

# The Naming Right Deal – Assessment of the European Market and the Fans’ Attitudes

Research dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MSc in International Business Management (HETAC & NTU)

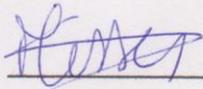
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & DEDICATION

This acknowledgment part will be dedicated to my parents that have allowed me to work in the best conditions. This work wouldn't have been possible with them. I also want to thank my supervisor, Mr Lynch to direct me when I was a little bit panicked and he also take a big part in the writing of this dissertation. The Griffith College also has been very important through the large amount of information provided in order to make us comfortable, and it has been really appreciated. I also want to thank Mr Keogan for helping me through the first but the most important part of the dissertation, in the Business Research Methods courses that have ordered my work for the rest of the research dissertation, thank you for the time you had given to allow me to write this dissertation.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to one of the greatest man in the history, a person that inspires me every day, Nelson Mandela.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFI – Asian Football Investment

FFP – Financial Fair Play

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

IOC – International Olympic Committee

IRR – Internal Rate of Return

MLB – Major League Baseball

MLS – Major League Soccer

NBA – National Basketball Association

NFL – National Football League

NRD – Naming Right Deal

UEFA – Union of European Football Association

## ABSTRACT

The dissertation purpose was to establish an overview of the actual situation on the Naming Right market in the European market and to provide insights about the different elements that compose the reaction of the fan. This a new practice in Europe, only massively developed before the 2006 World Cup hosted by Germany. The methodology was to understand the current situation in Europe through different countries and different sports and to analyse the different reactions posted by the fans on the forums related to the clubs news. It was obvious that there is real differences between the North American and the European market in terms of market development. The European countries can be divided in two subparts within which France, Italy and Spain are the most backward countries and United Kingdom and especially Germany that are really forward.

The fans attitudes has been divided upon three themes: Culture related, Finance related and Globalisation related. This research has pointed out two main element in relation to the fans attitudes towards the Naming rights deals, this was that the culture is an essential part of the club and that they could have negative reactions if they understand that this practice may distort the club history. The second important matter concerns the branding from the naming right owner, the communication needs to be thought carefully by the brand.

## INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

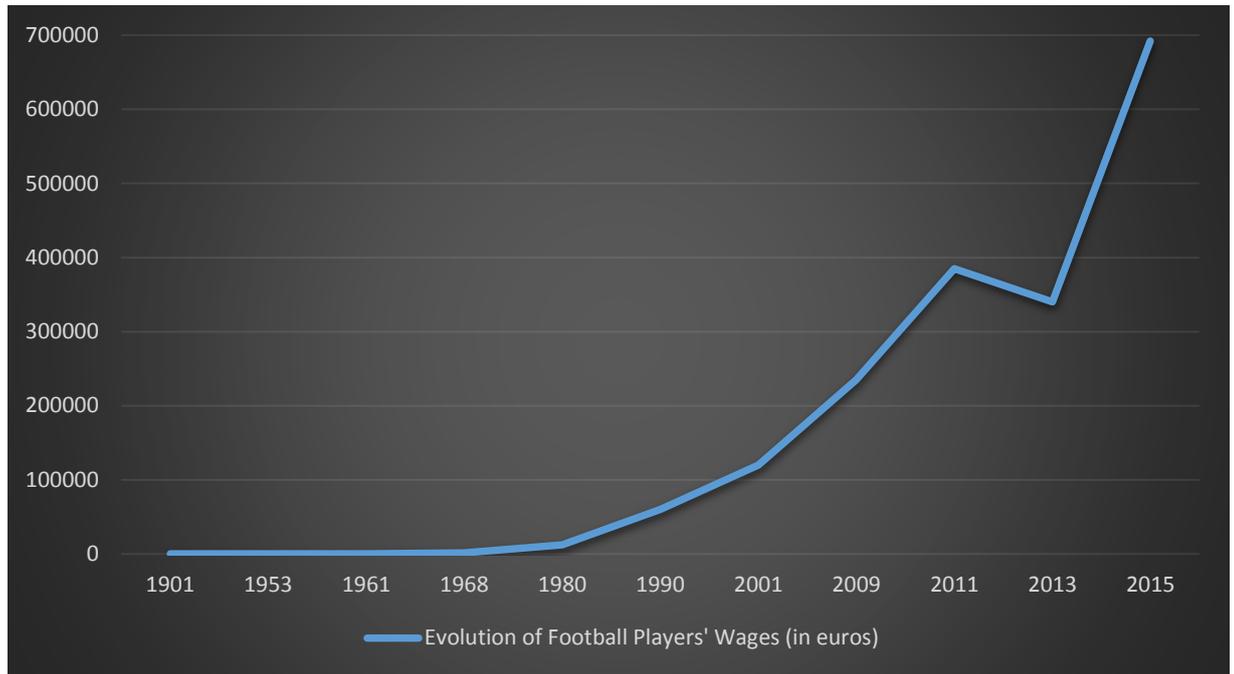
In the sports industry, it is important to understand that the sports especially football in Europe has been subjected to a tremendous change that have completely restructured the organisations. Since the beginning of the century, the idea of sports thought by Pierre de Coubertin that have created the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1890 and launched the modern Olympic Games in 1896. Moreover, there has been a tremendous drift in the sport economy highlighted by the work of Wladimir Andreff (2008), in his article he depict that the expense of sport goods represents “1 to 2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in developed countries” which is massive if taken into account the fact that this economy is considered by most people as a show and that lots of developed countries faced difficulties these times.

Indeed, in an article written by the Guardian (2012), they have denoted three important changes in the English Football League that have occurred for 20 years:

- The part of the wages accounted for 48% in 1997 and it accounted for 70% in 2012 which show that players in a club take an important part from decade to decade.
- The tickets cost has arisen by 1,025% in 20 years for buying a ticket to watch Liverpool games, indeed the prices grown from £4 (€5.46) to £45 (€61.52).
- The wages of the football players since the beginning of the century, the article of the Guardian highlight the last 20 years of evolution with a rise of 1,500% in wages. Sportune (2013) have focused their article on the evolution of football players' wages since 1901 that is highlighted in the table below.

As it is depicted in the table below the evolution is phenomenal, in one century the wages have been multiplied by more than 138,000 but the evolution in 25 years represents 1,083% between 1990 and 2015, and it is important to notice that the figures will continue to grow in the future year

**Figure 1- Evolution of the most important wages for a Football Player (in euros per week)**



Nowadays, the professionalization of sports is an accepted notion even if there is an incomprehension concerning the tremendous wages and amount of money spend in globalized sports. To compensate these large amounts of costs, a professional sport organisation can dispose of different types of revenue existing such as TV Rights, Sponsorships and Ticketing. And as the article from the Guardian noticed the last revenue stream has grown for the fans that are willing to pay. Concerning, the TV Rights, there is two types of these; the national TV Rights and the international TV Rights. The rise of the first one has several cause but it is predominantly due to the multiplication of the national channel that are willing to pay a certain amount of money to gain the authorisation to broadcast the games concerned. The rise of the international TV Rights is also concerned by this rise and it is mostly due to the fact that the competition is entertaining the viewers from the entire world and especially since a decade and the arrival of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) in the globalised economy. These types of revenue may not be enough for some sport organisation and it may require to think about other possibilities in terms of revenue streams. The most recent that have started to grow in Europe since a decade is the Naming Right Deals (NRD). A

new Marketing practice that consist in giving the name of the stadium to a corporation that will pay for a certain amount of time for this contract.

