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**Commercial Determinants of Health in Sport. The  
example of the English Premier League.**

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Sociology)**

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# Abstract

## Introduction:

Transnational alcohol, food, beverage and gambling industries market their unhealthy brands to sport's global audiences. However, there has been little research on the commercial determinants of health in sport and the world's most popular sport and competition - football's English Premier League (EPL).

## Methods:

I conducted four inter-linked studies to assess the commercial determinants of health in a case study of the EPL:

- 1) An internet scoping study of the sponsorship deals of EPL clubs in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 football seasons.
- 2) A content analysis of visual references to unhealthy brands during five EPL matches broadcast on subscription television in 2019.
- 3) The marketing strategies used by four EPL sponsors drawn from the gambling, food, beverage and alcohol industries.
- 4) A qualitative study capturing the stakeholders' views about unhealthy brand sponsorship in football.

## Findings:

The EPL and its member clubs have multiple partners drawn from the unhealthy commodity industries. Gambling brands are most prominent both in club sponsorships and during 'live' football programmes. The brands appear both on players' shirts and in pitch perimeter advertising. Sophisticated marketing strategies then activate traditional and digital methods to engage fans as consumers. Stakeholders' views on sponsorship reflect their level of economic and cultural capital.

## Discussion and Conclusions:

This study has described the marketing practices of unhealthy commodity industries in the EPL. Given that it has been demonstrated by others that this marketing is likely to damage the health of football's global audience of fan-consumers, a more ethical approach to sport sponsorship deserves consideration.

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## Acronyms

AFL	Australian Football League
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCAP	British Code of Advertising Practice
CDOH	Commercial Determinants of Health
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (UK Government)
EFL	English Football League
EPL	English Premier League
EUROs	UEFA European Football Championships
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
HFSS	High in saturated fat, sugar and/or salt
IGRG	Industry Group for Responsible Gambling
LED	Light-emitting diodes (lamps)
NCD	Non-communicable disease(s)
ROI	Return on Investment
TNCs	Transnational corporations
UCIs	Unhealthy commodity industries
UEFA	Union des Associations Européennes de Football
WHO	World Health Organisation

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Finally, I undertook my PhD to actively contribute to the discussion around the commercial determinants of health in sport. I hope and trust that my academic endeavours may contribute to public health advocacy.

## **Author's declaration**

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

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Signature:



## Chapter One. Introduction: Public health, football, and the commercial determinants of health

There is a growing awareness of the impact corporate practices may have on health (Freudenberg 2016). Industries such as tobacco, alcohol, food, beverages, and gambling produce commodities with the capacity to damage health. In calling these practices, “commercial determinants of health” (p.895) (CDOH), Kickbusch et al. (2016) described corporations using four channels which impacted on the environment, consumers and health. These channels are marketing, extensive supply chains, lobbying (to impede policy and regulatory barriers) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies which, together, magnified the impact of commercial enterprise. The combined effect of these business practices means, “The breadth and depth of corporate influence is expanded as more people are reached with ever more consumption choices” (Kickbusch *et al.* 2016 p.895).

The CDOH research has focused on the tobacco, alcohol and food and beverage industries as the drivers of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) (Maani *et al.* 2020a). Gambling may also be added as a public health concern given the growing attention to the gambling industry’s commercial practices (Wardle *et al.* 2019). A report authored on behalf of a WHO-UNICEF-Lancet Commission in 2020 recommended regulation of the commercial sector to protect children from “the marketing of tobacco, alcohol, [formula milk], sugar-sweetened beverages, gambling” (Clark *et al.* 2020 p.606). The marketing and advertising of unhealthy brands by these industries has the capacity to not only influence consumption, but also to influence awareness and attitudes towards unhealthy brands (Petticrew *et al.* 2017b). It will be these industries therefore that this thesis will focus on and will describe collectively as unhealthy commodity industries (UCIs) from this point.

These UCIs seeking ways to market their brands to as large an audience as possible, use mega-sporting events such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup to reach huge global audiences (Collin and MacKenzie 2006; Morgan *et*

*al.* 2017). Academic interest in the CDOH has recently grown substantially (Allen 2020; de Lacy-Vawdon and Livingstone 2020; Mialon 2020; Ndebele *et al.* 2020). The role of sport in unhealthy business practices deserves particular scrutiny, given how sports settings are used to promote alcohol, gambling, sugary beverages and food high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS), (Bunn *et al.* 2018; Ireland *et al.* 2019). In Britain, elite football through the English Premier League (EPL) has become a commodified entertainment business with its commercial partners eager to reach the sport's followers across the world (Elliott 2017a). Many of the products marketed through the EPL are from the UCIs and the impact of this marketing on the health of fans and wider communities is only just beginning to be explored.

## Historical context

In considering public health and football, it is perhaps helpful to our understanding to provide a brief historical perspective. Prior to the twentieth century in the United Kingdom, most people died of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, cholera and influenza (Rosen 2015). The growth of industrial capitalism in the Victorian era (1837-1901) marked a huge migration of people from rural areas into the growing cities of Glasgow, Manchester and Liverpool and into the Lancashire textile towns as people sought paid employment (Harman 1999). The Irish Potato Famines of the 1840s also brought an impoverished new population escaping starvation in Ireland into the already overcrowded British cities. Local infrastructure came under huge pressure and cholera outbreaks throughout the nineteenth century exposed the need for public health initiatives focused on improving the environment. Huge investments were then made to improve hygiene, sanitation and housing (Baggott 2000).

This historical period can also have been said to mark the beginning of modern sport (Huggins 2004). Public school leaders saw sport as part of the 'civilising message' of the growing Victorian British colonial power and there was a move towards the codification and institutionalisation of all sports. Initially leisure time had been the preserve of the monied classes and the origins of many

cricket, rowing and athletic clubs reflect this distinction (Holt 1992). However, reforming moves in the second half of the Victorian era towards improving the life of the working classes provided more time and money for the mass populations of towns and cities. The 1850 Factory Act allowed textile workers a Saturday half-day free from work (Sundays had previously been the only day set aside for rest). Then in 1867, the Factory and Workshops Act restricted the hours during which people (including women and children) were permitted to labour (Morris 2016; Collins 2019). This and other Victorian legislation helped introduce the practice of modern approved leisure time (Huggins 2004). It is in this context of expanded leisure time that British football started to take its contemporary form.

There had long been a history of games played resembling modern football in not only the United Kingdom but across the world. The simple art of kicking (or throwing) a round ball has always been popular and helped to provide a source of seasonal celebration in medieval Britain and well into more modern times (Goldblatt 2007). Following the agreement of a set of rules to play football with feet as opposed to hands (the latter became rugby football) on a measured piece of land in 1863, there was a huge growth of football clubs across England and Scotland towards the end of Victorian Britain (Mason 1980). Goal nets came later, in 1891. By then many clubs and teams had been formed by factory owners setting up works teams, others by cricket clubs seeking activity for their members in winter months and some by churches, wanting to provide organised leisure as an alternative to less approved 'anti-social' activities (Holt 1992). From the very beginning, football became commercial as soon as grounds needed to be paid for and spectator fees charged (Vamplew 1988). Whilst clubs were initially run by the middle classes, it did not take long for both fans and players to begin to be drawn from the male working classes, and a strong working-class football culture was developing by the 1880s (Tischler 1981). By 1885, the agreement by the British Football Association to permit professionalisation (and thus to pay players) can be argued to mark the victory of the northern industrial clubs over southern English amateurism (Russell 1997).

## The Epidemiological Transition and Determinants of Health

With the Victorian sanitary reforms, widespread vaccination and the progressive building of the Welfare State, many previously fatal infections such as cholera, typhoid, diphtheria, pertussis and polio became uncommon (Welch 2018). As life expectancy increased, the leading cause of mortality in almost all countries in the world became NCDs (Mathers and Bonita 2009; World Health Organisation 2018b). These NCDs include heart attacks and strokes, cancers, respiratory disease and diabetes. Mental illnesses are also increasingly prevalent affecting physical health and potentially leading to depression, loneliness and anti-social behaviour (Whiteford *et al.* 2010; World Health Organisation European Office 2019). The leading risk factors for NCDs are poor nutrition, smoking, alcohol, and physical inactivity.

An understanding that medical care is not the principal driver of health (McKeown 1979) accompanied the increase of NCDs. Two-thirds of NCD deaths are the result of tobacco and alcohol use, poor nutrition and insufficient physical activity (World Health Organisation 2018b). Further, there is a social gradient in these deaths, with health being related to social position, and standards of health declining from the top to the bottom of society (Marmot and Wilkinson 2006). In considering the growing health inequalities experienced between countries, the World Health Organisation established a Commission on the Social Determinants of Health (CSDH 2008) to examine the social and economic policies which shaped the conditions in which people live and die. The Commission took a holistic view of health and argued that the social gradient of health between and within countries was caused by the “unequal distribution of power, income, goods, and services” (CSDH 2008 p.1). Given limited success in addressing these social determinants of health, some attention has moved to the activities of commercial interests under neoliberalism. Modern capitalism contributes to the burden of disease by the aggressive marketing of tobacco, alcohol and unhealthy food (Freudenberg 2021) leading to an increased consumption of these unhealthy commodities (Lencucha and Thow 2019).

The rise of the prevalence of NCDs in the second half of the twentieth century was accompanied by a global implementation of free-market economic policies including the development of a capitalist culture featuring increasing commodity production and consumption (Sell and Williams 2020). Industries, such as alcohol and tobacco, can impact on health not only through the direct marketing of their brands, but also through their lobbying for sympathetic regulatory environments for their products (Lee *et al.* 2004; Savell *et al.* 2015). In low and middle-income countries where public health regulation may be weak, commodities such as tobacco, alcohol and ultra-processed food contribute directly to poor health (Islam and Hossain 2015). Thus, health harms caused by industrial epidemics of unhealthy commodities (Jahiel and Babor 2007; Jahiel 2008; Gilmore *et al.* 2011; Stuckler *et al.* 2012; Moodie *et al.* 2013; Collin and Hill 2016) are spread by transnational corporations (TNCs) using global markets. Lee and Crosbie (2020) argued that commercial interests have also framed the argument that agency for ill health is the responsibility of the individual, what Rose refers to as ‘responsibilization’ (Rose 1999), rather than on the business practices and policies which create health inequalities (Schrecker and Bamba 2015; Douglas 2016).

Football, now widely regarded as the world’s most popular sport, has reflected these neoliberal social and economic developments and has been described as a “metric, a mirror, motor and a metaphor of globalization” (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009 p.xii). The launch of the Premier League (now the English Premier League) in 1992, indicated for many, the growing commercialisation and commodification of the game (Elliott 2017a). Since it was launched, the EPL has become the richest, most broadcast (and therefore watched) sports league in the twenty-first century. The players wear branded shirts, the stadiums carry advertising messages around their perimeters and stands, whilst clubs’ merchandise is sold worldwide through websites that belong to shopping as much as they do to sport (Crawford 2004). Hastings (2012; 2015) argued that the marketing campaigns of TNCs, including through sport, harmed our “physical, mental and collective wellbeing” (Hastings 2012 p.26) and should be of greater concern to public health.

The environment in which we live in the United Kingdom has changed radically since Victorian times. In a globalised society where technology, media and transport have enabled transnational corporations (TNCs) to look for new marketplaces, sport is a convenient vehicle for brand aggrandisement (Wenner 1998). However, as popular mass entertainment, sport has evaded much academic examination until recently and has only usually caught the scrutiny of the public health community in how it may enable individuals to enjoy more active lifestyles. Thus the emphasis is typically on Sports Medicine, providing an individualised approach to treatment, therapy, rehabilitation and wellness (Krustrup and Parnell 2020). Public health, by contrast, takes a wider view considering health across the population. NCDs may be considered the products of a system partly determined by powerful commercial actors (Knai *et al.* 2018). In turn, the ‘fan community’, are consumers of the football environment that has been increasingly shaped by TNCs.

## 1.1 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this thesis is to seek to identify the social processes, mechanisms and arrangements through which the UCIs operate in sport in ways that are likely to harm population health, linking this to the CDOH thesis. It uses the example of the EPL to describe how the Premier League and its member clubs’ commercial partnerships with UCIs may impact on the health of fans. This impact is global, as, whilst the matches may be played in the United Kingdom, many of the largest audiences of the EPL are in Asia, North America and Africa.

The marketing of unhealthy commodities such as food and beverages high in fat, sugar and salt, alcohol and gambling brands and products is common. This marketing has the potential to encourage unhealthy consumption amongst the EPL’s audiences including significant numbers of children and young people. The consumption of these unhealthy products could lead to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes in both mental and physical health.

By examining the marketing practices of unhealthy commodity industries using the example of the EPL, the thesis adds to the evidence of how corporate

practices impact on health. The thesis does not seek to measure or understand the consequences of these marketing practices. It also does not consider the emergence of the 'celebrity' footballer in contemporary culture. By examining the commercial partnerships of the professional clubs and governing bodies of football, the thesis describes the promotion of unhealthy brands within the mediated spectacle of the EPL. Through this, the structural processes which affect health are demonstrated by the economic practices of elite football under capitalism. These practices help to create an environment which has the potential to damage the health of football's fan-consumers.

The objectives of this thesis are therefore:

- to consider the Commercial Determinants of Health in sport and how these may be reflected in football (soccer) and the English Premier League specifically;
- to explore the nature of marketing of unhealthy commodities across different media in the English Premier League clubs and Premier League across two football seasons (2018/19 and 2019/20).

## **1.2. Outline of the Thesis**

The next chapter of the thesis, Chapter Two, examines the literature concerning the CDOH. The practices of TNCs and UCIs are considered using a range of academic perspectives to conceptualise and define corporate activities and how these may impact on health. The role of sport is considered both within the marketing and the corporate social responsibility strategies of corporate players from UCIs. It is argued that the strategies of the alcohol, food and drink and gambling industries closely resemble the strategies developed during the tobacco industry's move into sport sponsorship in the 1960s (Cornwell 1997).

The second chapter continues with an appreciation of academic and popular writing concerning the history of football which is essential to chart the commodification of the game and the socio-economic conditions leading to the formation of the EPL in 1992. Examining the relationship between football and globalisation helps in understanding the sport's role in developing markets across

both the west and the global south. Similarly, a range of marketing and communications literature is considered in learning how football may serve the purpose of brand marketers and TNCs. There is an extensive literature about football fans from the 1980s to the present day which will be reviewed through the lens of ‘brand engagement and activation’. Cultural, media and consumption research studies and theoretical writings all play a part in developing the conceptual framework necessary to consider how the UCI may affect the health of football fans through the relentless commercialisation of all aspects of top-level professional men’s football in England and Wales<sup>1</sup>. A brief review of the literature on governance and regulation within the sport is also provided. After considering this wide range of theory and research, the five research questions the thesis seeks to address are set out.

Chapter Three begins with a description of the design and development of the four inter-linked studies contained in this thesis including the methodology used and an overview of the research process. It continues with a summary reflection on the background and positionality of the author taking account of public health advocacy, football fandom and research and personal experiences.

The official websites of the 20 clubs in the EPL in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons are examined in Chapter Four in a descriptive quantitative study which considers the financial partnerships of the clubs and the unhealthy brands which are promoted through these partnerships. Chapter Five includes a content analysis study of the broadcasting content of five EPL matches shown on pay-per-view (subscription) television in 2019 (three in the 2018/19 season and two in the following). An analysis is included of the number of visual mentions of unhealthy brands in the five matchday television programmes. Chapter Six presents four case studies taken from the gambling, food and drink and alcohol industries to examine how companies in these industries seek to build their relationships with EPL fans through social media and marketing campaigns. The final empirical chapter (Chapter Seven) reports on a qualitative interview study conducted with stakeholders in the EPL (from fan group representatives to senior

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<sup>1</sup> The English Premier League includes teams from both England and Wales.



football club officials) to seek their views on elite football's financial partnerships with UCIs which have been described in the preceding three chapters.

Chapter Eight includes a discussion which summarises the findings, considers them in relation to previous literature and discusses how this research has added to the literature on CDOH in sport as described in Chapter Two. It concludes with a reflection on the field of struggle in football using a Bourdieusian approach. Finally, Chapter Nine includes policy recommendations for football and sports' governing bodies, the UK government and public health organisations together with some suggestions on future research directions and priorities.

## Chapter Two - Background

### 2.1 Introduction

In Chapter One of this thesis, the concept of Commercial Determinants of Health (CDOH) was introduced. Transnational corporations (TNCs) use marketing strategies to encourage the consumption of commodities, including tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy food and beverages and gambling products, which impact on the health of their consumers. Poor diets, smoking and alcohol consumption are directly linked to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, respiratory disease, common cancers and type 2 diabetes which are the leading causes of premature death globally (Stuckler and Basu 2011; World Health Organisation 2018b). Mental disorders are associated with major NCDs (World Health Organisation European Office 2019) with harmful use of alcohol a risk factor (World Health Organisation 2018a). In addition, disordered gambling has become increasingly prevalent, contributing to poor mental health (Shaffer and Korn 2002; Wardle *et al.* 2019; Gambling Related Harm All Parliamentary Group 2020). The social determinants of health, or the conditions in which people live as affected by wider forces such as economic and social policies, are responsible for differences in individual health status (World Health Organisation 2019a). These forces include globalisation, or the ways in which businesses and people are becoming more connected, enabling the global promotion of unhealthy brands leading to many negative health impacts (Labonté and Schrecker 2006). This literature review will explore the CDOH in more detail including the impact of globalisation. The review will use football as a case study to explore the CDOH in sport.

Football is a space in which many interests collide. Cashmore's book, *Making Sense of Sport* (2010) drew from sociology, economics, history, philosophy, psychology and cultural and media studies to provide an introduction to the sociology of sport. This chapter will continue by taking a similar multi-disciplinary approach to explore the development of elite football in England and globally since its codification in the nineteenth century. This historical perspective enables an understanding of contemporary socio-economic and

commercial developments within the sport and explores the development of cultural and economic capital. Each historical development in the global development of football will be placed within the context of CDOH.

In the following shorter sections, under a series of interdisciplinary headings, the sociological and other theories which were drawn on to support this thesis will be described and considered. Literature concerning the mediated spectacle of football and the sport's commercial arrangements will be covered before considering how these may impact on the health and consumption of football's followers in the modern EPL. The final section of the chapter will consider the governance and regulation of football. Having drawn on a wide range of academic and popular literature to frame the research issues, the chapter will conclude with the aims and objectives of this thesis and the research questions it seeks to address.

## **2.2 Commercial determinants of health in sport**

### **2.2.1 The practices of transnational corporations and how they impact on health**

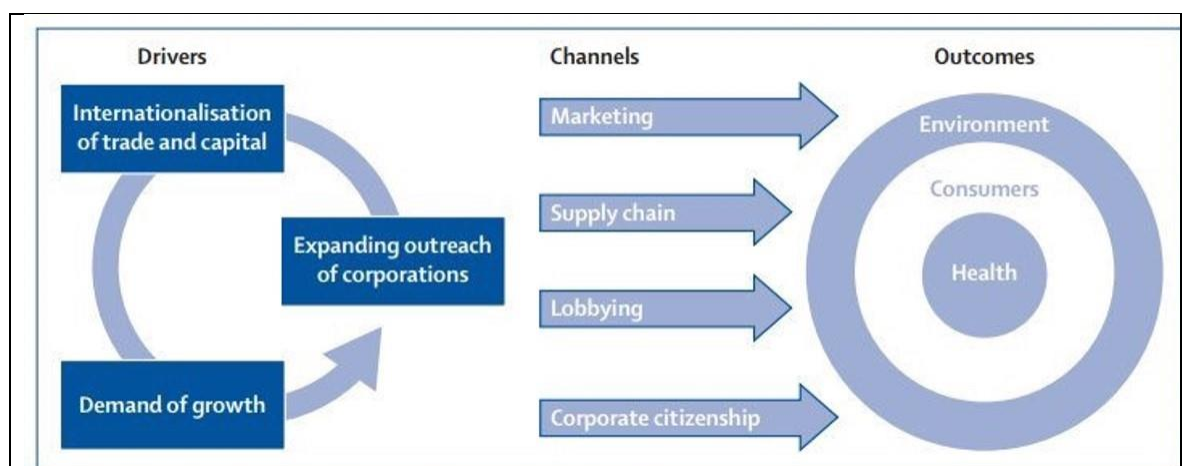
Health outcomes are determined by the influence of corporate activities on the social environment in which people live and work: namely the availability, cultural desirability, and prices of unhealthy products. The environment shapes the so-called lifeworlds, lifestyles, and choices of individual consumers - ultimately determining health outcomes (Kickbusch *et al.* 2016 e895-896).

The role of transnational corporations (TNCs) and their impact on health (Baum *et al.* 2016) has come under increasing scrutiny with many TNCs possessing turnovers larger than national states' GDP (Baum 2015). A growing literature has examined the practices of TNCs and the CDOH. This chapter does not attempt to review all this literature but will consider some of the earliest references to CDOH together with the most recent publications which attempt to

conceptualise the CDOH. It will seek to highlight where (if at all), sport is mentioned.

Two of the first papers to use the term commercial or corporate determinants of health were Kickbusch (2012) and Millar (2013). The former described how corporate power combined with global marketing influenced political decision-making at the highest levels. In this example, FIFA over-ruled a Brazilian law prohibiting the sale of alcohol at sporting events by forcing access to beer at the 2014 World Cup on behalf of their sponsor, Budweiser (Kickbusch 2012). Millar’s description of corporate determinants of health included a wide variety of businesses selling products that damaged health or the environment including tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy foods and beverages, resource extraction and the electronic media. Millar argued for government intervention where he saw a “failure in market mechanism” (Millar 2013 p.327) in controlling the overconsumption of sugar, fat and salt resulting from the actions of the food and beverage sector for example. Millar saw corporate social responsibility (CSR) as an industry tactic which included the sponsorship of sports and cultural events.

Developing the paradigm, Kickbusch et al. (2016) (see Figure 1) went on to define CDOH as “strategies and approaches used by the private sector to promote products and choices that are detrimental to health” (e895).



**Figure 1. Strategies that determine the Commercial Determinants of Health** (Kickbusch *et al.* 2016 e895)

As described in Figure 1, corporate influence is exerted through four channels: marketing, supply chain, lobbying and corporate citizenship. In considering how TNCs use sport to promote unhealthy products and choices, this thesis will focus on two of these commercial strategies: marketing and corporate citizenship. Unhealthy commodity industries (UCIs) are able to market their brands through sport, using sponsorship to increase the cultural desirability and consumption of sugary drinks or gambling (Ireland and Viggars 2019). These industries often accompany their sport sponsorship partnerships with corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies designed to enhance reputations and claims of corporate citizenship (Levermore 2013). Corporate marketeers also direct their marketing at politicians and policy makers as well as consumers in order to ensure the business environment is sympathetic to their interests (Hastings 2015).

De Lacy-Vawdon and Livingstone (2020) undertook a systematic review of formal and grey literature in seeking to define the CDOH. They selected 32 texts (from 125 identified) for final review and summarised the findings in assessing the strengths and limitations of current literature concerning CDOH. Their results showed broad facilitators of CDOH such as the globalisation of trade and neoliberal and capitalist ideologies. They also identified corporate activities in the literature including marketing, CSR and harmful products and production. These corporate and commercial activities significantly contributed to negative global health outcomes. In terms of understanding how sport contributes to the CDOH, this section in this literature review has included the 32 texts identified by de Lacy-Vawdon and Livingstone, to see if sport has been identified in these texts as a channel for unhealthy corporate activities. Additional literature has also been identified through searches around UCIs and sport.

In examining both texts from the de Lacy-Vawdon and Livingstone (2020) systematic review, and the additional literature identified, the CDOH in sport will be considered under the headings of unhealthy commodity industries (2.2.2), the marketing of unhealthy brands (2.2.3), corporate social responsibility (2.2.4) and policy interventions (2.2.5).

## 2.2.2 Unhealthy commodity industries

De Lacy-Vawdon and Livingstone (2020) and Mialon (2020) (in a paper published after the former's systematic review) wrote that research into CDOH has focused on the activities of the food, alcohol and tobacco industries. This is understandable when deaths from noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are attributable to 19 leading risk factors of which five of the top eight are related to our diet (high blood pressure, high blood glucose, overweight and obesity, high cholesterol and alcohol use), and the second highest risk factor is tobacco use (Stuckler and Basu 2011). Reports by Sir Michael Marmot undertaken both for the World Health Organisation (Commission on Social Determinants of Health 2008) and the UK Government (The Marmot Review 2010) demonstrated that the unequal disease burden from these diseases was determined by “a toxic combination of poor social policies and programmes, unfair economic arrangements, and bad politics” (Commission on Social Determinants of Health 2008 p.1). Whilst the public health approach adopted by governments is often focused on behaviours thought of as ‘lifestyle’ (Katikireddi *et al.* 2013), our choices are influenced by circumstances beyond our control “not to mention billions spent on advertising and marketing seeking to influence our choices” (Marmot 2015 p.75).

Crompton (1993), writing in the 1990s, argued that the major sponsors of sport were alcohol and tobacco companies who were using an association with healthy lifestyles to promote and normalise their products. The advertising and promotion of tobacco products in sport has largely been removed following extensive campaigning (Arnott *et al.* 2007) and effective national and international policies (Shibuya *et al.* 2003) including the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (World Health Organisation 2003). However, the tactics used by other industries such as ‘Big Food’, ‘Big Soda’ or ‘Big Alcohol’ are very similar to those used by ‘Big Tobacco’ (Freeman and Sindall 2019). Petticrew *et al.* (2017a) referenced the tobacco industry when examining the tactics of the food, beverage, alcohol and gambling industries in using the concept of complexity to undermine effective public health policies. UCIs argue that aetiology of NCDs is too complex to allow

individual products to be blamed and that policy interventions cannot be effective at addressing complex problems.

There is a discussion about what should be included within UCIs and indeed what may be considered as NCDs with this category now being expanded from four chronic diseases (cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic respiratory disease) to include mental health (Herrick 2020). Freudenberg (2016) in his book, 'Lethal But Legal', considered the corporate practices of the alcohol, automobile, firearms, food and beverage, pharmaceutical, and tobacco industries. Freudenberg argued that these industries had a profound influence on health behaviour and promote what he called "hyperconsumption" (p.xi). This he defined as a pattern of consumption directly linked to premature mortality and preventable diseases and contributing to "global epidemics of chronic disease and injuries" (p.37).

De-Lacy Vawdon and Livingstone (2020) found that CDOH literature referenced the food, tobacco and alcohol industries most frequently. Five of the 32 texts they identified discussed the gambling industry. Knai et al. (2018) noted that whilst the gambling industry has received less attention than other UCIs as a driver of NCDs, it is associated with other risk factors for NCDs such as alcohol consumption and that disabilities associated with gambling harms are similar to those associated with alcohol. A number of mental health disorders are often comorbid with gambling problems (Shaffer and Korn 2002). Whilst there are contested medicalised discourses of addiction around gambling (Reith 2019), there is a growing consensus that gambling should be treated as a public health issue (Lancet 2017; Wardle *et al.* 2019; Cassidy 2020) and as a UCI with no agreed safe level of consumption. As with food, soft drinks and processed foods that are high in fat, sugar, salt and alcohol, the emphasis has been on addressing individual behaviour ("responsible gambling") rather than the environment which has led to gambling addictions (Reith 2019; Cassidy 2020; Orford 2020).

According to some commentators, the focus on tobacco as a product with a unique ability to cause harm has detracted from a wider understanding of the commercial determinants of health and their impact on the consumption of unhealthy products (Casswell 2013; West and Marteau 2013). A systems thinking

approach (Meadows 2009) to inform policy action on unhealthy commodities is being called for in contrast to traditional individual risk commodity approaches which can be fragmented and piecemeal (Knai *et al.* 2018). Milsom *et al.* (2020) argued that there is a policy challenge to achieve greater policy coherence for NCD prevention given that public health practitioners have often focused on individual behaviour change to reduce the consumption of unhealthy products rather than higher level supply-side regulations.

Freudenberg described “corporate consumption ideology” (Freudenberg 2016 p.126) according to which personal choice (described as ‘lifestyle’ in public health literature) is the major determinant of health; corporations are only responding to consumer demand; education is key to making informed choices; and government has no role in regulation. Academics compare the practices of the tobacco and food industry (Brownell and Warner 2009; Malik 2010) and argue that the tobacco industry had a strategy or “playbook” (Brownell and Warner 2009 p.259). The strategy, developed from the example of the tobacco industry, is a series of actions used by UCIs which included influencing public opinion and lobbying against legislation and regulation. These UCIs seek to promote the consumption of their brands whilst emphasising personal responsibility in this consumption.

### **2.2.3 The marketing of unhealthy brands**

The marketing strategies of UCIs impact on consumption and public health (Hawkins *et al.* 2018). These strategies include branding, advertising, promotion and the creation of new markets to increase sales (The Health Foundation 2020). Hastings (2012) argued that marketing textbooks lionise consumption at the expense of our health. Marketing includes public relations, merchandising and sponsorship, as well as the promotion of brand consciousness and loyalty to develop brand relationships and relationship marketing (Hastings 2015). Hastings suggested the increase in all forms of sports sponsorship in recent years shows “the power of innocence by association” (Hastings 2015 p.1051), in which corporate marketers wish to add an emotional and psychological value to their brand through an association with sport. Relationship marketing is a perfect



practice for sport where clubs focus on their fans, treating them as customers/consumers, in order to improve their commercial income whilst reducing their dependence on success in the sporting field. These relationships have always existed in sport where owners and directors focus on establishing a close bond between fans and club (Bühler and Nufer 2013).

Sport has proved a willing vehicle for the marketing and globalisation of unhealthy brands by TNCs whilst tobacco and alcohol executives have sought to circumvent marketing restrictions placed on them by governments wishing to address the social cost to health caused by consumption of these legal products (Cornwell 1997). Collin (2003) has written of the globalisation of the tobacco industry and how it used technological developments to circumvent regulation and increase awareness of its brands with its sponsorship of motor racing as an example of its tactics. British American Tobacco (BAT) launched their sports sponsorship programme in Thailand in 1987 amid advertising restrictions; BAT's events in 1989 included a visit by Manchester United to promote the 555 cigarette brand (MacKenzie *et al.* 2007). In 1986, an estimated sixteen percent of all televised sport was sponsored by tobacco (Wilson 1988).

Whilst tobacco industry sponsorship has been mainly removed, there is still considerable sport sponsorship by the alcohol, gambling, fast food and sugary drinks industries raising public health concerns (Kelly *et al.* 2010b; Carter *et al.* 2013; Bunn *et al.* 2018; Dixon *et al.* 2019; Ireland *et al.* 2019). The London Olympic Games was criticised for its 'junk food' sponsors including Coca-Cola, McDonald's and Cadbury at a time of growing global obesity rates (Garde and Rigby 2012). Hastings noted the corporate takeover of the Olympics - "an event that should be a beacon of healthy activity not another shopping opportunity" (Hastings 2012 e5124).

Despite sport sponsorship being a key component of the marketing of UCIs, it receives little mention in the CDOH literature. Ireland *et al.* (2019) described how the appeal of sport is used to promote brands and products that harm health. Hastings (2015) argued that brand exposure through entertainment (sport and screen-based entertainment) provided business benefits including publicity, favourable brand associations and promotional opportunities. Knai

et.al (2018) gave the example of the shirt sponsorship of English Premier League teams (EPL) by gambling companies as UCIs building alliances with others beyond their core business to create an appearance of larger support. The increase of all sports and entertainment sponsorship by corporate marketers illustrates the marketing value of association with large sporting events. Jernigan (2009), in his consideration of the global alcohol industry, argued that public health research has not kept up with the ability of the industry to innovate in its marketing.

Differences in marketing strategy may provide a rationale for different regulatory approaches (The Health Foundation 2020). Madureira Lima and Galea (2018) used Lukes' (2005, originally published in 1974) three dimensions of power model to include marketing and advertising and CSR as part of "preference shaping" (Madureira Lima and Galea 2018 p.5). In this model, commercial entities ensure preferences are framed so that unhealthy products are viewed as safe and even healthy by consumers. As already noted, many commentators are calling for a reframing of the commercial determinants of health (Rochford *et al.* 2019), clearer definition and measurement (Lee and Freudenberg 2020) and a research agenda (Paichadze *et al.* 2020).

#### **2.2.4 Corporate Social Responsibility**

TNCs are taking increasing steps to present themselves as good corporate citizens with sports sponsorship sometimes considered part of a global corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme (Amis and Cornwell 2005). As Cornwell (2020) has noted, industries including tobacco, alcohol, gaming and fast food have all received criticism for their sport sponsorship programmes with a central concern being the fact that these sponsored activities reach youth audiences. Freudenberg (2016) observed that companies use CSR as a public relations tool to distract from criticism of their products, citing PepsiCo and Coca-Cola's 'philanthropic' contributions to physical activity programmes which they claim is their corporate response to address obesity (which their products directly contribute to). Zeimers et al. (2019) have explored the literature around the characteristics that have assisted the development of CSR in football. They highlighted three characteristics specifically: the increased commercialisation

which has transformed football into a major industry and resulted in increased social demands being made of it; the fact that the strong connection to the community has greater relevance for football as it is not a ‘conventional’ business; given the media scrutiny of football, it has raised the importance of “good reputation and positive brand image” (Zeimers *et al.* 2019 p.115).

Anagnostopoulos and Shilbury (2013) noted that CSR practices amongst English football clubs dated back to the 1980s with an awareness of “football’s potential to be a key deliverer of policy objectives” (p.271). In 2005 it was reported that the UK government pushed hard for an increase in revenue from broadcasting rights to be passed back into grassroots football and other social initiatives (Anagnostopoulos and Shilbury 2013). Both the EPL (Morgan 2013) and its membership clubs promote their CSR practices (Walters and Tacon 2010) but it is important to note that, in the UK, CSR is delivered by football foundations which have charitable status and are independent of their parent clubs (Anagnostopoulos 2013). Critics compliment the CSR work but note the small amount of money allocated to CSR initiatives as a percentage of the Premier League’s revenue from television broadcasting (Conn 2008). Mellor (2008) is critical of such relationships and considered football a “‘Janus-faced’ sport which ... separates out ‘community concerns’ from more everyday business operations and practices” (p.313). Whilst football is able to deliver positive health impacts through its CSR programmes (Smith and Westerbeek 2007), it is clear that there is a central contradiction between these programmes and the marketing of unhealthy commodities through both the Premier League and its membership clubs’ sponsorship arrangements.

### **2.2.5 Policy interventions**

Ireland *et al.* (2019) called for policy-makers and the public health community to formulate an approach to the sponsorship of sporting events. This requires more clarity in the understanding and conceptualisation of the way in which TNCs and the UCIs use sport to market their brands. Restrictions on advertising of unhealthy commodities are seen as an important component of market regulation (Watson *et al.* 2017) although under-researched (Naik *et al.* 2019).

Ndebele et al. (2020) have argued that there is a lack of guidance for public health decision-making in complex ethical situations.

### **2.2.6 Summary of commercial determinants in health literature in relation to sport**

Sport may be considered under-represented in the CDOH literature and, when it is mentioned, sport sponsorship may only be described as a part of a corporate social responsibility scheme in which CSR spending may be used for tax-deductible public relations and marketing (Millar 2013; Allen 2020). Hastings in two papers (2012; 2015), focused on the marketing strategies of TNCs, argued that the impact of this marketing is to prioritise consumption at every opportunity undermining mental as well as physical wellbeing. Hastings argued that “unbridled marketing should be ... energetically challenged” (Hastings 2012 e5126) because of its effect on public health.

In the 32 texts identified by de Lacy-Vawdon and Livingstone (2020) which specifically named the CDOH directly and/or similar concepts such as ‘corporate determinants’, only seven made any reference (usually very brief) to sport. Of the seven papers, the Olympic Games and/or the FIFA World Cup were mentioned by Hastings (2012; 2015), Kickbusch (2012) and the World Health Organisation Western Pacific (2017); the latter with reference to smoke-free policies at the Tokyo Olympics. The references to sport by Knai et al. (2018) and Millar (2013) in their papers on the CDOH have been mentioned previously. They pay very brief attention to sport sponsorship, as a form of advertising (Millar), and building support for the gambling industry through perceived positive public relations using football shirt sponsorship (Knai *et al.* 2018).

Ireland et al. (2019) focused on the commercial sponsorship of sport by UCIs. Whilst referencing literature concerning the sponsorship of ‘mega-events’ such as the Olympics and the World Cup, the authors described the relationships between unhealthy commodity industries (including tobacco, alcohol and unhealthy food and beverages) and sports events, including the UEFA European football tournaments and the English Premier League (EPL). They highlighted

that football was the “most popular spectator sport globally” (p.292) and that the EPL claimed 4.7 billion views per season (Cleland 2017). Their paper concluded by recommending further research into the relationships between sport and its unhealthy commercial sponsors which “present substantial challenges to public health” (p.292).

De-Lacy Vawdon and Livingstone’s (2020) systematic review has illustrated that, despite the huge cultural capital of sport, it is rarely mentioned, and, when it is, only briefly, in the literature concerning CDOH. Hastings (2012) argued that corporate power should be “a public health priority” (e5124). Given the absence of literature concerning the commercial determinants of health in sport, this thesis will therefore explore unhealthy sports sponsorship and CSR practices as a strategy of UCIs. As the English Premier League is considered the most popular sporting league in the world, it will act as a suitable case study to examine the commercial determinants of health thesis in relation to sport.

In doing so, it is helpful in the next sections of this chapter, to understand the commercial development of football in the context of the development of globalisation and neoliberal capitalism, and the sport’s relationships with UCIs.

## **2.3 Football and Modern Social Theorists**

As has been noted, sport is rarely considered in the public health literature which seeks to describe and define the commercial determinants of health. Further, sport only began to attract the attention of social theorists towards the second half of the twentieth century. To a certain extent, this is because sport was considered ‘low’ or ‘popular’ culture, a view that is associated with the ‘Frankfurt School’ of critical theorists (Giulianotti 2004a). Much of the writing of these philosophers and sociologists came after the Second World War when their members sought to explain the rise of fascism in Germany and the failure of the working class to exercise its predicted revolutionary role (Morgan 1988). One of the most prominent members of the school, Theodor Adorno, presented culture as the organisation of free time where the masses were permitted the gratification of their desires whilst maintaining their subjugation under

capitalism (Bernstein 2001, 1991). Adorno considered sport as part of mass culture but a parody of freedom: “Sport itself is not play but ritual in which the subjected celebrate their subjection” (Adorno 2001 [1991]). Lash and Lury (2007) argued that Adorno was writing at a time when commodities were manufactured and he saw the cultural industry as comprising of products whose representation would lead to capital accumulation. Following Lash and Lury’s position, it can be suggested that today’s global culture industry works through brands generated across a range of products, which use football to secure symbolic recognition. Although Adorno’s view of essentially passive consumerism is still relevant in today’s mass-produced representations of popular culture (Jeffries 2016), it excludes the role of agency of individuals.

Like Adorno, Norbert Elias was another who sought exile from Nazi Germany. Elias had already written ‘The Civilizing Process’ in German in 1939 but it was not published into English until 1978 and 1982 in two volumes (Elias 1978; 1982). Giulianotti (2004b) wrote that Elias’s status in sport is secured by the sociologist’s position of seeing sport and leisure as important social activities, still comparatively rare at this time. Elias described the civilising process as the developments in socially accepted codes of conduct and sentiment. These had begun to change from the sixteenth century onwards and were part of the process of state formation (Elias 1986). Elias collaborated with Eric Dunning to build on these ideas of a civilising process to develop a theory of leisure incorporating sociological perspectives of sport from medieval ball games to the crowd violence which marred English football in the 1970s and 80s (Elias and Dunning 1986). As will be described in the development of football since its codification in the following sections, many sociologists were drawn to try to explain the ‘hooliganism’ which erupted in football stadiums in the United Kingdom during Margaret Thatcher’s government.

Elias described the “pleasurable excitement” (Elias and Dunning 1986 p.63) of sport in his explanations of its role in providing an emotional outlet in today’s routine and constrained societies. Whilst Elias’s descriptions of the thrill of the struggle of football and the accompanying raising of the emotions and passions of football fans remain relevant, his civilising process theory can be criticised. For example, Giulianotti argued that it is difficult not to be sceptical in the face

of arguments that express faith in any civilising aspects of modernity and that Elias's approach fails to consider the power relations of sport (Giulianotti 2004b).

Like Elias, Pierre Bourdieu wrote extensively about sport and sociologists have used Bourdieu's understanding of social processes to apply his approach (Jarvie and Maguire 1994; Tomlinson 2004; Giulianotti 2016; Roberts 2016; Grenfell 2018). Bourdieu used concepts of *habitus*, *capital* and *field* to inform his analysis. For Bourdieu, a *habitus* is a series of dispositions which reflect the social actor's education, upbringing, and circumstances. Bourdieu used the term, *capital*, to associate with a system of exchanges linked with the values and beliefs of social groups (*doxa*). Various *capitals* are placed and valued by particular groups with a dominant *habitus* often determining that value. According to Bourdieu, there is *economic* and *symbolic capital*. In football, *economic capital* is clear and may be measured in terms of commercial income from a sponsorship agreement for example. *Symbolic capital* is the intrinsic value attached to a football club including its badge, its stadium and indeed its history of playing success (or failure), its *cultural capital*. In order to understand interactions between social actors, Bourdieu argued, it is necessary to examine the space in which these interactions or transactions took place. He called this social space, a *field*.

In 'Sport and Social Class' (1978), Bourdieu considered the historical and social conditions of modern sport, describing it as a "system of agents and institutions" (p.821) functioning as a "field of competition" and the "site of confrontations between agents with specific interests linked to their position within the field" (p.821). As in other practices, Bourdieu viewed sport as shaped by a struggle between members of the dominant classes and between the social classes. This struggle was determined by the position of dominant power within the field of competition and struggle. Bourdieu considered the opposition between participation in sport and purely consuming sport, via television for example, as something which emerged in the shift from "sport as a spectacle produced by professionals for consumption by the masses" (p.830). Bourdieu was clear that "sport is an object of political struggle" (p.832).

In this description of the struggles of competition within the sporting field, Bourdieu describes the various agents as reflecting their system of tastes and references (*habiti*). Bourdieu provides an explanatory model concerning the distribution of sporting practices (in this sense he is describing participation) which takes account of access to economic and cultural capital. In ‘Programme for a Sociology of Sport’ (1988), Bourdieu positioned sport as “inserted into a universe of practices and consumptions that are themselves structured and constituted in a system” (p.155). Thus, the site of sporting struggle represents “socially constituted dispositions” (p.158) which are imported into the field.

Bourdieu, along with colleagues (Bourdieu *et al.* 1999), published a paper to coincide with France hosting the FIFA World Cup in 1998, ‘The state, economics and sport’. They wrote of the trend towards commercialisation in sport, and particularly football, in which they defined the key relationship as between the sport’s practitioners and television. Football is “produced to be commercialised in the form of *televised spectacle*, a *commercial product* which is especially profitable because football is widely practised” (p.16). The factors involved in this commercialisation are those of the rules of neoliberal economics which is managed by the sport policies of different countries. In ‘The state, economics and sport’, the authors argued that “sport visible as spectacle hides the reality of a system of actors competing over commercial stakes” (p.17). The actors competing include:

Sports industry managers who control television and sponsoring rights, the managers of television channels competing for national broadcasting rights (or rights covering linguistic areas), the bosses of major industrial companies such as Adidas or Coca-Cola competing with each other for exclusive rights to link their products with the sports event, and finally television producers (Bourdieu *et al.* 1999 p.18).

As Bourdieu and his colleagues concluded, the process of commercialisation varied in different countries but they noted that in England, the process started early with clubs quoted on the Stock Exchange and, continued with the establishment of an independent elite league, the Premier League, with the principal aim of maximising profits.



Thus, a Bourdieusian theoretical perspective assists in an understanding of the ownership of football before and after the economic transformation of the 1990s and contributes to the contemporary debate between those who identify football clubs as social institutions rather than businesses. We can consider social actors such as players and owners of clubs seeking competitive advantage. Within the football 'field' of competition, *habitus* represents a system of dispositions or a 'way of being' and there is a struggle between those who hold economic capital (football club owners), the Premiership clubs which possess both economic and cultural capital, and the fans, who perceive themselves the rightful owners of this cultural capital. Further, Bourdieu's writing helps both in addressing the commercial determinants of health in sport, and the dominant neoliberal capitalist ideology demonstrated in the Premier League. Whilst football supporters can and do challenge this economic model (Numerato 2018), many also accept the commercialisation and commodification of their sport (Dixon 2013).

Whilst Adorno saw passive, subjugated consumption under capitalism, Bourdieu used the concept of *symbolic violence* to describe the suffering resulting from the reproduction of social order particularly in education and art (Bourdieu 1993a) where underlying power relations reproduce the legitimacy of existing structures. In accepting the economic model of the Premier League, in which sponsorship and television have transformed sport (Whannel 2002; Boyle and Haynes 2009), fans can be argued to be acquiescing in their symbolic domination. This is a theme that will be returned to in the qualitative study in Chapter Seven and the discussion in the following chapter. Bourdieu was also very critical of neoliberal capitalism and, rather than accepting a passive role in his engagement with contemporary society, he both called for social scientists to help shape the future (see 'Acts of Resistance' (Bourdieu 1998a)) and intervene politically (Bourdieu 2010). Whilst arguing that Bourdieu's work remains relevant, Lash argued however that Bourdieu was essentially pessimistic in his view of social transformation (Lash 1993). Fan movements may offer alternative views of football whilst remaining as consumers. These are themes that will be returned to regularly in this thesis whilst drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's social theories to assist in understanding the processes affecting the relationship

between football club owners and football fans, and the impact of the marketing of unhealthy brands by transnational corporations in the English Premier League.

In the following sections on the commercialisation and globalisation of football, a sociological model from Giulianotti and Robertson's work (2009) has been drawn on to understand the historical development and transformation of modern elite football.

## **2.4 The Commercialisation and Globalisation of football**

The historical origins of football are contested with academics such as Collins (2013; 2019) placing the history of sport as a product of capitalism developed as a part of the commercialised leisure industry of the nineteenth century. A modern alternative perspective sees the traditional "people's game" or the "beautiful game" (Conn 2005; Nicholson 2019) corrupted by the commercialism and commodification of the EPL. Harvey (2005) provided a revisionist interpretation with a strong focus on football culture developed "outside the public schools" (p.51). Kennedy and Kennedy's (2016) Marxist perspective on football in neoliberal times took a similar approach to Collins in describing the commodification of football. They detailed how fans have been defined as consumers in their relationship with football clubs (the producers in Marxist terms) but commented that football is more than a business in the usual sense and arguing that a simplistic analysis fails to acknowledge the balance of social forces within modern football. Football's administrators and owners were slow to see the sport's commercial potential after the Second World War with television and sponsorship only opening up new economic possibilities in the 1960s (Whannel 1986).

In helping to understand the historical development of football, this chapter will use an abbreviated version of Giulianotti and Robertson's (2009) phased model of development to build a social and economic history of football both in the United Kingdom and globally. This model provides a structure to examine CDOH in sport, and specifically football, and will be used to introduce themes which will be explored later, supported by a broader range of literature. Giulianotti

and Robertson's model presents football as a global game influenced by global processes and flows. They referenced Robertson's (1992) earlier work which defined globalisation as characterised by increasing global connectivity through digital connectiveness and an "intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson 1992 p.8). In turn, Giulianotti and Robertson's model of football history used Robertson's five phase historical model of globalisation and applied it to football. The phases follow a timeframe as used below.

### **2.4.1. Phase One. Pre-history**

In Giulianotti and Robertson's model, the first phase is germinal or pre-history and refers to the academic debates relating to the origins of football. For example, there is evidence of games taking place using a ball of some kind in many parts of the world as far back as the Han dynasty of Ancient China (206 BCE - 221 CE) (Goldblatt 2007). Whilst historical studies such as these may appear to be only of academic interest, as Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) noted, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) tend to highlight these ancient origins as a cultural resource to appeal to a new and expanding football market in Asia in order to create an 'ownership' of the traditions of football. Folk games were also played in England in the middle ages and are characterised as "wild and riotous" (Elias and Dunning 1986 p.176). Traditional games attracted huge and noisy crowds which the 'authorities' had tried to control and rule from the fourteenth century onwards (Fournier 2013). For football to move beyond a folk game and to become a sport, there needed to be an agreement on how it would be played. It may also be considered that in making such an agreement, a means of control was being established. At this pre-historical stage, football had yet to be commercialised.

### **2.4.2 Phase Two. 1830s-1870s**

The second "incipient" phase of football's development described by Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) is from the 1830s to the 1870s. They wrote that this was the time when the "social elites" (p.7) in England were instrumental in establishing football's rules in 1863 following the demand for common rules from

elite teams formed in public schools. This codification of an association football game was distinguished from rugby football by its banning of hacking and handling (Murray 1994). The Football Association (FA) was formed in 1863 from representatives of public school old boys' clubs (Goldblatt 2007) and the FA Cup was launched in 1871 with a shared set of rules for matches. As Collins (2015) wrote, the social history of sport has only emerged recently (in the last forty years) in the writing of those such as Mason (1980) following earlier histories which Collins dismissed as having "rarely risen above the antiquarian" (2015 p.1127). There are academic debates around modern football which reference tradition and authenticity. Many popular writers follow Harvey's (2005) historical interpretation using slogans such as "Against Modern Football" (Brown 2017; Kelly 2019) and "Reclaim the Game" (Reid 2005), in arguing that the sport has been taken away from its true, original, working class roots.

In football's next phase, the new football clubs developed a commercial path from their varied beginnings usually led by local businessmen. Sport was a part of the growing Victorian entertainment industry which was underpinned by the quest for profit (Jackson 2019).

### **2.4.3 Phase Three. 1870s-1920s**

Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) described the third phase of their football and globalisation model, as a take-off phase which covers the 1870s to the mid-1920s. This period is important to football becoming a global sport as this marked the development of the international game, initially across Europe and Latin America, and then into the parts of Africa and Asia most closely linked to Europe. FIFA was formed in 1904. The Confederación Sudamericana de Fútbol (CONMEBOL) was founded in 1916 representing South American interests and reflecting the early global diffusion of the game.

In Britain, there were initial tensions between the 'Corinthian' principles of the south of England (Horne *et al.* 1999) as personified by the 'Gentleman Amateur' (Holt 1992) and the industrialists and property owners in the North and Midlands of England (Giulianotti 1999). The latter sought to pay their players and faced

with a dangerous division, the FA voted to legalise professionalism in 1885 (Collins 2013; Russell 2013). This early argument may be characterised as an initial struggle between the keepers of football as leisure and those who wanted to make football a professional sport. Mason (1980) argued that the debate was between those in favour of and against the potential scale and scope of commercialised sport.

Tischler (1981) traced the growth of professional football and argued that nineteenth-century industrialisation helped to extend commercial relationships into the newly codified sport with class roles reflected. He argued that the amateur code had restricted the commercial operations of many clubs and that professionalisation made a clear distinction between owners and players. A large number of football clubs were established and developed rapidly at the end of the nineteenth century particularly based around the English industrial centres of the north and the midlands. There are several football historians (such as Morris 2016) that provide an excellent description of these clubs. Many clubs grew from pre-existing elements in the community such as cricket clubs (Newcastle United, Sheffield Wednesday), and church communities (Aston Villa, Bolton Wanderers, Everton, Manchester City, Wolverhampton Wanderers) to then develop commercial aspects later. The origin and history of football clubs forms a key part of what Bridgewater calls modern “football brands” (Bridgewater 2010). To begin with clubs had strong family and regional associations with their communities, thus placing a value on tradition including the history of key matches and successes (Bridgewater 2010).

The game started to change rapidly from the early 1880s when travel became easier and there was a general reduction in hours of work (Hill 2002). Football clubs from Lancashire and the Midlands began to draw in large enough crowds to justify erecting stands and enclosures and charging admission (Russell 2013). The FA Cup Final of 1872 had a crowd of 2,000; in 1888, there were 17,000 spectators at Kennington Oval. Whilst the Cup Final was at Crystal Palace, crowds rose from 45,000 in 1895, 69,000 in 1900, and, further, to 120,000 in 1913 (Walvin 1994). The size of crowds was simply limited by the capacity of stadiums (Walvin 1994). However, as well as providing excitement, these vast attendances also brought danger. Stadiums were not equipped for these numbers

of spectators and in 1902, there were 550 casualties and 25 people died at an England v Scotland match at Ibrox, Glasgow, when part of a stand collapsed (Mason 1980).

Following the early days of public school popularity in the 1860s to 1880s, football was increasingly seen as a “workingman’s game” (Tischler 1981). Descriptions in newspapers (Tischler 1981), photographs and early film representations (Mitchell and Kenyon 1902b) show serried ranks of men in flat caps (often with tobacco pipes) with very few women (if any) in evidence at matches. Tischler (1981) recorded that this working class adoption of the sport upset many of the upper classes who disapproved of “commercial-professional football” (p.129).

Unhealthy commodity industries were already seeing opportunities for marketing to the large following that football was attracting. Strategies to claim health benefits from food products (a common technique in today’s marketing) were already being advanced in 1898 when Bovril (a salty meat extract product developed in the 1870s) drew heavily on its claimed sporting benefits in promoting its association with Nottingham Forest, the FA Cup winners in 1898 (Figure 2) (Hadley 1970).

In a film of Newcastle United v Liverpool in 1901, there are a number of advertising boards demonstrating the early introduction of what the modern day commentator describes as “commercialisation and sponsorship” (Mitchell and Kenyon 1901). The first advertisement that this researcher was able to locate concerning cigarettes in a live game was an advertising board placed on a stand at Burnley’s stadium (Turf Moor) in a Mitchell and Kenyon film of the match between Burnley and Manchester United on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1902 advertising “Bulldog Flake” pipe tobacco (coincidentally the earliest film of Manchester United in action) (Figure 3) (Mitchell and Kenyon 1902a).

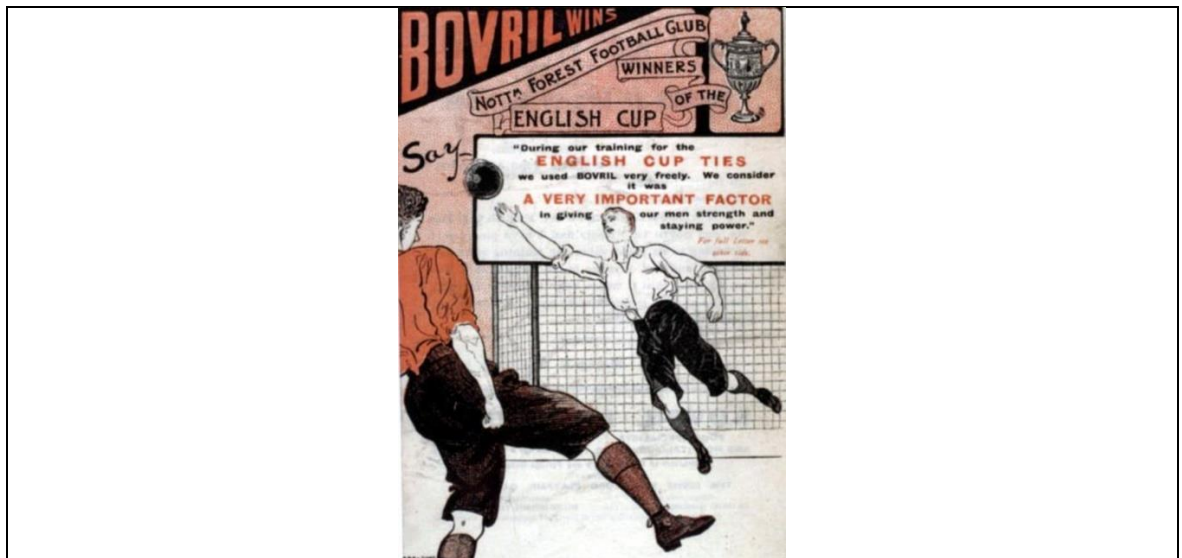


Figure 2: Bovril wins, 1898. Image taken from Hadley, 1970, p.88



Figure 3: Smoke Bulldog Flake, 1902.

Image extracted from Mitchell and Kenyon (1902), BFI:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jv-Ot4ioE58&t=45s>

The history of cigarette cards is one of a close association with sport. These cards were issued by tobacco manufacturers to stiffen cigarette packaging and to advertise brands. Originating in the USA in the 1870s, W.D. & H.O. Wills became the first British cigarette manufacturer to include cards in their packaging in 1887. By 1896, the first football set of cigarette cards were being produced as a way to obtain brand loyalty (Simkin 2020). The collection of these cards was popular into the 1920s and 30s.

Gambling has long been associated with recreational pastimes and was popular in the leisure culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries amongst all

classes (Clapson 1992). Mason (1980) argued that the ex-public schoolboys and middle-class professionals who dominated the FA at the end of the nineteenth century were concerned to avoid any concerns about betting and corruption, and players and officials were thus banned from betting on games in 1892 (Inglis 1988). Despite this ban, there was a growing practice amongst the sporting press of offering the opportunity to forecast the results of matches for a small stake with the hope of a big cash prize win (Mason 1980; Clapson 1992). This coupon-betting, based on bookmakers issuing coupons, developed rapidly in the first decade of the twentieth century in particular areas of England such as Lancashire and Yorkshire (Mason 1980; Clapson 1992).

The expansion of football coupon-betting met opposition. Hill (2002) wrote that, politicians and religious leaders regarded “betting by working people as an irrational and feckless pursuit liable to lead to poverty” (p.39). Football administrators were concerned about the impact of gambling on the image and probity of football. By 1910, betting was banned in football grounds and any player or official taking part in coupon-betting was permanently suspended (Inglis 1988). Newspapers continued to promote coupon-betting to boost their circulation until this was also banned in 1928 (Inglis 1988). Clapson (1992) characterised the time between the early to mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth century as an evolution from a pre-industrial sporting and betting culture into a mass commercialised gambling market based upon bookmakers and newspapers (the ‘sporting press’).

The alcohol business was also closely involved in football from a very early stage (Mason 1980; Collins and Vamplew 2002). Public houses played an important part in the origin of some football clubs, both in terms of enabling facilities for changing for players before a game, and in offering fields to play on. Pubs provided these spaces in return for the opportunity to sell beer, as well as prizes and gambling facilities (Collins and Vamplew 2002).

This phase in football’s development marked the development of codified football outside the United Kingdom with the formation of FIFA in 1904, commercial practices in ownership and an early association with UCIs. As described in the CDOH literature, the tobacco industry was already proving itself



an innovator in practices designed to develop new markets for their brands, for example via collectable cards. And, as with gambling, commercial practices were already challenging ethical values.

#### **2.4.4 Phase Four. 1920s - 1960s.**

The fourth phase of football's development according to Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) lasted from mid-1920s to the late 1960s. It marked the growing importance of television and radio in broadcasting sport. Newspapers and the sporting press played a major part in the development of Victorian sport and television has had a similarly profound effect in how contemporary elite football is presented to the public. As early as 1938, the FA Cup final in England drew around 10,000 television viewers (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009). By 1950 about 350,000 TV licences had been issued when Liverpool and Arsenal played in the FA Cup Final (Domeneghetti 2017). By 1953, the Final featuring Stanley Matthews had 10 million viewers according to Domeneghetti. As Mason (1980) wrote, whereas only 10 per cent had a television in Britain in the early 1950s, by the late 1960s only 10 per cent did not. The arrival of television into homes made football a significant "advertising platform" (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b p.111).

The first World Cup was launched by FIFA in 1930 and won by Uruguay. The 1954 World Cup, held in Switzerland, was televised widely across Europe, building a following and an audience for football (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009). Also in 1954, the Union des Associations Européennes de Football (UEFA) was formed reflecting the broader range of post-war European alliances (Giulianotti, 1999).

The post war phase of football's development was marked by the growing commercial success of Manchester United and the development of its iconic brand. Following the austerity and damage caused by the war, Manchester United was the club with the largest number of spectators (45,000 on average) between 1946 and 1960 (Boli 2017) winning First Division (the precursor to the Premier League) league titles in 1952, 1956 and 1957. In 1957, Manchester United were the first English team to compete in the European Cup (established by UEFA in 1955 for the champions of the top division European clubs, it was

rebranded as the Champions League in 1992 and broadened its qualifications to include more clubs). In 1958, a plane crash in Munich involving the Manchester United team returning from a European Cup match claimed 23 lives including eight players and injuring several more. Boli (2017) argued that the Munich crash shaped the mythology of the club. Following the Munich plane crash, the Manchester United team was rebuilt in the 1960s and the club brand developed around the success of footballers such as Bobby Charlton, Denis Law and George Best. Best may be considered the first football celebrity in an era when football players were transformed from “local heroes to global stars” (Turner 2014 p.751).

Jimmy Hill, the Chairman of the Professional Footballers’ Association at this time, saw a new position for the footballer in English culture. Hill saw football as part of the entertainment business and, as entertainers, footballers were producing commodities which should be valued in the same way as television, cinema and theatre (Hill 1961). By the late 1950s, many players were paid by companies to advertise their goods. Once again, the tobacco industry was an early innovator with Everton star, Dixie Dean, promoting Carreras Clubs cigarettes in the 1930s, and Craven A capitalising on the fame of England footballer, Stanley Matthews (Figure 4) (Matthews was not even a smoker), two decades later (Griffin 2012).

