consumers – indicated that the image values conveyed by different types of sponsorship vary considerably, with sport sponsorship transferring the values of being healthy, vibrant, masculine, energetic, young and fast (Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999). Interestingly, the study revealed that the perceived benefit to society associated with sponsorship and the related sponsor's goodwill was lower for sport sponsorship and greater for sponsorship of social causes, but, at the same time, was negatively related to extensive leveraging aiming at maximising the exploitation of sponsorship, raising some concerns with regard to appropriate and acceptable management of sponsorship investments. At the same time, however, sport sponsorship was regarded as more conducive to leveraging and exploitation compared to other categories, with consumers being less sensitive in terms of how the sponsor manages the activity. Hence, the study suggests that sponsors seeking sport sponsorships in an effort to create and deliver the desired

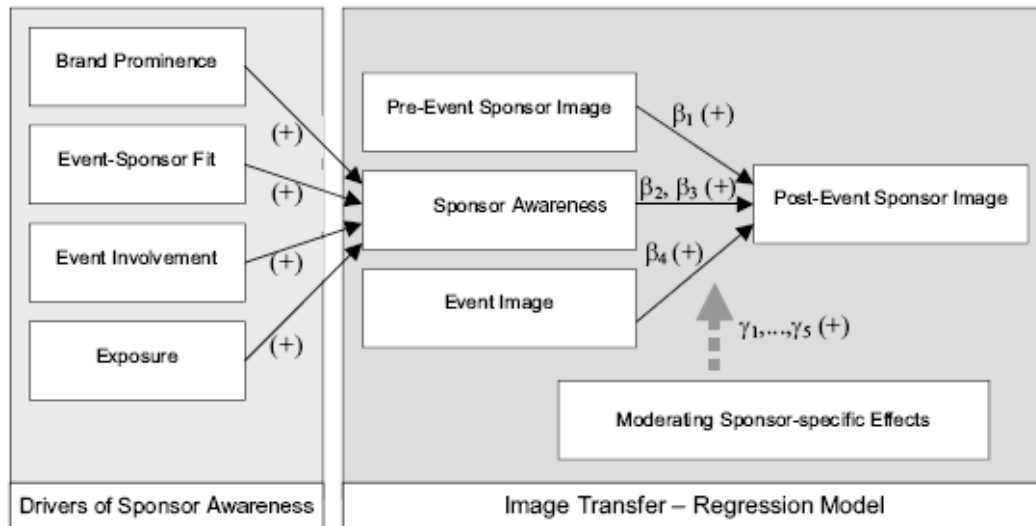
message to their audiences can employ noticeable leveraging without negative image consequence, as it is the case for other types of sponsorship.

Image enhancement, as a result of sponsorship, was also explored by Gwinner & Eaton (1999). The authors hypothesised that a sporting event image will be transferred to a sponsoring brand's image as a result of the sponsorship function. Moreover, and drawing on *schema theory*, the authors assumed that image-related similarity and functional-related similarity between the sponsoring brand and the event make the image transfer stronger. Findings came from an experiment in which 360 undergraduate students participated, and three sporting events used to test the hypotheses: the Indianapolis 500 Auto Race, the U.S. Open Golf Championship and the FIFA World Cup. The results provided support for all the three hypotheses, indicating that sponsorship can result in image transfer, especially when there is a congruency between the sponsored event and the sponsoring brand. Hence, both brand managers and sport event providers should take into consideration those notions before signing a sponsorship agreement. The former group can use this information when selecting the sponsored property, whilst the latter group can differentiate their events taking into consideration the image they deliver, and they can also invest on those positive relationships in an attempt to recruit sponsors and convince them about the effectiveness of their investment (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999).

Grohs et al. (2004) also found that image transfer is enhanced by the event-sponsor fit, providing further support to the findings of Gwinner and Eaton (1999). Moreover, Grohs et al. found that leveraging was another important factor increasing the magnitude of image transfer, lending additional support to the view that sponsorship is not a turnkey strategy that can be employed alone, without the support of additional promotional activities. Moreover, the study, which gathered pre- and post- event responses from 132 Austrians related to the Alpine Ski World Championships, found that the post- event image of the sponsor was positively influenced by the image of the event, sponsor awareness, and the pre-event

sponsor image, regardless of the sponsor’s industry type. Additionally, the study assessed sponsorship awareness through aided and unaided recall measures, and drivers determining recall “namely brand prominence, event-sponsor fit, event involvement and exposure” (Grohs et al., 2004, p. 126). The authors identified positive effects of exposure, event involvement, and event-sponsor fit on sponsor recall, while brand prominence was partially supported since for only one of the two sponsors investigated in this study brand prominence was associated with increased sponsor awareness. Overall, the results of this study supported the framework proposed by the authors (figure 10.4)

Figure 10.4 Graphical representation of the sponsorship model developed by Grohs et al. (2004)



Source: Grohs et al. (2004).

In addition to the key role of fit between the sport property and the sponsor sport, Grohs and Reisinger (2005) found another essential factor enabling the image transfer in sponsorship: fan’s involvement with the sport property. In their effort to identify factors that support or hinder image transfer in sport sponsorships, the authors revealed that fans’ involvement in the sporting event appeared to positively influence image transfer. Data obtained through the post-event responses of 125 individuals show that image transfer between the event and the sponsor is even more strongly affected by the perceived fit between the two

properties. Moreover, exposure, which was also investigated as a driver of image transfer, appeared having a significant positive impact on the strength of image transfer but only when the fit between the event and the sponsor was high.

In a similar vein, Barez et al.'s (2007) attempt to empower sponsorship evaluation "by modelling the effectiveness of the sponsorship communication process on the generation of brand awareness, the promotion of brand images, and the stimulation of product trial" (p. 75) revealed some quite interesting findings. Based on an analysis of 27 global cases of successful sport sponsorships, the authors suggested that target market, image, and functional congruency, are essential for the success of sport sponsorship activities. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that the promotional support activities designed to leverage the sponsorship medium should be carefully developed in order to motivate the consumer, create greater exposure, and enable interpretation of the sponsorship message. Finally, the study implied that fan identification and emotional connection to the sport, familiarity with the sponsored product and receiver's evaluation of the sponsorship relationship are also important determinants of the sport sponsorship effectiveness. The authors concluded that sponsors can do a lot to improve the effectiveness of their sponsorship: first through making appropriate sponsorship choices, then by activating and managing their sponsorship in the most effective way, and lastly, by communicating the relationship and the importance of their support to the sponsored property in an attempt to capitalise on fan identification.

The fact that congruency is a key determinant of sponsorship success was also demonstrated by a study carried out by Koo et al. (2006b). Specifically the authors found that perceived image fit between the event and the sponsor influenced participants' cognitive and affective responses. Building on *schema theory* to examine these relationships, the authors relied on pre and post event tests examining students who watched the 2003 College Bowl Championship Series. The findings revealed that high image fit was positively related to positive

corporate image of event sponsor and positive attitudes toward the brand, as well correct identification of a brand as an event sponsor. In addition, the findings indicated that corporate image, brand attitude and brand recognition had an effect on consumers' purchasing intentions, providing further evidence on the importance of congruency on the effectiveness of sport sponsorship.

Similarly, the key role of fit was further substantiated by Koo et al. (2006a). Building on *schema filtering model*⁷ proposed by Taylor & Crocker (1981, cited in Koo et al., 2006a), the authors attempted to explore the relationship between brand awareness and perceived image fit between the sponsor and the sponsored property through data collected from two different samples (through a pre- test and a main test) of more than 1800 students who watched the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup. The findings revealed that correct brand recall was enhanced by respondents' perceptions of the image fit between official sponsors and the FIFA World Cup. The implications of the results are important for both sponsors and sport providers since sponsorships that have a cognitive relatedness seem to be more promising and more effective as depicted in this study through the impact on brand awareness, but also as demonstrated in many other studies that focused on more concrete measures of sponsorship effectiveness (Clark et al. 2009; Cornwell et al. 2005; Cornwell et al. 2001b).

Additional research endeavors in the literature examining how sponsorship works have focused on examining the impact of several attitudes upon sponsorship effectiveness (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Lee et al. 1997; Madrigal, 2001; Speed & Thompson, 2000; Tsiotsou & Alexandris, 2008). In one of the earliest attempts, Lee et al. (1997) used the 1992 Winter and Summer Olympic Games and the 1994 FIFA World Cup as research contexts "to investigate consumer attitude constructs towards sponsorship and develop scales to measure these constructs" (Lee et al., 1997, p. 159). Using the quantitative data collected from the three

⁷ According to Koo et al. (2006a, p.181), "the model suggests that when a person is given new information about a brand, any information that is logically fit to the brand spokesperson's characteristics will be more easily encoded".

global events, the authors suggested that spectators' attitude toward the event, attitude toward commercialisation, and attitude toward behavioral intentions could be important in predicting sponsorship outcomes. The influence of those attitudinal constructs upon sponsorship effectiveness was not explored, however.

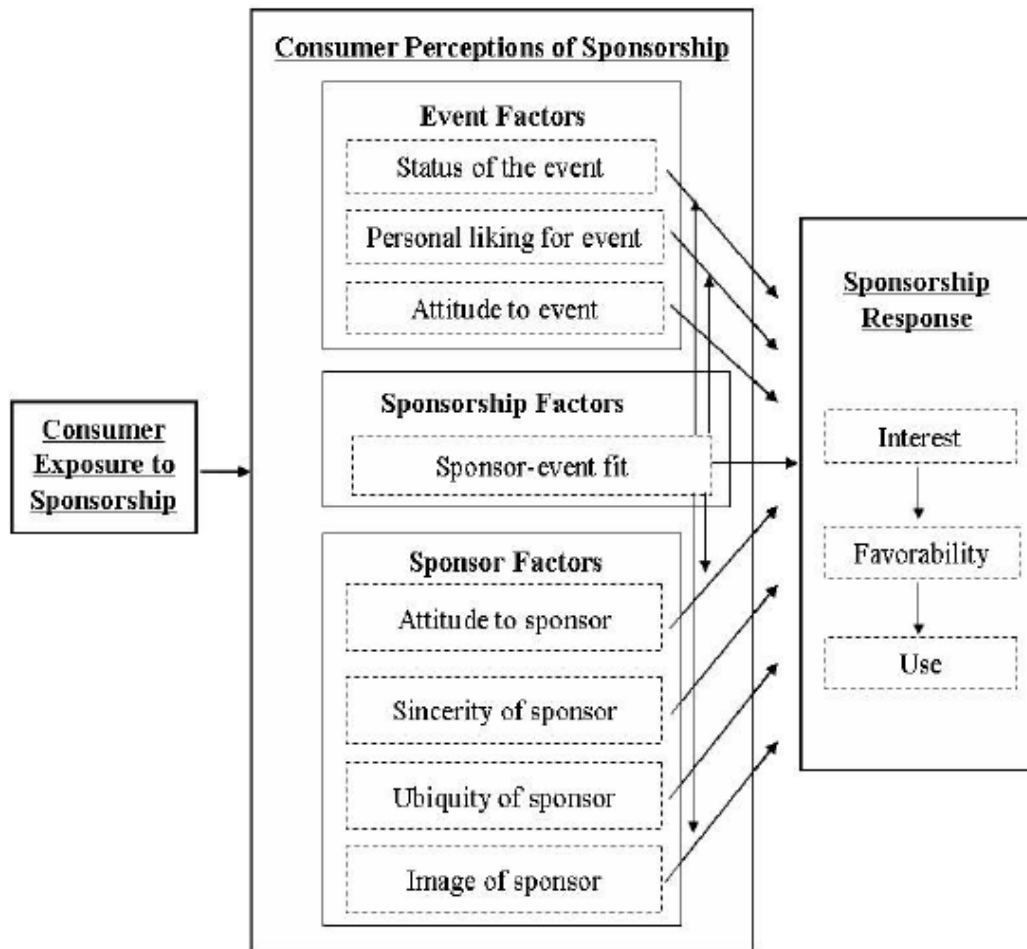
Dees et al. (2007) went further to examine the interrelations between those constructs. Using a sport festival for amateur athletes as the platform, the authors relied on the responses of 538 athletes, coaches, officials and spectators, and demonstrated that consumers who had a positive attitude toward commercial sponsorships, as well as consumers who had a positive attitude towards the event – those who were more satisfied and more highly involved with the event, demonstrating loyalty and commitment to the event – were more likely to react to the sponsorship message by purchasing products from sponsors. Those findings imply that sponsors and event organisers should manage to provide enjoyable experiences to the spectators that can satisfy and delight them in an attempt to increase the sponsorship outcomes. This argument is further substantiated by the findings provided by Ali et al (2006), who found that consumer participation in pre, post and on-going activities related to the Rugby World Cup held in Australia had a positive direct influence on their purchase intentions.