In 1973, the first stadium using a Naming Rights Deals has appeared in Buffalo, NY when the company Rich Foods, Inc. has decided to put its name on the stadium. The “Naming Rights Deals” is a marketing practice that consists in signing a contract where the exchange is between the owner of a stadium that provide the right of the stadium name and a company that will pay an amount of money each year for a given period. Indeed, the “Naming” is a marketing technique that is used by corporation to enhance their brands through public area (stadium, concert hall, metro station, etc...). The stadium name is an important vehicle for a brand because it is cited in a lot of media that are interested in the competition. In this dissertation, we will focus the research on the sports stadium “naming practice” especially in the United States, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and United Kingdom. However, this practice is developed differently throughout the different countries studied.

The proposed dissertation will analyse the actual situation of the Naming Right Deal through the United States Leagues (Major League Baseball, National Football League, National Basketball Association, National Hockey League and Major League Soccer), and the leagues of Football, Handball, Rugby and Basket in France, Spain, Italy, Ireland and United Kingdom.

This dissertation will also try to depict what type of companies and in what countries it is most developed in order to understand what are the key elements that may increase the use of this type of marketing practice.

There is already some paper in the literature that has examine the return on investment provided by the naming rights and sponsorship. But there is no literature that focus on this practice with a particular study and to what extent it is spread in the different sports and professional competition.

Since a number of years, the fans want to be included in the club’s decisions because they estimate that they are part of the culture of the club. In reality, as a recognised stakeholder they only have a limited power on the structure of the club. Indeed, this power is only limited to demonstration around the stadium or inside the stadium.

However, in Europe, there is examples such as Barcelona or Real Madrid which are owned by some of their fans that have the advantage to choose the president of their club. There is other examples in Germany where some clubs are willing to enter this type of structuration.

This paper will analyse data collected from different countries and different culture and how the culture may affect the Naming Right Deals through different elements:

- What is the type of company that is the most represented in the NRD?
- What countries and culture is using the most this type of marketing practice in the stadium and why?
- What type of attitudes does the fan have towards this practice?

The literature is wide on the relationship between economy and sports, there has been a lot of article written by lot of researchers and they only mention this marketing practice partly in the article. On the other hands, the literature that only focus on the naming right practice can be summarised through one article written by Eva Leeds, Michael Leeds and Irina Pistolet (2007) that focus on the early return of investment once the announce of the deal has been communicate and what are the repercussion for the company, moreover, the geographical area covered by the study only concern the United States and Canada. But there is no study that have focused their research on the overall picture of the Naming Rights, so this dissertation will fill the gap in the area of sports marketing.

## CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Among the literature that researched in the area of sports, for the purpose of this dissertation it can be divided in two part, the first one is researching the different hypothesis and examples that links the sports and the economy, this part of the literature is wide and the second area is more related to the Naming Rights Deals and the economic relations to the stadiums. This topic is new for the researcher especially because the first Naming Right Deals occurred in the sport area in 1973. Considering also the fact that this practice has accelerate in the mid-1990's

### Literature on the link between economy and sports

In recent years, a large majority of the literature based their research on a global study of the links between economy and sports. Indeed, W. Andreff (2008), Humphrey & Howard (2009), Seigfried & De Wilde (2014), Nauright (2014) and Zimbalist (2006) have conducted research to find elements upon history and the recent years that there is a real drift in the sports economy and that it exists a real economy the area of sports.

Most of these research focused their research on the financial value of the sport business and how corporation can take advantage of this situation.

Wladimir Andreff (2008) collected a large range of general data concerning the topic of the relationship between sport and economy. As an example, he mentions the football economy valuation represents €250 billion, and the sponsorship industry is nearly €18 billion but he contest the methods of analysis. Indeed, he mentioned the fact that France has adopted a tools to weight the French economy on the different elements that composed the Sports economy, and he also acknowledge that there is a numbers of countries that dispose a similar tools, on the other hands the expenses of the corporation when it concerns sports are not only domestic but are now globally widespread and he regrets that there is no existing tools that enable economists to weight accurately the global economy of sports. A. Zimbalist (2006) has also criticised the valuation techniques used but he accused the companies of misstatement.

In his paper, W. Andreff also draw the history of the links between sports and economy. For him, there is three trends that led this economy to weight more than the GDP of Israel in 2013 (International Monetary Fund, 2013).

- 1) Extension of annually paid holidays for individuals
- 2) Television broadcasting of big sports events
- 3) Emergence of New Information and Communication Technologies (NICT's), from mobile phone to internet.

Andreff also have discussed the area of sports and economy in a handbook that he co-writes with Stefan Szymanski in 2006. In this handbook, they collected tremendous range of data with the help of the most eminent researcher in the sport economy area. In this book, the different authors discussed about the different theory existing among the industry of sports, there two parts in this book that are interesting for the purpose of this dissertation. Thus are "sport in the economy" and "sporting governance and the state", in both of these part the subject of Naming has not been sufficiently developed in order to enhance the dissertation with an appropriate theory. Indeed, this research purpose only focus on the general aspect of the sport in the economy and forget this particular aspect of the Naming Right Deals. On the other hands, this book provides lot of insight on the way sports developed in the late years through the apparition of private funds. This economy has not faced the crisis such as the other area of the economy and especially the banking sector. In this book, Peter J. Sloane and Stefan Szymanski also examine the differences between the Anglo-American and the European Model of Sports. The key differences are highlighted between the two authors (see Table 1). The main similarity is that the clubs are now considered as corporation, they also highlighted the different structure of the corporate governance within the European continent, and in the Spanish Football league the examples of the two best club in the country shows a real difference in Europe. Indeed, the Real Madrid and the FC Barcelona are quite different in terms of culture but they share the approximate same structure where the fans have the possibility to own a small part of the club and they are required to elect the new president that will run the club among their wishes. This democratic system is quite rare in Europe even if you can find other examples in Germany.

This type of structure could be a real obstacle to the Naming Right practice. In this part of the handbook, the author also depict the country which is "the country the furthest away from North American model is France" especially due to the fact that until the 1970's one of the revenue of a professional football came from the public subsidiaries, indeed "18% of Division One football revenues were in the form of municipal government subsidies.

The author continue on the French model by arguing that “there has been a long tradition of local government involvement in the finance and administration of football (including municipal ownership of most of the stadium)

**Table 1 - The Differences between the North-American and the European Model of competitions**

	The European model	The North American model
Objectives	Utility maximisation (with negative profits)	Profit Maximisation
Structure	Open leagues with promotion and relegation)	Closed Leagues
Size	Large numbers of clubs per head of population	Restricted number of clubs
Geographical pattern	Restricted geographical movements of clubs	Exclusive territories but franchise mobility
International competition	Important at clubs and national level	Absent
Player drafts	None	Extensive
Sale of Players	Sales of players for cash common	Restriction on sales of players for cash
Roster Limits	None	Extensive
Revenue Sharing	Limited	Extensive
Salary capping	Limited, but increasing	Extensive
Stock market flotation	Recent	Restricted

Adapted from W. Andreff and Stefan Szymanski, 2006.

It is obvious that the table realised by Andreff and Szymanski (2006) has the objective to point out the main differences between the two models seen by the professional sport. The authors also add to this table the fact that the main aspect of the European model “is that the owners of clubs are not there to make money, but to indulge themselves in consumption activities from which they draw utility”.

This table also shows one of the main differences between the two models, it concerns the structure of the leagues which is closed for the North-American model and open for the European conception of professional sport. This apply different level of risks between the two

competitions because on one hand having a closed league allow the potential investor to be reassured in terms of return on investment. Indeed, in this structuration of the competition, there is no close sporting danger for the franchises due to this certainty of remaining in the same league for indefinite duration. On the contrary, the European leagues includes more risks for the investors in terms of the safety for their investment. In this sense, no club is protected if it is closed to be relegated. But, it is obvious that the structure of the club is important to consider for the investor, because it will reduce the risks dramatically and can ensure that there few possibilities that an accident can occur for these teams.

