

THE ROLE OF MARKETING STRATEGIES IN NOT OWNED STADIUM IN FOOTBALL REALITIES: evidence from Chievo Verona case study

Tomaso Borzomi

Email: tomaso.borzomi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Aim of the article is to propose a case study on a sport reality that is Chievo Verona, an Italian Serie A football team, which showed, during the last years, important attention to budgeting and reporting standards basing their attention also on the marketing strategies of the sport management system. The Chievo Verona choice was due to the fact that the society reported bad results in the average live attendance, as the team got the 19th, that is the last, position within the Italian Serie A attendance ranking¹. In particular it is interesting to see how the stadium management could involve and bring different outputs comparing a not owned arena and an ideal situation of an owned one, taking also into consideration which are the benefits of an owned stadium and how to adopt right marketing strategies. The study was conducted on the basis of a qualitative research, with two deep interviews to members of the sport organization: the marketing and communication manager, which gave me the opportunity to investigate how marketing strategies are linked to the stadium, and the team manager which allowed me to understand what is behind the athletes' motivation linked to the stadium importance. Then there was also the opportunity to have some informal speeches with five players, which gave me the possibility to understand their feelings about the importance of the stadium.

Furthermore it is considered the role of a stadium related to the importance it has in community creation. The effects of this strategy are mainly concerning the supporters/customers, but it should not to be avoided also the same possible effect on the athletes, particularly concerning the motivation factor which could impact their same performance, in both positive or negative direction.

¹ As it will be shown later, Serie A is made by 20 teams, but Cagliari has no possibilities to play in the designed stadium for safety reason.

Keywords: arenas, brand management, Chievo Verona, communities, leadership, motivation, performance, potential customers, qualitative, sport marketing, stadium, stadium opportunities, stadium ownership.

Table of contents: 1. Introduction - 2. Conceptual Framework - 3. Sport stadium marketing management - 4. Limitations due to non-ownership of the stadium – 5. Methodology - 6. The Chievo Verona case as example of Italian realities - 7. Discussion, managerial implications, limitations and further research.

1. INTRODUCTION

The article's purpose is to study the important role that marketing plays in the management of a stadium in a sport reality. Growing attention is occurring in Italy after Juventus' start with his new *Juventus Stadium*. It seemed then to be widely important to analyze how should be managed the whole infrastructure, trying to deal with the profitability increase and, at the same time, the minimization of the loss. In doing this analysis the core of the project is to find which are the limits arising from a not owned stadium. The arena offers a lot of strategies that could be exploited in terms of brand management, and they changes deeply, in profitability terms, if the stadium is owned or not. In fact if the stadium is not owned by a society, it means that it should be property of the town, at least in Italy, which implies that should be arranged a contract about its full exploitation. But this is not the key point; in fact there could be a lack of potential activities that are generally offered where the stadium is property of the team, which means, again, more profitability than a not owned arena. Ownership, for sure, could not be the only one vehicle of profit; in fact the main problem is the age of Italian arenas: as the most important ones were modernized in 1990, when occurred "Italy '90 World Cup". Old arenas are studied for supplying the needs of supporters in the Nineties, which are fairly different from what is requested now by a customer/supporter. In order to get the key-point, the paper is structured as a case study analysis, and the team studied is Chievo Verona, that plays in Serie A with fair results. Chievo Verona is a reality that has no property of the stadium, as everyone in Italy except Juventus², and it was the last one ranking in the Serie A

² For completeness it is important to remark that also Cagliari has built its own arena, even if there is a lack of bureaucracy permissions that are not allowing the team to play in its stadium.

for public attendance in 2011-2012. This reason raised my motivation in trying to understand what stays behind this lack of attention on an important sport reality in a city like Verona, that counts on more than 264,000 people and has two football teams playing in the two top leagues in Italy, which are Chievo Verona in Serie A and Hellas Verona in Serie B. An important remark is the fact that both teams are playing in the same stadium *Bentegodi*, as often happens in Italy where there are two teams in the same city³. This makes harder the process of customization of the stadium and the building of a specific identity through the same arena. These are the reasons why the study is focused on trying to understand how a stadium should be managed in order to better exploit marketing levers, with the subsequent benefits in terms of profitability and attractiveness. What emerges from the study is the importance of the stadium ownership in terms of reducing the time loss due to bureaucracy permissions in a not owned one. The minimization of bureaucracy would allow the management to make easier and faster the operation of adjusting the strategy to the customer's needs. Another aspect that it is intended to be investigated here is how supporters that are coming to the stadium could help the management in the process of innovating their services on the basis of their own needs and requests.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Coming from the literature it is plausible to consider arenas as a main contributor for creating communities between the supporters of a team, which generally are also the customer of a sport reality. Goal of the community creation is the sharing of values, which determine people belonging to a same environment, leading them to feeling part of a group and, sometimes, also to contribute to innovation. The benefits for a company on having some part of clients involved into the community are evidenced by Von Hippel [1994] studies where he shows how communities of practice are willing to develop innovative concepts. It is in fact possible to find some very small innovation in a stadium, coming from customers' needs. As the

³ Example of this statement are: Inter and Milan, which are playing in the *San Siro* stadium in Milan; Roma and Lazio which are playing in the *Olimpico* stadium in Rome; Genoa and Sampdoria, which are playing in the *Ferraris* stadium in Genova. And it also happened to Juventus and Torino when, before the building of *Juventus Stadium*, they were playing in the *Delle Alpi* stadium in Turin.

marketing's ontology demonstrates, the focus should be on trying to bridge the communication gap between the two parts. It would be then relatively easy to innovate in the supporters' direction, trying to satisfy their needs. A basic example comes from how supporters are willing to use the seats: generally they find them uncomfortable and they bring from home some seat cushion. If the management would be willing to try to catch directly from them this simple argument, this could become a driver in order to understand how to make more comfortable the seats or how to make profits starting from a weakness point. So then this can be considered innovating: e.g. the solution could be selling the official seat cushion with a discount to those that exhibit a ticket for the match. Marketing powers are trustworthy in this specific example.

From the same stream of literature on community theories, it comes out the fact that those who belongs to the community, act sharing the same goals and targets. This can assume importance in terms of sport supportership linked to the generation of motivation in the players of a team, as it will be enounced in the case study.

Furthermore, the importance of the stadium has also its implication in the social identity creation and empowerment. Borrowing what Ashforth and Mael stated [1999], the social identification is "*the perception of oneness with a group of persons*", which is typical of the supporters of a football team, which recognize themselves into the sharing of same goals and values, having the tendency to "*choose activities that are congruent with the identity, support for institutions that embody the identity...and outcomes that traditionally are associated with group formation, and it reinforces the antecedents of identification*" [Ashforth & Mael, 1999, pp 25-26]. The stadium is often the place where this happens in relation to supporters' identity creation. Then it is fundamental to consider the fact that this realization takes place only if the management is completely involved into the decision-making and decision-taking process. Which is not the case of a non-owned stadium, as the management is not the only one player in the decision taking process and then could not directly manage the variables. An example comes from the fact that Chievo is not the only one team playing in the stadium, so the mayor of the town should decide for both the teams and not favoring only one actor.