PICTUREGOER December 12 1952

STANLEY MATTHEWS, Blackpool's quicksilver outside-right, has been capped for England no less than 33 times. Stan takes his training very seriously and soon discovered the cigarette which suited him best. "It wasn't till I changed to Craven 'A'," he says, "that I learnt what smooth smoking meant."

**"The cigarette for me"**  
SAYS FOOTBALL GENIUS **STANLEY MATTHEWS**

EVERY WEEK crowds warm to the brilliant technical play of master-schemer Stan Matthews—football's greatest name to fans and players alike. Like so many leading sportsmen Stan's a Craven 'A' smoker. "For a really satisfying cigarette that's kind to your throat," he says, "give me a Craven 'A' every time."

**CRAVEN 'A' smooth, clean smoking**

P.S. That cork tip really does make a difference, you know. There's a lot more pleasure in a cigarette with an end that's always clean, and dry, and firm between your lips

Figure 4: Stanley Matthews: “The cigarette for me”, 1952. From (Griffin 2012 p.2)

The celebrity is an important part of contemporary football culture and centres upon the encouragement of consumption (Smart 2005; Cashmore 2006; Harris 2017). Matthews was a representative of his age and class and earned more from his royalties from advertising and writing a newspaper column (and two autobiographies) than he did from playing football (Hopcraft 2006).

This phase in football's development marked the development of football clubs as powerful brands and the widescale use of television as a broadcasting medium reaching new audiences.

#### **2.4.5 Phase Five. The late 1960s to the early 2000s including the launch of the English Premier League**

In Giulianotti and Robertson's (2009) model, this final phase included two key international and linked developments. Brazil's João Havelange became President of FIFA in 1974 (taking over from Sir Stanley Rous). Goldblatt (2007) wrote that Havelange's position was "created and sustained by mobilizing the football elites of the global peripheries" (p.527). In turn, "that power was multiplied a thousand times by the global expansion to television" (p.527). The second major international development in this period which Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) referenced, was the transformation of international football through television sports coverage with the 1970 World Cup, the first finals to be widely televised in colour (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009 p.22).

Whannel (1986) argued that the growth of television and sponsorship "constituted an economic force that has in turn generated a cultural transformation" (p.129) between 1965 and 1985. A huge expansion of sports marketing was required to finance the expansion of the World Cup. In 1978, Coca-Cola paid FIFA US\$8.33 million for exclusive rights to stadium advertising (Tomlinson 2014 p.95). The 1984 European Football Championships in France provided perimeter advertising in all the stadia used during the tournament with guaranteed worldwide television exposure (Sugden and Tomlinson 1998). Between 1986 and 1998, World Cup sponsors included Anheuser-Busch, Budweiser, Canon, Coca-Cola, General Motors, Gillette, JVC, Mars, Mastercard,

McDonald's and Philips (in 1986 they still had a tobacco sponsor: R.J. Reynolds - Camel cigarettes). The commercial model of sponsorship, developed from the model of the exploitation of the Olympic Games through the sale of television rights (Barney *et al.* 2002), was based around the innovation of product category exclusivity such as fast food (McDonald's) and alcohol (Amstel) (Sugden and Tomlinson 1998).

In the early 1960s, football had seen significant drops in match attendances and thus losses in matchday income. The expansion of television provided a great attraction for potential sponsors (Whannel 1986). The banning of cigarette commercial advertising on British television in 1965 led to major tobacco firms such as Benson and Hedges and Rothmans ploughing large sums into televised sport (Whannel 1986; 2002) such as cricket, tennis, and motor racing to maintain exposure for their brands. As the commercial potential of sport provided by television increased, there was increasing pressure on the "traditional amateur, benevolent paternalism of sports organization" by entrepreneurial interests. (Whannel 1986 p.130) Following initial opposition by the FA, shirt sponsorship was permitted in England from 1977 with Liverpool signing a £100,000 two-year shirt sponsorship deal with Hitachi, the Japanese electrical company in 1979 (Planet Football 2017). Having been resistant initially to football being broadcast live on television, the Football League gave in to commercial pressures and permitted the screening of live football in 1983, whilst television in turn allowed the showing of shirt sponsorships increasing the sponsorship potential of the elite clubs (Whannel 1986). By the 1980s and 1990s, alcohol companies were commonly represented on club shirts including Holsten Pils (Tottenham), Coors (Chelsea) and Shipstones (Nottingham Forest) (Billingham 2015).

The 1970s and 1980s brought attention both to fan behaviour and the decaying and unsuitable stadiums of British football. Taylor (1987) wrote that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government argued that the disasters which were to occur in our grounds were linked with hooliganism, and also "by the characteristically unregulated and inefficiently organized condition of a working-class mass sport" (p.172). The Hillsborough 'disaster' of 1989 when 96 Liverpool fans lost their lives due to the devastatingly inadequate crowd control measures employed by the South Yorkshire Police at Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough

Stadium proved a turning point both in how football was viewed and how it was governed (Tempany 2016). Lord Justice Taylor's reports (1989; 1990) into the Hillsborough tragedy led to a review of stadium safety. The resulting changes led to the refurbishment or reconstruction of stadiums including the introduction of all-seater facilities (Rookwood and Hughson 2017). This has also been described as a deliberate move to change the fan demographic to marginalise crowd disorder with increased ticket prices both contributing to stadium rebuild costs and to changing football culture (Inglis 2002).

Football's administrators and its leading clubs had already been seeking ways of making more money from the game which had originally been established by the Football League on a system of shared gate money (Conn 2005). The FA had established restrictions against unlimited dividends in 1892 to prevent what they saw as "the dangers of commercialism" (Conn 2005 p.42) and these rules had stayed in place until the 1980s. In 1983, in seeking new sources of income, the directors of Tottenham Hotspur floated their club on the Stock Market, thus avoiding the FA's restrictions on dividends and enabling football clubs to become profit-making vehicles for investors (Conn 2005). In 1991, the Football Association's *The Blueprint for the Future of Football* (Football Association 1991) recommended the establishment of a Premier League based around the "realisation of full commercial revenue" (Football Association 1991 p.55). There were three major areas of commercial activity which were highlighted: television rights (in 1991, the sale of television rights were lower in England than in Italy, Spain, Germany and France); sponsorship; and licensing and merchandising (Football Association 1991).

The establishment of the FA Premier League (now known as the English Premier League or EPL) in the 1992/93 football season established a new business model and took professional football to new levels of exposure and scrutiny. It provided opportunities to commodify all aspects of the game from the players themselves to the stadiums in which they played. Many writers have reported the decision in September 1991 by the Football Association to allow the top 22 clubs to break-away from their 70 fellow clubs in 1992 as a power-grab for the elite clubs. Conn (2005, p.102) quotes the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), Gordon Taylor, as describing it as "a way for the leading clubs

to seize virtually all the money”. Once there was an agreement that the top clubs would form their own league, they were able to negotiate their own broadcasting rights package.

With the launch of the Premier League, the top tier of English football became a “highly developed and globally marketed commodity for worldwide media audiences” (Tomlinson 2013 p.6). Walsh and Giulianotti (2001) used “hyper-commodification” (this is discussed further in 2.5) in their description of football as a truly global sport at the beginning of the twenty-first century. They described the market-centred processes into football as entailing,

the greater professionalization and global migration of players, the corporatization of clubs, the proliferation of merchandising, rule-changes to draw in new customers, and a general redefinition of the competitive structures and *ethos* of the sport (p.53).

This phase in the history of the globalisation and commercialisation of football included four key developments relating to the CDOH:

- the development of the marketing package and the sponsorship ‘offer’ including shirt sponsorship;
- the global expansion of television enabling new markets of screen fans;
- the introduction of broadcasting rights packages bringing new money to the game and commercial opportunities;
- the repackaging of football into new stadiums offering a safer and more controlled form of entertainment.

Corporate actors including UCIs were keen to make the most of the new commercial opportunities presented in football.

Giulianotti and Robertson’s (2009) five phase historical model of football has enabled an understanding of the sport’s commercial origins and its global developments. The internationalisation of football, combined with the expanding reach of transnational corporations and the development of broadcasting, has made the sport the ideal vehicle for the marketing of unhealthy brands to a global audience. British football’s traditions provide an

excellent case study of the commercial determinants in sport and their exploitation in the Premier League.

Table 1 on the following page provides a chronology of some of the key developments in both English and world football in the context of the sport's commercialisation and globalisation and provides an introduction to the next sections of this chapter which introduces the main themes explored in this brief social and economic history of English football.

**Table 1: A selective chronology of football, commercialisation, and the marketing of unhealthy commodities**

1863	Formation of the Football Association (FA)
1864	Notts County were the first professional club to be formed
1871	The first FA Cup
1885	Professionalisation legalised in England
1888	Football League formed
1904	The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) founded (England was not one of the original members)
1923	First FA Cup Final to be held at Wembley. Inception of Football Pools
1930	First FIFA World Cup (held in Uruguay)
1937	First live television broadcast by the BBC
1954	Union des Associations Européennes de Football (UEFA) founded
1960	The maximum wage in football was abolished
1964	'Match of the Day' debuts on television
1965	British Government bans cigarette advertising on television
1970	Ninth FIFA World Cup (held in Mexico). For the first time, some television viewers were able to watch the tournament in colour
1970	The first tournament for English Football League clubs to sell its naming rights was the Watney Cup, sponsored by brewer, Watney Mann, which was played from 1970 to 1973.
1974	João Havelange elected as President of FIFA
1977	Shirt sponsorship in English football clubs was permitted by the FA (Liverpool's was the first English sponsorship deal with Hitachi in 1979)
1978	Coca-Cola became a sponsor of the FIFA World Cup
1983	The Football League agreed to the live screening of football in exchange for which television allowed shirt advertisements
1983	Tottenham Hotspur were floated on the Stock Exchange
1989	96 fans die from crushing injuries suffered during the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest
1992	The launch of the English Premier League with a broadcasting deal with BskyB. No live EPL matches were shown on terrestrial television until the coronavirus pandemic in 2020
1993	The EPL now has a suite of sponsors as opposed to a title sponsor but it was known as the Carling Premier League from 1993-2001
1994	The FA Cup was sponsored by Littlewoods Pools from 1994-97
1995	Bosman ruling. Clubs were no longer paid fees at the end of a player's contract
1998	The FA removed the restrictions on dividends and on directors working part-time from its rule book (Rule 34)
2002	British parliament passes legislation that began as a Private Member's Bill, banning tobacco advertising. Deadline for phasing out sponsorship of Formula One motor racing brought forward to comply with EU directive
2002	Fulham FC were the first EPL club to have a gambling brand (Betfair) on the front of their shirt
2007	A ban on smoking in public places, including football grounds, comes into effect in England on 1 July
2007	European Commission ruled that Sky's monopoly of EPL coverage in the UK was not in the interest of the consumer
2010	UEFA established its Club Licensing and Financial <i>Fair Play Regulations</i>
2011	The FA Cup was sponsored by Budweiser from 2011-14
2017	Caraboa, a Thai-owned 'energy' drink, sponsor the English League Cup (ongoing)
2017	EPL allowed clubs to have sleeve sponsors on kits
2019	Current three-year (2019-22) domestic broadcasting rights deal to show the EPL belongs to Sky, BT Sport and Amazon Prime
2020	A 'pause' in football seasons globally due to SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) with leagues restarted without fans permitted to be in stadiums



## 2.5 Football as a Mediated Spectacle for Consumption

The launch of the Premier League helped to fully commercialise and commodify the top tier of the English game and bombard fans with new more targeted messaging from every possible angle (Dittmore and McCarthy 2016) making it a key marketing platform for UCIs. Rupert Murdoch based the development of BSkyB, a British broadcaster but part of Murdoch's global media conglomerate News Corporation, around winning the broadcasting rights to the live coverage of Premier League football and its potential worldwide audience through satellite television (Falcous 2005). Baimbridge et al. (1996) detailed the value of the BskyB bid which brought them exclusive rights for live matches of the newly established Premier League. The live broadcasting deal which was agreed with BskyB was worth £305 million pounds over five years. Within the new Premier League, TV and sponsorship was split three ways. Half was shared equally between the clubs, a quarter related to the games selected by Sky for live coverage and the final quarter was paid out in decreasing slices according to a club's final league position. Collins (2013) described the approach by News Corporation as "acknowledging the historical importance of sport to media companies of all technologies since the eighteenth century" (p.119).

Castells (2000) has documented the transformation of economic power through the integration of economic, cultural and political interests in a networked society. This has been described as a process of 'Murdochization' (David *et al.* 2017) where News Corporation has built digital media networks around sport. News Corporation has used sport as an instrument to penetrate national television markets within the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia (Andrews 2003). Murdoch was very explicit about this and has been widely quoted as saying "we intend to ... use sports as a 'battering ram' and a lead offering in all our pay television operations" (Andrews 2003 p.239).

Since 1992, there has been a migration of free to air broadcasting to a digital pay-to-view subscription service which has allowed football in England to provide a key source of globalised media power around the world (Lawrence and Crawford 2019). Like other TNCs however, News Corporation were careful to

recognise the local within their global strategising, in order to make their sport product relevant to their local audience. Thus, they showed Premier League football on BskyB (now Sky) in the UK and National Rugby League on Foxtel in Australia (Andrews and Grainger 2016).

Robertson (1992) discussed concepts of authenticity of experience in introducing the term 'glocalization' in relation to marketing where "micro-marketing takes place within the contexts of increasingly-global economic practices" (p.173). Thus, TNC football sponsors such as Budweiser and Coca-Cola use local cultural contexts to promote their global products from the FIFA World Cup to the EPL. As well as being shown in 212 territories, the Premier League's broadcasting is in a wide range of languages from Malay to Mongolian, Mandarin to Montenegrin (Dickson and Malaia Santos 2017).

Themes of football tradition and authenticity are reinterpreted through the medium of television and commercial media. Hill (2002) wrote:

The traditional experience has been replaced with something manufactured in a television studio, not for a 'spectator' but for a 'viewer' and, ultimately in many cases, for a 'consumer' of advertising" (p.51).

Other writers (Horne *et al.* 1999; Sandvoss 2003) have described how television provides an interpretation of reality and reshaped football consumption and fandom. Technology overcomes geography so that fans can watch matches from almost anywhere in the world where access is only limited through cost, legislation and equipment. The digitalisation of football coverage has enabled fans to follow the club through livestreaming and through social media (Petersen-Wagner 2019). These later digital technologies provide opportunities for even wider connections of fans (and consumers).

Beck and Bosshart (2003) wrote

The very "symbiotic relationship" between the media and sports has profoundly affected both participants. And the advertising industry forms an important part of the relationship. Both sports and mass media keep trying to reach people as spectators, fans, and consumers. (p.3).

Understanding this relationship is critical to an understanding of how commercial interests interact with football and potentially help to damage our health. The presentation of football via television is through the medium of the camera where close ups and the view of action is determined by the camera operator or the director rather than the consumer (Sandvoss 2003). Thus, interview positions may be determined by advertising boards and a focus on key players is likely to use images provided by their club with sponsors highlighted such as on the front of club uniforms.

The new technology of the twenty-first century is likely to advance sports consumption, increase social media networking and make consumption of football matches even more interactive and informed (Jarvie *et al.* 2018). Lawrence and Crawford (2019) used the term “hyperdigitalization” to describe these digital technologies and the social, cultural and economic transformations resulting, to theorise how football cultures are affected by the various ways football-related content is being produced, accessed and consumed in digital sports broadcasting. Digital communication has enabled football-related content on various media social platforms such as Twitter, You Tube and Facebook which fans, clubs and commercial sponsors make use of (Hutchins and Rowe 2012; Lawrence and Crawford 2019).

This section describes how football has been a key player in the development of global capitalism. The sport’s relationship with the media has enabled TNCs to reach ever increasing markets through English football clubs’ growing numbers of supporters far outside Europe, never mind the United Kingdom. These TNCs include UCIs such as producers of unhealthy food and beverages, alcohol and gambling who use the marketing opportunities provided by football to create even stronger positive associations with their brands as well as drive up consumption.

## **2.6 Football, Capital and Revenue**

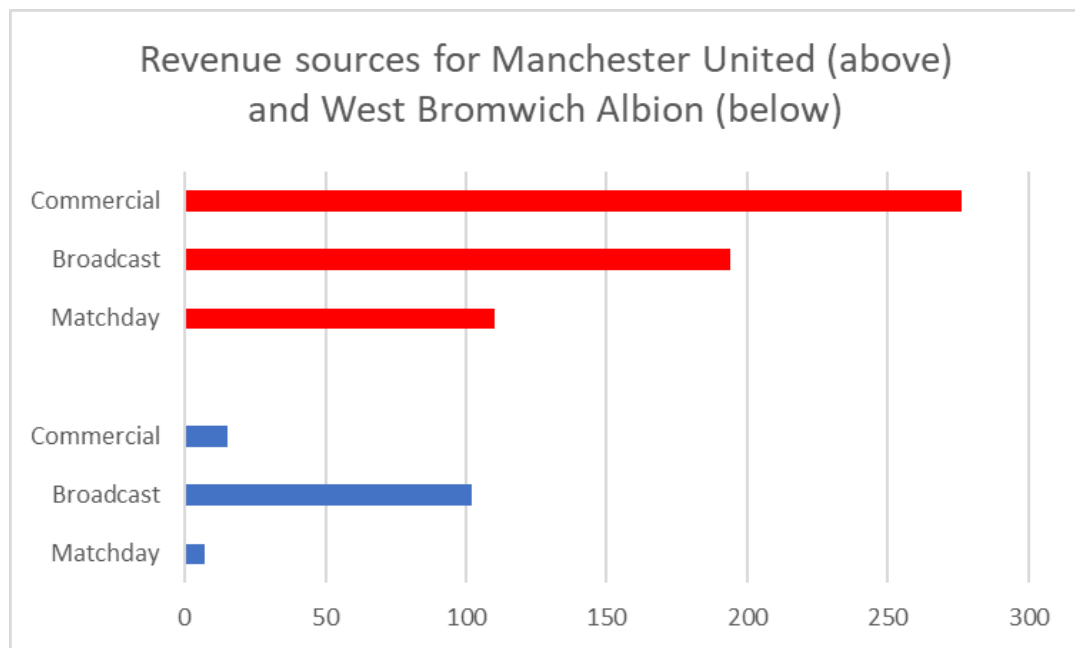
The launch of regular televised football brought a new and seemingly inexhaustible global market for the cultural-media industries (Williams 1994) and

a transformation in the finances of the game at least at elite level. Morrow (2003) restated the ongoing debate as football “being conceptualized as economic in basis, but social in nature” (p.43). King argued (1997b) English football responded to the findings of the Taylor Report (Rt Hon Lord Justice Taylor 1990) by the “unfettered application of free market principles” (King 1997b p.225). This was enabled by BskyB’s winning of the broadcasting rights to the new English Premier League as described earlier. This transformed the political economy of football from the “traditional spectator-based model” (Evens *et al.* 2013 p.17) to one based on the exploitation of media rights, merchandising and sponsorship.

Sociologists such as Walsh and Giulianotti (2001) have discussed the commodification of sport in terms of the introduction of market-centred processes into sport. Commodification may be considered simply in terms of a system of production and exchange (such as a football club charging entry to a stadium in order to view a match) but Walsh and Giulianotti used “hyper-commodification” to describe the intensive commodification of non-playing aspects of the game such as the huge increase in club merchandising (described further below). They argued that elite sports clubs such as Manchester United are organised as TNCs, with profit prioritised over historical and community-based origins.

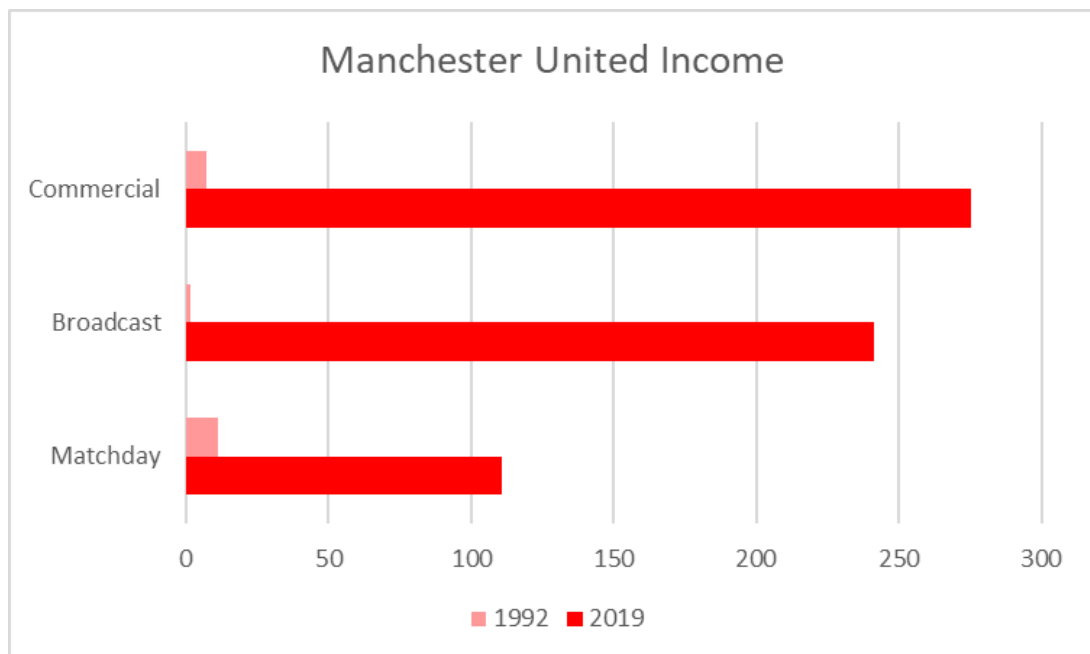
Modern EPL clubs generate income from three sources: matchday receipts, broadcasting rights and commercial transactions (Maguire 2020). However, there are big differences between the revenue of a global brand such as Manchester United and, say, West Bromwich Albion (who finished runners-up and bottom respectively in the 2017/18 Premier League table). Figure 5 (adapted from (Maguire 2020 p.25) illustrates the value of broadcasting to less well supported teams in the Premiership but also the huge commercial revenue now generated by one of the ‘big six’ clubs (generally described as Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester United, Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur (Potts 2020)).

**Figure 5: Revenue sources for Manchester United and West Bromwich Albion, 2017/18 (£ millions) (Maguire 2020)**



The income of Manchester United has grown exponentially since the launch of the Premier League in 1992 (Figure 6). Live broadcasting is extremely valuable and provides both direct and indirect income as, when a match is being broadcast live, clubs can charge more for perimeter advertising around the ground and it helps them to develop an international fanbase (Maguire 2020). As can be seen in Figure 5, and as described in Conn's (2019) summary of Premier League finances for the 2017-18 season, broadcasting income forms by far the largest share of income for the 'smaller' Premiership clubs. Commercial income, which is provided by revenue from such as the sale of merchandise, stadium rights, and sponsorship, is largely under an individual club's control, and varies widely between clubs. Thus, Bournemouth's commercial income in 2017/18 was £9m, whereas Manchester City's was £276m (Conn 2019).

**Figure 6: Manchester United income in 1992 and 2019 (£ millions\*) (Maguire 2020)**



\* Note: Not adjusted for inflation.

As has been noted already there has been a “historical presence of commercial investment (in sport) through investment, advertising, sponsorship and gambling” (Polley 1998 p.65). There has been discussion and debate about the definition of commercial sponsorship. It may be defined as a direct partnership and/or commercial transaction between an organisation or a brand with another organisation (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b). Semens (2019) argued modern sponsorship “with an overtly commercial element” (p.111) was conceived of in the late 1970s through the construction of sponsorship rights packages which were sold to partners in non-competing business sectors. This was described earlier in this chapter in relation to Havelange’s accession to the FIFA presidency. Semens wrote that the first football sponsorship in England occurred with the Watney Cup. This was a short-lived pre-season tournament sponsored by the Watney Mann brewery and ran for four years from 1970 to 1973 (Proudlove 2020).

Football is now the subject of detailed economic analysis and comment from leading auditing and financial services companies, and these are in turn focusing on the financial opportunities being provided through new technology. The Deloitte Sports Business Group (2017) commented that “consumers’ desire for

anytime, anywhere access to content” (p.23) is enabling the growth of streaming platforms and is hand-in-hand with social media networks. Powerful teams and leagues are also establishing their own televisual networks (Miller 2013; Boli 2017). The Deloitte’s financial lists show that the English Premier League continues to be the richest across Europe driven by the value of its broadcast rights revenue (Deloitte Sports Business Group 2020a). Castells (2000) described a network society based on interactions between global actors where flows enter the most lucrative space. Millward (2011) drew on this work to describe the most successful English teams as nodes in a European network who have been able to generate even further income through their participation in European tournaments and through the sale of overseas television rights (Williams 2013). Marketeers describe the leading clubs as major brands which may be compared to Pepsi or Toyota whilst having a loyal global fanbase far in excess of that achieved by almost every major brand (Carling 2020).

This section of the chapter has considered the commodification of football and the transition away from ‘traditional’ models of football economy. Ludvigsen (2020) has reflected on the globalisation processes involved in the Premier League and the continued push for new commercial markets. He noted that this expansion and the need for new consumers coexisted with unease and activism amongst fans.

## **2.7 Football Fans and Consumption**

This section in the review will consider literature concerning football fans as consumers. The broadcasting of sport is perceived to attract high concentrations of 18-34 year old male consumers which is very attractive to corporate advertisers (Andrews 2003) as these consumers are considered to have disposable income. Holt described football as a “celebration of intensely male values” (Holt 1992 p.173) which he defined in terms of the characteristics of the men who followed it. According to Holt, sport provided a safe space for working-class men away from women, in which “hardness, stamina, courage, and loyalty” (p. 173) were valued above all else. Football articulated male identity with its own language and initiation rites in which friendships and communities were

built. Giulianotti and Armstrong (1997) wrote that both playing football and spectating provided a collective source of male imagery and ideals which allowed men to play out their emotions. A shared language of football terms, expressions and indeed history, provided “an access to male credibility” (p.7) or what Archetti (1994) calls, “a privileged male participation” (p.236) in which masculine fraternal participation recreated shared images, histories and events. Football settings, as with other sports, are therefore tied to constructions of masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Bunn *et al.* 2016).

The male voice and football’s association with male working-class culture was described by Robson (2000) in his sociological study of Millwall Football Club fandom. Robson described a function of the club as “a repository of specific traditions and values” (Robson 2000 p.158). Culture, traditions and values are key themes throughout this thesis and were also explored by Williams, Hopkins and Long (2001) through their examination of the meanings and historic notions of Liverpool FC as a ‘national’ or ‘global’ club. Hill and Vincent (2006) described how Manchester United were able to take advantage of their history to benefit from the global market enabled by the EPL’s reputation and new media technologies. In establishing themselves as a “global brand and sports icon” (Hill and Vincent 2006 p.66), the club have acted as a corporation in their pursuit of fans, seeing them as marketing opportunities in North America and Asia.

Cleland (2015) argued that after the Hillsborough disaster in 1989, the prevailing neoliberal economic conditions enabled a structural change in football with the new Premier League reinforcing the breakdown of the traditional male working class support for football and the further development of the fan as customer. King (2002) argued that the economic and crowd-control crises of the 1980s, detailed earlier in this chapter, enabled the representatives of the elite clubs to transform the nature of the ‘consumption’ of the game by the fans. The old uncomfortable (and unsafe) football grounds with their open terraces and limited catering facilities have been replaced by homogenised all-seated modern stadia offering club shops with branded merchandise supported by websites where all purchases can be made without any need to visit the home of the club. Bryman (2004) characterised these stadium social environments, driven by a combination of consumption and globalisation, where people would be prepared



to stay longer and therefore consume, as similar to those of a Disney Theme Park.

Turner (2017) provided a brief conceptualisation of ‘traditional football fandom’ and “the imaginary constructions of authenticity” (p.113) as he examined the changes to English football since the launch of the Premier League. The broadcast revolution transformed spectator identity away from simply attending in person. Dixon (2016b) noted that concepts of tradition and authenticity are malleable and fluid. For example, since the emergence of regular live broadcasting of football, the public house can be viewed as a modern locus of authentic fandom where football supporters can gather together to watch the game (Brown 2008; Dixon 2014). However, referencing Anderson (1983), modern fandoms may be characterised as “imagined communities fostered by technologies that enable geographically dispersed people to overcome time and distance in forging virtual communities of affect” (Morimoto and Chin 2017 p.174).

The identification of fans as consumers is contested particularly by the fans themselves (Numerato 2018) and “there remains a stubborn denial that ‘real fans’ of football can be labelled as consumers at all” (Dixon 2013 p.2). The rejection of consumerism (Hamil 2008) was at least one of the reasons behind the actions of one group of Manchester United supporters in establishing Football Club (FC) United in 2005 following the take-over of the club by the Glazer family and links to the opposition to “the development of the club as a global leisure brand” (Brown 2008 p.347). FC United was seen as a counterpoint to corporate, consumer-driven football culture and incorporated an opposition to ‘plastic’ (inauthentic) fans (Brown 2008). The rejection of what some football supporters consider the commercialisation of football has been accompanied by some resistance across Europe (Kennedy and Kennedy 2013). Numerato (2018) described activism by football supporters based on a “nostalgia for old times” (p.59), as highlighting what they saw as authenticity and a rejection of a hyper-commodified football culture promoted by club owners who are often disconnected from local communities.

A football club perceived as guilty of ignoring or disrespecting its fans may be at risk of reducing the power and influence of their brand (Jensen *et al.* 2008). Supporters' unions, such as Spirit of Shankly from Liverpool Football Club fans, advocate for issues such as ticket prices "to keep football match attendance 'affordable' for working-class fans" (Cleland *et al.* 2018 p.135). These tensions between commercial imperatives and fans are reoccurring themes as the marketing issues facing football become more complex in the twenty-first century (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b). Rein *et al.* (2006) wrote of "the paradox of commercialisation" as a "conflict between business and game" (p.14) in which the sports "decision maker" has to balance the integrity of the game with its business requirements.

The relationships between clubs and fans are contested. It may be an over simplification to describe the process of commercialisation and globalisation as a "conversion of a pure working-class activity into some form of mass-produced and mass-consumed culture" (Cricher 2007 p.183). However, the literature reviewed and presented demonstrates a shift from Premiership clubs viewing fans as community members at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries to treating fans as a community of consumers in modern-day football.

## **2.8 Football, Governance and Market Regulation**

This literature review began with exploring the CDOH and how football played an important role in the marketing of unhealthy brands. Whilst it may be argued that a free market has developed some assets, such as improved communication networks which have benefitted all, a free market can also harm health and there is a strong argument to limit the power of corporations in these circumstances (Brezis and Wiist 2011).

Football clubs have unusual features as businesses (Szymanski and Kuypers 1999). For example, there is a philosophical question in terms of understanding 'Who owns sport'? Is it a question of who owns the assets of a particular football club? Is it a collection of disembodied property rights? Or is it the 'imagined

community' of football fans either in the UK or watching from a television set in Nigeria (A. Adams 2019)? In this chapter, socially embedded complex relationships with football clubs have been explored through the theories of fandom and consumption. Concepts of tradition and authenticity have been examined with a focus on the huge changes resulting from the injections of revenue into the top levels of the English professional game following the launch of the Premier League in 1992. Since football's codification and the establishment of the Football Association (FA) in 1863, the FA has been the responsible for overseeing all aspects of the sport in England. Historically, the FA saw itself as the custodian of football, the inventor and holder of the rules, devoted to the promotion and development of the game - a notion of development shorn of commercial or ideological interests (Goldblatt 2015 pp.249,250).

The increasingly commercial and commodified modern game has led to governance challenges both nationally and internationally. As Sugden and Tomlinson (1998) argued, because of its popularity, football is a "vehicle for the acquisition of power and the expression of status" (p.4). Goldblatt (2015) described the FA as an organisation completely out of touch with the demands of a modern global business which struggled to deal with football issues including labour contract interventions and the operation of broadcast television markets. The resignation of twenty-two clubs from the Football League to form the new Premier League in 1992 has been well documented by many writers (King 2002; Berlin 2013; Goldblatt 2015). It has been characterised as a complete failure of governance by the FA, an "abdication of leadership" (Conn 2005 p.102) which led to the big football clubs breaking away from the governance of England's governing body. King (2002) described his sociological analysis of the ensuing BSkyB broadcasting contract with the newly established Premier League as an exploration of the moment when "football came to be irretrievably associated with free-market ideas" (p.109).

Thus, the "world's most popular game" (Sugden and Tomlinson 1998 p.4) has essentially been left to regulate itself with conflicts of interest occurring throughout the domain. Ferran Soriano is currently the CEO of Manchester City FC. In 2009, Soriano wrote of the regulatory conditions at national and

international level in which the National Associations (the FA), UEFA and FIFA are the football industry regulators but are also responsible for their own national teams. These organisations then compete with their member clubs for the most lucrative television broadcasting deals and sponsorship deals (Soriano 2012). In the English game, the Premier League (Premier League championship), the FA (national team and the FA Cup) and the English Football League (including its three divisional competitions and the League Cup) are in direct competition with each other. At the same time, the Premier League is a corporation and is owned by its 20 member clubs; the FA has no say in the commercial running of the league although the Premier League matches are played under its rules (Street 2017). As Premier League clubs are increasingly being owned by foreign investors (Montague 2018), concerns are being raised about the impact of these foreign influences and ownership on the marketing and management of the English games and traditions of organisation and supporters' consumption practices (Nauright and Ramfjord 2010).

Bruyninckx (2012) argued that historically the world of sport and the world of government have been perceived as separate and he characterised the world of the sports administrator as having an obsession with the rules and regulation of their sport whilst having an aversion to being ruled and regulated (by the government). Yet, the EPL is considered a British icon. In 2018, Populus published their research on the global popularity of leading British Brands (Populus 2018) with their results showing the Premier League finishing first in an online survey of 20,882 adults in 20 'international markets' in front of Rolls Royce and Jaguar Land Rover. Whilst the research was commissioned by the EPL itself, it is still a performance of note given the Premier League's good showing in East and South East Asia and Africa, and finishing first in South Korea, Thailand, Kenya and Morocco.

Walters and Hamil (2010) noted that there is little academic literature on governance in the football industry. This is despite the significance of the sport in British culture although there is growing interest and analysis of its financial management as has been described. The Labour Government established a Football Task Force in 1997. It produced reports on racism, disabled access, community involvement and a fourth report on commercial issues. However, the

latter seemed mainly to be concerned with ticketing prices and the cost of replica shirts (Faulkner 2000). In 2011, the Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee of the UK government published its report into football governance (HM Government 2011). This was about addressing financial instability and levels of debt in the game but critics then were doubtful that it would have any real impact on the structure of the FA as the national governing body (Slater 2011). In 2015, the Cabinet Office published ‘Sporting Futures’ (HM Government 2015). In the section entitled ‘Supporting a more productive, sustainable and responsible sport sector’ on page 54, there is a statement:

Sponsorship is an area where a number of sports, and individual clubs, have adopted a responsible approach, for example around sponsorship by companies marketing alcohol or high fat sugar and salt (HFSS) foods. We will continue to discuss with sports the scope for voluntary agreements in this area.

There remains little progress in this area. The Premier League’s Project Restart during the coronavirus pandemic was led by money and the concern about losing broadcaster and sponsorship revenue. McCarthy (2020) described “sponsors starved of action” (p.1) during the break in the 2019/20 football season. The UK Government was much more concerned with the Premier League restarting to improve the morale of the population than any more long-term regulation of what is still regularly called the ‘People’s Game’ (or any concern with players’ safety) (Goal 2020; Sport24 2020). Conversely, there are other models of governance in world football such as the German Bundesliga, where fans part-own and shape their clubs which may provide alternatives to the current governance practices of EPL clubs (Price 2015).

Market regulation is considered in CDOH literature. Allen (2020) framed this as “balancing health against competing values” (p.6) where cultural values and social attitudes have a part to play in any process of change. Capewell (2016) argued that it is the role of the state to regulate where necessary to provide a safe and healthy environment. The concept that businesses may have a social responsibility to address the ethical and social issues resulting from their economic activity is not a new one (Jacoby 1973). The emergence of CSR as a means of addressing corporate power or market excesses may be criticised in that this can involve corporations’ involvement in shaping solutions to problems

and thus may reinforce their power rather than offsetting it (Marchildon 2016). In their analysis of the tobacco industry, Fooks et al (2013) argued that CSR should be regarded more as a “public relations tool or device for managing regulatory environments than a medium for undertaking regulatory change” (p.295). There is some confusion in distinguishing between CSR and other marketing activities such as sport sponsorship. As shown in Kickbusch et al.’s (2016) conceptual model of the dynamics of CDOH (see Figure 1, p.11), these corporate practices can and should be distinguished. This is essential if regulatory approaches to addressing the commercial marketing of UCIs such as gambling, alcohol and fast food in football are to be considered.

## 2.9 Conclusions

This literature review began by considering the commercial determinants of health (CDOH). This is a relatively new literature and there remains an active debate on how the practices of transnational corporations (TNCs), and unhealthy commodity industries (UCIs) in particular, impact on population health. The concept of CDOH is used to help understand and explain the impact of TNCs including the food and beverage, alcohol and gambling industries. TNCs present themselves as good corporate citizens and use corporate social responsibility (CSR) to distract from criticism, arguing personal (‘responsible’) choice enables safe use of their products whilst the marketing of fast food, alcohol, sugary drinks and gambling brands encourages consumption and fills the screens of broadcast EPL matches. The role of sport in the marketing of unhealthy brands has received little attention and, when noted, has usually focussed on single industries such as tobacco, gambling, alcohol, food or beverages (Ireland *et al.* 2019). Sports sponsorship has developed as the Premier League markets have grown in Asia, North America and Africa. UCIs have used football’s audience to promote their brands and products whilst the morbidity and mortality from noncommunicable diseases has grown internationally with effects felt disproportionately on the most economically-deprived populations (Williams *et al.* 2018). The influence of these industries on population health is only just being understood. Whilst there has been a considerable literature around the commodification of the world’s most visible sporting league (measured in

viewing figures) and its consumers (fans), football's commercial partnerships have not generally been considered from a public health perspective.

In describing the globalisation and commercialisation of football, the review briefly outlined the social and economic history of professional football from its early origins and development in Victorian Britain through the period of disasters and violence in the 1970s and 1980s to the transformation of English football with the launch of the Premier League in 1992. The review used Giulianotti and Robertson's (2009) phased model to examine football and globalisation and the increase of mediated networks through greater global connectivity. There are varying explanations for the importance of the codification of association football in 1863 and debates on whether the game has always been commercial. Sociologists have drawn on the theories of Pierre Bourdieu (1978, 2010) to explore his concepts of capital (cultural and economic) to explain models of football club ownership, football fandom, habitus and field of location.

Academics have also contested concepts of authenticity and tradition and have drawn on sociological and economic theories to explain football's metamorphosis from a rundown, predominantly male working-class leisure pastime into a twenty-first century hyper-commodified entertainment product available on multiple global platforms. Benedict Anderson's (1983) concept of 'imagined communities' has been helpful in understanding how Liverpool FC fans from across the world experience loyalty and belonging despite the club being thousands of miles from their homes in some instances. Some popular writers and academics have argued that football has been taken away from its working-class roots and there are supporter-led movements against what is characterised as 'modern football'. In the last one hundred and fifty years, football clubs have developed from community roots into global brands exemplified by the commercial growth of Manchester United FC.

The development of media and digital technology across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has been a key factor in football's development and many academics write of the symbiotic relationship between media and sport. Rupert Murdoch used football to drive the expansion of broadcasting subscription platforms and Sky television in the 1990s. The value of broadcasting rights (both

domestic and overseas) based on the sale of consumer subscriptions and the accompanying advertising has grown, enabling EPL income to rise exponentially and benefitting the richest elite clubs in particular. Whilst many football fans are uncomfortable being considered as consumers, football is packaged as a commodified experience from its viewing platforms and matchday packages, to its merchandising of replica shirts and badged products.

Academic literature on football governance is limited and has principally only detailed concerns around football club ownership, finance and issues considered most precious to fans, such as the price of match tickets. If we accept football as a business, its relationships with unhealthy commercial partners should be examined for possible regulation where these may be considered to be health harming.

The literature considered in this review has been wide-ranging and has covered a number of disciplines. The author has found no clear descriptions in the historical, social and economic histories of football, in which the actions of corporate players in the sport are considered from a public health perspective. Similarly, there is no clear description of the effect of the promotion of the consumption of unhealthy commodities through the commercial partnerships formed by both football clubs and the Premier League with transnational brands. As has been described, football presents an example of the “twenty-first century dynamics of health” (Kickbusch 2012 p.427) in which challenges may be presented when advocating for health in the face of the sport’s perceived economic interests.

This thesis will therefore now turn to and explore the scale of the marketing of unhealthy commodities in the world’s most popular sport, and its most successful league, the EPL. In doing so, the thesis will be addressing the research questions set out below in seeking to develop understanding of how the Commercial Determinants of Health operate in sport.



## 2.10 Research Questions

The research aims and objectives were provided in 1.1 (page 6). The research objectives are:

- to consider the Commercial Determinants of Health in sport and how these may be reflected in football (soccer) and the English Premier League specifically;
- to explore the nature of marketing of unhealthy commodities across different media in the English Premier League clubs and Premier League across two football seasons (2018/19 and 2019/20).

The following research questions (RQ) were formulated to address the aims and objectives of the thesis:

RQ1: How many and what types of unhealthy commodities were promoted through partnerships (sponsorships) with EPL clubs and featured on club websites in 2018/19 and 2019/20? RQ1 is addressed in Chapter Four;

RQ2: How were unhealthy brands marketed in the live broadcasting of EPL games in 2018/19 and 2019/20 on pay-to-view (subscription) television? RQ2 is addressed in Chapter Five;

RQ3: How do unhealthy brands build relationships with football's consumers through marketing campaigns in a digital environment? RQ3 is addressed in Chapter Six;

RQ4: What are the views of key informants in football in England concerning the type of sponsorship and marketing associated with the EPL? RQ4 is addressed in Chapter Seven;

RQ5: What are the views of key informants in football in England concerning the ethics of marketing unhealthy commodities in the EPL and the regulation that may be required to moderate this? RQ5 is addressed in Chapter Seven.

## **Chapter Three: Overview of the Research Methods**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes how a research design was developed and constructed to address the thesis research objectives of considering the CDOH in sport and how these may be reflected in football (soccer) and specifically the English Premier League. Four inter-linked studies are used in the thesis to explore the nature of marketing of unhealthy commodities across different media in the EPL clubs and Premier League across two football seasons (2018/19 and 2019/20), and bring together data with reference to the EPL. The overall mixed-methods research design is described in the section below. This chapter concludes by reflecting on my positionality as a researcher with reference to the research. Chapters Four to Seven will then present the research undertaken, including a detailed description of the methods relating to each study.

### **3.2 Thesis Research Design**

#### **3.2.1 Introduction**

In considering the CDOH in sport and in the case of the EPL, it was important firstly to assess the scale and exposure to the marketing of unhealthy brands in the Premier League. The two initial prospective research studies identified were therefore both quantitative. These combined the collection of data to measure the number and range of commercial partnerships entered into by EPL clubs with unhealthy brands (described further in 3.4.1 and Chapter Four), with an analysis of the exposure to these brands provided by television broadcast media (see 3.4.2 and Chapter Five). As described in Chapter Two, it was the new broadcasting rights agreements agreed by the EPL in 1992 which facilitated and enabled the development of the sponsorship arrangements now available to EPL clubs. However, as described in the literature review, marketing methods are increasingly sophisticated and use a wide range of channels to communicate with their intended audiences. A case study approach was designed to explore these

marketing strategies which captured this complexity and illustrated how UCIs use both advertising and CSR techniques to promote their brands (described in 3.4.3 and Chapter Six). Finally, a further qualitative study was developed to help understand the various perspectives of those working in the football industry and the consumers of it (in 3.4.4 and Chapter Seven).

### 3.2.2 A Mixed-Methods Approach

Flick (2018b) describes differing approaches to combining qualitative and quantitative research in what is considered to be a mixed-methods approach. Flick noted that these methods may be considered complementary with neither method seen as *superior or preliminary* (p.23).

Mixed-methods research may be defined in its simplest form as using at least one quantitative and one qualitative method:

As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011 p.5).

Critics of this approach have suggested that mixing quantitative and qualitative methods are ignoring a suggested incompatibility of these methods as both adhere to a different view of the production and validation of knowledge (Howe 2004; Creswell 2011). Morgan (2007) reviewed these methodological issues within a discussion around how research is carried out within the social sciences concluding by advocating a ‘pragmatic approach’ as a “new guiding paradigm” (p.48). Bazeley (2004) argued that mixed-methods research raised study design concerns including demands on increased researcher skills and time and that triangulation may lead to difficulties in assigning the relative weight to the findings from the different components of a study.

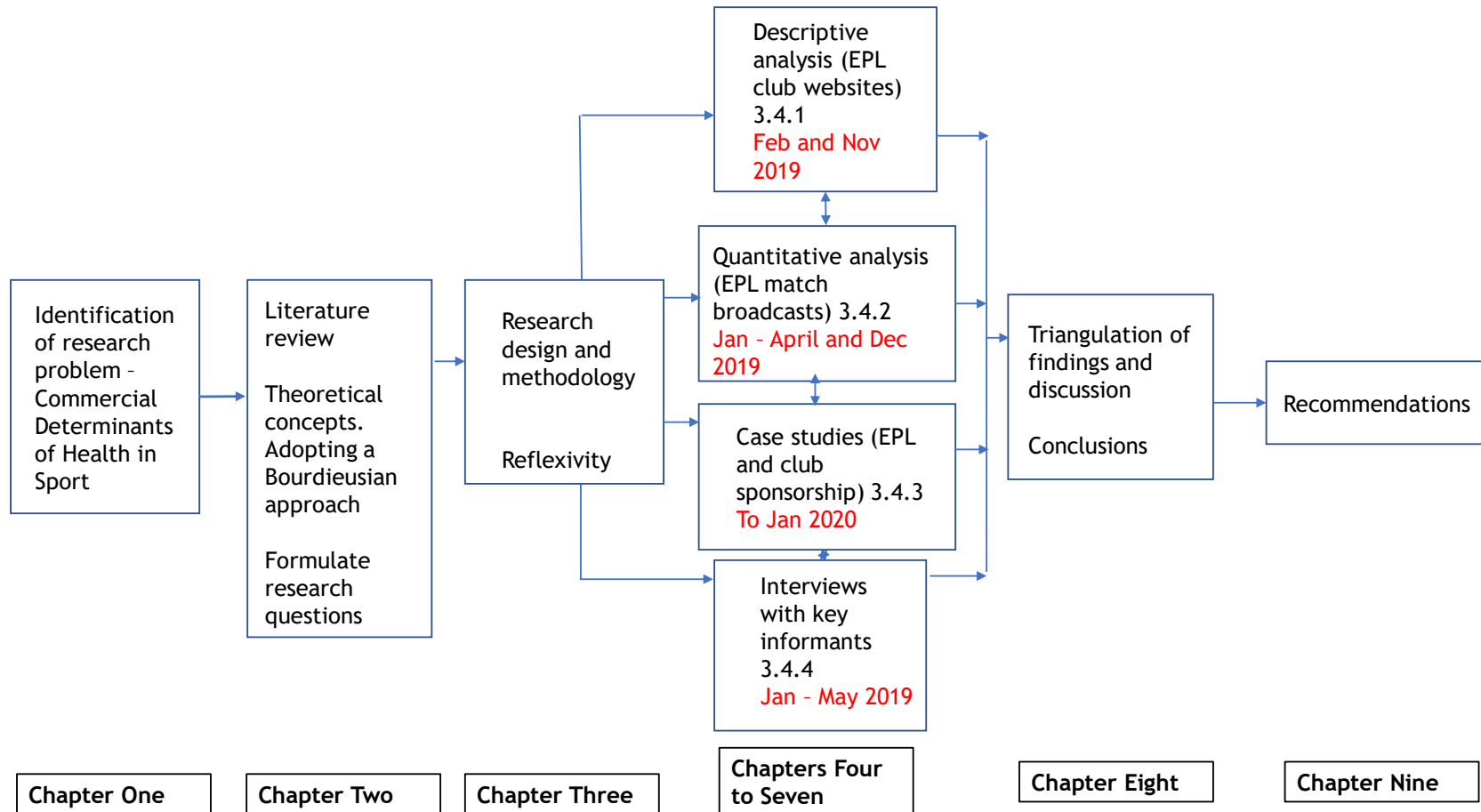
Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) suggested that if the researcher was aware of these criticisms, and designed the different components of a study carefully, using multiple data sources were helpful in understanding research problems and

addressing different research questions. Flick (2018a) described an integrative concept of combining qualitative and quantitative research where the methods mutually support each other and provide a fuller picture of the issue which is studied. Rudd and Johnson (2013) have also described how social and behavioural science researchers have used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study to more effectively answer research questions. They referenced Brewer and Hunter (2006) who discussed synthesising styles to improve research and to provide “increased power of persuasion and strengthened claims to validity” (p.xi).

Rudd and Johnson also acknowledged that combining research using different methods has provoked debate. It has been argued that quantitative research provides more objectivity (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010), so that for example, the measurement of the number of unhealthy brand relationships described using EPL club websites is clearly defined. Similarly, the number of exposures to unhealthy brands during the broadcasting of EPL matches is described in 3.4.2. I recognise that in the decisions I have made around data creation, that there will always be some subjectivity, but I have attempted to be as transparent as possible about the methods I have used so that readers are able to make their own judgments.

A classic criticism of qualitative research is that it is subjective, in that the characteristics of the interviewer are likely to influence data collection (Braun and Clarke 2013). These criticisms may be considered simplistic. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) argued that the most appropriate research design should focus on the research objective rather than on epistemological or ontological differences based around relationships between researcher and participants or perceived realities. Quantitative and qualitative approaches do not need to be linked to any paradigm (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2005), whether positivist or interpretivist, and may be mixed in a pragmatic approach to solving “real-world questions” (Gilad 2019 p.1). All methods should direct us to produce research findings that are useful and meaningful (Lieber and Weisner 2010).

Figure 7: Summary of the research design and study timeframe (October 2017 - September 2020)



The overall thesis study design that has been selected attempts to utilise the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods whilst addressing the research objectives as laid out above. Figure 7 above summarises the research design I have established. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) used models to explain approaches to mixing methods. Figure 7 illustrates what Creswell and Plano Clark described as a convergent parallel design where different methods are used to obtain a triangulated result about a single topic viz. CDOH in sport. They used a flowchart to describe the basic procedures in implementing a convergent design (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011) which I have created in the figure to show the ways in which data collected via different methods have been synthesised in this research.

In this mixed-methods approach, once the research questions were conceptualised and described (Plano Clark and Badiee 2010) (the process was described in Chapter Two), the four studies shown in Figure 7 (and described in full in Chapters Four to Seven) were designed. The data was taken from the 2018/19 and 2019/20 football seasons, and each individual study was able to draw from the findings of the others as each was developed (as the arrows in the figure indicate). The detailed methodologies for each of the four studies are embedded in their designated chapters.

Bryman (2016) discussed the priority and/or sequence approach, how the data is collected and whether the quantitative and qualitative data have equal weight. As Figure 7 shows, and as described, the studies informed each other. Each study helped to build a more complete picture of how many, and the means in which, unhealthy brands are promoted within the English Premier League. Each is able to stand alone as an individual study in terms of its methods and its findings and has equal weight to its linked studies. When presented collectively, as in this thesis, the findings from the four studies provide a more persuasive and convincing analysis of unhealthy commercial partnerships within English elite football and the impact this may have on the health of football fans.

The website study (3.4.1) was undertaken in two stages, in February 2019 (during the 2018/19 football season) and November 2019 (in the following season). The broadcast survey (3.4.2) also spread across two seasons, with three

EPL matches between January and April 2019 analysed and two further in December 2019. The four case studies (3.4.3) used to examine Premier League and club commercial partnerships, considered data from the start of the sponsorship deals up until the end of January 2020. The interviews (3.4.4) with key informants were carried out between January and May 2019. The studies were carried out over a similar timeframe therefore with some overlapping. The only study which could be considered to have been limited because of time constraints was accessing the interviewees for the final study.

Ethical approval for the research was given in October 2018 (see 3.3). Given the difficulties in accessing participants in a busy football season (see Chapter Seven for a full discussion), it was felt, following discussion with colleagues, that interviews needed to take place in the first half of 2019. Thus, the knowledge gained from the respondents helped with the design and implementation of each of the other three studies. In turn, the analysis from these three studies, helped in the analysis of data and the identification of themes in the interviews.

Data were revisited in an iterative process as the results from each study were analysed and described which, in turn, helped to shed light on the other studies. The convergent results are discussed in Chapter Eight in terms of validation and legitimation (Bryman 2016; Flick 2018a) and to determine whether the findings are broadly consistent.

### **3.3 Ethical Procedure**

The application (no. 400180002) to the University of Glasgow College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee to conduct this research was granted on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018. The research was considered to be of low risk, as no interventions would take place, the work was not with vulnerable groups, and did not involve travel to volatile territories. The research was funded and overseen by the University of Glasgow.

It was agreed that data should be held securely after the completion of the research project in accordance with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research. All files were stored on a password protected laptop.

The ethical application contained detailed information about the face to face and telephone interviews required in the fourth study below (3.4.4). This is fully described in Chapter Seven.

## **3.4 The Four Inter-Linked Studies**

### **3.4.1 Understanding football clubs' financial partnerships through the official club websites**

Football club revenues relate to services from ticket sales, broadcasting rights and commercial deals with business partners (Maguire 2020). As we have seen in Chapter Two, for smaller clubs in the EPL, broadcasting rights predicated on the sale of perimeter advertising and slots in commercial breaks are their largest source of income. This broadcasting, in relation to unhealthy brands, is examined in the study described below in 3.4.2. For all clubs, commercial income, typically described as sponsorship arrangements, also provides revenue. These commercial arrangements are often agreed over a longer timeframe, with shirt sponsorship deals commonly in place over a period of years (PwC 2018). As these agreements are commercially sensitive, clubs do not generally divulge the financial details although the amounts are frequently speculated about in the press. Clubs' financial accounts show cumulative totals so possibly the only way to obtain an overview of the commercial deals is to scope them using the official websites of the EPL clubs.

Thus, this study used the websites of the 20 EPL clubs in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons (23 club websites in total allowing for promotion and relegation between the seasons) to ascertain the distribution of types of partner/sponsor including those from UCIs (gambling, alcohol, and food and beverages). This analysis is described fully in Chapter Four.



### **3.4.2 An analysis of the marketing accompanying five EPL matches broadcast on BT Sport and Amazon Prime**

As with the previous study (3.4.1), there seemed few options to examine the marketing of unhealthy brands in the broadcasting of EPL football. Television is the main media for football's consumers and its success remains the bedrock of commercial partnerships in the EPL as described in Chapter Two. Television broadcasts were therefore selected for the second study.

The study benefitted from and was informed by an earlier study carried out by myself and colleagues on the broadcasting of the FIFA Men's World Cup held in Russia in 2018 (Ireland *et al.* 2021). In turn, the research carried out on the World Cup was able to use and adapt a previously established codebook developed to examine alcohol advertising at the Men's UEFA European Football Championship (EUROs) in France in 2016 (Purves *et al.* 2017). This showed that a content analysis of brand marketing in broadcast EPL matches was both possible and an effective method of capturing exposure to the marketing. A content analysis was therefore carried out of five pay-per-view EPL matches featuring ten EPL clubs broadcast on two digital channels (BT Sport and Amazon Prime) in 2019 (across the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons). The study documented the frequency and duration of viewer exposure to marketing relating to UCIs. In the absence of any computer software in the public domain to enable brand identification in broadcasting, there are limitations to this approach (discussed in the chapter). However, it arguably provided a good indicator of the level of exposure to unhealthy brand advertising in the EPL. This study is described fully in Chapter Five.

### **3.4.3 Brand activation in a digital Age: Four case studies**

This study was the most necessarily complex of the four inter-linked studies, as each case study required a slightly different approach to address the marketing strategy of the individual sponsor. Every commercial partnership is designed to suit the needs of the individual sponsor and the sports organisation. Whilst commercial partnerships are more easily apparent when displayed on the front

of players' shirts and the light-emitting diode (LED) displays which surround pitches, marketing handbooks emphasise the principle that sponsorship works most effectively when a relationship is established between brand and customer (Jobber 2001; Bühler and Nufer 2013). Sponsorship managers typically provide a budget for the development of this relationship, described as "brand activation" or "brand engagement", which focuses on building a longer term emotional connection with the customer (Keller 2013). A case study is a potentially helpful method to capture these individual commercial relationships, as each study can take a slightly different approach to try to map and understand their complexities.

Social media provides one mechanism in which marketeers can communicate directly with their potential customers and encourage them to interact with others which directly builds the brand's visibility (and hopefully, from the company's perspective, drives increased sales) (Keller 2013). In understanding how sponsors are able to use brand engagement strategies with football fans, this study used one social media platform, examining the Twitter outputs of three corporations who are official partners to the EPL (soft drink, beer and snack) and one EPL club's (Newcastle United FC) gambling brand shirt sponsor. Further, each of these four case studies also considered the marketing techniques of the sponsors which included promotional links and launches, product placements and tie-ins and accompanying corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes. Companies employ a range of techniques from simple competitions where the purchase of products is linked to entry into competitions to win match tickets, to the development of short films featuring both fans and live action showcasing the brand sponsor on every occasion.

This study is fully described in Chapter Six. The in-depth look at UCI brands, enabled by the use of a case study method, enabled a clearer understanding of how marketing in football is used to drive consumption.

### 3.4.4 Interviews with key informants in the football business

The final of the four studies designed to examine the complexity of the commercial relationships and the marketing of unhealthy brands within the EPL used a qualitative approach to capture the perspective of key informants on this marketing and sponsorship. Eighteen semi-structured interviews were carried out between January and May 2019 with club officials, fans, government officers and those from football-associated businesses to explore their perspectives on sponsorship. A questioning route (interview guide) (Patton 2002; Seidman 2006) was established from study 3.4.1, in which the relationships between both clubs and the EPL with unhealthy brands had been identified and documented, and from the preliminary investigations made into the other inter-connected studies. The qualitative study is described in full in Chapter Seven.

## 3.5 Reflexivity, Football and Public Health

Sociologists of football are, in this country, overwhelmingly white and male, and they have adopted the position of a large majority of white, male fans who also attend matches. (King 2002 p.11).

Following Bourdieu, taking a reflexive approach to empirical enquiry means that “it is not only the object of the research that needs to be examined and reflected upon but also the very elaboration of the research object itself and the conditions of its elaboration” (Deer 2014 p.196). Finlay (1998) likewise argued that personal and methodological reflexivity should be an element of all qualitative and quantitative investigation at every stage of the research process. Thus, I considered my background and my positionality in all aspects of the research process described in 3.4. Reflexivity is the recognition that the product of research reflects the background of the researcher (Gibbs 2018); it brings the researcher into the process and makes them visible (Braun and Clarke 2013). What we write reflects a stance based on our culture, social position, gender, class and personal politics (Creswell 2013).

In Figure 7, I have shown how each of the four studies in this thesis are inter-connected and have provided an indication of the reflection process undertaken

as each study developed. In addition, I am acutely aware of my own position as a researcher, given that King (quoted above) correctly noted that many sociologists writing in the 1990s, adopted the position of male fans who attend football matches. He argued that by taking this socially and gender-specific position, they take a critical populist approach to what King called the “new consumption of football in the 1990s” (p.11). King referenced Haynes (1995) and Taylor (1992) in describing what he considered to be a romanticised notion of football fans which influenced their sociological enquiries. The debates between the concepts of authenticity and tradition and fans as consumers were discussed in detail in the previous chapter. Below I will touch briefly on my own experience of being a football fan. As well as my positionality as a white male fan, I will also reflect on my history and employment experience as a public health advocate.

### **3.5.1 Being a white male fan: My life as a football fan**

There is sociological writing on ‘masculinity and football’ (Haynes 1993; Archetti 1994; Holt 1996) reflecting on the game’s origins in a search for identity in the modern world. Popular football writers like John Nicholson (2019) described their experiences on football terraces in the 1970s invoking a mystical authentic community in which football clubs become “a sort of secular holy place” (p14).

I was taken to my first professional match with my father in 1961, when I was aged six years. However, it was only in my own struggle for identity, when I moved to study my ‘A’-levels in Norwich in 1972 aged 17 years (and effectively left home in the South of England), that my love affair with Norwich City began. Given I was not born in Norwich or Norfolk for that matter, that may make me a ‘plastic’ (i.e. non-authentic) supporter (Downes 2020) in some eyes. It makes me more sympathetic to less strict definitions of what a football supporter is and more cynical of imagined traditions as described in the previous chapter.