They also have provided an interesting range of data that has been provided from the book of Fort (Fort, 2003), the author have estimated the amount of expenses from the Top 20 advertising companies that are involved in sports which is US \$1,876.3. These authors develops the evolution of sports through the age and the difference that led these change on the North-American and European continents. The interesting part of the research that relates in part to my subject concerns the relation between the corporation and the fans which is completely different between the two countries.

However, there is some similarities that can be highlighted such as the public/private partnerships. Indeed, this subject has also been mentioned by Pierre Chaix in his book "*Les Grands Stades: Au cœur des enjeux économiques et sociaux entre collectivités publiques et clubs professionnels*" that can be translated to "The Large Stadium: At the heart of the economic and social issue between the public authority and the professionals clubs", in this there is part dedicated to the public/private partnership used especially to construct the stadium of the FIFA 2016 World Cup and which is a practice used frequently now in order to construct new infrastructures. And the author also highlight the fact this practice enhance to have recourse to NRD because the stadium is owned by the company, or the company that owned the rights want to benefit from this practice and gain a regular amount of money to be sure to have returns from their investment directly.

Indeed, J. G. Long (2013) has written a book in which she depict this type of partnership especially used in North American major league sports and it is also widely used in France for stadiums such as the new stadium of Lille and Bordeaux. On the other hand, there is a new objectives for major sports club in France which is to be able to fund itself through external investors the stadium such as the "Stade des Lumières" in Lyon.

Lamont and Dowell have designed a process model applied to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises that are willing to sponsor a regional sporting events and its relationship with

tourism. Indeed, they both have a background that is linked between the sport and the tourism industry. This paper has the advantage of presenting a process even if it is for SMEs and that is not directly related to the particular type of sponsorship that I will research for my dissertation.

C. S. Seigfried and A. de Wilde (2014) use Rickard point of view which came from the early 20's on how companies must use sports as a vector for marketing. They also will demonstrate through case study and historical study how traditional marketing and sports marketing are different.

Within the literature, there is also paper that discussed the repercussion of sports in the economy but only upon specific events such as du Plessis & Maenning (2011) on the 2010 World Cup hosted by South Africa or upon a specific area such as Wang, Cheng, Purwanto and Erimutri (2010) that have investigated the Asian continent.

The different text within the literature mention to some extent the relationship that exists between sports and multi-nationals that have the capability to support such investment.

There is still a wide gap concerning the research on the "Naming Rights" practice especially because it is still a young practice in Europe. On the other hands, there has been some research conducted through deep studies to evaluate and understand the mechanisms of this practice

### Literature on Naming Right Deals

The amount of literature on the Naming Right Deals is limited and the majority came from the marketing literature. Most of the paper have been written in the 2000's and focus for the majority on the American market. However, they provide interesting insights on the valuation and the reasons for a company to invest in sport through the Naming Right practice.

McCarthy and Irwin (2000) argued that "Naming Right relationships, arguably, provide the most cost effective marketing communication in the market place today". M. Leeds, E. Leeds and I. Pistolet (2007) have focused their research to analyse the early-returns after the announcement of the deal. The authors have decided to make three contributions to the literature which are to "reinterpret the results of the literature", to "focus on individual firms rather than on the overall average return" and with the use of a more recent database of NRD to focus on the impact longer in time and reinterpret the results". The authors have decided to realise this research on the American leagues (NBA, NFL, NHL and MLB), they removed the franchises with no NRD on

their stadium and the NRD where the date of announcement were not clear, so they have selected 54 usable deals that represents 67 teams, due to stadiums or arena that are used by several teams, quite equally divided between the different leagues. This study have shown no evidence of a positive impact for a company after the announcement because only 3 companies have shown a real positive effect after the announcement of the deal. Their main conclusion was that there is no “economic value to the firm that buy them” and that “popular press and the existing literature have overstated the impact of naming rights on the profits of firms”.

This paper add to the debate within the literature among the benefits that a company can obtain from the Naming Right Deals between the sceptics represented by Isidore (2001, 2003) from example that have questioned the decision of utilising this type of marketing practice and the authors that are encouraging the NRD because it is efficient for a company (McCarthy & Irwin, 2000).

De Schriver and Jensen (2003) have focused their research on the amount of these Naming Right Deals and how are they determined, the authors also depicted that the public funding can be necessary although there is the private sector that is willing to invest in these infrastructure.

The authors have highlighted several key elements that may encourage or restrain the process for a Naming Right Deal. Indeed, one of the main element is the fact that the actual name has long history ahead, “facility with older, widely-recognized name are less likely to be named because the opportunity cost of selling the name apparently becomes quite substantial”. This point can also be linked to the team’s recognition within the entire country, it is obvious that a team which is efficient in a league will inquire larger amount of money to able the company to dispose of the stadium’s name. The reputation of the team and the stadium could also be an important factor for the development of the club’s strategy, indeed, the organisation will have to select carefully the corporate name that will be chosen for the stadium.

They also have found that the price for NRD can be raised due to the amount of the population in the area of a stadium or an arena because the stadium will have to be advertised to a larger audience compared to other areas.

DeSchriver and Jensen (2003) have also predict that the market prices will still continue to raise before becoming steady. It is interesting to compare this prediction with the actual highest deals in terms of total prices that have been collected by Sports Business (2011).

In 2003, the highest deals was the Phillips Arena in Atlanta valued at \$180 million on 20 years (\$9 million per year) and the FedEx Field in Washington at \$205 million on 27 years (\$7.5 million per year).

In 2011, the highest deals are the Farmers Field in Los Angeles valued at \$600 million on 30 years (\$20 million per year) and the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey that has been estimated between \$425 million and \$625 million on 25 years (between \$17 million and \$25 million per year). As it is obvious, the increase is still important and this will probably continue to raise because the economy of sport is increasing dramatically.

Ashley & O'Hara (2001) also discussed the valuation of the Naming Rights and especially through three approaches: the cost, the income and the market value methods. The authors provides a large range of value-added benefits of a NRD such as:

- Name placed on tickets
- Name placed on stationary of the facility
- Name placed on athletic courts or other flooring space
- Name placed on some/all employee uniforms
- Placement of kiosks in building for selling products, etc.

This adds to the assumption that the purchase of the naming rights by a company “is the most cost-effective marketing practice (McCarthy & Irwin, 2000), it also depict the difficulty to evaluate the price of a stadium due to the numerous communication opportunities for the owner of the naming rights.

They based the three approaches study on a work done by Smith & Parr (2000) who argued that “any other methods of valuation is essentially a variation of these three”.

The cost method research “to calculate how much money would have to be spent in order to replicate by some other means the exact bundle of benefits being valued”. It is necessary to predict the future cash-flow cost and the revenue that will occur in the future. The authors critics this approach because it seems difficult to predict accurately what are going to be the cost related to the NRD because the individuals may have different techniques and it quite impossible to obtain every information related to the contract and the other value-added attached to the contract.

The Income Method intend to “compute all of the nominal income, present and future, expected to be earned from the deal”. The authors outline the fact that the Internal Rate of Return (IRR) can be used by the firms to calculate the revenue made by the deal. They mentions that cost and income method share the same issue related to the difficulty of predicting future or expected returns.

The market value methods is the most used to value the NRD upon the literature as reminded by Ashley & O'Hara (2001), this methods "seeks to avoid the unavoidable uncertainties and subjective inputs of the building blocks approaches inherent to the cost method and the income method.

The authors conclude their article with two arguments. Firstly, there is lot of elements to consider before signing a new contract of NRD and that it may seems as an obstacles to enter the process of engaging in this marketing practice, however the NRD offers "unique marketing opportunities and other additional values that are hard to acquire from other sources". They also prevent the company that are willing to enter in the process to look at the local sentiment if they do not want to have negative repercussion from the fans.