Similarly, the impact of several attitudinal factors upon sponsorship effectiveness has been the focus of the study conducted by Speed and Thompson (2000). The authors criticised the dominant exposure methods used for evaluating sponsorship effectiveness and argued that exposure is a necessary but not sufficient condition for sponsorship success. Adopting a classical conditioning approach and recognising the importance of cognitive aspects, the authors applied a conceptual framework to predict responses to sponsorship. They examined the effects of consumers' attitudes about the sponsor and the sporting event as well as the perceived congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored property, on a multidimensional measure of sponsorship effectiveness. As the authors argued, a key contribution of this research is "the identification and

measurement of conceptually distinct constructs that contribute to a consistent model of determinants of sponsorship response” (Speed & Thompson, 2000, p. 235), namely interest - the extent to which respondents believe sponsorship will affect their attention to the sponsor and its other promotions; favor – their favorability toward the sponsor; and use – their willingness to consider the sponsor's products. Questionnaires administered to 195 respondents revealed that attitude towards the sponsor, perceived sincerity, and sponsor-event congruency, were positively associated with the level of sport sponsorship response. In concluding, the authors favor the use of such an attitudinal framework in the area of sponsorship, emphasising at the same time that sponsorship evaluation involves much more “than counting column inches” (Speed & Thompson, 2000, p. 236).

Building on the theoretical model presented by Speed and Thompson (2000), Alay (2008) added two additional factors namely image of the sponsor and attitude toward the event in an attempt to further our understanding of the role of consumer attitudes toward sponsorship in shaping their response. The responses of 413 female undergraduate students of a university in Turkey, which were collected through a sponsorship evaluation questionnaire three months after the sponsored event – the Turkish Women’s Team matches of the European Volleyball Championship, provided support for the proposed model (figure 10.5).

Figure 10.5 Theoretical framework on the factors predicting response to sponsorship.



Source: Alay (2008).

Specifically, the results indicated that the sponsor-event fit, sponsor’s sincerity and the “interaction of the fit with the status of the sponsored event affect females’ sponsorship responses toward sport sponsorship in terms of their interest and favor toward the sponsor’s product and use of the sponsor’s product” (Alay, 2008, p. 24). Those findings further confirm the results provided by Speed and Thompson (2000) who found that sponsor’s sincerity, which suggests a sheerer and philanthropic orientation, can achieve more desirable customer responses than a more commercial orientation. Moreover, the study conducted by Alay indicated that consumer interest and favor toward the sponsoring brand were

positively influenced by the interaction of fit with the personal liking for the event, as well as the interaction of fit with the attitude toward the sponsor. Personal liking was also found to be an important predictor of sponsoring brand's usage. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that sponsor image was an important determinant of both interest and usage of sponsor's products. The findings of this study are important for both sport sponsorship providers and receivers. This kind of information can also be invaluable for sport property owners when attempting to sell their sport products to sponsors, but they can also inform sponsors' decision-making regarding the allocation of resources on the type of sponsorship that has the potential to generate returns. Moreover, they can be helpful in guiding sponsors on the way in which they have to approach and manage their investment, since a convincing sincere approach to the sponsorship could be very helpful in achieving sponsorship outcomes.

Another study attempting to further our understanding on the mechanisms shaping the effectiveness of sport sponsorship is the study carried out by Gwinner and Bennett (2008). Driven by evidence suggesting that fit between the sponsor and the sponsored property has a significant influence on several attitudinal and behavioural sponsorship outcomes (e.g. Koo et al., 2006b; Quester & Farrelly, 1998), the authors analysed the effects of sport identification and brand cohesiveness⁸ as predictors of fit.

Data collected from 522 attendees of an action sports event provided support for the proposed model, since both sport identification and brand cohesiveness positively influenced fit perceptions. As the authors argued, highly identified fans modify their thinking to more easily find a fit between the event and the sponsored brand in an attempt to preserve positive self-identity, while brand cohesiveness "leads to greater brand knowledge which in turn results in a greater ability to see dimensions common to the event and the brand, which serves to

⁸ According to Gwinner and Bennett (2008), brand cohesiveness is regarded as being a measure of internal brand congruence.

increase fit” (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008, p. 420). Moreover, the findings demonstrated that higher perceptions of event-sponsor fit resulted in a more positive attitude toward the sponsor, which in turn resulted in higher purchase intentions. The results of this study highlighted once again the importance of fit and sport identification in increasing the impact of sport sponsorship, suggesting that, in order to get the maximum out of a sponsorship arrangement, event organisers and sponsors should try to invest on sport identification in an effort to increase the perceived event-sponsor fit, and thus increase indirectly some of the sponsorship outcomes.

Tsiotsou and Alexandris (2009) also proposed an attitudinal-behavioural model in which fans’ team attachment is the determinant of three sponsorship outcomes: sponsor image, purchase intentions, and word of mouth. The model was intended to examine “how and when sport sponsorship works” (Tsiotsou & Alexandris, 2009, p. 359), and according to the study, highly attached fans were more likely to develop positive image about their team’s sponsor and consequently express positive intentions to say good things and buy the sponsor’s products. Moreover, sponsor image was also shown to have a strong direct effect on both purchase intentions and word-of-mouth, suggesting that it is also important in predicting behavioural sponsorship outcomes. The finding of this study suggest that marketers should also work on the development of team attachment and the improvement of sponsor image in an attempt to increase sponsorship effectiveness, through the inclusion of social objectives within their sponsorship programs activities and programs that are conducive to the achievement of the aforementioned goals. Such activities could be, for example, supporting developmental leagues, kids’ sports, promotion of the sponsored sport in the society and support of charitable events organised by the team and/or the league. Another interesting study’s finding is that sport involvement appeared as being an antecedent of team attachment. Specifically, it was found that the perceived importance of an activity and the interest, pleasure and enjoyment derived from the activity had a strong direct effect on team attachment. These findings,

combined with the fact that team attachment was a determinant of three sponsorship outcomes, led the authors to the conclusion that sport activities that are fun, attractive and spectacular are more likely to develop fans' attachment, and thus, improve the effectiveness of sponsorship.

The importance of fan identification, or otherwise the emotional connection or attachment to the sponsored property, was also demonstrated by the study carried out by Madrigal (2001) in his attempt to test a belief-attitude-intentions hierarchy model intended to build on the theory of sponsorship effectiveness. Drawing on *social identity theory*⁹ and identification, the study revealed that fan identification had a positive, direct impact on purchasing intentions as well as an impact upon the attitudes that people have towards supporting corporate sponsors. More interestingly, fan identification was found to moderate the effect of attitude on purchase intentions, since, among respondents with an unfavourable attitude "high identifiers had significantly more positive intentions to purchase than did low identifiers" (Madrigal, 2001, p. 145). Furthermore, the results obtained through the responses of 368 individuals in the context of the corporate sponsorship of a major university's sport team, generally supported the proposed model since people's purchase intentions seemed to be influenced by their beliefs about sponsorship as well as their attitudes towards purchasing products from the sponsor.

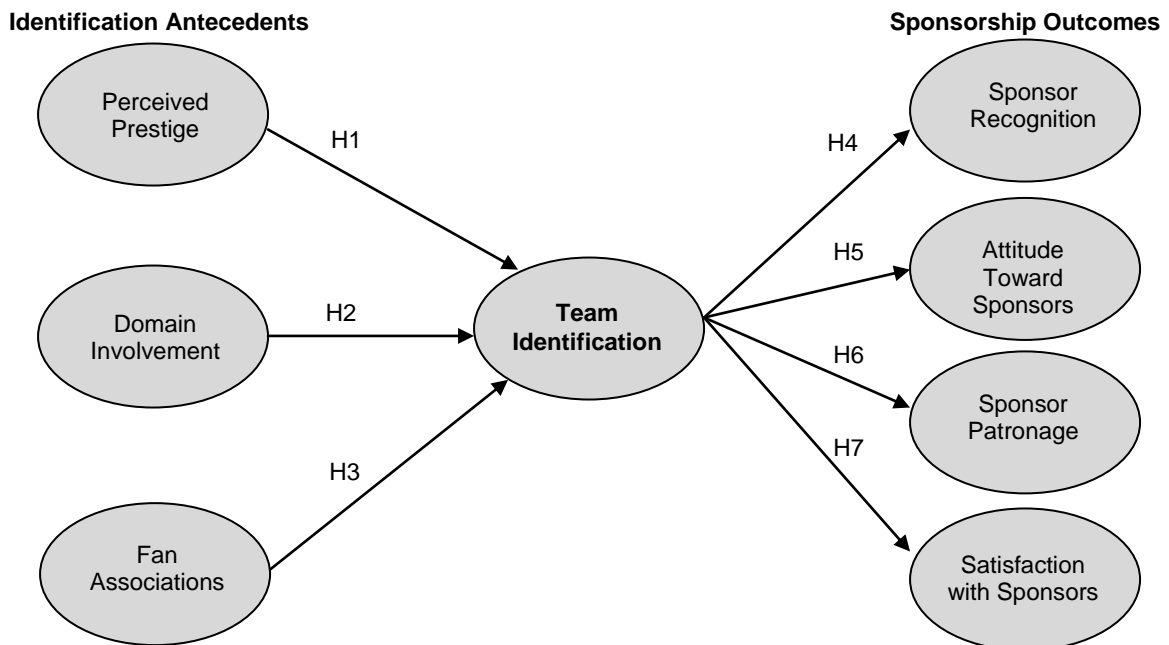
Almost identical findings were presented by Dees and Bennett (2008), who explored the interrelated effects of these constructs and their impact on sport consumer in a sports event context. Quantitative data from 382 participants of an annual professional tennis tournament revealed that attitudes towards the sponsor were positively related to purchase intentions. In addition, fan involvement appeared as being a strong moderator between attitudes toward the sponsor and purchase intentions, suggesting that in addition to sport teams,

⁹ "Social identity theory proposes that individuals identify themselves to varying degrees with different social groups, and in so doing they adopt the norms and values of the group (Lings & Owen, 2007, p. 485)

sporting events can also develop a strong support from highly involved participants which eventually can impact the sponsors of the event. The results also suggest that sponsors should do much more than simply sponsoring an event, so that they can generate positive views and attitudes that have the capacity to improve the effectiveness of their sponsorship investment.

Social identity theory and identification have also been central in the model proposed by Gwinner and Swanson (2003), who relied on a quantitative methodological design to examine the impact of fan identification on four sponsorship outcomes in a college football context: sponsor recognition, attitude toward the sponsor, supportive patronage behaviours for sponsors (involving intentions to purchase sponsors' products) and satisfaction with the sponsor (see figure 10.6). A survey conducted with 881 spectators prior to a game demonstrated that team identification is essential in sponsorship effectiveness since highly identified fans were more likely to exhibit the explored sponsorship outcomes.

Figure 10.6 Team Identification: antecedents and sponsorship outcomes



Source: Gwinner & Swanson (2003)

In addition, Gwinner and Swanson (2003) found that team identification can be predicted by the perceived prestige a team represents, the involvement of the person with the sport domain, and the number of fan associations (relationships, contacts etc.) with the team. Hence, the findings suggest that sponsorship effectiveness can be improved through exploring the potential offered by highly identified fans. Furthermore, this research can serve as the baseline for segmenting the sponsor's market based on their level of team identification in order to enable the sponsor to develop different, tailor-made, and possibly more efficient awareness and promotional initiatives to target the less identified groups.

The findings of another study carried out in the football context also demonstrated that favourable purchase intentions of fans are more likely to occur as team identification increases (Madrigal, 2000). Moreover, the study relied on the concept of "group norms", which is central in social identity theory, and based on the notion that group norms can specify and regulate the actions of the members of a group. The authors investigated the impact of this concept upon fans' purchasing intentions. Indeed, Bennett (1999) demonstrated that sport sponsorship can impact the assumptions of fans that their views and behaviours are customary among the members of the same group – fans in this case – but Bennett did not investigate the effect of this so called false consensus upon attitudes or behaviours. Data from a convenience sample of 678 students attending a college football game in the USA suggested that purchase intentions are more favourable when those intentions are perceived as a group norm (Madrigal, 2000). Furthermore, the study found that team identification had a greater impact upon purchase intentions at lower levels of group norms than at higher levels, suggesting that when individuals are highly concerned with other fans' opinions and expectations, team identification has little impact on purchase intentions. The findings of this study depict once again that a loyal and strongly identified fan group is highly beneficial for sport sponsors, implying that any actions strengthening the emotional connection and psychological attachment of

fans is something that is going to be highly appreciated by potential sponsors. Moreover, Madrigal (2000, p. 22) argued that the study highlighted “the need for properties to provide companies with exclusive opportunities for leveraging the sponsorship in ways that tap into attendees' loyalty” mainly through the employment of several affinity programs designed for strengthening the sponsor-sponsee relationship.