Of course it has not to be forgotten the fact that the arena does not drive the attendance in a stadium *per se*, but there are some other factors that attract people to the stadium. An example is the loyalty of the supporters to the team that catch the attention of those who are deeply involved in the team's support. Then there could be the case of a particular results track

coming from the team that can be able to catch the attention of people with less emotive involvement. It should be also considered the fact that a team that offers a nice show, playing good games: this could be a vehicle for those who are not supporters but only passionate in the specific field and has pleasure in watching it independently from the team that is playing. In the applied setting this will be better explained.

Another important argument is the influence on others component of the communities that could be played by people like the most involved supporter, which are the so-called “ultras”. Their strong attitude in attract follower shows an important issue for the firms: people who are able to lead others to a specific behavior could involve the same ones in feeling part of a group, which is, again, a huge potential for firms [Marchi & Giachetti & De Gennaro, 2011; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001; Schouten & Mc Alexander, 1995; Shau & Muniz & Arnould, 2009]. It is important to considered the relevance of those leaders because there would never exists any other loyal customer like the supporter of a team, which generally never change its favorite one in the whole life⁴, with the obvious implication it has in the attendance at the stadium⁵. Then, to be noted as important too, is, somehow, also the possibility to attract people that are not true supporter, but only sympathizers [Cova, 1997; Fuller, 2010; Kozinets, 1999; Sawhney & Prandelli, 2000]. The leaders can be seen as charming at the eye of the potential supporter, and their interest could increase, letting them also being potential customer for the merchandising products. This is a very broad, but effective way on explaining the potential of the community creation [Dholakia & Bagozzi, 2006], and its impacts on the firms’ financial performance. In doing this, arenas play a very active role, where the example of some leaders could involve other people. So then it is important to consider the difference between having and not having an owned stadium. Those forward thinker clubs should admire at the possibility to own an arena, as it would lead to an increase of the potential customer due to the fact that they would be the only responsible for the process of decisions-taking and making. Clear example of this way of thinking is the English or German football culture, where almost all the teams play in a stadium, which is property of

⁴ It is a general rule, but seems plausible to note how it is still possible a change in the favourite team, even if it is socially considerable as exception.

⁵ This sentence takes value only in the case of “ultras”, which are, by definition, the supporters who are directly involved in the team support, so the ones that participate actively to the stadium activities.

the same management and has impact on the land value [Ahlfeldt & Maennig, 2010]. Vice versa, not having a proper arena could damage the team in several ways, deeply shown later, starting from the point that the direct control of a stadium gives freedom to the management in deciding how, and which, marketing levers exploit. Those levers can be used e.g. in terms of communication to supporters, helping the management in the creation of a defined identity through the stadium, which should become the *locus* where interaction occurs. The indirect control implicates the request of permissions, for any kind of purpose, to the owner, which in Italy is the town's mayor, with the well-known bureaucracy problems that afflict Italy's law system.

3. SPORT STADIUM MARKETING MANAGEMENT

A stadium, both in case of ownership and not, offers several opportunities for marketing strategies as a team could be seen as a vehicle of communication. It is then possible to consider a standardized marketing system, or something linked to the team itself. Let firstly concentrate on standards. The main important area to be exploited is the pitch, where rotors are generally placed all way long and can host many sponsors, which generally pay for the important visibility offered by being associated to the team. Generally those kinds of services are sold at very high prices. Those offers could be directly managed by the marketing management, as it is the case of Chievo Verona, or could also be outsourced to external firms, as for example Udinese which has an external marketing management that is "HS01", or sometimes also creating a partnership with e.g. Italtelo, which is the leader company in Italy, in supplying rotor, for the management of the contracts⁶. All the possible strategies are linked to the relationship with the sponsors, but they are mainly concerning the possibility to pay an higher price in order to avoid an high percentage of sponsors, or paying a bit less, but trying to host more sponsors. The rotors are a standard, and the price is strictly linked to the presence in a more or less competitive league. Moreover there is a wide distance in terms of visibility between Serie A and Serie B, which can determine also a less competitive advantage on the market. Rotor are not the only way to pursue economic incomes exploiting stadium opportunities with marketing strategies, as there is a sort of diffused exclusivity, which is

⁶ This kind of partnership is generally used by team which are not expert like the newcomers in Serie A, or the Serie B participants.

more limited when considering backdrop interview panels: they could be fixed in some places like press room or mixed zone; or mobile ones, which are generally routed where interviews are occurring in the pitch. A growing attention is now also considering the benches where there could be at maximum one sponsor as it is possible to consider the selling of the spaces behind the players and the coach, giving a sure, but limited, visibility via television, as coaches and players are often subject of screening by tv operators.

There is also the possibility to create some *ad hoc* strategies, which is the case of every football reality. In particular, in the case of Chievo Verona, as there are some important district realities, seemed to be interesting to exploit some areas of the stadium to be dedicated to those firms, even small, which are into b2b sector, so not requiring a national visibility. In this case it is important to evaluate which parts of the stadium could be reached by customized sponsoring services. This strategy allows Chievo Verona to reach also the target of firms that has a limited budget, as the tv visibility requires important investments.

Another possible way in how to increase profit from the marketing point of view is the activation of partnership with suppliers in different areas; this means, for the suppliers, receiving more attention and it is the case of beverage and food management in the stadium, which, as it will be described later, from the very past years is completely served by the society itself and is requiring a lot of improvements. It was then noticed that there is also the possibility to manage in a sponsored way also the bars within the stadium, and not only outside of it. This kind of attention lead a potential double attention to, first, sponsorships, but denotes growing attention, in terms of wider offer, also to the supporters, which are showing needs that could be satisfied within the stadium more than outside of it, as it happens nowadays. This potential satisfaction could attract and create a stronger link between people and team, helping both parts to deeply understand the dynamics staying behind what is requested and what it could be offered.

4. LIMITATIONS DUE TO NON-OWNERSHIP OF THE STADIUM

One of the most important limits to the exploitation of the stadium that is important to remark is the existence of boundaries given by the Italian law. In Italy, as a matter of fact, the possibility to open the stadium in the match day is determined by the local police, and generally comes from one hour and a half before the match, until two hours, depending on the