I have supported Norwich City Football Club for nearly 50 years, from 1972 (the club’s first-ever season in the top tier of the old Football League by coincidence), a period in which football itself has been transformed as has been detailed. In April 1989, I attended the FA Cup semi-final between Norwich City

and Everton at Villa Park. The tragic events at the semi-final held between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest on the same day at Hillsborough had an enormous impact on football and its governance up to the present day, as Adrian Tempany, a Liverpool fan and Hillsborough survivor, has written (Tempany 2016). As a spectator at Villa Park, and a resident of Liverpool between 1984 and 2018, I directly shared some of the distressing memories of that day and felt some closure with the people of Liverpool when the inquests into the deaths of the 96 men, women and children at Hillsborough concluded in 2016 that the fans were ‘unlawfully killed’ (Conn 2016). Perhaps these experiences have provided some protection from considering my own past of standing on terraces at Norwich City, Liverpool and indeed Hillsborough with any undue sentimentality. I certainly have no wish to return to the dangerous, decrepit and often unwelcoming - particularly to women and supporters of colour - football stadia of the 1970s and 80s.

As a former away season ticket holder for several years, and a member of a fan group, Northern Canaries, since its formation in 1997, I have had the opportunity to be a consumer of the Premier League, to meet my club’s owners and directors, and observe as Norwich City experiences its regular promotions and relegations (sadly, including in 2019/20). This colours my perception but should not affect my academic clarity. As Tempany’s experience of being a Hillsborough survivor has directly led to his view of the Premier League, it would be disingenuous of me, however, to claim that my own research has not been affected in some way by my own experiences of both watching matches in person or on television. Numerato argued, “a reflexive football fan is not an actor who reflects upon his or her own individuality and position, but an actor who, in the first instance, critically scrutinises football culture” and considers “the development of football and its socio-cultural aspects” (Numerato 2018 pp.58,59).

As a reflexive football fan, I experience that emotion and passion that accompanies my support for Norwich City and recognise I am a consumer of its brand. I have bought mugs, scarves, socks and replica shirts (but never with a gambling sponsor on the front). As I write, behind me I have a framed print of Norwich shirts since Norwich won the Football League Cup in 1985 (then

sponsored by the Milk Marketing Board and known as the Milk Cup) when their shirt sponsor was Poll Withey, a Norfolk-based windows company. As a long-term fan, I was able to benefit from my knowledge and understanding of the game to frame my research. My age and possibly my gender gave me an advantage in both approaching and interviewing senior figures in the football industry although my work experience in public health may also have created some barriers, as described below.

### 3.5.2 Public health advocate

Sport and health are rarely considered together unless in an individualised ‘sport as medicine’ approach (Krustrup and Parnell 2020). My working experience in public health, has led me to directly question how football could be a force for better health. I established the Healthy Stadia (HS) initiative in 2004 in Merseyside (Ashton 2020; Viggars *et al.* 2020) in order to consider how sports stadia settings may be able to promote health. The original concept remains:

Healthy Stadia are... those who promote the health of visitors, fans, players, employees and the surrounding community... places where people can go to have a positive, healthy experience playing or watching sport (European Healthy Stadia Network 2020).

In 2007, I completed my Master of Public Health (MPH). My dissertation combined my love of football with my knowledge of NCDs and considered how settings (such as a stadium or arena) can promote unhealthy lifestyles. The food provided at football stadia was notoriously of poor quality and unhealthy (White 1998), and I wanted to explore the views of fans concerning this. My dissertation became an academic paper which was published in 2010 (Ireland and Watkins).

My public health practice has led me to believe in the importance of working at a collective level to improve environments and policies, rather than blaming individuals for their ill health (Baum 2015). I was responsible for developing Food Active, a regional policy-led approach to obesity in the North West of England in 2014 (see [www.foodactive.org.uk](http://www.foodactive.org.uk)), and remain an honorary member of the initiative. In developing the Food Active programme, I had the pleasure of inviting Professor Ilona Kickbusch to deliver a Masterclass on the Commercial

Determinants of Health in Manchester in May 2014. Professor Kickbusch used a diagram in her presentation which I found helpful to my understanding and which I have reproduced as Figure 1 (p.12) in this thesis. No doubt this and other experiences led me to want to explore further how corporate practices are reflected in sport and how this may impact on health.

In considering the CDOH in sport (Ireland *et al.* 2019), my position in public health has led me to believe that corporate behaviour in sport promotes profits at the expense of fans' well-being. My views on this are in the public domain as former Chief Executive of the Health Equalities Group charity and current Director of Research (Honorary) of HS. I also have an account on Twitter (@robinHEG) which takes a strong public health position (3,300 followers as at 10 December 2020). In Chapter Two, I considered the literature which was relevant to my proposed study. It is still my view, as when I completed my MPH in 2007, that the public health community does not take sport seriously. There was thus a real opportunity in my thesis to consider the marketing of unhealthy brands in football and its potential impact on health. I have tried to be as objective as possible in my reading and have considered other views particularly in terms of considerations of how football should be regulated. This was discussed in 2.7 and will be revisited in Chapter 8 in the Discussion and Conclusions to this thesis.

My views and public health profile both helped and hindered the qualitative research undertaken in this study. It may have been a factor in both representatives of the FA and the EPL declining to speak to me as they may have considered my public stance to be critical of their commercial sponsorships. However, my position in Healthy Stadia provided me with contacts and connections which helped in securing interviews. These factors are considered more fully in Chapter Seven.

### **3.5.3 Conclusions**

Chapter Three began with a description of the design and development of the four inter-linked studies contained in this thesis including the methodology used and an overview of the research process.

I planned four inter-linked studies to assess the commercial determinants of health in a case study of the EPL:

- 1) An internet scoping study of the sponsorship deals of EPL clubs in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 football seasons.
- 2) A content analysis of visual references to unhealthy brands during five EPL matches broadcast on subscription television in 2019.
- 3) The marketing strategies used by four EPL sponsors drawn from the gambling, food, and beverage and alcohol industries, and
- 4) A qualitative study capturing the stakeholders' views about unhealthy brand sponsorship in football.

I then offered a summary reflection on the background and positionality of the author as researcher, taking account of public health advocacy, football fandom and research and personal experiences.



# Chapter Four. Understanding football clubs' commercial partnerships through the official club websites

## 4.1 Introduction

As described in Chapter Three, this thesis includes four inter-linked case studies which explore the Commercial Determinants of Health (CDOH) in sport using the English Premier League (EPL) as an example. This chapter contains the first of these case studies and addresses RQ1: *How many and what types of unhealthy commodities were promoted through partnerships (sponsorships) with EPL clubs and featured on club websites in 2018/19 and 2019/20?*

The literature review described how FIFA developed the commercial model of sponsorship in 1978 (Tomlinson 2014). The modern sport sponsorship industry was described together with the involvement of unhealthy commodity industries (UCIs) which will be documented further here in a brief historical consideration of shirt sponsorship since the formation of the EPL in 1992. The commercial backers of the FA, the EPL and the EFL (English Football League) will then be detailed. The sponsorship 'pyramid' (Bühler and Nufer 2013) is explored in a case study of two maximally varied cases by comparing the sponsors of Manchester United with those of Huddersfield Town in football season 2018/19; one of the largest EPL clubs and one of the smallest. The methodology employed to scope the range of unhealthy sponsors listed on the websites of today's English premiership clubs will be described. Analysis of the EPL club websites illustrates how all aspects of the modern game are marketed by the Premiership's members, and, in turn, by the UCIs.

The results section will focus on the gambling, alcohol and food and beverage sponsorships of EPL clubs. Using a methodology adapted from an Australian study (Sartori *et al.* 2018), unhealthy sponsorship ladders are constructed by allocating points to teams sponsored by UCIs. This chapter will conclude in a discussion of

the results using a Bourdieusian approach before considering the strengths and weaknesses of this study.

## 4.2 Background

### 4.2.1 Sponsorship in modern elite football. The FIFA ‘tiered’ model.

As described in Chapter Two there has been a long historical association between football and commercial sponsorship. There are academic debates around the genesis of sponsorship, but it may be argued that after the Second World War, popular professional football players became advertising platforms for a range of brands (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b). The previous chapter also described how modern packages of sponsorship rights based on the sale of television rights were first conceived of in the 1970s and developed at the FIFA World Cup (Semens 2019). By 1975, FIFA had agreed its first global deal with Coca-Cola. Getting a blue-chip global company like Coca-Cola associated with football was seen as providing credibility and prestige to the sport and opening the door to the sponsorship of world football (Sugden and Tomlinson 1998). Mexico in 1986 was the second World Cup tournament that featured tobacco company sponsor RJ Reynolds and its Camel brand. Criticism of the example this was setting for children seemed to have an impact, and FIFA pledged to stop tobacco advertising at its events at this time (Cronin 2018). Despite regular corruption scandals involving the world governing body (Conn 2017), FIFA has retained its partnership with Coca-Cola for over 40 years now and is still able to attract a string of TNC brands as partners. FIFA’s tiered and packaged model provided a model for all major sports to aspire to and attempt to replicate including, of course, football in member countries and domestic leagues (Semens 2019).

This pattern of sponsorship is illustrated at the most recent FIFA World Cup (Men’s) which was held in Russia in 2018. There were seven FIFA partners as shown in Table 2. Each sponsor was reported to be paying 32 million euros to FIFA (Becker 2018).

Sponsor	Country of origin	Industry
Adidas	Germany	Sportswear
Coca-Cola	USA	Soft drinks
Gazprom	Russia	Energy
Hyundai/Kia	South Korea	Automobile
Qatar Airways	Qatar	Airline
Visa	USA	Financial
Wanda	China	Enterprises

**Table 2. FIFA commercial partners at the 2018 World Cup**

In addition, there was a second category of FIFA World Cup sponsors paying between eight and 20 million euros to advertise at the World Cup and the Confederations Cup (this was held between the winners of the six continental cups, the World Cup winners and the host nation, but was abolished in 2019) (Becker 2018). These were:

- McDonald's (USA): fast food;
- Budweiser (USA): alcohol;
- Hisense (China): electronics;
- Mengniu Group (China): dairy products and ice cream;
- Vivo (China): smartphones and accessories.

Finally, there was a third tier of 'regional sponsors' including Russian Railways and the Egyptian Tourist Board. Other companies, such as 'energy' drink brand, Gatorade, used the World Cup to promote its product by featuring international footballers, Lionel Messi (Argentina) and Luis Suárez (Uruguay) in its advertising at this time, although Gatorade was not an official partner (B&T 2018).

#### **4.2.2 The development of sport sponsorship**

Sponsorship models have developed from the 1970s when sponsorship may be defined as a "single payment made for advertising" (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b p.112) and has become considerably more complex in its objectives (Meenaghan

2005). Chanavat et. al. (2017) described the key factors for successful sponsorship as coherence, objectives, duration and meaning of content. Coherence (sometimes called congruence) relates to whether a company's brand values are in harmony with the sponsees. This will be explored later in the thesis. Public health advocates will question whether an association made between a perceived healthy activity such as football and the consumption of fast food can ever be described as brand coherence. The use of McDonald's child player escorts (Figure 8) at the 2018 World Cup was heavily criticised for example (Ashraf 2018). Ashraf contrasted the motive of the McDonald's programme which claimed to promote a healthy and balanced lifestyle, whilst promoting the consumption of fast food, high in fat, sugar and salt, associated with obesity, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.



**Figure 8: Player escorts sponsored by McDonald's at the World Cup. Image extracted from Ashraf, 2018.**

Meenaghan (2005) provided examples of the objectives of a brand sponsorship. Whilst increased sales of a product may be the most obvious, there may be much more complex objectives (and thus harder to evaluate) such as the creation of a positive image, promoting brand attractiveness and platforms for lobbying. The duration of a sponsorship is also important in order to maintain the visibility of a brand image amongst other brands competing for the public's attention. Finally, the content of a sponsorship programme is a key factor. By telling a story about the brand, sponsorship can strengthen public support and encourage brand awareness and brand preference (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b). The complexity of

modern football sponsorship will be explored in the case studies of brand activation by sponsors as described in Chapter Six.

The next section will briefly consider the development of football sponsorship within English elite football before examining the extent of UCI sponsorship in today's EPL.

### 4.2.3 The examples of English football's governing body and the English Premier League

The governing body of football, the Football Association (FA), and the Premier League itself (a private company) have followed the FIFA model of commodifying as many assets as they can. In 2018/19, the FA's website (<http://www.thefa.com/>) listed the following partners shown in Table 3. Of the 22 partners, seven (32%) are from unhealthy commodity industries (shown in red).

Commercial	Emirates FA Cup	Wembley	Women's Football	St George's Park	National Game
Buildbase	Budweiser	Coca-Cola	BT Sport	BT Sport	Continental
Cognizant	Cognizant	Cognizant	Continental	Carling	Mars
EE	EE	EE	Nike	Continental	McDonald's
Head & Shoulders	Emirates	LG	SSE	Hilton	Nike
LG	Mitre	Mars		Mars	SSE
Lucozade Sport		National Express		Nike	
Mars		Nike		Technogym	
Nike		Panini			
		Walkers			

**Table 3. The FA's commercial partners in 2018/19**

Brand activation (Leckie *et al.* 2016) is part of the marketing process and, for the sponsorship to be fully capitalised on, sponsors invest further by promoting their products directly to their consumers, the fans. For example, the Football

Association's partnership with McDonald's is activated online through their SuperKicks campaign app encouraging children's play and aimed at children as well as their parents (The FA 2020) (Figure 9).

The EPL had a title sponsor from 1993/94 when the league was known as the FA Carling Premiership. From 2001-2004, the brewery was replaced by the financial company, Barclaycard, and then became simply, the FA Barclays Premiership and the Barclays Premier League until the conclusion of the 2015/16 football season. The EFL (formerly the Football League, consisting of the three professional leagues beneath the Premiership) was rebranded in 2004 with Coca-Cola replacing the Nationwide Building Society as title sponsor with the League known as the Coca-Cola Football League until 2010 (Football League 2007). Since 2013, the Football League has been sponsored by Sky Bet. The English Football League Cup has been known as the Carabao Cup, after its sponsor, Carabao 'Energy' Drink, since 2017. It was first sponsored by the National Dairy Council in 1982 becoming the Milk Cup (Szymanski and Kuypers 1999). Since then, it has been sponsored by Littlewoods (pools), Rumbelows (television rentals), Coca-Cola (soft drink), Worthington's (alcohol), Carling (owned by Molson Coors, alcohol), Capital One (bank) and now Carabao.



**Figure 9.** The FA SuperKicks App. Accessed : <http://www.berks-bucksfa.com/news/2019/mar/28/introducing-fa-superkicks>

After Barclay's decision to end their title sponsorship, the Premier League followed the example of major US sporting leagues such as the National Basketball Association and the National Football League in having no title sponsor (Chapman 2016). Instead, the Premier League used the FIFA model, as described earlier, in having 'category' sponsors (see Table 2, p.72). The EPL also

has Official Licensees (Avery Dennison, adhesive materials, and Panini, stickers and trading cards) and television and radio UK Broadcast Partners.

Coca-Cola was unveiled as an EPL partner in September 2018 with Coca-Cola themselves launching the partnership in February 2019 where they took care that their sponsorship campaign (“Where Everyone Plays”) featured both fans and Manchester United and England star, Jesse Lingard (Coca-Cola GB 2019a). Coca-Cola’s and Budweiser’s sponsorship of the EPL (the latter announced in July 2019) will be two of the four case studies of brand engagement considered in Chapter Six.

**Table 4. The EPL commercial partners** (from <https://www.premierleague.com/partners>).

Partner	2018/9	2019/20
Official Partner (Sports Technology)	EA Sports	EA Sports
Official Bank	Barclays	Barclays
Official Snack	Cadbury	Cadbury
Official Beer	Carling	Budweiser
Official Soft Drink	Coca-Cola	Coca-Cola
Official Ball	Nike	Nike
Official Timekeeper	TAG Heuer	TAG Heuer

#### 4.2.4 Club shirt sponsorships by unhealthy commodity industries

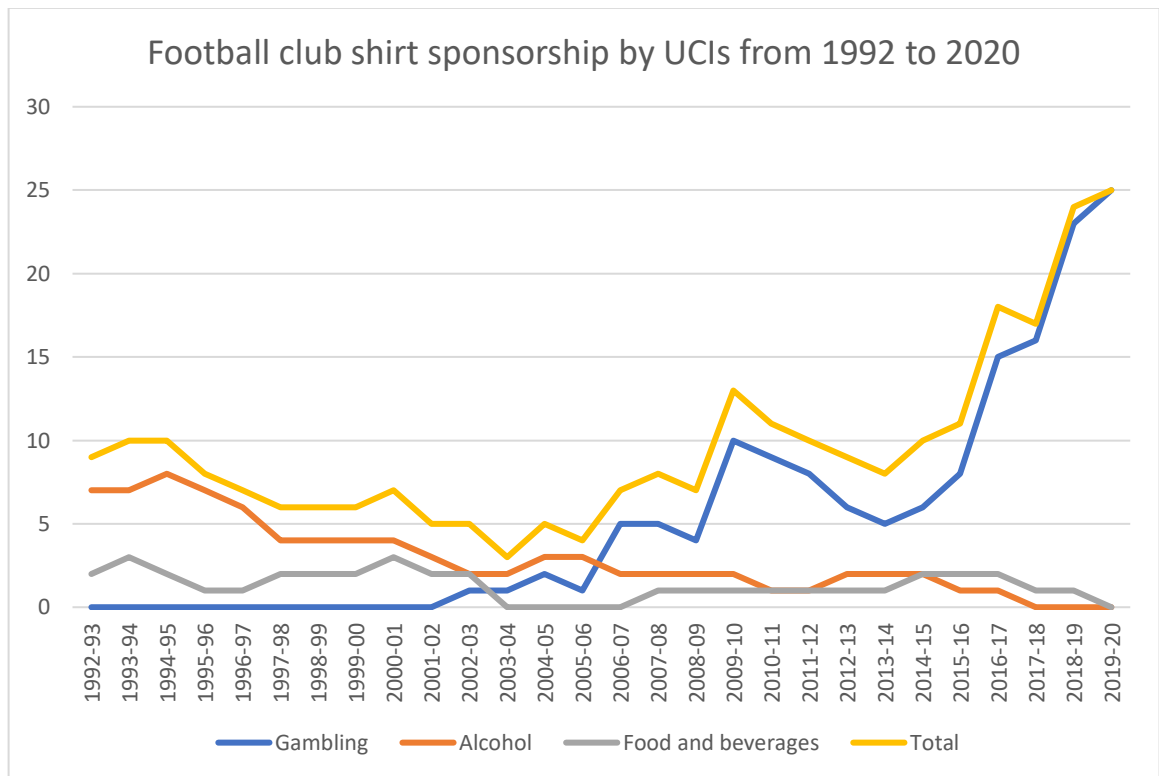
Shirt (also referred to as ‘jersey’) sponsorship is considered the principal marketing outlet in football (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b). As described in the historical overview of the commercialisation and globalisation of football (see 2.3.5, p.29), shirt sponsorship was first permitted in England in 1977 when clubs were beginning to seek new funding although sponsored shirts were not permitted to be featured in televised matches until 1983 (Rowe and Zemanek 2014). Revenues from shirt sponsorship have grown consistently (Unlucan 2015)

which may indicate sponsoring brands better understand its impact (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b). Sponsors pay large sums to be associated with the popularity of football to improve their brand image and to reach large audiences globally through the television coverage of the EPL (Jensen *et al.* 2013). With their brand on the front of the shirt, as well as benefitting from the extensive media coverage that accompanies all clubs in the EPL, sponsors also gain further exposure from the strong market for replica kits amongst teenagers and adults (Rosson 2001).

Bunn and colleagues (2018) tracked shirt sponsorship in the English and Scottish Premier Leagues to ascertain the level of sponsorship by gambling companies. They consulted the websites of the EPL and identified every club that had participated in the league since its establishment in 1992/93. The first shirt sponsorship by a gambling company in the EPL was Fulham FC's sponsorship by Betfair in 2002/3. As Bunn and colleagues' paper showed, there was a pronounced increase in gambling companies sponsoring EPL teams following the Gambling Act 2005 which liberalised the marketing of gambling. This study used the same method of examining an online football shirt archive site, [www.historicalfootballkits.com](http://www.historicalfootballkits.com), to track the shirt sponsors of the 41 clubs who have participated in the EPL since the league's inaugural season up to 2019/20. Rather than solely looking at gambling sponsors, all sponsorship from UCIs defined as alcohol, food and beverage and gambling was considered. The results are shown in Figure 10.

There is a clear and pronounced increase in the presence of shirt sponsorship by gambling brands even since the 2016/17 football season when Bunn *et al.*'s study was undertaken. By 2019/20, 25 of the 41 clubs (61%) had gambling shirt sponsors. However, this study only considered shirt sponsorship and omitted other types of advertising including pitch perimeter advertising, in-programme adverts, social media and app-driven content. The study, however, provided sufficient evidence of the exposure of gambling advertising in football for the authors to argue that the football authorities should consider the ethical issues relating to this type of advertising and the impact this type of sponsorship may have on gambling-related harms.





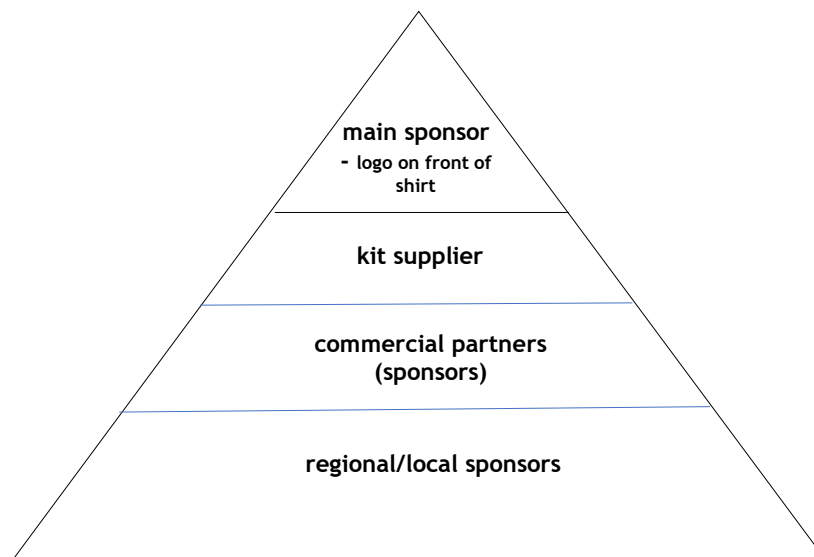
**Figure 10: Shirt sponsorship of the clubs that have participated in the EPL**

It is notable that whilst shirt sponsorship by gambling companies has increased, that by other UCIs has decreased. Whilst the sponsorship of the front of a club shirt is generally the most valuable (Bühler and Nufer 2013), there are a wide variety of other commercial partners which are demonstrated on the official club websites.

#### 4.2.5 Club websites

Since the 1980s, the internet has radically changed the way that organisations interact with the public and enables football clubs to enhance their marketing activities and communications directly to their supporters and customers (Beech *et al.* 2000). Websites help revenue streams and gather data on supporters whilst being critical to fan communication (Whiteside 2014). With more powerful and easily accessible technologies, websites include audio and video files and podcasts enabling more user interaction (Ioakimidis 2010) and more potential for commercial partners. Club websites are a key component of contemporary football culture in engaging with fans as both supporters and consumers (Cleland *et al.* 2018). They help clubs practise relationship marketing in developing

relationships with remote supporters to promote and distribute products and services globally (Kriemadis *et al.* 2010).



**Figure 11: Sponsorship pyramid of EPL club** (after Bühler and Nufer 2013 p.94)

All club websites reserve space for their sponsors (Kriemadis *et al.* 2010) and typically illustrate a version of what may be described as the sponsorship pyramid (Bühler and Nufer 2013) - see Figure 11 above. The main sponsor or brand usually has their logo carried on the front of the shirt as well as having other opportunities made available to them such as perimeter advertising during live matches and public relations opportunities provided by the club (Bühler and Nufer 2013). The manufacturer of the football kit pays a considerable sum to be associated with an EPL club (Unlucan 2014) which it hopes to recoup from the sale of replica shirts from which it shares its revenue with the retailer and the club (Szymanski and Kuypers 1999). The name and brand of the kit supplier usually follows that of the main sponsor on the club website.

There are then a number of other commercial partners whose names appear on the next level of the sponsorship pyramid (Bühler and Nufer 2013). Once again, their brands are likely to appear on perimeter advertising. Some may sponsor the club's training kit or even the sleeve of the shirt (sleeve sponsors were introduced to the Premier League in 2017). Finally, the lowest level of the

pyramid lists regional and local sponsors. They will pay less than the other sponsors and will receive smaller and possibly more targeted benefits. Section 4.2.1 in this chapter described the tiered structure of partnership that FIFA use, which is another way of visualising the sponsorship pyramid as described above. All sponsorship packages are tailored to the needs of sponsor and sponsee with the fee determined by the relative success and profile of the club including the size of its fan base (Bühler and Nufer 2013). The club website therefore acts as part of the network which a sponsor utilises to promote its brands. It is an appropriate point of contact between club, sponsors, and fans in which to establish the full range of commercial partnerships an individual club may hold.

#### **4.2.6 The ‘rich’ and the ‘poor’ in the Premier League**

There may be different commercial choices facing the bigger and smaller clubs in the EPL although all seek to commodify all aspects of their sporting operations. Football historians and economists (Curran *et al.* 2009; Dobson and Goddard 2011; Penn and Berridge 2016) may argue about exactly when it happened, but there is no doubt that competitive balance in the top-tier of English football has been seriously eroded, exacerbated by the income revenue now available to the most successful teams in the EPL who also qualify for European competition.

Manchester United has become Britain’s richest football club benefitting from its commercial development over recent years and an understanding of its revenue streams helps in an examination of both of its history and its website. Boli (2017) described the evolution of business activities at Manchester United including private boxes for supporters built in 1964, a souvenir shop opened in 1967 and billboards around the stadium installed in 1975. Manchester United’s first shirt sponsorship deal was with Sharp, a Japanese electronics firm, in 1982. The club’s website was launched in 1996. Thwaites and Meng-Lewis (2013) described Manchester United’s relationship with the corporate sector in 2002. They included Budweiser as the official beer of Manchester United and which also had stadium pouring rights. Pepsi was the Club’s official supplier of soft drinks whilst Ladbrokes were Manchester United’s “official betting partner in the stadium and

its interactive gaming partner worldwide” (Thwaites-Sykes and Meng-Lewis 2013 p.386). English football has been described as the leader in the sponsorship field with Manchester United developing a partnership with Smirnoff Vodka, their drink partner responsible for Asia and Pacific in 2008 (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b).

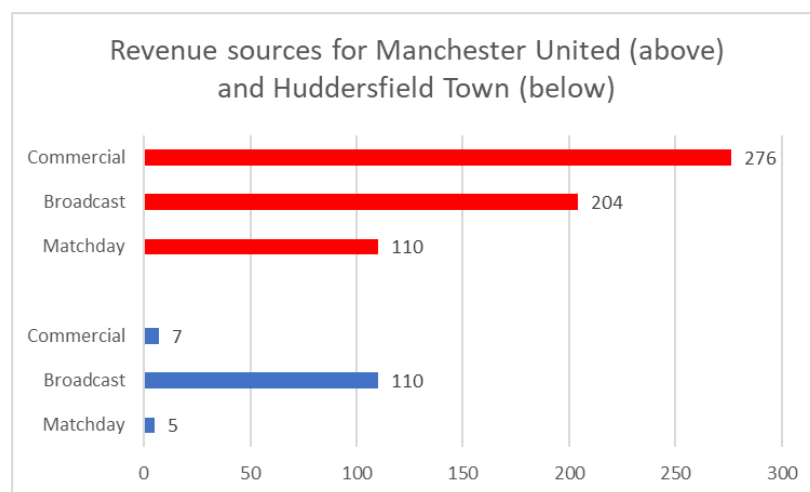
In comparison, Huddersfield Town FC, despite winning the old First Division three times in the 1920s, may consider their promotion to the EPL in 2017 (and remaining within the Premier League for two seasons) as their only significant footballing achievement this century. Manchester United’s home at Old Trafford has a capacity of 74,879 and is the largest club stadium in England. The stadium is entirely owned by the football club and was opened in 1910. In contrast, Huddersfield Town’s stadium is shared with rugby league team, the Huddersfield Giants, with a capacity of 24,121. Huddersfield’s stadium was opened in 1994 (the club’s previous ground had been at Leeds Road where they were based from 1908 to 1994) and the owners (the stadium is jointly owned by Kirklees Council, Huddersfield Town and Huddersfield Giants) sold its name on three occasions becoming the John Smith’s Stadium after the Yorkshire-based brewer in 2012. The two stadiums are pictured in Figure 12 below.



**Figure 12. The homes of Manchester United and Huddersfield Town. Photos by Researcher.**

Figure 13 shows the clubs’ respective incomes at the end of season 2017/18 in their accounts as posted in June 2019 (Conn 2019). Manchester United’s income from broadcasting is almost double that of Huddersfield Town (£204m compared to £110m). The Manchester club’s higher broadcasting income benefits from their appearance in the final of the FA Cup, reaching the round of 16 in the UEFA Champions League and from the fact they were runners-up in the EPL. This was Huddersfield’s first season in the EPL following promotion from the

Championship and broadcasting exposure is much less significant for a smaller club. Despite the disparities in broadcast incomes between the clubs, it should be noted that broadcasting revenues in the Premier League are at the highest level in Europe (UEFA 2019) which benefits clubs at both ends of the league. Matchday income is over twenty times higher for the Manchester club, but it is in the ability to generate revenue from its commercial partners that really distinguishes the clubs. Huddersfield Town showed commercial income of £7million in 2018 whereas Manchester United received £276million.



**Figure 13: Revenue sources for Manchester United and Huddersfield Town, 2018 (in £million)**

Manchester United's seven year sponsorship deal with Chevrolet, part of the General Motors Corporation, was worth around \$560 million dollars when it was signed in July 2012 (Rowe and Zemanek 2014). That translates to around £44.75 million pounds a year (Mirror Football 2012). The car company's press release claimed the sponsorship deal would enable them to reach Manchester United's 659 million followers around the world (Chevrolet Pressroom 2012). Rowe and Zemanek (2014) examined the sponsorship in detail drawing on a report from Kantar Media which claimed that there were 325 million fans of Manchester United in the Asia-Pacific region, including 108 million in China alone. The report argued that the potential audience for Chevrolet included 138 million followers of football in China (45% of the adult population), 43 million in Brazil

(68% of the adult population) and 17 million people in South Korea where 43% of the adult population follow football.

The study (Rowe and Zemanek 2014) of Chevrolet's sponsorship illustrated the detail of a major sponsorship deal. As well as Chevrolet's logo being placed on the front of the Manchester United official shirt, it also appeared on the chairs where the players and manager sat during matches, an interactive stadium crowd photo where fans could tag themselves, on the LED perimeter boards at home games and as part of the backdrop during pre- and post-game interviews. Other onsite promotions were activated when Manchester United toured China in 2013 and 2016 (Sheen 2016). The sponsorship programme was supported by a website ([www.chevroletfc.com](http://www.chevroletfc.com)), a Facebook page, a YouTube channel and a Twitter account. Chevrolet's marketing team looked for interaction on their social networks which was particularly successful in Asia where fans were given access to the football club, football shirts and other goods, and even match tickets and travel expenses in a few cases.

Whilst Manchester United are one of the richest brands in world football, Huddersfield Town occupy a very different place in football's hierarchy. As a much smaller club, there is very little literature concerning Huddersfield Town. Despite an illustrious history which included winning three successive English league titles in the 1920s and winning the FA Cup in 1922, Huddersfield Town Football Club have spent the majority of the years since the Second World War moving up and down through the lower three divisions. In 2003, the club was taken over by local businessman, Ken Davy, who was both the chairman of Huddersfield Town FC and of the local rugby league club, Huddersfield Giants.

As a club unsure of its place in the Premier League, a year-on-year sponsorship deal was agreed by Huddersfield Town in 2017 with Ope Sports, part of Opebet, a global betting brand based in Malta. Ope Sports' logo appeared on the front of Huddersfield's shirt, on the pitchside LED, on other branding sites at the stadium and across social media channels (Simmons 2017). The sponsorship was renewed when Huddersfield maintained their place in the Premier League for an additional season and was reported as being worth £1.5 million a season (Carp 2019a). In 2019/20 Huddersfield Town announced a shirt sponsorship with Irish

bookmaker, Paddy Power (Carp 2019a). However, that proved to be a publicity stunt for the gambling company, with their logo eventually not being displayed on the front of shirt (Chicken 2019).

The examples of these two clubs provide a perspective on the economics of the Premier League. Transnational corporations recognise the huge global reach achieved by the top clubs and exploit this as much as they can. The methods used by both Chevrolet and Opel in their sponsorships of Manchester United and Huddersfield Town are similar in terms of brand coverage and brand activation. Both seek to engage with fans, albeit at very different scales in terms of size of audiences. However, gambling brands are still able to afford to have their logos displayed on the shirts of clubs like Huddersfield Town and are able to reach Asian as well as European and American audiences, where their objective is to encourage online betting rather than the purchase of luxury and expensive products like sports utility vehicles.

### **4.3 Methodology**

The official websites of the 20 EPL clubs in the 2018/19 football season were visited in the opening weekend of the season in August 2018 and in week commencing 18 February 2019 (around Matchday 26 of 38). The season commenced with Matchday 1, between 10 and 12 August 2018, and concluded on Matchday 38 on 12 May 2019. The first visit enabled a scoping mechanism to be developed using the home pages of the EPL club official websites to record the sponsorship deals of EPL clubs.

The 20 club websites from the 2019/20 football season were visited on Matchday 12, between 23 and 25 November 2019. This meant 23 websites were accessed in total over the two seasons. 17 clubs were members of the EPL in the two seasons considered (Arsenal, Bournemouth, Brighton, Burnley, Chelsea, Crystal Palace, Everton, Leicester City, Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United, Newcastle United, Southampton, Tottenham Hotspur, Watford, West Ham United and Wolverhampton Wanderers). Cardiff City, Fulham and Huddersfield were relegated from the EPL in 2018/19 whilst Norwich City, Sheffield United and

Aston Villa were promoted from the league below (the Championship) making the additional six clubs. The clubs' sponsors were identified from each website.

Each club website follows a template and looks similar with news, fixtures, videos, match highlights, player profiles and a shop. At the bottom of each clubs' website homepage is a table of brands or partners. Each Premiership club website was visited in February and November 2019 and the total number of partners counted together with the nature of their brand or business.

Using a model adapted from an Australian study of unhealthy sponsorship in the Australian Football League (AFL) (Sartori *et al.* 2018), a traffic light system was then used to grade the sponsors and league ladders were constructed from them. As in the Australian study, each sponsor was classified as either Red, Amber or Green according to the classification shown in Table 5. Only gambling, alcohol and food and beverage brands were scored. All other brands such as sportswear, financial, automotive and travel were not included in the points classification.

**Table 5. Classification of unhealthy sponsors of EPL clubs.** Adapted from Sartori et.al., 2018

<b>TYPE OF SPONSOR</b>	<b>RED</b>	<b>AMBER</b>	<b>GREEN</b>
<b>Gambling</b>	All gambling brands were classified as Red as all have the capacity to damage health		GambleAware (although funded by the gambling industry) administrates the National Gambling Helpline
<b>Alcohol</b>	All alcohol brands were classified as Red as all have the capacity to damage health		
<b>Food and beverages</b>	Food and beverage brands with over 50% of products high in saturated fat, sugar and/or salt (HFSS)	Food and beverage brands with over 50% of products moderate in saturated fat, sugar and/or salt	Food and beverage brands with over 50% of products low in saturated fat, sugar and/or salt

The Australian study used Australian Dietary Guidelines in classifying food and beverage products. Similarly, this research has drawn on the UK Government's



Dietary Guidelines (Public Health England 2016) in its classifications. Alcohol and gambling brands were classified as unhealthy, as all have the capacity to damage health. Food and beverage companies were more complicated to classify. Some food and beverage brands were considered healthy and, following dietary guidelines, all coffee brands were classified as 'Green'. Marketing for brands was considered unhealthy if a core product fell into an unhealthy category, as advertising for healthier products does not necessarily drive healthier choice but does drive desire for that brand overall (Whalen *et al.* 2018). A full list of the Food and Nutrition classifications of the EPL club sponsors is provided in Appendix 5.

A brand allocation of 'Red' scored one point. An 'Amber' score (for food and beverage brands only as in Table 5) received half a point. 'Green' scored nil. The points were then allocated to each club and tallied in the form of an Unhealthy Sponsorship Ladder. These are shown for each football season considered in Tables 6 and 7. The club shown at the top of the ladder received the highest number of points for unhealthy sponsors and the team at the bottom, had the lowest number of points. This research also followed the Australian model in allocating additional points if the logo of an unhealthy sponsor appeared on the front of the club's football shirt (a point for a 'red' shirt sponsor, a half a point for 'amber'). This was to reflect the level of exposure this logo would receive from this positioning.

A further case study of Manchester United and Huddersfield Town was undertaken to examine other types of commercial partnerships in which brand logos may not appear on the official clubs' home website pages but are described elsewhere on their websites. This was undertaken in March and April 2019 when searches were undertaken on the two websites using the terms "regional" and "local" sponsors.

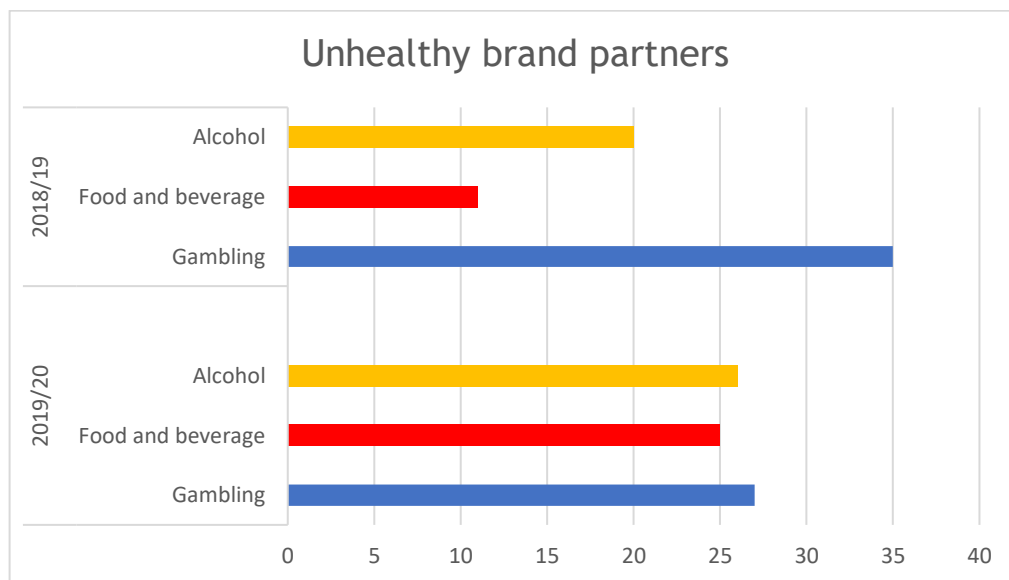
## 4.4 Findings

In 2018/19, there were 260 brands featured on the 20 EPL clubs' official websites. Eleven (4.2%) were food and beverage brands, 20 (7.7%) were alcohol and 35 (13.5%) gambling. The remaining 194 (74.6%) were brands from a wide

range of other industries. Fifty-eight (22.3%) of the 260 brands were classified as ‘red’ or unhealthy. A full list of the clubs’ unhealthy partners in 2018/19 is shown in Appendix 6.

In 2019/20, there were 286 brands featured on the 20 EPL clubs’ official websites. Twenty-five (8.7%) were food and beverage brands, 26 (9.1%) were alcohol and 27 (9.4%) gambling. The remaining 208 (72.7%) were brands from other industries. Sixty-five (22.7%) of the 286 brands were classified as ‘red’ or unhealthy. This represents a small increase in the overall number of sponsors. It also shows a similarly small increase of 12.1% in the number of unhealthy sponsors. A full list of the clubs’ unhealthy partners in 2019/20 is shown in Appendix 6.

Figure 14 below provides a summary of the industries of the unhealthy brand partners across both seasons with gambling brands being the most prominent.



**Figure 14. Number of unhealthy brand partners across two Premier League seasons**

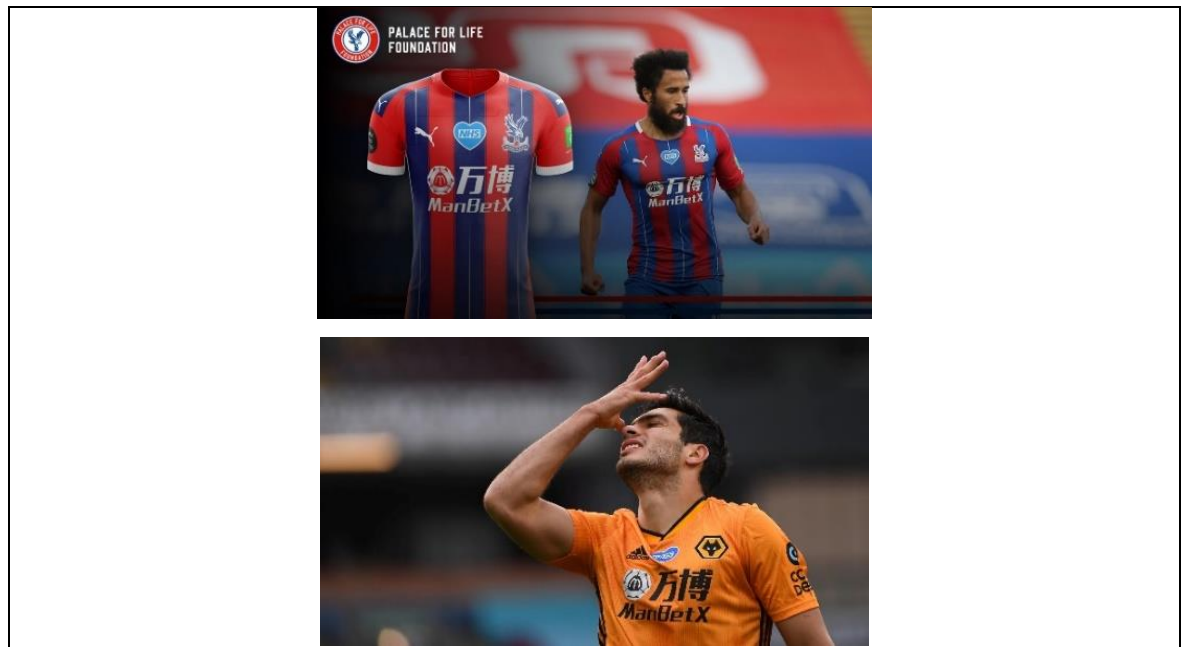
#### 4.4.1 Gambling

In 2018/19, 25 different gambling brands featured on club websites and nine on the front of players’ shirts. One brand, the Kenyan-based SportPesa, sponsored

three clubs (Arsenal, Southampton and as shirt sponsor for Everton). Tempobet (Arsenal, Fulham), M88 (Leicester City and as shirt sponsor for Bournemouth), Ladbrokes (Burnley, Leicester City), bet365 (Leicester City, Newcastle United), Dafabet (Leicester City and as shirt sponsor for Fulham), W88 (Leicester City and as shirt sponsor for Wolverhampton Wanderers) and MoPlay (Manchester United, Watford) all appeared on two different websites. Both Arsenal and Leicester City had five gambling partners, although none featured on the front of their shirts. Arsenal described Tempobet and 12BET.com as regional betting partners with 12BET as their “official betting partner in Asia” (arsenal.com).

The number of gambling brands declined slightly in 2019/20 with 19 brands mentioned but with ten now on the front of shirts. In this season, one brand, Malta-registered Betway, sponsored three clubs (Leicester City, Norwich City and as shirt sponsor for West Ham United). Similarly to 2018/19, W88 (Leicester City and as shirt sponsor of Aston Villa), Yabo (Leicester City, Manchester United), bet365 (Leicester City, Newcastle United), Mansion (Newcastle United and as sleeve sponsor of Bournemouth) and ManBetX (as shirt sponsors of both Crystal Palace and Wolverhampton Wanderers) appeared on two different club websites (Figure 15). Leicester City continued to have partnerships with five gambling brands in 2019/20 although two (bet365 and W88) were the same across both seasons.

GambleAware (sponsors of Crystal Palace in both seasons) are included as a gambling brand but are classified as ‘green’ (as a charity intended to prevent gambling harms, see [www.gambleaware.org](http://www.gambleaware.org)) and therefore score no points in the unhealthy sponsorship ladders.



**Figure 15: ManBetX shirt sponsorship.** Images taken from official club websites of Crystal Palace and Wolverhampton Wanderers on 17 July 2020.

#### 4.4.2 Alcohol

Alcohol companies are also widely featured, with 12 brands in 2018/19, but 18 in season 2019/20. This market is dominated by three brands: Heineken, Carlsberg and Carling. In 2018/19 Carlsberg sponsored four clubs (Burnley, Crystal Palace, Fulham and Liverpool), Carling, three (Everton, Newcastle United and Wolverhampton Wanderers) and Heineken, two (Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United). In 2019/20 Carlsberg (Burnley, Crystal Palace, Liverpool and Watford), and Heineken (Aston Villa, Manchester City, Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United) both sponsored four and Carling, three (Everton, Newcastle United and Wolverhampton Wanderers as in the previous season). There are regional brands featured, as in gambling, with Arsenal, for example, referring to Star, as their ‘beer partner’ in Nigeria in 2018/19. Partners may also reflect club ownerships, with Leicester City’s partnership with Chang beer (a Thai-owned brand) mirroring their ownership by the King Power Thai consortium (King Power are the shirt sponsor and hold the naming rights to Leicester City’s stadium). Arsenal had the most alcohol sponsorships in both seasons scoped; three in 2018/19 (Santa Rita “official wine partner”, SBL and Star) and four in 2019/20 (Santa Rita, SBL, Camden Town Brewery and Ganzberg Beer).

### 4.4.3 Food and beverages

Whilst a few food and beverage brands were classified as green (such as the coffee and water brands), 16 (44%) of the 36 sponsors were classified as 'red' (see Appendix 5 for full details). 'Sports drinks' are a new and rising category and are hard to classify due to difficulties in assessing content. Their sugar content meant the majority were classified as 'amber'. High sugar 'energy drinks' were present with Monster Energy Drinks' logo appearing on the websites of eight EPL clubs (Crystal Palace, Everton, Leicester City, Sheffield United, Southampton, Tottenham Hotspur, Watford and West Ham United) in 2019/20. Carabao, the Thai based high sugar 'energy' drink, sponsored the English League Cup and one EPL team (Chelsea). Another 'energy' brand, Gatorade, sponsored Arsenal and Manchester City (both clubs in 2018/19 and Manchester City only in 2019/20).

### 4.4.4 Unhealthy Sponsorship Ladders

The results are shown in the form of unhealthy sponsorship ladders on the following pages (Tables 6 and 7), where the clubs promoting the highest number of unhealthy brands in both seasons are given the highest number of points as described. In this way, Arsenal and Leicester City finished at the top of the unhealthy ladder in the two seasons considered. In 2018/19, Arsenal had five gambling sponsors whilst Leicester City had the same number in 2019/20, reflecting different overseas markets. As noted above, Arsenal received sponsorship from four alcohol brands in 2019/20. In contrast, Brighton and Hove Albion did not promote unhealthy brands through their website or on their shirt in either of the football seasons considered. However, the club did have an association with Monster Energy (Hilsum 2019), although at the time of the website visit in November 2019, the brand logo was not displayed.

Table 6. EPL Unhealthy Sponsorship Ladder 2018/19

Rank	Club	Sponsors			Shirt sponsor			Points
		R	A	G	R	A	G	Total
1	Arsenal	9	0	1	0	0	0	9
2	Leicester City	7	0	0	0	0	0	7
3	Fulham	4	0	1	1	0	0	5
3	Newcastle United	4	0	0	1	0	0	5
5	Burnley	3	1	0	1	0	0	4.5
5	Liverpool	4	1	1	0	0	0	4.5
7	Everton	3	0	0	1	0	0	4
8	West Ham United	2	1	0	1	0	0	3.5
9	AFC Bournemouth	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
9	Chelsea	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
9	Crystal Palace	2	0	1	1	0	0	3
9	Manchester City	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
9	Manchester United	3	0	1	0	0	0	3
9	Southampton	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
9	Wolverhampton Wanderers	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
16	Huddersfield Town	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
17	Cardiff City	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
17	Tottenham Hotspur	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
17	Watford	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
20	Brighton & Hove Albion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		<b>58</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>68.5</b>

Note: Points determined by unhealthy commercial relationships shown on club websites in February 2019. See page 86 for full explanation.

Table 7. EPL Unhealthy Sponsorship Ladder 2019/20

Rank	Club	Sponsors			Shirt sponsor			Points
		R	A	G	R	A	G	Total
1	Leicester City	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
2	Arsenal	6	0	1	0	0	0	6
3	Aston Villa	4	1	0	1	0	0	5.5
3	Everton	4	1	0	1	0	0	5.5
5	Crystal Palace	4	0	1	1	0	0	5
5	Manchester City	5	0	1	0	0	0	5
5	Newcastle United	4	0	0	1	0	0	5
5	Norwich City	4	0	1	1	0	0	5
5	West Ham United	3	2	0	1	0	0	5
10	Watford	3	0	0	1	0	0	4
11	AFC Bournemouth	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
11	Burnley	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
11	Liverpool	2	2	1	0	0	0	3
11	Manchester United	3	0	1	0	0	0	3
11	Southampton	3	0	1	0	0	0	3
11	Tottenham Hotspur	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
11	Wolverhampton Wanderers	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
18	Chelsea	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
19	Sheffield United	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
20	Brighton & Hove Albion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		<b>65</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>78</b>

Note: Points determined by unhealthy commercial relationships shown on club websites in November 2019. See page 86 for full explanation.

Findings suggest that sponsorship by unhealthy brands in the EPL could be a growing issue. The total league score has increased from 68.5 to 78 points across the two seasons with a similar increase in 'Red' sponsors from 58 to 65. In 2019/20 only four teams did not have a gambling partner whilst only three teams were without an alcohol partner. Half the teams in the league (ten from twenty) had an 'energy drink' sponsor shown on their website. Despite the prevalence of many unhealthy brands, the majority of EPL club partners came from other industries. Across the two seasons considered, the 23 clubs had a total of 546 partners. Of these, there were 144 (26.4%) unhealthy brands featured (many of these duplicated due to sponsorship of multiple clubs as described above). Thus, nearly three quarters of EPL club partners came from outside the UCIs.

There were large differences between the total number of partners each club had. In 2018/19, four clubs had more than 20 partner brands displayed on their websites. Manchester City had 29, Arsenal 27, Manchester United 24 and Liverpool 22. In contrast, Bournemouth, Brighton & Hove Albion, Huddersfield Town and Wolverhampton Wanderers only had four. In 2019/20, more clubs had 20 brands or more displayed: Manchester City had 33, West Ham United 25, Manchester United 24, Arsenal 23 and Crystal Palace and Norwich City both had 20. There was a similar contrast as that shown in the previous season however, as Brighton & Hove Albion only had three, Wolverhampton Wanderers four, Bournemouth five and Sheffield United six. A full summary of EPL club partners is shown in Appendix 6.

#### **4.4.5 Manchester United and Huddersfield Town**

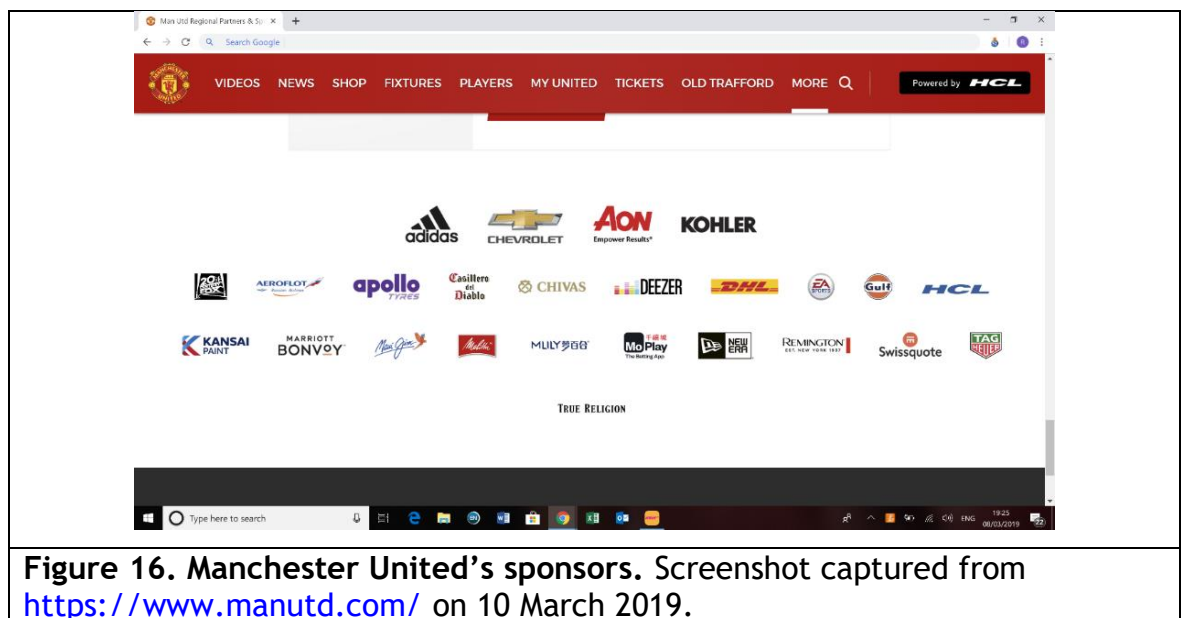
Having explored all the EPL club websites across two football seasons, this chapter will look further at two clubs - Manchester United and Huddersfield Town - to describe their sponsorship arrangements.

In Figure 16, with the website image shown towards the end of the 2018/19 season, Manchester United had Chevrolet as their shirt sponsor, Adidas as their kit supplier and Kohler as the sleeve sponsor. All three of these sponsors' brands appeared on the top line of Manchester United's partners as shown on their



website. The fourth brand shown at the top, Aon, sponsored the club's training top and training ground and academy complex, known as the Aon Training Complex.

Manchester United had 24 global partners displayed in total. Only Arsenal (27) and Manchester City (29) had more partners listed on their home webpage in 2018/19. Of Manchester United's partners, only two (8.33%) are UK based (Aon and Chivas) illustrating that the extent to which the club's audience is global. Three of the brands (Casillero del Diablo, Chivas and MoPlay) (12.5%) are problematic from a public health perspective in that they are alcohol and gambling brands. The scale of Manchester United's operation and the diversity of their partnerships, such as their Official Vision Partner (Maui Jim) and their Official Global Mattress and Pillow Partner (Mlily), help to make them Britain's richest football club (Deloitte Sports Business Group 2020b). Whilst other clubs such as Arsenal may have their regional sponsors such as 12BET.com (Official betting partner in Asia) and Star (Beer partner in Nigeria) included on their home webpage, Manchester United's are listed elsewhere on their website.



Huddersfield Town's home page on the official club website in November 2018 (Figure 17) showed five sponsors (Ope Sports, Umbro, Leisu Sports, First4Lawyers and Appliances Direct). As with eight other clubs in the EPL in that season, the club's shirt sponsor was a gambling company, Ope Sports, based in Malta. Only two clubs, Brighton and Hove Albion and Wolverhampton Wanderers, had fewer

partners' brands displayed on their websites (four) and AFC Bournemouth were the only other club with five.



**Figure 17. Huddersfield Town's sponsors.** Screenshot captured from [www.htafc.com](http://www.htafc.com) on 30 November 2018.

#### 4.4.6 Regional and local partnerships

As described, all Premiership club websites adopt a similar approach with top tier sponsors paying to have their brand appear on a football shirt front, on a sleeve or on training kit. There is then a second level of partners whose logos appear below the top tier and are displayed on the home page of the Premiership clubs' websites. In addition, all clubs have partners aimed at an audience located outside of Europe. Manchester United's nine 'regional partners' listed on its website but not on the home page (and therefore not in the Unhealthy Sponsorship Ladders (Tables 6 and 7), show Manchester United's global ambitions even more clearly. The regional partners are listed in full below in Table 8. Of the nine, five may raise concerns from a public health perspective: Aland (nutrition supplements), Chi (fruit juice brand), Coca-Cola, Manda and Science in Sport.

This difference in numbers of global partners between Manchester United and Huddersfield Town, is also reflected in the smaller club's next tier of sponsors, their 'regional' partners. Like Manchester United, these are not shown on the home page of Huddersfield Town's website. But Huddersfield's idea of 'regional' is very different from that of Manchester United's.

**Table 8: Manchester United's regional partners**

Official Wellness and Nutrition Partner for China	Aland
Official Soft Drinks Partner for Nigeria	Chi
Official Pharmaceutical Partner for Korea and Vietnam	Cho A Pharm Co Ltd
Official Indoor Entertainment Centre Partner for the People's Republic of China	Harves
Official Soft Drink	Coca-Cola
Official Partner	The Hong Kong Jockey Club
Official Nutritional Supplements Partner for Japan	Manda
Official Sports Nutrition Partner for UK and Europe	Science in Sport
Official Travel Services Provider	Thomas Cook Sport

Captured from <https://www.manutd.com/en/partners/regional> on 10 March 2019

Huddersfield Town used a concept called the #HuddersfieldHundred (Threlfall-Sykes 2018) to develop a partnership scheme promoting the value of the club to businesses in the local area. Huddersfield aimed to reach 100 Club Partners. Figure 18 illustrates some of the businesses who joined the programme; there were 94 at the time of accessing the website on 26.04.19. The range of local sponsors is not dissimilar from the type of sponsorships across all EPL clubs. Thus, you find companies offering business services (such as Absolute Warehouse Services and Complete Business Solutions), financial companies (Yorkshire Payment) and motor vehicle dealerships (Longley Park KIA and Perrys Vauxhall). There are property companies (Bastion Estates) as well as building and construction services (Hurricane Roofing Solutions and Walkers Window Company). The audience for these partnerships is not those watching the EPL broadcast in Africa or Asia, as it is with Manchester United, but those who have business relationships with Huddersfield Town or its fans in West Yorkshire. There are companies in the food and beverage, alcohol and gambling industries but even these have a very local orientation. With the exception of Jones Pies, a local pie company in Huddersfield (<http://www.jonespies.co.uk/home>), and PAS Nutrition (sports nutrition), none of the other companies would be considered unhealthy (according to the classification used in the Unhealthy Sponsorship Ladders): Caterers Choice, Coco Fuzion, Coconoil, Haighs Farm Shop, Ice Valley Natural Mineral Water, Kenco Millican and Total Food Service. Caterers Choice support the club's Foundation charity by providing breakfasts to local schools through an Early Kick-Off Breakfast Club (Zientek 2013) although the mention of Vimto jellies in these is not encouraging from a public health perspective.

Heineken have an association with three other EPL clubs (Manchester City, Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United) as described previously. Huddersfield Town’s partnership with them is not included earlier as they are included as a regional rather than a global club partner. Although Heineken is clearly part of the Dutch-based conglomerate originally, the link provided from the webpage (see Figure 17) stated that Heineken UK is a “wholly owned subsidiary of Heineken N.V.” and that it has a brewery in Tadcaster, North Yorkshire. The Football Pools is also listed as a member of the Huddersfield Hundred. This is a simple betting game based on predicting the results of Huddersfield Town’s matches. See: <https://www.terrierpools.com/>.



## 4.5 Discussion

This chapter addressed RQ1: “How many and what types of unhealthy commodities were promoted through partnerships (sponsorships) with EPL clubs and featured on club websites in 2018/19 and 2019/20?” Gambling, alcohol and

unhealthy food and beverage partners are common, with 125 (22.9%) unhealthy sponsorships from the 546 commercial partnerships identified across the two seasons. This EPL study contrasts with that carried out on the Australian Football League (AFL) clubs (Sartori *et al.* 2018) which was carried out in 2017 and found 56 out of 453 sponsors (12%) which were classified as unhealthy, just over half the level found in the EPL. There were also differences across the studies with gambling sponsors the most common type of unhealthy sponsorship in the EPL (48.7%) with alcohol sponsors next (37.4%). In contrast, food and beverage brands (46%) were the most common category of 'red' sponsorship in the AFL, followed by alcohol (43%). In the AFL, Coca-Cola had the highest number of sponsorship partnerships sponsoring 13 of 18 clubs (72%), with Carlton Draught (a beer producer) sponsoring six clubs (33%). In the EPL, only Monster Energy (a high calorie sweetened soft drink), sponsored more than three teams, with eight partnerships (40% of the clubs) with EPL clubs.

Sartori *et al.* (2018) noted the popularity of the AFL, measured by match attendance by game. Given that overweight and obesity affects two-thirds of Australian adults and that one in six adult Australians drink alcohol at a level that puts them at risk of an alcohol-related disease or injury during their lifetime, the Australian study raised concerns at the level of unhealthy sponsorship on AFL club websites and on playing uniforms. The authors advocated for a coordinated approach to remove unhealthy sponsors from sport in Australia, similar to that used to remove tobacco sponsorship.

As the EPL has a much larger global audience than the AFL, with concerns about the rising levels of noncommunicable diseases internationally (Moodie *et al.* 2013), the same arguments can be made about the elite level of English Football as in Australia. As shown in the examples of Manchester United and Huddersfield Town, clubs seek to maximise their commercial income in any way they can. In the former case in particular, UCIs are able to use their sponsorship of an EPL club to market their brands to a global audience. Their sponsorship is predicated on getting their brands seen by as many people as possible and television remains the main mechanism for achieving this. As Bourdieu described, football is a "commercial spectacle" (Bourdieu *et al.* 1999 p.18), in which economic

capital is exchanged for social and cultural capital. TNCs use their economic capital to sponsor football teams, to pursue visibility, and buy marketing space.