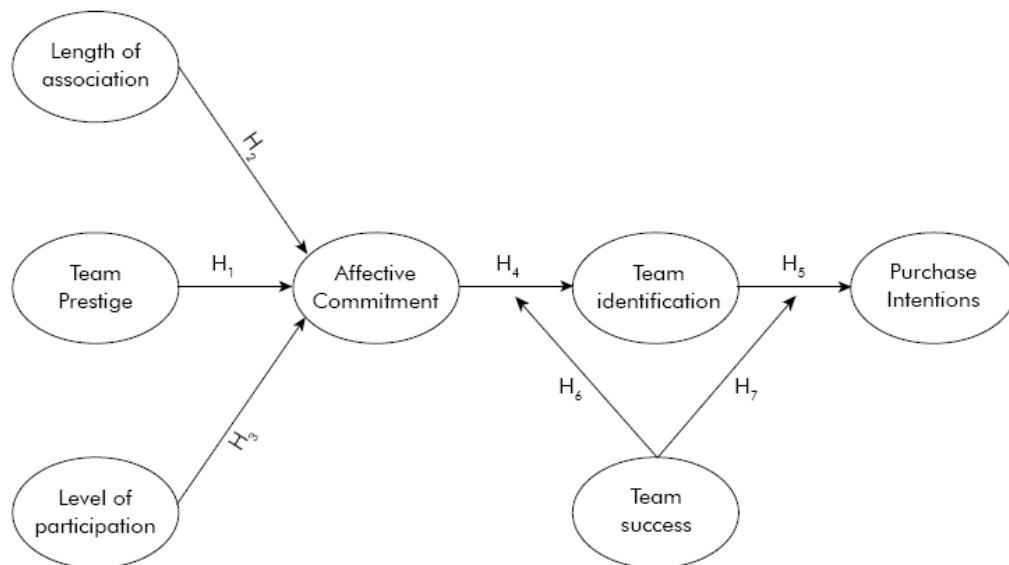
Similar results were presented by Smith, Graetz and Westerbeek (2008), who embraced Madrigal's (2001) belief-attitudes-intentions hierarchy model to identify the way in which team support and perceptions of sponsor integrity influence consumers' intentions to purchase sponsor's products. Their case study examined the members of an Australian football club through a mail-out questionnaire achieving 1647 usable responses, and the findings showed that team support, sponsor integrity – as perceived by the respondents – and sponsor receptiveness are key determinants of purchase intentions. Moreover, the study demonstrated that team support is associated with higher perceived sponsor integrity which, in turn, and in accordance with other studies (Alay, 2008; Speed & Thompson, 2000), seemed to enhance receptiveness to the sponsor's message and purchase intentions. Hence, in addition to the introduction of initiatives aiming at increasing the enthusiasm for the team, another important contribution of Smith et al.'s (2008) research is that sponsors can enhance their sponsorship potential by the adoption of strategies aiming at strengthening their integrity and demonstrating a sheer and genuine interest in the sport, the club, and its supporters.

In the same vein, the findings presented by Cornwell and Coote (2005) provided further evidence demonstrating that identification is positively related to consumers' intentions to purchase sponsors' products. Drawing on several concepts emerging from social identity theory the authors attempted to examine several antecedents of identification and purchase intentions. Data obtained through the responses of 501 participants taking part in a running race serving a

social purpose revealed that organisational prestige, the number of years of participation in the event, and the primary motivation of the participants were positively related to their identification with the organisation. Interestingly, the findings demonstrated that although the effects of the aforementioned factors on the intention to purchase sponsors' products were also positive and significant, they were mediated by organisational identification.

Extending the conceptual and operational models of the impact of sponsorship on purchasing intentions proposed by many authors (e.g. Cornwell & Coote, 2005; Madrigal, 2001; Speed & Thompson, 2000), Lings and Owen (2007) have drawn on the concept of affective commitment to propose "a modified framework describing the effect of sponsorship on purchase intentions in the context of low and high performing sport teams" (p. 483) (see figure 10.7).

Figure 10.7 A model of team identification and intention to purchase a sponsor's products



Source: Lings & Owen (2007).

The authors hypothesised that affective commitment, which is conceptualised as the emotional component of team identification, can influence fans' evaluations of the prestige of the team, their affiliation, and their

identification with the team. Moreover their model suggested that the performance of the team can positively moderate the relationship between affective commitment and team identification, and team identification and purchase intentions. The authors relied on the responses of 250 fans representing all the 16 teams participating in the Australian Football League, in order to test the proposed model. The findings provided support for their framework since they found that the impact of team prestige, length of association and level of participation upon team identification was mediated by affective commitment. Moreover, team identification was found to positively influence purchase intentions. However, it is of interest to observe that in the case of less successful teams this impact was minimal, despite the fact that fans maintained an affective commitment to their team regardless of its non-success. In contrast, for the successful teams, affective commitment appeared impacting purchasing intentions both directly and indirectly, through fan identification (Lings & Owen, 2007), suggesting that when the team is performing well, sponsorship can be more effective. The results indicate however that sponsorship can also be effective for low performing teams, but only when identification with the team is high.

The role of sport identification in enhancing sponsorship value was further empirically proved in the car-racing context. Research conducted by Levin et al. (2004) involving NASCAR car racing competitions found that the fans of the sport demonstrated higher attitudinal loyalty to sponsors' brands compared to non-NASCAR fans, and that this loyalty was significantly higher for highly identified fans compared to less identified fans. Interestingly, this effect was statistically significant only for the attitudinal component of brand loyalty and not for the purchase-related loyalty component (Levin et al., 2004). However, as the authors argued, attitudinal loyalty is important in that it implies that the customer is emotionally connected to the brand, and thus less price sensitive and more resistant to competitors' promotional efforts. Moreover, fan identification seems to have the potential to enhance fans' loyalty, and thus the effectiveness of sport

sponsorship, given that sponsors are able to invest in this highly promising emotional and psychological connection of the fans.

Given the importance of fan identification depicted in many studies, Gill (2008, p. 181) went a step further to “examine corporate sponsorship messages from a rhetorical perspective to understand how they create identification with the consumers of a sponsored activity” using also the premier division of NASCAR context. This context was regarded as an excellent platform for this study since NASCAR fans exhibit extremely high levels of sponsor awareness, and they are “the most brand-loyal fans, demonstrating a tendency to make purchasing decisions based on a product’s sponsorship of NASCAR or a product’s sponsorship of a driver” (Gill, 2008, p. 186). In his study, Gill tried to shed light on how the sponsors’ messages shape and influence the relationships sponsors have with the sport and the fan, and in doing so, he elaborated both on visual and textual messages employed by corporations. Regarding the visual messages, Gill argued that the placement of corporate logos and names – which are regarded as being key parts of their corporate identities – on teams, uniforms and racing cars, suggests a symbol of identification with both the teams and the fans.

Specifically, the exposure of the logos, names and trademarks – which are perceived as crucial in forming identity (Cheney, 1983, cited in Gill, 2008) - on the racing car is an essential medium for creating identification since the car is “the symbol and the foundation of racing” (Gill, 2008, p. 186). Moreover, when teams carry their sponsor’s name, colours and logo, the sponsor becomes an important part of the team’s identity. Additionally, this association fosters sponsor’s identification with consumers, since both of them are seen as supporters of the team. According to the author, this association “implicitly states a commonality between the corporate sponsor and the consumer by demonstrating a bond between fans and the corporate sponsor” (Gill, 2008, p. 186). These practices enable the sponsor to invest on the psychological connection and commitment of NASCAR fans towards the sport and the team, leading to benefits maximisation

given that they support the sponsorship with appropriate leveraging. In addition to the visual messages, corporations also employ textual messages to foster identification such as the language chosen, the name the team or the way in which they describe the sponsorship relationship. For example, the utilisation of names incorporating both team and corporate or brand elements, or the use of the term “partnership” to describe the sponsorship relationship, highlight shared values and shared interests that foster identification with both teams and consumers.

In addition to the factors fostering identification, another important evidence of the literature review is that identification, as well as consumers’ attitudes towards purchasing from sponsors seem to vary across cultures (Dalakas & Kropp, 2002). Their cross-cultural research using data gathered from USA, Korea and Southern Europe (Greece) examining similarities and differences among young sports fans in relation to the aforementioned concepts revealed that USA participants exhibited more favorable attitudes toward purchasing from sponsoring firms compared to Greeks and Koreans. This finding is compatible with the fact that sponsorship investment is not a recent phenomenon in the USA, something that enhances people familiarity and possibly their acceptability and responsiveness to the messages of the sponsors. Consistent with similar studies, the fans that were more strongly identified with their team had significantly more positive attitudes toward purchasing the sponsors’ products than moderate and low identification fans. It is important to note that male participants appeared to be significantly more strongly identified with their team in this study, information which is vital for sponsors’ segmentation and promotional strategies and decisions, especially when considering that there is plenty of evidence suggesting an impact of fan identification upon purchasing intentions (Cornwell & Coote, 2005; Dees & Bennett, 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Madrigal, 2000, 2001).

Contrary to Dalakas and Kropp’s (2002) expectations, American participants appeared having a stronger degree of identification with their team than Greeks

and Koreans, discarding the assumption that collectivistic cultures lead to stronger degree of identification than individualistic ones. These findings suggest that there may be other factors impacting identification. The strong emphasis on achievements, success and competition evident in the American culture can lead to the conclusion that “team identification in the United States may serve the purpose of allowing sports fans additional opportunities for personal accomplishment” (Dalakas & Kropp, 2002, p. 36).

Another factor which is closely related to fan identification and attachment and which was found to be a significant determinant of sponsorship effectiveness is fan involvement¹⁰. This is not surprising when considering the evidence presented above (e.g. Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Tsiotsou & Alexandris, 2009) suggesting that sport involvement is an antecedent of the attachment of fans with the team, as well as evidence implying that involvement has a positive impact on image transfer between the sport property and the sponsor (Grohs & Reisinger, 2005). Aligned with these notions, Bennett et al. (2009) found that the involvement of fans with the sport explored in their study had a significant impact on spectatorship, which in turn had a direct impact sponsors’ brand use by the 552 attendees of the Dew Action Sports Tour who served as a case study. The integral role of spectatorship demonstrated in this study provides further support to the notion that sponsorship should be carefully managed through additional communicational efforts such as product placement, advertising, signage, contests, and several sales promotions on site or during televised events in an effort to increase sales and brand consumption.

Congruent with the above findings, sport involvement, together with an individual’s attitude toward the event and beliefs about sponsorship appeared having value in predicting certain sponsorship outcomes such as sponsor image, word-of-mouth and purchase intentions (Alexandris et al., 2007). More specifically, beliefs about sponsorship appeared having an important and

¹⁰ In fact, it is important to note that although many authors use different terms (fan identification, attachment, involvement etc.) they basically measure the same thing.

consistent contribution in predicting all the three sponsorship outcomes explored in this study, lending additional support to the view that sponsorship effectiveness should be facilitated through initiatives and actions directed at formulating positive consumer attitudes towards their investments. Attitudes toward the event seemed to contribute to the prediction of purchase intentions but not to word-of-mouth or sponsor's image. Finally, and regarding the involvement construct, the centrality dimension (the role that a sport activity has in an individual's lifestyle – social and individual contexts) made a significant contribution to all the sponsorship outcomes, while the attraction dimension did not.

Dees et al. (2008) further substantiated the findings presented above by demonstrating that fan involvement and attitudes towards the sponsor appeared having a significant impact on fans' intentions to support the sponsor through purchasing behaviors. In addition, the data collected through a web based questionnaire administered to 351 attendees of an elite intercollegiate football program, demonstrated that sponsor's goodwill (the degree to which the sponsor was socially responsible company), as a result of its sponsorship activity, was a stronger predictor of fans' purchase intentions, implying that "goodwill may be one of the keys to transforming avid fans into loyal consumers" (Dees et al. 2008, p. 86). Those findings are quite interesting, especially when considering that goodwill values have not been employed extensively for evaluating the sponsorship activity, with authors such as Irwin et al. (2003) and Van Herdeem et al. (2008) being the exceptions in the literature review.