number of ticket sold. Furthermore, after the match, people are more willing into going out of the stadium environment as faster as possible, as they have no reasons to stay inside it, and in that way they could be able to avoid long queues. This is an infrastructure problem, as there are always queues both in getting in and out from the arenas by car. This approach is showing a situation in which people looks not interested in coming or staying into the stadium, maybe also because teams are not allowed to make complementary show purposes. This is a myopic attitude of the legal system as major incomes for the team, makes higher incomes for the government as well, e.g. in terms of paid taxes. In different countries and in other sports, vice versa, it is possible to come into the stadium earlier, having the opportunity to follow shows purposed by the management of the team. An example of this possibility, not exploited in Italy, is hockey in Canada or basketball in USA, where it is more convenient to enter the stadium some hours before the beginning of the match, following the purposed shows and participating actively to them if e.g. extracted in lotteries. In those countries the attention to the experiential marketing is strongly encouraged by the management of the sport societies involved. An interesting dynamic that could be imported in Italy, and in football as well, should be, for example, the possibility to let the public being active part of the show, through lotteries or other skills competitions, having so the opportunity to win official gadget of the team coming from the merchandising. This would be an important driver in order to attract and involve supporters. There could be then, the opportunity to win something official, depending on the prizes, from e.g. a key ring up to a signed t-shirt simply in relation to the place where supporters are seated. Or another example could be the possibility to shot a penalty kick to the goalkeeper or to try to shot a free throw in basketball, and on the basis of the result, gaining a gadget. This attention to the customer for sure would attract people to live entirely the stadium, which, if of property, could be also equipped with shops, restaurants, bars and museums. The results of this approach would let the society getting enlargement in economic margins. In fact one of the huge problem for Italian football realities is that people often lay out from the stadium, as there are food kiosks where they can eat and share comments, knowing other people and making new friendship, as they generally share the same values [Dholakia & Bagozzi, 2006]. But not only food and beverage is the main profit chance: outside of the stadium there are also merchandising shops, which are, often, not official. This, for sure, make the situation undesirable from an economic perspective in terms of missed profits. The main goal for a football reality should be the capacity to attract people into the stadium, more than outside of it, being able to give services before and after the

match, in terms of maximization of profit and customer satisfaction, taking the example of British and German realities where everything is offered widely.

5. METHODOLOGY

As the target of the study is a specific reality, the methodology required a case study analysis [Coates & Humphreys, 1999, p.605]. The results of the research can then be extended to other similar realities, which are Italian football teams not owning a proper stadium due to the strong similarities of the sector. So then it was chosen to opt for some qualitative interviews, concerning the topic, involving marketing and communication department of the society Chievo Verona, but also players and an ex player now manager, trying to get the key elements of the management itself. This is due to the complexity of the factors that are involving the stadium importance. The first interview occurred in Verona in July 2012, in a private *tête-à-tête* meeting between the marketing and communication director E. Z. and me; it lasted almost one hour, it was developed in his office and it was semi-structured. For semi-structured it is intended the possibility to start from some key elements, e.g. which are the basic marketing strategies in stadium management, that are described in section 3; passing through the intended strategy that the society is trying to pursue, knowing that could be impossible to exactly follow the steps originally intended [Mintzberg, H., 1978]. Finally catching what would change in an ideal situation in which the stadium would be owned by the society instead that from the town⁷. In a second moment still in July 2012 I moved to Peschiera del Garda where Chievo Verona was doing its pre-season training. There, I had the opportunity to interview the team manager F. M., a former Chievo Verona football player that played in the team for 10 years. The interview occurred near the pitch where there would be the daily training; it was semi-structured, leaving space for understanding the role of the stadium in the creation of the motivation on the player. After this meeting I also had the opportunity to have some fast speeches with 5 players, which told me some issues about the importance of living an owned stadium, as the main variable seemed to be how much full should it be. The link between managing directly a stadium and its attendance it is not direct, but marketing levers show relevance in this analysis. Up to now, this link it is only postulated and not yet formulated even if there are some key issues about the finding of a positive correlation

⁷ Appendix shows the report of the interviews adopted.

between the parts. The issues come from the option to the opportunity, for the management, to act directly, not needing to pass by a third actor, the mayor, in the decision making and decision taking process. This could push people, through marketing levers, to attend the matches from the stadium instead preferring to participate to the event from home or from bars. Further analysis could take this direction.

Thanks to these interviews it was possible to make a deep analysis on how was managed the stadium before, which are the adopted marketing strategies and how it is possible to differentiate the society from the other competitors. Then it was also important to note where is the focus of the program of Chievo Verona and how it was intended to be pursued the target.

6. THE CHIEVO VERONA CASE AS EXAMPLE OF ITALIAN REALITIES

A COMPARISON WITH THE OTHER ITALIAN REALITIES

Chievo Verona is a team which is being a consolidate Serie A participant as in the last years it takes active part of the Italian football panorama⁸. The team was founded in a small fraction of Verona, which is Chievo, 2500 people, and started its sport activities in 1929. The team plays in the *Marcantonio Bentegodi* stadium, settled in Verona, that counts on 42,160 places. The stadium was inaugurated in the 1963 and restructured for the world cup “Italy ’90”, even if the last repair service was in 2009, when the whole stadium was equipped with 13,328 solar panels, which, “unfortunately”, as the marketing director said, are not serving the stadium necessities but are supplying the city needs. This happens because the stadium is property of the town of Verona and rented by the team only during match days. In the same year there also was a purpose to make the stadium more modern, with a project involving several components like: remaking the changing rooms and the tunnel to the pitch, the tribunes enlargement also getting them nearer to the pitch and the creation of bars, stores and restaurants. The estimation of the works was among 40 millions of euros, reason why the project never started as the society has not the financial power to invest that much in a non-owned arena. Neither the city had the possibility to find sponsors that would be willing to

⁸ Since 2001 Chievo Verona is a Serie A player, except a small interval during the season 2007-2008 where it played in Serie B.

invest in that direction. Evidence demonstrates also in this case the importance of owning a stadium.

Analysis								
	Totale	Matches	Media	Rank	Max	vs.	Min	vs.
Atalanta	294.341	19	15.492	13	22.335	Juventus	11604	Cagliari
Bologna	365.877	19	19.257	9	30.321	Juventus	14120	Fiorentina
Cagliari								
Catania	292.344	19	15.387	14	20.839	Juventus	12237	Cesena
Cesena	311.793	19	16.410	12	23.343	Juventus	13650	Udinese
Chievo	183.324	19	9.649	19	22.000	Juventus	6000	Cesena
Fiorentina	406.833	19	21.412	7	36.387	Juventus	15812	Atalanta
Genoa	355.262	17	20.898	8	27.527	Juventus	18957	Chievo
Inter	851.323	19	44.806	2	78.222	Milan	18320	Palermo
Juventus	713.351	19	37.545	4	40.944	Atalanta	35226	Siena
Lazio	615.785	19	32.410	6	57.148	Juventus	23129	Cesena
Lecce	189.265	19	9.961	18	23.298	Juventus	5962	Bologna
Milan	931.372	19	49.020	1	79.522	Inter	35753	Parma
Napoli	756.354	19	39.808	3	57.402	Juventus	22397	Chievo
Novara	208.189	19	10.957	16	17.649	Juventus	8224	Cesena
Palermo	365.136	19	19.218	10	28.941	Juventus	14365	Parma
Parma	259.278	19	13.646	15	19.481	Milan	10800	Catania
Roma	688.164	19	36.219	5	50.801	Lazio	29433	Parma
Siena	192.432	19	10.128	17	15.265	Juventus	8242	Catania
Udinese	353.312	19	18.595	11	28.588	Juventus	15818	Lecce
	8.333.735	359	23.214		79.522		5.962	

Figure : from <http://www.stadiapostcards.com/A11-12.htm>

Some important data are showing that Chievo Verona in 2011-2012 provided its services to a total of 183,324 people attending the stadium, which classifies the team as the last one in order of people attractiveness in the Serie A Championship, with a mean of 9,649 people per match, where the average for Serie A matches is 23,214⁹. Comparing this data with the top team in this classification, which is A.C. Milan¹⁰, it makes interesting to study which are the reason why this was and it is still happening. But more interesting should be the comparison with the only one stadium of property in Italy, which is, as said before, the *Juventus Stadium*. That arena shows a capacity of 41,000 places which is closely similar to *Bentegodi's* one, and, even if the attractiveness of the two team is fairly different, it seems important to note how

⁹ Data are coming from <http://www.stadiapostcards.com/A11-12.htm>

¹⁰ A.C. Milan showed 931,372 total people for a mean of 49,020 people per match, on a stadium capacity of 80,018.