Sharman (2020) has noted that none of the Premier League's six biggest clubs, including Manchester United, have shirt sponsorship deals with gambling companies. There is no explanation given for this by Sharman but it is possible to speculate that the high cost of being the main sponsor of one of the 'Big Six' (at least three times higher than other EPL clubs in 2019/20 (Gough 2020)) makes this prohibitive to gambling companies. Of the other 14 clubs in the EPL, nine had a gambling brand displayed on the front of their shirt. The Lords Gambling Industry Committee Report (Select Committee on the Social and Economic Impact of the Gambling Industry 2020) recommended banning gambling sponsorship in football. Sharman (2020) argued that if these recommendations (and others) are implemented, "the impact on football finances could potentially be enormous" (p.6). Whilst this is possible in less well financed leagues where broadcasting revenues are either significantly lower or non-existent, it seems unlikely in the EPL. A 'rich' club like Manchester United only had one gambling brand out of the 24 commercial partnerships displayed on its website in March 2019 (see Figure 16), whilst a 'poor' club such as Huddersfield Town received £1.5 million (1.2%) of its £122 million total income in 2018 from its shirt sponsorship deal with Ope Sports. The most important income for most clubs in the EPL comes from their broadcasting income. In the case of Huddersfield, their £110 million share from the EPL broadcasting rights deals amounted to 90.2% of their income (see Figure 13).

Sport sponsorship has grown exponentially in the last forty years (Cornwell 2020), also demonstrated by the increased commercial value of broadcasts rights for both the EPL and the AFL (Fujak and Frawley 2016). Corporate brands need to find a way to stand out in an overcrowded marketplace (Goldman and Papson 2006) and sport offers an opportunity to transnational corporations to raise global awareness of their brands whilst promoting commodity consumption (Smart 2007). Gambling sponsorship is the most prominent of the UCIs in this study of EPL commercial partnerships and commentators have argued that football plays a problematic role in the promotion and normalisation of gambling (Jones *et al.* 2020).

## 4.6 Strengths and Limitations

The main strength of this study is the simplicity of the method which was able to use a similar approach to that adopted by Sartori *et al.* (2018) in their study of the AFL. There are limitations in this research concerning the classifications used to develop the Unhealthy Sponsorship Ladders. The study has only looked at the partnerships (sponsorships) promoted through the use of brand logos on the home pages of the official club websites. This is likely to underestimate the number of unhealthy brands associated with EPL clubs as the home page may omit regional and local sponsors and, in the case of Brighton and Hove Albion and Monster Energy, relationships which simply are not declared on the main club webpages. It has also been noted that it is difficult to estimate the nutritional content of some food and beverages especially when a sponsor's full range of products is not available in English.

The biggest limitation is not being able to compare the financial value of the club sponsorships. Club accounts show overall commercial income as has been shown but do not provide the value of specific contracts. However, it is likely that press speculation does provide reasonably accurate estimates of the larger value sponsorships, such as in the case of Manchester United. The Australian study (Sartori *et al.* 2018) also noted the difficulty in ascribing values to sponsorship due to the private nature of these contracts.

## 4.7 Conclusions

This chapter has described the commercial partnerships in the EPL and focused on the unhealthy sponsorships that form just under a quarter of those identified on club websites. The unhealthy sponsorship ladders (Tables 6 and 7) show the extent of the partnerships between EPL clubs and unhealthy commodity corporations. Modern football sponsorship is a complex and financially rewarding process for EPL clubs. The clubs seek to extract as much income as possible from these sponsorships, and, in return, help to promote brands to global audiences.

The club sponsorships have developed alongside the broadcasting of football on subscription television channels since the launch of the Premier League in 1992. This thesis will therefore go on to consider how the broadcasting of EPL matches facilitates the marketing of unhealthy brands. The next study considers this broadcasting in 2019 (across two football seasons).



# Chapter Five. An analysis of the marketing accompanying five EPL matches broadcast on BT Sport and Amazon Prime

## 5.1 Introduction

The historical relationship between sport, the media and broadcasting was described in the literature review in Chapter Two. Pierre Bourdieu also commented on this relationship in his description of the World Cup in France in 1998 as a “world cup for the media and for consortia locked in headlong competition” (Bourdieu *et al.* 1999 p.18). Bourdieu saw this process of commercialisation starting very early in England in which he described the launch of the Premier League as a demonstration of the “logic of capitalist profit-making” (Bourdieu *et al.* 1999 p.18). The launch of the new independent English league was accompanied by a broadcasting deal with BskyB (now Sky) which transformed the income available to elite professional football clubs in England. In the previous chapter, an analysis of the Premiership club official websites in 2018 and 2019 was undertaken to describe the EPL clubs’ commercial partnerships including with UCIs.

This chapter will briefly consider studies which have examined the frequency of unhealthy brand marketing in football including a pilot study undertaken on matches broadcast at the FIFA World Cup in Russia in 2018. The previous chapter described the sponsorship pyramid and the detailed requirements of sponsors which include the placement of brand logos at home games in the EPL. The broadcasting of the EPL guarantees a global television audience with in-play exposure. This chapter describes a study of the broadcasting of five EPL matches in 2019 in addressing RQ2: *How were unhealthy brands marketed in the live broadcasting of EPL games in 2018/19 and 2019/20 on pay-to-view (subscription) television?*

## 5.2 Background

### 5.2.1 Modern football and subscription television

As described in Chapter Two, there has been a symbiotic relationship between football and the media (Domeneghetti 2017), from the beginning of the sport and newspapers, to the switch from analogue to digital broadcasting, and between sport and television in particular (Boyle and Haynes 2004; Evens *et al.* 2013). The distribution of broadcasting revenue across the elite clubs only (as opposed to across all the English domestic leagues) was the key factor in the formation of the new Premier League in 1992 (Sartori 2019). The £35.5 million deal agreed by the EPL and BSkyB to broadcast 60 games in season 1992/1993 has been described and dissected by a wide range of academics and popular writers (Conn 1997; King 2002; Boyle and Haynes 2004; Evens *et al.* 2013; Goldblatt 2015; Tempany 2016; Domeneghetti 2017; Fynn 2017). The reason this has attracted so much attention is that it transformed the revenue stream into England's elite football league whilst bringing it to a global audience. In 1992, Manchester United's income from broadcasting was £1.8 million (equivalent to £3.2 million in 2019 adjusted for inflation); 8.9% of the club's total income of £20.1 million. By 2019, Manchester United's broadcasting income had risen to £241.2 million (Maguire 2020); a staggering 7,437% increase.

### 5.2.2 Broadcasting revenue - domestic and global

The EPL sells broadcasting rights domestically and globally on behalf of its rights holders (the 20 member clubs) and is agreed in three-year contract cycles; the current broadcasting commercial rights contracts are for seasons 2019/20-2021/2. The EPL derives its income from broadcasting contracts and its commercial activities (including sponsorship) but there is no definition or split in its filed accounts on the divisions between these activities (The Football Association Premier League Limited 2019). Geey (2019) details the value of the EPL's broadcasting packages and how broadcasting revenue is distributed based on a set formula. All clubs in the Premier League receive an equal share of 50%

of the total revenue, a further 25% calculated on the basis of where the teams eventually finish in the league table at the end of the season and the remaining 25% on the basis of how many times a club features in a broadcast live game. Foreign broadcasting money is distributed equally between the clubs. It was reported (Carp 2019b) that the total value of broadcasting rights for the 2019-2022 package was £9.2 billion. Whilst the sale of domestic rights has fallen slightly, that has been more than offset by an increase of income from overseas broadcasters. It is claimed that with the distribution of international TV rights, the EPL is the richest league in Europe and the most watched sports league in the world with TV audiences of 3.2 billion across 188 countries (Sartori 2019).

On the formation of the EPL, BSkyB (subsequently Sky) used Premier League football as the foundation of their subscription services (Geey 2019; Maguire 2020). As noted in section 2.4, King (1998) saw the emergence of Sky television as supported by Thatcherite policy towards free market broadcasting and an attack on the BBC and its public funding. The EPL has always sold its media rights collectively enabling a stronger bargaining position unlike other European football leagues such as La Liga (the men's top professional football division in Spain) which took a similar position later (Sartori 2019). Sky (as BSkyB) tried to buy Manchester United in 1998 in order to be in a better position to influence broadcasting rights (Evens *et al.* 2013). This was fiercely resisted by fans (Crowther 2000) and was eventually ruled against by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in the UK who ruled that the public interest was better served by keeping broadcasters and clubs separate. In a further development, in 2007, the European Commission ruled that Sky's monopoly of EPL coverage in the UK was not in the interest of the consumer, the football fan, and argued that the EPL was abusing its position as a monopoly supplier (Geey and James 2006). The Commission argued that the abolition of exclusivity would promote consumer choice and that Sky had been in a position as a monopoly to charge artificially high subscriptions services. As a result broadcast rights are now sold in tranches with seven packages of live matches awarded in 2019-2022 around time slots (BBC 2018). Thus, Package A, comprising of 32 matches kicking off on Saturdays at 12.30 p.m., was won by BT Sport; Package G, comprising of 20 midweek fixture programmes was successfully bid for by Amazon Prime.

The competition between broadcasters for sports broadcasting rights, in order to gain consumers' attention, has remained fierce emphasising the global nature and importance of the sport entertainment industry (Evens and Lefever 2011). Other subscription services have followed similar models to Sky e.g. Setanta Sports and BT Sport in the UK, together with other satellite platforms across Europe, benefitting all of the top European football leagues (Moragas *et al.* 2011). The EPL has been successful in the sale of domestic rights to broadcast its matches in the UK, but the sale of international rights to show matches across the world may be becoming even more important. Between 2001 and 2010, international rights grew 800% and in 2010-13 were worth £1.4 billion, 42% of the EPL's television revenue (Berlin 2013). Millward (2011) detailed the scope of international broadcast rights contracts and argued that overseas television coverage confirms and builds the global appeal of the EPL.

### **5.2.3 The global audience**

The development of television has made sport a mass phenomenon and watching sport has become part of global culture (Whannel 2002). As the development of digital platforms has enabled a worldwide audience, football clubs such as Manchester United and Liverpool may be considered global brands (Millward 2011; Carling 2020). Much as with other successful brands, supporters identify with the team and consume match tickets, broadcasting subscriptions and merchandise on which the team logo appears. Similarly, transnational corporations (TNCs) use sport to associate with and develop their own brands. In an era of high media visibility, brands strain to be seen amongst an increasing flow of mediated communication (Thompson 2005; Goldman and Papsen 2006). A football jersey, along with the brand of the club's leading sponsor on the front, may be considered as a key sign value in consumption, helping to develop both club and sponsor's client base (Millward 2011).

European football clubs, and their sponsors, seek to penetrate the huge audiences of the United States, China and India as described in Chapter Four (Miller 2013). The importance of this global audience is demonstrated by the Broadcast Right packages with different times of kick-off and is illustrated in

Figure 19 below. The match on 30 December 2018 between Crystal Palace and Chelsea, two clubs based in London, kicked off on a Sunday at 12 noon, UK time. Whilst noon on a Sunday is certainly not a very convenient time for English fans more used to mid-afternoon and evening kick-offs, it enabled global viewing with this match beginning at 1900 in Jakarta (Western Indonesia Time), and Bangkok and Hanoi (Indochina Time), all representing important Asian markets. Maguire (2020) wrote that live football is the most popular team sport in the world judged on the number of global television viewers. Football has a long season and is popular amongst young males in particular (aged 15-34 years) which in turn makes the sport attractive to advertisers who can target this audience who often have a disposable income (Maguire 2020). Global Web Index's audience report on Premier League Fans in 2015 (Global Web Index 2015) showed television as the main way in which fans view matches with large audiences in Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand, approximately twice as many male as female viewers, and with the largest audiences aged under 45 years.



Figure 19: Local kick-off times around the world of Crystal Palace v Chelsea on 30 December 2018. Tweet from @CPFC (Crystal Palace FC)

Bourdieu et al. (1999) observed that the “mediatisation” (p.18) of football and pay-TV channels meant that the times and dates of matches are becoming

determined by the needs of television. Porter (2019) noted the unease that English football match attenders experienced, due to the changes introduced for the convenience of television audiences including varying kick-off times. The Football Supporters' Federation expressed their disquiet in 2017 (Dobson 2017) establishing a Kick-Off Times Working Group featuring supporters' trusts from Chelsea, Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur to voice their concerns.

#### **5.2.4 Sport sponsorship as a CDOH**

Sport sponsorship has been defined in Chapter Two. It is helpful to remember as we review the relationship between UCIs and the EPL that Amis and Cornwell (Cornwell 1997; Amis and Cornwell 2005) argued that the sports sponsorship industry was largely developed by the tobacco and alcohol industries seeking to circumvent legislation to control their marketing practices. Carrigan and Carrigan (1997) referenced a series of studies that identified sport sponsorship as a tactic to avoid legal restrictions imposed on advertising. Sport sponsorship increases brand awareness, drives positive consumer perception (Kelly *et al.* 2011) and is associated with increased levels of consumption of unhealthy products (Brown 2016). Further, associating unhealthy brands with sport can also provide a 'health halo' effect whereby unhealthy fast food, for example, can benefit from an association with healthier lifestyles (Whalen *et al.* 2018). Sport sponsorship can promote a sponsor's community standing (Carrigan and Carrigan 1997) and has the potential for societal benefit. But, as described in 2.2, it can also be used by UCIs to divert public attention from their associated harms (Ireland and Boyland 2019).

The sponsorship of football clubs involves a suite of commercial partners (as illustrated in the preceding chapter on the EPL club websites) with category exclusivity (for example official beer partner) at various levels of financial commitment (Semens 2019). The details of sponsorship packages are kept commercially confidential and are related to requirements of the brand. The value of sponsorship is directly related to the potential television audience and thus Manchester United's arrangement with Adidas would have been negatively affected if the club had failed to qualify for the Champions' League in 2019/20

(Blitz 2020). Television audiences who watch the EPL in the UK are exposed to marketing primarily through the live action where brands are advertised on the front and sleeve of players' shirts, in pitch-side LED digital boards and in static advertising on available surfaces such as on spectators' stands and on the coaches' and players' dugouts (the shelters provided by the side of the pitch for non-playing staff and player substitutes). The commercial breaks which divide up the match play and the punditry before and after the live action also provide opportunities for advertisers. Sky, BT Sport and Amazon Prime take their income from subscriptions to their services and from the advertising they sell which feature in the commercial breaks in their services.

Jones et al. (2020) argued that football plays a role in the promotion and normalisation of gambling. As has been described, gambling brands such as ManBetX and Dafabet target large betting markets in Asia (Hancock and Ahmed 2019). Variable EPL kick-off times support this approach together with many EPL clubs' shirt sponsorships paid for by gambling companies as described and illustrated (see Figure 15, p.92, showing Crystal Palace and Wolverhampton Wanderers home team shirts) in Chapter Four. Crystal Palace's shirt sponsor from 2017-2020, ManBetX, are themselves based in Thailand. Football has a dual role in providing revenue for the gambling industry in that it both provides gambling opportunities through live matches and unlimited opportunities to bet in games from the next scorer to the next yellow card (Jones *et al.* 2020). There has been an explosion of gambling marketing since the Gambling Act (2005) (Bunn *et al.* 2018) with sport playing a key role. The British Code of Advertising Practice (BCAP) rules that gambling adverts must not feature in programmes aimed specifically at children but of course many children watch football (Jones *et al.* 2020).

### **5.2.5 Previous studies of unhealthy brand advertising in televised sport**

There have been previous studies which have considered the marketing of unhealthy brands in televised sport. Two studies have found a high frequency of visual alcohol marketing references in English club football (Graham and Adams

2014) and the men's European football championships in 2016 (EURO 2016) (Purves *et al.* 2017). In the former study of English football, alcohol references were common with an average of nearly two per minute in the six broadcasts considered, with the majority of references featuring in pitch perimeter advertising during the field of play. No alcohol brands featured on the front of players' shirts.

UEFA had ten global sponsors in 2016 including the beer brand, Carlsberg (it was Carlsberg's eighth consecutive sponsorship of the tournament) (UEFA 2016). EURO 2016 was held in France where the Loi Évin bans alcohol sponsorship of sporting and cultural events (Gallopel-Morvan *et al.* 2016). Carlsberg evaded these regulations at the tournament by using indirect brand references such as "Probably" or the phrase "... the best in the world" using green colours and text fonts associated with their brand (see Figure 20). In Purves *et al.*'s study, a frequency analysis of all verbal and visual references to alcohol were carried out on 18 EURO 2016 matches broadcast on the BBC and ITV (the main commercial free-to-view broadcaster in the UK). All matches were recorded in their entirety including the full programme of the broadcast including pre- and post- expert match analysis, commercial breaks (on ITV only) and the game with time added on, extra time and penalties as appropriate. Despite the French restrictions on alcohol advertising, a total of 2213 alcohol marketing references were recorded across the 18 broadcasts with 122.94 per broadcast and 0.65 per broadcast minute. Most references were in the live broadcasts of the games; only a small proportion featured in the commercial breaks. The great majority (85.8%) of the references appeared on the pitch-side border in digital perimeter advertising (see Figure 20).





**Figure 20: Perimeter advertising for Carlsberg at EURO 2016.** Image captured from: Football Marketing Magazine, 2016: <https://www.footballmarketingmagazine.com/advertising/carlsbergs-creative-advertising-board-strategy-for-the-euro-2016/> Accessed: 30 July 2020

Australian research (Nuss *et al.* 2019) considered unhealthy marketing in the television broadcast of the 2017 Australian Football League (AFL) Grand Final. This study used a content analysis examining episodes of unhealthy food and sugary drinks, alcohol and gambling marketing. Having considered a study of the sponsorship of AFL clubs by unhealthy brands (Sartori *et al.* 2018) in Chapter Four, it is no surprise to find extensive and similar branding in what is described as the highest-rating sporting event in Australia (Nuss *et al.* 2019). The study of the Grand Final only considered marketing episodes within in-game time and did not include pre- or post-match footage (they included the commercial breaks within the match quarters but not at half-time). The researchers found 559 episodes of unhealthy marketing with viewers being exposed to 4.4 unhealthy marketing episodes per minute. The majority (81%) of these episodes were for fast food, soft drink and sport drink brands with promotions for McDonald's making up just over half (51%) of these. This was mainly due to McDonald's having their branding on the goalposts.

An earlier Australian study (Lindsay *et al.* 2013) investigated alcohol, gambling and unhealthy food marketing in the Australian National Rugby League 2012 State of Origin three-game series. The authors examined the strategies used to market three categories of 'risky products': alcoholic beverages, gambling products and unhealthy foods and non-alcoholic beverages. The latter were

defined as foods and beverages which contained a high amount of added salt/sodium, sugar, or saturated fats. There was a total of 4445 episodes of marketing for 'risky products' across the 360 minutes of television with alcohol marketing being the most common. Alcohol brands had on field (such as players' jerseys and painted logos on the field) and off field placements (including scoreboard advertising and drink coolers) all contributing to the high frequency of marketing. The study noted that marketing for 'risky products' "saturated the game coverage" (Lindsay *et al.* 2013 p.8). In contrast, whilst the authors observed that this type of advertising is associated with commercial breaks, the breaks accounted for less than 1% of the unhealthy marketing episodes and just over 7% of their duration.

Cassidy and Ovenden (2017) used a coding framework taken from the 2012 Australian National Rugby League study to identify and categorise 'risky product' marketing in six broadcasts of the EPL in the 2016/17 football season. This is the only study that the researcher is aware of that considers, collectively, references to unhealthy marketing by UCIs in the EPL. The six broadcasts included in the study contained three full matches on Sky (subscription) and three EPL highlights programmes on Match of the Day on the BBC (free to air). During the 270 minutes of the Match of the Day programmes, the authors identified 764 instances of gambling advertising, 176 instances of alcohol advertising and 39 instances of what they called 'hyperpalatable foods' advertising (separately defined as in the Australian study). The Sky broadcasts of 480 minutes were similar with 524 instances of gambling advertising, 138 of alcohol instances and 6 of 'hyperpalatable' foods. The greatest proportion of advertising instances came from perimeter advertising (66.19% for Match of the Day, 71.86% for Sky).

This study is helpful but focuses on the amount of references on non-commercial broadcasts showing match highlights as well as the complete match programmes shown on subscription channels. Thus, in the sample in this study, the free-to-air broadcaster (BBC) had 65.76% pro rata more advertising than the commercial broadcaster (Sky). The study does not seek to explain this difference although the authors comment on the high level of adverts on a broadcaster (the BBC) which is considered as free from advertising. As with other studies though,

Cassidy and Ovenden found most unhealthy advertising to appear on what they categorised as dynamic advertising appearing on billboards; that is the digital media at pitch perimeters. 66% of the advertising on the BBC, and 72% on Sky, came from perimeter advertising. The only consideration of team sponsorship in the study was through shirt sponsorship, and there was no attempt to link the advertising shown on the boards around the pitch to the commercial partnerships of the teams playing.

Another UK study (Purves *et al.* 2020) considered the frequency and nature of gambling marketing in televised broadcasts of a range of professional sporting events. As with EURO 2016, this study was carried out on unhealthy brand marketing when regulation was in place to protect consumers. Gambling sponsorship is common in English and Scottish football (Bunn *et al.* 2018) and, as described in Chapter Four, many EPL clubs have gambling partners with a pronounced increase since the liberalisation of gambling and its marketing in the 2005 Gambling Act (Bunn *et al.* 2018; Jones *et al.* 2020). The growing concern over the prevalence of gambling brands being advertised in live football led to the Industry Group for Responsible Gambling (IRRG) to introduce a voluntary ban in 2019 on gambling adverts being broadcast during televised sport before 2100 (UK time) (Industry Group for Responsible Gambling 2018). A frequency sample of verbal and visual references to gambling was carried out on nine sporting events (including football, rugby union, tennis, boxing and Formula 1), before the voluntary regulation was put in place, broadcast on a range of UK television platforms (BT Sport, Sky Sports, ITV 1, BBC One and Channel 4) in 2018. There were 4.7 references per broadcast minute in boxing and 2.75 in football. For football (and rugby union) most references were at pitch borders or on front of shirts. Given that the IRRG's voluntary regulation only applied to commercial gambling adverts, this study showed it was likely to have very limited effect on exposure to the marketing of gambling brands in the sports events contained in this study.

In the last chapter, a study of the range of commercial partnerships that EPL clubs have was described, using official club websites as data sources. The value and importance of the television audiences and sponsorship arrangements by UCIs has been discussed in this chapter. The studies above show a wide

prevalence of unhealthy commodity advertising in both Australian and English sport. The most common site of the advertising is on perimeter advertising during in-game coverage whilst shirt sponsorship is also important. The methodology used in the studies has been similar with frequencies of exposure measured across rugby and football. It has been emphasised both in this and the previous chapter, that audiences for football are global with the highest number of television viewers exposed to the unhealthy marketing that accompanies the broadcasting of EPL football located in Asia. In the study described below a frequency analysis of visual references to unhealthy brands was undertaken on five three-hour EPL match packages broadcast on subscription television using tested methodologies.

## **5.3 Description of broadcasting analysis – Methods**

### **5.3.1 Design**

This research draws on the methodology used by Purves et al. (2017) and Graham and Adams (2014). These two studies considered alcohol marketing in football. Purves et al. considered alcohol brand marketing at the UEFA EURO 2016 Football Tournament where shirt sponsorship was not permitted under UEFA regulations (only the name of the kit manufacturer is permitted on the front of international team shirts (UEFA 2018)).

Graham and Adams' study considered alcohol references at six professional matches across six competitions (the Premier League, the Championship, UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League, the FA Cup and the League Cup). Whilst the paper mentioned the alcohol sponsors of the various teams, it did not identify whether any were shirt sponsors or whether the number of visual references during a match was related to the sponsors of the home team, although the study showed considerable variations in the references between matches. In the Cassidy and Oviden study (2017), the researchers considered three matches on pay television (Sky) and three episodes of the BBC's Match of the Day highlights programme. Whilst team sponsorship was mentioned, the sponsors of the clubs shown in the broadcasts were not described although shirt

sponsorship was identified as a location for branding and counted in the references.

A study by this researcher and colleagues (Ireland *et al.* 2021) considered the marketing of unhealthy brands at the 2018 FIFA Men's World Cup, quantifying visual marketing references at eight matches. The research acted as a pilot study for the EPL match programme analysis. As with the EURO 2016 study (Purves *et al.* 2017), the principal unhealthy brands appearing in the World Cup broadcasts were those of FIFA's global partners and the tournament's main sponsors. As sponsor logos are not permitted on international players' match shirts, these brands appeared most frequently in perimeter advertising. However, as described in Chapter Four, logos do appear on the front of EPL club shirts, many featuring gambling brands (Bunn *et al.* 2018). Given that players feature in all live action, careful consideration needed to be given in this EPL study as to how often brand references should be counted in the data collection. Camera angles, distance and focus all impact on how clearly logos on the front of shirts (or sleeves) can be identified. In the World Cup study, the researchers agreed (following discussion with the authors of the EURO 2016 paper), that the key to all data capture was how long a brand was in view and how clearly a brand could be observed. Exposure needed to be considered from the perspective of the television viewer. Thus, all impaired or blurred images were discounted.

The design in this research used the coding methods taken from the Purves *et al.* study (2017) but applied it to all unhealthy brand visual references in the matches considered. All segments of broadcast (including commercial breaks) were manually coded using a content analysis for marketing references to unhealthy products. Marketing references were categorised by brand category (rather than at product level) into alcohol, gambling and food and beverages (Ireland *et al.* 2021). The beginning of the match programme was designated by the opening titles. The commercial breaks immediately before and immediately after the programmes were not included in the data analysis. Only visual references to unhealthy brands were considered following the World Cup study which took a similar approach given verbal references to alcohol brands had

been very few in previous frequency analyses of televised football (Graham and Adams 2014; Purves *et al.* 2017).

### 5.3.2 Selection of broadcasts

Three broadcasters showed live EPL programmes in 2019: Sky, BT Sport and Amazon Prime. All three are subscription services which control the broadcasting and recording of their programmes. As the researcher had contracts with BT Sport and Amazon Prime, the study considered football matches broadcast by these channels. Three matches were recorded in the 2018/19 season as broadcast on BT Sport. These featured three different home teams and included two of the 'Big Six' (Arsenal and Manchester United).

Each match programme had the same format of pre-match discussion, live match (including half-time break of 15 minutes) followed by post-match discussion and was of approximately three hours in duration. All programmes were recorded in their entirety using an iPad directly from the television broadcast. In total this represented just under nine hours of broadcasting. Whilst there seemed little obvious differences between the programmes, it was decided to record two further matches in the following season on Amazon Prime to see if there were any differences between the broadcasters and to increase the total hours of broadcasting coded. The matches chosen featured two new home teams and two additional away teams. In total, just under 15 hours of broadcasting was analysed. The sample size of five matches covered games featuring ten EPL clubs, half of the EPL membership. The matches included five different clubs playing at home. Of the ten, three of the 'big six' featured (Arsenal, Chelsea and Manchester United) together with four others with smaller grounds with a crowd capacity of under 30,000 (Burnley, Crystal Palace, Bournemouth and Norwich City) and thus a higher dependence on broadcast income. As noted previously, clubs outside of the 'big six' are more likely to have a main sponsor from the gambling industry. The other three clubs included were Newcastle United, West Ham United and Southampton.

The total duration of the programmes was similar to the previous only EPL study of this kind (Cassidy and Ovenden 2017). The BT Sport recordings spanned matches in January, February and April 2019. Amazon Prime's package of midweek games included matches in December 2019 with two matches selected in December. The full list of the matches coded is shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Selection of broadcast matches

Date	Match	Day	Time of kick-off	Match attendance	Broadcaster	Length (hr.m.s)
19.01.19	Arsenal v Chelsea	Saturday	1730	59,979	BT Sport	02.56.13
26.02.19	Newcastle Utd. v Burnley	Tuesday	2000	48,323	BT Sport	02.56.47
13.04.19	Manchester Utd. v West Ham Utd.	Saturday	1730	74,478	BT Sport	02.55.10
03.12.19	Crystal Palace v Bournemouth	Tuesday	1930	23,497	Amazon Prime	03.01.35
04.12.19	Southampton v Norwich City	Wednesday	1930	27,019	Amazon Prime	03.05.06
					<b>Total</b>	<b>14.54.51</b>



### 5.3.3 Defining unhealthy brand marketing references

A reference was considered to be any mention of an unhealthy brand (alcohol, gambling or food and beverage) which was measured at two seconds or longer. All mentions of gambling and alcohol brands were recorded as unhealthy as there is considered no level of safe exposure to either product. Food and beverage categories presented more issues. For example, coffee brands are sometimes sponsors of EPL clubs (see Chapter Four) and are an example of a beverage which would not be considered unhealthy unless consumed in very high quantities and with a high concentration of caffeine. Similarly, food delivery services such as Deliveroo can theoretically deliver healthy as well as unhealthy food. This is an under-researched area, although a *Sunday Times* investigation (Ungoed-Thomas and McDonald 2019) claimed that Deliveroo were promoting “junk food” in more disadvantaged postcodes in Britain, and a UK study has shown that takeaway food has a poor nutritional profile (Jaworowska *et al.* 2014). Without applying a nutritional analysis to all food and beverage products advertised, it is impossible to fully assess whether a product is unhealthy or not. However it is noted that advertising for low-alcohol products or sugar-free soft drinks does not necessarily drive healthier choice but promotes the brand (and its wider portfolio of products) overall (Whalen *et al.* 2018).

Previous Australian and English studies described in 5.2.5 used different terminologies to define unhealthy food and beverages but all settled on a definition which included products or brands high in saturated fat, sugar and/or salt. The Unhealthy Sponsorship Ladders used in Chapter Four followed this approach and used the UK Government’s Dietary Guidelines (Public Health England 2016). For this study however, for simplicity, all food and beverage brands were initially coded with no attempt made at this point to identify whether they may be considered healthy or not.

References were coded across all parts of the match programme. A reference was only included if the brand was visible in a clear, obvious way to the viewer; thus, in most cases a brand featuring on a digital LED board on a pitch border/perimeter behind presenters discussing a match would not be included.

Similarly, although theoretically a brand on a shirt front or sleeve can be seen in all live action, it was only counted when the camera focused on a player or a small group of players so that the logos could be easily seen. Typically, this would be in a ‘dead ball’ situation (a free-kick or corner) or during a break for an injury to a player or when a goal was scored when the focus was on the goal-scorer.

A reference was only counted once if the camera angle changed but the reference source remained the same. Similarly, the brand was only counted once even when there were multiple references such as on pitch borders - see Figure 21 as an example. If the reference went out of shot for more than two seconds it was counted as a new reference if it appeared again. If the reference shown in live action was then repeated in a replay it was counted again. Finally, if more than one brand was displayed in one camera shot, both brands were counted separately.

#### 5.3.4 Codebook Variables

All references were captured manually using a codebook adapted from those used previously with English football matches (Graham and Adams 2014; Purves *et al.* 2017) and the FIFA World Cup (Ireland *et al.* 2021) to identify unhealthy brand advertising. Coding variables included location (e.g. pitch border and shirt front) and format (e.g. electronic). The variables are fully described in Appendix 7. All references to all brands (not only unhealthy) were captured in the commercial breaks.

As all advertising data was captured in the commercial breaks, an industry economic classification (Office for National Statistics 2007) to the brand references was adapted as used in Chapter 4 concerning the EPL clubs’ official partners (sponsors) as detailed on the clubs’ official websites. The classifications used are as shown in Appendix 8<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Industry economic classifications were not used for inplay advertising as coding was restricted to advertising from the gambling, alcohol and food and beverage industries.



**Figure 21: Example of multiple brand exposure in digital advertising at the pitch border. Arsenal v Chelsea. 19 January 2019. BT Sport. Screenshot: Researcher.**

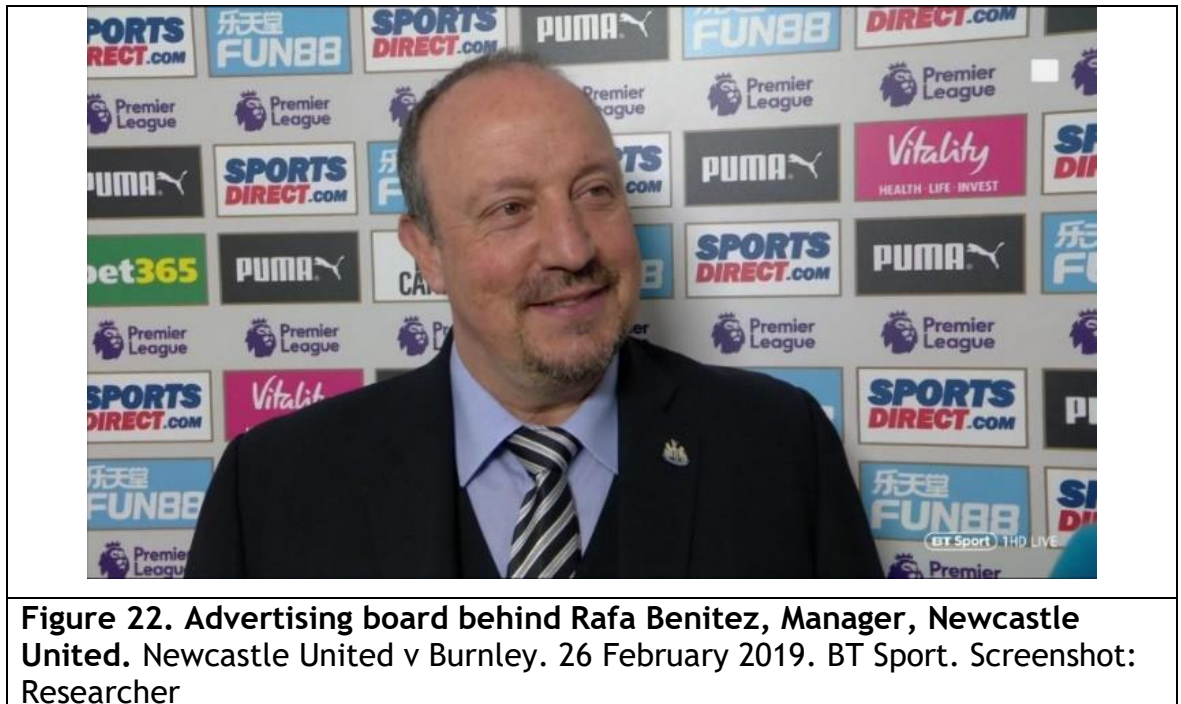
### 5.3.5 Procedure

The five match programmes were recorded and coded by the researcher. Recorded files were viewed on a laptop computer using Microsoft Photo. Data were coded on a separate PC and a file kept for each individual match programme.

### 5.3.6 Data analysis

Data were analysed using Microsoft Excel 2016 (Microsoft Corporation, Washington, USA). For each match programme, the number of references to unhealthy brands was recorded. The total time of the exposure to the brands was calculated as a percentage of the length of the programme. Averages (mean and median) were obtained by dividing the total time of the broadcast by the time of the exposures. If references were simultaneous (such as in the static advertising in the advertising boards used as backdrops to television interviews - as in Figure 22 below), the duplicate duration was only calculated once.

The commercial breaks were also analysed in each matchday programme. This enabled a comparison to be made between the number and duration of the advertisements featuring unhealthy brands and others.



## 5.4 Findings

### 5.4.1 Main findings

The main results are shown in Table 10. The five match programmes which were analysed included 14 hours 54 minutes 51 seconds of live programming: just under three hours per match. The football matches are divided into two halves of forty-five minutes each plus time added on. There are many breaks to allow for set pieces (such as a corner or a free kick for foul play) and to permit treatment to injured players.

Table 10. Unhealthy brand exposure in the five matches

Match	Broadcaster	Programme (hr.m.s)	Unhealthy refs	Exposure (hr.m.s)	% with exposure	Mean no of exposures per minute
ARS v CHE <sup>3</sup>	BT Sport	02.56.13	199	00.34.52	19.88	1.1
NEW v BUR <sup>4</sup>	BT Sport	02.56.47	377	01.08.54	38.97	2.1
MUN v WHU <sup>5</sup>	BT Sport	02.55.10	130	00.29.10	16.65	0.7
CRY v BOU <sup>6</sup>	Amazon Prime	03.01.35	311	00.58.42	32.17	1.7
SOU v NOR <sup>7</sup>	Amazon Prime	03.05.06	121	00.27.17	14.74	0.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14.54.51</b>	<b>1138</b>	<b>03.38.55</b>	<b>24.5% mean</b> <b>19.9% median</b>	<b>1.3 mean</b> <b>1.1 median</b>

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<sup>3</sup> Arsenal v Chelsea

<sup>4</sup> Newcastle United v Burnley

<sup>5</sup> Manchester United v West Ham United

<sup>6</sup> Crystal Palace v Bournemouth

<sup>7</sup> Southampton v Norwich City

In the five EPL matches examined, a mean of 24.5% of all footage included at least one reference to an unhealthy brand. However, this varied considerably between matches with a high of 39% at the Newcastle United v Burnley match on BT Sport on 26<sup>th</sup> February, where both football clubs had shirt sponsorship by gambling brands. FUN88, Newcastle's principal sponsor and a China-based online gaming firm, received 109 exposures at this single match, whilst bet365, another sponsor, received 190 (see Table 11 below). Table 12 shows that whilst gambling companies were the most referenced (921; 81%) across the five matches analysed, there were also a combined 217 references to alcohol and food and beverages. Across all five games, there was a mean of 1.3 exposures to unhealthy brands each minute (2.1 during Newcastle United v Burnley). Table 12 shows that 72.1% of the references to unhealthy brands were 'in play' (when the football was taking place as opposed to the pre- or post- match analysis or during the commercial breaks). This is broken down further in Table 13 by individual match as will be explored later.

Table 11 shows the most common brands occurring per match. Bet365, a gambling brand, is the most common individual brand. Gambling brands in turn are by far the most prominent in all five matches with 12 (75%) of the 16 most common brands observed. The advertising on the LED digital perimeter boards reflects the home club's sponsors. Thus, in the five matches analysed, the in-play perimeter advertising reflects the commercial partnerships of Arsenal, Newcastle United, Manchester United, Crystal Palace and Southampton. The shirt sponsorship deals will of course be displayed by the brands showing on the front and sleeves of all ten clubs. The commercial partnerships of the EPL clubs were described in Chapter Four and a comparison of differences between the five matches will be considered further later in this chapter.

**Table 11: Most frequently appearing unhealthy brands (UB) shown per match**

Match	Brand	No of exposures	Percentage of UB mentions	Category
Arsenal v Chelsea <sup>1</sup>	Gatorade	38	19.1	Food/beverage
	12Bet	27	13.6	Gambling
	Betfair	25	12.6	Gambling
	Tempobet	25	12.6	Gambling
Newcastle United v Burnley <sup>2</sup>	Bet365 <sup>6</sup>	190	50.4	Gambling
	FUN88	109	28.9	Gambling
	Carling	25	6.6	Alcohol
	LaBa360	20	5.3	Gambling
Manchester Utd v West Ham Utd <sup>3</sup>	Betway	52	40.0	Gambling
	Chivas	18	13.8	Alcohol
	MoPlay	17	13.1	Gambling
	Bet365	14	10.8	Gambling
Crystal Palace v Bournemouth <sup>4</sup>	ManBetX	123	39.5	Gambling
	M88	54	17.4	Gambling
	Bet365	45	14.5	Gambling
	Betway	29	9.3	Gambling
Southampton v Norwich City <sup>5</sup>	Dafabet	30	24.8	Gambling
	Bet365	26	21.5	Gambling
	Unibet	23	19.0	Gambling
	Monster Energy	14	11.6	Food/beverage

**Notes:**

1. Gatorade, 12Bet (official betting partner in Asia), Betfair and Tempobet (official regional betting partner) are sponsors of Arsenal FC.
2. Bet365, FUN88 and Carling are sponsors of Newcastle United FC. LaBa360 is the shirt sponsor of Burnley FC.
3. BetWay is the shirt sponsor of West Ham United. Chivas is Manchester United's official spirits partner whilst MoPlay is a sponsor.
4. ManBetX is the shirt sponsor of Crystal Palace FC. M88 (Mansion) is the shirt and sleeve sponsor of AFC Bournemouth.
5. Dafabet is the shirt sponsor of Norwich City FC. Unibet and Monster Energy are both sponsors of Southampton FC.
6. Bet365 featured significantly in the gambling advertising in all five matches; 288 exposures in total (13 in ARS v CHE).

Table 12: Frequencies (n and %) of brand references shown by match segment and industry category

Total references		No. of games	n	%	Avg. (mean) no. of exposures
By segment	1st half	5	376	33	75.2
	2nd half	5	444	39	88.8
	Half-time (incl. commercial breaks)	5	64	5.6	12.8
	Post-match (incl. commercial breaks)	5	136	12	27.2
	Pre-match (incl. commercial breaks)	5	118	10.4	23.6
	<i>Commercial breaks</i>	5	59	5.2	11.8
	<b>Total references</b>			<b>1138</b>	
Summary	In play	5	820	72.1	
	Out play	5	318	27.9	
<b>Total references</b>			<b>1138</b>		
By industry	Alcohol	5	64	5.6	12.8
	Food/beverage	5	153	13.4	30.6
	Gambling	5	921	80.9	184.2
<b>Total references</b>			<b>1138</b>		



**Table 13: Exposures of unhealthy brands per match**

Presented per segment and as a percentage of the total number of exposures in each individual match.

Match		ARSVCHE BT Sport	NEWvBUR BT Sport	MUNvWHU BT Sport	CRYvBOU Amazon Prime	SOUvNOR Amazon Prime	TOTALS - Mean average
<b>Segment</b>	Pre-match	25 (12.6%)	35 (9.3%)	22 (17.0%)	22 (7.1%)	14 (11.6%)	118 (10.4%)
	First half	58 (29.1%)	123 (32.6%)	25 (19.2%)	126 (40.6%)	44 (36.4%)	376 (33.0%)
	Half-time	14 (3.5%)	19 (5.0%)	13 (10.0%)	14 (4.5%)	4 (3.3%)	64 (5.6%)
	Commercial break ads	(18) (9.0%)	(19) (5.0%)	(16) (12.3%)	(4) (1.3%)	(2) (1.6%)	(59) (5.2%)
	Second half	81 (40.7%)	141 (37.4%)	41 (31.5%)	132 (42.44)	49 (40.5%)	444 (39.0%)
	Post-match	21 (10.5%)	59 (15.6%)	29 (22.3%)	17 (5.5%)	10 (8.3%)	136 (11.9%)
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>1138</b>
<b>In-play</b>	In-play	139 (69.8%)	264 (70.0%)	66 (50.8%)	258 (83.0%)	93 (76.9%)	820 (72.1%)
	Out of play	60 (30.1%)	113 (30.0%)	64 (49.2%)	53 (10.0%)	28 (23.1%)	318 (27.9%)
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>1138</b>

Table 14: Frequencies (n and %) of brand references per game presented by location and format

Match		ARSvCHE	NEWvBUR	MANvWHU	CRYvBOU	SOUvNOR	TOTAL
<b>Location</b>	Shirt front	0	71 (18.8%)	44 (33.8%)	64 (20.5%)	23 (19%)	202 (17.8%)
	Shirt sleeve	0	0	0	20 (6.4%)	0	20 (1.8%)
	Training kit	9 (4.5%)	7 (1.9%)	3 (2.3%)	2 (0.6%)	0	21 (1.8%)
	Field of play	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Interview area	7 (3.5%)	36 (9.5%)	14 (10.7%)	3 (1%)	2 (1.7%)	62 (5.4%)
	Pitch border	143 (71.9%)	228 (60.5%)	34 (26.2%)	172 (55.3%)	74 (61.2%)	577 (50.7%)
	Sponsorship lead in/out	12 (6%)	12 (3.2%)	12 (9.2%)	0	0	36 (3.2%)
	TV studio	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Stadium facia	1 (0.5%)	0	0	0	0	1 (0.1%)
	Video segment	5 (2.5%)	3 (0.8%)	2 (1.5%)	16 (5.1%)	17 (14%)	43 (3.8%)
	Commercial break ad	18 (9%)	19 (5%)	16 (12.3%)	4 (1.3%)	2 (1.7%)	59 (5.2%)
	Other	4 (2%)	1 (0.3%)	5 (3.8%)	30 (9.6%)	3 (2.5%)	42 (3.7%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>199</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>1138</b>
<b>Format</b>	Shirt front	1 (0.5%)	74 (19.6%)	44 (33.8%)	67 (21.5%)	23 (19%)	209 (18.4%)
	Shirt sleeve	0	0	0	20 (6.4%)	0	20 (1.8%)
	Training kit	12 (6%)	7 (1.9%)	3 (2.3%)	2 (0.6%)	0	24 (2.1%)
	Electronic advertising (all)	68 (34.2%)	84 (22.3%)	36 (27.7%)	142 (45.7%)	88 (72.7%)	330 (29%)
	Electronic advertising (part)	71 (35.7%)	0	0	37 (11.9%)	0	108 (9.5%)
	Static advertising	12 (6%)	180 (47.7%)	14 (10.7%)	39 (12.5%)	5 (4.1%)	250 (22%)
	Product or Packaging	1 (0.5%)	0	0	0	0	1 (0.1%)
	Sponsorship lead in/out	12 (6%)	12 (3.2%)	12 (9.2%)	0	0	36 (3.2%)
	Commercial break ad	18 (9%)	19 (5%)	16 (12.3%)	4 (1.3%)	2 (1.7%)	59 (5.2%)
	Other	4 (2%)	1 (0.3%)	5 (3.8%)	0	3 (2.5%)	13 (1.1%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>199</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>1138</b>

### 5.4.1 continued

Table 14 shows that most references to unhealthy brands occur at pitch borders. A mean average shows just over half (50.7%) with a range from 26.2% at Manchester United v West Ham United to a high of 71.9% at Arsenal v Chelsea. The next most common location is on shirt fronts with a mean of 17.8% across the five matches (a high of 33.8% at Manchester United v West Ham). These two locations (pitch border and shirt front) make up 779 of the 1138 unhealthy references (68.5%). No other location has over six percent of the total references (the interview areas and the commercial breaks are the next most common). As would be expected, the format frequencies are very similar to the locations of the references.

Electronic advertising in Table 14 refers to the LED digital boards which are positioned at pitch borders and are in almost continuous view whilst a match is taking place (see Figure 21, p.119). The only exceptions are when the camera position focuses on individual players, small groups of players or in occasional shots of the crowd or an external view of the stadium. Thus 438 (38.5% - combining all and part electronic advertising) of the references are contained within electronic advertising with a high of 72.7% at Southampton v Norwich City and a low of 22.3% at Newcastle United v Burnley. Static advertising is the next most common format with a total combined 22% of the references (again with wide differences between the matches). The principal position for static advertising is in the advertising boards used for interviews (see Figure 22, p.120) and at some stadia (such as St James Park, Newcastle United) which incorporate space for advertising in stand facia. Shirt fronts are once again a common format. Whilst nearly all of these refer to players' shirts, camera shots of crowds sometimes show supporters showing their dedication to their club by wearing replica shirts as in Figure 23.



**Figure 23. Fans wearing replica shirts. Crystal Palace v Bournemouth.**  
Screenshot: Researcher.

#### 5.4.2 Commercial breaks

The duration of the advertisements shown during match programmes is a relatively small part of the match programme. The total airtime of the five match programmes was 14 hours 54 minutes 51 seconds (53691 seconds) of which 1 hour 40 minutes 54 seconds (6054 seconds) was taken up by commercial advertising during 29 commercial breaks (including three stand-alone spot advertisements). Thus, 11.28% of the match programme was taken up by the commercial breaks across the two broadcasters although there were differences between BT Sport and Amazon Prime. Table 15 provides a summary of the advertising time and the total time and percentage of exposure to unhealthy brand references.

As shown in Table 16, of the matches broadcast on BT Sport, each had six plus one advertising breaks (there was a single advertisement for Coral (Ladbroke Coral) gambling products immediately before kick-off in each game). In total there was a similar amount (1546-1597 seconds) of advertising per match programme (4714 seconds in total) from the 31690 seconds of match

programming of the three matches analysed which were broadcast on BT Sport; 14.97% of the total match programme.

The matches shown on Amazon Prime contained fewer advertising breaks than on BT Sport. There were four advertising breaks in each of the two matches broadcast and analysed. There was, therefore, much less time devoted to paid commercials in these matches. There were 1340 seconds of commercial break advertising in the two matches, from a total of 22001 seconds of match programme; 6.32% of airtime. There was one major difference between the type of advertising on each broadcaster as can be seen in Table 16. Whilst BT Sport's coverage included 23 advertisements for gambling brands in its commercial breaks, amounting to 590 seconds of its 4714 seconds advertising allocation (12.52 percent), Amazon Prime had none at all. This is directly as a result of the Industry Group for Responsible Gambling's introduction of a 'whistle to whistle' ban on advertising around live sport in 2018 (Industry Group for Responsible Gambling 2018) as described previously.

**Table 15. Total advertisements from unhealthy commodity industries in commercial breaks**

Category	No. of ads.	Total duration (in seconds)	Percent of total duration of advertising
Gambling	23	590	9.75
Food/beverage	22	570	9.42
Alcohol	10	350	5.78
<b>TOTAL</b>	55	1,510	24.95

Table 17 shows a summary of all the advertising in the commercial breaks in each of the five games. The most common form of advertising is for brands from the Information and Communication industry with 59 of the total number of advertisements of 213 (27.7%). If we total the number of advertisements from the commercial breaks (Table 15), we find almost exactly a quarter of these advertisements is for a brand from the UCIs. In the commercial breaks, a viewer is exposed to 1.9 such advertisements every break or 0.25 per minute of the advertising break, considerably less than the mean of 1.3 exposures per minute to unhealthy brands across the match programme.

**Table 16: Commercial breaks. Length of the broadcast and times of exposure to unhealthy brands are presented in seconds**

Descriptive of the coded games											
Date	Teams	Day	Time of prog.	Broadcaster	No. of commercial breaks	No. of adverts	No. of refs.	Total advertising time (secs)	Total time of exposure to unhealthy brands (secs)	% of the ads with exposure	% of the ads of the total advertising time
19.01.19	ARS v CHE	Sat.	1700-2000	BT Sport	6+1 <sup>1</sup>	58	16	1597	430	27.59	26.93
26.02.19	NEW v BUR	Tues.	1930-2230	BT Sport	6+1 <sup>1</sup>	53	18	1571	530	33.96	33.74
13.04.19	MUN v WHU	Sat.	1700-2000	BT Sport	6+1 <sup>1</sup>	52	15	1546	470	28.85	30.4
03.12.19	CRY v BOU	Tues.	1900-2200	Amazon Prime	4	27	4	670	120	14.81	17.91
04.12.19	SOU v NOR	Wed.	1900-2200	Amazon Prime	4	23	2	670	60	8.7	8.96
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>18+3<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>163</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>4714</b>	<b>1430</b>	<b>30.06</b>	<b>30.34</b>
<b>BT Sport</b>											
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>8</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1340</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>13.43</b>
<b>Amazon Prime</b>											
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>					<b>26+3<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>213</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>6054</b>	<b>1610</b>	<b>25.82</b>	<b>26.59</b>

<sup>1</sup> On the BT Sport programmes, there was a single 30 second advertisement for Coral (Ladbroke Coral) gambling products immediately before the game kick-off.

Average (mean) no. of exposures per minute in all commercial breaks = 0.27

Average (median) no of exposures per minute in all commercial breaks = 0.26

Average (mean) no. of exposures per minute in the commercial breaks on BT Sport = 0.3

Average (mean) no. of exposures per minute in the commercial breaks on Amazon Prime = 0.13

Table 17. Commercial break advertising - summary by match

Match	Channel	Industrial classification of advertiser	Brand if an unhealthy commodity	No. of ads.	Total duration (in seconds)	Percent of total duration of all advertising in breaks
Arsenal v Chelsea	BT Sport <sup>1</sup>	Gambling	SportPesa, William Hill, Coral (Ladbrokes Coral) x2, Bet365, The National Lottery, BetWay x2	8	240	15.03
		Food/Beverage	Domino's, Walkers (PepsiCo), Fridge Raiders, McDonald's, Nakd (Natural Balance Foods) (Lotus Bakeries), Taylor's of Harrogate, Burger King	7	170	10.64
SUB-TOTAL		Alcohol	Heineken 0.0	1	20	1.25
		Information and Communication <sup>3</sup>		13	357	22.35
		Financial and Insurance		9	250	16.65
		Automotive		6	170	10.64
		Other		14	390	24.42
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				<b>58</b>	<b>1597</b>	
Newcastle Utd v Burnley	BT Sport <sup>1</sup>	Gambling	BetUK, William Hill, Coral (Ladbrokes Coral) x2, Bet365, BeGambleAware, BetWay, Paddy Power	8	240	15.28
		Food/Beverage	Kit Kat (Nestlé), Nespresso (Nestlé) x2, Coca-Cola, Domino's, McCafé (McDonald's), Diet Coke (Coca-Cola), Deliveroo	8	230	14.64

		Alcohol	Guinness Six Nations, Carling (Molson Coors)	2	60	3.82
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>				<b>18</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>33.74</b>
		Information and Communication <sup>3</sup>		12	396	25.21
		Financial and Insurance		6	160	10.18
		Automotive		6	180	11.46
		Other		11	305	19.41
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				<b>53</b>	<b>1571</b>	

Manchester Utd v West Ham Utd	BT Sport <sup>1</sup>	Industrial classification of advertiser	Brand if an unhealthy commodity	No. of ads.	Total duration (in seconds)	Percent of total duration of advertising
		Gambling	BetUK, William Hill x2, Coral (Ladbrokes Coral) x2, Bet365, BetWay	7	210	13.58
		Food/Beverage	Domino's, Just Eat, Burger King, Wrigley's Extra	4	80	5.17
		Alcohol	Fosters (AB InBev) x2, Strongbow (Bulmer) (Heneken)	4	180	11.64
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>				<b>15</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>30.4</b>
		Information and Communication <sup>3</sup>		13	356	23.03
		Financial and Insurance		8	270	17.46
		Automotive		8	230	14.88
		Other		8	220	14.23
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				<b>52</b>	<b>1546</b>	

Crystal Palace v Bournemouth	Amazon Prime <sup>2</sup>	Industrial classification of advertiser	Brand if an unhealthy commodity	No. of ads.	Total duration (in seconds)	Percent of total duration of advertising
		Gambling		0	0	0
		Food/Beverage	Papa John's x2	2	60	8.96
		Alcohol	Heineken 0.0, Smirnoff (Diageo)	2	60	8.96
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>				<b>4</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>17.91</b>
		Information and Communication <sup>3</sup>		12	320	47.76



		Financial and Insurance		1	20	2.99
		Automotive		1	30	4.48
		Other <sup>4</sup>		9	180	26.87
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				<b>27</b>	<b>670</b>	
<b>Southampton v Norwich City</b>	<b>Amazon Prime<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Industrial classification of advertiser</b>	<b>Brand if an unhealthy commodity</b>	<b>No. of ads.</b>	<b>Total duration (in seconds)</b>	<b>Percent of total duration of advertising</b>
		Gambling		0	0	0
		Food/Beverage	Papa John's	1	30	4.69
		Alcohol	Heineken 0.0	1	30	4.69
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>				<b>2</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>9.37</b>
		Information and Communication <sup>3</sup>		9	250	39.06
		Financial and Insurance		2	40	6.25
		Automotive		3	120	18.75
		Other <sup>4</sup>		7	170	26.56
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				<b>23</b>	<b>640</b>	

## Notes:

1. All commercial breaks on BT Sport had a sponsorship lead in and lead out featuring the bet365 logo. The lead in and lead out (usually about five seconds) was not included in these timings.
2. All commercial breaks on Amazon Prime had a sponsorship lead in and lead out featuring the Amazon Prime logo. The lead in and lead out (usually about one second) was not included in these timings. There was an additional stand-alone ad for Amazon Prime Sport in the post-match section also not included in the timings.
3. All Amazon services including Amazon Distribution are included as Information and Communication.
4. Brands advertised included an offer from Amazon to deliver.

### 5.4.3 Findings by broadcaster and individual match

There are differences in the results found both between broadcaster and between the matches selected. All of BT Sport's football coverage (and other sports) coverage in the two seasons was sponsored by bet365 which gave the gambling company a high profile throughout the three matches broadcast on this platform. As noted in Table 11 (p.127), bet365 featured significantly in the gambling advertising in all five matches receiving 288 exposures overall; 25.3% of the total exposures to unhealthy commodity advertising. This was driven by perimeter advertising (see Figure 24) with 190 exposures at the Newcastle United match containing 66% of the gambling company's mentions across the five matches. Bet365 was a commercial partner of Newcastle United in 2018/19 despite another gambling company, FUN88, being the club's shirt sponsor. However, bet365 still received a total of 71 references at the two matches shown on Amazon Prime despite having no commercial relationship disclosed with any of the four clubs taking part. The two matches on Amazon Prime took place in the 2019/20 season following the Industry Group for Responsible Gambling's (IGRG) introduction of a 'whistle to whistle' ban on advertising around live sport (Industry Group for Responsible Gambling 2018) which meant there were no mentions for gambling in the commercial breaks (very different from the matches on BT Sport). Each match will now be considered individually.



Figure 24. Perimeter advertising at Newcastle United v Burnley. 26 February 2019. BT Sport. Screenshot: Researcher.

### **Arsenal v Chelsea (BT Sport), 19 January 2019.**

Nearly 70% of the exposures to unhealthy commodities were in the live action of this match (just under the mean average across all matches of 72.3%). It had the highest proportion of references at the pitch border (71.9%). As Arsenal and Chelsea do not have an unhealthy commodity as their main and thus shirt sponsor (although Chelsea have Caraboa as the sponsor of their training kit), the high number of exposures reflect Arsenal's other sponsors in the 2018/19 season as described in Chapter Four. Arsenal were on top of the unhealthy sponsorship ladder for that EPL season.

As shown in Table 11 (p.127), Gatorade (a sugary drink) and 12Bet, Betfair and Tempobet (three of Arsenal's five gambling sponsors), received 115 mentions (out of the 199 unhealthy references). The sponsorship packages agreed by these companies will have included an agreed timed exposure in the LED digital advertising in the pitch border. In the time added on at the end of each half of this match (time allocated for match time taken up by player injury, player substitution and other stoppages), each LED board displayed a different sponsor which increased the number of references considerably (22 in the first half and 46 at the end of the second half).

### **Newcastle United v Burnley (BT Sport), 26 February 2019.**

This match had the most unhealthy references of the five matches with 377 in total resulting in a mean average of 2.1 exposures per minute. With both Newcastle United and Burnley having a gambling company as their principal sponsor (FUN88 and LaBa360), the match had the highest number of shirt front references. There were also a high of 228 references on the pitch border. This is partly due to bet365, one of Newcastle United's other sponsors, paying for four static banners in one of the stand's fascia. The positioning of these banners meant they featured almost continuously in the live match coverage and explain the high average exposures. In Figure 24 on the previous page, two of the bet365 static advertising boards can be seen on either side of the pitch halfway line. This advertising is combined with the LED digital boards displaying Carling,

another of Newcastle United's sponsors, and an alcohol brand. It is worth noting that the blue boards (also static) above Carling are advertising FUN88. As this branding was illegible to the researcher as displayed on a television screen, it was decided to omit these references meaning the findings for this match report less unhealthy advertising than was actually present.

### **Manchester United v West Ham United (BT Sport), 13 April 2019.**

This match had the lowest number of unhealthy references to unhealthy brands of the five matches along with Southampton v Norwich City. It was the shirt sponsor of West Ham United (BetWay, a gambling brand) that received the most mentions. Two of Manchester United's other sponsors, Chivas (alcohol) and MoPlay (gambling), featured most often in the LED perimeter boards. Whilst bet365 were not one of Manchester United's sponsors, the brand's 14 mentions came from 12 sponsorship lead in/outs and two advertisements in the commercial breaks.

### **Crystal Palace v Bournemouth (Amazon Prime), 3 December 2019.**

Despite the IGRG's introduction of a 'whistle to whistle' ban on advertising around live sport, the high number of references to gambling brands in this match shows that the ban has had very little effect as Purves et. al. have already indicated (2020). The four brands mentioned most often in this match were all from the gambling industry (ManBetX, M88, Bet365 and Betway). ManBetX and M88 are respectively Crystal Palace and Bournemouth's shirt sponsors. ManBetX had 123 individual references in this match, the second highest of any brand in the five matches which were coded. The company's brand was displayed on the front of Crystal Palace's shirt, on the LED perimeter boards, on the interview boards and even on the dugouts for the players and coaches which regularly came into camera focus as below in Figure 25.



**Figure 25. Dugouts at Crystal Palace v Bournemouth. 3 December 2019.**  
Amazon Prime. Screenshot: Researcher

### **Southampton v Norwich City (Amazon Prime), 4 December 2019.**

Southampton v Norwich City had the least references to unhealthy brands of the five matches. The most referenced brand was Dafabet, the gambling sponsor of Norwich City whose logo appears on the front of the players' shirts. Bet365 is the next most common brand despite not being a sponsor of Southampton (or Norwich) and without any gambling advertising featuring in the commercial breaks. Both Unibet, part of the Kindred Group who also own 32Red, a common gambling brand in the English Football Championship (the league below the EPL) and Monster Energy, the other brands noted, are sponsors of Southampton.