Similarly to Dees et al. (2008), Boshoff and Gerber (2008) found that fans' attitudes towards the sponsoring brand are positively influenced by sport sponsorship only for fans demonstrating high levels of involvement with the sport. In addition, the authors found that both brand recall and recognition scores increased significantly as a result of the sponsorship. Using a one-group pre- and post-test design, the authors evaluated both companies sponsoring the 2007 Cricket World Cup as well as non-sponsors, and found that the impact of sport

sponsorship on unaided brand recall and recognition involves only the sponsoring brands and not competing brands offered by non-sponsoring companies in the same product category. In a similar vein, car-racing sponsorship also seems to impact brand recall and recognition levels of consumers as demonstrated by Levin, Joiner, and Cameron (2001). The authors also found that the NASCAR fans that scored high in involvement were more likely to recall sponsoring brands and had more positive attitudes towards those brands than the fans with low involvement. In addition, the study illustrated that the effectiveness of sponsorship is higher when combined with related advertising, providing further support to the importance of leveraging the sponsorship activity.

The significant relationship between involvement and several measures of sponsorship effectiveness was further depicted by Ko et al. (2008). Data obtained through a survey with 390 Korean fans carried out during the 2002 FIFA World Cup showed that fans' involvement in football had a positive and direct impact on sponsor awareness, sponsor image and purchase intentions among fans. Those findings become even more important when considering that positive image of the sponsor was found to favourably influence the intentions of fans towards purchasing products offered by the sponsor. In contrast, but in line with evidence presented earlier (Lyberger & McCarthy, 2002), awareness did not influence consumers' future purchase intentions, suggesting that when managing their sponsorship deals, corporate sponsors should consider developing marketing initiatives aiming at enhancing their image instead of awareness levels. The positive relationship between corporate image and intention to purchase sponsors' products has also been demonstrated by Pope and Voges (2000). The results were gathered using a convenience sample of 964 Australian university students who gave responses related to ten sponsors from five different product categories involved in several sponsorship activities. Interestingly, the study also found that sponsorship awareness had also a direct impact on purchase intentions, but it is important to note that no interactive effects between

sponsorship awareness and image values were found, providing no evidence that sponsorship impacted sponsors' corporate image.

Contrary to the findings underscoring the important role of sport involvement on the effect that sponsorships have, Cornwell, Relyea, Irwin and Maignan (2000) found through pre-event survey involving 222 basketball fans that involvement did not influence recall and recognition of sponsors directly. It would appear that different measures of involvement employed in several studies may produce contradicting findings, or that different types of sporting competitions may impact sponsorship outcomes differently. The results revealed, however, that involvement did influence fans' attendance, and thus, the exposure of those fans to the sponsors' messages. Hence, the authors asserted that involvement may have had an indirect impact on awareness. Furthermore, the study also found that fans' enthusiasm and overall exposure to the sport influenced awareness levels, while environmental clutter resulting from advertising and promotional communications had a negative influence on both sponsor recall and recognition.

These findings suggest that, in order to maximise the effectiveness of their investment, it is more beneficial for companies to enter sponsorship agreements with few additional sponsors – supporting further the findings presented by Ruth and Simonin (2006) - as well as sponsoring sports that have loyal fans. Indeed, a field survey results drawn from a sample of more than 1200 participants attending a cycling event provides additional support to the above notion, since repeat attendance was found to be associated with enhanced brand image, more favorable attitudes of fans towards the sponsor and purchase intentions of ongoing sponsors' products (Lacey, Sneath, Finney & Close, 2007). It may be that a relationship between sponsors and fans takes years to develop, suggesting that long-term sponsorships are more effective than short-term ones. This notion was further supported empirically by Cornwell and colleagues, who examined the perceptions of sport sponsorship managers and found that “longer sponsorship

relationships lead to stronger perceived effects on brand equity” (Cornwell et al., 2001a, p. 49).

The perceptions of managers with regard to the effects of sponsorship on brand equity were also explored by Henseler et al. (2007), verifying the argument made by Cornwell & Maignan (1998) that brand equity could form an ideal framework for the analysis of brand-related sponsorship effects. Using the conceptualisation of brand equity proposed by Aaker (1996), Henseler et al. asked 86 managers of companies sponsoring football clubs in the Netherlands to complete an online questionnaire measuring the impact of sponsorship on brand awareness, brand associations, brand loyalty and perceived quality. The study relied on a Sport Sponsorship Index (SSI) consisting of four components (level of exposure, amount of coverage – TV and spectators, club quality operationalised by the competition in which the club plays, and tie-in advertising opportunities the sponsor receives (Henseler et al., 2007). The findings demonstrated that, in line with Cornwell et al. (2001a), sport sponsorship (as components of the SSI model) “contributes significantly to the formation of brand equity, as perceived by managers” (Henseler et al., 2007, p. 327), and sponsor-ponsee fit appeared to have a significant, positive and strong direct impact upon brand equity.

10.5 Measuring the value of sponsorship based on objective/concrete measures

The studies presented above clearly illustrate the dominance of cognitive models that have been extensively applied in the sponsorship evaluation literature as depicted in the awareness and attitudes measures used by the majority of the researchers. Hoek (1999), however, criticised the strong emphasis placed on attitudinal constructs, reiterating that although there are clear indications that sponsorship creates awareness, “there is no evidence that awareness, and the subsequent development of descriptive belief attributes, will prompt trial” (p. 3). Hence, the author recommended a shift towards behavioral models that have the capacity to shed light on the relationship between sponsorship and consumer

behavior, so that sponsorship investment is not “simply a magnanimous but empty gesture” (Hoek, 1999, p. 8). Therefore, the author emphasised the need for incorporating clear, behavioral objectives and measures into sponsorship activities that can provide direct behavioral evaluation. According to Hoek, this can be achieved by linking sponsorship directly to some forms of sales promotion activities that offer more straightforward evaluation opportunities, such as sales responses to price discounting promotions, competition entries and number of coupons redeemed.

The same concerns were voiced by Wilson (1997), who held that sponsors believe that awareness, recognition, and image are important objectives, primarily because they feel that may subsequently lead to behavioural outcomes such as product consumption and increased sales. Evidence, however, cited in the certain paper did not provide convincing arguments that the aforementioned attitudes were in fact, neither translated into increased sales or market share, nor that the increases monitored in several studies were attributed to sponsorship effects since the latter is usually leveraged by additional marketing and communicational activities. The author was led to the conclusion that sponsors rely more on feelings than pure facts with regard to the impact of sport sponsorship on the financial performance of the business.

Currie (2000) believed that technological advances would greatly enhance sponsors’ ability to measure sponsorship effectiveness in terms of sales and revenue figures. Indeed, there have been some attempts in the sponsorship evaluation literature focusing on more concrete and tangible measures of sponsorship performance, albeit those attempts were scarce. Cornwell et al. (2001b), for example, examined the effectiveness of sponsorship, as well as the impact of several factors on the success of this marketing medium. The authors focused on auto-racing sponsorships, and specifically tried to examine the value of winning on sponsorship effectiveness, the impact of the fit between the sponsor and the event and the impact of several uncontrollable aspects, such as close

finishes or surprise winners. Based on the assumption that effective sponsorships eventually translate into increased sales, and thus into “quantifiable improvements in the overall economic fundamentals of the sponsoring companies” (Cornwell et al., 2001b, p. 18), the authors used the stock price of the firms as the main indicator of performance. Adopting the “market model”¹¹ method, a widely accepted and heavily used methodology in the certain context, this empirical study revealed the value and importance of the linkage or the match between sponsor and the sponsoring event. Specifically, sponsors with matched ties to the automotive industry (e.g. tires or motor oil) “registered statistically and economically significant gains in their share prices around the time of their sponsorship victories” while sponsorships of a lower congruence or a more unrelated nature generated lower levels of corporate goodwill (Cornwell et. al., 2001b, p. 17).

The same methodological design was used by Clark et al. (2009), who attempted to evaluate title sponsorships of golf, tennis and auto-racing events. In line with past evidence, sponsorships of NASCAR races seemed to have resulted in increased share prices, something that it is not the case for the golf and tennis sponsorships explored in this study. This could be attributed to the fact that NASCAR fans appear as being very loyal to the sport and its sponsors (Levin et al., 2004) which may lead to increases in the effectiveness of NASCAR sponsorships. The study carried out by Clark et al. also revealed that congruency is an important component of sponsorship success as perceived by the respondents, while sponsorships by large companies and high-tech firms appeared as being more beneficial in terms of the impact on shareholder wealth.

In another attempt to estimate the net economic value of sports sponsorships, Cornwell et al., (2005) also found that sponsorships by high technology firms were more effective as demonstrated in the stock price reactions. Furthermore,

¹¹ The methodology involves the estimation of a time series of stock market returns to measure the effects of events (in this case, sponsorship wins at the Indianapolis 500) upon the stock prices of firms (Cornwell et.al., 2001, p. 21)

congruency was also found to be important since sponsorships that were reasonably linked to the sponsored league were more effective in terms of stock price increases compared to those less related. This study revealed that the increase in stock prices around the time of the initial sponsorship announcement, as demonstrated by the market model analysis employed to examine 53 official league sponsorships of some of the most popular sports in the United States, was greater for basketball, hockey and golf compared to football and baseball sponsorships. Moreover, the study indicated that firms with smaller market shares that are less dominant in their industry appear to benefit the most of their sponsorship investments, leading to the conclusion that the contribution of sponsorship to consumer awareness “may be more readily identified by investors when the sponsoring firm is a relatively small player in the market” (Cornwell et al., 2005, p. 410).

The fact that small businesses benefit more from sponsorship announcements has also been supported by Samitas et al. (2008), who relied on event study analysis which is a widely accepted and utilised method to analyse changes in a firm’s market value as a result of certain events. Those events were the announcements of the 2004 Olympic sponsorships and the opening ceremony of the Games. The results indicated that only sponsorship announcements of the 21 national and international sponsors taking part in this study did impact sponsors’ stock returns, and not the opening ceremony event. Moreover, this positive impact was marginal, and not as high as expected by the authors. Similar evidence was presented by Miyazaki and Morgan (2001), who also conducted an event study analysis to examine how the sponsorship announcements of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta influenced the movements in stock prices of the 27 official Olympic sponsors. Their empirical results did not demonstrate large effects on sponsors’ stock value, but the lack of significant negative abnormal returns¹², combined with one significant positive return, suggest that “the acquisition of

¹² Returns not consistent with the pattern of change as established by past firm and market activity, calculated as the difference between the actual and the expected returns (Miyazaki & Morgan, 2001).

Olympic sponsorships is seen by the investment marketplace to be a positive event” (Miyazaki & Morgan, 2001, p. 13).

11. Legal and Ethical Issues in Sport Sponsorship

11.1 Ambush Marketing

Ambush marketing has attracted continued research attention since it is a controversial marketing strategy with debatable moral grounding. In fact, early definitions of ambushing were highly judgmental, implying unethical practices undertaken by non-sponsors in order to attack official sponsors and diminish the value of their investment by deriving similar benefits as official sponsors do. The term *ambush marketing* was initially coined by Bayless (1988, cited in Farrelly, Quester & Greyser, 2005) to describe the activities of companies that sought a false association with an event without paying the sponsorship fee and thus confusing audiences as to which companies hold official sponsorship rights. In the same vein, Meenaghan (1996, p. 106) described ambush marketing as “the practice whereby another company, often a competitor, intrudes upon public attention surrounding the event, thereby deflecting attention to themselves and away from the sponsor”. Hence, ambushing is also described as “parasitic marketing” (Cornwell, 1998, p. 306), and it is argued to have detrimental impact upon official sponsorship (Meenaghan, 1994; O’Sullivan & Murphy, 1998).

As Meenaghan (1994) argued, ambush marketing has significant negative implications for sport property owners such as the IOC and FIFA, threatening the integrity of the events and undermining official sponsorship activity. According to Farrelly et al. (2005), ambushing had been most prevalent in the beverage, credit card, fast food and sports apparel industries. The use of ambush marketing, however, has become widespread and increases together with official sponsorship activity. In fact, the practice of ambush marketing is thought to have evolved “from a suspicious or even illegitimate practice to an acceptable

marketing strategy” (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998), and this is well illustrated in the fact that reviews of sponsorship literature have included the ambushing section under the umbrella of *strategic sponsorship practices* (e.g. Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Walliser, 2003). The use of ambush marketing activities by several companies as an official sponsorship’s counterstrategy has resulted in the method being perceived as a “respectable practice worthy of research” (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998, p. 15). Cornwell (2008) argued that ambushing could actually form an important area of future sponsorship inquiry, with strategy research focusing on how ambushers could form alliances in an effort to avoid the legal and financial burden associated with ambushing, whilst communication research could examine the positive and negative consequences of ambushing. In fact, Cornwell (2008, p. 52) held that “an outrageous ambushing” could impact favorably the official sponsor and generate important negative outcomes for the ambusher.