Wladimir Andreff (2008) linked, in his paper related to the globalisation of the sport economy the Naming Rights with possible ambush marketing. This new practice has been defined by numerous authors (Sandler & Shani, 1989; Crow & Hook, 2003; Ratzek, 2011; McKelvey, Sandler & Hook, 2012). They all agree to say that it is the use of different marketing technique during an event by a company that has not any sponsorship agreement with the organiser of the event in question. The example provided by Sandler & Shani (1989) is the use of different marketing techniques used by Kodak during the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games to "ambush" the official sponsor Fuji. The different authors have defined this practice can be seen that this term has positive and negative meanings by the overall literature. Concerning the Naming Right Practice, the ambush marketing occurred most of the time indirectly but could also be directly intended by the corporations. It was especially obvious during the 2006 World Cup in Germany in which took place several games in 12 stadiums. The problematic was that 6 of the stadiums has been renamed after a corporation brand which were not an official partner of the event. In order to prevent ambush marketing, FIFA has decided to change the name of the six "named" stadiums with this typography: FIFA WM-Stadion "the name of the stadium's city" in German with WC standing for "Weltmeisterschaft" which means World Cup in German. And in English, it was FIFA WC Stadium "name of the stadium's city". So for example, the stadium where play Schalke 04, a well-known team in the first German division, situated in Gelsenkirchen was named the Veltins-Arena. The organiser changed this name and it becomes the FIFA WM-Stadion Gelsenkirchen because Veltins has not a sponsorship deal with the World Cup organisation. However, even if this change made the organiser allow the organisation to control the marketing of the event, it is also impossible to prevent the fans to talk about their stadiums with the name they want to use, corporate name or not. So this modification has also its limitations and the event organiser cannot prevent the different ambush marketing made voluntarily or not. On the

other hand, by respect to their partners the organisation must counter the possible competitors of their partners that may intend some marketing operation along the event. McKelvey, Sandler and Snyder (2012) highlighted the overall sponsorship expenses in order to retain the contract on the duration of 4 years is \$1.6 billion during the 2007-2010 period compared to \$584 million in the 1999-2002 period spends to acquire a sponsorship deal for the World Cup (FIFA Secures, 2010). These mega-events attract the multi-nationals firms that are more and more willing to invest in these competitions that are attractive to billions of persons.

Andreff also mentioned the Naming Right deals in his handbook co-written with Stefan Szymanski (2006) as a type of sponsorship deal. This subject has been discussed upon the "sponsorship" part by Claude Jeanrenaud in this handbook. The author have drawn an interesting historical background and he also emphasises the cultural issue in Europe which is the local authority that may be seen as an obstacles due to their involvement in the construction of facility. However, this part of the argument will not stand for long because as P. Chaix (2011) has repeated the new financial construction scheme will be the Public/Private partnership and he highlighted the fact that this type of agreement will continue to increase in the different countries. There is also the fact that the clubs can build their own stadiums with the money raised from their different partners and this will change the way facility will be financed. In their book they also have defined "naming" as a type of sponsorship and they also estimated the annual revenue at US \$169 million for 2013, especially because the deal that are contracted are based on an annual fee basis. They also depict the evolution of this type of sponsorship in Europe, indeed, Germany and the United Kingdom are the countries where this type of practice is the most implanted in Europe. On the social aspect of the "Naming", they also have mentioned the fan's contestation that occurred with the Bayern Munich stadium construction done for the 2006 World Cup.

McCarthy and Irwin have underlined the major interest for a company to use the NRD by regrouping the different corporation engaged into the Naming rights practice into four categories: transportation, communication/electronics, food and beverage and financial services. The willingness of the study was to understand the reasons for the companies to undertake such a sponsorship agreement. They decided to use a qualitative analysis and to select 2 airlines, 2 communications companies, 2 breweries, a utilities company and a financial services firm. The study depicted that the companies placed a majoritarian importance upon the corporate citizenship and especially one company's representative answers that "Our naming rights deal for the new ballpark enabled us to play a significant role in saving the community's major league baseball team from moving out of town". This testimony shows the real

importance placed into the corporate's role into the community. They concluded by emphasising the necessity of the structure for such deal and the fact that it is really important to understand the role for the community. However, their sample may lack of companies that came from outside of the continent because it may change the application of their conclusion. Indeed, a foreign companies or even an American corporation but from Los Angeles that has interest in making a deal with a franchise from New York may have less feeling for the community. In this sense, the financial opportunity seems to be the number one objective for corporation in a general sense, but it is obvious that a company which is close to the town may have more interest in the community.

The overall idea on the Naming Right is that there is a real opportunity for a company to invest in this type of sponsorship. Jean-Louis Triaud the President of the FC Girondins de Bordeaux a professional football club that play in the first French Division and which is looking to name their new stadium opened this year. And he answers a journalist about the Naming Right by highlighting the fact that the fans can remember more easily the name of your club's stadium rather than the sponsor on the front of your club's jersey.

It is important to underline the novelty of this practice that only begins in the end of the 1980's and has been widespread all over the world facilitate by the globalisation of the economy. This is the reason why the literature is limited on the subject and only focused on the North American area. The majority of the literature has been written between the end of 1990's and the beginning of the 2000's where different arguments have emerged from the studies.

From the overall literature there is three schools of thoughts that are emerging from the debate on this area:

- This first school argued that this practice has positive financial but also value-added benefits in contracting a NRD. Mc Carthy and Irwin (2000) mentioned that this practice were "the most cost effective marketing communication in the market place today".
- The second school has been named the "sceptics" is represented by Isidore (2001, 2003) that have begun to question the efficiency of this practice on the finance of a company.
- The last one if more focused on being somewhere between these two schools. Leeds, Leeds and Pistolet acknowledge that there is lot of benefits that a company can find in doing such a deal but their research show no evidence of a "significant impact" upon the companies' value.

The different theories highlighted upon this part shows that there is a lack of literature in this domain especially concerning the European market of Naming Right Deals. Indeed, most of the

literature take the American franchises as an example and it requires to take into considerations that the European market is now open to this type of sponsorship especially in Germany since the 2006 World Cup and in the United Kingdom since the arrival of foreign investment in the Premier League of football.

However, it is also important to consider the fact that these papers has been written in the early years of this century and that there is a lack of continuity in the research models.

This dissertation will try to emphasise more on the European market by taking into account the shortage in the literature and to draw an important database of the different professional leagues existing in Europe but also in the United States and examining the different sectors of the companies that use this type of sponsorship deals to enhance their brand knowledge.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this study is to provide a background among the Naming Right Deals from the beginning until and today. Indeed, this paper have the pretention of filling the gap along an analysis of the actual market of the Naming Right Deals and focusing in the European market. This study will be supported by the literature that have been interested in some of the area that this paper will try to underline. The research made by McCarthy and Irwin (2000) will extend the research by providing insights upon the context in which the companies decides to invest in a NRD. As stated in the parts above, most of the research has focused on the economic links between economy and sport. Most of NRD focused on the return on investment and the potential add-ons that this deal could emanate from this deal.

This research will also emphasise on the different sector of the companies engaged in a NRD and also to look at the different deal that have been done by foreign companies. As stated above, McCarthy and Irwin (2000) have outlined several factor that may encourage a company to invest in a Naming Right Deals. It is very important to analyse the different companies' sector engaged in a NRD and to see the real differences between Europe and the United States, this is a lack within the literature especially in terms of comparing the two thinking such as Sloane and Szymanski (2006). The disparity between the two professional sports' systems may explain in which way this practice is more developed in the United States than in some countries in Europe.