## **5.5 Discussion**

The sport entertainment industry has grown rapidly over the thirty years of the EPL, based around the fan consumerism both of the clubs themselves, and of the commodities associated with the clubs through their commercial partnerships. Bourdieu wrote about the televised spectacle of the Olympics, describing them as a “commercial, marketable product that must be designed to reach the largest audience and hold on to it the longest” (Bourdieu 1998b p.79). This also describes the EPL where sponsors seek as much intensity in the exposure of their brands as possible. The results of this study show how high this exposure is with

matches containing a mean of 1.3 references to unhealthy brands every minute. In the broadcasts analysed, the brands of the sponsors of the clubs featured are those which are most referenced, and the sponsors of the clubs playing in their home stadiums in particular. This was illustrated clearly in Table 11 on page 127. In matches where the featured clubs were all sponsored by unhealthy industries, such as Newcastle United v Burnley and Crystal Palace v Bournemouth (all with gambling shirt sponsors), there are even higher exposures to references to unhealthy brands with 2.1 and 1.7 references per minute respectively. Sponsors want to be associated with the EPL as it enables them, through associated domestic and international broadcast partners to penetrate local markets (Elliott 2017b). The EPL is a global business and many of the brands which wish to associate themselves with it target an audience outside Europe. The frequency and duration of brand exposure is determined directly by the sponsorship agreements determined by EPL clubs whose primary purpose is to maximise their commercial income.

### **5.5.1 Shirt sponsorship**

The team shirt signifies an identification with a team (Millward 2011) as well as a source of income for the club. Companies such as FUN88 wish to build their brand both locally and in Asia and pay high prices for their logo to be featured on the front of the shirt of Newcastle United. Unhealthy commodity industries (UCIs) are able to pay to have their brands displayed around pitches in-play whilst these images are being transmitted to vast audiences.

In the four matches, where at least one of the teams featured had an unhealthy brand as a shirt sponsor, this resulted in a high exposure of the sponsors' brands, which, in these instances, were all from the gambling industry. Just under a quarter (23%) of the unhealthy references in these four matches came from the players' shirts (see Table 14, p.126).

Whilst broadcasting offers considerable exposure for shirt sponsors, the images of players wearing shirts with unhealthy brands advertised enables many more

opportunities for marketing as will be illustrated in the next study (Chapter Six) described in this thesis.

### 5.5.2 The normalisation of the gambling industry

UCIs use sport to promote their brands which both normalises unhealthy commodities (Jones *et al.* 2020) and encourages their consumption as part of a lifestyle choice (Dewhirst 2004). Sponsorship of football enables an association with a glamorous and exciting way of life (Dewhirst 2004). Gambling brands are by far the most common of the unhealthy commodity references in this study. As noted in Table 11 (p.127), 12 of the 16 most frequently appearing brands are gambling with two alcohol (Chivas and Carling) and two sugary beverages (Gatorade and Monster Energy) brands being the exceptions. The prominence of gambling brands is relatively recent with an increase in gambling sponsorship observed since the 2005/06 football season (Bunn *et al.* 2018) when the Gambling Act (2005) liberalised rules on gambling advertising. It is worth noting that none of the so-called “Big Six” clubs of the EPL (Manchester United, Manchester City, Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur) had a gambling brand as their main and shirt sponsor in either of the seasons surveyed.

Gambling brands were the most prominent in the in-play advertising as this study found. Bet365 achieved particular prominence with 288 exposures across the five matches without being a shirt sponsor of any of the clubs featured. Bet365 sponsored BT Sport’s coverage of sport, streamed the FA Cup in January 2020 (BT News 2020) (for which it was criticised), sponsored Newcastle United and Leicester City in the 2019/20 EPL and paid for advertisements featuring the highly visible cockney actor, Ray Winstone (Winstone has been part of the gambling company’s promotions since 2015) (G. Adams 2019). Bet365’s development as a company has been based on their development of online betting (Smith 2020), in turn strongly supported by the gambling opportunities presented by the broadcasting of the EPL.

Whilst gambling marketing is very prominent in the Premier League, the Football Association (FA) terminated its relationship with its own betting partner,

Ladbrokes, in 2017, following a series of gambling controversies featuring former players (Kelner 2017) where they were found guilty of match-fixing (Meikle 2015) or gambling on match results (MacInnes 2017). The FA's decision was framed as the avoidance of a conflict of interest as the FA have a responsibility to enforce betting rules within the game as opposed to any issues around the ethics of having commercial partnerships with gambling companies.

The voluntary ban on gambling advertising from whistle to whistle in televised football, whilst being shown to be ineffective in reducing overall exposure to such advertising in this and other research (Purves *et al.* 2020), may be considered as a move by the gambling industry to avoid statutory regulation. It mirrors the move of the tobacco industry in the 1970s and in more modern times when tobacco companies turned to sport sponsorship to compensate for controls on advertising (Dewhirst 2004; Cornwell 2020).

Another tactic in resisting efforts to control sports sponsorship by the gambling industry is the argument used by sports' governing bodies and by the gambling industry that sport cannot survive without such sponsorship. This was indeed the argument used by the tobacco (and the alcohol) industry in the 1980s (Crompton 1993). However, it was only in 2002 that a bookmaker first appeared as a shirt sponsor of an EPL (Fulham) (BeSoccer 2019). In the 1998/99 season there were nine EPL teams sponsored by electronic companies (BeSoccer 2019) showing that other industries are likely to fill any gap left by reducing sponsorship from UCIs. Yang and Goldfarb (2015) used a two-sided matching model to investigate the consequences of banning sponsorship from alcohol and gambling companies with English football clubs. Their estimates show that such bans are likely to have little impact on clubs in the EPL. The German Bundesliga offers another view of club sponsorship where, in 2019/20, the 18 clubs had four shirt and two sleeve sponsors from UCIs (Score and Change 2019) showing that income is available from other industries such as the Information and Communication, and Financial and Insurance sectors.



### 5.5.3 Competition for television rights

Sport has been very effective in commodifying its assets (Real 2011). The three broadcasters of the EPL in the UK in 2019/20 (Sky, BT Sport and Amazon Prime) are indicative of the major media groups (Evens *et al.* 2013) who are “extending their reach across multidimensional and interactive channels” (Moragas *et al.* 2011, p.147). Broadcasters want to achieve maximum commercial value through driving up subscriptions to their channels and through sales from advertising in the commercial breaks of their matchday programmes. As described previously, Sky even attempted to buy Manchester United in 1998 in a move that would have given them unparalleled power in controlling the broadcasting rights of the EPL (Crafton 2020).

Castells (2007; 2009) has written extensively of the investment of new media into communication networks as a feature of cultural globalisation. As well as the example of Sky and BT Sport’s investment in sport broadcasting, Amazon Prime’s entry into the EPL in 2019/20 was supported by heavy advertising both of their digital service but also of their distribution and delivery services. It is noticeable that the Information and Communication Services were the biggest advertisers in the commercial breaks, for example. But, as with other broadcasters, Amazon’s interest in the EPL is about gaining access to an audience of passionate consumers as well as driving Prime subscriptions (Johnwallstreet September 2020).

### 5.5.4 Brand exposure

In the fifteen hours of Premier League action over five matches, just under a quarter of the total period of the broadcasting (over three and a half hours) featured an exposure to an unhealthy brand. Seventy-two percent of this unhealthy marketing took place in play with only 5.2% in commercial breaks demonstrating that it is unhealthy club sponsorship that drives this exposure.

Whilst the marketing of gambling brands was the most prominent, both alcohol and high sugar ‘energy’ brands sought exposure through multiple partnerships

with Heineken, Carlsberg and Carling sponsoring ten different EPL clubs and Monster Energy's logo appearing on the websites of eight (Ireland and Viggars 2019). This is not unique to EPL football. The Austrian-based Red Bull 'energy' drink have invested across a number of sports and own football clubs in three continents (Few and Payne 2019). Monster Energy's brand featured prominently in pitch border electronic advertising particularly in the Southampton v Norwich match. The frequency of brand exposure creates familiarity and more positive associations for those exposed to this marketing (Lee and Pedersen 2010).

## 5.6 Strengths and Limitations

This study has limitations as well as strengths. As the analysis was based on coding carried out manually, there is obviously room for error, and, as only one researcher carried out the coding, there has been no opportunity to assess for reliability. However, the exposure to unhealthy brands described is likely to be an underestimate as only exposures of over two seconds were included, blurred and partial images were excluded and the images of brands on the front of players' shirts were only counted in more closely focused camera angles. Cassidy and Ovenden's (2017) study of the EPL noted similar difficulties as to whether shirt sponsorship was legible and on screen for long enough to be counted. The exposures described therefore can only be an estimate. Further studies would either require investment in a huge number of researcher hours or access to specialist image recognition software which is only just emerging. This study, combined with the branding revealed on EPL club websites in Chapter Four, can only highlight the issue rather than be an exhaustive account of it.

The researcher had personal contracts to view BT Sport and Amazon Prime, so this effectively determined the channels used for this research. However, Cassidy and Ovenden's (2017) research on EPL broadcasting on both Sky and the BBC highlights programme showed similar results, indicating that gambling marketing was the most common with pitch perimeter advertising the most frequent placement for brands.

## 5.7 Conclusions

The exposure to unhealthy brands is primarily determined by club sponsorships as described in Chapter Four and demonstrated in the pitch perimeter advertising accompanying all EPL matches broadcast globally on subscription television. The most frequently appearing brands were either sponsors of the home team or shirt sponsors of the away team (Table 11, p.127). The sole exception was the gambling brand, bet365, who received 288 exposures across the five matches. Although Arsenal's shirt sponsor is not from an UCI, their high position at the Unhealthy Sponsorship Ladder described in Chapter Four is reflected by the brands occurring most frequently at the Arsenal v Chelsea game (Gatorade, 12Bet, Betfair and Tempobet). All four are their commercial partners, including two described as 'official regional betting partners' - 12Bet and Tempobet.

Unhealthy brand exposure is high at all matches with the highest measured in time expressed as a percentage of the total programme at Newcastle v Burnley (39 %) and Crystal Palace (32%) where all four club shirt sponsors were from UCIs. Southampton v Norwich had the lowest unhealthy brand exposure of the five matches (15 % of programme time) demonstrating Southampton's relatively low position in the Unhealthy Sponsorship Ladder of 2019/20 (see Table 7 on p.95). The mean number of unhealthy exposures per minute varied from a high of 2.1 at Newcastle v Burnley to a low of 0.7 at both Southampton v Norwich and Manchester United v West Ham. Gambling brand exposure is high, receiving 319 mentions in Newcastle v Burnley and 251 at Crystal Palace v West ham United.

Commercial break advertising plays only a small part in the marketing of unhealthy brands as demonstrated both here and in previous studies (Cassidy and Ovenden 2017; Purves *et al.* 2020). However, in this, there was still a high percentage of unhealthy brands advertised with 27% of the advertisements being unhealthy with a mean exposure of 0.27 unhealthy references per minute across all commercial breaks. The voluntary ban on gambling advertising during the live showing of matches did impact on gambling brand exposure in commercial breaks with the matches broadcast on Amazon Prime featuring none. This was in

direct contrast to the matches on BT Sport where a 30 second advertisement by Coral (a gambling brand of Ladbroke Carol) was shown before kick-off in each of the three matches.

Chapter Five in this thesis has described and analysed the marketing accompanying five EPL matches broadcast in 2019. As noted in Chapter Four, the association between UCIs and the EPL is clear. Marketeers are using the global reach of the EPL to promote a number of brands which may be seen to be poor for our health.

Chapter Six will explore further how sponsors of both EPL clubs and the Premier League itself use this association to develop their brand messages and to build a relationship with football fans through brand activation. Whilst ensuring the regular display of brand images on shirt fronts, on LED perimeter boards and in television commercials, builds a recognition and an association, marketeers are looking for a return on their investment and an increase in sales of their products. Chapter Six considers the use of other digital and social media in seeking to describe how UCIs seek to address these objectives by driving fan engagement.

## **Chapter Six. Brand engagement in a digital age. Four case studies of unhealthy commodity industries' promotions to EPL football fans**

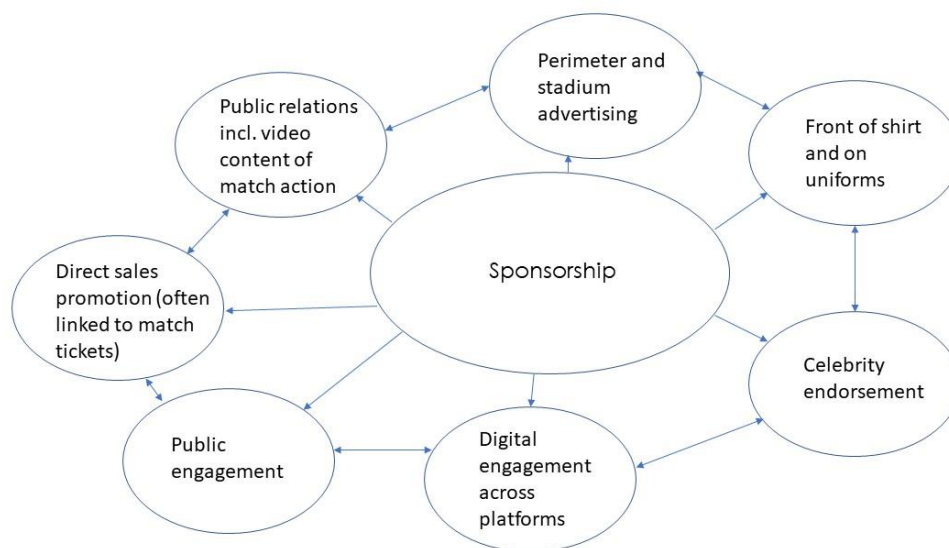
### **6.1 Introduction**

In previous chapters, this thesis has explored the relationship between unhealthy commodity industries (UCIs) and the English Premier League (EPL) and its member clubs. It is clear from the commercial partnerships declared on club websites (Chapter Four), and in the advertising during EPL broadcast matches (Chapter Five), that unhealthy brands are consistently and systematically promoted often with multiple exposures in a single match. The global reach of EPL football with its millions of followers across the world makes the EPL an attractive proposition for corporations who want their brands to stand out in a global marketplace. As described earlier, the transformation and commodification of elite football in England in the 1990s has made fans into communities of international consumers. UCI sponsors want to be associated with football to reach this global audience, who they wish to encourage to purchase their products whether these may be gambling, HFSS food and beverages or alcohol. Players and stadia are used as billboards for brands but, in addition, companies are becoming ever more resourceful at finding ways to make sure football's huge audience is fully engaged with the game's sponsors.

Marketing has evolved from static signage to a wide variety of on-site activations (Dees *et al.* 2019) in a digital age as illustrated in the previous chapter on the broadcasting of EPL matches. Shirt sponsorship and LED in-stadium pitch-side advertising are the most common mechanisms employed to market brands. However, sport sponsorship is much more than simply attaching a brand name to an event, a competition or club. Corporations pay large sums for access to fans domestically and globally (Maguire 2020) and want to see a return on their investment which is usually measured against brand awareness and, if possible, product sales (O'Keefe *et al.* 2009). They typically supplement their sponsorship with related marketing activities which may cost more than the sponsorship

itself (Keller 2013). Sponsorship arrangements are complex and are likely to be individually negotiated between recipient and corporation to meet the needs of both parties and the brand in particular. It is seen as important that there is a fit or congruence based on the shared attributes of sponsor and sponsee (Cornwell 2019). Thus, tobacco industry sponsorship was always open to justified criticism that an obviously unhealthy and carcinogenic product was deliberately associating itself with health and fitness as promoted through sport (Carrigan and Carrigan 1997).

Marketing literature emphasises that for sport sponsorship to be successful for companies, it needs to be mixed with other promotional tools (Bühler and Nufer 2013). Marketeers use a number of methods to ‘activate’ their brand with these illustrated in linking strategies as shown in Figure 26. Some of these methods such as perimeter advertising and brand logos displayed on the front of players’ shirts have been described previously.



**Figure 26. The sport sponsorship promotional assemblage in the English Premier League.** Adapted from (Bühler and Nufer 2013 p.99)

This chapter will detail and analyse other aspects of the sport sponsorship promotional assemblage which include interdependent actors (including the EPL clubs themselves) and strategies designed to maximise consumption amongst football fans in addressing RQ3: *How do unhealthy brands build relationships*

*with football's consumers through marketing campaigns in a digital environment?*

## **Brand activation**

Brand activation is the name for how sponsors seek to interact and engage with fans (Cornwell 2020). It describes a process of building a popular perception of a brand through consumer engagement and participation strategies (Broadbent 2015). Activations aim to “give the consumer an experience that will make them feel a real personal connection to the company” (Broadbent 2015 p.1). The definition of brand activation overlaps with that of brand engagement, in which companies seek customer engagement to create loyalty and drive consumption and profitability (Hollebeek 2011). Activation and engagement is critical for brands if they wish to stand out and receive positive responses from consumers whilst building confidence and trust in their brands (Gambetti and Graffigna 2010).

Corporate sponsors, including UCIs, use their commercial agreements with clubs and the EPL to activate their brands and secure engagement with football fans and viewers, their intended consumers. In addition, the UCIs sometimes use concepts of corporate citizenship and social responsibility through sport; this will also be discussed.

As described in the literature review in Chapter Two, football offers an almost unique social field for company marketers as fans generally will stick to their clubs and not switch allegiances (Abosag *et al.* 2012; Cayolla and Loureiro 2014; Wann and James 2019). At the same time, the EPL's global reach is vast, with broadcast rights extended to 156 countries and 212 territories (Eurosport 2015). However, sponsorship of football clubs or leagues does not guarantee increased consumption to those companies marketing their brands whether in Europe or in Asia (38% of the EPL audience is estimated to be in Asia and Oceania) (Jaipragas 2016). As has been described, academic and industry literature (Cornwell 2008) argue that consumer involvement with brands is essential to establish brand loyalty and to drive consumer behaviour.

## 6.2 Background

### 6.2.1 Sponsorship and the football fan-consumer

Business spending on sports sponsorship was predicted to grow with corporate sponsorship globally anticipated to reach £35 billion in 2019 (Wilson 2019). In the UK, financial services were the largest sponsoring sector with gambling, alcohol and soft drinks all amongst the top six. The report from which this data derives, authored by a sports marketing agency, noted that digital marketing could be better utilised by sporting bodies to achieve even larger income from sponsorship (Wilson 2019). At the same time academics have described how social media has been used by corporate brands to target and engage with young audiences to market unhealthy products (Dunlop *et al.* 2016).

Cornwell (1997) described how the tobacco industry looked for ways to promote their products whilst traditional advertising routes (such as in the broadcast and print media) were being closed to them. Whilst millions of people were dying from tobacco related diseases, the transnational tobacco companies continued to promote their brands globally (Collin 2003). Transnational corporations (TNCs) used conventional advertising as well as product placement in the film industry to develop their market (Collin 2003). Sport also offered an opportunity to develop the awareness of tobacco brands in popular culture with the industry's move to sponsor motor racing as a means to achieve a global presence at the same time that cigarette advertising was banned on American television (Collin 2003). Whilst sponsorship is designed to encourage consumption (Cornwell 1997), tobacco sponsorship of sport was particularly problematical as it reached a youth market, enabled an association with a healthy activity and its international promotion could allow exemption from national regulations (Cornwell 1997).

Sponsorship is much more than advertising and can take many forms (Cornwell 2019). In its earliest forms, sponsorship was seen as a form of patronage, as a means of increasing community standing (Carrigan and Carrigan 1997) or even as a type of philanthropy (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b). At its simplest level, sponsorship is a form of communication which pursues a business objective through a



commercial transaction between concerned parties (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b). The marketing of brands aims not only to increase consumption but also to influence attitudes and social norms (Petticrew *et al.* 2017b). Sponsorship is associated with improving images of a brand as well as consumers' attitudes towards buying sponsors' products (Madrigal 2004).

Sponsorship in elite sport, including the EPL, has become a sophisticated means of communicating a business's advertising messages (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b) whilst taking various forms (Cornwell 2019). Figure 26 illustrates some of sport sponsorship's components. Critically, Cornwell (2019) stated that sponsorship is more successful than traditional advertising in its potential to influence consumer engagement. Engagement, in this sense, directly involves the consumer in a relationship with a brand which can be a form of emotional bonding (Cornwell 2019). Football fans are therefore the subject of sophisticated approaches to encourage them to consume not only products from their club, but also the products of the brands that sponsor or are associated with it.

If companies are paying millions of pounds for shirt sponsorship, greater emphasis is being placed on raising awareness of the sponsorship with fans (O'Keefe *et al.* 2009). Meenaghan (2001) provided a model for understanding the effects of commercial sponsorship on consumers and there is a psychology and marketing literature around sponsorship and the recall of sponsors (Lardinois and Derbaix 2001). Sponsorship communications are received in a "halo of goodwill" (Meenaghan 2001, p.101) generated by a perception of benefit which has been noted elsewhere in a study of junior sport in Australia (Kelly *et al.* 2011). This effect may be described as if fans are aware of companies sponsoring their team, they are more likely to feel favourable to them. This was noted in the positive feelings generated towards Barclays when the bank was the title sponsor of the Premier League (McDonald 1991). The commercial content of the communication may also be disguised if the message is subtle enough (Meenaghan 2001). Meenaghan (2001) argued that the concept of fan involvement is key to an understanding of how sponsorship works. He defined this as the extent to which consumers identify with, and are motivated by, their engagement and affiliation with their chosen activity (such as sport). Pracejus (2004) used the term affect transfer to describe how positive feelings towards a

sporting event or team may be transferred to the sponsoring brand through association. He argued that even without conscious awareness of an association, one might expect the more a consumer likes a sponsored event, the more positive feelings will be generated about the sponsoring brand.

There is an additional literature around the interactive relationship between the consumer and the brand (Leckie *et al.* 2016). Consumers are more likely to exhibit intensified levels of engagement when they have fulfilling experiences with brands (Vivek *et al.* 2012; Dwivedi 2015). Further, a recent study (Tonietto and Barasch 2020) described how corporations encourage sports fans to communicate about their events and experiences using branded hashtags and rewards posted on social media to enhance their experience and potentially encourage consumption.

A positioning of football fans as natural consumers is contested and was briefly discussed in Chapter Two. Brooks (2019) argued that “the game’s modern capitalism has affected the identity of the ‘traditional fan’” (p.5) in that the modern fan is framed as a consumer by football’s governing bodies whilst self-identified ‘traditional’ fans construct an identity in opposition to the game’s modern capitalism. He sees this as a false binary construction in that all fans engage in complex processes placing their identities in a fluid position between consumerism and tradition. It may be argued that corporate players seek to position their brands at that precise junction where they can seek to benefit from an association with traditional football culture whilst promoting consumption. Fandom has therefore become another field in which the logic of consumerism dominates.

As this thesis explored the globalisation of football in the twentieth century, modern marketing methods have enabled transnational corporations (TNCs) to achieve global penetration (Allen 2020). Television was pivotal in achieving this. In the twenty-first century, digital media platforms have further revolutionised the mediation of football and its culture, providing a new platform for marketing to fan-consumers. Social media has been at the centre of these developments (Lamberton and Stephen 2016) enabling direct two-way communication between brand and consumer (Newman *et al.* 2017).

## 6.2.2 Brand engagement from the traditional to the digital

Sports marketing literature describes how consumers develop and maintain relationships both with their clubs and with their clubs' sponsors. Companies have to link their sponsorship with other promotional tools to leverage as much attention as possible (Bühler and Nufer 2013). Academic literature has reported a positive association between exposure to alcohol marketing and consumption (Brown 2016) and the Irish-based alcohol brand of Guinness provide an example of marketing methods developing over an extended period from 1999 as the transnational corporation (TNC) has sought to affirm its global identity through the sport of rugby (Amis 2008). Guinness is currently the Title Sponsor and the Official Beer of the Guinness Six Nations tournament. This is an annual men's rugby union competition between the teams of England, France, Ireland, Italy, Scotland, and Wales. The tournament's website declares "The brand (Guinness) is .. continuing its commitment and promotion of responsible drinking by maintaining its reputation as Official Responsible Drinking Partner" (Guinness Six Nations Rugby 2020).

Guinness were one of the global sponsors of the Rugby World Cup in 1999 (Heineken are the current alcohol sponsor). Guinness was clear about its target market for consumption which focused on men (particularly those aged between 18 and 34 years) (Rines 2002). The alcohol brand saw the World Cup as a strong communication platform to address its audience which were "inextricably linked through social drinking" (Rines 2002 p.82). Aside from advertising within the broadcast matches, Guinness ran themed press and radio campaigns, on-pack promotions, game cards linked with prizes such as holidays to rugby playing nations and merchandise rewards for purchase (Rines 2002). The supporting public relations campaign was intended to develop an emotional bond between the fan and the brand (Rines 2002). Guinness claimed increased consumption of its alcohol in France, Australia, South Africa and Great Britain as a direct result of its sponsorship as well as a reinforcement of its brand awareness (Rines 2002). The marketing at the Rugby World Cup and other events was designed to strengthen the brand identity of being "masculine, strong, genuine and independent" (Amis 2008 p.155). The brand used the same approach, albeit less

successfully, in the 'Born of Our Land' campaign positioned to accompany Ireland's participation in the Six Nations tournament of 2009 (Kearns 2020).

The studies of Guinness's sponsorship of rugby reinforce the methods of the sponsorship mix used to directly engage fans and to encourage them to consume more of their (unhealthy) products. In Guinness's case, the claimed identity as "Responsible Drinking Partner" rings hollow when the brand is clearly trying to encourage increased sales through its sponsorship. In 2015, Three Ireland (the Irish branch of the international telecommunications brand) were using a much more nuanced approach to promote their sponsorship of the Irish team in the Six Nations Tournament by supporting the usual posters, billboards and Internet banner ads with the production of three mini-documentary videos featuring Irish players which they issued via Three Ireland's YouTube channel gaining considerable viewing figures (Kearns 2020). This use of digital technologies to support Irish rugby sponsorship reflects wider changes within marketing which is moving from the 'Traditional to Digital' (Kotler *et al.* 2017), or from the conventional, defined as TV, print and billboards, to digital connections, through "horizontal webs of communities" (Kotler *et al.* 2017 p.47) in which brands seek to develop relationships with their consumers through customer connectivity. As companies seek to gain influence and advantage over their customers, both the traditional and digital will be employed to gain favour and customer engagement.

In digital communications, social media is seen as an important method of nurturing customer relationships within the sport industry (Williams and Chinn 2010; Abeza and O'Reilly 2013) and publications in academic journals based on social media data have increased rapidly (Pedersen 2014; Filo *et al.* 2015; Alalwan *et al.* 2017). The social media service and micro-blogging platform, Twitter was launched in 2006 and has been used by clubs to promote news about football, and by fans wanting to vent their feelings and views about matches (Price *et al.* 2013). There is limited research regarding Twitter conversations about corporate sponsors, however. Jensen *et al.* (2015) carried out a study concerning football fans at the FC Barcelona and Juventus 2015 UEFA Final. They used a visual analysis method to gather tweets that contained images to evaluate key metrics from Twitter conversations about two sponsors. This

included tweets, retweets, favourites, impressions and hashtags. This study concluded one sponsor (Qatar Airways) was more effective in engaging fans measured by the number of times fans clicked to retweet and share tweets amongst their followers. In other metrics, such as the volume of tweets, the other sponsor (Jeep) was more successful. However, the authors were unable to volunteer reasons for their findings and there seems to be considerable space for further research around how clubs and sponsors engage with fans. There is a suggestion that a younger demographic are engaging with football, and sponsors will wish to be present on the digital platforms they access (Sartori 2020). The richest EPL clubs provide sponsors with a global online community to leverage and activate (Sartori 2020). KPMG Football Benchmark calculated that EPL clubs represented six of the top ten football clubs across Europe in terms of their accumulated social media following across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube in a time period between 1 September 2015 and 20 July 2020 (Sartori 2020). Manchester United had 135 million followers, Chelsea 87 million and Tottenham Hotspur 31 million (the other three EPL clubs in this list are Manchester City, Arsenal and Liverpool).

These social media platforms are used by sports organisations as marketing and communication tools to gain greater audience reach and to increase commercial revenue through this engagement with fans (McGillivray and McLaughlin 2019). Twitter is now used in everyday communication by individual users as well as corporations (Weller *et al.* 2014). It has a huge following amongst sports fans, including amongst footballers, and clubs use the platform as a promotional tool and publishing platform (Price *et al.* 2013). New-media platforms, such as Twitter, enable brands and sponsors to reach fans both physically and digitally building relationships and awareness (Karg and Lock 2014).

Sponsorship awareness can develop over time and contracts may be long-term with partnerships developing between commercial sponsors and sports clubs and leagues (Walraven *et al.* 2014). Football particularly has become increasingly attractive to corporations thanks to its global popularity and

the unrivalled power football has in raising brand visibility, creating positive associations between the team, league or player and the

corporate brand and providing amplified brand differentiation from their competitors within a cluttered advertising landscape (Sartori 2020 p.1). The EPL offers many examples of how companies, including UCIs, seek connectivity with their markets, the sport's millions of global fans.

## **6.3 Methodology**

### **6.3.1 Design**

It has already been noted that sponsorship arrangements are complex and are likely to be individually negotiated. A case study approach has been taken therefore in this study of brand engagement and sponsorship activation by UCIs in the EPL. Case studies provide a helpful approach to investigate a phenomenon within a real world context (Yin 2018). They enable a detailed analysis and in-depth exploration of the complexity of a particular problem (Thomas 2011). Taking a case study approach to marketing campaigns provides an insight into the different methods companies use to try to establish an emotional connection with fans through football in promoting the consumption of their commodities.

### **6.3.2 Selection of case studies**

This thesis is exploring sponsorships from UCIs defined as gambling, food and beverages high in fat, sugar and/or salt (HFSS) and alcohol. Thus, an example has been drawn from each of these categories. As described in 4.2.3 the EPL was official partners with Cadbury, its "Official Snack", Budweiser, "Official Beer", and Coca-Cola as "Official Soft Drink" (<https://www.premierleague.com/partners>) in 2019 and 2020. The Premier League does not have a gambling partner and it was noted previously that the FA has terminated its own relationship with Ladbrokes. Thus, a gambling sponsor has been selected from the various companies that sponsor club shirts in the EPL. This, together with the EPL's selected sponsors, is described immediately below.

The four case studies selected are not intended to be representative of all sport sponsorship practices within the EPL. Indeed, that is not possible as all commercial partnerships will reflect the individual requirements of the brand as already argued. There are various types of case studies as described in academic literature and there is no one agreed method of selecting the studies with a wide selection of categorisations (Thomas 2011). The four selected for this research may be considered illustrative and provide an insight into how brands seek to build relationships with fan-consumers. They describe marketing practices designed to increase the consumption of unhealthy products through developing rich relationships with football fans using verbal and visual references to the emotion and passion of the sport.

### **Case Study 1. Gambling: FUN88.**

In Chapter Four, it was described both how gambling brand sponsorships were common in the EPL (19 brand commercial relationships with clubs in 2019/20) and that there were ten shirt sponsorships (also in 19/20). This was reflected in the data presented in Chapter Five, where the broadcasting of live matches showed a high number of gambling references with 173.8 per match and 76.4% of the total references to unhealthy brands. Given the relationship between individual clubs and gambling sponsors, it was considered important that one case study should investigate how a club sponsor sought to activate its brand and engage with the club's fans. One of the broadcast matches analysed in Chapter Five was Newcastle United v Burnley (played on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019). Newcastle's shirt sponsor is FUN88, a gambling brand. This received 109 exposures in the broadcast match. Newcastle United's sponsorship deal with FUN88 was announced in May 2017 (Ryder 2017). A case study of FUN88's sponsorship of Newcastle United between 2017 and 2020 is provided illustrating a gambling industry sponsorship of an EPL club.

### **Case Study 2. Food and beverages (soft drinks): Coca-Cola.**

Coca-Cola has perhaps the longest history in modern sport sponsorship of any TNC and is sometimes regarded as "the most recognised brand in the world" (Williams 2000 p.14). In Chapter Four, FIFA's sponsorship deal with Coca-Cola in

1975 was described as pivotal to providing credibility and prestige to the sport and opening the door to the sponsorship of world football (Sugden and Tomlinson 1998).

Nestle (2015) states that Coca-Cola spent more than \$290 million on sponsorships (64% on sport) in the United States alone in 2013. Sponsorships of sports events and 'heroes' (sportsmen and sportswomen) are not only about sales but also to give the brand a healthy aura and are intended to make it popular and 'cool' (Nestle 2015).

Coca-Cola launched their three-and-a-half-year partnership with the Premier League on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Coca-Cola's status as the 'Official Soft Drink' of the EPL is explored as the second case study.

### **Case Study 3. Food and beverages (snack): Cadbury.**

Cadbury has a long history having been established by John Cadbury as a tea, coffee and confectionery company in Bournville, Birmingham, England in 1824. Williams (2000) described how the brand has used its history to convince consumers of its quality including the use of its products' purple wrappers which are associated with luxury. In 1928, Cadbury claimed there was 'A Glass and a Half Cream Milk' in every half pound of chocolate and this device has been used ever since to suggest richness, healthiness and freshness (Williams 2000).

The company has been owned by Mondelez International (originally Kraft Foods) since 2010 and is a TNC. Cadbury is the 'Official Snack' of the EPL and is taken as the third case study in this research.

### **Case Study 4. Alcohol: Budweiser.**

Budweiser is a lager beer produced by the Belgium-based TNC, Anheuser-Busch InBev, commonly known as AB InBev. AB InBev acquired SABMiller in 2016 and is the world's largest brewer. Budweiser are well practised in global football promotions. Budweiser sponsor the FIFA World Cup, with which they have been



involved intermittently since 1986, with the EPL and La Liga (Spain's top professional football division).

Budweiser became the official beer partner of the England senior men's team and Wembley Stadium in 2018 following its sponsorship of the FA Cup (Beeson 2018). The announcement that Budweiser would become the official beer of the Premier League was made in July 2019. Budweiser is the fourth and final of the case studies designed to illustrate the brand engagement practices of UCIs in the EPL.

### **6.3.3 Procedure**

Data gathering took a similar approach for each case study but was also impressionistic (Stake 1995), that is flexible, opportunistic and open to identifying a range of examples from many different sources. In each of the studies, a simple search technique using the specific four brand names (FUN88, Coca-Cola, Cadbury and Budweiser) was adopted using Google and Google Scholar to identify, principally in grey literature and in the media, mentions of these brands in connection with football and the EPL. Searches were undertaken covering the time-period of each sponsorship. Searches for relevant academic papers were also undertaken using similar search processes but, as may be expected from the literature review undertaken in Chapter Two, there is less academic focus on the links between these brands and sport.

Twitter was used as a mechanism to explore social media data used by sponsors and sponsees which promote the brands and thus encourage consumption of their associated products. The searches on Twitter for each study were slightly different, partly determined by the marketing methods used by the brand and also reflecting the use of hashtags and brand twitter accounts where these were employed. The social media searches are further described briefly in the sections below to distinguish between the approaches used by each brand.

### 6.3.4 Data capture/collection

The Social Media Research Foundation's NodeXL Pro application (licensed for use in 2019 and 2020) was used to capture tweets initially and to explore digital activation by sponsors, sponsees and fans. NodeXL is a network data capture, analysis and visualisation package which works with Microsoft Excel 2016. Searches were carried out on the principal brand accounts (such as @fun88eng) with hashtags when identified (for example #WhereEveryonePlays as used by Coca-Cola) using the Import function from the Twitter Search Network to show who was replied to or mentioned in recent tweets. Twitter limits searches to 18,000 tweets. As is detailed on the NodeXL platform, NodeXL asks Twitter for recent tweets that match the search query. It then creates a vertex for each unique user who either tweeted one of those tweets, was replied to in one of those tweets, or was mentioned in one of those tweets. There can be multiple mentions for each tweet. Search results are not complete in that Twitter focuses on what they consider relevant (thus Twitter determines what is included). NodeXL searches provide tweets from up to about a week before the date of the search.

In all the searches undertaken, both visual and textual data were captured. Visual data is important to illustrate and enhance descriptions of brand engagement.

### 6.3.5 Data analysis

The data are presented below arranged as discrete case studies. The differing marketing strategies of each brand are described, focusing on the methods identified to engage fans and, both improve fans' perceptions of brands, as well as encourage consumption of unhealthy commodities. In each study, the case was considered unique (Stake 1995), and examined for characteristics of brand engagement between the sponsor, the sponsee (club and Premier League) and fan-consumer. Data from Twitter and other digital sources were triangulated (Stake 1995; Thomas 2011) with promotional materials including press releases, football match programmes, product promotions in supermarkets, together with

academic literature when this was available. An analysis was then undertaken to enable comparisons with the data collected in the other three research studies contained within this thesis and to facilitate further discussion. Themes such as globalisation, tradition and authenticity have been considered throughout this thesis. The process of the transformation of fans from community members to fans as a community of consumers with the advent of the EPL was fully discussed in Chapter Two and subsequently.

Commercial determinants of health (CDOH) theory describes how the practices of UCIs can be detrimental to health. Industry discourse, in which it is argued that it is the responsibility of the individual to determine their own safe levels of consumption, is considered in the marketing described below. Finally, CDOH literature also considers the practice of UCIs in assuming a role of corporate citizenship through the demonstration of corporate social responsibility (CSR). This will be discussed in the analysis and discussion of the results of the case studies.

## **6.4 Findings**

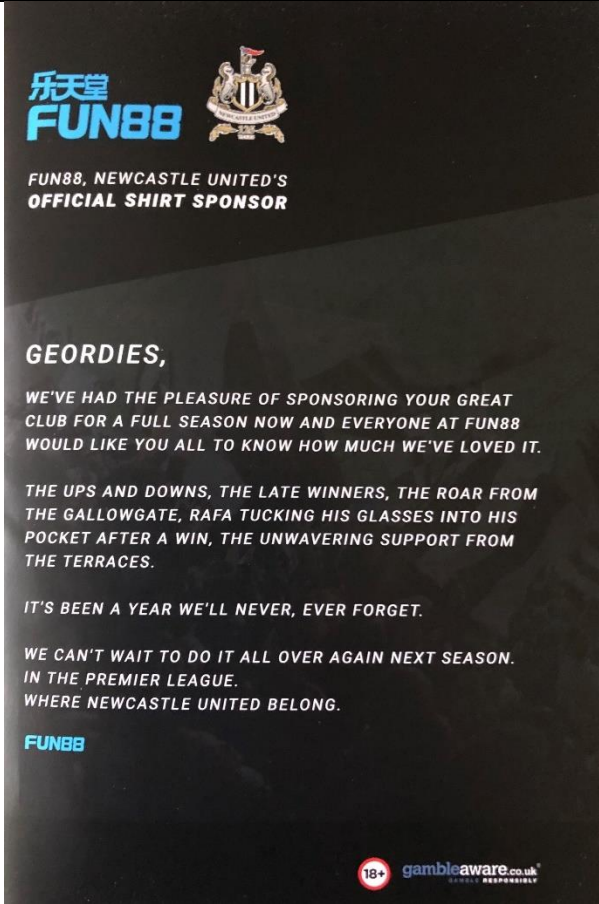
### **6.4.1 Case Study 1. Gambling: FUN88**

It is difficult to establish the location and origins of many gambling companies. They have operating licences in different countries and are often registered in locations to suit tax purposes rather than signifying their locus of operation. The BBC report FUN88 as a China-based online gaming company (BBC 2017).

FUN88 became a sponsor of Newcastle United after the club's much criticised partnership with money-lending company Wonga in which one player even refused to wear the shirt carrying Wonga's logo (Robson 2013). FUN88 were very careful therefore to gain cultural capital and to position themselves as a friend of the club and indeed a fan. An open letter from FUN88 was published in the Newcastle United match programme in May 2018 and carried on the club's website (FUN88 2018b). The language used is important to the company's

intended brand engagement and is reproduced in full both below and as shown in the programme in Figure 27:

Geordies, we've had the pleasure of sponsoring your great club for a full season now and everyone at FUN88 would like you all to know how much we've loved it. The ups and downs, the late winners, the roar from the Gallowgate, Rafa tucking his glasses into his pocket after a win, the unwavering support from the terraces. It's been a season we'll never, ever forget. We can't wait to do it all over again next season. In the Premier League. Where Newcastle United belong. FUN88.



**乐天堂  
FUN88**

**FUN88, NEWCASTLE UNITED'S  
OFFICIAL SHIRT SPONSOR**

**GEORDIES,**

*WE'VE HAD THE PLEASURE OF SPONSORING YOUR GREAT CLUB FOR A FULL SEASON NOW AND EVERYONE AT FUN88 WOULD LIKE YOU ALL TO KNOW HOW MUCH WE'VE LOVED IT.*

*THE UPS AND DOWNS, THE LATE WINNERS, THE ROAR FROM THE GALLOWGATE, RAFA TUCKING HIS GLASSES INTO HIS POCKET AFTER A WIN, THE UNWAVERING SUPPORT FROM THE TERRACES.*

*IT'S BEEN A YEAR WE'LL NEVER, EVER FORGET.*

*WE CAN'T WAIT TO DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN NEXT SEASON. IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE. WHERE NEWCASTLE UNITED BELONG.*

**FUN88**

**18+** **gambleaware.co.uk**  
GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY

**Figure 27. FUN88, “Geordies”.** Image taken by researcher direct from Newcastle United v Chelsea, Match Programme, 13 May 2018

In this letter, the gambling brand is positioned directly next to Newcastle United’s official club badge, demonstrating the partnership between the club and the gambling company. The letter invokes the traditions and cultural values of Newcastle United and indeed the heroes of the North East and its regional identity (Holt 1996). The club’s ground at St James’ Park has been in use

(formerly by Newcastle Rangers) since 1880 (Joannou and Candlish 2009) and, by referring to the Gallowgate, and indeed, the use of the term Geordies (the nickname and dialect of people originating from Tyneside), the gambling company are attempting to win favour. They refer to Newcastle United's passionate support ("the roar"), the late winners, and the club's then very popular manager (Rafa Benitez), to identify themselves with the fans.

As Newcastle United's Managing Director, Lee Charnley, said, "When we were looking for a new sponsor it was really important for us to find somebody who wanted a relationship with us that went beyond what was written down on a piece of paper" (Ryder 2017 p.3). Charnley was highlighting that commercial sponsors want much more than an advertising platform for their brands. The relationship that he described, enables the credibility and cultural history of Newcastle United to be used for the benefit of the sponsor, in return for an increased commercial income for the club. Sponsors pay to gain credibility, and to use the emotional connection that fans have with their club, to establish brand connections and brand engagement. After the letter from FUN88 in the programme, there was a call from Newcastle United's official website (FUN88 2018b) to follow the club's gambling sponsor on Twitter to find out more about their fan engagements through competitions, ticket giveaways and Player of the Month voting.

Newcastle United announced that FUN88 remained as the club's 'primary partner' in July 2020 (Newcastle United FC 2020). The club's press release is revealing. Whilst describing the scale of FUN88's online global following (sports betting, live casinos, slots and keno games in multiple languages), it stated:

The brand has also developed a popular presence on social media with Newcastle United fans, with thousands of Magpie<sup>8</sup> supporters interacting with its accounts and ticket and shirt giveaways over the last three years. (Newcastle United FC 2020 p.2)

On 4 December 2019, FUN88's Twitter account in English @fun88eng had 28.4K followers. The media images they used often included the headline, "Unmissable Action, Unmissable Odds", with a note of the game time on Amazon Prime (the

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<sup>8</sup> Newcastle United are nicknamed the Magpies because of their black and white shirts.

streaming channel first showed live EPL matches on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019). The images shown below describe the methods FUN88 used to build this social media following amongst Newcastle United fans.

BT Sport broadcast Newcastle United FC versus Burnley FC on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The television coverage lasted from 1930 to 2230 with the match kicking off at 2000 (UK time). Twitter data was captured on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019 from 0830 using NodeXL. A series of systematic searches were undertaken from the 44,020 tweets captured from an initial search which included the Twitter handles of the official hashtag of Newcastle United (@NUFC) and for the hashtag associated with the game (#NEWBUR). The Newcastle United Twitter account had 1.35 million followers at the time of the search. The tweets were examined to consider the relationship between the football club and FUN88. As described in the section on data capture (6.3.4), many of the tweets obtained in the original searches were duplicates. The key data was obtained from those tweets appearing in the source vertex of the Node XL interface. That is the search which identified the original tweets from the FUN88 official Twitter account in English in the time frame selected.

Figures 28 to 32 provide examples of the methods used and are illustrations of the marketing techniques used to encourage gambling amongst Newcastle United's fans.

Figure 28 shows a tweet from Newcastle's official club twitter account promoting betting with their sponsor, FUN88. This uses the inducement of 'free bets'.

FUN88 Retweeted

 **Newcastle United FC**   
@NUFC

RT @NUFC: FUN88: Get up to £28 in free bets this week with our sponsors @fun88eng!

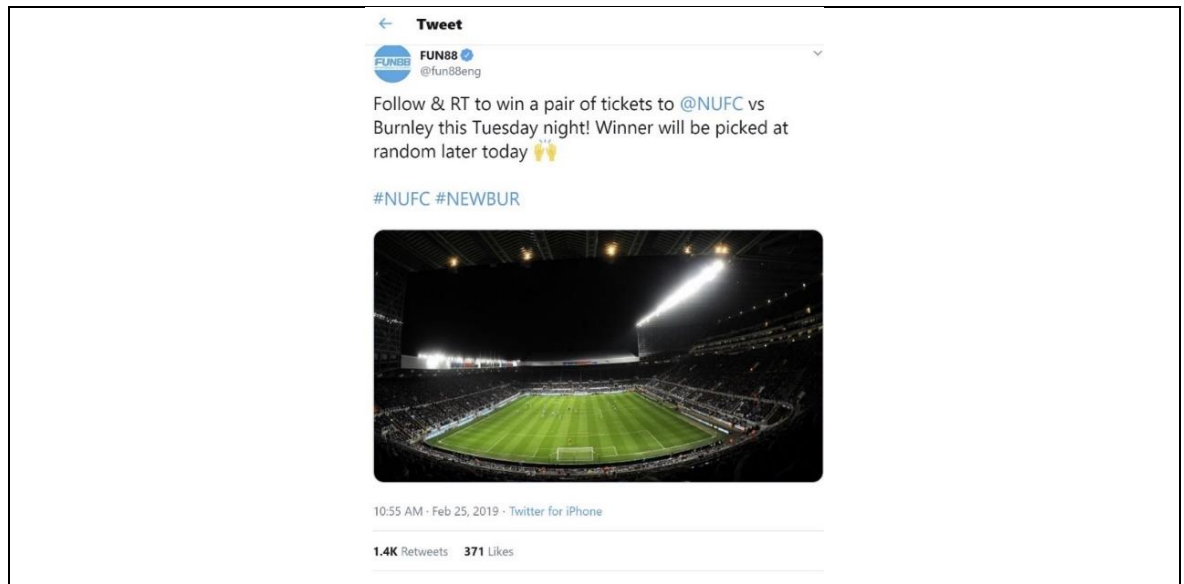
Full Ts & Cs: [bit.ly/2v1oMoS](https://bit.ly/2v1oMoS) | 18+ #NUFC htt...



12:48 PM · Feb 25, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

**Figure 28. 'Get up to £28 in free bets this week with our sponsors'.**

Figures 29 and 30 used the lure of free match tickets to encourage fan engagement. The images used of a floodlit stadium and a player screaming instructions are to excite and to build on the anticipation of the atmosphere of the match (either consumed in broadcasts or streaming or in person). The tweets showed the interaction encouraged in the club's press release above with the tweet in Figure 29 receiving 1.4K retweets, whilst the tweet offering a choice of match to attend (Figure 30) had 2.1K retweets.



**Figure 29. Follow & RT to win tickets**



**Figure 30. Away Day Giveaway**

In Figure 31, FUN88 connect their twitter platform with their Instagram account. The images reference club greats including Sir Bobby Robson (born locally in County Durham and a very popular Newcastle United manager between 1999 and 2004) and Kevin Keegan wearing a Newcastle United shirt (Keegan played for the club between 1982 and 1984 and was manager from 1992 to 1997 when they nearly won the Premier League) with a McEwan's lager logo on the shirt front (the beer company sponsored Newcastle United between 1995 and 1997). The play on nostalgia and tradition is reinforced with the image of the iconic save from goalkeeper Gordon Banks from Brazilian legend, Pele, in the 1970 FIFA



World Cup, in the match between England and Brazil. This is mixed with images of contemporary match action and excitement together with current locally-born player, Sean Longstaff (bottom left) and new club Brazilian striker, Joelinton (middle image). They provide promise of similar images from the gambling company's Instagram account.

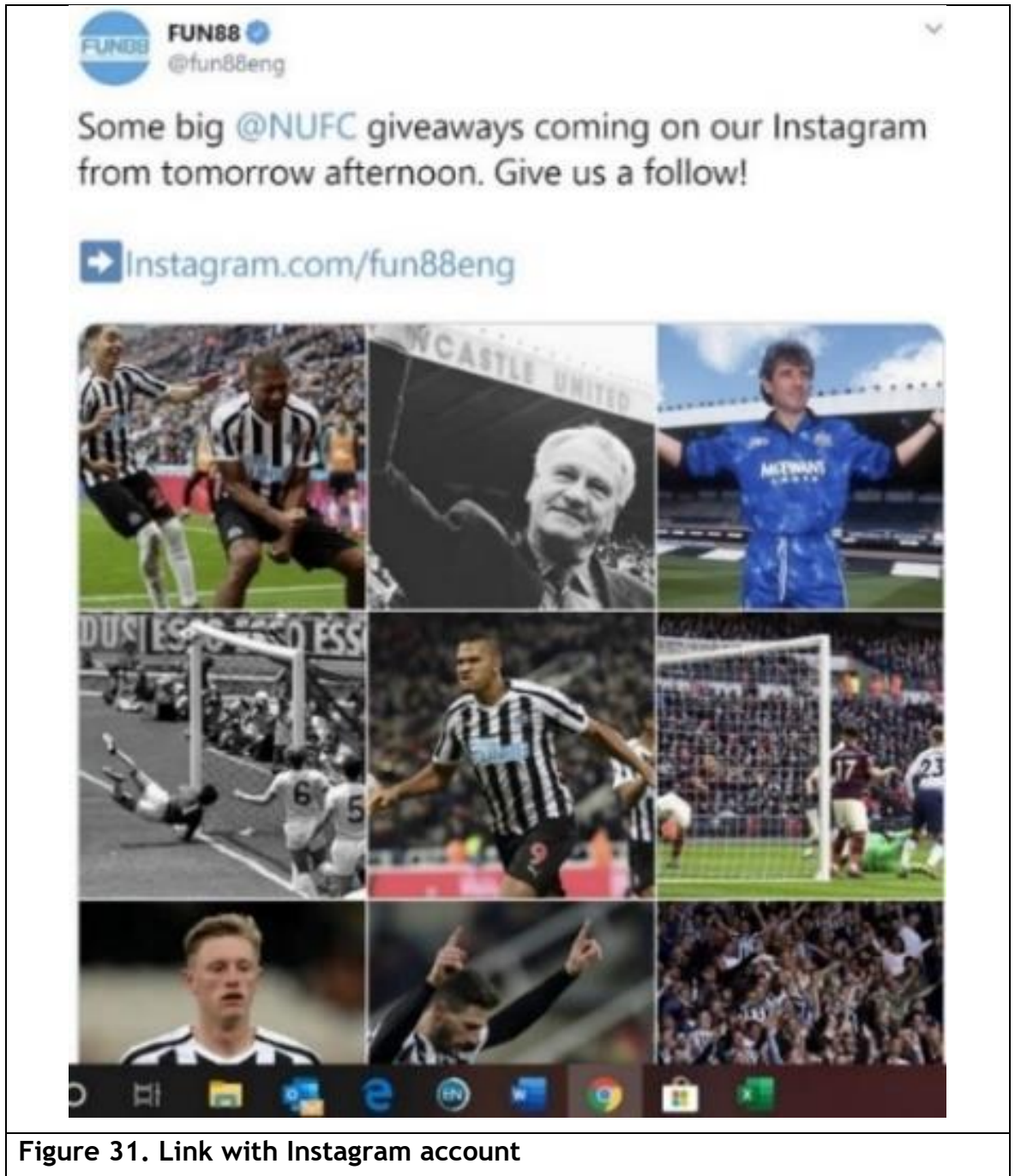


Figure 31. Link with Instagram account

Gambling is directly promoted as in Figure 32 or more subtly in Figure 33 which encourages fans to make a prediction without a wager which could then become a bet. Betting is portrayed as easy, exciting and fun.



Traditional media is employed in Figure 34, where fans attending a match at St James' Park are encouraged to bet through messages displayed on an electronic scoreboard.



Whilst the gambling industry say they encourage “responsible gambling” (The Betting and Gaming Council 2019), there is little evidence of this in the FUN88 marketing bar a small link to the [begambleaware.org](http://begambleaware.org) site in Figures 27, 28 and 32.

FUN88 have worked closely with Newcastle United to try to form a relationship and engage with the clubs' fans. Traditional media was employed both in a match programme and a scoreboard. Brand activation, however, focuses on content marketing and social media (Gendron 2017) where messages are designed to engage fan-consumers and encourage them to bet on their team. Newcastle United have allowed this gambling company to evoke the club brand and image whilst encouraging their fans to bet on match scores and results. Given FUN88's logo on the front of the club's shirt is also in Chinese characters (Chadwick 2019), it is assumed that the China-based corporation are also seeking to engage with the Premier League's Chinese speaking followers.

## 6.4.2 Case Study 2. Food and beverages (soft drinks): Coca-Cola.

The official Twitter handle for Coca-Cola GB (@CocaCola\_GB) had 149.7K followers on 28 January 2020. The profile (see Figure 35) included the logo of the EPL, and an image featuring Manchester United FC player, Jesse Lingard, at an event featuring the Coca-Cola Christmas Truck in conjunction with national sports charity, Street Games. NodeXL was used to extract 3,200 tweets from CocaCola\_GB on 28 January 2020. The strapline “Where Everyone Plays” is featured prominently in the profile picture. A search was carried out to find all the tweets using the hashtags #WhereEveryonePlays #WhereEveryonePlaysPL #WhereEveryonePlaysPremierLeague #WhereEveryonePlaysTheOfficialTrophyTour. Fifteen tweets were obtained.



Figure 35. The official Coca-Cola GB Twitter profile. 29 January 2020

The press announcement of Coca-Cola’s sponsorship of the Premier League (Coca-Cola GB 2019a) was accompanied by a tweet which introduced Coca-Cola’s marketing strapline with a link to a 90 second film “Where Everyone Plays”

(Coca-Cola GB 2019b). The film featured fans from all the clubs in the EPL at that time. It used a very catchy tune, “Only You” by Yazoo, which was originally recorded in 1982, with the lyrics:

All I needed was the love you gave  
 All I needed for another day  
 And all I ever knew  
 Only you. (Yazoo 1982)

The full lyrics of Yazoo’s song (written by Vince Clarke) can be interpreted in different ways but may be seen as a love song referring to a deep and emotional relationship. Coca-Cola evoke the sentiment of a love never lost and seek to engage with the level of commitment and passion that football fans feel for their club.

The video and song are an attempt by Coca-Cola to connect fan emotion and passion with their brand and products. It is an example of how affect transfer (Pracejus 2004) may enable the positive feelings generated by the film to be transferred to Coca-Cola through association. The video provided regional and historical references to evoke football traditions. These include a London taxi at the start, a jigsaw puzzle of a long-haired Kenny Hibbitt (Wolverhampton Wanderers player between 1968 and 1984), the Mersey Ferry, Chelsea Pensioners and some ‘cockney’ West Ham United supporters playing pool. There is a clip of London male fans’ football banter over fish and chips. In the 90 seconds, there are 17 images of Coca-Cola cans and bottles i.e. one every 5.3 seconds. This is not including mentions of the brand name. The Manchester United player, Jesse Lingard, also appears towards the end of the video to join in with fans ‘having a laugh’. Coca-Cola continued using this film and edited highlights of it across the two football seasons considered. The company used carefully chosen references to the cultural heritage of each club in the EPL. Coca-Cola GB’s tweet on 5 August 2019 was simple and direct: “This season, let’s make it a game #WhereEveryonePlays” (the first match of the EPL 2019/20 season was Liverpool versus Norwich City on Friday 9 August). The launch video (described above) was skilfully edited to add references to the three promoted clubs. A young man is seen asking for a ‘Grealish’ haircut (after Aston Villa’s talented young midfielder); Norwich City fans are shocked to find a talking image of Delia Smith



(Norwich City's major shareholder and celebrity cook) in their fish pie; Brian Deane (ex-Sheffield United player and hero) is seen shouting "We're Back").

Coca-Cola have provided a 90 second 'master' video produced by specialist marketing agency, M&C Saatchi, which brings together "250 real football fans" (Arrigo 2019 p.1) from all 20 Premiership clubs. It is a masterpiece of cultural references, a "proper, flag-waving, badge-kissing crowd-pleaser" (Arrigo 2019 p.1). The short film skilfully uses an emotive memory or image from every club which can then be used and referenced once again in smaller edits. This film received 122.9K views.

On the opening day of the new season, a ten second edited version of the same film was tweeted with fans chanting to the background of the synthesised chorus line of "Only You". This received an astonishing 5.7M views. Of the 15 tweets extracted, two are replies to fans complimenting the films: "It's the best football advert for years. Got a proper feel-good factor to it" (this from a Twitter handle with 11.3K followers who promises football predictions). The excitement levels at the start of every football season are intense amongst fans with high hopes for their clubs. Each of the film edits has successfully targeted fans with a specific form of familiarity linked to the cultural heritage of their clubs.

In case anyone missed the very brief reference to Brian Deane in the amended film, a six second extract featuring the ex-footballer (including a goal from his Sheffield United past), was tweeted on 24 August garnering another 1.1K likes. Another short six second film tweeted on 31 August features a fan celebrating a goal from the opposing team as the goalscorer is on his office fantasy league team. This is classic football banter (the concept of banter will be discussed later) and gained 1.2K views. Similarly, on 21 September 2019, a six second video features Norwich City fans and Delia Smith ("Scoring a last-minute banger in extra time? Easy as pie. Just ask Delia"); 1.2K views again. A six second film was released in a tweet on 28 September with 1.6K views: "Whether you're a seagull, eagle or canary (sic.), this season we're flying together!" referencing the nicknames of Brighton & Hove Albion FC (seagulls), Crystal Palace FC (eagles) and Norwich City FC (canaries). The next tweet from 29 March 2019 also

included a video. This is three minutes and eleven seconds long and featured a Crystal Palace fan who, despite living in Belfast, travelled to every home game. The film carried the Coca-Cola and Premier League logos throughout (see Figure 36) and strongly reinforced loyalty and camaraderie through football. The tweet received 47.4K views. Both films referenced the shared history of supporters.



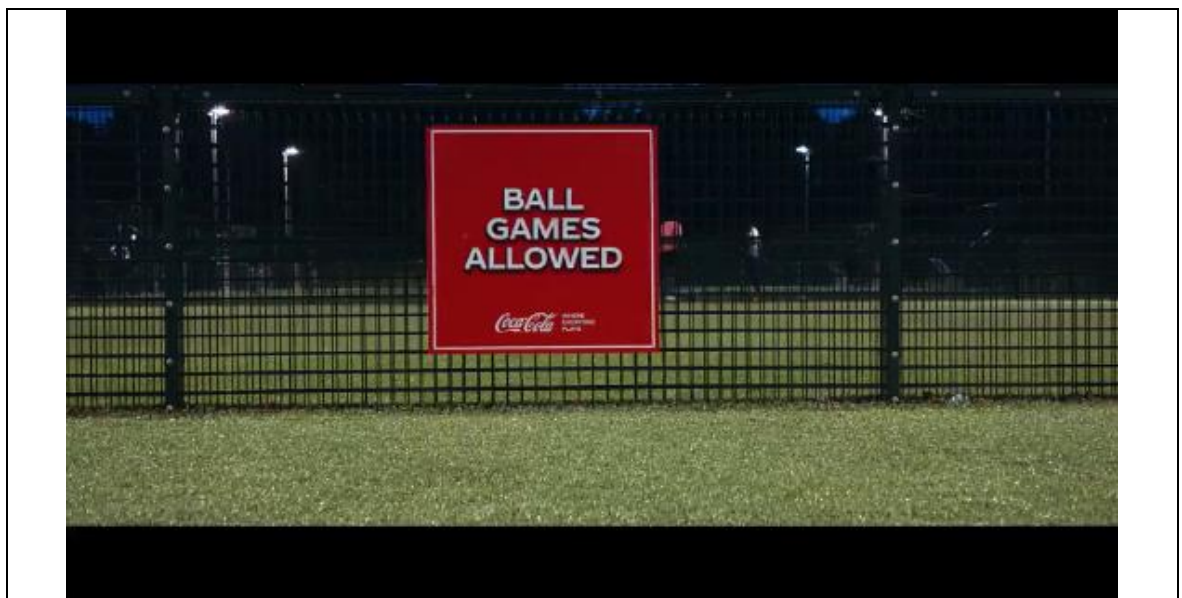
**Figure 36.** “to be at the match to see my friends”. Still from film. 29 March 2019

Coca-Cola GB’s tweets referencing the Premier League were few and were well spaced out, based around their use of films as described. Table 18 below summarises the films and the number of viewers at the time of data capture.