Meenaghan (1994) held that ambush marketing is used as a strategic alternative to official sponsorship, whilst at the same time the author argues that there is a considerable difference between associating with an event without paying a fee and a more generic form of ambushing involving a variety of “wholly legitimate and morally correct methods of intruding upon public consciousness surrounding an event” (p. 79). Having said this, it should be mentioned that the immoral and unethical dimensions of this practice is still a question that is highly discussed and debated.

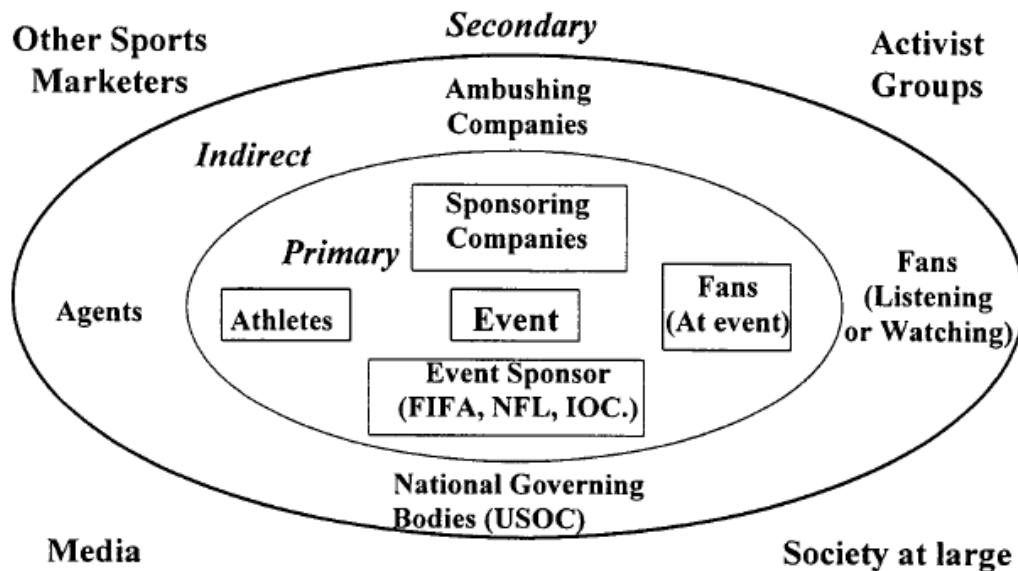
O’Sullivan & Murphy (1998) attempted to draw attention to the ethical and legal aspects of ambush marketing. They argued that attitudes towards ambush activities have become harsher over time together with a growing realisation of the fact that ambushing is a well-planned activity intended to “create miscomprehension in the consumer’s mind” (Sandler & Shani, 1989, p. 11, cited in O’Sullivan & Murphy, 1998). The authors went further to locate ambush marketing within an ethical and legal framework. Using literature indicating the

effectiveness of ambush marketing, and drawing upon a conceptual framework describing the desired relationship with events, media and audiences that sponsor seek, the authors assumed that the damage caused to official sponsors is real and serious. With the ambusher intervening in this relationship, a spurious affiliation with the sponsored property is communicated, intended to “capture the attention of the audience for both message and association effects” (O’Sullivan & Murphy, 1998, p. 355). Although some practices of ambush marketing raise significant legal concerns, according to O’Sullivan & Murphy (1998, p. 355) available legal decisions on the topic “have generated more controversy than clarity”, and thus “there is no readily available solution emerging from the legal domain”. Similarly, the authors do not believe that the issue of ambush marketing can be addressed solely from the perspective of property rights, albeit these, when comprehensively defined can provide a framework for economic activity and conduct. In addition, the fact that many of the sponsored events have become deeply embedded in the society has led citizens to become stakeholders, raising in turn issues related to their rights for accessing sporting events that are actually part of their culture.

O’Sullivan & Murphy (1998) continued this discussion on the ethics of ambush marketing based on four theories: *utilitarianism*, *duty-based ethics*, *stakeholder analysis*, and *virtue ethics*. Utilitarianism is more concerned with the consequences of an action, and thus ambush marketing is regarded as unethical based on its detrimental impact upon official sponsors. Duty-based theory concentrates on the intention of an action. Hence, ambush marketing is regarded as an ethically questionable practice if, as mentioned earlier, it purposefully attempts to mislead consumers. Stakeholder analysis evaluates the ethical properties of ambushing activities based on their impact upon a range of stakeholders (see figure 11.1) such as fans, environmentalists, athletes, event organisers, sponsors, governing bodies etc. Finally, virtue ethics place emphasis on the person (or the organisation) and not on the action. Hence, ambush marketing, is probably going to be rejected as an action, according to the theory,

by the corporate culture of the businesses as a counterproductive action (O'Sullivan & Murphy, 1998).

Figure 11.1 Stakeholder Analysis for Sport Sponsorship



Source: O'Sullivan & Murphy (1998).

Ambush Marketing Practices and their Effectiveness

Meenaghan (1994, 1998) examined the range of ambush marketing strategies employed by companies. The practices identified mainly involve the following: (1) sponsoring certain media coverage of the event in an effort to access the media audience which is usually much larger than participants; (2) sponsoring of subcategories within an event (such as sponsoring a certain team); (3) engaging in a variety of promotional activities coinciding with an event (e.g. themed advertising); (4) making sponsorship-related contributions to the players pool, a strategy that is especially applicable in international events where players' sponsors are distinct from teams' sponsors; and (5) using miscellaneous creative and imaginative ambushing strategies allowing the company to associate itself with a certain sport property. From the aforementioned strategies, broadcast

sponsorship is regarded as particularly effective and, although it was seen as a novelty in 1984 when Kodak sponsored the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) covering the 1984 Olympics to compete with Fuji who signed as official sponsor, it became a standard practice a few years later (O'Sullivan & Murphy, 1998).

In addition to the main strategies employed by ambushers, Meenaghan (1998) examined consumer reactions and attitudes to those through elaborating on several empirical studies that investigated those effects quantitatively or qualitatively. The studies examining the effectiveness of the medium that were reviewed by Meenaghan concentrated on the Olympic Games and explored mainly recall and recognition levels of ambushers and official sponsors. Overall, the main conclusions drawn are that ambush marketing can be very effective under certain circumstances, such as when the ambusher uses broadcast sponsorship, or when the official sponsor fails to support sponsorship with adequate leveraging. The former notion is further supported by Shin and Turco (2005), who argued that the aggressive ambush marketing practices employed by Nike may partly explain the high levels of positive image and the increased purchase intentions demonstrated by respondents in their study. Additionally, the latter notion is empirically supported by the longitudinal study carried out by Tripodi and Hirons (2009), who found that leveraging activities of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Sponsors not simply raised sponsorship awareness levels, but also minimised the detrimental effect of ambushing.

Meenaghan (1998) also highlighted the attitudes of consumers towards ambush marketing found in the scarce literature that examined this issue at that time. Interestingly, findings are not particularly illuminating since there is evidence suggesting that consumers are "negatively disposed toward ambush marketing" (Meenaghan, 1998, p. 315), and evidence indicating that consumers are poorly informed about the rights of official sponsors and largely indifferent to the issue of

ambushing, providing marginal support to the unethical aspect of this marketing strategy (Sandler & Shani, 1998, cited in Meenaghan, 1998).

In another study, Meenaghan (1994) cited evidence indicating that certain ambush strategies can be very effective. Specifically, broadcast sponsorship proved to be very efficient as illustrated in the recognition rates achieved by a non-official sponsor providing broadcasting sponsorship of several events such as the 1990 FIFA World Cup (Parker, 1991, cited in Meenaghan, 1994) as well as in the image rates obtained for the 1991 Rugby World Cup. In addition to broadcast sponsorship, other ambushing methods have also yielded satisfactory effectiveness indicators, suggesting that ambush strategies can be successful in achieving “initial levels of communication effects” as depicted in recognition and recall rates (Meenaghan, 1994, p. 83).

Despite the growth of ambush marketing, empirical research examining the effectiveness of this medium has been scarce in the sport sponsorship context, as depicted in the systematic review conducted in this study. Moreover, the evidence presented by the limited studies that explored this issue is rather conflicting than conclusive. Lyberger and McCarthy (2001), for example, produced some results that generate much concern to official sponsors, and much promise to ambushers. The authors looked at the practice of ambushing around the 1998 NFL Super Bowl through the responses of 486 individuals. Employing a questionnaire originally developed by Sandler and Shani (1998, cited in Lyberger & McCarthy, 2001) the study found that consumers have moderate levels of knowledge and express significant confusion with regard to the rights of official sponsors. In fact, the study reported that consumers are less aware of ambush tactics being employed at the Super Bowl than those being employed at the Olympics. Further analysis of these factors revealed that although consumers successfully identified the general characteristics associated with official sponsors’ usage, they lacked specific sponsorship-related knowledge (Lyberger & McCarthy, 2001). Interestingly, this lack of knowledge did not appear to be affected by the level of

interest consumers have toward the sport, the organisation, or the sponsored event. It is also important that, the authors found “a considerable level of apathy toward the practice of ambushing” (Lyberger & McCarthy, 2001, p. 135), with only 51% of them considering misdirecting consumers beliefs as unethical, only 54% considering ambushing unfair, and only 20% being annoyed by ambush marketing practices. Overall, the results generate much concern for sponsors and event organisers since the lack of awareness, combined with the neutral attitudes towards ambushers lead to the conclusion that the value of sponsorship need to re-evaluated (Lyberger & McCarthy, 2001).

In contrast to the above findings, Portlock and Rose (2009) explored the effects of ambush marketing upon UK football-oriented consumers and found very different results. Specifically, the study explored consumer reactions to ambush marketing based on pre- and post- event instruments measuring brand recognition within the FIFA World Cup 2006 context. Moreover, the study attempted to find out consumer knowledge with regard to the difference between sponsorship and ambushing. Notably, the results indicated that little confusion existed among the 291 participants in this study as to the correct recognition of the three official sponsor brands. Furthermore, sponsoring brands gained greater levels of recognition compared to ambushing brands. Finally, and contrary to Lyberger and McCarthy (2001), the level of involvement appeared as being critical since highly involved consumers were more likely to recognise both the sponsorship and the ambushing relationship with the event. These promising findings lend some support to the value of investing in sponsorship rights, something that is not further substantiated by the fact that, once again, consumers appeared to be tolerant of ambush marketing activities, expressing low levels of annoyance to this practice (Portlock & Rose, 2009).

Byon and Zhang (2009) made an effort to estimate the detrimental impact of ambush marketing upon sponsorship through a quasi-experimental design that controlled the effects of extraneous variables such as previous consumption and

brand influences. The results of this study are quite interesting in that, although sponsorship was found to be slightly more effective than ambush marketing, considering the marginal cost associated with the latter strategy the findings generate much concern to event organisers and sponsors. Specifically, the study examined the impact of ambush marketing activities upon sponsorship during the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Bowl Championship Series (BCS) and Division I Men's Basketball Championship in the U.S.A. 164 football and basketball spectators of the televised games participated in this study that examined recall and recognition rates as well as purchase intention of both sponsorship and ambush products in three product categories (soft drink, automobile, and wireless cellular phone). Although sponsorship appeared as being more effective than ambush marketing in terms of both awareness and purchase intentions measures, the impact of ambushing was also very significant. In fact, there was evidence showing that the ambush brand was even more effective than the sponsorship brand for the basketball spectators, whilst for the combined sample the ambush brand represented particularly high rates of brand awareness and purchase intentions (Byon & Zhang, 2009), leading the authors to the conclusion that ambushing could be very effective in terms of return on investment.

Based on these findings, the authors made some hypotheses and addressed the need for further research exploring those. Particularly, they felt that consumers got confused with regard to who the official sponsor was since they seemed to be exposed to both sponsors' and ambushers' products during the events. In fact, the authors observed that in some cases ambush brands were more visible than sponsor brands. They tried to locate the confusion that seems to be generated within the Mere Exposure Effect theory (holding that consumers exposed to various products over a long period would more likely build familiarity and eventually favorable attitudes toward the products), and within the *Market Prominence theory* explaining that when failing to recall or recognise a product consumers tend to associate it with any product that has high market prominence.