Finally, this research will look at the different reactions that the fans had at the moment of the launch of the new stadium's name in order to fill a gap that have been left by the literature that may have not consider the fact that the fans are the first persons touched by the name of the stadium, well upfront the players and the staff. A part of report written by the UK International Marketing reports (2012) will help understand the different problems that may cause NRD to the fans. In this parts also, the cultural differences have value to be investigated because the fans reactions are disparate within the European continent and adding to the fans reactions, it is also obvious that the history around a stadium may be an obstacle to the NRD practice.

The Naming Right Deals is a new marketing practice that has been developed and analysed by researchers since the end of 1990's and there is few theories existing on the subject. However, there is sufficient literature to help this dissertation to attain the research objectives.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The first chosen methodology was to understand the feelings from the fans but also the determinants of the Naming Right Deals strategy from the companies by using a qualitative approach through interviews. However, this technique have found its limits in reason of no answers to the interview request. This limitation will be developed in the recommendation parts.

My research will follow the interpretivism research philosophy, indeed my research aims want to focus several questions that are related on the perception of the “naming” technique by the fan and also provide a wide database of Naming Right Deals within Europe. Indeed, Hussey and Collis (2009) highlight the fact that this paradigm is about identifying how “perception” might be different upon each society on the same phenomenon and that the study of these “perception” and their influence on the individuals. In relation with my topic, I think it is most relevant to use this paradigm because I want to interview key people from different side of the naming process. Indeed, my point of view make me say that the world cannot be explained just by results but with relations and how society interact with each other and that’s the interesting part that I want to focus on my study like the influence that such a technique have on their behaviour and how they may be perceived by the stakeholders of the company and the clubs.

This dissertation will use a mixed method analysis through qualitative and quantitative data gathered about the Naming Right Deals. Indeed, the research will focus on the interpretation of the data gathered mixed with the literature collected in order to discover any theory that may arise from this mix. The case study analysis will conduct the research through analysing

This dissertation has two main purposes. The first objectives is to understand the actual state of this practice in Europe and to compare it with the United States which is seen to be a mature market and the reaction that occurred when the name has been communicated to the fans. In this sense, this dissertation will use a Case Study analysis that will use both data gathered from the 4 main leagues in the United States (National Basketball Association, National Hockey Leagues, National Football Leagues and Major League Baseball) but also the Major League Soccer which is growing in the American sports market, and 4 “European” sports; football, rugby, handball and basketball. The choice of the country researched for each sports was difficult because of the cultural

aspects and importance of each sports. So as highlighted in table below the choice was made according to the importance of these 5 sports within the country.

**Figure 3 – Repartition of sports by countries**

United States and Canada <sup>1</sup>	Basketball, Baseball, American Football, Ice Hockey and “Soccer”
France and Monaco <sup>2</sup>	Football, Basketball, Handball and Rugby
United Kingdom	Football and Rugby
Italy	Football and Rugby
Germany	Football, Basketball and Handball
Spain and Andorra <sup>3</sup>	Football, Basketball and Handball
Ireland	Rugby

The choice of the sports within Europe was based upon two factors:

- The cultural importance in the country: the sport must be important in the country from a national or a local perspective. For example, the handball has been created in Germany, the National team of France has been evaluated as one of the best team since the creation of world competition and Spain have one of the best team in their championship which the FC Barcelona Intersport.
- The multi-cultural aspects: the sport must have a widespread presence in at least 3 countries chosen for the study. It is the reason why cricket is for example inexistent in the study even if it an important sport in England, it does not have a real cultural importance in the other European countries. Same thing is applied for the volley-ball which is a national matter for Italy but it has not the same repercussion for the countries in the sample, even if in France this sport is played around the school playground.

<sup>1</sup> Canadian franchises taken into account are playing in the American league while there is a Canadian league that have not the same world impact

<sup>2</sup> There is two teams from the Principality of Monaco that is playing in the French Football first division and the first division of basket

<sup>3</sup> There is only one team playing in the first division of basketball in Spain

It is important to notice that the sport chosen for the data gathered from United States and Canada have decided upon the 4 main leagues existing (NBA, NFL, MLB and NHL) and that have the main importance to the American culture. It was also important to look at the “soccer” league because this championship is growing every year in the United States and begins to have its own audience coming from the arrival of well-known players (Kaka, Andrea Pirlo, David Beckham, etc...) in the United States but also from different part of the world. Within this database, especially upon the American facilities, there is some stadiums or arenas that are used by several teams or franchises due to the multi-purposes function of the facilities. SO in this research, the decision was to bring the classification upon the Stadium name in order to facilitate the comprehension for the purpose of the study.

The second objective is to establish the different fans reactions that have been published among the different forum that relates to the club. The choice of these forums have been made randomly in order to prevent any answers that may come from a forum which led their reactions. The sample for the fan clubs observed was made upon the language used so I have decided to remove all countries where the language was different from French and English, so the countries that will be used inside the sample will be France and United Kingdom. In term of the sport’s choice, the decision was to choose Rugby and Football due to a really tied relationship between the sport and its fans.

It has been difficult to research these forums to find the exact topics because of the different obstacles that exists in this type of research such as no-research application, small members on the forum and the inexistence of a forum to speak about the different topics. The clubs picked are Nice, Manchester City, Stoke City and Leicester City for the Football side and the Sales Shark to look at the rugby’s fans. This choice has been realised according to the findings of topics surrounding the matter of Naming Right deals and the consequences for their clubs.

After the sample has been designed, the data gathered concerning different elements which is the name of the stadium, in order to determine whether if it is a naming rights or a “cultural” name, the companies’ name and sector that have bought the naming rights of the stadium or arena and the country of origin for both teams and companies

that are involved in this practice. These different elements will be crossed in order to obtain a significant results to answer the research objectives. In order to analyse the findings on the forum discussions between fans, the decision was to use a template analysis using the technique developed by King (2007). It is important to mention that King developed this techniques to interviews transcripts however he precise that this techniques can also be applied to any textual information. This techniques is a step-by-step processes that will enable this paper to gather the data in meaningful theory:

1. Define a priori themes: Cultural importance, financial benefit, Globalisation.
2. Transcribe your interviews, which is in the case of this research to order the different posts that are related to the Naming Right Deal
3. Carry out initial coding of your data. Identify those parts of your transcripts that are relevant to your research question(s). In this dissertation, it is to remove the posts that are not in relation to their feelings but just in regards to their response to other comments. It is important to focus on the first opinion made by the different persons.
4. Produce your initial template. To order the different feelings and arguments into the themes previously mentioned and to add other levels in order to have a more precise idea of the fans' thought.

Culture	Roots issue	Community
		Name's relation to culture
	Fans' role	Name's ownership
		Name is not a matter
Finance	Valuation in question	
		Financial Fair Play
	Club revenue	Stadium's ownership
Globalisation	International name	Marketisation
	Foreign Investment	Foreign culture

5. Develop your template by applying it to the full data set. The author reminded that at this stage it is normal to change the template by adding or removing themes.
6. Use your "final" template to help you interpret and write up your findings.
7. At one or more of the coding stages described above, you should carry out some kind of quality check to ensure that your analysis is not being systematically distorted by your own preconceptions and assumptions.

The data gathered and analysed have enabled to discover and confirm findings from the other research within the literature. These findings will allow this dissertation to build a theory based on the existing literature

The presentation and the analysis of findings will be divided in two parts that will correspond as the actual state of NRD and differences between Europe and the United States, and the qualitative analysis of the European fans' reactions upon this practice.

## PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Naming Right is part of the sponsorisme category in the marketing techniques and it is obvious that since numerous of years there has been a drift upon the world concerning this practice. It is important to start by giving a brief history of the Naming over the European and American continent.