**Table 18. Coca-Cola. #WhereEveryonePlays films**

Name/description	Date	Length (seconds)	Viewers
Where Everyone Plays launch - <i>The Launch video for #WhereEveryonePlays</i>	7 February 2019	90	82.2K
Crystal Palace FC fan <i>Figure 36 - “to be at the match, to see my friends”</i>	29 March 2019	191	47.4K
Street Games UK (1) <i>Figure 37 - Ball games allowed</i>	22 July 2019	80	28.4K
Street Games (2)	22 July 2019	70	7K
Football season launch	5 August 2019	90	122.9K
Matchweek 1	9 August 2019	10	5.7M
Brian Deane (Sheffield United)	24 August 2019	6	1.1K
Fantasy League Team	31 August 2019	6	1.2K
Delia Smith (Norwich City)	21 September 2019	6	1.2K
Bird nicknames	28 September 2019	6	1.6K

Two of Coca-Cola's films highlighted the company's social responsibility programme. On 22 July 2019, a tweet included a one minute twenty seconds film promoting Coca-Cola's relationship with registered charity, Street Games UK. The text in the film included the phrase "we're helping communities to access pitches" and the powerful sign (Figure 37) (in a still from the film) referencing young people's hatred of signs which forbid them to play games at the same time as linking to the drink brand. The text accompanying the film also stated that Coca-Cola will donate £200,000 to Street Games. This relationship between sponsor and charity will be considered briefly later. The film received 28.4K views. This would be considered very significant exposure for a charity who promote sport and physical activity in local communities where such opportunities may be sparse (or not permitted). This message explicitly endorsed Coca-Cola, a sugary calorie-laden drink, in areas where levels of obesity are directly linked to poverty (Bann *et al.* 2018). A second tweet on the same day from Coca-Cola featured another one minute ten second film promoting the relationship with StreetGames UK and the training of football coaches. The film had 7k views.



**Figure 37. Ball Games Allowed. Still from film. 22 July 2019**

Coca-Cola also used local activations to engage fans which provided many opportunities for fans to have their photograph taken with the Premier League trophy, to play virtual football games and, of course, to receive free Coca-Cola



products. The tour visited major cities in 2019 including Liverpool (Figure 38), Newcastle, Cardiff, Dublin, Manchester and London. This model of promotion is built on the established success of Coca-Cola's Christmas Truck Tour which has been widely criticised by public health advocates for its promotion of sugary drinks (Ireland and Ashton 2017). The two promotions were featured together as illustrated in Figure 39 along with their charity partnership. Offers to win Premier League tickets through the partnership between Coca-Cola and the Premier League also featured on bus stop advertising.



Coca-Cola have used a variety of marketing techniques in their sponsorship of the EPL. The TNC skilfully connected themselves with the tradition of football at every opportunity and attempted to position the brand as ‘authentic’ through an association with ‘real’ football fans. Brand activation is shown through the production of a 90 second film which has then been used to engage with millions of football fans (the Matchweek One tweet at the beginning of the football season received over five million views). The corporation is skilled at directly engaging with consumers in traditional ‘face to face’ promotions in addition. Coca-Cola’s campaigns connect the excitement generated by Christmas to link with the exuberance and energy of football fans and the soft drink’s young consumers. In both instances, hashtags (#HolidaysAreComing and #WhereEveryonePlays) promote inclusion and community. Coca-Cola have successfully associated their unhealthy brand with fan emotion and passion if success is measured by viewing figures and those attending their roadshows on the streets.

### **6.4.3 Case Study 3. Food and beverages (snack): Cadbury**

The partnership (sponsorship) between the EPL and Cadbury was announced with a fanfare on the Premier League website in 2017 (Premier League 2017). Cadbury was signed as the Official Snack Partner of the Premier League in a three-year deal from 2017 to 2020. In August 2020, a business commentator reported that the partnership would not be renewed as Cadbury were now focusing on club sponsorships including Manchester United, Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea (they are described as the Official Chocolate Partner of Chelsea) (Glendinning 2020).

In 2017, at the beginning of their three-year partnership with the Premier League, Cadbury were described as the nation’s favourite chocolate and, having built on its sponsorship of the London Olympics in 2012, it promised “to bring moments of joy to millions of people” (Premier League 2017). Brand activation was explicit from the start, with the following promised to football fans in its publicity material including on the Cadbury website:

- The chance to win matchday tickets;

- Opportunities to meet Premier League stars past and present;
- Support for the Premier League Primary Stars programme;
- Golden Boot, Golden Glove and Playmaker awards at the end of the season.

“Cadbury wants to bring the Premier League to consumers for them to share in the moments of excitement that football brings” (Premier League 2017).

Cadbury, like Coca-Cola, were keen to associate their brand with the passion of football to benefit from the anticipated brand affect transfer. The sponsorship deal with Cadbury met with negative comments from campaigners right from the start with critics questioning how a snack brand could promote healthy lifestyles (Connelly 2017).

On Cadbury’s website (Cadbury.co.uk), there was a link provided to Cadbury FC with the Premiership’s logo. One click took you to the image shown below in Figure 40.



Figure 40. Cadbury FC home webpage. 2 February 2020

As with the other Premiership partner brands, Cadbury used their association with the League to promote their products (via Mondelez International) globally. ‘Joy Schools’ is an initiative by Mondelez International (Malaysia) “which

empowers people to snack right” (by promoting Oreo, Cadbury Dairy Milk and other brands) (Mondelez International (Malaysia) 2019). Joy Schools was established in 2011 by Mondelez across Southeast Asia and was described as a community investment initiative. This theme of corporate social responsibility will be explored later. Mondelez International’s press release featured ex Premiership football and England ‘legend’, Michael Owen, taking part in a football school in Malaysia whilst promoting the Cadbury brand.



**Figure 41. Michael Owen promoting Cadbury in Malaysia.** Photo from <http://redzoommedia.blogspot.com/2019/03/young-aspiring-footballers-treated-to.html>. Accessed: 30 November 2020.

Jamie Redknapp (ex-Liverpool, Tottenham Hotspur and England) was also in Malaysia in 2020 in a promotion for Mondelez and Cadbury (Ryan Raj 2020). Similarly, Gary Neville (ex-Manchester United and England) visited Dublin in 2018 with Cadbury (O'Brien 2018).

CadburyUK, the official Twitter handle for Cadbury UK had 303K followers on 28 January 2020. This is much larger than in the other case studies of the brands which were considered (@fun88.co.uk, 30.9K followers; @CocaCola\_GB, 149.7K



followers; @BudweiserUK, 20.4K followers). NodeXL was used to extract 3,200 tweets from CadburyUK on 28 January 2020. However, unlike Coca-Cola or Budweiser, there does not seem a hashtag that Cadbury use concerning the Premier League. Cadbury launched a campaign with Age UK in September 2019 to help older people who may struggle with loneliness (Delahunty 2019) which accounted for a significant percentage of the tweets captured via NodeXL. There is a Twitter account for @CadburyFC but although branded on its home page as “Cadbury FC - Official Snack Partner of the @premierleague”, it only had 40 followers in February 2020 and clearly was not used regularly. It may represent a failed initiative. There have been 23 tweets from the account (as on 8 February 2020) since it was established in August 2017.

In using Twitter therefore as a method to test engagement between brand and fans, 90 tweets from the main Cadbury UK twitter account have been examined simply by scrolling back through the account. The data captured all tweets starting from the formal launch of Cadbury’s sponsorship of the EPL on 11 August 2017 (the beginning of the 2017/18 season) (see Figure 42) and continued through to 31 January 2020.



Figure 42. Happy Premier League Day. 11 August 2017

Of the 90 tweets captured and analysed, 26 refer to Cadbury’s partnerships with a number of charities including Age UK, 24 to generic Cadbury product or sales promotion, and 19 to Cadbury’s partnership with the EPL (either direct tweets from CadburyUK or retweets from the Premier League Twitter account). The remainder are on a mix of topics with Christmas 2017 featuring in 13.

In the 2017/18 season, there were ten tweets relating to football. These were not all directly related to the Premier League. Two used Dan Walker, the BBC journalist and long-term presenter of the BBC programme, Football Focus, in a direct product promotion (for Creme Eggs). Four related to playing awards at the end of the season and were retweets from the Premier League. More recently, in January 2020, CadburyUK retweeted a tweet from @premierleague with “milestones for January” based on EPL players’ appearances (Figure 43). As with many of other of the EPL commercial partnerships, a short film (58 seconds) was used to accompany the tweet, featuring images of the respective players and showing the number of their appearances. This received 42.7K views.



**Figure 43. Cadbury Player Milestones. 29 January 2020.**

On 27 January 2020, a six second film (Figure 44) made a direct link with the Cadbury Dairy Milk product. As also described on the Cadbury FC webpage, if you purchase a chocolate bar and “find a shiny”, this gives you an opportunity to “win an experience with a Premier League Legend”. The six second film shows a young woman on a supermarket checkout and a sound as the item (presumably a chocolate bar) is scanned. It then references the former players as in the still in Figure 44. The relationships with Owen, Neville and Redknapp have all been noted earlier.



Figure 44: “Find the Shiny”. 27 January 2020

Figure 45 shows Cadbury’s products in UK supermarkets. Cadbury have directly linked their promotions and their commercial partnership with the EPL to drive consumption of their chocolate bars. The Dairy Milk bar photographed shows the ‘Match and Win’ logo providing an opportunity to match a code on the wrapper with the chance to ‘Win VIP Matchday Experiences Plus 1,000,000s of Other Prizes Available’.



Figure 45: Cadbury supermarket promotion in 2019. Photo: Researcher

On 10 October 2019, Cadbury FC launched another of their promotions with the EPL. The customer could buy a ‘participating Cadbury product’, visit the Cadbury FC website where they could enter a barcode and batch code and receive a randomised match score prediction. If their predicted score came up, they won a prize (see Figure 46). Prizes included ‘VIP matchday experiences’, pairs of match tickets and club shop vouchers of between £5 and £10 (the most popular). A 15 second film was used by Cadbury to promote ‘Match and Win’ featuring ex Arsenal FC legend, Thierry Henry, and linked to Cadbury’s products. The film received 4.8K views.



**Figure 46: Match & Win. 10 October 2019**

Cadbury UK retweeted @OfficialPanini (23.7K followers in February 2020) on 14 June. An 18 second video linked in a tweet promoted Cadbury player award winners who were then featured in the Premier League Panini Tabloid Sticker Collection. Panini is an Italian company which produces trading cards and other collectibles. The use of stickers is popular amongst children, as with the cigarette cards of the twentieth century, and their use here links Panini very closely with Cadbury with the Cadbury FC brand used in the football action shown. This is a strategy benefitting both Cadbury and Panini which engages with and reinforces consumption amongst children. The player award film had 6.8K views.

Cadbury sponsored a series of awards during their partnership with the EPL featuring numbers of player appearances, ‘Playmaker Award’ (players recognised for their creativity in creating chances for other players to score



goals), most successful goalkeepers (Golden Glove award) and goalscorers (Golden Boot). This enabled Cadbury to regularly show images of players (such as in Figure 43) which fans would identify with. At the same time all these images were carrying the Cadbury logo together with that of the Premier League using the purple colour of Cadbury's chocolate wrapper, a colour traditionally associated with imperial majesty and now suggesting luxury and status (Williams 2000) whilst encouraging consumers to treat themselves.

Cadbury UK also retweeted @premierleague on 12 May promoting Cadbury's Playmaker Award. A 35 second film showcased Eden Hazard of Chelsea FC, highlighting the Cadbury brand received 278.5K views. A similar film on the same date with Alisson Becker of Liverpool FC (Golden Glove award) had 207.2K viewers. The highest number of viewers came with the Golden Boot award which was won by three players (Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Sadio Mane and Mohammed Salah) who all scored 22 Premier League goals in the 2018/19 season. The 35 second film accompanying the tweet and the award had 555.4K views. Cadbury UK announced their partnership with the Premier League for the 2018/19 football season on 14 August 2018 with another 11 second film featuring Jamie Redknapp. This received an incredible 4.2M views.

Cadbury's partnership with the Premier League was centred on engaging with and turning football fans into consumers of Cadbury's products or at least reinforcing their consumption. The corporation uses more traditional marketing strategies than the first two case studies with fan-consumers being able to buy their branded chocolate products from retailers in order to qualify for competition entry. Cadbury, via Mondelez International in some instances, have associated themselves with former footballers in order to gain celebrity endorsement. The link with Panini also is resonant of old-fashioned marketing methods linked with a direct enticement for children to be involved. Cadbury have actively used new media however, particularly in their association with Age UK. This relationship has covered the time the company was a sponsor of the Premier League and promoted Cadbury's desired image of acting as a corporate good citizen.

#### 6.4.4 Case Study 4. Alcohol: Budweiser

The announcement that Budweiser would become the official beer of the Premier League was made in July 2019. By partnering with both the EPL and La Liga in Spain, Budweiser hoped to reach fans across five continents “through a series of unique programmes across the globe” (Premier League 2019). The launch on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019 was supported by a tweet from the Premier League’s official Twitter site. The accompanying 30 second film featured a young urban male fashionable street rap, “Make Way for the King” (artist: Ohana Bam, 2019). This track was also used to accompany the FIFA 20 football simulation video game released in 2019. The film used images from Premier League matches and promoted the “Be a King” slogan. It received 63.6K views and 1.2K likes (Figure 47).



Figure 47. Be a King. 23 July 2019

All the brands selected in the four case studies operate globally, with the Asian market particularly important. In India, Budweiser have used mainline and digital advertising and fan parks with screenings of the EPL to keep fans engaged and to enjoy the excitement around matches (Chakraborty 2019). A similar approach has been used in Nigeria where the brewing company has organised viewing parties and teamed up with local celebrities to promote their beer alongside football (Esan 2019) along with launching a Kings of Football show on

Nigerian television (BellaNaija.com 2020). Even further afield, an article in the Himalayan Times claims that Budweiser's sponsorship of the English Premier League and La Liga (together with the FIFA World Cup) will help to build the brand's customer base in Nepal (The Himalayan Times 2019).

BudweiserUK, the official Twitter handle for Budweiser UK had 20.4K followers on 28 January 2020. The profile includes the logo of the EPL, prominent players from the Premier League as its profile picture and the brand slogan, "Beer of Kings". This, and "King of Beers" are now used more regularly than the original "Be A King" campaign used in the 2019 launch (Premier League 2019). NodeXL was used to extract 3,200 tweets from BudweiserUK on 28 January 2020. A search was then carried out to find all the tweets using a variety of 22 hashtags including #beerofkings, #budmatchday, #emiratesfacup, #budmatchday, #budweisermanofthetmatch, #kingofbeers, #kingsofthepremierleague, #kotpl #manofthetmatch, and #premierleaguebeerofkings. Ninety-five tweets were identified and considered. The majority of the data captured was before Budweiser's sponsorship of the EPL was announced in July 2019. However, the beer company's brand presence across football was immediately evident with tweets relating to EURO16, the FIFA World Cup 2018, the Superbowl (American Football League) and the Emirates FA Cup.

The media images used in Budweiser UK's tweets depicted shared fun and camaraderie as employed in the GIF (Graphics Interchange Format) first observed in a tweet on 16 June 2018 and shown in Figure 48, "Made for Sharing". As a GIF, the tweet encourages sharing of the image as well as the beer. Similar to the approach used by the gambling industry, there is a small link in Figure 48 provided to [drinkaware.co.uk](http://drinkaware.co.uk) (to 'encourage' 'responsible drinking'). And, as with Coca-Cola, Budweiser use films which use the excitement and passion of football match-play to encourage engagement from fans. The 25 second video, posted on 30 August 2017, showing how Budweiser delivered their beer to the Plymouth Argyle FC fans who watched their team take on Liverpool in the Emirates FA Cup, had 122.5K views.



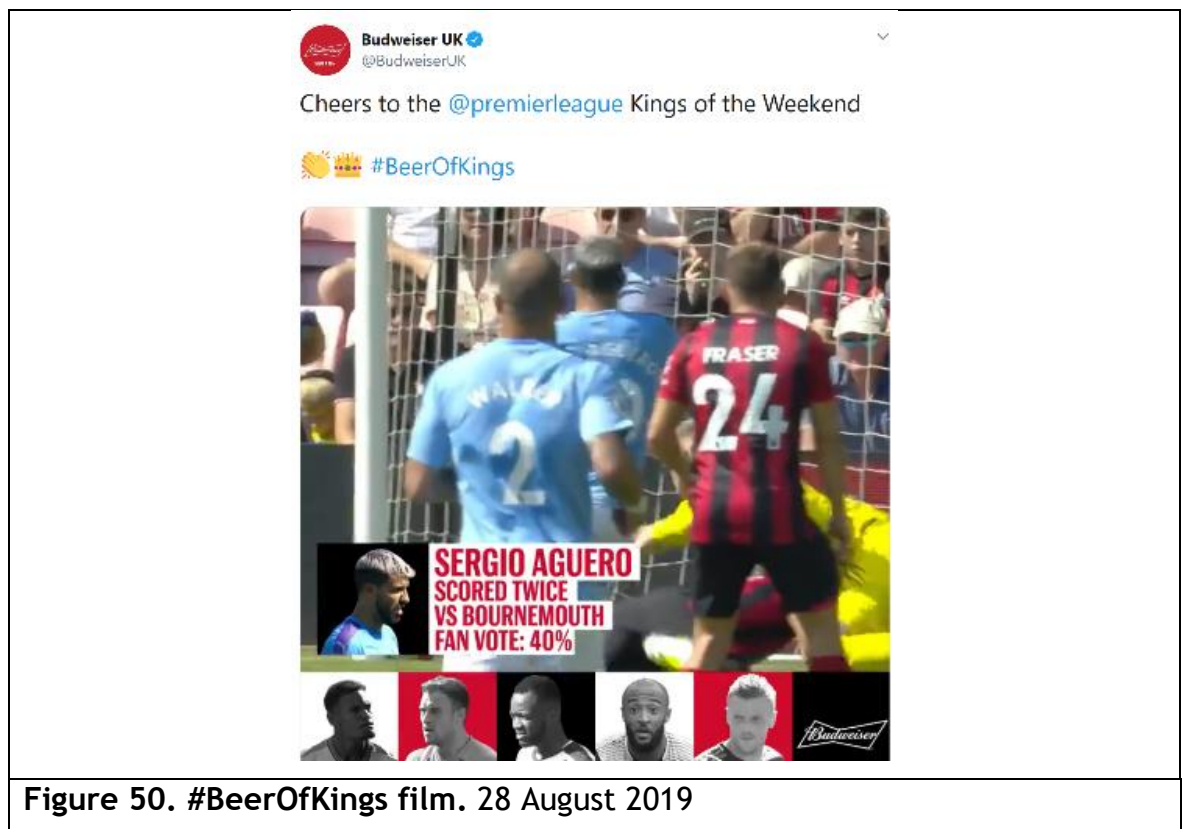
Figure 48. “Made for Sharing”. 16 June 2018. Gif

There were 29 tweets by BudweiserUK after July 2019 (after their sponsorship of the EPL commenced) featuring the hashtags referenced previously. These fell into two categories. The first were interactions with fans who mention the beer brand. Figure 49 provides text and visual representations of these interactions.

The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter thread. At the top, a tweet from a user (profile picture obscured) dated Sep 27, 2019, says "Listening to @ElvisPresley & scudding @BudweiserUK - that's how winning is done!". Below it, a reply from Budweiser UK (@BudweiserUK) dated Sep 30, 2019, says "Enjoy your Bud" with a thumbs up emoji. To the right, the "Relevant people" section shows the Budweiser UK profile with a "Follow" button. Below the tweet screenshot is a photograph of a hand holding a can of Budweiser Lager Beer.

Figure 49. Interactions with fans

The second category uses short films of around 45 seconds which feature action from the Premiership matches and highlight individual players using the #BeerOfKings (Figure 50). This was initially much less successful than the films that Coca-Cola have made, and which were described previously. BudweiserUK's tweeted films on 13 and 20 September 2019 for example only had 442 and 325 views respectively. However, a new approach was used on 27 September 2019, when Budweiser launched a new campaign with the subscription broadcaster, Sky Sports. Another short film (28 seconds) presented players from each Premiership team, linked to a specific Sky Sports programme and launched "Kings Of The Premier League" using both this as a hashtag and the abbreviated #KOTPL. This film received 30.6K views. On 30 September 2019, Budweiser tweeted that the Kings Of The Premier League show was to be carried in full on Sky Sport's You Tube channel.



The 47 second film tweeted on 18 October 2019 with Premiership action was back down to just 318 views. Once again, the tweet by Sky Sports linked with Budweiser (using the #BeerOfKings and #KOTPL hashtags) on 1 November had a much bigger audience of 64.5K views. The remaining tweets from BudweiserUK were all either responses to other tweets tagging #KingOfBeers or more short

films which never received more than 400 views (at the time of analysis). On 10 January 2020 however, the last tweet obtained, another new approach is used. A one-minute video shows Tottenham Hotspur's Son Heung-Min's Premier League's Goal of the Month winner for December 2019. The film includes not only the goal but also an interview with Son by Layla Anne-Lee from 'Bud Football'. This approach was much more successful and received 23.5K views.

Budweiser have attempted to use the same methods of fan engagement through the use of films and hashtags in their social media tweets without the levels of success that Coca-Cola achieved. They have used new media though to seek fan engagement. Budweiser's more recent direct links with Sky have proved effective, demonstrating the power of commercial partnerships between broadcasters and brands in which television coverage drives the number of viewers up. Finally, Budweiser have used their sponsorship of the Premier League to drive more traditional marketing approaches in countries such as India and Nigeria as described.

## **6.5 Discussion**

### **6.5.1 Introduction**

At the beginning of this chapter, Figure 26 (p.150) illustrated all elements of the sport sponsorship mix (Bühler and Nufer 2013). Perimeter and stadium advertising featured in the broadcasting of live EPL matches as described in the preceding chapter. The findings from the four case studies in this chapter illustrate brand activation and engagement with fan-consumers. Whilst advertising at pitchside and on the front and sleeves of players' shirts may be considered as traditional methods of marketing, the digital strategies adopted in the case studies demonstrate increasingly sophisticated brand engagement techniques. All show UCIs using an assemblage of marketing methods in association with their commercial partners, the EPL, or, in the case study of FUN88, with Newcastle United, to promote consumption. Football fans form a huge global base and the digital revolution means ever more ways for corporations to build brand loyalty and consumption through brand engagement.

### 6.5.2 A global consumer culture

Both Coca-Cola and Anheuser-Busch (who own Budweiser) have a long history of using sport from mega-events such as the Olympic Games (Gruneau 1984) to the EPL as noted. Castells (2009) has described cultural and economic power relationships constituted and sustained through systematic communication flows. Transnational corporations are internationalised businesses that rely on trade openness and global media access to reach more customers (Franz and Kickbusch 2018) with the English Premier League acting as a vehicle for global consumer culture (Giulianotti and Numerato 2018).

Corporate interests, including those marketing unhealthy commodities, use the broadcasting of the EPL internationally, to promote their brands to an international audience (Ireland *et al.* 2019). Unhealthy products such as sugary drinks and snacks have become ubiquitous, using the same strategies as were developed by the tobacco industry and contributing to a global epidemic of noncommunicable diseases (Stuckler and Siegel 2011; Moodie *et al.* 2013; Freudenberg 2016).

All four case studies illustrate brands marketing themselves globally. FUN88 are representative of a gambling industry that has grown rapidly in English football using the deregulation of gambling advertising enabled by the 2005 Gambling Act in the UK (Bunn *et al.* 2018). The relationship between gambling and football is explored in more detail in Chapter Two. FUN88 are a China-based company that use the broadcasting of the EPL globally to take the opportunity to enter new markets in Asia and gain new followers (Cleland 2017). Their marketing appears in both Chinese characters as well as English as illustrated in many of the pictures used in the case study of their commercial partnership with Newcastle United. This is stated very explicitly by the Managing Director of Newcastle United who said in 2018, that the club and FUN88 will work together “to engage fans and grow our collective reach around the globe” (Newcastle United FC 2020 p.2). A spokesperson for FUN88 added, “we live the dream of expanding our fan base across all continents, especially in Asia”. This is a partnership which



pursues global reach together to expand both consumers of the club and of the gambling brand.

Coca-Cola's use of the global marketplace of sport is a textbook example of linking regional sporting cultures through narratives focusing on passion, intensity and excitement whilst associating these with drinking its products (Silk and Andrews 2005). Norbert Elias wrote about the excitement and passion of sport which the TNCs in these case studies invoke to insert themselves into the cultural narrative of football. As Bourdieu (1999) illustrated, TNCs are using their economic capital to purchase visibility and build cultural capital. As the case studies illustrate, and as Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) have argued, football (and the EPL) can be viewed as a metric and a motor for globalisation.

### **6.5.3 Evoking tradition and authenticity**

Tradition is a key component of English football. Chapter Two described the beginnings of association and professional football in England. Fans of clubs know when their clubs were founded, the grounds where they played and even their original shirt colours (Bridgewater 2010). Brands work on sponsorship engagement models that draw on authenticity and they position themselves carefully to tell a story based on football's history (Cornwell 2020). Football-related marketing positively influences brand user engagement (Aichner 2019) and helps to transfer the positive emotions aroused by football onto a brand (Bühler and Nufer 2013).

The brands in the case studies work hard to identify themselves with these rich traditions and accompanying passions. FUN88's evocation of the Gallowgate at Newcastle United's St James' Park references the iconic spectator stand in the stadium (Hughson 2004) and refers to the fans as Geordies; the affectionate nickname of those people originating from Newcastle-on-Tyne or Tyneside. Coca-Cola's videos for the launch of the football season very effectively connect football's traditions, passions, and emotions. As described, their ten second video sequence of fans chanting (singing) the synthesised chorus line of their film brilliantly captures the sound of the football crowd and gained 5.7M views.



Cadbury's device of calling their marketing campaign Cadbury FC is an attempt to tap into the historic concept of the football club. Their partnership with Panini draws on a long-established tradition of fans collecting cards featuring players and now stickers in the modern day. Cadbury FC also has its own Fan Club in which membership enables fans to win match tickets and of course provides a database for Cadbury. Football has its own tradition of supporters' clubs (Taylor 1992) and Cadbury is trying to tap into this concept of football or brand loyalty.

Sandvoss (2003) argued that many football fans consider fandom as "an integral part of their personality" (p.31). The brands described are attempting to engage and connect with the traditional identities and collective ritualisations of fandom (Sandvoss 2003). Consumption may be considered as a practice of fandom although there is opposition to the game's modern capitalist arrangements from some fans (Brooks 2019).

#### **6.5.4 Masculinities and football banter**

Despite the transformation of football in the modern era, the prevailing discourse appears to remain male-orientated with academic literature often reflecting this interest (King 1997a; Kennedy 2000). Historically, Sugden and Tomlinson (1998) wrote that global sponsorship of football has been based around male consumption: "drinking, snacking, shaving, driving" (p.93). Qualitative research published in 2009, reported that female football fans felt that football stadia were essentially male preserves (Ireland and Watkins 2009). Kossakowski et al. (2020) argued that the commodification of football including new types of fans and a growing number of women watching games has increased focus on the enduring "masculine character of fandom culture" (p.521). The principal target of the brand activation strategies described in the case studies, however, remains young men, with the objective of increasing their consumption of soft drinks, alcohol, and gambling products.

Coca-Cola's use of edited films from #WhereEveryonePlays uses banter to connect with fans showing how the brand seeks to demonstrate its authenticity.

‘Football talk’ may be considered as a ‘lingua franca’ amongst football supporters (Penn 2016) and football banter, defined as “mock politeness as a form of discourse” (Rivers and Ross 2019 p.1), is used primarily within male-to-male bonding interactions. Language is important within the development of consumer identities (Hein and O’Donohoe 2014) and there is a literature around men’s consumption activities including product-related conversation including humorous disparagement and technical details (Hein and O’Donohoe 2014). The representations in the Budweiser advertising and FUN88 tweets, in particular, use banter, similar to the tone often used by the gambling industry.

Messner and Montez de Oca (2005) described the way in which sports advertising draws on tropes of masculinity to encourage consumers to think of their products as an essential part of a stylish and desirable lifestyle. As described previously, the soundtrack for the Budweiser video advertising their partnership with the EPL (Premier League 2019) featured a young urban male fashionable street rap, “Make Way for the King”. Historically, the core market for Budweiser (in its home US market at least), has been 18 to 24-year-old blue-collar males (Jobber 2001).

Garry Robson in his sociological study of Millwall FC fans discussed working class identities and masculinity attached to football (Robson 2000). The gambling advertisements in the commercial breaks described in Chapter Five showed young men engaged with gambling activities. A study carried out by Spanish and British researchers (Lopez-Gonzalez *et al.* 2018) found that a sample of British and Spanish sports betting television adverts showed a male-dominant representation. The advertisements also showed the representation of gambling along with other risky behaviours such as drinking alcohol and eating junk food.

### **6.5.5 The language of individual responsibility**

There is a tension between economic pressures and public health (Wiist 2010; Freeman and Sindall 2019) which was described when the 2019/20 football season recommenced after the pause caused by the coronavirus pandemic (Hytner 2020). Corporate practices promote the consumption of unhealthy

commodities through their marketing (Kickbusch *et al.* 2016) and any attempts at curtailing the operation of free markets is commonly positioned as unnecessary regulation (Allen 2020). Whilst the environment we live in promotes unhealthy consumption such as the marketing described at football, defenders of neoliberal capitalism argue that people are responsible for their health and are blamed for their consuming practices (Baum 2015; Schrecker and Bambra 2015). Neoliberal society individualises responsibilities and requires individuals to manage their own risks (Rose 1999). Maani *et al.* (2020b) argued that whilst the use of unhealthy commodities is strongly influenced by factors such as availability and advertising as part of a marketing mix, the focus in health policies is on individual 'lifestyles'.

Since 2015, many of the gambling operators in the UK have attached the warning label, "when the FUN stops, stop". Unpublished research shows that the label did not encourage responsible gambling in the participants in the study (Newall *et al.* 2019b). This is a common approach across all the case studies. A little wager, an occasional sugary drink, snack, or beer is presented as hardly likely to affect health and indeed, all these activities should be seen as fun according to the marketing messages. In the findings, Budweiser linked to the Drinkaware website and talked of drinking responsibly, Cadbury (Mondelēz International), of snacking right, and FUN88 linked to the Gambleaware website. The emphasis is placed on individual responsibility and ignores the exposure to the marketing activities of the TNCs (Ireland *et al.* 2019) featured in these case studies.

Public health advocates are likely to be accused of spoiling the fun of the consumer if they criticise the activities of Coca-Cola, Cadbury and so on (Ireland and Ashton 2017; Allen 2020). The language captured in the tweets and the emotion and the passion in the films, are of excitement and fun. Coca-Cola's advertisements attracted the admiration of fans and Budweiser's tactic for fans to send selfies created a brand loyalty where consumers advocate on behalf of the beer brand (Bühler and Nufer 2013).

### 6.5.6 Corporate Social Responsibility

As described in Chapter Two, corporate social responsibility (CSR) may be defined as how organisations demonstrate their commitment and contribution to society through their social (including health) and environmental policies (Paramio-Salcines *et al.* 2016).

Freudenberg (2016) noted that CSR is often seen as a public relations tool and mentions Coca-Cola's tactic of claiming the philanthropic contributions they make to physical activity programmes as an example of the how the company frames obesity. Coca-Cola argue that being overweight is the result of too little physical activity rather than consumption of their sugary drinks. Further, Nestle argued that 'Big Soda's' tactics of investing in sponsorships and worthy causes enhances company's credibility, gains brand loyalty and neutralises critics (Nestle 2015). In the case study, Coca-Cola demonstrated their support of Street Games UK, a registered charity, whose website declares that the organisation "harnesses the power of sport to create positive change in the lives of disadvantaged young people right across the UK" (Street Games 2020). Access to the charity gives Coca-Cola both a series of positive images around disadvantaged people and physical activity and helps to neutralise criticism of its activities. Coca-Cola's support for ParkLives, a programme designed to increase levels of physical activity across the UK delivered in partnership with local authorities, may be similarly categorised (Jane and Gibson 2017).

Cadbury, as has been noted, is owned by TNC, Mondelez International, and its work promoting the rather unpleasantly named "Joy Schools" (this may be a translation) in Malaysia has been described previously in this chapter. As also described, when the partnership with the Premier League was launched, Cadbury used this to promote their Health for Life programme in the UK (Connelly 2017) which, as with the Mondelez campaign in Malaysia, promised to promote "balanced snacking" as part of a healthy lifestyle. Perhaps the criticisms by health campaigners were effective, as no mention of this programme can be found after 2017. A report by Mondelez International itself dated 19 December 2017 mentioned a five year initiative in Birmingham (first

funded in 2011) with the headline “Thousands inspired to lead a healthier lifestyle thanks to Health for Life programme” (Mondelez International 2017). This is clearly a very similar tactic to that deployed by Coca-Cola UK.

As Allen (2020) has written, both food and alcohol TNCs work hard to associate themselves with sport and activity but he categorised sport sponsorship as an example of CSR. Whereas there was a time when a local industrialist financially supporting his local team could be considered an example of philanthropy, and as means of purely boosting his social capital, this is hardly the case in the example of the modern sport sponsorship industry where a return on investment is critical. This is an important discussion as academics seek to describe and conceptualise the CDOH (de Lacy-Vawdon and Livingstone 2020).

## 6.6 Strengths and Limitations

Academic and grey literature and Twitter have been analysed in each of the four case studies. These have provided both rich visual and textual data. Other social media sites such as Instagram, Facebook and You Tube could also have been used as all EPL clubs and commercial sponsors will take advantage of these digital channels. Twitter may be considered a trusted source by football clubs (McCarthy *et al.* 2014) in some instances so may not always be used to carry commercial messages. It is certainly impossible to capture the full complexity of digital platforms when only using one platform. The volume of data from Twitter provided challenges and some material may have been missed inadvertently. In addition, Twitter itself limits the data that is provided so any resulting dataset cannot be described as comprehensive.

However, the large volume of grey literature available assisted in developing an understanding of the methods used by TNCs to promote their brands. The method used has also been able to identify both the marketing of unhealthy brands in the UK, but also globally. A major limitation is that searches have been carried out in the English language only so that data relating to some aspects of global marketing may have been missed.

Overall, the means employed through brand activation to secure consumer engagement have been very clearly demonstrated. Of course, it is not possible to prove that this brand activation has increased product sales although evidence has been provided both in this chapter and in Chapter Two of the effectiveness of this type of marketing. However, this study was not designed to understand how fans receive or respond to these marketing messages.

## 6.7 Conclusions

In this chapter, together with the preceding two chapters, it has been shown how UCIs use sport as a vehicle to market their brands globally in order to increase consumption of their products. Modern marketing has moved from the traditional to the digital as brands use all elements of the sponsorship assemblage to occupy as they can as much of the “brandscape” (Wood and Ball 2013) and football space.

In the four case studies, brands use media communications to generate interactivity (Lury 2004) with their fan-consumers. Each corporation has used different methods to generate engagement. Measured by activity on Twitter, Coca-Cola were very successful in their #WhereEveryonePlays campaign, with an astonishing five million views of the film they tweeted at the beginning of the 2019 Premier League season.

English football offers excitement, unpredictability, passion and tradition which were all tropes used by the four corporations in their marketing campaigns to gain attention for their brands. Brand activation is thus key, it creates an emotional connection to the consumer. Its aim is to motivate the consumer and to provide a positive image so that the brand is a part of their lives through shared experiences (Saeed *et al.* 2015).

As Cadbury’s link their sponsorship of the EPL to the purchase of a product, it is easy to see how this commercial partnership is directly linked to the purchase of chocolate which contributes to the high levels of obesity experienced not only in the UK but worldwide (Swinburn *et al.* 2011). It is also clear that the Industry

Group for Responsible Gambling's (2018) claim that their 'whistle-to-whistle' ban on gambling advertising will have any meaningful impact on exposure to gambling brands and betting practices (BBC Sport 2018) is disingenuous. The description of the brand engagement strategy in this chapter, adopted by a gambling sponsor such as FUN88, indicates that television commercials form a very small part of brand activation.

Whilst the marketing campaigns of transnational corporations are "harming our physical, mental, and collective wellbeing" (Hastings 2012 e345), their consumers are blamed if they consume too many of their products and are chastised by these same companies (and government) to act responsibly.

It is also important to appreciate conceptually that sport sponsorship and corporate citizenship strategies are separate components of marketing although linked.

The next chapter will explore the views of stakeholders within football on the unhealthy commercial partnerships described in this and the preceding two chapters.

# Chapter Seven: Exploring unhealthy sponsorship in the English Premier League. Interviews with key informants in football.

## 7.1 Introduction

In Chapters Four to Six, this thesis illustrated how unhealthy brands are advertised and marketed through commercial partnerships (sponsorship) with the English Premier League (EPL) and its member clubs. The qualitative research described in this chapter builds on the research detailed in the previous chapters and the insights gained. In this study, informants from different sections of the football industry were interviewed to ascertain their views on the sponsorship and marketing in the EPL by unhealthy commodity industries (UCIs). The interviews explored themes which have emerged across this thesis including tradition, authenticity, commercialisation, and consumption. They concluded with discussing whose responsibility it is to consider commercial arrangements and whether there should be an ethical framework around the sponsorship and advertising used in the EPL. Data analysis followed a thematic approach. As in other sections of this thesis, the analysis draws on Bourdieu's work to help and explain how the positions occupied by representatives of social groups within the football field (the interviewees) reflected their dispositions and their respective orientations towards economic and cultural capital.

This study addresses the thesis research questions:

*RQ4: What are the views of key informants in football in England concerning the type of sponsorship and marketing associated with the EPL?*

*RQ5: What are the views of key informants in football in England concerning the ethics of marketing unhealthy brands in the EPL and the regulation that may be required to moderate this?*



## 7.2 Background - Fields of power

In considering the transformation of English football in the 1990s and the hyper-commodification of football, it is important to adopt a theoretical framework which recognises the different economic relationships which exist within the sport. The increased commercialisation of English football following the launch of the EPL in 1992 led to an academic interest in the consumption of football (Robson 2000; Crawford 2004; Dixon 2016a; Dixon 2016b; Giulianotti and Numerato 2018; Brooks 2019). This thesis has used theoretical frameworks around consumption, exploring these from a sociological and public health perspective in examining how UCIs use football to promote their brands. In Chapter Two, Bourdieu's descriptions of social actors and the economic and cultural capital in football were discussed and will be returned to here. The huge increase in elite club revenues since the formation of the Premier League has been discussed earlier and football club owners "chase profit maximisation and market domination" (Wilson and Plumley 2020 p.2) at every opportunity. The health implications of their commercial decisions are not considered in a sport defined by neoliberal economic practices (Kennedy and Kennedy 2016).

King (1997a; 1997b; 2002) applied a class-analysis in describing football's transformation in the 1990s within the context of the free-market approach of the Thatcher government which was intended to establish Britain's economic role in the new global order. In his research into what he termed the "new consumption of football" (2002 p.4), King interviewed those whom he identified as being responsible for the changes in football - who he called the elites: the chairmen (sic) of football clubs, FA and club officials and media and television elites. He also spoke to those who directly experienced the changes, that is the fans, who had no control over these economically driven processes. King's analysis focused on the development of the fan as a customer, and the relationship between the fans as consumers and the new entrepreneurial directors who emerged in this period. As explored in Chapter Two, football clubs did not often make profits historically, but the opportunities for

commodification enabled by the new broadcast contracts developed in the 1990s, provided financial opportunities for different actors within football. In twenty-first century football clubs commercialism has introduced a new and expanded group of stakeholders who have an interest or play a part in the sponsorship of EPL clubs. Beech and Chadwick (2013) described some of those who they identified as 'benefitting' from commercialisation. Their list (pp.9-10) included the players (income), the gambling industry (by value), the spectator (considered in increased size of audience), the club (in economic turnover), the consumer (by spend), the corporation (the hospitality industry), the sponsor (by opportunity), the governing body (income), the merchandiser (the example given is of the sales of football kit), the venue (profits), the rights owner (image, broadcasting etc.). Beech and Chadwick demonstrated the commercialisation of football and the various stakeholders seen from a business management perspective.

The ownership of the clubs in the Premiership reflects the growth of economic capital in football since 1992. Where once clubs were owned by local businessmen, they are now controlled by oligarchs such as Roman Abramovich, a Russian billionaire, who took control of Chelsea in June 2003 (Montague 2018). The Premier League's current list of owners (Beard 2020) shows 14 clubs in foreign control reflecting the fact that the EPL has become a global commercial empire (Robinson and Clegg 2019).

In 1994, King (2002) approached the chairmen (sic) of football clubs, including Sir John Hall, the then Chairman of Newcastle United (who did not respond to the request for interview), for his research. King quoted Hall from Gardner and Sheppard (1989), to support his argument that Newcastle United were being used as a "symbol of Northeastern cosmopolitanism and affluence" (King 1997b p.229) to promote the club and the Tyneside region to international markets. In this study, King used the example of two football clubs in North East England (Newcastle and Middlesbrough) to illustrate that their Directors had a policy of long-term capitalist accumulation. In King's theoretical framework, which explored the relationship between fan and club, the club owners must exploit the profit-making potential of the club by maximising the consumption potential of the clubs' customers, the fans.

The perspective of male fans is also explored by King (1997a) in a further study of the consumption of football following the development of all-seater stadiums. King developed a sophisticated interpretation of male consumer fandom which illustrates his argument entailing both compliance and resistance. His qualitative study of a group of Manchester United fans in the 1993-94 season described the passion and emotion they felt for 'their' club. The fans in the study demonstrated their support through their pride in Manchester United's success and approved of the commercial standing of the club. Thus, King believed, the fans' position aligned themselves with the commercial practices of the Board. In contrast, the same fans' view of football was rooted in a false invented tradition (according to King) whereby football supporting had not changed from a perceived dominant working-class male leisure pursuit. These fans disapproved of the branded clothing and new commodities now offered by the club as symbolic of the commercial developments at Manchester United which they rejected. King's core argument that these male fans' demand for success facilitated their acceptance of commercialism, whilst disapproving of certain aspects of this commercialism, thus demonstrates a central paradox played out in debates amongst fans today. Fans' relationships to the new consumption of football encompasses "elements of compliance and resistance simultaneously" (King 1997a p.342). Fans recognise they have little economic capital, but they have a strong sense of the tradition and values associated with 'their' club forming their habitus and providing them with high cultural capital.

King's studies demonstrate that social positions in football are underpinned by the crosscutting principles of differentiation (division of labour), economic capital and cultural capital. Bourdieu's sociology of practice has been drawn on in this chapter incorporating the concepts of 'habitus' and 'capital'. Bourdieu wrote that sport is "inserted into a universe of practices and consumptions" (Bourdieu 1990 p.159) and that sport cannot be studied independently of other consumption practices. He saw sport as comprising of diverse intersecting 'fields' reflecting different types and volumes of capital (Bourdieu 1993b). The concept of 'field' provides a theoretical approach in exploring relations between these agents which are defined by their position in the structure of the distribution of capital and their access to the profits that are at stake (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

The Football Supporters Association (FSA) has carried out two quantitative National Supporters Surveys (in 2012 and 2017) to elicit their views on the state of the game. Two-thirds of the 8500 fans responding to the first electronic survey thought 'top-flight' clubs were focusing too much on their global brand to the detriment of their local fan base (Football Supporters' Federation 2017). This is a challenge faced by all global brands which seek to retain a local identity, and was considered both in Chapter Two and is covered later in the thematic analysis in discussing branding and marketing to different football audiences spread across the world.

A further survey carried out by the FSA in 2019 was funded in conjunction with GambleAware and the full details are not in the public domain. However, it was reported that only 13% of the respondents (the total number of respondents is not given) were happy for their club to be sponsored by a gambling company (Football Supporters' Federation 2019). Only 10% of fans felt that their club was doing enough to warn of the risks of gambling. Fans were also concerned that young supporters are being unnecessarily exposed to gambling messages. The survey found that supporters of clubs have deep emotional and social connections to their team.

In the EPL, the players themselves may be termed as the means of labour in a capitalist enterprise (Kennedy and Kennedy 2016), regularly being transferred from club to club, and seemingly primarily focused on securing as high a salary as possible in a very short playing career. The social space of football in the English Premiership is dominated by the club owners and boards of directors who possess the economic capital. Success is determined by success on the pitch which brings increased revenue from both broadcasting and commercial interests. However, for clubs to maintain their success, they are dependent both on retaining their local support, who attend home matches and provide the atmosphere beloved by the broadcasters, and on expanding their fanbase across the globe, to deliver more potential consumers to their transnational partners. The fields of power are dominated by the clubs who have both the economic capital and the cultural capital associated with the clubs' brands. Fans believe they are the true guardians of the values of their club whilst conflicted between a sense of themselves as victims of capitalist exploitation and wishing their club

to be successful, sometimes at all costs. Kennedy and Kennedy (2016) argued that this may be too simplistic as fans are not always prepared to be passive consumers and may expect more even if, as they wrote, this may only be about “success with artistry and against quality opposition” (p.40).

The role of those who may claim ownership and control of football should be considered in relation to sponsorship decisions. The legal control of sport is determined by its rule formations and disciplinary procedures and may change according to status or commercial reasons (Vamplew 2019). The call from fans for ethical leadership may be difficult to resolve. Hardman (2019) argued for a moral ownership of sport “through beneficent institutions that effectively balance the pursuit of ends and means for humanistic good” (p.18). Further, the balance between economic pursuit and public health (Wiist 2010) is an argument that is played out regularly in any analysis of corporate activities and sport is no different.

The owners of football clubs and the management of the English Premier League often pretend that they share a common interest with those who follow football. This is transparently not the case when economic capital is at stake and fan-consumers are placed in a difficult position in which the love they hold for their club is placed against commercial partnerships they often prefer not to think too closely about. Whilst fans’ concerns are more likely to be voiced about the political practices of their owners (Bland and Ahmed 2018), there has been growing concern about the commercial partnerships formed by football clubs with the gambling industry in particular and ethical issues are beginning to be raised (Jones *et al.* 2020).

## 7.3 Methods

Chapter Three contained an overview of the methodology in the overall thesis research design. This included a more detailed explanation concerning my reflexivity and the ethical procedure adopted across the four linked studies (Chapters Four to Seven). In this study, a qualitative approach was adopted to enable the exploration of the complex issues (Isaacs 2014) around sponsorship by

UCIs and to make sense of the patterns of meaning generated through the data (Braun and Clarke 2013).

Kvale (1980) (translated in Brinkmann and Kvale 2014) provided seven stages in describing a qualitative research design: thematising; designing; interviewing; transcribing; analysing; verifying; reporting. I have already considered thematising in the previous studies; in Chapters Four to Six for example, the themes of branding, commercialisation, globalisation, communications and corporate social responsibility have already emerged.

This section of this chapter will describe the ethical procedure (see Chapter Three in addition) and the recruitment process of the 18 participants. Detail of the design is provided including the interview procedure, the settings of the interviews and the transcribing. There is then a consideration of the researcher's reflexivity. Snape and Spencer (2003) noted there is no single way to undertake qualitative research and the process of gaining, undertaking and reporting each interview was subtly different according to the circumstances of the participant.

As I was keen to speak to those in senior positions where possible, this raised particular issues that Green and Thorogood (2004) categorise under the heading of 'elite' interviewing. As they described, the interviewees may consider themselves 'relatively more powerful' (p.94) than the interviewer, causing access issues and potentially difficulties if they feel they may be speaking on behalf of their organisation. Whilst Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) discuss what they call power asymmetry in qualitative research interviews, I felt that this was more an issue of access to the participants (see 7.3.2) than in the interview setting itself. It was important at all times, however, to be aware of how the interviewees viewed me (particularly in terms of knowledge and experiences), and how this may be reflected in the process of knowledge production (Flick 2018b).

Finally, this section of the chapter concludes with a description of the data analysis methods used in this study.

### 7.3.1 Ethical procedure

The application to the University of Glasgow College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee to conduct this research was detailed in Chapter Three together with some initial personal reflections on positionality (also considered later in this chapter in connection with this specific research). Ethical issues run throughout an interview investigation (Brinkmann and Kvale 2014) and were considered and reflected on throughout the process described. Prospective informants were supplied with a Participation Information Sheet (see Appendix 2) providing background to the research and a consent form to complete (Appendix 3). The proposed questions (Appendix 4) to be used in the semi-structured interviews was included in the application. The interview recordings were transcribed using a professional transcribing service who were required to sign a confidentiality contract. Data were stored by the interviewer on a personal laptop computer protected by password. It was intended that interviews would be carried out face to face, logistics permitting.

Confidentiality in terms of coding the identity of participants is critical throughout a study such as this (Seidman 2006). Original records including consent forms were kept in the interviewer's personal possession under secure conditions. On receiving the transcripts from the transcribing service, I edited specific details such as the geographical area where the participants work and their employment history (Bryman 2016). In addition, given the sensitivity issues concerned with 'elite' interviewees (Green and Thorogood 2004), the consent form used noted: *I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to participants for verification*. Each individual transcript was returned to each participant within a fortnight of their interview and they were asked to respond within a further fortnight if they wished to make any changes to their transcript. Five of the 18 interviewees requested minor amends to their transcripts to protect their anonymity highlighting the importance of providing this facility.

### 7.3.2 Recruitment of informants

Following ethical approval for the study (see Appendix 1) which was granted in October 2018, a table of possible key informants and/or organisations was drawn up between September and December 2018. In the background to this chapter (7.2), the concept of Bourdieu's theory of social practice and the relationship between field and habitus was introduced. A field is defined by specific stakes and interests and reflects the distribution of agents and institutions engaged in the struggle between these interests (Bourdieu 1993b). Thus, the recruitment of informants was intended to reflect groups that occupied different sections of the football field. This is expanded on later.

The potential informants were approached using a number of methods but predominantly through emails to the named contact. Approaches with requests for a one-to-one interview were made from January 2019 onwards and all interviews were completed between January and May 2019 (all bar one during the 2018/19 EPL season). A further amended application to the University of Glasgow College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee was submitted in January 2019 (and subsequently granted) to undertake questions by email after one potential participant had asked for a questionnaire rather than the requested interview. Whilst this was then available as an option, it was not subsequently used. It took three weeks for ethical approval to be given which meant a slow response to the participant who subsequently did not respond to my emails (see 7.3.5).

I categorised possible informants in the following way: EPL football clubs; Governing bodies and Government; football fans; commercial interests. Each category is dealt with briefly in turn below.



### **EPL football clubs (six key informants)**

Out of the 20 clubs in the EPL in the 2018/19 football season, 18 representatives of nine clubs were approached providing six informants (and an additional fan interviewee). They were selected through personal contacts, internet searching (including using club websites) and snowball sampling. Potential key informants were considered to be Commercial and Communications Directors, and senior staff within club charitable foundations. Although the club foundations are established independently from their host clubs, they inevitably have a close link although their staff views will be influenced by their role in the community they serve. Club officials are very busy throughout the season and the reply received from an EPL club's Head of Communications in a personal email following a second email (the first was not responded to) was a polite refusal to an interview saying that he was "inundated with such requests". Personal contacts (made through existing connections) enabled three interviews to be secured. A contact at another club was secured when I made the following tweet through my personal Twitter account in March 2019: "My PhD research [@UofGlasgow](#) is concerning [#football](#) and sponsorship. Am hoping to speak to fan groups of EPL clubs. If you'd like to be involved, please let me know. Plse RT."

This earned 4732 impressions and was responded to by a Masters student who gave me a contact at an EPL club. This contact responded to my following email and resulted in an interview and a connection with a fan whom I was also able to interview. It was disappointing that although four club Supporter Liaison Officers were approached, I was unable to secure an interview with any of them. These posts are relatively new but are intended to be a link between clubs and fans (Football Supporters Federation' 2019).

### **Governing bodies and Government (one key informant)**

The EPL is a company formed from its existing members, thus the 20 football clubs in the 2018/19 season. The clubs elect a Chief Executive (CEO) and a Board of Directors. There are around 150 staff working from the Premier League's offices in London. I wrote a personal letter to the CEO and approached six other EPL officials (two through existing contacts). Unfortunately, I was unable to secure an interview. Three declined in emails saying pressure of work including

one who said his “schedule being incredibly busy”. Three others did not respond to my email. I received no reply to my letter to the CEO.

The Football Association (FA) was formed in 1863 (the oldest football association in the world) and is the governing body of association football in England. Despite this, the FA has no responsibility for the day-to-day running of the EPL. Nevertheless, I hoped that officials in the FA might have a view on the sponsorship arrangements of EPL clubs and approached two possible informants (both work connections). The eventual email I received from an FA official is interesting and informative in that it raises questions about any possible regulation of sponsorship in the EPL: “Those with the expertise, have indicated that it is not up to us, (*The FA*) to offer a view on what sponsorship and advertising is used in association by PL clubs. I am sorry we are unable to assist you with your request” (personal email to researcher).

At UK Government level, sport including football, falls within the remit of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). However, it was difficult to identify an appropriate person both to approach and was willing to be interviewed. I first approached a named contact on 17 January 2019 and secured an interview (with a completely different contact sourced using existing connections) which took place at the Department Headquarters in London on 30 April. As with many of the other informants, persistence proved crucial.

### **Football fans (five key informants)**

Most football fans are very happy to talk about football if they have the chance so the task here was to find people who were likely to be aware of a range of views. There is a considerable academic literature around fandom which Sandvoss et. al. (2017) describe. I have avoided any detailed discussion of taxonomies but issues of fan consumption and possible resistance to their mediated role have been explored in Chapter Two and later in this chapter. I was able to approach two national fan organisations where I found one senior participant from each (one on the organisation’s board and another, an employee) who were able and willing to be interviewed. One further participant came via a club where an official put me in contact with a fan who sat on one of

the club's consultative committees. Another came from a prominent club supporters' group who I approached 'cold' via email. I contacted three other club supporter groups in the same way, but I did not receive any response. Finally, through a work contact, I was able to find an acknowledged 'fan expert' and published author on fandom who agreed to be interviewed.

### **Commercial interests (six key informants)**

I approached a wide range of possible informants including through work and personal contacts. Successful interview requests were made by approaching the authors of a recent economic report concerning the EPL (the interview was carried out with an economic advisor of the 'professional services' company) and contacting the author of a published article concerning football club sponsorship in the football press (a sports marketing consultant). This author then provided me with a contact to interview from another marketing organisation. The three remaining interviewees all came from existing contacts. One works for a global gambling concern, one works with broadcasters and the last for a media company.

### **Summary of recruitment**

Table 19 shows the informants categorised by groups as above, and by role and/or title. Silverman (2005) discussed issues around the validity of data gathered through interviews; can they be considered representative in any way or are they simply anecdotal? I took a purposive approach to sampling, with the intention of generating "insight and in-depth understanding" (Patton 2002 p.230) in order to gain a range of perspectives from key (often 'elite') informants. Given the potential lack of access to some interviewees due to the high pressure of the football industry, together with the level of interest it generates from the media as well as academics, some decisions to interview were also made opportunistically in that an informant was able to make themselves available in the required timeframe. I have defined my informants as those who may be considered experts or simply well informed in their field. Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) noted that such informants may be people in powerful positions (elite). With the exception of governing body representatives, I believe I was able to

achieve a range of perspectives from different actors. Out of the 18 interviewees, nine (50%) were identified through existing connections. This may have helped overcome the issues around accessing 'elite' people which Green and Thorogood (Green and Thorogood 2004) have described.

Whilst I was not trying to achieve a saturation point in which it may be considered that you keep sampling and analysing data until nothing new is found (Green and Thorogood 2004), this also did not appear realistic in this study where I was interviewing participants across a large entertainment business where there were considerable pressures on time and access. Qualitative research sample selection requires a flexible and pragmatic approach (Braun and Clarke 2013) which was demonstrated in this study design.

**Table 19: Summary of key informants****Interviews. N = 18**

No.	Informant group	Title and/or Organisation	Length of interview (time)	Length of interview (text)	Setting	Ident
11	EPL football club	Commercial Director	1 hr 2 mins	22 pages	Own office	C1
09	EPL football club	Research	0 hrs 58 mins	23 pages	Own office	C2
01	EPL football club	Charitable Foundation	0 hrs 46 mins	20 pages	Own office	C3
04	EPL football club	Charitable Foundation	0 hrs 43 mins	16 pages	Own office	C4
07	EPL football club	Charitable Foundation	1 hr 3 mins	23 pages	Own office	C5
13	EPL football club	Charitable Foundation	0 hrs 27 mins	11 pages	Telephone	C6
17	Governing bodies and Govt.	DCMS	0 hrs 49 mins	17 pages	Own office	G
08	Fans	Supporters group	0 hrs 54 mins	22 pages	Borrowed office	F1
10	Fans	Club fan Representative	0 hrs 44 mins	22 pages	Borrowed office	F2
12	Fans	National fans' organisation	0 hrs 58 mins	22 pages	Video	F3
16	Fans	National fans' organisation	0 hrs 40 mins	12 pages	Borrowed office	F4
18	Fans	Advisor	0 hrs 51 mins	19 pages	Telephone	F5
03	Commercial interest	Gambling organisation	0 hrs 37 mins	15 pages	Borrowed office	I1
02	Commercial interest	Sports Marketing company	0 hrs 54 mins	19 pages	Borrowed office	I2
05	Commercial interest	Sports Marketing company	0 hrs 40 mins	16 pages	Own office	I3
06	Commercial interest	Finance company	0 hrs 41 mins	16 pages	Own office	I4
14	Commercial interest	Media company	0 hrs 36 mins	15 pages	Own office	I5
15	Commercial interest	Broadcaster	0 hrs 48 mins	15 pages	Telephone	I6

### 7.3.3 Interview procedure

Qualitative interviewing is an important method of capturing the way people make meanings of their experience (Rabionet 2011). Bryman (2016) described the difference between a quantitative approach to interviewing, where a structured questioning route is used so that interviewees are asked exactly the same questions and responses can be compared, and a semi-structured approach in which questions are more open-ended and provide an opportunity to see what

the interviewee considers relevant and important. A semi-structured interview format enables insights into the participants' views whilst the interviewer has set the agenda. Thus, in my interviews, whilst all interviewees were asked the same questions (see the full list in Appendix 4), these were very open and not necessarily in the same order, and there was time for the participants to develop their own account of the issues which were the most important to them (Green and Thorogood 2004).

Rabionet (2011) described her *journey* of learning to design and conduct semi-structured interviews in which she went through a series of stages to find the best way to support her research. She wanted to “narrow down some areas or topics” (p.564) and used an opening statement and some general questions to encourage conversation.

In a similar way, I selected the semi-structured interview to narrow down the topics that I wanted to ask my participants. I established a questioning route (or interview guide) to enable me to both ask open questions and to probe as and when required. It also enabled me to build on the participants' own experiences in developing my own understanding (Bryman 2016). I found preparation for the interview critical, including ensuring I had some background on the participant (if, for example, they had written a report I needed to be familiar with) and even the social interaction before commencing the interview which I found important to establishing an appropriate relationship for questions to be asked and responded to (Brinkmann and Kvale 2014).

All the participants were emailed a Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix 2) in advance, but I then talked them through it before the interview. Whilst a questioning route was followed, all interviews were terminated by my saying, “*That concludes my questions. Is there anything else that you would like to add?*” (Appendix 4). As I emailed the transcripts to the participants after their interviews, I was able to thank them at this point for their assistance.

### 7.3.4 Settings

As noted previously, I intended to interview participants in venues of their choosing. It is recognised that the setting of an interview can impact on the data generated (Green and Thorogood 2004). By going to people's offices, it recognised that, as 'important' people, I saw their time as precious and was prepared to travel to them. Out of the 18 interviewees, 14 were therefore interviewed in person at their offices (in London, Manchester and Yorkshire) or in borrowed interview facilities (these included interview rooms provided by the Faculty of Public Health and the European Healthy Stadia Network) and sometimes in club stadiums (5). However, the practical arrangements were insurmountable in four instances and, in these cases, three were interviewed by telephone with recordings encrypted using a confidential recording device provided by the University of Glasgow. One informant took advantage of a video recording facility provided by her employer. There are advantages and disadvantages of telephone interviewing (Brinkmann and Kvale 2014). In this instance, the advantages are practical and mainly down to convenience and cost. However, there are disadvantages in that it is obviously impossible to interpret and respond to body language if the interviewer is not present in the same room as the interviewee. It is also more straightforward to go through the interviewee consent procedure (see Ethical Procedure above) if they are in the same room as the interviewer. I felt that it was much easier to establish a rapport with the interviewee if I was interviewing them at their office. One potential interviewee cancelled two phone interviews at 24 hours' notice which would have been harder to do if they were aware I had made travel arrangements. Interviews took between 27 minutes and 63 minutes (see Table 19) with a median length of 47 minutes (mean = 47.28 minutes). The shortest interview (27 minutes) was by telephone where the participant was very nervous and needed to be reassured about anonymity. It proved difficult to establish a relaxed atmosphere in this setting. In contrast, the two interviews lasting over 60 minutes were at football stadia where the senior club officials were very comfortable in familiar surroundings and on their home grounds so to speak.