Juventus, ranked 4th, has a total of 713,351 people, which means 37,545 per match, more than four times the attractiveness of Chievo Verona. Providing a percentage overview it is important to note how Chievo Verona occupied the 22.89% of the stadium, while A.C. Milan performed 61.26% and Juventus reached the 91.57% of saturation. A rate never reached with the previous stadium. This data showed an important issue, which tells how the property stadium could attract more people as better incur the needs of the people than other ways. In fact it is important to remark how both Chievo's and Milan's arenas are shared, respectively, with Hellas Verona and Inter¹¹ teams, while *Juventus stadium* is not shared with Torino team, as it was occurring with the *Delle Alpi* stadium during the past years. And this possibility to have an own stadium let the teams more free in terms of customer satisfaction, as it is possible to create a dedicated approach to the people, providing keen services. Other statistics show that the maximum number of people reached by Chievo Verona is 22,000 against Juventus, which is still more or less a half of the capacity of the stadium (52.18%), while A.C. Milan was 79,522 (98,15%) against Inter and for Juventus was 40,944 (99,86%) against Atalanta¹².

In terms of efficiency it is important to compare Chievo Verona also with other similar realities. As in 2011-2012 Chievo Verona ranked 10th at the end of the season, the direct competitor of the team could be founded between Bologna, ranked 9th, Catania, 11th, Atalanta 12th and Siena 14th¹³. Bologna plays its internal matches in “*Renato Dall’Ara*” stadium, which counts on a capacity of 39,279 places and was restructured for the Italy ’90 World Cup, as *Bentegodi*'s stadium. Catania plays its internal matches in “*Angelo Massimino*” stadium, which has a capacity of 23,200 places. Atalanta plays in “*Atleti Azzurri d’Italia*” stadium, which has 26,542 places available. Siena has a stadium that counts 15,373 places which is the

11 It is important to see how Inter Milan is classified 2nd in this ranking, with 851,323 total people, for a mean of 44,806, which is the 55.99% of the same capacity of A.C. Milan, as the stadium is the same. It is not possible to make the same comparison with Hellas Verona, as they were playing in Serie B.

12 That match was the final one of the season, where the team had already won the championship and it was awarded with the trophy.

13 Fiorentina, which classified 13th, is not taken into consideration as it was characterized by societal problems that were affecting the comparison.

“*Artemio Franchi – Montepaschi Arena*”. Bologna showed 365,877 total people, for a mean of 19,257 (49.03%) persons per match and a maximum reached against Juventus with 30,321 (77.19%), this lead them to ranking 9th in this special classification. Catania had 292,344 people attending to the total amount of matches, which means 15,387 (66.32%) persons per match, the maximum number or presence was reached against Juventus with 20,839 (89.82%) people. Catania reached the 14th position in this ranking. Atalanta got a total of 294,341 people attending their internal matches, which means 15,492 (58.37%) per match, getting its top against Juventus with 22,335 (84.15%) people and getting the 13th position in this ranking. Finally, Siena showed a total amount of 192,432 people for a mean of 10,128 (65.88%) per match, getting their top against Juventus with 15,265 people (99.30%), which let them reaching the 17th position in the ranking. It is not a case that almost every team scored its top saturation rate against Juventus, as it is recognized as the most supported team in Italy.

From Fig. 1 it is possible to note how Chievo Verona got the worst performance in Serie A, far away from the general mean that is 23,214; this tells to an observer that the team suffers for a possible low attractiveness of the brand and a possible bad management of the stadium. The meaning of this data are also showing that Chievo Verona is not able to penetrate the market, and probably a stadium of 42,160 places is too big and too expensive for the team. But could also be interesting to note how all the Serie A teams are facing trouble if compared with Premier League reality, where it is possible to note how the average attendance is far away better than the Serie A one. In fact, from Fig. 2 it is possible to note how 34,629 people attended, in mean, a British league match, instead of only 23,214 attending Italian league. This for sure has a link with both the technical performance of the two different leagues, but also with the stadium management, as the last team ranked in the attendance, belonging to the Premier league: QPR, has almost doubled the performance of the last team belonging to the Serie A: Chievo Verona. Taking into consideration also the top team of the two different leagues, Manchester United and A.C. Milan, it is possible to note how also in this case the difference is: 75,387 against 44,806. Again, almost doubled the performance in attendance. This demonstrates a total lack of attention to the customers, which is one of the pillars of the marketing management. In fact, as it was shown in the literature before, supporters, here targeted as also customers, often bring attention to what a team offers, and are, more often, vehicle of innovation [Franke & Shah, 2003; Thomke & Von Hippel, 2002; Von Hippel, 1978; Von Hippel, 2005] or, in some cases, also co-producers of it [Cova, 1997; Cova & Dalli, 2009; Fuller, 2010; Kozinets, 1999; Sawhney & Prandelli, 2000]. It was then demonstrates

that customers who are willing to purpose actively innovations, especially through the net, are also willing to buy what they ask for [Baldwin & Hierneth & Von Hippel, 2006; Dahlander & Magnusson, 2008; Dholakia & Bagozzi, 2006; Fueller & Von Hippel, 2008; Jeppesen & Molin, 2003; Kozinets & Hemetsberger & Jensen Schau, 2008; Sawney & Verona & Prandelli, 2005]. This shows how there is still a lack of consideration on the importance of the creation of a community on the Internet for those sport realities that are more willing to create a strong substrate of supporter/customers. It is obvious that it cannot be asked, on a net platform, which are the players that a supporter would like to see playing in the team, but it seems important to notice that the same platform would not interfere with the direct request to them on what are the events they would like to attend, or what they expect from an infrastructure like a stadium could be. In this way, the stadium could become a vehicle of customer satisfaction, and not only the place where plays the team. But again, it is still needed the ownership, as there is the necessity to take decisions by themselves, without interferences.