Finally, they emphasised the importance of the opportunity provided to official sponsors to heavily expose themselves more effectively through a variety of leveraging initiatives instead of allowing room for ambushers.

Evidence substantiating the effectiveness of ambush marketing was also reported by Nufer (2009). His study concentrating mainly on the sponsorship effectiveness the 2006 FIFA World Cup, suggested that the role of ambushing can be important since non-sponsors in their study appeared being “able to achieve similar recall and image values to official sponsors by applying ambush marketing strategies” (Nufer, 2009, p. 248). In addition, the author argued that ambushing minimises the efficiency of official sponsors since the latter has to share consumer awareness with non-sponsors utilising the event as a promotional platform. Hence, both event organisers and sponsors need to be creative and very active in supporting official sponsorships to avoid exploitation from ambushers.

McKelvey and Gladden (2006) were interested in uncovering the influence of ambush marketing from the official sponsor’s perspective. Thus, the authors investigated the opinions and perceptions of 85 USA-based official sponsors for eight professional sport organisations toward ambush marketing. They did so by using a questionnaire designed to elicit their perceptions on effective ambush marketing practices and potential implications of ambushing upon property holders. Respondents ranked the purchase of advertising time within the event broadcast as being the most effective ambush method, followed by sweepstakes or contests using event tickets, and offering of premiums thematically linked to the event. Furthermore, using a notable athlete affiliated with the sport event, using advertisements thematically tied to the event and sponsoring individual teams, were perceived as being effective strategies. Finally, the study indicated that ambush marketing is seen by sponsors as a growing problem that is more prevalent today than in the past. Notably, the study also found that “ambush marketing can pose a significant threat to the value of a sport organisation’s sponsorship portfolio” (McKelvey & Gladden, 2006, p. 292) since respondents were less likely to recommend sponsoring a property that had been successfully

and continually ambushed in the past. Moreover, they stated that the rights fees charged by sport organisations would decline if they continued to ineffectively deal with ambush marketing. These findings generate concerns for property holders since, in order to secure their sponsorship income, they have to adopt a more systematic and proactive approach curtailing ambushing, especially with regard to the ambushing practices that are regarded as being more effective.

Actions Combatting Ambush Marketing

Apart from the findings concerning the effectiveness of several ambushing strategies, there is also some literature about the strategies that have the potential to combat ambush marketing. McKelvey and Gladden's (2006) study, for example, explored managers' perceptions with regard to the effective tactics combating ambushing. According to the authors, the respondents felt that legal action against ambushers, patrols in and around the venue designed to police ambushers, cease and desist communications accompanied by threats for legal action and print advertisements saluting official sponsors had the capacity to combat ambushers.

In the same vein, part of Meenaghan's (1994) also looked at the counter strategies that corporate sponsors can employ to protect their sponsorship investments. Among them are actions such as exercising pressures upon event organisers to protect their events from ambushers (e.g. blocking opportunities for ambushers through controlling images and licensed products, undertaking legal action against ambushers etc.). Another suggestion made by Meenaghan is the development of sponsorship packages combining event and broadcast sponsorship. Furthermore, sponsors should be prepared to anticipate competitive promotions (e.g. through identifying other official sponsors and their rights, the existence of co-sponsors and their support activities) and develop plans to counter them. Another important strategy is the appropriate and adequate exploitation of the sponsorship rights secured, and the importance of this factor is further substantiated by empirical evidence illustrating the role of leveraging in

diminishing the impact of ambush marketing (e.g. Tripodi & Hirons, 2009). The last option available to sponsors being ambushed described by Meenaghan involves undertaking legal action against ambushers or against the event organisers. This action, however, is more complicated since it is dependent upon national and international legislation.

Congruently to Meenaghan (1994), O'Sullivan & Murphy (1998) also argued that linking event and broadcast sponsorship is a preventing action against ambushing. The authors also argued that offering "complete vertical and lateral sponsorship rights" would eliminate confusion and enable the protection of official sponsors. Finally, they proposed the development of codes of ethics and actions concerning the primary stakeholders of the sponsorship activity intended to monitor and control unethical ambush marketing activities.

Farrelly et al. (2005, p. 346) advocated a counterstrategy to ambushing that is "deceptively simple". Specifically, the findings of their study examining ambushing from the perspective of the sponsor and the sponsored property indicated that despite the constantly growing sophistication of ambush marketing, the adoption of a co-marketing alliance towards sponsorship has the potential to optimise sponsorship effectiveness and to act as a remedy for ambush marketing. Interviews with 20 key global sponsorship professionals (i.e. the top level managers of Manchester United, Visa, IOC, Nike, Vodafone, FIFA, Coca-Cola etc.) revealed that the co-branding benefits associated with sponsorship can be primarily defended through the development of strategic, long-term sponsorship partnerships embedding credible associations with the sponsored properties. Specifically, sponsors need to select congruent properties "with which they can establish an association that is meaningful to consumers" (Farrelly et al., 2005, p. 346).

Such sponsorship partnerships that are also long-term, and not opportunistic, can enable the sponsor to add value to the brand by adding legitimacy and

authenticity to the company or the brand. The sponsor can, in turn, protect their brand value derived from their sponsorships in case of ambushing through capitalising on legitimacy and authenticity and by “appealing to consumers increasingly wary of disingenuous brands” (Farrelly et al., 2005, p. 339). In fact, the authors were surprised by the fact that for some sponsors, attacks from ambushers appeared providing “a great opportunity for brand building as they garner consumers' support and goodwill in the face of "fake" and fraudulent ambushers” (Farrelly et al., 2005, p. 347). Furthermore, the study highlighted the importance of investing heavily upon the sponsorship arrangement through carefully designed marketing and communication leveraging activities that create barriers for ambushers and further legitimise the role of the official sponsor. Finally, the authors drew attention on the importance of a joint effort exercised by both the sponsors and the sport properties. In fact, the study revealed that some sport properties have adopted a proactive, highly energetic and effective approach against ambushers, which is also regarded as being a method to deliver additional value to the sponsor.

The critical role of the sponsored property in defending the benefits of their sponsors was also highlighted by McKelvey and Grady (2008) who felt that recently, sport event organisers have become much more proactive in protecting both the financial investment of the sponsors as well as the integrity and credibility of their events. Hence, this study discussed the effectiveness of several strategies aiming to combat ambush marketing implemented by event organisers. Before examining the effectiveness of those strategies, McKelvey and Grady (2008) elaborated on a variety of ambush marketing tactics employed by ambushers to illuminate practical and legal implications for official sponsors and event organisers.

Specifically, the authors argued that intellectual property protection is major concern for event organisers since trademark law could provide limited protection for the use of generic phrases that are usually employed by ambushers to create

a false association with an event. In addition, purchase of advertising time within an event broadcast is another heavily used method that event organisers cannot easily combat since by selling sponsorship to the media they also relinquish control to them. Presence in and around an event is another issue of major concern for McKelvey and Grady (2008), albeit the intensive efforts of the event organisers, especially those of major sporting events such as the Olympics, to limit opportunities for ambushers. Consumer promotions at several retail locations implying associations with a sponsored event, yet without using registered trademarks, was an additional popular ambush marketing practice mentioned by the authors. Finally, another creative ambush marketing method discussed by McKelvey and Grady (2008) is the attempt to affiliate with a sponsored property through congratulatory messages incorporated in advertisements.

Based on the variety of ambushers' actions and creativity, McKelvey and Grady (2008, p. 560) concentrated on "new and arguably more effective sponsorship program protection strategies" undertaken by the organisers of major sporting events and attempted to evaluate their success against ambushers. Recognising that, despite many legal victories against ambushers, ambush marketing issues are very difficult to be resolved through legal action, one of the main initiatives undertaken by event organisers and explored in this study is the enactment and enforcement of special trademark protection legislation, a practice heavily used within the Olympic Movement. Specifically, the practice of ambushing does not necessarily involve clearly illegal activities that can easily be resolved through trademark protection legislation, especially when the action takes place in less developed legal contexts, something that is very common in staging international and global events. Moreover, the creativity of ambushers described above enables the use of activities that cannot be easily combated. Hence, enacting special protection legislation provides organisers with the means "to thwart ambush marketing" (McKelvey & Grady, 2008, p. 574)

Another important preventative measure discussed by the authors involves the introduction of educational and PR initiatives well before hosting the event. The authors placed particular emphasis on the importance of informing and educating consumers and companies about the differences between official sponsorship and ambushing regarding legal rights. Drawing on several cases of national and international event organisers, some illuminating examples of this practice provided by the authors involve positioning rules and regulations on the official web-site of the event, the production and dissemination of audiovisual material and news releases to the media emphasising intellectual property rights and legal initiatives for their protection, educating and offering guidance to sponsors on how to defend their investment, and more aggressive tactics such as using “the threat of a high-profile public reprisal as a means of deterring non-sponsors” (McKelvey & Grady, 2008, p. 564). Despite the usefulness of educational initiatives, the authors recognised that their effectiveness is limited since they depend on the cooperation of media and on the receptiveness of the public that, based on several studies, is uninformed, unaware, or even apathetic towards ambushers.

The third protection initiative discussed by the study involves on-site policing of venues, such as patrolling the area to remove ambush marketing activities, covering the logos of non-sponsors, securing commercial inventory (e.g. advertising space and billboards) for the official sponsors in and around the venue area, restricting access to large blocks of tickets or to hospitality opportunities, and reserving those benefits for official, and finally, the establishment of clean zones intended to minimise commercialism and restrict the use of unauthorised logos or PR and promotional activities exercised by ambushers (McKelvey & Grady, 2008). Despite recognising that policing measures are proactive and particularly aggressive against ambush initiatives, the authors however drew attention on the fact that control measures bear the risk of generating negative publicity to official sponsors and the event, and alienating fans. Moreover, those measures raise significant legal concerns since the commercial rights of other

businesses need to be taken in consideration. After all, according to McKelvey & Grady (2008, p. 560), “it is critical to acknowledge that non-sponsors have legal rights and ethical obligations to shareholders to maintain the salience of their brands during sports events”.

Finally, the fourth measure discussed by the authors refers to the use of contractual language in athlete participation agreements and on spectators’ tickets. Considering that athletes provide “an ambush marketing avenue for non-sponsors”, such measures are essential in the prevention of ambush marketing. Moreover, the placement of restrictions on the spectators attending the event regarding ambush marketing actions is also important in protecting from ambushing activities, but those measures raise important concerns regarding acceptability and legality involving the civil rights of fans.

11.2 Ethical and legal Dimensions of Sport Sponsorship by Unhealthy Products - Alcohol, Tobacco, Unhealthy food, and Gambling Sport Sponsorship

Sport sponsorship by unhealthy products forms another part of the sport sponsorship literature having legal and ethical implications, and thus, generating controversies. The association of sport with products that seem not to coincide with the alleged integrity of sport or the values that it represents is something that led to much debate in the sponsorship literature, especially after the dramatic expansion of this kind of sport sponsorship in heavily and strictly regulated markets (e.g. the tobacco market) after the introduction of advertising and promotional restrictions. The section that follows concentrates on the promotional and advertising value of the sponsorship medium for unhealthy sponsoring brands, the capacity of sport sponsorship to increase unhealthy consumption habits of sport spectators and fans, the need for further restrictions, as well as on the financial concerns that legal intervention raises. Moreover, some risks associated with sponsorship that generate legal concerns are also discussed.

The promotional power of the sponsorship medium is an issue that generated much concern in the sponsorship literature. Ledwith (1984) provided some evidence indicating that the exposure of children to tobacco-sponsored snooker championships broadcasted on BBC TV appeared to increase the levels of awareness of the sponsoring brands, raising serious concerns regarding the role of sponsorship in encouraging unhealthy behaviors. Although the survey, which used a quite large sample of 880 children in five secondary schools, did not explore whether tobacco sport sponsorship could persuade children to smoke, it is interesting that, children associate the sponsoring tobacco brand with the sporting activity. Hence, Ledwith (1984) concluded that this kind of sponsorship raises both ethical and legal issues since it is regarded like advertising “in informing about tobacco brands and linking these with sport” (p. 86).