### 7.3.5 Reflexivity

It is recognised that a researcher is part of the process of collecting data (Green and Thorogood 2004) and I have reflected on this in other sections of this chapter. Further, the researcher and the participants are involved in continual and changing interaction (Rallis and Rossman 2012). I considered my position as a football supporter in Chapter Three, but I needed to reflect on my roles both as a PhD researcher and as a public health advocate particularly at the time of recruitment. Initially, as described in 7.3.2, I sent emails out to a range of contacts at the beginning of January 2019. The first few were those I had had personal contact with (either directly or indirectly) and I was able to interview four participants by the end of January. I was already appreciating that an email sent from a student account requesting help with research may not receive a response. As previously noted, I received a reply from a club official declining an interview whilst stating he was “Inundated with such requests”. A Supporter Liaison Officer from another EPL club also refused, “Due to the extremely high number of similar requests that we receive, I very much regret that we are unable to assist with coursework, assignments or university projects” (personal email dated 22 February 2019).

At this point, I started to consider my roles and the email address I was using. My University of Glasgow email account automatically includes the word (student) after my name. I continued to approach potential participants as a student when I still felt this may elicit responses from fan groups and league clubs. But I also used my identity as a public health advocate when approaching potential participants to state that I hoped my research may have impact in helping to develop a discussion around commercial sponsorship in the EPL, thus possibly giving it additional value. Further, I discussed my initial difficulties in recruitment with colleagues who then suggested other potential contacts. Two people I approached (one of whom I had met previously), suggested they would respond to a questionnaire rather than a direct interview. There are clearly limitations to a questionnaire such as difficulties with using open ended questions when follow up probing and requests for clarification may not be responded to (Bryman 2016). However, to facilitate these requests, a further



application was made to the University of Glasgow College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee to support this research. This included an amendment to the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form for those agreeing to take part in the research using an interview by email approach. I also adapted the Topic Guide for this purpose. There was an inevitable delay from when I first received the request for a questionnaire (on 11 January 2019) to when I was able to email the questions (on 4 February) and the contact never responded. On reflection, I could have anticipated the request for a questionnaire at the time of my initial application to the Ethics Committee which would have saved time later.

Reflexivity challenges the researcher to examine their agenda and assumptions and to consider carefully all aspects of the interview setting and questions (Hsiung 2008). I believe I was able to do this to the best of my ability.

### **7.3.6 Approach to data analysis**

Gibbs (2018) noted there are a range of views regarding how qualitative data is analysed. This qualitative research should be seen as part of the overall research process (Flick 2018b) of this thesis and thus builds on the data collected and reported on in previous chapters. The approach adopted to analysis benefits from the insight and understanding developed through conducting the three preceding studies. Because of the volume of the data generated, I decided to use Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) to support my analysis. In this instance, I used NVivo 12 Pro.

As noted earlier in 7.3.1 (Ethical Procedure), the recordings of the 18 interviews were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcribing service. I checked the text for veracity and clarified where there was any uncertainty. I then edited the text to try to remove all personal identifying features. In some instances, these had been discussed with the participant at the time of the interview. And, as described in 7.3.1, some amends to the transcripts were then made by the participants themselves.

Scholars of qualitative data analysis recommend that researchers get an overview of their data by immersing themselves in it and spending time interpreting and validating patterns (Riley 1990; Miles and Huberman 1994; Richards 2005). Thus, I spent considerable time familiarizing myself with the original transcripts (Braun *et al.* 2017) by reading the transcripts (as well as checking them for accuracy) and listening to the recordings and by reminding myself of the characteristics of the individuals I interviewed, before attempting any description or analysis. As I was interested in how my participants were concerned with broad issues around sponsorship and marketing in the EPL, a finer grained analysis of the language used was not necessary (Gibbs 2018). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) described the qualitative researcher as a *bricoleur* (p.5) deploying a pieced-together set of representations and, as I read the different experiences and thoughts of the interviewees, this description felt accurate.

Despite Bryman (2016) writing that a thematic approach to data analysis is not well defined, and Braun and Clarke (2006) also saying that it is a poorly demarcated qualitative analytic method, it is a common overarching description of how many qualitative researchers, including myself, undertake their task of data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) provided clear guidelines on undertaking thematic analysis which they describe using six phases.

The first is familiarising yourself with the data as described previously. Thus, although I used a professional service to provide the transcriptions from the interviews, I am very familiar with the original interviews which I carried out myself. I re-read and listened to the interviews, however, to ensure I was familiar with the data before starting formal coding.

The second phase is generating initial codes; coding is simply one method of analysing qualitative data which assists in translating data to capture underlying patterns (Saldaña 2016). My study is based on addressing specific research questions and the data is analysed with these in mind (Maguire and Delahunt 2017). In addition, this research has benefitted from the quantitative analysis of football club websites (Chapter Four), the analysis of the broadcasting of EPL matches (Chapter Five), together with the qualitative case study approach to

brand activation described in the previous chapter, and this helped to identify themes that I might expect to find. The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research, although sometimes complex (Flick 2018b), has been complementary in this instance. Thus, I coded everything which was of interest to my research and was able to develop the codes as I worked through each transcript. Given my familiarity with the transcripts, together with my overall understanding of the data gathered from the research already undertaken and reported in Chapters Four, Five and Six of this thesis, it was possible to quickly identify text to code and initial themes representing some level of patterned response and meaning (Braun and Clarke 2006). This helped to start to organise findings from the 18 transcripts (14 hours 11 minutes, 325 pages). In this phase of analysis, 619 text references were coded generating an initial 36 themes. Once the data has been initially coded and collated, Braun and Clarke described a process of searching in the codes for a broader level of themes. As Maguire and Delahunt (2017) wrote, there may be an overlap between the coding stage and the stage of identifying preliminary themes. This was certainly the case with this data when initial themes and sub-themes were developed in order to help understand the high number of references generated in this phase of reading and examining text for meaning.

Table 20 on page 222 provides a list and descriptions of the initial themes and sub-themes identified from the transcripts which were developed from my interpretation of the research findings from the previous chapters of this thesis. It was clear during the recursive phase of analysis that the themes presented across my research both informed my questioning and led to increasingly detailed discussions with the informants building upon my developing understanding of the football industry. In every case, I developed each interview with an opening question to understand each informant's role in football (and in many cases in previous roles when employment positions had changed) and thereafter questions reflected their knowledge, experience, position and understanding of football. Having explored themes and participants' views on sponsorship and advertising (and on unhealthy commodities in particular) in football, it was important to ascertain from them if an ethical framework may be required to regulate this marketing.

Phase four is reviewing and refining themes. This requires reviewing, modifying and developing the initial themes. Using NVivo 12 made this process easier as text can easily be cut and pasted into different themes as required. Braun and Clarke (2006) had defining and naming themes as the fifth phase or, as Maguire and Delahunt (2017) put it, the final refinement of the themes. NVivo was used not to make an analytical contribution (it is unable to do this) (Woolf and Silver 2018) but to help to organise and generate code- and theme-specific reports from the data collected through the 18 interviews, enabling an iterative process of interpretation.

In this final phase of reviewing of the themes, where I sought to develop and explore a deeper layer of understanding of the qualitative data, I used a Bourdieusian model of field theory to refine (Grenfell and Lebaron 2014) the initial themes illustrated by Table 20. By applying the concept of 'field' described in 7.2, the positions occupied by agents who compete for positions of authority and power in the football 'field' could be mapped out (Grenfell 2014). This enables a discussion of the findings, taking into account the various positions the participants adopted when considering how unhealthy sponsorship may be approached from an ethical and regulatory perspective.

## **7.4 Findings and Discussion (1): Unhealthy brand marketing to a global audience**

As described, the initial themes generated reflected the literature review in Chapter Two and the previous research conducted as part of this thesis and described in Chapters Four to Six. The themes (see Table 20) are described below and illustrated by direct quotations from the interviews.

The final three themes as shown in Table 20 (Ethics, Promoting Health and Responsibility and Regulation) are considered in more detail in section 7.5 of this chapter taking into account the distribution of economic and cultural power between the agents in the field of football.

## Overview of initial codes

Table 20 provides an overview and a description of the codes and sub-codes identified in the first three stages of data analysis. These related closely both to themes identified in the literature review (Chapter Two) and from my increased understanding of the commercial relationships between unhealthy sponsors and the EPL clubs and the Premier League itself.

The initial themes generated were also directly linked to the questioning route (Appendix 4). Thus, most of the participants contributed in some way to the themes described below. Table 20 describes these themes but also draws from other chapters of the thesis in providing definitions for the terms used.

**Table 20. Initial themes and sub-themes**

Themes and Sub-Themes	Definition
1. Brand	A brand is a name, symbol and/or design intended to distinguish the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers.
i. Club	A football club's name, badge and colours are intrinsic components of its brand.
ii. Premier League	The Premier League is a limited company whose membership is composed of the twenty clubs who are in the league in a given football season. Thus, its brand reflects its membership clubs.
iii. Corporation	The brand of a company or group of companies. Some multinational organisations are headquartered in one country and use different brands in different countries. For example, Carling (a beer brand) is owned by Molson Coors, a Canadian based multinational. The beer consumed in the UK is brewed in Burton upon Trent.
iv. Global/local	A brand which is global in reach but seeks to reach local markets. Thus, a brand may be used to promote different products to reach the populations of different countries or simply be promoted in different languages.
2. Finance	The revenue of a football club is generally split into three components: matchday, broadcasting and commercial. This research is primarily interested in the last two and how this serves commercial interests.
i. Commercialisation	Almost every aspect of a football match is commodified with players' kit sponsored, stadia often named by commercial sponsors and broadcasting paid for by advertising and subscription television.
ii. Sponsorship	Sport sponsorship is a means of promoting brand awareness and image.
iii. Return on Investment (ROI)	What a sponsor or advertiser may expect in return for their investment in marketing.
3. Audience	All those who are considered consumers of football.
i. Global	The Premier League's audience extends beyond the United Kingdom and Europe.
ii. Fans	All those who take an interest in Premier League football including those who may consume it at a match, on television or any various other online and digital media.
iii. Young males	Aged between approximately 18 and 35 years. Often defined as the key audience for football marketers in that they are seen to have a disposable income.
iv. Children and Young People	Whilst marketers will often argue that their primary audience are adults, many children and young people are also football fans and are likely to be influenced by marketing messages in football matches.

4. Unhealthy commodities	Commodities which may be detrimental to human health here defined as gambling, alcohol and food and drinks which may be high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS).
5. Communications	Corporations use football to market their brands at live matches, in television and online broadcasting and streaming.
i. Tone	The language (and colours, images and music) used by sponsors is designed to engage with their chosen market.
ii. Role models	Players are often seen as role models by children and young people. The brands that they are associated with are able to benefit from players' perceived glamour and sporting prowess.
iii. Brand engagement	Sponsors do not usually just pay to have their brand displayed on shirts or in television images. They have to also provide a brand activation budget to engage fans (consumers) in their brands and thus develop a relationship which they hope will have a ROI.
6. Ethics	Principles that govern behaviours and the applications of policies.
i. Values	What are considered to be important to an individual (for example a fan) or organisation.
ii. Morals	Standards of behaviour.
iii. Reputation	The beliefs or opinions that are generally held about something.
iv. "Nanny state"	Is it the state's role to take decisions which may affect personal choices?
7. Promoting Health	Sport is generally regarded as being good for health. But is it?
8. Responsibility and Regulation	Who is able to take decisions about the sponsorship and advertising prevalent in the Premier League and how would regulation work?
i. Corporate Social Responsibility	A business model which suggests a company should be socially accountable.
ii. Governance	The manner of governing (football).
iii. Premier League	The company which manages the English Premier League on behalf of its corporate members (the football clubs in a given season).
iv. Football Association	The governing body of football in England and Wales.
v. Government	The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is a department of the United Kingdom government and has responsibility for sport in England (as well as broadcasting in the UK).

### 7.4.1 Brand

Fans are often not comfortable with the concept of their club being a 'brand' as they may see this as reflecting what they perceive as the commercialisation of football (Bridgewater 2010) and some fan communities have objected to these commercial practices (Brown 2008). However, the importance of branding was reflected throughout the interviews whether this belonged to the football club, the Premier League, or a company. The clubs' and Premier League brands' recognition are global:

We've had coaches go over to, you know, various countries in Africa and straightaway the Premier League brand is recognised and they'll talk about how people may walk three/four/five hours just to watch a Premier League football match and you could be sat in a small hut watching this Premier League football match in the middle of nowhere, and that's how sought after that badge is. (Participant 1, Club).

In this example, the participant demonstrated the extreme lengths that some fans, who are unlikely to ever visit England to watch a Premier League game are willing to go to. Fan-consumers are willing to expend considerable time and energy on the traditionally less authentic experience of watching a game via television showing the appeal of English football and the attraction of this audience to transnational brands.

With this recognition comes a responsibility, however, and an understanding that a brand may also need protection:

Most clubs are very careful about who they choose to work with. You know, your brand is your brand, so, you know, you have to be very, very protective of who you partner that brand with. And it's not necessarily all about the financial return. (Participant 4, Club).

There is some caution shown here about the congruity of brands. One participant was approached successfully for interview after they had written a published article concerning controversy over the appropriateness of the sleeve sponsor of a London Premier League team (article not referenced to protect anonymity).



Congruity or the concept of a brand being considered suitable for sponsorship is a theme that will be returned to.

If clubs may be sensitive to associations with brands, fans may be even more protective of the values of what their club may represent:

I think supporters get those values a bit more and sometimes ... would ask themselves, well, what considerations do the club give to what we see as being our core values, who we should sponsorship with, who we should partner with. (Participant 8, Fan).

This highlights a deeper concern over who is the ultimate owner of the club. Whilst this may be clear in economic and legal terms, it is less clear as regards the social and cultural properties of football (Hardman 2019). As Goldblatt (2020) argued football clubs may be seen as fans' "collective web of stories, memories and identities woven between themselves and the team" (p.1).

#### **7.4.2 Finance**

As we have seen, revenue for sponsorship is a very important part of a Premiership club's overall income (Maguire 2020) and the bottom-line for many participants including at national government level:

The economic sustainability of football clubs has always been our biggest concern. We don't want to see clubs going under. We know that football is an expensive business. It's a risk-based business. And the more commercially successful clubs are the better and that will mean attracting as much sponsorship and advertising into the game as possible. (Participant 17, Government)

Given government policy in favour of a free market, this is a position you would expect, with commercial income and economic capital prioritised above any other consideration.

Fans are aware of the importance of the commercialisation of all aspects of the football business but also how sponsorship may be used by companies:

It's not going to be Holland & Barrett that want to be associated with your sport in order to prove to people that they're healthy because people already know they're healthy. They don't feel that they need to gain any ground or apologise to anyone. So it is going to be companies like McDonald's or Cadbury or whatever that say, actually we're getting political pressure because we've got a high sugar content in our food so what are we going to do to change that? Okay, what we need to do is get kids to be more active. So we're going to sponsor sporting stuff so we can say, actually you can be healthy, as long as you run around and play your sport then, yes, you can have a, you know, Cadbury's Dairy Milk. (Participant 18, Fan)

Cadbury (owned by Mondelez International) were the 'Official Snack Partner' of the EPL. This sponsorship was considered fully in Chapter Six as a case study of brand activation and engagement. Further, the fan representative is identifying two key strategies that lie behind the sponsorship of sport by UCIs. In this example, which references HFSS food brands, the food industry seeks to frame the obesity crisis prevalent across the world as the result of insufficient physical inactivity rather than because of a poor diet (Allen 2020). Similarly, this framing reinforces the individual versus social responsibility for health argument (Allen 2020). Namely, the food industry's argument is it is the individual's fault if their health suffers if they overindulge in unhealthy food. Meanwhile, unhealthy food brands are heavily promoted in an (football) environment which is associated, in contrast, with health and physical fitness.

A return on investment (ROI) is also important from the perspective of the sponsor. This is usually about increasing sales although it can also be about promoting the image of a brand (Meenaghan 2005):

So that sales ROI (sic) is sometimes harder to track. It's easier for the likes of Cadburys and Coke, et cetera because if they're putting the Premier League logo on packaging, or they're putting players on packaging, they can measure how those packs sell in comparison to ones that don't have that. (Participant 5, Commercial interest).

Sponsorship is not about patronage or philanthropy as it may once have been considered. Neither should it be confused with corporate social responsibility. Corporate sponsors want to see an increase in consumption of their brands in return for their marketing spend.

### 7.4.3 Audience

The English Premier League has a huge global audience (Elliott 2017b) which is critical to clubs and sponsors alike. Major clubs now act like transnational brands (Hamil 2008) and brand expansion is a key element of neoliberal globalisation where companies are constantly seeking new fans for their products (Cleland 2015). Of those interviewed, an informant from a club was open about the marketing opportunities available to their club:

Yeah, well ultimately, we want to create fans; that's the prize for us. But we are competing in a global market, particularly for (*Club Name*) because of the profile of the Premier League and its broadcast distribution, we have this amazing opportunity, global opportunity to connect with fans around the world. (Participant 9, Club).

Whilst fans debate concepts of authenticity, the English Premier League has become a “global brand league” (Millward 2011 p.29) in its quest for even larger audiences. To connect with fans, to reference this football club participant, may also be translated as to win customers or consumers from other football clubs both in England and internationally.

Whilst the club and commercial participants are aware of the marketing opportunities available, their brands target a younger male demographic, the traditional bedrock support for football:

I think it's fairly generic and kind of typical brands that you'd expect to see trying to reach kind of the male audience. It's very male focussed a lot of it, the sponsorship, commercial advertising; so, cars, beer, betting. (Participant 9, Club).

We know we're targeting a young male demographic, 18 to 30 and therefore we're going to put lots of shaving adverts there. (Participant 6, Commercial interest).

The established marketplace of male football fans (Sandvoss 2003) is thus still observed, particularly from the perspective of the sponsor. The gambling industry in particular has used football to market its brands to young men (Jones *et al.* 2020), both normalising betting in the sport and encouraging men to bet often through the use of incentives such as “cash back offers” and “bonus bets” (Deans *et al.* 2017) as described in Chapter Six.

Football viewers also include many young people and children and there are implications therefore of this type of marketing. Interview participants raised the issue of sports sponsorship and child audiences:

Kids are such an important audience for football and they are the future fans that will, you know, be paying throughout their lives to go to see games or watching them on TV or whatever. (Participant 14, Commercial interest).

This participant worked for a media company and was very conscious of the amount companies spend on advertising, which, in their mind, showed how effective this marketing was. They were frustrated that sport “has the potential to be such an amazing force for health” and yet “it is being co-opted by these brands that are turning the impact of sport into a negative one” (Participant 14).

This impact on impressionable minds can be considerable whether we are discussing gambling (Nyemcsok *et al.* 2018), sugary drinks (Kelly *et al.* 2010a) or alcohol (Critchlow *et al.* 2019). The potential negative impact of sport sponsorship by food and beverage companies on young people's health has been noted (Ireland and Boyland 2019) and the detrimental effects of such unhealthy marketing on children's diets has been well documented (Cairns *et al.* 2013).

Another participant was also concerned about the impact of unhealthy brands on children. It was brought home to them in a particularly powerful and personal way:

I still have a card that my niece and nephew made for me when I'd taken them to a match when they were little, a little thank you card

that they'd made with a picture of a footballer on the front, you know, a Liverpool player. The only thing that is really recognisable from this child's drawing is the Carlsberg logo. (Participant 18, Fan).

Shirt sponsorship is the highest value commercial partnership (Maguire 2020) and its value to brand marketers can be recognised here. Whilst gambling and alcohol brands are not displayed on the front of adult size football shirts (Reuben 2018), children obviously aspire to wear the shirts of their heroes and iconic shirts such as Liverpool's "Carlsberg" kit (worn between 1992 and 2010) live long in the memory whilst creating a strong and positive association between alcohol brand and football club brand.

Children form an important component of the EPL's television audience whether acknowledged formally or not. As Participant 5 (Commercial interest) expressed very clearly:

We have all these rules about what is allowed on children's advertising, like with kids' TV shows and things like that. You'd never have a gambling advert on CBBC and stuff like that. Why is it okay just because it's on a football channel? All of the stuff is pre-watershed. You're telling me that five-year-olds don't sit there with their dads or with their mums and watch football? That's ridiculous, so why is it okay in one environment and not the other?

Sponsors and clubs clearly understand their audiences. Whilst marketing unhealthy brands to adults may be of less concern to some, there was a clear understanding from nearly all the interview participants (including those from the clubs), that any marketing to children needed to be considered carefully.

#### **7.4.4 Unhealthy commodities**

In the past, as we have seen in Chapter Two, there has been a history of unhealthy commodity industries taking an interest in sport:

Gambling sponsorships have replaced alcohol sponsorships which was, like, you know, maybe ten years or so ago. Before then it might have been cigarette sponsorship. (Participant 17, Government).

Gambling brands are now highly visible particularly through shirt sponsorship, and gambling was raised regularly during the interviews by the participants in terms of the industry's marketing and the normalisation of gambling through football. One interviewee from a marketing organisation was very clear about the effect of this:

The kind of messaging that is being portrayed, and again particularly to a younger and more vulnerable audience, it normalises gambling in a way that previous generations hadn't necessarily seen, where you had to walk into a bookmakers, and it wasn't as accessible as it is now. And the reality is that, could a 14-year-old football fan, sat there, watching whatever game it might be, on a Sunday afternoon, go and set up a fake profile and start gambling? (Participant 2, Commercial interest).

A fan, subjected to this marketing, saw the inconsistencies of the 'responsible gambling' aspect of the messaging and its likely outcome:

When you look at betting in football at its most basic level, it is really bizarre that we allow betting companies to sponsor our football matches and then complain about footballers betting on games, and complain about the debt and the problems that betting causes, and match fixing and stuff like that. (Participant 8, Fan).

As we have seen in the literature, the prevalence of gambling brands on the front of shirts has attracted particular concern (Bunn *et al.* 2018; Davies 2019).

As noted in the previous section, the impact of the marketing of unhealthy commodities is not only experienced in the UK, and sponsors are keen to exploit a global market. Gambling companies are aware of the international audience that they wish to reach:

These are gambling companies that are looking to attract overseas audiences more than just domestic audiences. (Participant 17, Government)

Whilst gambling brands stand out because of their ubiquity, other unhealthy commodity industries are also seeking new markets and often these include young people:

It's clearly where their brand strategy lies, isn't it? We've saturated the Western market. Let's go and get nations (sic) like Africa and continents, and Coca-Cola is everywhere. And it's a brand that brings young people - rather than save their money and put that towards a proper meal, ...they'll buy that bottle of Coke, because it's kind of all the imagery that they associate with it. (Participant 7, Club).

Children can be highly susceptible to marketing messages and may consider sports sponsors to be 'cool' (Kelly *et al.* 2011) whilst brand consciousness comes early, acting as an important conceptual cue in their consumer judgments (Achenreiner and John 2003). While young people may want the status of buying branded products, this can have a negative impact if the product is harmful to their health.

Celebrity endorsement was also raised by some of the participants who suggested that children are likely to be influenced by their football heroes:

I think, role models are immensely important in kid's lives, and research says that, and so when you have, kind of I mean, after the World Cup all everyone was talking about was Harry Kane, next thing you know he's been sponsored by McDonalds. (Participant 14, Commercial interest).

In Chapter Five, Cadbury's use of former players to promote their chocolate products was described in detail. Several participants felt an association with unhealthy food and drinks was wrong partly because it may influence children:

Yeah because they're impressionable, aren't they, so if they see a player for example drinking a can of Coke or Lucozade or whatever, or a can of Monster. (Participant 13, Club).

This view was clearly expressed by most of the participants employed by club foundations who were aware of the contradictions between the health campaigns they ran in their local communities and some of the commercial partners of their host clubs.

Unhealthy food was mentioned regularly both in terms of advertising but also at matches:

So, if we're talking about like an obesity epidemic is it right for a football club to, you know, not only sell a lot of shitty food, excuse me,

but promote it as well, you know, Ginsters, or whatever, Pukka Pies, whatever it is? (Participant 12, Fan).

Unhealthy food brands may be as prevalent as gambling brands in some eyes:

I just think it's pretty dismaying, like, not only from a junk food perspective but, I mean, with that in particular, especially drinks, Coke, Carabao, it's just...yeah it's really, like, in your face. (Participant 14, Commercial interest).

This relates to a core contradiction observed regularly both in these interviews and in the literature. Football (and sport), considered as healthy activities, are used consistently to promote unhealthy brands and their consumption. Fans see and understand this but consider themselves as having no power to change or even to comment on it.

#### 7.4.5 Communications

The communication strategies used by clubs and brands alike are increasingly sophisticated and are tailored to their global audiences. Club officials are aware that content must address the needs of the local fan.

We have a kind of regional content team now; so people in local markets, in some of our key markets, who are on the ground close to the kind of football culture in Brazil, for example, and they are creating bespoke content for that market. And the Portuguese, so the tone of voice and everything is right for what the Brazilian football fan wants to know and hear from the Premier League football club. (Participant 9, Club).

The tone of the marketing content is important whether it is to convey the excitement of the sport (Jackson *et al.* 2005) or to be aimed at a particular market (this may be as simple as using a local language) (Westerbeek and Smith 2003).

The Premier League is a global product and clubs work with sponsors as described in the Brazilian context. Brands want to be associated with English football. In the previous three studies in this thesis (described in Chapters Four to Six), the



importance of the Asian market to the EPL was underlined as this commercial informant confirms:

That's why you see so many more sponsorships that are targeting audiences away from these shores. And you'll see lots of shirt sponsors with Chinese writing on, because there's such an appeal in the Far East, and that's just because the product has grown so big, globally, that there is a huge appeal for it. (Participant 2, Commercial).

As described previously, the most commercially successful clubs, like Manchester United, claim large audiences in Asia in particular, to draw in transnational corporations who wish to increase consumption of their brand in these marketplaces. In Manchester United's latest financial results, they describe 1.4 billion social interactions on all social media in 2019/20 (Whitwell 2020).

Communications are smooth, slick and sophisticated and brand activation incorporates much more than simply paying for digital advertising. Brand activation is key to fan engagement and immediately understood by those with commercial interests:

They (*brands*) buy loads of advertising spots, they do loads of things like giving away tickets, but in really imaginative ways through social media, through Youtube, like, they create really good content around it. (Participant 5, Commercial).

How the brand is communicated through its sponsorship is very important in terms of its ability to reach its desired audience (Amis and Cornwell 2005).

There is considerable investment in ensuring clubs and brands have the most penetration into the global marketplace. EPL clubs make sure they have the necessary expertise in both staff and technical resources to maximise fan engagement:

we have a dedicated media team that kind of sits, that manages all of that output from the production of it through to the kind of back end analysis of it. So they'll be using specific software analytics to...and looking at each individual piece of content across all the different channels and how many people view it and watch it and how many

people share it, or like it, comment on it and they'll be trying to see what is the pattern of preference? (Participant 9, Club).

These modern communications methods enable football supporters to identify with English teams from across the world, and their consumer spending habits, in terms of merchandise, television subscriptions and match tickets, reflects this (Millward 2011).

## 7.5 Discussion: Findings and Discussion (2): Ethics, brand congruence and regulation

As has been discussed, following Bourdieu, sport may be considered as comprising of a number of fields in which different forms of capital are both the subject of competition and the resources deployed in that competition. In considering the three final themes drawn from the interview data, it is useful to understand them from a perspective which recognises that the interviewees may occupy very different positions in relation to economic and cultural capital. Bourdieu (1978 p.821) described sport as a “*field of competition*, the site of confrontations between agents with specific agents linked to their positions within the field”. He continued in ‘Sport and Social Class’ (1978) to describe sport as “an object of political struggle” (p.832).

Bourdieu defines capital as “accumulated labour” (Bourdieu 1986 p.241) either in a materialised form or in an embodied form. He wrote that it is impossible to understand the social world without considering capital in all its forms including economic (Bourdieu 1986). Capital can present itself in three fundamental forms: *economic*, *cultural* and *social*. It is primarily the first two forms that we are interested in here although I will return to social capital later. Economic capital may be more simply explained as that which is “immediately and directly convertible into money” (Bourdieu 1986 p.243).

Cultural capital is more complex but, in this context, may be considered as cultural ‘goods’ such as the football club badge, images and memories of a club’s history and players, its shirts, scarves, programmes and even the songs that the

supporters sing. Cultural capital may be manifested economically in, for example, a football stadium which represents an important cultural and emotional home for fans (Bridgewater 2010). Whilst some aspects of cultural capital such as merchandise and replica shirts are tangible (Bourdieu calls these “*objectified*” (Bourdieu 1986 p.243), others are “*embodied*” (p.243), in that they are incorporated into the individual as “principles of consciousness” (Moore 2014 p.102), as a history that fans share and embody. The acquisition of the cultural capital of a football club represents challenges to the new football owners who may only see a club as a business venture and omit to see the cultural investment of the club’s followers.

Bourdieu used the concepts of *social space* and *field of power* (Bourdieu 1998c) to describe how individuals or groups exist relative to one another. The social space is a field of forces where agents confront each other “contributing to conserving or transforming its structure” (Bourdieu 1998c p.32). Bourdieu saw sport as a field of practices in which there was a struggle over definitions and legitimate functions of sporting activity (Bourdieu 1993b). For Bourdieu, this included elite vs. popular mass sport, and, in this study, the field of power may also demonstrate the struggle between fans and owners of clubs for the moral ownership of football. Whilst the owners of clubs clearly possess the economic capital, fans are the custodians of the cultural capital. The EPL clubs themselves are trying to position themselves as favourably as they can economically, so they can compete for success globally, whilst being holders of the collective tradition and culture which the club represents historically and which the fans see themselves as protecting. Of course, this supposes that fans think collectively, when, as has been seen, they are conflicted between wishing their club to be successful at any price whilst being concerned at some of the manifestations of the commercialisation of modern football.

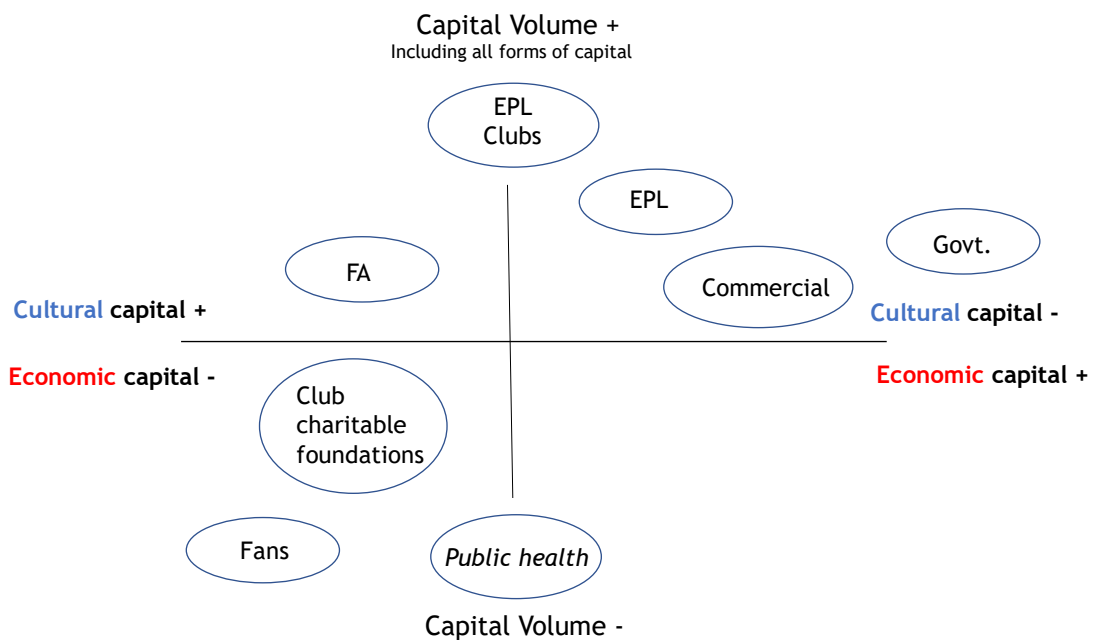
In Figure 51 on page 237, I have applied Bourdieu’s model to aid an understanding of the football industry as a “*field of struggles* aimed at preserving or transforming the configuration of these forces” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992 p.101). This is derived from Bourdieu’s own figure (1998c p.5) in which he plotted social and

political space in terms of voting intentions with total capital volume at the top. In Figure 51, the clubs in the EPL are shown at the very top of the football field as they represent the highest accumulation of economic and cultural capital. Fans possess the highest cultural capital but very little economic capital when matchday income in the EPL is proportionately a very low percentage of total revenue for clubs (this changes in lower leagues).

I have placed the actors from this qualitative study onto this grid using Bourdieu's analytical approach. Bourdieu assumed a link between actions and interests and that agents within the football field, for example, would be predisposed to follow particular interests because of their habitus. Each interview participant shared certain fundamental presuppositions depending on the economic and cultural context of the roles they played within football. Thus, their positionality is not individual but represents the collective disposition determined by the quantities of different types of capital they may possess and reflects the relations between economic and cultural agents within the field.

In Bourdieu's terms, football is a site of struggle between forms of capital (Bourdieu *et al.* 1999) in which economic capital holders seek to exercise dominance over cultural capital. In today's football field of practice, football clubs, the EPL and the UK government (through taxation) derive high economic benefit. Figure 51 shows the interconnections between agents, with the model illustrating the groupings the interviewees are linked to as shown in Table 19 on page 213. Their accounts represent their group's economic and cultural capital and are placed accordingly in the map of relations shown below. I have placed the group identified as 'commercial' as possessing economic capital. Many commercial interests such as sport economists or marketeers could be argued not to be contributing any capital at all but act more in a subsidiary role to other actors within football. I have also included club charitable foundations (these have been described earlier) separately from the clubs themselves. Senior figures within these foundations may have similar perspectives to the club officials but, given the health promotion work they often do in their local communities, they are likely to be aware of the contradictions between the marketing of their club's unhealthy

sponsors and the healthy lifestyles they advocate. Foundations also have less economic capital as their income is entirely separate from their host club. I have separated the Football Association (FA) and the Premier League itself as the former has considerable cultural capital and is seen as the governing body of football including the national team, albeit with no control over the EPL itself since the latter's formation.



**Figure 51. A Map of Relations between the Agents in the Football Field**

The government clearly has economic capital but not cultural capital. Finally, public health may be placed at the foot of the diagram, without any economic or cultural capital, although this perception may change following the coronavirus pandemic and the higher attention given to public health. Public health has been placed in italics as no respondents were approached from this area.

Whilst I am not suggesting that this model is comprehensive and can be challenged in different ways, it demonstrates that fans are in a very different position in a field of power from the EPL clubs, the EPL itself and indeed the UK government, and that the economic and cultural capital of football is actively contested.

The final three themes drawn from the first stages of the thematic analysis will be considered from this Bourdeusian perspective and applied to a deeper understanding of how the commercial determinants of health (CDOH) are represented in sport sponsorship. The themes reflect the balance between economic pursuit and public health and the corporate strategies of UCIs.

### 7.5.1 Ethics

Having followed a discussion on sponsorship and advertising informed by the questioning topic guide, but also partly led by the varying perspectives of the participants, all participants were asked, “Do you think there should be an ethical framework around the sponsorship and marketing used?” (in Premier League football). Fundamentally, most felt an ethical framework would be helpful, but responses reflected the economic capital of the positions of those responding. Those with an indirect commercial interest in football (not directly employed by a club) were often, paradoxically, more direct in their responses with one stating bluntly: “Well, you have to say, generally speaking, morality in football is not a high priority.” (Participant 15, Commercial interests).

The football club Commercial Director (Participant 11) who was interviewed responded taking a position often adopted by corporate interests (Allen 2020) who place the burden (and blame?) of ‘appropriate’ levels of consumption on individuals when unhealthy brands are marketed: “I would be very much in the everything’s fine in moderation camp, so beer is fine in moderation, betting is fine in moderation”. Allen (2020) described this as a “common industry argument and framing tactic” (p.1). These arguments and narratives are used regularly by commercial actors to distract or refute public health campaigns. The position taken by Participant 11, is characterised by Allen as, “It’s Their Own Fault for Overindulging, So Don’t Punish Moderate Consumers” (p.25).

State interference is strongly resisted by economic libertarians (“This is the Nanny State Going Too Far” (Allen 2020 p.25)) and such a position was articulated by

Participant 6 (Finance Company) who argued, “it comes down to your personal perspective around ... people’s right to spend their money how they see fit, versus ... the view of the state intervening to stop problem gambling”. He continued:

And so Cadbury and Coca-Cola, I can see why, you know, a very nanny state view of the world would be, yes, we should ban it, kids shouldn’t be exposed to it, but they are legal businesses going about their business, selling products that, you know, I consume and therefore I don’t have a problem with it being advertised and associated with sport.

Within the club setting, those working for the club’s charitable foundation were aware of the community and social objectives of their own organisation which may be different from those of the football club. They were also aware that the club’s brand was very powerful, evoking passion and connection, and thus played an important and influential role in all their activities. The community coaches display the sponsoring brands on their clothing which may have a particular impact on children who see the same brands worn by the players:

... obviously children who idolise players and would do anything to meet their heroes if they’re seeing them, you know, running around with a particular brand on their shirts, they do recognise that brand (Participant 1, Club).

Whilst those employed in a community role have limited economic capital, they fully appreciate the cultural assets of their club.

Fans were aware of this cultural capital and had less concern for economic interests, enabling them to reflect on sponsorship and the issues arising from unhealthy sponsorship. They were aware that they (the fans) provided a market for the brands being promoted and felt that because these companies were trading on the love of the club, care needed to be taken. “So, anything being advertised I think that supporters are way more susceptible to following suit because it’s part of the football club” and “supporters love their club to another level” (Participant 12, Fan). Another fan (Participant 10) was frustrated at the brightness and distracting nature of the LED stadium perimeter advertising whilst recognising, “My little girl’s looking at that more than the game half the time”. Whilst recognising

that fans have high cultural capital, it is also clear that there are very clear differences of acceptance to commercial messaging reflecting the paradoxical views described in King's (1997a) research with Manchester United fans.

Participant 12 from a national fans' organisation saw this as a split between those who are "really sensitive to betting and certain ads and being bombarded" and those who really do not care "whatever the football club does as long as they can keep going".

It was recognised that sponsorship needed to be congruent with the club brand particularly by those representing commercial interests as any deviation from this could damage a club and have a negative economic impact. A broadcaster (Participant 15), very aware of the industry he worked in, stated, "the authorities have to be very careful that sponsorship doesn't spread to affecting the core values of what football clubs are all about". Another senior football club representative (Participant 9) was clear that any inconsistencies in messaging could affect "reputational damage" so "our communications and brand teams would look at what kind of signal or message does that say if we align ourselves with a particular brand". As noted earlier, the field of power illustrated in Figure 51 may primarily reflect a struggle between those who view economic or cultural assets the higher.

Those with economic capital are dependent on the cultural capital of the clubs and exploit those assets as completely as they are able but are aware that they must not undermine the cultural foundations of these same clubs at the same time. Sponsors seek out the cultural capital possessed by the fans that partnering with the club gives them access to. It is cultural capital that binds club and fans together. Corporate agents try to exploit this as in the example of FUN88 referencing "the roar from the Gallowgate" (FUN88 2018a) and Coca-Cola's 'Where Everyone Plays' film which were both discussed in Chapter Six.



## 7.5.2 Promoting Health

'Promoting health' was identified as an initial theme (Table 20, p.222) and it seems very obvious to write and discuss the idea that football should be good for health and indeed, it is not uncommon to find a claim that "sport can be used as a vehicle for improving world health" (Krustrup 2018 p.viii) or "football is medicine" (Krustrup and Parnell 2020 p.3). The interview participants were also clear that football has the potential to promote health:

So, kids love sport and it has the potential to be such an amazing force for health and, you know, it makes them run around at lunchtime, it makes them excited to get better at sport and it's also, obviously, it has so many benefits in terms of, like, social cohesion and ultimately it's a brilliant brilliant thing. (Participant 14, Commercial interest).

Those placed with some economic and high cultural capital within the club's charitable foundations were aware of the incongruence between their club's commercial partnerships while their own work was about promoting health. Those participants in these roles were proud of their work:

Thirty years of delivering community-based provision to help improve the health of the local population, and that's grown and grown over the years to the point where we're supporting the entire life course from children, young people right the way through to older adults. (Participant 1, Charitable Foundation).

But economic capital has bought brand presence in the spaces in which football's cultural capital is reproduced. As described in the previous section, there is a lack of congruency in this work undertaken to promote health, whilst those working within clubs for charitable foundations were very conscious of their role in providing a platform for their club's sponsors. Participant 13 was obliged to wear her club uniform complete with gambling sponsor brand on her trousers, tee-shirt, jacket and coat whilst undertaking her work within the community. Similarly, Participant 1 (also from a club foundation) noted that all their community coaches carried sponsors' brands on their clothing. This awareness was carried forward into

concerns about the children the foundations work with, recognising that children idolise players and can identify a particular brand carried on players' shirts. This was echoed by a commercial participant (from a media company): "when you think about the significant influence of sport in their lives, then you start to ask the questions, well is that influence promoting their health or detracting from it." (Participant 14).

Fans too, with less economic capital, but very aware of the responsibilities of their club through its cultural capital, appreciate these contradictions in health messaging:

We are saying that we need to encourage more kids to play sports, but if, at the same time, that sport is counter acting that whether through sugary drinks or alcohol, or mental health through gambling problems, then, to some extent, those things are working against each other.

(Participant 16, Fan).

Whilst playing football is generally perceived as 'good for health', watching sport may in fact be detrimental to health given the unhealthy nature of many sponsors, the poor food choices provided at venues and the sedentary behaviour also linked with fandom (Parry *et al.* 2017; Parry *et al.* 2020).

### 7.5.3 Responsibility and Regulation

Bourdieu saw the field of sporting practices as a "site of struggles" (Bourdieu 1978 p.819) which included what he called "participant sport vs. spectator sport" (Bourdieu 1978 p.826). The commodification of the EPL has led to some opposition to those possessing the economic capital in the clubs (the owners) from those holding the cultural capital (the fans). Whilst football has not been seen as a conventional business, the EPL is now part of the modern entertainment industry (Hassan and Hamil 2011), and the relative autonomy in the field of sport in its powers of self-administration (Bourdieu 1978) may now be called into question.

Whilst the possibility of an ethical framework around the sponsorship and advertising used in the Premier League was considered, the participants were not

clear how this could be achieved or where the responsibility for this might lie. It recalls the discussion about brand in 7.4.1 in that it is not always clear who is the true ‘owner’ of football. Whilst the clubs and the Premier League claim the economic capital, it is the fans who may lay claim to the philosophical and social ownership of the sport: “the current runners of the game, the FA and the Premier League, they’re custodians of it. The game will still exist post-them.” (Participant 8, Fan).

In many ways, and taking into account that economic capital is of lower value to them, fans may be more protective of their sport and be acutely aware of the impact that the marketing of unhealthy brands may have in their communities:

I kind of think the FA could lead by example but it's between the leagues and the clubs ... to effect change and consider the impact that their marketing, sponsorship has on people, their community. (Participant 12, Fan).

Club representatives, reflecting any pressure on their independence and their economic interests, are more likely to challenge attempts at establishing an ethical framework around the commercial relationships in the EPL placing this responsibility on the UK government: “It wouldn’t be a league decision, it would need to be a government decision” (Participant 11, Commercial Director).

The site of sporting struggle is complex, as shown in Figure 51. Whilst the positioning of fans and clubs is clear, it is less so when it comes to the Government and the governing body of the rules of football, the Football Association (FA). The 20 member clubs of the EPL manage their own affairs as “separate businesses coming together collectively” (Participant 17, Government). The UK Government derives economic and cultural capital from football and given the complexity of the field, may be unwilling to take any regulatory role and leaves the responsibility of football to the sport itself:

it’s ultimately football’s responsibility....the government doesn’t dictate. You know, these are commercial businesses. We would not have been involved in the decisions for Sky Bet to sponsor the football league.

We won't be consulted on individual Premier League sponsors. You know, it's for those clubs to, kind of, have those commercial discussions. (Participant 17, Government)

The UK Government Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) has both a responsibility to promote culture (including sport) but also to ensure social responsibility (DCMS 2020a). The participant is here prioritising the economic dimension of practice over any consideration of social responsibility and well-being. Government is in a position to influence and pressure the Premier League, and indeed regulate where this may be considered necessary, but it chooses not to do.

Apart from the club representatives and the participant from DCMS, quoted above, most of the interviewees felt that regulation of the Premier League was left to the Premiership clubs themselves. This view was expressed most strongly by those who were employed (or who had been previously) in fan representative roles. Some may be aware of the close relationship between DCMS and the Premier League and the social connections between both. As Participant 18 (Fan) said, "probably the one organisation that the Premier League talks to most often is not their sponsors or their broadcasters but it's the government". Historically, with very few exceptions, the UK government has left sport to manage itself. In effect, it is highly unlikely to intervene unless pressure is brought, particularly by the football fans, who, as articulated, often see themselves as the true custodians of the game. In turn, this may not happen if the desire for commercial and footballing (competition results) success from all parties outweighs any wider social responsibility.

The field is structured in such a way that those with economic capital seek to maximise this capital:

I think you'll find that across a lot of football clubs in particular is that they will go with the best deal possible. There are no scruples necessarily in the game. (Participant 17, Government).

Nevertheless, these economic interests are dependent on the game's cultural capital as represented by the fans. The fans' frustration can be aired in many

ways:

My experiences with the Premier League, my best way I can describe them to people is, this is a private gentleman's club. And it is increasingly, it's mainly gentlemen sat around the table, they are all shareholders in the Premier League. The Premier League isn't owned by us [fans], and I think people think it is. They think that it's our game. And it's not, it's a private company. They can do what they want and we can't stop them. (Participant 8, Fan).

The regulation of football is possible but only by challenging the economic capital possessed by the clubs. The fans, the arbiters of cultural capital, feel disenfranchised from the commercial interests of the sport they love.

Any study into the commercialisation of sport must consider governance and the broader issues of how the Premier League is controlled as raised and discussed by many of the participants whether discussing sponsorship or ownership. Despite football being seen as the people's game, it essentially is a private business run by its membership clubs who would not easily accept government intervention in their choice of sponsorship arrangements which they see as purely a commercial decision. As one participant in this qualitative study said, however, morality in football is not the highest priority. Polley (1998) wrote that arguments against sponsorship are similar to arguments against political involvement in sport in that some believe that government should have no role in regulation in the same way that commercial decisions should be left to the clubs alone.

Fan opposition to owners' values is framed around an awareness that tradition and culture are very important and should be protected against excess commercialisation. As Participant 8 (Fan) said:

We have this very valuable asset, financially, culturally and socially, and civic, and yet we don't protect it in the same way that we protect other things that fall within the same category.

Nauright and Ramfjord (2011) describe what they call the 'Americanization' of English football where North American ownership of Premiership clubs and their

consequent marketing strategies may clash with English traditions and supporters' "consumption of the game" (p.86).

To return to Bourdieu's field of struggle in sporting practice, those who both have some economic capital and use the club's cultural capital to promote health, namely those who work for the clubs' charitable foundations, appreciate that football should be no different from other businesses:

It can be a hard industry to reconcile from a moral perspective, but I think particularly when you're doing something that is designed to say, we as a club, or, we as a governing body endorse this product, I think you have to be open to scrutiny. (Participant 2, Charitable Foundation).

Bourdieu argued that "the history of sport is a relatively autonomous history ... with its own tempo, its own evolutionary laws, its own crises, in short, its specific chronology" (Bourdieu 1978 p.821). This is how those with economic capital prefer to see it, somehow separate from other structures in society. Yet, "sport has a deep cultural significance beyond its perceived commercial imperative" (Hassan and Hamil 2011 p.4). Effective regulation may be necessary where watching football may be considered to harm health rather than to promote it.

## 7.6 Strengths and Limitations

The key strength of this research was the range of participants I was able to access from clubs and organisations across the country. However, there were also some limitations. I would have liked to carry out the interviews once I had completed all my other research so that my questioning would have benefitted from this knowledge and experience. However, access to those working in the football industry is very much influenced by the time of year, or, more precisely, by the requirements of the football season. My research began in October 2017 leaving me no time to prepare interviews in the 2017/18 season. Similarly, I would have had no time to conduct and write up interviews in the 2019/20 season given my thesis submission date in 2020. This was of course fortunate as this season was severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Thus, all interviews were conducted between January and May 2019 in the second half of the 2018/19 season

before football traditionally takes a break in May and June (apart from international competitions). As analysis was conducted in early 2020 when all my other research was completed, this helped particularly in the identification of themes as noted in the results section of this chapter.

I did not approach people employed within public health which may have been a limitation. This was principally because I wanted to interview those who had a direct stake in football. However, speaking to public health stakeholders could have provided interesting insight in this area.

I have noted access issues. In 1994, Anthony King (King 2002) was able to interview senior figures in the game (including Ken Bates, the Chairman of Chelsea, Robert Chase, the Chairman of Norwich City, Jimmy Hill of the PFA and Henry Winter of the *Daily Telegraph*) for his research. In 2019, I did my best to access and interview similar figures. I note though that King was declined interviews by Graham Kelly (FA) and Rick Parry (Premier League) as I was by the same organisations 25 years later.

However, as in other industries, the study benefitted from at least seven participants having held other jobs in football including two who had worked from the Premier League in the past, one who was involved in a governance capacity with the Football Association and another who worked with them, one who had been directly involved in identifying suitable sponsors for the Premier League and one who had been a Director of a professional club in the Football League. Together, the 18 participants who I interviewed, possessed considerable knowledge of and experience in the football industry, as well as presenting varying perspectives.

## 7.7 Conclusions

This qualitative study has supported and complemented the previous research described in earlier chapters of this thesis which explored the extent of sponsorship by UCIs in the EPL. This final study in the four inter-linked case studies

in this thesis has enabled a reflection on the meanings, consequences and potential futures for these arrangements. Whilst a simple thematic analysis was used to explore the initial themes generated in the interviews, a field analysis, adapted from Bourdieu (Grenfell 2014), was used to examine three of the themes in more detail.

The study showed that all respondents recognised the power of brands within football and that these reached a global audience. However, there was concern from many that young people and children were exposed to unhealthy marketing including that of the gambling industry.

Respondents from clubs disclosed the sophistication of their marketing which used data analytics to engage with as many fan-customers as possible.

An understanding of economic and cultural capital helped to identify the different positions and arguments made by the club and fan participants in particular. Those with more economic capital were more likely to take a position that it was the personal responsibility of fans to consume responsibly despite marketing messages encouraging consumption of unhealthy sponsors' products.

However, distinctions may also be blurred in the balance between commercial and social interests particularly when these views were articulated by those working for the charitable foundations. Many of the participants had worked in different capacities in the football industry which may have affected their views. This included fan representatives who had worked with the Premier League and a media figure who had formally been a Football Club Director. Their perspective may be much less clear-cut than those who had always been fans or club officials.

As Bourdieu and colleagues (1999) wrote, "Sport visible as spectacle hides the reality of a system of actors competing over commercial stakes" (p.17). Those who are heavily invested in football as a producer of economic capital are reluctant to regulate where commercial income may be affected. However, many participants, including fans and some from charitable foundations, believed that commercial



sponsorship should be discussed and moderated through the development of some kind of ethical framework. Sponsorships with unhealthy brands from the gambling, alcohol and food and beverage industries were particularly problematic. However, respondents were unclear as to who should be responsible for any regulation of this sponsorship.

## Chapter Eight: Discussion and Conclusions

### 8.1 Introduction

This mixed methods PhD study set out to explore the Commercial Determinants of Health (CHOH) in sport. The combined research described in this thesis was designed to address the following objectives as set out in Chapter One:

- to consider the Commercial Determinants of Health in sport and how these may be reflected in football (soccer) and the English Premier League specifically;
- to explore the nature of marketing of unhealthy commodities across different media in the English Premier League clubs and Premier League across two football seasons (2018/19 and 2019/20).

Four inter-linked studies were used to examine the marketing of unhealthy commodities in the English Premier League (EPL), the world's most broadcast sports league.

### 8.2 Unhealthy marketing is everywhere

The brands of unhealthy commodities fill the mediated space of modern football creating a powerful and highly visible presence amongst the sport's global fanbase. As many areas of the football stadium, pitch surrounds, players' and coaching staff uniforms as possible have been commodified and display multiple logos. The first two of the four studies illustrated here showed how the owners of today's English Premiership clubs have sought to increase their clubs' commercial revenues, attracting sponsors whose audiences are as likely to be in Asia and Africa, as in Europe and North America.

In Chapter Four, the websites of EPL clubs across two football seasons were examined to describe the unhealthy commercial partnerships which had been established. There were 546 sponsorships overall, with 125 (22.9%) coming from the unhealthy commodity industries (UCIs) across the two football seasons

considered. Shirt sponsorship provided the most prominent site for brands with nine EPL clubs having gambling brands on the front of their shirts in the 2019/20 football season. This sponsorship has increased substantially since the Gambling Act 2005 liberalised gambling advertising in the UK. This is demonstrated in the increasing number of shirt sponsorships (exactly half of EPL clubs had a gambling brand shirt sponsor in 2019/20).

The unhealthy sponsorship ladders provided across two seasons show how prevalent sponsorship is from the gambling, alcohol and food and beverage industries. Furthermore, many companies, such as bet365, Carlsberg and Monster Energy, have multiple EPL partners. Sponsorship in the EPL is used to market brands globally, and the bigger EPL clubs have 'official' betting and alcohol partners across the world. There are different marketing opportunities (and therefore commercial partnerships) provided by a 'Big Six' club such as Manchester United, who claim huge followings in Asia, compared with the 'smaller' EPL clubs. It was reported that the combined value of the Premier League shirt sponsor deals in 2019/20 was £349.1 million (Statista 2020). The 'Big Six' received a £264 million (76%) share of this. The shirt sponsorships with gambling companies of the ten smaller clubs was worth £68.6 million in contrast (West Ham United's deal with Betway being the largest at £10 million). The value of shirt sponsorships is directly related to the number of global followers a club is able to demonstrate.

In Chapter Two, the long-term benefit of linking a stigmatised product with a healthy sporting image was highlighted, as demonstrated originally by the tobacco industry (Polley 1998). However, there has also been criticism of UCIs associating themselves with sport for many years. Some sports advocates are unhappy that their sport, a "healthy product", is being used to market unhealthy brands. In effect, they are concerned that their sport or club brand may be damaged by an association with gambling or fast food; much as it was previously by tobacco. As early as 1989, the UK Rugby Football League was criticised for its sponsorship from the brewing and tobacco industries, whose sponsorships were "hardly in keeping with the values the game is supposed to embody" (Gate 1989 p.144).

The second study (Chapter Five) analysed the broadcasting of five EPL matches on subscription television channels, to quantify the extent of the exposure to viewers of gambling, alcohol, food and beverage brands. Exposure to unhealthy brands during the broadcasting of EPL matches on subscription television was high with a mean average of 24.5% of all programme footage including at least one reference to an unhealthy brand, representing 1.3 exposures per minute. This exposure is most common in match in-play (71.9%) with perimeter advertising providing the most references (50.7%). The second most common source of in-play exposure came from sponsor logos located on the shirt front (17.8%). However, brands also appear on players' sleeves, training apparel, coaching staff clothes, stadium dugouts, and in static displays in other sites in stadia. Broadcast exposure is directly related to the commercial partnerships of the teams playing, both through the shirt sponsors and the perimeter advertising which reflects the commercial partnerships of the home team.

This was demonstrated clearly at Newcastle United v Burnley where gambling references were the most common. In this match programme shown on BT Sport, there were 326 gambling references including 190 of bet365 and 109 of FUN88. Both bet365 and FUN88 were sponsors of Newcastle, the home team. Were regulation banning gambling advertising on pitch perimeters (both LED and static including on interview boards) and on official club uniforms (players' shirts and training kit) to be introduced, 305 (94%) of the 326 individual exposures to gambling brands would have been removed. Given that the commercial breaks only provided 12% of the programme coverage, the gambling industry's voluntary 'whistle to whistle' ban (Industry Group for Responsible Gambling 2018) of advertising in commercial breaks can be considered only a gesture with very little impact on exposure to gambling marketing during broadcasts of EPL matches.

This unhealthy marketing places responsibility for purchase on the individual, disregarding the circumstances and the environment where this decision may be made (Moodie *et al.* 2013). The marketing of unhealthy commodities has a demographic gradient and studies have shown that the processed food industry, in particular, has targeted low income and ethnic minority consumers (Grier and

Kumanyika 2008) as well as children and young people (Harris *et al.* 2010). Given the social gradient of marketing strategies (Reith 2019), it is possible that marketing to gain new consumers through sport will enhance sales amongst disadvantaged groups thus increasing health inequalities (Collin and Hill 2016).

As highly regulated industries, tobacco and alcohol have been at the forefront of marketing initiatives including the use of sport for association with a healthy product (Sparks *et al.* 2005). This may also be the case with the food and beverage industry where the UK's latest obesity strategy (UK Government 2020) makes the case that current advertising restrictions for HFSS products are insufficient to protect children from seeing a significant amount of unhealthy adverts on television (Cancer Research UK 2020).

Furthermore, it is clear that exposure to advertising for HFSS products can shape children's preferences from a young age (Cairns *et al.* 2013). Whilst the UK Government has therefore announced an intention to ban HFSS products being shown on television and online before 9pm (UK Government 2020), sport is not mentioned and is likely to provide a convenient mechanism for industry to avoid marketing regulations. Brands such as Cadbury (Agnihotri 2020) and Monster Energy (Lemanski 2020) are continuing to associate themselves with EPL clubs in what may be a deliberate marketing strategy given increasing pressure on advertising practices and possible government regulatory actions (Cornwell 2020).

### **8.3 Brands use excitement and emotion to engage football supporters**

Football fans live and breathe their sport. A football brand is like no other. Supporters have club badges tattooed on their arms and chests. Arguments are regular occurrences between fans of different clubs. Liverpool supporters may only choose red seats to sit on and Everton only blue. These emotions make football brands very different from other brands. Every minute and every goal counts in a football match and it is possible to gamble on when the first goal is scored, who

scored it, the number of goals scored across a match as well as the final result. Before the game kicks off, fans are encouraged to place their half-time order of a pizza in a well-timed television commercial and, when the game finishes, you can celebrate ‘like a King’ with a beer. Sponsors use their brands’ association with football to transfer fans’ emotions and excitement into positive feelings about these brands and to turn fans into consumers.

In the third study (Chapter Six), the methods used by four transnational corporations (TNCs) were examined in detail in case studies drawn from unhealthy commodity industries (UCIs). Coca-Cola and Anheuser-Busch InBev (AB InBev), the owners of the American Budweiser brand, have long histories in sport sponsorship. Coca-Cola’s highly successful ninety-second film, “Where Everyone Plays”, used the EPL clubs’ traditions and rituals to skilfully trade on the sheer exuberance of fans and the love of their clubs to secure millions of views of Coca-Cola’s film for the brand.

Cadbury’s involvement in football is more recent, but they have been very active in recent years with the Premier League and now with EPL clubs. Following the end of Cadbury’s sponsorship of the Premier League itself, their logo appeared on the websites of eight EPL clubs on 2 December 2020. This included all the ‘Big Six’ plus Sheffield United and West Bromwich Albion. The latter club announced its partnership with Mondelez International (who own Cadbury) in November 2020 using the cultural capital not only of the football club, but also of Cadbury’s long association with the West Midlands (Bournville, Birmingham, is the site of the original factory) (West Bromwich Albion FC 2020). The tactic of reinforcing the brand’s positioning as a corporate good citizen is once again shown, with Cadbury stating that they will be supporting WBA’s ‘Baggies<sup>9</sup> Buddies’ programme which is designed to combat loneliness. The emotion and excitement of football is explicitly referenced as the press release stated

... the partnership celebrates the similarities and shared values of the two brands - bringing people together, creating and sharing moments of

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<sup>9</sup> The Baggies is the nickname of WBA fans.

happiness, as well as celebrating and supporting local communities (West Bromwich Albion FC 2020 p.2).

The fourth case study in Chapter Six, of FUN88, Newcastle United's shirt sponsor, shines a light into the strategies of the gambling industry. The findings show how the sponsor, with the direct support of the club, sought to encourage betting from online football followers and matchday attendees alike. All four case studies show that sponsorship involves much more than paying for brands to be displayed on shirt fronts and perimeter advertising (Cliffe and Motion 2005). Brand activation strategies use a range of marketing methods to promote a brand. For example, engagement through social media activities or through entering competitions via product wrappers are designed to develop customer bases and directly increase consumption.

Brand engagement works effectively when brands use football's cultural capital - the sport's tradition, excitement and passion - to position themselves as football fans themselves (Manoli and Kenyon 2019). Brand attachment is a very important concept in sports marketing and it is used to define how consumers feel about a brand and whether one feels congruence with a brand fit (Cornwell 2020). Brands seek to establish commitment and loyalty where sponsor and club fit well together, in order to encourage a consumer to maintain (or increase) their consumption (Mazodier and Merunka 2012). Conversely, consumers may not accept sponsors if there is a perceived dissatisfaction with the brand or company. The example of Wonga, in which Newcastle United fans clearly rejected their club's sponsor's key business of payday loans (Bird 2016), is an example of where brand values conflicted.