Manchester United	75387	19
Arsenal	60000	19
Newcastle United	50162	19
Manchester City	47044	19
Liverpool	44253	19
Chelsea	41478	19
Sunderland	39095	19
Tottenham Hotspur	36026	19
Aston Villa	33965	19
Everton	33408	19
Stoke City	27225	19
Norwich City	26553	19
Wolverhampton Wanderers	25682	19
Fulham	25293	19
West Bromwich Albion	24904	19
Bolton Wanderers	23669	19

Blackburn Rovers	22551	19
Swansea City	19946	19
Wigan Athletic	18635	19
Queens Park Rangers	17295	19

Figure : from football-lineups.com

A DEEPER ANALYSIS ON CHIEVO VERONA

Coming deeply into this reality, after an interview with the Chievo Verona's marketing and communication director¹⁴, what emerged is that in Italy there is a poor consideration of the stadium, and the needs to be satisfied are still the basic concepts. In fact no surveys are taken, as the needs are so low-level that every person could be able to understand which are the basic necessities of a supporter. This lack of attention could lead to think to a necessity of the satisfaction of needs in a first/second step of a revised Maslow pyramid.

Trying to reinterpret that famous approach, it is possible to see that if we consider the basic need as the team match watching, the second step could be the requirement of finding some places where to sit comfortably, some places where to rest and, of course, also clean lavatories. Then a step further could be the possibility to find bars or meeting places where to stay with friends and making connections with other people in order to share the same values and make confrontation with the other elements that could be part of the same community. The fourth step could be the necessity to find a museum where supporters could increase their self-esteem by comparing and identifying themselves with what the team did in its whole history. Then, the last step to be accomplished should be the feeling part of the stadium, as it happens, for example, at the *Juventus stadium*, where it is possible to buy a star on the wall where to write the own name; or, extremely, what happens in Liverpool, where some people asked for the possibility to be buried under the pitch.

In Italy in fact the stadium is targeting almost exclusively males, as everywhere there is a lack of primary services, which do not help the enlargement of this basis. But, if it would be taken into consideration the possibility to target families there should then be the presence of basic

¹⁴ The interview occurred with mr E. Z. in July 2012.

services with a bit higher quality. This problem comes mainly from the fact that the ownership is not of the team, but of the town, to whom Chievo Verona pays 300,000 € per year for using the stadium only on match days. This means that no one has interests in amplifying the primary needs that are considered in the second step of the pyramid, as both parts are considering not their responsibility that improvement. The result is then a total absence of customer satisfaction that could be easily solved with an agreement between the two operators. So, the management of Chievo Verona is interested in providing these requirements by itself, trying to solve the problem of the secondary needs of the clients. This is happening through a growing attention to the supporters and focusing also on the profitability that bars can offer. In the stadium there are several bars, which are at a very basic level; what Chievo Verona is interested to do now is to offer an improved quality of beverage and food to their supporter. This could happen with the help of sponsors that are not so keen on national visibility, as they are more willing to capture the attention of those people that are living in the area. This will let the management able to exploit other spaces of the stadium at a very low cost and, in case of direct management of the bars, getting profit coming from the sponsorship of the area. In case of outsourcing the management of the bar, even if the profit could be low, the service could be of an higher level, focusing on a better customer satisfaction for the supporter, which up to now are facing long queues and basic level of food quality.

In doing this improvement the management provided a deep analysis of all the process that are incurring from the selling of the ticket up to when the supporter exit from the stadium. The focus is on the minimization of the difficulties provided by the infrastructure and by the norms that are constantly changing, on the selling of the ticket. An example is the so called “*tessera del tifoso*”, which is a compulsory card that every supporter who want to buy a seasonal card to access to the stadium should have. The sport society releases this card after the *nulla osta* of the local police, in order to identify the correct attitude of the supporter on being part of the sport event. This instrument creates some procedures that every supporter should accomplish before buying the ticket; Chievo Verona is trying to help the supporter in doing every step, trying to minimize all the inefficiencies that could come up while requesting the card. Then, in the procedure of coming into the stadium, every supporter should show at least once an identity document to physically enter the stadium, but also at least once when buying the ticket, and it could be asked to be shown at every time while requested inside the arena. This creates several problems for example in slowing down the queues that are normally generated. So, then, trying to minimize the times in which an identity document

should be exhibited, this could faster a bit the entire process or, at least, could help in avoiding the possibility to lose the document in the context.

Furthermore, another improvement that Chievo Verona is trying to obtain is the presence of some “sky boxes”. These boxes are exclusive rooms dedicated to special guests that are willing to see the match in privacy and with optional services like, for example, the possibility of having beverage and food services served directly on place. This will give to the special guest the opportunity to follow a match in a different environment, trying to attract also people that are willing to establish a sponsor contact, as the guests could be also hosted for business purposes. From a marketing perspective, this service could be used not for a b2c purpose, but mainly for b2b relationships. Which is where the frontier is probably moving: from a sponsorship pitch system to a dedicated attention to the suppliers in a sort of entertainment-business approach. But this option is quite hard to be reached as there are some difficulties in trying to modernize the stadiums in Italy as the investments required are too expensive¹⁵ and also not possible to be decided exclusively by the management.

What seemed to be interesting from a b2c perspective, in order to attract attention from the supporter, the management could create a guided tour of the stadium, maybe also in accord with some schools of the town, in order to teach a fair sport culture and to attract the future potential supporter. In this way it could be easier to let people understand why all the signposting are prohibitions [End & Foster, 2010]. These kinds of symbols are posing people in a mental status of disease and are encouraging them to escape from a stadium to other realities, which are outside. Then, a guided tour could also try to deeply explain why and how those ban symbols are posed and for which reasons, lowering the negative attitude of the people inside the stadium.

The last thing from a marketing perspective, which has relevant impact, could be the name of the stadium. If of property, there could be the possibility, for a team, to change the name of the stadium into a commercial one, as it is used in countries like UK or Germany¹⁶. This is a

¹⁵ Just for curiosity it is enough to think about the Juventus stadium, that requested almost 150,000,000€ for being developed and three years of work.

¹⁶ For example the Allianz Arena where plays Bayern Munchen, or the Emirates stadium where plays Arsenal, are names coming from the official sponsor of the teams.

big difference with a non-owned stadium, as this possibility is completely out of the range of the team, as the ownership is of the town. And also from the sponsor's point of view could be not so attractive linking the name to a sport team that could leave the stadium for any reason in any moment.

Coming back to the property question, the main deal seems to focus not only in the owning or not a stadium, but in having a new one. The management of a new stadium could be fairly different from an old one. The marketing director of Chievo Verona estimates that a new stadium creates an increase of the 30-35% of the attendance because of the different services offered to the public. In this sense, another relevant point to be studied is the fact that the interest of the people could be pushed, using marketing levers, to the attention to them, instead of the importance of the match, as the sport variable will not facilitate the positive forecasting of every game. For this reason the supporter should be induced to come in the stadium anyway, even if the team would be winning or losing, and this could happen only giving him a reason to come into the stadium, which could be the service he would like and appreciate independently from the result of the match. Up to now, in Italy, there has been a lack of this culture, so managers of the sport teams should be highly involved into the process of changing the main motivation of going into a stadium, which can, of course, be driven also by the supporting the team, but mainly from the appreciation of being in a stimulating or relaxing environment like could be a theater or a cinema.