Some more illustrative evidence with regard to the use of tobacco sport sponsorship as a supplement to regular advertising was presented by Siegel (2001). It is interesting to note that, despite the federal ban on the TV advertising of tobacco products, Siegel’s (2001) research estimated that, during the 1997-1999 period, “tobacco companies were able to achieve 169 hours of television advertising exposure and \$410.5 million of advertising value for their products by sponsoring televised motor sports events” (p. 1102). The aim of this study was to measure the impact of further legislation enacted in the USA in 2001 through the Master Settlement Agreement aiming at restricting the promotional capacity of motor sponsorship as an advertising tool for tobacco brands. According to Siegel, even when tobacco companies comply with the provisions of the Settlement (each tobacco company could be involved in one brand-name sponsorship of a sporting event or series per year), the promotional value of sponsorship for tobacco brands will not substantially diminish since tobacco companies will still be able to achieve more than 25 hours of TV exposure and an equivalent annual TV value of more than \$99 million - a value representing over 70% of the 1999 advertising value achieved by the three tobacco companies analysed in this study. Hence, the author concluded that legislators and health practitioners should do much more to

counteract this invaluable promotional sport sponsorship tool available to tobacco companies.

Similar findings were presented by Morrison, Haygood, and Krugman (2006), who built on the work of Siegel (2001) through analysing the amount of advertising exposure achieved by tobacco companies sponsoring motor sports in the USA after the implementation of the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) during the 2000-2002 period. They found that, although the TV exposure in terms of time achieved by tobacco motor sport sponsors decreased by almost 17.3% as compared to the results provided by Siegel (2001), the total advertising value increased by almost 69%, due to increases in audiences for the races. Hence, the authors were led to the conclusion that tobacco companies “have used auto-racing sponsorships to successfully circumvent both the ban on televised cigarette advertising and the intent of the MSA not to target youth” (Morrison et al., 2006, p. 18).

In addition to the direct advertising and promotional benefits that tobacco brands can achieve through motorsports sponsorship, Dewhirst and Hunter (2002) drew attention to the additional co-branding opportunities that tobacco manufacturers get in becoming even more visible through the advertising and promotion of unrelated products offered by the co-sponsors of the sport. Specifically, the authors referred to the alliances built with co-sponsors in an effort to compensate for the diminished advertising exposure resulting from legislation restrictions. Hence, tobacco manufacturers sponsoring F1 and CART auto racing managed to establish privileged partnerships with co-sponsors that had the legal capacity to place print and outdoor advertising, so that a car featuring the tobacco sponsor be seen, leading to substantially increased exposure for the tobacco brand. This co-branding strategy enables tobacco manufacturers to bypass legislation and “enrich the symbolic value” of their brands (Dewhirst & Hunter, 2002, p. 147), generating at the same time concerns regarding both, the ethical and legal

dimensions of such strategy. As the authors argued, tobacco control policies and legislation should be developed taking into account such loopholes.

In fact, the loopholes that allow tobacco sponsors to increase substantially their promotional and advertising benefits through sport sponsorship is an issue that policy makers in the US have tried several times to resolve, many times without being successful. The introduction of a rule in 1996 indicating “an absolute prohibition of the sponsorship of sporting events, except in the corporate name” (Dzeguze, 1998, p. 446) by the Department of Health and Human Services which gave the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) jurisdiction to enforce tobacco advertising regulations, is an example of a rule that generated much debate and controversy, especially in the motor racing environment. The tobacco companies, for example, strongly opposed to the rules imposed by the FDA through raising arguments with regard to the authority of the FDA to regulate tobacco. Moreover, tobacco manufacturers claimed that the FDA regulations violate their First Amendment rights, leading them to require compensation for a rule invading their property (Dzeguze, 1998). Such conflict and debate is not surprising, especially when considering the promotional benefits at stake and the lucrative sponsorship revenues associated with the NASCAR motor sport context.

The capacity of sport sponsorship to act as advertising was clearly and heavily appreciated by British American Tobacco (BAT) as demonstrated by a study conducted by MacKenzie, Collin and Sriwongcharoen (2007). Specifically, the authors relied on an analysis of internal company documents in an effort to deploy the marketing policies and practices used by the tobacco company in order to circumvent advertising restrictions on tobacco advertising in Thailand, which is regarded a key emerging market. The study showed that, sponsorship of sport events had been proved particularly useful in one of the world’s most restrictive marketing environments which emerged as a result of the strict tobacco legislation enacted in 1992 after Thailand was obliged to open its tobacco market to imports. The data demonstrated that BAT used to choose their sponsorship arrangements

based on the “potential for dominance of the sport” (MacKenzie et al., 2007, p. 30) which was regarded important for attracting prominent media attention and coverage. The authors condemn the employment of an adversarial approach involving the sponsorship of sport before the certain tobacco products were legally available in Thailand, and using practices that are seen to test the limits of Thailand tobacco legislation. Hence, the study highlighted the need for “careful drafting of tobacco regulation” and “detailed monitoring and strict enforcement” (MacKenzie et al. 2007, p. 31) in order to leave less room for sponsorship exploitation from arguably unhealthy products. This argument is further supported by the results obtained by Lavack (2003). His study, which also concentrated on the BAT Company and its practices in managing their sport sponsorships, indicated that “with careful handling” sponsorship can be used as a cover in order to circumvent the laws in Thailand (Lavack, 2003, p. 113).

Stricter legislative restrictions on tobacco advertising and sponsorship were implemented in Australia, and those have been examined in detail by Furlong (1994). The author focused on the Commonwealth legislation and specifically on the Tobacco Advertising Prohibition Act and the Broadcasting Services Act, both introduced in 1992, and she attempted to examine the impact of their provisions upon the capacity of sport to raise funds through sponsorship. Although the legislation does not prohibit the sponsorship of sport by tobacco companies, it does so to the extent that the sponsorship involves the promotion of tobacco products through actions such as advertising. The extensive reach of legislation which, according to Furlong (1994, p. 159) was “severely curtailing, on an Australia-wide level” was regarded as restricting the ability of sport to recruit tobacco sponsors, since the latter would hesitate to invest a large amount of money in return for non-promotional benefits such as corporate entertainment or image enhancement.

The main arguments against the use of sport sponsorship by tobacco brands were the perceived capacity of the sponsorship medium and the related

promotional benefits sponsors receive to increase tobacco consumption, as well as the promotion of smoking as an acceptable behaviour and the projection of “a glamorous, successful and healthy image as attributable to the consumption of tobacco products” (Furlong, 1994, p. 179). In contrast, this view and the related legislation was heavily opposed by the tobacco industry which argued that sponsorship is mainly concerned with influencing brand choice and improving corporate image. Despite those claims, it is of interest to note that there is evidence revealing that sport sponsorship strategies employed by tobacco companies aim at increasing cigarette consumption through the development of a culture in which smoking is normalised and cigarettes are viewed as “a legitimate source of meaning and consumptive pleasure” (Dewhirst & Sparks, 2003, p. 392). It is important to consider that the study conducted by Dewhirst and Sparks relied on an analysis of internal documents taken from the tobacco industry that were publicly available from Canadian and US court proceedings. Specifically, the strategies employed by three Canadian cigarette brands clearly demonstrated that the sport sponsorship medium was used as the platform for reaching and influencing adolescents, male target groups through associating the brand with “desirable, peer-defined attributes, identities and personalities” (Dewhirst & Sparks, 2003, p. 372). Hence, their efforts were concentrated on promotions linking the tobacco brand to symbols of independence, freedom, adventure, masculinity, leadership, pleasure and acceptance, all of those attributes easily communicated through sports.

Further evidence demonstrating the impact of tobacco sponsorship on people’s consumption habits was also provided by Chebat and Daoud (2003), who found that the F1 Grand Prix event explored in their study seemed to influence the smoking behavior of their sample consisting of adolescents. This effect was even stronger for male adolescents having more interest in the event.

In addition to the controversy that exists regarding the sponsorship of sport by tobacco brands, sponsorship by other categories of unhealthy products is also

questioned in the literature. Such an issue was raised by Maher, Wilson, Signal and Thomson (2006) through a pilot study conducted in New Zealand. An internet survey employed for the purpose of the study revealed that the sponsorship of eight popular sports in New Zealand was dominated by sponsors promoting unhealthy products such as gambling, alcohol and unhealthy food. Of the 640 sponsorships examined, gambling appeared as the most common sport sponsorship category but, interestingly, when the relationship between certain sports and specific sponsorship categories was explored, alcohol sponsorship appeared as being the most common for rugby, whilst sponsorships coming from the unhealthy food industry were primarily directed towards junior sports. The prevalence of unhealthy products' sport sponsorships and the imbalance that the study found between "healthy" and "unhealthy" sport sponsorship in New Zealand, led the authors to the conclusion that policy makers should direct their attention to the enactment of legislation and restrictions with regard to the certain kinds of sponsorships to reduce this imbalance, whilst at the same time they should turn to alternative funding sources for popular sports if sponsorship revenues were to diminish because of greater government control over sponsorship (Maher et al., 2006).

The issue of sport sponsorship by gambling companies also attracted the attention of McKelvey (2004a), who discussed the constantly growing trend of legalised gambling entities to sponsor several sports in the USA. The author questioned the practice of such a type of sponsorship by generating some concerns with regard to its impact upon the integrity of the sport, as well as upon the behavior of sport consumers. The article discussed the inconsistency of the risks associated with gambling (personal, social and economic) with the health and social benefits of sport, and held that those can challenge the value and integrity of sports. Moreover, McKelvey relied on existing research on sport sponsorship by unhealthy products such as tobacco and alcohol, in order to provide several research propositions for future inquiry. Suggestions involved

mainly investigating the impact of such a sponsorship activity upon the attitudes of sport consumers.

Specifically, McKelvey (2004a) proposed to address the impact of consumers' acceptance of the level of commercialisation within sports based on the sponsorship by potentially harmful products, as well as the influence of identification of sport consumers with their sport or team upon the attitudes they develop towards gambling sport sponsorship. Another research proposition made by the author was to examine whether people who gamble have more favorable attitudes towards this certain type of sponsorship than non-gamblers, since alcohol and tobacco sponsorship research seems to suggest that self-interest may influence sport consumers' attitudes (Danyichuk & MacIntosh, 2009; Kropp et al., 1999). Finally, socio-demographic factors as well as religious beliefs were also deemed by the author as interesting topics for investigation, suggesting that highly-religious individuals may be less tolerant regarding gambling sponsorship of sport properties.

In addition, and based on several studies suggesting an impact of several types of unhealthy sport sponsorships upon the actual behavior of sport consumers, McKelvey (2004a) proposed to examine the impact of gambling sport sponsorship on the consumption habits of adolescents, something that is regarded as essential when considering the constantly increasing gambling activity that is evident in the USA and in many other countries. The rapid emergence of gambling sponsorship within the U.S. professional sport, the social and sport-related factors that have resulted in such a trend, as well as the internal strategies and policies that regulate the sponsorship relationship between sport leagues and legalised gambling entities (LGE) were also topics explored in another study conducted by McKelvey (2004b). The author used Major League Baseball (MLB) as a platform to demonstrate how U.S. sports have modified their rules and regulations to better accommodate the interests of LGE to increase their sponsorship revenues. Specifically, the MLB appeared to significantly loose the

formerly strictly restricting and carefully monitored relationship of its clubs with LGE. The constantly increasing exposure of people to the commercial messages that are developed to promote gambling behaviour, and specifically sports-related gambling, as well as the tolerance demonstrated by the government with regard to gambling activity, had been regarded by McKelvey as fueling further adolescents' gambling habits. Moreover, the author considered these practices to threaten the sport itself, through undermining the integrity of sport and the values that sporting activity is thought to promote. Hence, McKelvey (2004b, p. 25) concluded that sponsorship by LGE "raises concerns that might ultimately result in potential legislative intervention".

Based on the criticisms that have been voiced by experts and the calls for legislation restricting the use of sport sponsorship by products that are regarded as unhealthy, many countries seemed to have responded to those requests through the enactment of laws and regulations (combatting mainly tobacco sport sponsorship), despite the potentially huge and sometimes devastating financial consequences for sport properties. One of the earliest discussions regarding the financial consequences of legal action upon the capacity of several sports to generate money through sponsorship by tobacco brands was initiated by Stotlar (1992). Stotlar's main concern was the impact of a ruling resulting from the 1991 litigation of Federal Trade Commission v. Pinkerton Tobacco Company for violating tobacco advertising regulations and using sporting events to advertise its products. As Stotlar (1992) argued, the Pinkerton ruling could severely diminish the ability of the tobacco sponsors to achieve their sponsorship objectives, something that could heavily impact the revenue generating ability of sport properties which, in turn, could impact the quality of the event in terms of participation and attendance. As a result, the broadcasting revenues will also decrease, with further impact upon the willingness of sponsors to invest their money on the certain event.