Historically, the Naming Right practice appeared in 1973 in the United States when the Buffalo Bills, an American football franchise have sold the name of the stadium to a food and drink manufacturer, Rich Food Incorporation. This is the first Naming Right deal that have been signed between a company and the owner of the stadium. Since this date, there has been an important number of stadium especially in the US that have been renamed by a company that purchased the Naming Rights for a stadium.

As underlined by E. Leeds, M. Leeds and I. Pistolet (2007), the real drift happened in the 1990's due to the construction of numerous stadium in the United States.

Indeed, these stadiums needed to respect some economic requirements especially in their ability to be multi-purpose infrastructure in order to be profitable through a large range of revenue stream. The arenas and the stadiums can host many events from sports to concerts. The authors depicted the situation in 2001 of the naming right deals among the four main franchise: the National Football League (NFL), the Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the National Hockey League (NHL). And it is interesting to compare it with the actual situation in 2015 as it is underlined in the table below.

**Table 2 – Evolution of the Facility Naming Right Deals in the American Leagues**

Major Leagues	2001	2015	Evolution in percentage point
NBA	75 %	93 %	18
NFL	50 %	78 %	28
MLB	75 %	67 %	- 8
NHL	50 %	90 %	40

This graph shows that the trend launch from the 1990's is continuing nowadays. As it is obvious in this graph there has been a dramatic increase in almost every leagues except

the Baseball league. This evolution may be explained in the light of the scandal faced by Enron that was the owner of the Naming Rights of the Houston Astros' stadium and that had to end the deal after the massive affair linked to corporate governance failure. However, the larger trend is increasing in the United States and in some countries in Europe.

This trend is highlighted by the necessity for the owner of the stadium to obtain new revenue streams due the raise of the stadium cost due to the augmentation of capacity, access required and operation management. Nowadays, there is 2 types of ownerships for a stadium or an arena:

- Public ownership: the facility is owned by a city, the local government or even the country itself. In this type of ownership, the tenant will have to pay a certain amount of money to be able to play on the ground, in terms of Naming Right Deal, it can occur a reduction on the amount of the rent and it is beneficial for both parties.
- Private ownership: the facility is owned by private corporations or by the tenants. Most of these case occur the creation of an organisation that will be responsible to manage the facility for a given period.

In this case, the organisation will also be able to allow a discount on the price of the rent, although it is less obvious than for the public ownership that the NRD can occur to the reduction of the rent price. Indeed, the private corporation does not have the same responsibility for the community that local government have.

The cost for the construction of the stadium are sizeable for a city. For example, New York city have 10 franchises tied to the city that are playing in 4 different stadiums, outdoor ground on grass and 2 arena for American football, Baseball and Soccer, indoor ground on ice or parquet for Hockey and Basketball. The recent construction of the new facilities have generated both revenue and costs for the owner, for the city of New York the infrastructure have cost multi-billions of investment. For example, for the construction of the actual MetLife Stadium, the construction costs has been revealed at an overall cost of \$1.6 billion. It means that this investment must present a lot of

certainty and especially in terms of financial returns to be able to complete the process. On the other hand, the massive tendency is to finance these project through external investments from Private Corporation, these type of deals has been named the Public-Private partnership.

The PPP have been implanted in Europe since the construction of 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, where most of stadium were using these type of deals. At this occasion, this was the first wave of Naming Right Deals have arrived in Europe with a large echo in Germany and United Kingdom but the type of practice is quite inexistent in other parts of the continent. However, there is some examples such as the Allianz Riviera of Nice in France, the Power8 Stadium of the Espanyol of Barcelona in Spain or the MAPEI Stadium of Sassuolo in Italy. And these recent development of this practice may initiate a larger wave throughout the south part of Europe.

#### Actual state and differences between Europe and the United States

The first purpose of this dissertation is to underline the actual state that surround this practice in Europe and to compare the results with the established market of North America. The table below account the number of Naming Right Deals per country being noticed that there is countries which have teams in other championship that will be detailed below the graph.

**Table 3 - Overall number of Stadium with and without a NRD per country**

Country	Number of Stadium	Number of Naming Right Deals	Naming Right Deal Presence (in %)
Andorra	1	0	0%
Canada	11	10	90%
France	64	4	6%
Germany	54	36	66%
Ireland	3	0	0%
Italy	18	1	5%
Monaco	2	0	0%
Spain	53	2	3%
United Kingdom	38	12	31%
United States	116	92	79%
Europe	233	55	23%
North America	127	102	80%

Note: Andorra, Canada, Ireland and Monaco take part in other countries national championship. The overall American league covered by the study has taken into account the Canadian franchise registered in the championship. Concerning Monaco and Andorra, as a small country, they do not have the chance to have their own competition so it exists convention that allow these principality to be register respectively in France and in Spain. On the other hands, the Ireland teams selected in the study played in the Pro12 or commonly referred to as "the Celtic league" which is a competition that confront countries that are not on the English territory such as Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland. On the other hand, two teams from Italy have joined the competition even if there is an Italian championship but with less competition.

It is obvious that there is an important difference between the two continents in terms of the Naming Rights market. Europe have only developed this practice upon 23% of the stadium within the study whereas North America through their 5 leagues have reached 80% of Naming Right. The difference is massive and it is difficult to find arguments that may explain such a difference. However, the Table 1 (Andreff and Szymanski, 2006) that depicts the main differences between the North American and the European system in terms of sport may provide some elements to analyse this gap. Indeed, investors are researching investment security and fast return, the notable difference may be seen between the two competitions' organisations. The North American system is organised through closed leagues where the only problematic will be to build a competitive team to search the title in the present but also in the future, and the other problematic will be to secure the finance and to create revenue from external stream such as sponsorship, jersey retail ...etc.

On the other hands, the European system is organised through an open league with accession and relegation. This system enhance the uncertainty at the beginning because

they will have to build a team with one main objectives, to prevent any relegation. This situation can be difficult to attract the different investors that may be willing to invest in the project of the club because of this uncertainty. For example, there has been a tremendous example of famous teams in the past such the Stade de Reims in France or Nottingham Forest in England that have been part of the history of their national championship but also on the European history and have faced sporting difficulties and had to be relegated and to build a new project. These kind of stories are legion in the sports and it is also what makes so unrealistic and so enthusiastic to be interested in. However, in terms of investment, it can be seen as an obstacle to the success of your investment and it obliged the clubs to create a real enthusiasm around their project in order to attract investments.