Social cognitive psychological models (Bandura 2002) suggest mechanisms which help to explain how marketing is able to draw on the emotional appeal of football to transfer the positive feelings supporters feel for their club onto a sponsoring brand (the process of affect transfer) (Pracejus 2004). These may be unconscious or automatic behaviours (Bargh 2002) and repeated brand exposure (as in the examples of Newcastle United's sponsors above) may also increase liking of a

brand (Harris *et al.* 2009). Sport sponsorship enables brands to drive engagement and loyalty by reaching into fans' passion for their sport. The case studies described in Chapter Six show how sponsoring companies use a wide range of methods to create content and experiences such as through video footage of match action to build a sense of shared values with fans (Morgan *et al.* 2017).

## 8.4 Economic capital and regulation

The driver for sport sponsorship is to increase brand recognition and commercial income wherever possible. In a neoliberal capitalist world, this marketplace is scarcely moderated or regulated in any way, allowing transnational corporations unfettered access to market unhealthy brands across media platforms. The Premier League's new billionaire owners have international aspirations and the league acts effectively as a private corporation resisting any attempts to moderate its influence (Montague 2018).

In the final of the four inter-linked studies described in this thesis, football actors were interviewed to gain an understanding of their views of unhealthy sponsorship and marketing within the EPL (Chapter Seven). Drawing on Bourdieu's field theory (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Bourdieu 1998c; Grenfell and Lebaron 2014), respondents' views were shown to be heavily influenced by the capital they accumulate or reproduce within the football 'field'. Those who possessed most economic capital (the clubs) felt that sport sponsorship was the responsibility of the clubs alone and that it was not the role of government to intervene. Those who held cultural capital (fans) were more aware of the marketing to promote unhealthy brands and were more likely to suggest some regulation was necessary, based on an agreed ethical framework. Respondents who worked for club community foundations were very aware of the inconsistency of their foundation's health interventions whilst their clubs' sponsors were promoting consumption of unhealthy food and drinks and gambling products.

Cornwall (2020) wrote that congruence is a central idea in sponsorship. Thus, a running event being sponsored by a company that makes running shoes is a good



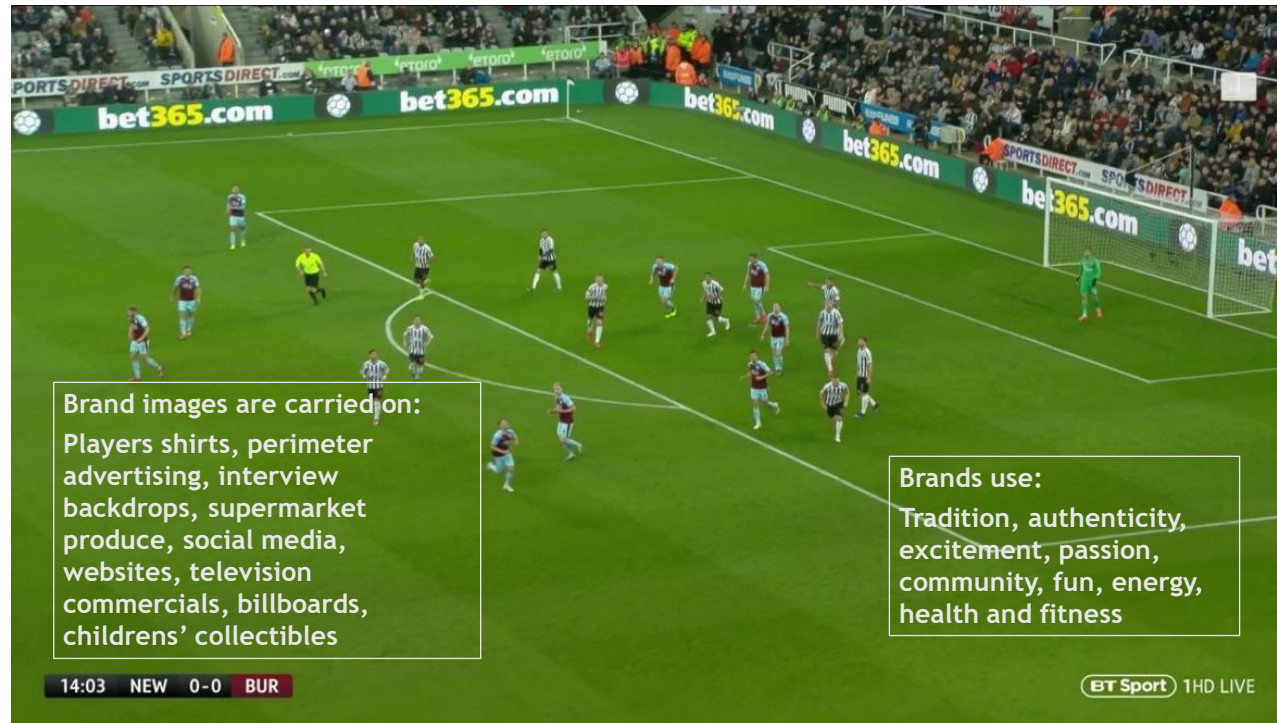
“fit” in potential consumers’ minds. Cornwall argued that Shell Oil sponsoring a wetlands conservation group may make sense in that it was obvious that Shell were trying to improve its environmental reputation. At the same time, the relationship may attract scepticism. This was exactly the point made by some respondents in the qualitative research in terms of football’s HFSS sponsors. Whilst it is obvious why a company like Cadbury would want its unhealthy brands to be associated with health and fitness, this nevertheless attracted some criticism and cynicism. A measure to test what has been described as “relationship authenticity” has therefore been developed for use in sponsorship (Morhart *et al.* 2015), in which it could be argued that all unhealthy brands could be placed low on a scale where consumers appreciate that the sponsorship only has benefit to the sponsor and has no benefit to themselves directly. Certainly if societal actors, or specifically football fans, objected to sponsorship by UCIs, negative publicity could be created and might negate any goodwill from the sponsorship (Cornwell 2020).

## 8.5 Commercial Determinants of Health in Sport

In Chapter Two, we saw that football has been a commercial activity since the nineteenth century. However, the commodification of all aspects of the elite professional game following the launch of the EPL in 1992 (Elliott 2017a) has made sport sponsorship a huge business (Semens 2019). Further, its use by transnational corporations (TNCs) and UCIs in particular, has raised increasing concern by public health actors (Ireland *et al.* 2019), particularly as mental health worsens in the twenty-first century with economic downturns (Bambra *et al.* 2016) and the rising social and financial costs of obesity and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are being experienced globally (Smith *et al.* 2016). The corporate strategies of UCIs and their contribution to population health have been considered in many settings (Jahiel and Babor 2007; Jahiel 2008; Moodie *et al.* 2013; Freudenberg 2016), but rarely in sport.

This thesis describes how today’s English Premier League is a global entertainment product that is used by brands to establish their presence using every means and every surface available. For those who are not interested in sport, it can be

difficult to communicate the grip it holds over fans' passions and emotions. Unhealthy brands are able to use football's cultural capital to associate and ideally (from the brand owners' perspective) transfer the sport's excitement and positive feelings to their brands and products. Figure 52 illustrates this process using an image taken from Newcastle United v Burnley.

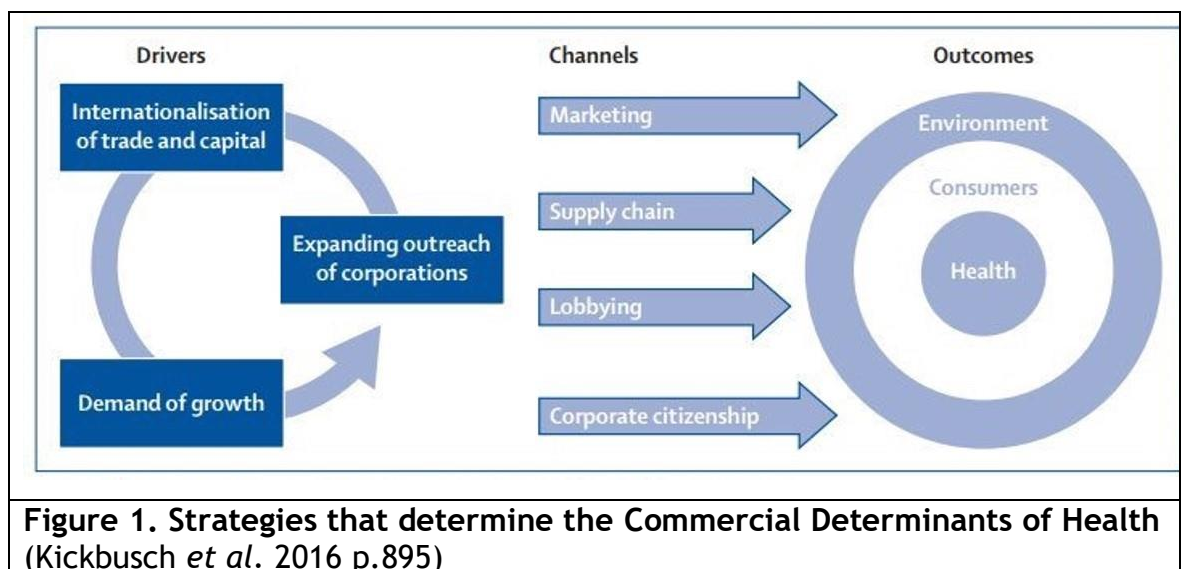


**Figure 52. Affect and Image Transfer.** Background image, screenshot taken from Newcastle United v Burnley, 26 February 2019, BT Sport

Note. Brands seek to achieve a positive image or affect transfer, from the activity which they sponsor, to their brand (Meenaghan and Shipley 1999; Dewhirst 2004; Pracejus 2004; Bühler and Nufer 2013).

Figure 52 illustrates the ubiquity of unhealthy brand images. The gambling brand illustrated, bet365, achieved 190 separate exposures in the Newcastle United v Burnley match shown on BT Sport in the United Kingdom and receiving global coverage thanks to the sale of overseas broadcasting contracts by the Premier League. The four brands illustrated in the case studies in Chapter Six employed the textual and visual cultural capital of football clubs to attempt to promote positive feelings about their brands. The size of the sponsorship agreements driven by the Premier League's television contracts and guaranteed exposure for the brands (as described in Chapter Four), has enabled power to be concentrated with economic capital. Market regulation will be resisted by those holding this capital when a neoliberal ideology dominates political processes.

In Chapter Two, I used the figure below from Kickbusch et. al. (2016) to illustrate the various strategies used by transnational companies in a globalised world to respond to the demand for growth determined by the dominant neoliberal economic orthodoxies. Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) accurately placed football as the global game and Giulianotti with other colleagues went on to describe the making of sport consumers (Giulianotti and Numerato 2018) in the process of the modern commodification of sport (Walsh and Giulianotti 2001).



The four inter-linked studies in this thesis have focused on the part football has played in the marketing and corporate citizenship channels illustrated in Figure 1. UCIs have used these channels to support the development of their supply

chains and to build their brand images, an important aspect of seeking to mitigate against regulation (Brown and Walsh-Childers 2002). The effect is to create an environment for football fans which is saturated with marketing cues to consume unhealthy products contributing to the global industrial epidemic of non-communicable diseases.

As described in Chapter Two, CDOH literature is comparatively recent. Similarly, academic studies of football have largely developed since the focus on the violence and racism of English football, endemic in the sport in the 1970s and 80s. Early forms of sport sponsorship may be considered more as philanthropy or advertising. Modern sponsorship is a relatively modern marketing method distinguished by brand associations through image transfer driven by brand activation (Meenaghan 1991; Cliffe and Motion 2005). I have therefore drawn on a diverse literature, as well as undertaking the original research described above, to conceptualise, describe, analyse and discuss from a sociological and public health perspective why watching EPL football broadcasts on our screens in the twenty-first century may be damaging to our health.

It is noted in CDOH literature that the food and beverage and alcohol industries work hard to associate themselves with sport and activity (Garde and Rigby 2012; Ireland *et al.* 2019; Allen 2020). This is part of a commercial strategy to promote physical activity as a more effective method to prevent obesity than healthier nutrition (Freudenberg 2016; Nestle 2016). TNCs also seek to gain a 'halo effect' for an unhealthy brand in an association with sport through sponsorship (Dixon *et al.* 2019).

In 1989, Lawrence A. Wenner wrote that whilst communication scholars were asked about the effect on children of MTV, cartoon and commercials, sport eludes inquiry (Wenner 1989). It is difficult to obtain accurate figures on the viewing figures for football, but it is clear that the audience includes high numbers of children (Jones *et al.* 2020). Interest and concerns in sport broadcasting have certainly changed within the last two decades. Amis and Cornwell (2005) have written of what constitutes "acceptable sponsorship activity" (p.12), and of the debate around sport organisations accepting money from alcohol firms for instance. More recently, sport sponsorship from UCIs has

been questioned by Ireland *et al.* (Ireland and Boyland 2019; Ireland *et al.* 2019) and by Chambers and Sassi (2019).

Yet the CDOH literature makes very little mention of sport sponsorship as a marketing tool. The concept of social responsibility in business as a management tool (as opposed to philanthropy) only developed from the 1950s (Paramio-Salcines *et al.* 2016). However, there is a literature around corporate social responsibility (CSR) as part of a marketing and communications strategy and how this may be used to promote unhealthy brands to consumers (Kline 2017). CSR may be linked to “cause-related” marketing such as donations to breast cancer research (Farsetta 2010), contributions to physical activity programmes (Freudenberg 2016; Kline 2017) and supporting organisations such as GambleAware and Drinkaware in funding educational activities (Miller *et al.* 2018). The case studies in Chapter Six described how both Cadbury and Coca-Cola have used contributions to community-based charitable causes, often with health objectives, to deflect criticism of the unhealthy aspects of their brand from public health actors. In Chapter Seven, respondents employed by an EPL charitable foundation found it difficult to reconcile the work they did to support the health of their local communities with the marketing of unhealthy sponsors of their club, and the branded uniforms they were obliged to wear which featured the club’s gambling sponsor’s logo.

There is a lack of clarity concerning sport sponsorship in the CDOH literature. There is a need to conceptualise sport sponsorship and its part within the CDOH; both to study it, and, from a public health viewpoint, seek to regulate and/or mitigate its effects. Three contemporary studies have attempted to define and provide an overview of the CDOH literature. Allen (2020) referred to sport sponsorship by ‘big food’ and ‘big alcohol’ as a form of corporate social responsibility (CSR), and provided the example of the 2014 FIFA World Cup being sponsored by Coca-Cola, Budweiser and McDonalds. De Lacy-Vawdon and Livingstone (2020) placed sport sponsorship as a form of marketing and advertising and separated this from other corporate activities such as CSR and corporate political activity (CPA). Mialon (2020) used the Kichbusch *et al.* (2016) framework to structure her review of CDOH literature. Mialon correctly noted that the impact of corporate activity on public health often focused only on the

alcohol, tobacco and food industries. Whilst Mialon did not specifically mention sport, she described the marketing practices of corporations.

Marketing literature is clearer on the differences between CSR and sponsorship. Hemsley (2009) wrote, “Whilst sports sponsorship can often be based on hard-nosed marketing and business decisions, any CSR investment is based more on how a business can improve the communities in which it operates” (p.1). Thus, a sport sponsorship may be entirely separate from a CSR programme, although it is argued by marketers that they complement each other (as described in Chapter Six). Hemsley used the example of the gambling industry where, as documented in Chapter Four, shirt sponsorship by gambling brands is common in the Premier League and “potentially as socially damaging as being sponsored by tobacco or alcohol brands” (p.43). Hemsley used examples of gambling brands which had sponsored Tottenham Hotspur, Sunderland AFC and West Ham United, as evidence of how companies attempted to alleviate criticism of their sponsorship by supporting community and charitable health causes. However, CSR must connect with the values of the business according to Hemsley: “A CSR strategy will also falter if the whole issue of social responsibility is viewed by big players within a particular industry purely as a way to avoid more regulation” (p.53). In Chapter Six, Cadbury was considered as a case study where it has used a CSR strategy to try to counter criticism of its sponsorship of the EPL. Hemsley recalled a previous campaign by the former Cadbury Schweppes to swap tokens gained from chocolate products for sport equipment in 2003. Following a backlash from parents and health campaigners, Cadbury followed a tobacco industry tactic, by claiming the token idea would not encourage consumers to eat more chocolate but merely to switch brands (Hemsley 2009).

### **8.5.1 Sport sponsorship**

Sponsorship models have developed from the 1970s when sponsorship may be defined as a “single payment made for advertising” (Chanavat *et al.* 2017b p.112) and have since become considerably more complex in their objectives (Meenaghan 2005). Chanavat *et. al.* (2017) described the key factors. Coherence (sometimes called congruence) relates to whether a company’s brand values are in harmony with the sponsees. Public health advocates will question whether an

association made between a perceived healthy activity such as football and the consumption of fast food can ever be described as brand coherence. In contrast, unhealthy corporations want to construct a world where their brands are compatible with being healthy and sport sponsorship provides a way of achieving this objective. Hastings (2015), in discussing corporate marketing, wrote that Coca-Cola and McDonald's were well aware of the marketing value of major sports events. Sports sponsorship can transfer values to the sponsor including an association with health and fitness (Meenaghan and Shipley 1999; Jobber 2001) and may help deflect criticism of an unhealthy brand. Hastings (2015) described the affect as "innocence by association" (p.1052).

Opportunities for tobacco advertising and sponsorship have been severely limited because of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (World Health Organisation 2003). However, just as regulation affected such marketing, it is likely that the alcohol, gambling, and the food industries will continue to follow the tactics and innovations of the tobacco industry in their pursuit of profits at the expense of public health. Sport sponsorship, whilst placing unhealthy brands in front of a huge global audience including millions of young people, is often neglected in the considerations of those seeking to regulate the limit of exposure of unhealthy brands.

Where clubs are aware of these issues, they are likely to play off commercial needs against any health or ethical concerns. Ben Kensell, Chief Operating Officer of Norwich City FC, in an interview with a local journalist in June 2019 (Goreham 2019), articulated this debate when he spoke of his club's new sponsorship deal with gambling company, Dafabet: "sometimes a football club has to ... marry ... the requirement for funds at the highest level ... against its values." Walsh and Giulianotti (2007) made exactly this point in discussing the commodification of sport and the pressure to meet financial targets. The need for advertising, merchandising and commercial revenues are seen as essential for the survival of professional sport and as having priority over any other considerations. Walsh and Giulianotti argued that without any form of state intervention, advertisers will "dictate the shape and structure of sport" (p.17).



### 8.5.2 Corporate social responsibility

No right-minded tobacco multinational would consider addicting another generation of children without first producing a glossy report on its good works in the inner cities or Sub-Saharan Africa (Hastings 2015 p.1051)

In the quotation above, Hastings demonstrated that corporate social responsibility was used to disguise and hide the true purpose of modern advertising and branding, such as in the tobacco industry example he provided above. Kwak and Cornwell (2016) likewise placed cause-linked marketing as part of an organisation's CSR approach. They argued that sport is increasingly using this approach to build emotional bonds with fans. For example, the NFL (the American professional National Football League) promoted the American Cancer Society. In a similar vein, the EPL has its own Charitable Fund which "creates and supports activities that inspire young people to achieve their potential and positively impact their communities" (Premier League 2020 p.1). The work carried out by club charitable foundations may cover a wide range of community-based provision to help improve the health of the local population from support for children through long term health and mental health conditions, to help for older adults. As found in this thesis, some employed by these foundations were uncomfortable about how this positive contribution to the health of local communities may be harmed by the unhealthy marketing of club sponsors.

Given that all cause-linked marketing is designed to ultimately generate revenues (Kwak and Cornwell 2016), UCIs may link their sponsorship with supporting a meaningful cause in order to better leverage their brand association and thereby increase consumption (Cornwell and Maignan 1998). Flöter et. al. (2016) discussed the effectiveness of the communication of CSR-linked sponsorship recognising the potential difficulties in obtaining positive brand effects if messages are seen as company-controlled. As described in the Cadbury Schweppes example previously, where tokens obtained from buying chocolate products were swapped for sport equipment (Hemsley 2009), consumers may perceive cause-related marketing as exploitative (Kwak and Cornwell 2016), which could potentially have a negative effect on sponsorships as brand image

transfer can work in both directions (Morgan *et al.* 2017). The charity Diabetes UK's commercial association with Britvic, the owners of many brands of sugar-sweetened soft drinks, may be argued as detrimental to the image of both brands given the association between an overconsumption of calories and the condition (Diabetes UK 2018).

There is a lack of clarity in some CDOH literature which sees CSR schemes as including sport sponsorship (Millar 2013; Allen 2020). Whilst there is widespread understanding that the marketing of unhealthy transnational corporations may damage health (de Lacy-Vawdon and Livingstone 2020), in considering regulation of these marketing practices (de Lacy-Vawdon and Livingstone 2020), a clear distinction should be made between sport sponsorship and CSR. It is possible to regulate the former, as with tobacco industry sponsorship; however, it is more complicated to prevent unhealthy commodity industries directly funding charities such as Street Games which accept money from Coca-Cola whilst promoting physical activity (see Chapter Six).

## **8.6 The field of struggle in football**

Football is not one community of interests but, as Bourdieu wrote, and as previously quoted, it is “a system of actors competing over commercial stakes” (Bourdieu *et al.* 1999 p.17). Bourdieu's theory of practice is helpful in considering both the position of the researcher and the fan in the social field of football.

### **8.6.1 The social scientist as an agent of change**

Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Deer 2014) argued that social science researchers should strive to recognise their position and the conditions and structures of their practice. This thesis sought to undertake this reflexive approach and tried to recognise and control the effect of my own position in relation to the objects of my research, as described in Chapters One and Three.

Of course, I am both a fan and a researcher. As a football fan, I share the views of many of those of my generation (Hornby 1992; Nicholson 2019) and from multiple backgrounds that decry the commercialisation of modern football. As a white male who was already 37 years of age when the Premier League was launched in 1992, I remember football in the 1970s and 80s. I therefore welcome the steps taken to welcome women into stadia, to encourage greater diversity amongst football supporters and to enjoy a safer experience. My perspective as a long-term fan and modern consumer of football however has helped develop my understanding of the methods required to rigorously examine how the sponsorship and marketing of unhealthy brands is practised in today's English Premier League.

As a public health advocate, I am appalled by the use of 'my' sport to promote the consumption of unhealthy commodities whilst industry blames this consumption on the personal behaviour of its targeted markets. As the former Chief Executive of a public health charity, I fully understand that to achieve changes in policy which may improve population health, a clear approach to advocacy is required (David *et al.* 2020). The first stage is always the gathering and presentation of data to present an evidence-based rationale for change. The studies in this thesis have produced this data to show how the commercial determinants of health are applied in the English Premier League.

At the 2018 Football Supporters' Federation Annual General Meeting held in London, I proposed a motion which recommended limiting "the use of football as a marketing platform for HFSS brands" (Football Supporters' Federation 2018). After a debate, the motion was carried. This experience drew on my personal identity as a fan together with my work experience in public health. It provides an example of how personal experience and a public health background can be combined to provide an effective and informed voice for population health.

I trust my (almost) sixty years of 'consuming' football places me in an excellent position to understand the emotional appeal of the sport. Whilst my public health experience of over thirty-five years has led me to hate how fans' passion for 'their' sport is manipulated by corporate practices to encourage consumption of gambling, alcohol and unhealthy food and beverages. In developing an

understanding and analysis of the commercial practices of sponsorship and marketing in football, I trust I have strengthened my own (and I hope others') advocacy towards a healthier sport.

Bourdieu also believed that the role of the academic 'intellectual' can fulfil both positive and negative functions and argued "For a Scholarship with Commitment" (Bourdieu 2010 pp.179-185). Bourdieu believed that academics should criticise the neoliberal *doxa* in terms of addressing the "interests of the dominant" and the "overwhelming power of transnational corporations" (pp.183-184). This supports my own approach concerning the commercial determinants of health in sport. Bourdieu argued that there was a negative role for the academic in producing and disseminating "instruments of defence against symbolic domination" (p.181). This involves providing a discourse to challenge and help uncover the social determinants of the "producers of dominant discourse" (p.181). Bourdieu was specifically writing about the economic writers who support neoliberal ideology, but this approach can also be applied to those who write or research the sport of football without considering the values and ideology of the business underpinning it (Cohen 2021).

### **8.6.2 Football fans and symbolic violence**

*Symbolic domination* describes effectively the relationship between both TNCs, and the owners and leaders of the football industry, and their consumers/fans in their respective environments. Bourdieu used the concept specifically in terms of education and culture (See for example: Bourdieu 1993a) in describing the structures of authority contained in these industries. This also applies to the neoliberal discourse which surrounds the framing of consumerism around personal choice.

In Chapter Two (2.2.2), it was described how the commercial determinants of health literature has shown how commercial interests have framed policy approaches to noncommunicable disease prevention (Lencucha and Thow 2019). This neoliberal framing is based on the assumption that consumption expands choice and any attempt to regulate it is an infringement on personal liberty (Purdie *et al.* 2019). Unhealthy commodity industries use the argument of

personal choice even within their marketing. For example, the gambling industry demonstrates its support for GambleAware, a charity supported by voluntary contributions from the gambling industry to pay for research and education around ‘problem gambling’ (Cassidy 2020). And, like the food and beverage and alcohol industries, there is emphasis on the individual gambling ‘responsibly’, despite the constant messaging in football broadcasting (Chapter Five) to gamble more.

This classic neoliberal concept is also expressed in the views of those with economic capital, and who benefit the most from this view, as described in the qualitative study in Chapter Seven. Cassidy argued that industry used ‘responsible gambling’ to emphasise individual responsibility, whilst a public health response emphasised population-wide policy measures to prevent this harm from occurring (Wardle *et al.* 2019; Cassidy 2020). Similarly, Orford (2020) described the debate between an individual’s freedom to choose how to behave without interference by the state, as a debate framed to protect the freedom of the gambling industry from government regulation. The gambling industry frames ‘responsible’ gambling together with that of the ‘informed consumer’, disregarding the evidence against the likelihood of winning (Orford 2020). Promoting individual responsibility distracts from the wider political, economic, regulatory and commercial features that produce harm (Reith 2019).

Baum (2015) argued “the distinguishing feature of public health is its focus on populations rather than individuals” (p.140). There are ideological and moral components to this debate: libertarians and proponents of neoliberal capitalism believe that any restrictions on advertising are an inappropriate barrier in a free market economy. Others identify a class dimension whereby the middle class paternalistically oppose the ‘harmless’ recreational activities of the working class (see Clapson 1992 re: gambling), perhaps echoing the arguments over professionalism in football at the end of the nineteenth century, as described in Chapter Two.

In considering determinants of health, it is useful to review Bourdieu’s concept of *symbolic violence* and apply this both to football and an understanding of agency shaping the football environment. *Symbolic violence* is the product of

*symbolic domination* and “practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle” (Bourdieu 1977 p.78). In any discussion of a football ‘family’ or ‘community’, fans are encouraged to accept that they share the same interests of those who derive economic capital from the game. Fans are persuaded that the commodification of their sport is reasonable and that it is acceptable that their clubs have been sold to billionaires based on different continents to their home stadiums. They are similarly encouraged to buy replica shirts advertising the brands of the gambling industry, and to accept that marketing messages (unhealthy or otherwise) on football stadiums, social media platforms and interview backboards are a natural part of the game. Football club owners and the executives of clubs argue that it is the price that has to be paid for teams to be able to compete at the highest level. Best used the Bourdeuisian concept of *symbolic violence* in his paper on the Football League’s use of ‘sporting sanctions’ on clubs which went into financial administration (Best 2011). In this case, Best argued, football governance is exercised via an institutional structure that has the function of keeping order and maintaining the cultural arbitrary and symbolic power.

Similarly, the commodification of football is argued as the natural development for a sport which has become a the “the most global and most popular of popular cultural phenomenon in the twenty-first century” (Goldblatt 2019 p.3). However, as King argued in his study of Manchester United fans (King 1997a), fan culture can be framed in terms of both submission and resistance. Whilst the owners and management of football clubs seek to maintain control of both economic capital and cultural capital, not all fans acquiesce *to symbolic violence*.

### **8.6.3 Fan opposition to symbolic domination**

Opposition to the prevailing power relations within elite football is likely to be determined by the fans themselves and debates about what makes a true ‘authentic’ football fan. The concepts of tradition and authenticity within football have been important throughout this thesis. As has been argued, football clubs may be considered as brands (Bridgewater 2010) and the history

and tradition of famous clubs, such as Manchester United, have been studied and discussed from this perspective (Hill and Vincent 2006; Hamil 2008; Boli 2017). From a philosophical position, fan groups argue that they are the true keepers of this tradition, which was reflected in the interviews with fan representatives in the Chapter Seven. For instance, some Manchester United fans asserted their position as authentic (working-class) Mancunians in their opposition to the global commercial development of their club in the opposition to the takeover by American owners between 2003 and 2005 (Brown 2008). This opposition reflects a wider dissatisfaction felt by many football fans and writers with the modern game, as demonstrated by many heartfelt and well-argued books on the subject (Conn 1997; Conn 2005; Bazell 2011; Goldblatt 2015; Tempny 2016; Nicholson 2019).

Several of these writers positioned themselves as traditional, authentic fans in opposition to the modern consumer fan. As Brooks (2019) argued, this is a false dichotomy, with fans appreciating their club's past but also embracing a new stadium culture that welcomes women, provides better access to disabled supporters and actively combats racist and homophobic language. Brooks advocated a nuanced view of fan identities which took into account the assimilation of football with wider leisure industries. In this, the game's control by "modern capitalism" (p.3) naturalises relationships between clubs, fans and associated industries. Fans' identity as consumers are therefore accommodated within football's tradition whilst simultaneously criticised by those who seemingly want to return to a more 'authentic' culture. In my interviews, fans expressed both positions. Whilst some questioned the more extreme representation of commercialism in football, others simply found it annoying, in that constantly changing LED advertising displays distracted them from their enjoyment of the game. Most felt that the power to change these relationships did not rest with them.

Kennedy and Kennedy (2013) also explored this portrayal of fans as passive or reluctant consumers. In their view, whilst professional football has been commodified, football clubs are more than simply businesses - they are caught between being businesses and community assets. This was expressed most clearly in the different positions articulated by those employed in the football

club itself, or in the club's associated charitable foundation in the previous chapter. David Kennedy (2013) reflected further on these issues in a study of the discussions around Everton supporters' views of their proposed football stadium relocation. In this, fans seemed to be united in an acceptance of seeing their club better "commercially geared for the future" (p.21) in making them more competitive on the field. To this extent, opposition to unhealthy branding in the EPL may be limited if fans believe that there is no alternative to receiving income from UCIs, if, by refusing to take it, their club may be placed at an economic disadvantage. However, fans may be more critical of the EPL itself, which because of its perceived wealth, may be open to more scrutiny. The EPL has been careful not to accept sponsorship from gambling companies in 2019/20, but its CEO refused to criticise clubs which have accepted this type of sponsorship (Conn 2020a).

#### **8.6.4 The governance of football**

Bruyninckx (2012) summed up the attitude of most sports' governing bodies (such as the Football Association) very succinctly, when he wrote a book chapter entitled, 'Sports Governance. Between the Obsession with Rules and Regulation and the Aversion to Being Ruled and Regulated'. Bruyninckx argued that the worlds of sport and government have been perceived as separate. Sport is considered usually from the perspective of results and records rather than in terms of power and legitimacy, with no consideration of costs and benefits to wider society as a result of policy interventions. Thus sport, and football, have traditionally only been subjected to self-governance or private governance. The game's traditional regulatory institutions have struggled to keep up with its commercial success and global influence (Hamil *et al.* 1999). Whilst football and its club representatives will present arguments against regulation and a neoliberal conservative government may be averse to what it regards as state interference, government intervention may be required to moderate the worst effects of a free market economy. Perhaps public authorities are increasingly realising that certain aspects of the commercialisation of professional sport require closer scrutiny (such as in the EU position taken against Sky in football broadcasting described in Chapter Five) (Bruyninckx 2012).



Fan organisations, including some of the respondents in the last chapter, may be considered committed to the long-term sustainability of the sport, whilst commercial interests are sometimes much more short-lived and geared towards success on the football field. Thus, the most constructive suggestion towards establishing an ethical framework for commercial sponsorship could, as one representative suggested, involve an expert working group with all stakeholders involved: Government, the FA, the supporters organisations, the Premier League and the EFL. There is increasing concern and pressure for more public oversight and control over the world of sports, whether this is around doping, racism or tax evasion (Bruyninckx 2012). If the sponsorship by UCIs is considered to be potentially damaging the health of football's consumers, there is a strong argument for better governance in football through regulation and public policy.

Bourdieu referred to the potential of social movements as “the vanguard of a worldwide struggle against neo-liberalism” (Bourdieu 1998a p.53) and against symbolic domination. Freudenberg, in describing his experiences as a “public health researcher, practitioner, and activist” (Freudenberg 2021 p.6) also argued that only social movements can “create alternatives to the world created by twenty-first century capitalism” (p.299) and thus address the impact of corporations on health. In the focus groups, some of those from fan organisations interviewed, as described in Chapter Seven, glimpsed the potential for change. The governance of football may provide the key to this change.

## 8.7 Strengths and limitations

As far as the researcher is aware, this is the first application of a comprehensive approach to understanding how the Commercial Determinants of Health work in sport. This thesis provides an insight into the mechanisms that drive the operations of unhealthy commodity industries. Other studies have focused on individual harmful commodities such as food and drink brands (Kelly *et al.* 2010a), alcohol (Purves *et al.* 2017) and gambling (Cassidy and Ovenden 2017; Purves *et al.* 2020). There is a strong argument for taking a cohesive systems approach across unhealthy commodity industries in understanding the linkages across UCIs (Knai *et al.* 2021). Others have argued that a position of “tobacco exceptionalism” (Collin 2012; McCambridge and Morris 2019) in which tobacco

has been considered as a unique threat to public health, may have inadvertently led to obstacles in policy coherence in addressing NCDs by not considering other unhealthy industries such as food and alcohol (to which may be added gambling) which also have global health impacts. This multi-case study research illustrates the importance of looking across industries to understand unhealthy marketing and sponsorship within football.

The CDOH literature itself is relatively new and academics are seeking to define (de Lacy-Vawdon and Livingstone 2020) and understand commercial determinants as drivers of ill-health (Mialon 2020). Despite football's position as the 'global game' (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009) and a key driver in the process of globalisation (Kennedy and Kennedy 2016), sport has barely featured in this literature. This thesis is the first to conceptualise and distinguish sport sponsorship from CSR within a CDOH framework. In addition, by focusing on the EPL, this thesis has been able to examine in depth how this unhealthy marketing may be addressed in one setting.

This chapter has drawn from each of the four inter-linked studies to triangulate the results and to use a mixed methods approach to ensure the validity of the data and its interpretation (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). However, each individual study had limitations, as acknowledged in the specific chapters (Chapters Four to Seven). Below I briefly consider some general issues.

One key limitation is that we cannot assume that exposure to unhealthy brands in football increases consumption. There has been no attempt to measure or understand the consequences of the marketing messages which have been described in this thesis. However, many studies do show the effectiveness of this marketing (Brown 2016; Orford 2020) particularly amongst children (Cairns *et al.* 2013; Boyland *et al.* 2016). It is also clear that marketing does influence consumer behaviour in line with business goals (Mahoney 2015).

A further limitation lies in the fact that brand marketing is a complex and sophisticated field, and sport and football are a fertile field for marketers (Chanavat *et al.* 2017a; Semens 2019; Cornwell 2020). A single study of the EPL will omit some marketing practices particularly those that may be presented by

new media (Dittmore and McCarthy 2016) including social media. Other professional sports may also provide different results.

My public views and public health profile may have both helped and hindered the qualitative research undertaken in this study. It may well have been a factor in representatives of both the FA and the EPL declining to speak to me (as they may have considered my public stance to be critical of their commercial sponsorships). However, my position in Healthy Stadia (Section 3.5.2) provided me with senior contacts and connections which helped in securing interviews.

In undertaking the thesis however, I would argue that my personal experience as a football fan, combined with my academic and working experience as a public health advocate, were particular strengths.

## **8.8 Conclusions**

This case study of the EPL illustrates a very sophisticated array of commercial strategies which exchange economic capital for access to football's social and cultural capital, which UCIs use to attempt to stimulate consumption among fans and thus expand their accumulation of economic capital. It adds to our understanding of how TNCs from UCIs use marketing techniques to seek engagement and emotional involvement from fan-consumers for their brands by drawing on the passion and excitement of elite football. The case shows the importance of including sport sponsorship as a key element when examining the advertising reach of UCIs.

Whilst the EPL is played in England and Wales, its followers from its televised broadcasts live in all the continents of the world. Match kick-off times are designed to maximise viewers and provide the largest possible market of potential consumers for the UCIs who are the clubs' and EPL's sponsors.

This study contributes to the further shaping of literature and research around CDOH and illustrates the benefits of considering the marketing strategies of UCIs together in order to understand the similarities of their approaches. Further, this thesis highlights the interface between public health and sport. This may be

poorly understood in sport literature which may take a medicalised, individually focused approach and is more about health protection than public health. The commercial determinants of health literature has almost ignored sport altogether even as elite football has become a global culture industry.

This thesis has used a sociological framework to bear on a public health issue. This Bordieusian framework is also applicable in considering unhealthy marketing in other settings in which TNCs use their economic capital to access social and cultural capital. By using cartoon characters in their advertising which are appealing to children for example, TNCs are buying visibility and relevance to insert their brands into communities which they want to extract economic capital from.

In drawing on a wide range of literature across several academic fields, my thesis began by demonstrating that football (and sport) has always acted as a vehicle for commercialisation, and now globalisation. The four inter-linked studies of this PhD suggested that the relationship between the media and football in the twenty-first century makes it an ideal platform to promote the brands of transnational UCIs whose search for new markets and consumers facilitates the increase of noncommunicable diseases across the world. A dominant neoliberal political framework has assisted these TNCs to build unhealthy environments and act as vectors for noncommunicable diseases (Gilmore *et al.* 2011) whilst blaming individuals for their excessive consumption.

As many writers have argued, modern football reflects dominant neoliberal economic thinking. This case study of the EPL illustrates the sophisticated and multiple channels through which commercial actors manipulate the social and cultural capital of the football field to extract economic capital. The EPL's hyper-commodification, in which fans are football's consumers, will promote gambling, alcohol and HFSS food and beverages at the risk of fans' health. Unless this hyper-commodification is controlled by the Premier League, the clubs themselves or by the UK government. This thesis has provided a strong argument for why control of unhealthy marketing in English elite football is necessary to better protect the public's health.

## Chapter Nine - Policy Recommendations and Further Research

### 9.1 A call for action to address unhealthy sponsorship

Football should be considered as any other industry in which regulation may be required if an unfettered marketplace impacts on people's health.

Further, the EPL is a global competition played in and broadcast from England and Wales. It can be viewed in almost every territory on the planet and the branded uniforms of its elite clubs are worn by fan-consumers in towns and cities across the world. It is a global spectacle reaching and potentially influencing billions of consumption habits. Elite sport transcends borders and enables TNCs to promote unhealthy commodities internationally. Regulation of the EPL should be considered by a wide range of bodies as its commercial arrangements have a global impact.

From a regulatory perspective, being able to define what is sport sponsorship and what is CSR is important, although it is recognised there have been historical blurring of distinctions and definitions (Mescon and Tilson 1987; Cornwell and Maignan 1998). Amis and Cornwell (2005) argued that sports sponsorship is multi-faceted, with corporate businesses likely to have a different perspective than football rights holders (those owning exclusive rights to their product such as the Premier League) who are seeking financial support. However, whilst the UK government may be able to ban gambling brands appearing on EPL footballers' shirts for example (Hancock and Ahmed 2019), they are unlikely to be able to legislate against more sophisticated CSR practices, particularly where these may be framed as philanthropic.

#### 9.1.1 Football and sports' governing bodies

Given the economic capital resting with the EPL's professional clubs, the Premier League and the clubs themselves will be resistant to any imposed

regulation. The protracted focus and debate on the elite club's finances during the coronavirus pandemic showed that, for the top clubs, their financial performance always overcomes other considerations (Conn 2020b).

Football, as with any other aspects of society, is subject to race and sex discrimination laws. Legislative approaches were also used to try to address hooliganism in the 1980s (McArdle 2000). Given the high levels of noncommunicable diseases worldwide, fuelled by poor diets and alcohol issues and the damage to mental health caused by gambling, there is a strong argument for government to regulate the marketing of unhealthy commodity industries. Particularly if the sport's governing body and the Premier League do not face up to the moral and ethical challenge presented by the extensive marketing of unhealthy brands in football. The EPL's global reach should be accompanied by a global responsibility in relation to the potential health impacts of the products that are marketed through the games they organise and distribute.

It has been previously described how sport can be used to avoid national legislation as in FIFA over-ruling Brazilian law to allow Budweiser to promote and sell beer at the 2014 World Cup (Kickbusch 2012) and Carlsberg finding ways at marketing their brand at the 2016 European Football Championships despite the Loi Évin (Purves *et al.* 2017). Indeed, the model of packaged category-specific sponsorship now preferred across all sports was first introduced and developed by FIFA at the World Cup (Semens 2019) following the global deal it signed with Coca-Cola in 1975 and the long-standing relationship between Coca-Cola and the Olympic Games (Simson and Jennings 1992).

Opposition is growing to the "capitalist mega-sports" of the Olympics (Boykoff 2020) and the World Cup (Conn 2017) and to the new network of the billionaire owners of the EPL (Montague 2018). Modern elite sport is funded by TNCs, many part of UCIs. As more than one interviewee said in the study described in Chapter Seven, it seems entirely inappropriate that unhealthy brands are being promoted through healthy activities such as football and are benefitting from an association with sport's rich cultural capital, and the 'health halo' it provides. It is possible that the sheer incongruence and relationship authenticity of linking a

healthy activity (such as football) with an unhealthy brand (such as an 'energy' drink) may make this type of sponsorship unacceptable if it is challenged sufficiently either by sports fans or by the general public (Cornwell 2020).

As with many other public health challenges, there is much to learn from the experience of the tobacco industry, however. As has already been observed, controls on the advertising of tobacco products in the 1960s and 70s led tobacco companies to invest in sport to make up for lost advertising revenue (Dewhirst 2004). Sponsorship of Formula One motor racing was associated with tobacco advertising from 1968 and the industry continued with indirect marketing techniques even after the 2005 European Union Tobacco Advertising Directive (Grant-Braham and Britton 2011). Nevertheless, as in motor racing, sport has shown its ability to attract alternative sources of income. A simulation of shirt sponsorship in English football clubs showed that most of the impact of the banning of gambling and alcohol sponsors would be mitigated with other sponsors stepping in (Yang and Goldfarb 2015).

***Recommendations:***

- *Further attention should be given to finding alternative sources of income in the professional and amateur games.*
- *Establishing an ethical framework to sponsorship should be considered as part of an overview of the governance of football.*
- *Sports' governing bodies should not accept sponsorship from unhealthy commodity industries.*

### **9.1.2 UK government**

Given the UK government's resistance to commercial regulation on ideological grounds, they may also be likely to resist controls on marketing in football

although a review of the Gambling Act 2005, which may impact on sponsorship within football, was launched in December 2020 (DCMS 2020b).

Individual papers and public health advocates have called for regulation of gambling advertising in sport (Bunn *et al.* 2018; Purves *et al.* 2020), alcohol marketing at football matches (Purves *et al.* 2017) and sports sponsorship by unhealthy food brands (Dixon *et al.* 2019). The impact of Covid-19 is likely to have a long-lasting effect on sport as in all other areas of society, and the pause in the 2019/20 EPL season together with the start of the 2020/21 season being played 'behind closed doors', may have provided an opportunity for wider reflection on the commercialisation of elite football. There is a strong case to be made for applying a health impact assessment to all forms of commercial sponsorship in football to assess how they may affect population health.

In 1983, the Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR) launched a Committee of Enquiry Into Sports Sponsorship (The Central Council of Physical Recreation 1983). It is surely time for a further enquiry considering the impact of sport sponsorship on health. The CCPR published its recommendations in terms of ethical considerations. It stated, "The Voluntary Agreement concluded between the government and the tobacco industry is the right way to regulate sponsorship of sport by tobacco interests" (p.110). Its report considered sports sponsorship by the alcohol, tobacco and gambling industries and took the view that "what is lawful must also be presumed to come within the ambit of personal choice and freedom" (p.93). The CCPR noted the tax revenue gained from alcohol, gambling and tobacco but did not consider the health and social costs generated by these industries. The debate about voluntary regulation by industry is still relevant today and may be applied to the 'whistle to whistle' ban on gambling advertising advocated by the gambling industry. As described previously, this voluntary regulation is largely ineffective as has been shown in this thesis, and mirrors previous tactics by major food and alcohol companies who have sought to influence their regulatory environment (Gilmore *et al.* 2011).

The UK Government has traditionally steered clear of regulatory policies in football since Hillsborough and the Taylor Reports (1989; 1990) and the Football



Task Force (established under a Labour Government in 1997) which addressed racism in football, disability access and investment in grassroots football (Burnham 2000). In 2015, the Government produced a report which called for “a more productive, sustainable and responsible sport sector” (HM Government 2015 p.52). A responsible sport sector should consider the health impact of the marketing of UCIs in football.

In the United Kingdom, the government’s latest obesity strategy (HM Government 2020), published in July 2020, identified that food choices are “shaped and influenced through advertising in its many forms” (p.9). Thus, it was announced that the Government intended “to ban HFSS products being shown on TV and online before 9pm” (p.9). A consultation on a total ban of online advertising for unhealthy foods was launched in November 2020 as a part of the obesity strategy which noted that advertising restrictions are “widely supported by the public” (p.2). A commitment to ban “junk food adverts pre-9pm watershed on TV and a total ban online” were announced as a part of proposed Health and Care Bill in the Queen’s Speech of 11 May 2021 (HM Government 2021 p.21). Sport sponsorship is not mentioned, however.

Sponsorship should not be separated from advertising in considering regulation which helps to protect children and young people from developing unhealthy habits whether in consuming food and beverages and alcohol, or in gambling. Sponsorship of sport reaches and is likely to influence large audiences including children and young people (Pitt *et al.* 2016; Pitt *et al.* 2017; Newall *et al.* 2019a) and reinforces gambling as a socially acceptable form of entertainment (Binde 2009; Buil *et al.* 2015). Exposure of gambling brands through sport encourages risky behaviour amongst young people causing potential public health problems (Lamont *et al.* 2011).

It is clear from the research presented in this thesis, that the principal sites for branding are the players’ shirts and the pitch perimeter advertising (both electronic and static). In Chapter Five, I showed 779 (68.5%) of the 1138 unhealthy exposures in the five matches considered, were on players’ shirts and the pitch perimeter. A simple ban on the advertising of gambling, alcohol and HFSS food and beverages in these sites would have considerable impact. Further,

prohibiting tobacco advertising, promotions and sponsorship (TAPS) is still seen as ‘best buy’ for public health in some parts of the world in that the tobacco industry persists in ways to circumvent TAPS prohibition laws (Arora and Nazar 2013). This same approach may be considered relevant to all unhealthy commodity marketing.

***Recommendations:***

- ***The UK government establish an enquiry considering the impact of sport sponsorship on health.***
- ***Any reviews and policies designed to protect children from the advertising of unhealthy brands in broadcasting and online media should include sport sponsorship in their remit.***
- ***Sport sponsorship from the gambling and alcohol industry should be banned together with sponsorship that is promoting the consumption of HFSS food and beverages.***

### **9.1.3 Public health organisations**

Public health has only just begun to consider the CDOH. Consideration of their application in sport is also recent and may be partly constrained by an individual compartmentalised industry approach (gambling, food and drink HFSS and alcohol) as it may have been previously by its approach to tobacco control regulation (McCambridge and Morris 2019). Collin (2012) argued for policy coherence in addressing NCDs in moving beyond “tobacco exceptionalism” (p.277). He proposed a governance model in addressing the regulation of corporate conduct in not only the tobacco industry but also in rejecting partnerships with the food and alcohol industries.

In considering corporate power, Hastings wrote, “The marketing campaigns of multinational corporations are harming our physical, mental and wellbeing” (2012, p.26). He urged the public health movement to take action. I would

endorse this call and ask for public health practitioners and advocates to consider more carefully the marketing of unhealthy commodities in sport at all levels from grassroots to professional, and the impact this marketing may have on population health.

The World Health Organisation is in an ideal position to lead global enquiry and advocacy into the impact of the marketing of unhealthy commodities in sport. In 2019, the World Health Organisation agreed a four-year collaboration with FIFA to “promote healthy lifestyles through football globally” (World Health Organisation 2019b). Whilst the policy to ensure tobacco-free stadiums at FIFA events is to be commended, this collaboration seems to ignore that FIFA’s partners and sponsors for the World Cup in Qatar include Coca-Cola, Budweiser and McDonald’s (FIFA 2021). It would seem to be impossible to claim the World Cup is promoting ‘healthy lifestyles’ whilst the competition is being used to market sugary drinks, beer and HFSS food and beverages.

### ***Recommendations***

- ***Public health practitioners and advocates challenge the commercial relationships and marketing agreements between unhealthy commodity industries and sports organisations at all levels.***
- ***The World Health Organisation should lead public health enquiry into the impact of the marketing of unhealthy commodities in sport.***
- ***The World Health Organisation review its relationship with FIFA.***

## **9.2 Further research recommendations**

Given the newness of the CDOH in sport field, there are many possibilities for future research. Once most tobacco marketing was prohibited in the UK in 2003, it continued in many other parts of the world until the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (World Health Organisation 2003) agreed a comprehensive advertising ban in 2008. Other UCIs are likely to use sport to avoid regulations on

marketing, and research is required in all sports to examine the scale of such marketing. This should include not only men's sport but also women's and disability sports. Further, amateur and grassroots sport should also be considered, particularly where it may be important to consider what may be otherwise framed as philanthropic giving, measured against the potential damage to children's health. Research should also consider fans' view of unhealthy sponsors, as this may help to inform, address, and legitimise possible regulatory approaches. Finally, although research into the effectiveness of the marketing of HFSS food and beverages has been undertaken, more studies are required which seek to measure and understand the consequences of the marketing messages and relationships described in this thesis.

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## Appendix 1

17/10/2018

Dear Robin Ireland

### **College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee**

**Project Title:** Commercial Determinants of Health in Sport

**Application No:** 400180002

The College Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your application and has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. It is happy therefore to approve the project, subject to the following conditions:

- Start date of ethical approval: 17/10/2018
- Project end date: 30/09/2020
- Any outstanding permissions needed from third parties in order to recruit research participants or to access facilities or venues for research purposes must be obtained in writing and submitted to the CoSS Research Ethics Administrator before research commences. Permissions you must provide are shown in the *College Ethics Review Feedback* document that has been sent to you.
- The data should be held securely for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project, or for longer if specified by the research funder or sponsor, in accordance with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research: ([https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media\\_490311\\_en.pdf](https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_490311_en.pdf)) (Unless there is an agreed exemption to this, noted here).
- The research should be carried out only on the sites, and/or with the groups and using the methods defined in the application.
- Any proposed changes in the protocol should be submitted for reassessment as an amendment to the original application. The *Request for Amendments to an Approved Application* form should be used: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/staffandpostgraduateresearchstudents/>

Yours sincerely,



Dr Muir Houston  
College Ethics Officer

**Muir Houston, Senior Lecturer**  
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## Appendix 2



University  
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### Participant Information Sheet

Title of Project: **COMMERCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH IN SPORT**  
Exploring how corporations use sport (and football in particular) to  
promote their products and how this may impact upon the health of the population.

Name of Researcher: Robin Ireland

Name of Supervisor: Dr Christopher Bunn

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

I am interested in your views concerning the type of sponsorship and advertising used in association with English Premier League (EPL) clubs.

I would like you to complete the accompanying questionnaire.

Data from this questionnaire and from other qualitative research including interviews will be used in the thesis I am preparing which is considering how the type of sponsorship and advertising in the EPL may impact on health. The questionnaires and interviews form a part of the research methods I am using which will also include analyses of the websites of EPL clubs, broadcast EPL matches and social media content around selected matches.

This research has the potential to influence UK Government policy and football's own regulations through its governing bodies, its leagues and clubs.

Your partnership in this research is of course voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without prejudice.

Data from the questionnaires will be anonymised. In my thesis and any other written literature, you will be referred to in a way in which you won't be identified but references the position you

hold (but not the organisation); for example, “senior administrator, football governing body” or “elected representative, fan organisation”.

Please note that confidentiality may not be guaranteed; due to the limited size of the participant sample.

I am seeking the views of between 12 and 35 people who are part of the “football family”. Once the questionnaires and interviews have been completed, I will be analysing the responses to establish viewpoints around the marketing of brands and products to football’s various audiences (through broadcasting and online).

The questionnaires will be anonymised with electronic copies protected on a password-controlled computer and/or in hard copy locked within a filing cabinet at the University of Glasgow.

The hard copies will be destroyed at the conclusion of the research in September 2020. The electronic versions will be stored for a maximum of ten years to facilitate publication and dissemination of the research.

The results of the research may be published widely within a PhD thesis, in academic papers and in conference proceedings. It can also be presented to football organisations and can be made available to you and/or your organisation on request.

This research is supported by the University of Glasgow. It has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee.

If you have any questions or would like further information about the research: please contact the researcher, **Robin Ireland**, email: [23561331@student.gla.ac.uk](mailto:23561331@student.gla.ac.uk)

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research or wish to pursue any complaint: please contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, **Dr Muir Houston**, email: [Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk)

## Appendix 3



University  
of Glasgow

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College of Social  
Sciences

### Consent Form

Title of Project: **COMMERCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH IN SPORT**

Name of Researcher: Robin Ireland

Name of Supervisor: Dr Christopher Bunn

I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Please initial the box below (and further boxes as relevant) to indicate you have read and understood the statements.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I am interested in your views concerning the type of sponsorship and advertising used in association with English Premier League (EPL) clubs.

I wish to interview you either at a venue of your choice or via telephone/Skype. The interview is expected to last between 30 and 60 minutes and will be recorded. A written record of the interview will be produced by a professional transcribing service.

The transcribing service will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement that they will not share in any format, any content from the interview.

I consent / do not consent (**delete as applicable**) to interviews being audio-recorded.

I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to participants for verification.

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

I acknowledge that participants will be identified by name in any publications arising from the research.

I acknowledge that there will be no effect on your employment arising from your participation or non-participation in this research.

All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.

The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.

The material will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research.

## Appendix 4



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### COMMERCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH IN SPORT

Topic guide - Draft questioning route

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Channel (phone/Skype/email/in person):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Role:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q1: What do you think about the type of sponsorship and advertising used in association with English Premier League clubs?**

**Q2: Whose responsibility is it to make decisions about football's sponsorship and advertising?**

**Q3: Do you think there should be an ethical framework around the sponsorship and advertising used?**

**Q4: Should there be particular considerations around children?**

**Q5: Does football have any role in promoting health and fitness?**

**Q6: Can EPL clubs do anything more in promoting the health of their fans and their local community?**

**That concludes my questions. Is there anything else that you would like to add?**

**Thank you for your assistance. I will be in touch with the transcript from this interview which you will be able to amend if necessary.**

## Appendix 5.

### Classifications of brand partners of EPL clubs

All gambling sponsors were classified as RED. Apart from the gambling charity, BeGambleAware (Crystal Palace), which was classified as GREEN.

All alcohol sponsors were classified as RED.

Food and beverage sponsors are nutritionally complex although all energy drinks were classified as RED because of their main brand's sugar content. The level of caffeine was not considered.

The full list of **2018/19** food and beverage sponsors is listed below together with their classification:

Gatorade (Arsenal): RED  
 Lavazza (Arsenal): GREEN  
 Fitlion (Burnley): AMBER (sports nutrition)  
 Carabao (Chelsea): RED  
 Fratelli Baretta (Everton): RED  
 Buxton Water (Fulham): GREEN  
 Chaokoh (Liverpool): AMBER (coconut products)  
 Lavazza (Liverpool): GREEN  
 Gatorade (Man. City): RED  
 Melitta (Man. Utd): GREEN  
 Heroic Sports (West Ham): AMBER (sports drink)

The full list of **2019/20** food and beverage sponsors is listed below together with their classification:




Lavazza (Arsenal): GREEN  
 Science in Sport (Aston Villa): AMBER (sports nutrition)  
 Carabao (Chelsea): RED  
 Monster Energy (Crystal Palace): RED  
 RC Cola (Crystal Palace): RED

## Appendix 6. Summary of partners on English Premier League club websites

2018/19 (club websites accessed in w/c 18 Feb 2019)

	Club	Partners	Food & beverage	Alcohol	Gambling	Other
	Arsenal	27	2	3	5	17
	AFC Bournemouth	4	-	-	2	2
	Brighton & Hove Albion	4	-	-	-	4
	Burnley	13	1	1	2	9
	Cardiff City	11	-	-	1	10
	Chelsea	15	1	1	1	12
	Crystal Palace	16	-	1	2	13
	Everton	10	1	1	1	7
	Fulham	9	1	1	3	4
	Huddersfield Town	4	-	-	1	3
	Leicester City	15	-	2	5	8
	Liverpool	22	2	2	2	16
	Manchester City	29	1	1	1	26
	Manchester United	24	1	2	1	20
	Newcastle United	11	-	1	3	7
	Southampton	7	-	1	2	4
	Tottenham Hotspur	11	-	1	-	10
	Watford	7	-	-	1	6
	West Ham United	17	1	1	1	14
	Wolverhampton Wanderers	4	-	1	1	2
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>194</b>

## 2019/20 (club websites accessed in November 2019).

	Club	Partners	Food & beverage	Alcohol	Gambling	Other
	Arsenal	23	1	4	2	16
	Aston Villa	9	1	2	2	4
	AFC Bournemouth	5	0	0	2	3
	Brighton & Hove Albion	3	0	0	0	3
	Burnley	9	0	1	1	7
	Chelsea	13	1	1	0	11
	Crystal Palace	20	2	1	2*	15
	Everton	14	3	1	1	9
	Leicester City	16	1	2	5	8
	Liverpool	18	3	2	0	13
	Manchester City	33	3	2	1	27
	Manchester United	24	1	2	1	20
	Newcastle United	10	0	1	3	6
	Norwich City	20	1	2	2	15
	Sheffield United	6	1	0	0	5
	Southampton	10	2	1	1	6
	Tottenham Hotspur	14	1	1	1	11
	Watford	10	1	1	1	7
	West Ham United	25	3	1	1	20
	Wolverhampton Wanderers	4	0	1	1	2
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>208</b>

\*BeGambleAware – a charity which promotes ‘safer’ gambling - was included.



## Appendix 7. Codebook variables and definitions

Variable	Definitions
Match	ARSVCHE (Arsenal v Chelsea); NEWvBUR (Newcastle United v Burnley); MUNvWHU (Manchester United v West Ham United); CRYvBOU (Crystal Palace v Bournemouth); SOUVNOR (Southampton v Norwich).
Entry	To note when brands were advertised at the same time for the same duration (for example when LED perimeter boards advertised different brands).
Time	Recorded in hours, minutes and seconds with the start time determined by the beginning of the match programme.
Duration	Time in minutes and seconds of each individual exposure to unhealthy brand advertising. Only exposures of two seconds and over were included.
Broadcast segment	Pre-match; First half; Half-time; Second half; Post-match; Commercial break.
Location	Shirt front; Shirt sleeve; Training kit; Field of play; Interview area; Pitch border; Sponsorship lead in/out (BT Sport's Premier League coverage in 2018/19 was sponsored by bet365); TV Studio; Stadium roof; Stadium fascia; Stadium exterior; Video segment (For video sequences of matches other than the one being broadcast); Commercial break ad; Other (specify).
Commercial break	This included the advertisements contained in the break only and did not include the sponsorship lead in/out which was separately coded.
Format	Shirt front; Shirt sleeve; Training kit; Electronic advertising (all) - when all LED perimeter boards were advertising the same brand; Electronic advertising (part) - when the LED perimeter boards advertised different brands; Product or packaging; Sponsorship lead in/out; Commercial break ad; Other (specify).
Number	The number of times a brand featured in the same reference. For example, in Figure 16, SportPesa would have been counted three times.
Brand	Where a gambling, alcohol or food and beverage brand was displayed.
Category	Category of the brand (alcohol, food/beverage or gambling).

## Appendix 8. Brand classifications in the commercial breaks

Brand classification	Detail if required	
Gambling		
Food/beverage	All food and beverage brands were included whether considered healthy or unhealthy	
Alcohol	All alcohol brands were included including any advertising low alcohol products	
Information and Communication	All digital services. Amazon Prime distribution services were included as being part of the Amazon multinational company	
Financial and Insurance		
Automotive	All advertisements for vehicles and vehicle services	
Furniture		
Cosmetic and toiletries	Including shaving products	
Airline		
Accommodation and Services	Including hotels and travel services	
Real Estate		
Pharmaceuticals	Including personal medicines such as cough reliefs	
Energy	Including energy suppliers and Smart Meter providers	
Personal health	Including health and fitness services such as gyms	
Gaming		
Music/film retail		
Cruise holiday		
Paint		
Sportswear		
Other	This include a range of retail products available both in stores and online (the latter often promoted via Amazon Prime)	