The issue of the financial impact of legislation upon sport sponsorship revenues was also discussed by MacLean and Bonington (2008). The focus of their article was about the discussion regarding regulatory intervention in the controversial areas of alcohol, gambling and high-in-fat food, sugar and salt (HFSS), and the impact of further regulation upon the ability of sport properties to raise funds through sponsorship coming from the certain industries. The legislation debate discussed in the present paper was fuelled by the ban on tobacco advertising introduced through the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002, which led to a considerable debate whether sport sponsorship should become a more strictly regulated area. The UK football sector, which forms the focus of the article, fully endorsed the tobacco legislation, since the UK Football Association had prohibited tobacco sponsorship in football about two decades earlier (MacLean & Bonington, 2008). Regarding the surrounding debate on additional legislation regulating sport sponsorship from the alcohol, gambling and HFSS, however, the authors had some reservations with regard to the financial impact of such regulation. Specifically, they drew attention to the fact that the Government should not take any action without consulting with the sport governing bodies, since sponsorship revenue decreases as a result of further regulation without replacing these funding sources would have devastating effects on the development of sports and the associated benefits of participation and exercise that can keep people and specifically children away for unhealthy lifestyles.

Apart from the discussion about the promotional impact of unhealthy sport sponsorship and the legal intervention aiming at minimising its use and effects, some authors went further to examine the ethical dimensions of such practices as well as the attitudes of people towards sport sponsorship by unhealthy products. McDaniel, Kinney and Chalip (2001) focused on the ethics involved in sport sponsorships by alcohol and tobacco brands, through a cross-cultural, quantitative study examining cultural and sex differences in ethical evaluations of sport sponsorships promoting unhealthy products. This study indicated that, although no sex differences were revealed, there were some cultural differences

with regard to ethical perceptions of sport sponsorship by alcohol and tobacco brands. Specifically, Australian students appeared demonstrating a stronger unethical perception of such kind of sport sponsorships as compared to the American students, maybe due to the fact that Australia introduced strict sponsorship regulations much earlier than the USA, as the authors argued. This notion further supports the point made earlier by MacKenzie et al. (2007) which emphasised the need for strict legislation and vivid enforcement of the law, especially if it could be used as a means for shaping peoples' attitudes and perceptions on sport sponsorships by unhealthy products.

The perceptions and attitudes of people towards controversial sport sponsorships by alcohol and tobacco brands in the USA was also a topic explored by McDaniel and Mason (1999). The results of this study revealed a greater opposition towards tobacco Olympic sponsorship as compared to alcohol Olympic sponsorship, and more specifically, sponsorship by beer companies. Thus, it appears that people find it more acceptable to use sport as a vehicle for promoting beer products than using sport to promote tobacco products. This is maybe due to the fact that the promotion of tobacco is an area that received higher and stricter regulation as compared to the alcohol promotion (McDaniel & Mason, 1999) since smoking was perceived as being less socially acceptable than alcohol consumption.

Another study that focused on people's attitudes towards sport sponsorship by healthy and unhealthy products indicated once again that sport sponsorships by tobacco brands were seen as less favourable compared to sport sponsorships by alcohol companies (Danyichuk & MacIntosh, 2009). Both types of sponsorship, however, were perceived as less acceptable as compared to sponsorship of sport by non-alcoholic brands and food companies, since the latter were regarded by the Canadian participants of this study as providing a better fit with healthy activities such as sport. This is exactly why attitudes towards more healthy food and non-alcoholic drinks (e.g. cereal, water, juice) were more favourable than those perceived less healthy (e.g. pizza, soft-drinks, hamburger). Another

interesting finding of this study is that both smokers and non-smokers appeared to believe that tobacco brands are not appropriate sponsors for sport, whilst alcohol consumers appeared as having more favourable attitudes towards sport sponsorships by alcohol brands (Danyichuk & MacIntosh, 2009), indicating once again that drinking is possibly regarded as a more acceptable social behaviour as compared to smoking.

Very similar findings were presented by Kropp et al. (1999), with the university students comprising their multi-cultural sample (Canada, USA and Australia) who had more favorable attitudes toward beer companies sponsoring sport as compared to tobacco sponsors. Once again, smokers had a more positive attitude toward tobacco sponsorship than non-smokers and, respectively, beer drinkers for beer sponsorships. In line with the evidence provided earlier by McDaniel et al. (2001), Australian students appeared as having negative attitudes towards tobacco sponsorship regardless their smoking habits, supporting further the notion that the long-term impact of legislation can be particularly effective in shaping people' attitudes and beliefs.

11.3 Other risks associated with Sport Sponsorships that generate Legal and Ethical Concerns

In addition to the sponsorship of sport by unhealthy products, which, together with ambush marketing, got the attention of sport sponsorship researchers, another legal and ethical issue that was found to be associated with sport sponsorship involves various risks that could lead to a scandal or generate public and media scrutiny which could eventually negatively impact the sponsor. Hughes and Shank (2005), for example, focused on the perceptions of the sponsors and media representatives with regard to sport scandals and the impact that those could have upon the sponsors. Qualitative results gathered through in-depth interviews revealed that sponsors believe that professional sports and elite athletes are more scandalous as compared to sport and athletes at the amateur level. Conversely, media representatives felt that media coverage is the defining factor, and argued

that the latter can have a huge impact upon how people perceive a sport property as scandalous or not (Hughes & Shank, 2005).

Moreover, Hughes and Shank's (2005) indicated that there are some danger differences, with women sports appearing as less scandalous, however, once again, the media attention that male-sports enjoy can be seen as responsible for this perception. In concluding, the study paid attention to the fact that sponsors should try "to minimise the likelihood of individuals engaging in illegal and unethical behaviour" in order to protect the integrity and value of their brand (Hughes & Shank, 2005, p. 215). In doing so, the authors argued that sponsors should employ several risk management techniques such as investigations regarding the sport property's past actions indicating a propensity to scandalous behaviour, in their effort to mitigate the risks of harming their brand through such a sponsorship association.

The risks associated with some kinds of sport sponsorship were also the topic of the research conducted by O'Reilly and Foster (2008). The authors used two in-depth case studies engendering the human mortality risk, but those case studies, combined with secondary data research, were used as a platform for developing a risk management framework to enable practitioners to "mitigate their risks in dealing with high-risk sponsees" (O'Reilly & Foster, 2008, p. 54). The framework consists of two parts – a pre- and a post-sponsorship action plan. The pre-sponsorship plan deals with preventing risks, especially in the phase of selecting the sponsee, whilst the post-sponsorship part involves the implementation of a formerly developed and detailed contingency plan in an effort to control, reduce or eliminate a possible negative impact on the sponsor. Specifically, some actions proposed by the framework include the provision of training and support services to sponsees, the delivery of consistent messages, innovative prevention policies, stringent appeal process etc. In addition, the authors argued that the contract

itself can serve as an important component of risk management, mainly by outlining consequences for high-risk sponsee actions.

Earle & Groome (2009) also attempted to address several risks associated with sponsorships, but they did so from another perspective. They focused on the issues to be considered, from an English law perspective, when developing sponsorship contracts in order to protect, both the property and the sponsor. The authors concentrated on five different safeguards. Starting with the length of the agreement, they proposed that the sponsor, as a result from the request of the sponsee for long-term affiliation, they can agree to do so on a “rolling basis” through renewals of the agreement based on both parties’ satisfaction. Another option suggested by Earle and Groome is establishing a long-term agreement but introducing at the same time performance criteria relating to the success of the sponsorship agreement. Payment schedule is another area that according to the authors deserves consideration. In case that a sponsor is not able to meet their financial responsibilities on a timely basis, the rights holder could consider a “proportionate reduction in the sponsorship rights and benefits to be enjoyed by the sponsor” (Earle & Groome, 2009, p. 283). Another safeguard discussed by the paper is that of the introduction of “break clauses” into the contract that would allow a sponsor terminate sponsorship agreement, emphasising at the same time that the sponsee can include a consideration for proper compensation in case of early termination. Moreover, given that category exclusivity is an important issue for sponsors, right-holders are encouraged not to offer broad category exclusivity, but instead, to provide the sponsor with exclusive rights in respect to a certain set of products.

Finally, Earle and Groome (2009) placed much emphasis on the management of the sponsorship relationship, and stressed the importance of creating a team comprised of members of both parties, who are able and qualified in order to approach sponsorship as a partnership to accommodate the interests of both actors. Special reference was also made to the risk of reputation damage

of the sponsor or the sponsored event, and they proposed the inclusion in the contract of provisions with regard to moral issues that would enable the sponsor to terminate the agreement. In addition, the risk of event cancellation is thought to be accommodated by special provisions in the contract indicating how the sponsorship agreement will be affected. In concluding, the authors held that although the contractual agreement is essential in mitigating the risks involved in a sponsorship deal, in case that the deal termination is inevitable, then it is crucial that this “detachment process is managed well” (Earle & Groome, 2009, p. 289), through joined and cooperated actions in order to prevent both actors from a negative impact upon their respective reputation and image.

The importance of clearly defined clauses in the sponsorship contract that minimise the risks associated with a sponsorship agreement was also highlighted by Urbach (2008). The author focused on the inclusion in the contract of a provision securing the sponsor’s right-of-first-refusal and the capacity of such a clause to protect the sponsor’s interests. The case presented by Urbach clearly depicted how essential such a contractual agreement is, since it illustrated how MasterCard filed and won a federal lawsuit against its former partner, FIFA, when the latter decided to grant exclusive sponsorship rights to Visa, an action that violated MasterCard’s right-of-first refusal. The case study has shown that the fact that the “provision was drafted deliberately and precisely” effectively and sufficiently protected MasterCard “from the very gamesmanship that FIFA engaged in with Visa” (Urbach, 2008, p. 82). Hence, it is obvious that both parties involved in a sponsorship agreement should undertake actions aiming at limiting the risks associated with their marketing alliance, since they should never assume that their partners will always be the perfect team-mates.

Although the provisions included in a sponsorship contract seem to be essential in eliminating the risks associated with sponsorship, some of them may generate concerns with regard to competition protection. Fortunato and Richards (2007) critically analysed category exclusivity offered to sponsors in the majority of the

sponsorship contracts that are signed, and they held that such a provision can be regarded violating anti-trust laws that exist in the USA and aim at protecting and promoting the economic competitiveness of a certain market. Specifically, the exclusivity offered to the sponsoring brand within a certain product category, combined with the opportunity they are also offered for promoting and selling their products within the venues, has been regarded as giving the sponsors “a highly advantageous monopoly position” through the creation of “a competition-free venue for sales of that brand” (Fortunato & Richards, 2007, p. 34). The legal concerns that arise as a result of exclusivity with regard to advertising and selling sponsor’s products is that, as the authors asserted, restrict not only the sport consumer’s exposure to certain brands, but also their choice of brands during the sport event they attend.

Fortunato and Richards’ (2007) article called for legal intervention to regulate these issues, but at the same time, it recognises that although courts demonstrated a willingness to regulate promotion and advertising related to sport sponsorship, it seems unlikely that they will demonstrate the same willingness to regulate category exclusivity since such an action would have overwhelming financial consequences for all types of sport, undermining at the same time the survival of some sports, leagues and venues. Thus, Fortunato and Richards (2007, p. 48) suggested an approach seeking “a middle ground” through actions such as “limiting the extent to which stadiums and arenas can ban consumers from bringing in refreshments, limiting the terms of exclusivity agreements, and so forth”.

Apart from the risks involved in a sponsorship arrangement, Roberts (1997) shed some light on another legal concern associated with corporate sponsorship of sports properties, and specifically college sports in the USA. The author heavily criticised the intention of the government (as expressed through the congress and the Internal Revenue Service) to provide university and college sports with special tax protection related to the income they generate through sport sponsorship.

Specifically, the author condemned the fact that, although under the UBIT (Unrelated Business Income Tax) regulations, tax-exempt charitable organisations, including educational institutions, are taxed on income generated through unrelated business activities (activities that are unrelated to the exempt mission of the organisation), the government offered special tax protection to the educational institutions with regard to sponsorship revenues through the introduction of certain regulations. However, considering the purely commercial aspect of the sponsorship medium, Roberts (1997) heavily criticised the congressional intention to offer university and collegiate sports “a generous UBIT treatment” (p. 418) through avoiding taxing certain sponsorship revenues. Approaching the issue from another perspective, however, this special treatment collegiate sports enjoy is essential in their efforts to secure financial resources that would enable them to develop and grow.