7. DISCUSSION, MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

What arises from this research is not only the importance of having an own stadium *per se*, but for the opportunity it gives. The possibility to decide every strategy in the wanted direction is fundamental for the right management of a football team. Vice versa, having to cooperate with another team does not leave spaces for exploit all the opportunity that marketing and communication levers offer¹⁷. Furthermore it assumes high importance the bureaucracy factor, where, in an owned stadium could be amenably minimized as at least the decision should be taken only by one side: the team's management. From a marketing perspective, in order to best manage a sport team, it seems to be vital, more than important,

¹⁷ For example the four p's or the four c's declined by Kotler [Kotler 1972].

the possibility to use a new, updated stadium, as the needs of supporters are changed from what they were asking during the Nineties. It was chosen this date as a comparison because the last modernization on stadiums were for the World Cup occurred in Italy in 1990. So, today, arenas are considered old. Social lives, as also marketing strategies, changed deeply during those twenty-two years, and as in Italy stadiums are old, there is an important issue coming from the lack of attendance, compared to other realities like British Premier League or German Bundesliga. People are not willing anymore to go to the stadium for several reasons. One of those is the television high quality of services provided by specialized broadcasters, but the main one still remains the inhospitality of Italian arenas. There is, in fact, a total lack of attention focusing on supporters¹⁸, which are the final customers of sports realities. This case study exemplified and tried to explain why people do not want to go anymore to the stadium, and how marketing directors should behave to attract people into the stadium. In order to explain this question it was purposed a revisited Maslow Pyramid, trying to highlight where and how the Italian's arenas situation is positioned. Evidence shows how Italian stadiums are at a very low level in satisfying the needs of the supporters, which are not willing to come to an arena, as everything is totally uncomfortable, from the seating to the cleaning services, and it seems a nonsense trying to provide higher quality services like e.g. wi-fi free connection before making an attempt on satisfying other, basic needs, as Chievo Verona marketing director confirm.

So, in order to take economic advantage on the competitor, the focus should be on the exigency of a new stadium that should be able to target the needs of the supporters, enabling the possibility to have a full stadium at every match, so then a profitable situation. But new things are costly, which is what impedes Chievo to invest in that way, and cannot be provided by the government as the general crisis highlights other priorities. This means that a forward thinker society should take into consideration the possibility to get an agreement with the town, for example in taking fiscal advantages, and then trying to build an own one, as Juventus did with his new "*Juventus stadium*". Furthermore, from the possibility to have a private arena, it comes out the output of having higher margins of profitability, exploiting all the optional services that could be offered by the ownership instead of the renting position. An example could be the link of the name to a sponsor, like it happens in the most appealing

18 This is simply evidenced by e.g. the lack of cleaned restrooms, or the long queues requested for buying a sandwich.

stadiums: *Emirates* in London with Arsenal team, or *Allianz* in Munich with the Bayern Munich team. But this is not the only example, the existence of bars and restaurants are important in order to create a comfortable environment where supporters could exchange opinions and making new connections, or simply get satisfaction from tasting some good beverage and food services. Coming to a bit more sophisticated structure it should be interesting to build a museum that could enhance the possibility to link the identity of the supporter to the team's one. As it was shown here, the importance of the existence of new stadiums is necessary in order to be competitive on an European basis, simply using one of the basic framework of marketing, that is pursuing the customer satisfaction.

The limitations of this study are subjects to the general conditions arising from a case study analysis. So the circumscription of the analysis and the fact that it could be very difficult to generalize these conclusions that often are considered as descriptive. By the way, the situation in Italy is not so difficult to get understood, as there are similarities between small teams and top teams. The spread between the top team and the last one counts on around 40,000 people, which is fairly different from what happens in England, where the same difference counts on almost 60,000 people. And also the average is quite poor in Serie A: more or less 23,000 people, against 34,000 of the Premier League. This means that the whole reality was showing deep problematic, and the solutions could be evaluated and founded into the marketing area. Putting an effort on exploiting the right levers it could be possible to reach higher levels in economic performance.

The capacity in attracting new supporter/customer will lead the management to the possibility to make the situation more profitable, which means the opportunity of being more competitive on the market, this bring to the capacity to attract new, more important, players through the visibility they can obtain. This could then show an evident impact also on performance, as the players interviewed highlighted how much better is to play in a full stadium in terms of motivation. Further studies will involve this sector, so the possibility to find a correlation between new stadium and better performance on the pitch.

Another important strand of further studies could involve the link between entrepreneurship and football realities. It is important to note that all the owners of a football team are affirmed entrepreneurs, generally in different sectors from football. It could be interesting to note why they should be interested in building new arenas. A possible *trait d'union* could be the

importance of visibility that a football reality offers. So, again, the importance of marketing in this field is highlighted, trustworthy and useful.

REFERENCES

- AHLFELDT, G. M., MAENNIG, W. (2010), *Impact Of Sports Arenas On Land Values: Evidence From Berlin*, Ann Reg Sci , Vol. 44, Pp. 205–227
- AGUILAR-MANJARREZ, R., THWAITES, D., MAULE, J. (1997), *Modelling Sport Sponsorship Selection Decisions*, Asia-Australia Marketing Journal, Vol. 5, No.1, Pp. 9-20
- AMIS, J., SLACK, T., BERRETT, T. (1999), *Sport Sponsorship As Distinctive Competence*, European Journal Of Marketing, Vol. 33, No. 3/4, Pp. 250-272
- ASHFORTH B. E., MAEL F. (1999), *Social identity theory and the Organization*, Academy of management review, Vol. 14, No. 1, Pp 20-39
- AUSTRALIA INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT Q2 (2011), Business Monitor International Ltd, Pp. 82-88
- BALDWIN C., HIERNETH C. AND VON HIPPEL, E. (2006), *How User Innovations Become Commercial Products: A Theoretical Investigation And Case Study*, Research Policy 35, Pp. 1291–1313
- BOF, F., MONTANARI, F., BAGLIONI, S. (2007), *Il Calcio Tra Contesto Locale Ed Opportunità Globali. Il Caso Del Barcellona Fc, Més Que Un Club*, Rivista Di Diritto Ed Economia Dello Sport, Vol. 3, Fasc. 2, Pp. 27-44
- BOLAND R.J., TENKASI, R.V., (1995), *Perspective Making And Perspective Taking In Communities Of Knowing*, Organization Science, Vol. 6(4), Pp. 350–372
- BORGHESI, R., RODNEY, P., WEINBACH, A. (2009), *Market Frictions And Overpriced Favourites: Evidence From Arena Football*, Applied Economics Letters, Vol. 16, Pp. 903–906
- BRIDGEWATER, S. (2006), *An Analysis Of Football Management Trends 1992 – 2005 In All Four Divisions*, Warwick Business School

BRIDGEWATER, S, KAHN, L. M., GOODALL A. H. (2009), *Substitution And Complementarity Between Managers And Subordinates: Evidence From British Football*, Labour Economics, Vol. 18 (3), Pp. 275-286

BROWN, J. S., DUGUID, P. (2001), *Knowledge And Organisation: A Social-Practice Perspective*, *Organization Science*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Pp. 198-213

COATES, D. (2007), *Stadiums And Arenas: Economic Development Or Economic Redistribution?*, *Contemporary Economic Policy*, Vol. 25, No. 4, October, Pp. 565-577

COATES, D., HUMPHREYS, B. R. (1999), *Growth Effects Of Sport Franchises, Stadia And Arenas*, *Journal Of Policy Analysis And Management*, Vol. 18, No. 4, Pp. 601-624

COVA, B. (1997), *Community And Consumption: Towards A Definition Of The 'Linking Value' Of Products Or Services*, *European Journal Of Marketing*, Vol. 31, No. 3/4, Pp. 297-316.