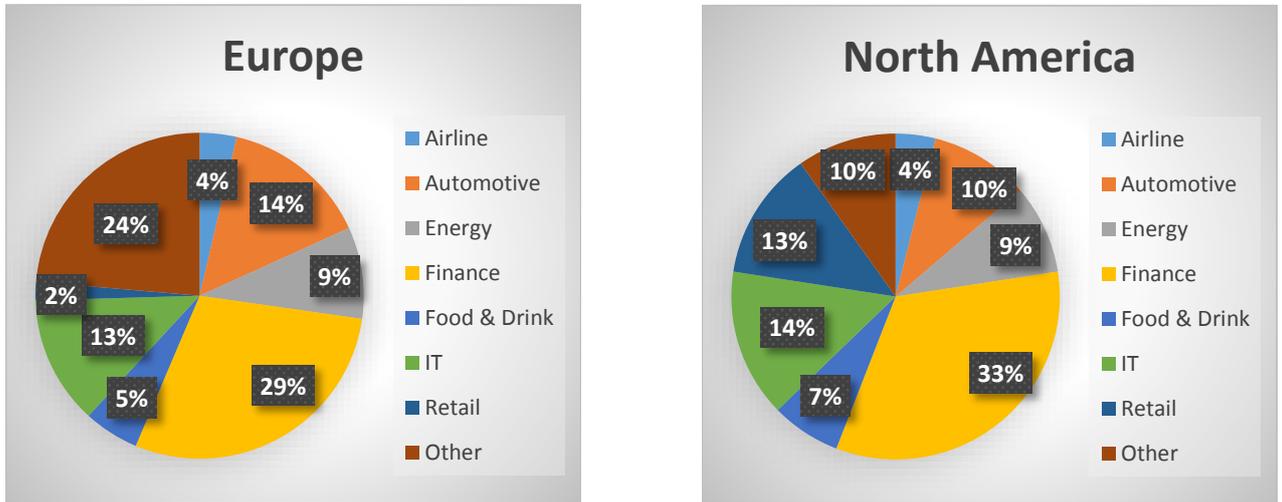
In France, the city of Le Mans faced a really difficult situation with their new stadium due to the situation of their tenant Le Mans FC which has faced the relegation in the second division since a long time and it was just after the opening of their stadium. This facility was chosen by the corporation MMA (Mutuelle du Mans Assurance), an insurance company operating on a national scale based in the same city. The relegation was not being planned in the budget and the club faced enormous financial problems of money and they had to declare them bankrupt. The situation nowadays is that the club is in the 4<sup>th</sup> division of the French championship with an amateur structure and the Stadium is only used for some National Youth team on several occasions and for some other events such as concerts.

The UK International Marketing Reports (2012) have raised another problematic that is interesting to point out. Indeed, in their reports concerning the sponsorship practice they have insisted on the fact that new facilities are easier to rename than historical facilities. For example, in France the average age of the stadiums used by professional clubs was about 66 years in 2009 (C. Bouchet) and it has not change since this date because there is only 3 stadiums built for the football purposes that is now used by a professional team.

The other interest of this research is to look at the companies that are paying in order to rename a stadium or an arena and to analyse the sector of the companies and the

part taken by the foreign investment, meaning the number of International Naming Right Deals are signed.

**Figure 2 - NRD by companies' industry**



The two figures shows how the different sectors are split within the NRD and it show that there is no real distinction that can be made between the two, the finance industry is in both cases the most disposed to use this type of marketing practice. There is also evidence that the industries investing in this type of sponsorship is the same, the automotive, energy and IT are the most represented in both cases which underline the attraction of these industries for the Naming Right Deal.

It also important to have a picture of the companies and from which countries does the investment in NRD comes from. Not surprisingly, the United States is the first country to initiate a NRD but most of them are contracted intern to their home country. (Appendix A)

This is an elements shared by the other countries among the study which show that most of the investment are done internally. This enhance the theories from Irwin and McCarthy (2000) which highlighted in their study the desire from the corporation to invest in a sense of keeping the community together as it has been explained by a respondent to the study, the person in charge of the NRD for the company “Our naming rights deal for the new ballpark enabled us to play a significant role in saving the community’s major league baseball team from moving out of town”.

However, the fans does not have always the reaction wanted by the companies and this may have repercussion on the companies' strategy concerning the Naming practice because it is not perceived in the way the company want to communicate with it.

### Fans' reaction to the Naming Right Deal over their stadium

This part will emphasise on the perception of these deal through the analysis of the different conversations observed into the forums. This choice has the benefit of looking at what arguments does the fans have and how they react concerning this type of practice. This analysis will rely on 5 team's fan: OGC Nice in France, Manchester City, Stoke City and Leicester in England for the football fans and the Sale Sharks in England for the rugby.

This part will be divided by three subparts which will correspond to the themes explained in the Research Methodology part. First of all it is interesting to present the different teams in order to understand the fans feelings about the name of "their" stadium.

OGC Nice is an ancient club of the French football championship, they now play on the Allianz Riviera named after the German insurance company that has bought the naming right of the stadium and the Riviera is a reference to the French Riviera, an English term for the famous tourism location.

Manchester City is also a famous football club in England, and they have been purchased in 2008, by an Investment Funds founded by the Prime Minister of Abu Dhabi and have known a large series of success since. They play on the Etihad Stadium after a Naming Right Deals with the national airline company of the United Arab Emirates, Etihad Airways.

Stoke City is a football club from the city of Stoke-on-Trent in the Staffordshire, it is the most ancient club currently in the Premier League, they do not have a huge amount of trophy but they still have a long history before today. Their stadium naming rights has

been purchased by the Britannia Co-operative Bank which is the result from the merger of a building society (Britannia) and Co-operative Financial Services.

Leicester city is a newly promoted club in the English Football Premier League. In 2010, the former owner of the club decided to sale it to the Asian Football Investments (AFI) which is owned by King Power is a Thai group based in Bangkok that is the best travel retailer in the country. The new owner decided to change the name of the stadium and it became the King Power stadium.

The Sale Sharks is a rugby team from the suburb of Manchester that have a long history with brief success. The stadium is named the AJ Bell Stadium after the Naming right being purchased by AJ Bell an investment platform.

### Culture

The culture of the club is a major interest for the fans. For the Nice fans, it is really important for them that the culture of the club is not marred with foreign investment. In this category of reactions, the first one concerns the loss of the cultural roots. Most of the fans are criticising the origin of the two names chosen despite the name of the corporation. Indeed, they would have a preferred a name linked to the Nice culture, the problem in the name is the Riviera which an English term and does not correspond to the expectation of the fans. Nice's fans are the only one among the study that have been criticised the name itself. This type of subject always derived on nationalist themes, a little amount of the post have mentioned the fact that the corporation in question Allianz is German and that they would have preferred a local branding on the Stadium. It is important to notice that most of the fans are not against the Naming Right Deals. The name must have references from the club and the city culture, the fans needs to recognise their clubs through ideological figures.

The Leicester city fans also mentioned this fear for their culture especially due to the foreign private ownership and other examples that have enhanced this fear among the fans. Indeed, Cardiff City has been played with blue jersey since their creation, however, when Vincent Tan purchased the club in 2010, he decided to change the colour on the

jersey in 2012 and that the team will now play in red jersey. This action has faced a tremendous amount of protestation from the fans and after three years of struggle. This affair have had an important echo all over the world because it was the first time that the owner of the stadium have tried to overtake and change dramatically the culture of a club.

This is one of the biggest fear from the fans that is supporting their team for a certain amount of time and they want to possess part of this culture. Concerning the Sale Shark's fans, they also requested the incorporation of "Salford" into the name in reference to the other tenants of the stadium which is a professional Rugby League Football club along with Sale.

The name has also to ring to the ears of the fans, most of them required that the name must sounds and mean something to them. There has been a lot of messages around the AJ Bell Stadium of the Sales Sharks and a large number of people have mentioned the fact that the name" had a ring to it", which means this aspect does have an important meanings to them but also through the analysis of the other messages on the other forums. The stadium name is one the main aspect that concerns the arrival of a new stadium or the communication for the change in the name.

On the hands, some of the comments concerns the role of the fans concerning the culture but also the Naming Right practice and how to skirt to name the corporation. A large majority claims that the name should be owned indirectly by the fans, in the sense that once the supporters will get comfortable in the stadium, they will be able to rename within the community. This example is highlighted by the fans of Stoke City which called their stadium "the Brit'" instead of the Britannia Stadium, this does not have the same resonance for the corporation and this may be seen as an obstacle by the firms. The fans are also responsible for the ambiance inside the stadium, and most of Stoke City fans preferred the old stadium because it exists a special atmosphere. The fans need to be able to attract new supporters to the stadium in order to create an ambiance despite the name of the stadium.