COVA B., DALLI D. (2009), *Working Consumers: The Next Step In Marketing Theory?*, *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 9, No. 3, Pp. 315-339

DAHLANDER L., MAGNUSSON, M. (2008), *How Do Firms Make Use Of Open Source Communities?*, *Long Range Planning*, 41(6), Pp. 629-649

DHOLAKIA U. M., BAGOZZI R. P. (2006), *Antecedents And Purchase Consequences Of Customer Participation In Small Group Brand Communities*, *International Journal Of Research In Marketing*, 23, Pp. 45-61

DWYER, B., KIM, Y. (2011), *For Love Or Money: Developing And Validating A Motivational Scale For Fantasy Football Participation*, *Journal Of Sport Management*, Vol. 25, Pp. 70-83

END, C. M., FOSTER, N. J. (2010), *The Effects Of Seat Location, Ticket Cost, And Team Identification On Sport Fans' Instrumental And Hostile Aggression*, *North American Journal Of Psychology*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Pp. 421-432

FARRELLY F., QUESTER P. (2004), *Investigating Large-Scale Sponsorship Relationships As Co-Marketing Alliances*, Kelley School Of Business, Indiana University

FILO, K., FUNK, D., O'BRIEN, D. (2010), *The Antecedents And Outcomes Of Attachment And Sponsor Image Within Charity Sport Events*, Journal Of Sport Management, Vol. 24, Pp. 623-648

FRANKE, N., SHAH, S. (2003), *How Community Matters For User Innovation: An Exploration Of Assistance And Sharing Among End-Users*, Research Policy, Vol. 32

FUELLER, J., VON HIPPEL, E. (2008), *Costless Creation Of Strong Brands By User Communities: Implications For Producer-Owned Brands*, MIT Sloan School Of Management Working Paper 4718-08, September

FÜLLER J. (2010), *Refining Virtual Co-Creation From A Consumer Perspective*, California Management Review. Vol. 52, N. 2, Winter, Pp. 98-122

GWINNER, K. P., EATON, J. (1999), *Building Brand Image Through Event Sponsorship: The Role Of Image Transfer*, Journal Of Advertising, Vol. 28, No. 4, Pp. 47-57

HANSEN M.T., NOHRIA N., TIERNEY T. (1999), *What's Your Strategy For Managing Knowledge?*, Harvard Business Review, Vol. 77, No. 2 (March-April), Pp. 106-116

HUANG, C., CHEN, C., WANG, C. (n.d.), *The Effect Of Spectator Experience On Spectator Satisfaction Among Sbl Sports Fans – A Case Study Of The Fifth Season Sbl Champion Series*, International Journal Of Organizational Innovation, Pp. 286-301

IRWIN, R. L., LACHOWETZ, T., CORNWELL, B., CLARK, J. S. (2010), *Cause-Related Sport Sponsorship: An Assessment Os Spectator Beliefs, Attitudes And Behavioral Intentions*, Sport Marketing Quarterly, Vol. 12, No. 3, Pp. 131-139

JEPPESEN, L. B., FREDERIKSEN L. (2006), *Why Do Users Contribute To Firm-Hosted User Communities? The Case Of Computer-Controlled Music Instruments*, Organization Science Vol. 17, No. 1, January–February 2006, Pp. 45–63

JEPPESEN, L. B., MOLIN, M. (2003), *Consumers As Co-Developers: Learning And Innovation Outside The Firm*, Technology Analysis & Strategic Management, 15(3), Pp. 363-383

JOHNSTON, M. A. (2010), *Illuminating The Dark Corners Of Sponsorship Decision Making*, Journal Of Sponsorship, Vol. 3, No. 4, Pp. 365-378

KELLY, L., WHITEMAN, C. (2010), *Sports Sponsorship As An IMC Tool: An Australian Sponsor's Perspective*, Journal Of Sponsorship, Vol. 4, No. 1, Pp. 26–37

KIM, Y. K., TRAIL, G. (2011), *A Conceptual Framework For Understanding Relationships Between Sport Consumers And Sport Organizations: A Relationship Quality Approach*, Journal Of Sport Management, Vol. 25, Pp. 57-69

KOTLER, P. (1972), *Marketing management*, Prentice-Hall.

KOZINETS, R.V., HEMETSBERGER, A. AND JENSEN SCHAU, H. (2008), *The Wisdom Of Consumer Crowds: Collective Innovation In The Age Of Networked Marketing*, Journal Of Macromarketing 28(4), Pp. 339-354

KOZINETS R. (1999), *E-Tribalized Marketing? The Strategic Implications Of Virtual Communities Of Consumption*, European Management Journal, Vol. 17, No. 3, Pp. 252-264

LEI, S., GHOSH, C., SRINIVASAN, H. (2010), *Should They Play? Market Value Of Corporate Partnerships With Professional Sport Leagues*, Journal Of Sport Management, Vol. 24, Pp. 702-743

LI, H., JIN, H., WANG, D. (2011), *Research On The Asset-Backed Securitization Financing Of Large Stadium*, International Business Research, Vol. 4, No. 2, Pp. 90-92

LIN, Y. T., LIN C. H. (2008), *Factors Influencing Brand Loyalty In Professional Sports Fans*, Global Journal Of Business Research, Vol. 2, No. 1, Pp. 69-84

MACINTOSH, E. W., CROW, B. (2011), *Positioning A Brand Within The Controversial Sport Of Mixed Martial Arts*, Journal Of Sponsorship, Vol. 4, No. 2, Pp.163–177

MASLOW, A. (1954), *Motivation and Personality*, New York: Harper and Row

MCDANIEL, S. R. (1999), *An Investigation Of Match- Up Effects In Sport Sponsorship Advertising: The Implications Of Consumer Advertising Schemas*, Psychology & Marketing Vol. 16(2) Pp. 163–184

MCDANIEL, S. R., HEALD, G. R. (2000), *Young Consumers' Responses To Event Sponsorship Advertisements Of Unhealthy Products: Implications Of Schema-Triggered Affect Theory*, Sport Management Review, Vol. 3, Pp. 163–184

MCDONALD, H., SHERRY, E., (2010), *Evaluating Sport Club Board Performance: A Customer Perspective*, Journal Of Sport Management, Vol. 24, Pp. 524-543

MILANO, M., CHELLADURAI, P. (2011), *Gross Domestic Sport Product: The Size Of The Sport Industry In The United States*, Journal Of Sport Management, Vol. 25, Pp. 24-35

MINTZBERG, H. (1978), *Patterns in Strategy Formation*, Management Science, Vol 24, No 9, Pp. 934–948

O'KEEFE, M., ZAWADZKA, J. (2011), *Does Passion For A Team Translate Into Sales For A Sponsor? The Irish Case*, Journal Of Sponsorship, Vol. 4, No. 2, Pp. 190–196

OLKKONEN, R. (2001), *Case Study: The Network Approach To International Sport Sponsorship Arrangement*, Journal Of Business & Industrial Marketing, Vol. 16 No. 4, Pp. 309-329

OLSON, E. L., THJØMØE, H. M. (2011), *Explaining And Articulating The Fit Construct In Sponsorship*, Journal Of Advertising, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Spring), Pp. 57–70.

- PARK, S., MAHONY, D., KIM, Y. K. (2011), *The Role Of Sport Fan Curiosity: A New Conceptual Approach To The Understanding Of Sport Fan Behavior*, Journal Of Sport Management. Vol. 25, Pp. 46-56
- POPE, N. (1998), *Consumption Values, Sponsorship Awareness, Brand And Product Use*, Journal Of Product & Brand Management, Vol. 7, No. 2, Pp. 124-136
- POPE, N. (1998), *Overview Of Current Sponsorship Thought Nigel Pope*, Cyber-Journal Of Sport Marketing, Vol. 2, No. 1
- RATTEN, V. (2011), *Sport-Based Entrepreneurship: Towards A New Theory Of Entrepreneurship And Sport Management*, Int Entrep Manag J, Vol. 7, Pp. 57-69
- RICHELIEU, A., DESBORDES, M. (2009), *Football Teams Going International — The Strategic Leverage Of Branding*, Journal Of Sponsorship, Vol. 3, No. 1, Pp. 10-22
- RODNEY, P. J., WEINBACH, A. P. (2005), *Bettor Preferences And Market Efficiency In Football Totals Markets*, Journal Of Economics And Finance, Vol. 29, No. 3, Pp. 409-415
- SIMMONS, R. (2007), *Overpaid Athletes? Comparing American And European Football*, Workingusa: The Journal Of Labor And Society, 1089-7011, Vol. 10, Pp. 457-471
- SAWHNEY M., PRANDELLI E. (2000), *Communities Of Creation: Managing Distributed Innovation In Turbulent Markets*, California Management Review N. 4, Summer
- SAWHNEY M., VERONA G., AND PRANDELLI E. (2005), *Collaborating To Create: The Internet As A Platform For Customer Engagement In Product Innovation*, Journal Of Interactive Marketing, Vol. 19, No. 4, Pp. 4-17
- SUNG, Y., CHOI, S. M. (2011), *Increasing Power And Preventing Pain: The Moderating Role Of Self-Construal In Advertising Message Framing*, Journal Of Advertising, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Spring), Pp. 71-85

THOMKE S., VON HIPPEL E. (2002), *Customers As Innovators. A New Way To Create Value*, Harvard Business Review, April, Pp. 5-11

TITLEBAUM, P., LAWRENCE, H. (2011), *The Reinvention Of The Luxury Suite In North America*, Journal Of Sponsorship, Vol. 4, No. 2, Pp.124-136

TURNER, P., FULLER, P., KARG, A. (2010), *'Matching' The Club To The Sponsor: Perceptions Of Australian Football League Club Sponsorship Managers*, Journal Of Sponsorship, Vol. 3 No. 4., Pp. 321-332

VIGNALI, C. (1997), *The MIXMAP-Model For International Sport Sponsorship*, European Business Review Volume 97 · Number 4 · Pp. 187-193

VIRVILAITE, R., DILYS, M. (2010), *Formatting Sport Organization Image As A Competitive Advantage Trying To Attract More Sponsors*, Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics, 21(5), Pp. 561-567

VON HIPPEL, E. (1978), *A Customer-Active Paradigm For Industrial Product Idea Generation*, Research Policy, 7, P. 240-266

VON HIPPEL, E. (1994), *Sticky Information And The Locus Of Problem Solving: Implications For Innovation*, Management Science, 40(4), 429-429

VON HIPPEL, E. (2005), *Democratizing Innovation. Boston, MIT Press* (<http://web.mit.edu/evhippel/www/democ1.htm>)

WAKEFIELD, K. L., BENNETT, G. (2010), *Affective Intensity And Sponsor Identification*, Journal Of Advertising, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Fall 2010), Pp. 99-111

WENGER, E., SNYDER, W.M., (2000), *Communities Of Practice: The Organizational Frontier*, Harvard Business Review. Jan-Feb

WILSON, G. A. (1998), *Does Sport Sponsorship Have A Direct Effect On Product Sales?*, The Cyber-Journal Of Sport Marketing, Vol. 1, No. 4

APPENDIX

In this section are reported the questions to the marketing and communication director of Chievo Verona and to the team manager.

Interview with marketing director mr E. Z.:

1. How it is managed a stadium from a marketing point of view? Which are the options adopted?
2. Is there any green marketing strategy in your idea/budget?
3. How much limited is the marketing performance by the Italian law system (bureaucracy)?
4. How are minimized the law constraint, if possible?
5. How would you try to increase the level of the attendance at the stadium?
6. Why the supporter, in your opinion, prefers to stay outside of the stadium before and after the match instead of staying inside?
7. Is it possible to organize any collateral show before or after the match?
8. Do the supporter shows strong interest only in the match day or also in other days? And is there a possibility to extend this interest also in other days?
9. Which is the level of attention to the supporters? Taken that it is a low level, what would you intend to do for increasing this level?
10. How do you understand the requests of the supporters? Do you use questionnaires, consumption analysis...?
11. How would you overcome the prohibition signals that are part of the stadium, if possible?

12. Which are the services offered to the supporters? And to the sponsors/partners?
13. Which strategies would you implement with an owned stadium, imagining it would be possible?
14. How do you deal with the marketing strategies of the team more than the focusing only on the performance track?
15. How would you try to shift the attention of the supporters from a results-orientation to a show-watching orientation?
16. Do you think that the property of the stadium would generate more motivation in the players?

Interview with the team manager of Chievo Verona mr F. M.:

1. As an ex player, which are the variables that define motivation?
2. How did you motivate yourself before a match? What do you think about football players in general?
3. Do you think that the motivations are induced by subjective variables or by objective ones?
4. How much do you think that a stadium generates motivations? E.g. the distance of the seats position more than the environment.
5. Which are the variables that help players in creating motivations?
6. Do you think that, as a player, an own stadium could create something important on the performance aspect? And what about as a team manger?
7. Do you think that a stadium could create an emotional tie?
8. What about the psychological pressure that can exert an owned stadium?

Informal speeches with the 5 players were made on the basis of what already asked to the team manager in order to find a correlation or coherency with the feelings already expressed.