The fans may have a limited power over the club's strategy, they still are the main consumers of this sport. The feelings of the fans and their role required a deep attention

from the entire structure of the club. Even though, it is difficult to access to all queries from the fans it is necessary to take their opinion into account when decision are made, it could even be beneficial to invite the representing persons of the fans group around the table once a month to discuss the different “hot topics” linked to the club.

It is an important matter for the Nice’s fans especially around the name’s choice and how this may be changed by the fans will. Other comments concerned the media coverage of the stadium and this message highlighted the fact that it was the fans responsibility to change this name on the media coverage.

Manchester city fans have mentioned one things previously cite in this dissertation which the importance for the community, and the fans have felt it even if the Abu Dhabi comes from a culturally different country. The investors are looking to facilitate their integration among the community of the Manchester City fans by creating events around the stadium.

### Finance

In the theme of finance, most of the fans are questioning the amount of the deal and how this enter in the strategy of the club.

The majority of Manchester City’s fans were positive around the announcement of the Naming right because of the Financial Fair Play (FFP) that could have caused some troubles to the future of the club. The FFP has been launched by the Union of the European Football Association (UEFA), the main principle is to balance between the expenses and the revenues in order to reduce the debts of the European clubs and to equilibrate the finance of the European football. Manchester City owner arrived with a lot of funds in order to build a team able to compete on the European competitions, however the UEFA have warned Manchester City and they had to reduce a little bit their ambition. In this sense, the fans have taken positively the £400 million (€541 million) for 10 years signed between Manchester City and Etihad Airways which have reduced the fear of the fans and also of the club.

This also a major interest for the fans that see these multi-millions contract for the club, but this may be profitable for the club only under one condition which is that the Naming Rights are owned by the club. In the case of Manchester City, the rights are owned by Manchester council but the administration has been delegated to the club and the revenue will be split between the two.

Concerning, the Nice fans they are not really satisfied with this deal because they thought that the Naming rights would cost more for Allianz rather than only €2 million per year. Unlike, the example of Manchester City, Nice Stadium is operated by the local government, so it means that the money will not be given to the club, however, this may results in a decrease of the rental charges but it depends of the different negotiations led by the two parties. It seems that among the fans, there is a general acceptance of the fact that nowadays money is stronger than the good will of the fans. They maybe unfortunately, accept it without struggling a little bit, it may be worth to show the local authority that there is a real opposition if there is no benefits for the club in question.

### Globalisation

The fans also reacts on the surrounding theme of globalisation and most of the fans react negatively to this but there is also some voices that take the side of globalisation and find it positive for the future of the club.

The Leicester City's fans are reacting negatively to the branding launched by King Power especially due to the tremendous number of places around the stadium where the name of the brand is communicated. It is obvious that the fans dislike this "over" branding for the brand name

This communication perception has also been misperceived in the Sale sharks forum, indeed, some posts have mentioned a "clumsy announcement" which also seems to be important for the fans. The communication is also a major perspective for the club in their position towards their consumer. As it has been said above, the participation of the fans inside the club structure may be a solution to interest the fans and to reduce the risk for contestation.

Even though there has been some negative comments on the English name of the Allianz Riviera, there is also some fans that recognise the necessity to enter in the globalised world and the fact that having a English term in the name of the stadium is also facilitating the pronunciation for the general audience and in consequences also to enhance the possibility to remember the name. The stadium of Nice now try to open global perspectives with the European championship that is coming in 2016 and fans have understand the value of it even if there some reluctances with the foreign investments.

To summarise the list below highlights the different elements observed through the forum around the perception and the evaluation of the Naming Right Deals by the fans:

- Priority needs to be given to the club's culture
- Preference for local investment
- Fans are able to rename the stadium
- Stadium Naming Rights is defined as a pure financial practice
- It is profitable for the club
- Communication needs to size with the club's culture
- The Stadium name must sound correctly

These elements are the most important elements for the fans concerning the naming right practice.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Naming Right practice has a very history among the European continent in terms of market presence. The main elements highlighted by this research have shown that:

- Europe can be split in two parts: United Kingdom and Germany which are very forward and Spain, Italy and France which showed an evolution but still limited within these countries.
- The differences between the presence of the Naming Rights in the Europe and in North America is predominantly explained by the sense of “sporting indecision”. The American leagues are closed so there is no fear to get less coverage from the media by being relegated in inferior league which is the contrary of the European leagues. This differences may explain why in some parts of Europe the investors are reluctant to this type of sponsorship.
- There is no real differences regarding the type of industries that are willing to invest between North America and Europe, the Finance sector is in both cases the biggest Naming Right “contractor”.
- Most of the Naming Right deals are made by home-based companies. It may been due to this sense of community as McCarthy and Irwin (2000) depicted it in their research.

The presence of Stadium named by corporation is increasing in Europe since this decade and it will continue to grow with the sporting pressure still growing

In the light of the fans comments most of them are not really against the principle of the NRD if it respects three things:

- Cultural references: the culture of a club represents a massive subject for the fans and they are afraid that foreign capital may spoil a part of this culture such as the fans of Nice and their relation to the actual Stadium name, Allianz Riviera. Allianz being a German insurance company and Riviera referring to the French Riviera, an English word that name this part of France. They relate a lot on the subject of being afraid that globalisation may spoil the club’s culture. For a

company, this may be prevented by incorporating the fans around the discussion with the owner.

- Branding: the fans are also interested in the branding of the Stadium and more especially in the way that they do not want it to be “too much”. There can be attracted to this idea of Naming but they want that this practice to stay at the highness of their clubs. The fans of Leicester City regretted the enormous amount of “King Power” writings all around and more especially inside the stadium. The companies must include the fans into their strategy because they will be the primary target in terms of Naming right and they will also the principal communication’s “instrument”.
- The financial issues: a large part of the fans even if they regret to use it, recognise that it may be beneficial for the club because it may induce some financial advantage for the club. For Manchester City, it has prevent the club from the Financial Fair Play and allowed the club to continue on their strategy of acquiring the best players in the world. In reality, the financial area of the

These three elements seems to have a massive importance for the fans in terms of their relations regarding the Naming Right Deals, they also discussed about their role in the club structure and how they can manage to change the club’s name.

This dissertation has faced one major difficulty regarding the research methodology around the access to information, it has been difficult to access information regarding this subject in terms of respondent. Indeed, the first qualitative research approach was to interview fans and companies face-to-face, however, facing the poor amount of answers, the decision taken was to use the forum and investigate on them. The limits in this case was the network which was not sufficiently developed in order to achieve with success the research objectives, the other case where this difficulty has been observed has occurred when the dissertation research wanted to point out the different price for the deals in order to look at the differences in expenses by companies depending on their nationality. Indeed, most of the deals are not disclosed in the media and it may require a longer research to access to this information.

To conclude, this dissertation occurred some interesting insights around the Naming Right practice and the attitude of the fans towards NRD, these insights could be the subject to a deeper exploration towards the companies' attitudes towards the fans or how this practice may be incorporated in a communication strategy.

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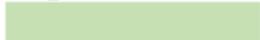
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## APPENDIX A – TABLE OF THE INVESTMENT PER COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

		Stadium's Country										Total Nb of NRD per
		Andorra	Canada	France	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Monaco	Spain	United Kingdom	USA	
NRD Company's country	Austria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Belgium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Canada	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	11
	Costa Rica	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	UAE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
	France	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Germany	0	0	1	33	0	0	0	0	1	2	37
	Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Italy	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
	Japan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4
	Netherlands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Spain	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Switzerland	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Thailand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	United Kingdom	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	6	2	0
	USA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	79	80
	No NRD	1	1	60	18	3	17	2	51	26	24	203
<b>Total Nb of Teams per</b>	1	11	64	54	3	18	2	53	38	116	1	

### Legend

 Naming Right Deals occurring in the same country