Over the past thirty years, sponsorship has evolved from a small-scale activity in a limited number of industrialised countries to a major global industry (Meenaghan 1998b). Sponsorship is clearly understood as a communications instrument and is therefore considered a commercial investment. The range of sponsored activities has increased steadily. While sports – and, to a much lesser extent, the arts – remain the most important areas, social and environmental sponsorship have gained in importance. The growth of broadcast sponsorship is another key development. In 2001, worldwide investment in sponsorship are estimated at more than US $24 billion (IEG Sponsorship Report 2002).

On the research side, the growth of sponsorship has been accompanied by a large number of studies, examining its various practical and theoretical aspects. Partial reviews of this work were carried out by Fuchs (1994) and Pope (1998b). The first author summarises the evolution of French doctoral dissertations on the subject and the latter focuses on Anglo-Saxon sources. The most comprehensive review of the sponsorship literature has been published by Cornwell and Maignan (1998). Eighty articles about sponsorship published prior to 1996 were gathered and grouped into five research streams. While the structure of the article by Cornwell and Maignan is convincing, the analysis is well conducted and the theoretical framework presented is certainly useful for many researchers, it may have fallen short with regard to its ambitious objective to 'provide an accurate representation of the research conducted worldwide' (Cornwell & Maignan 1998, p. 2). Despite the authors' efforts to include articles written in German and French, only one such article (Grégory 1984) was finally included in the review. However, sponsorship has traditionally been of great interest to researchers in France and Germany. A much larger number of articles published in German or French exist than the 1998 review was able to integrate. Actually, sponsorship may be one of very few areas which has attracted more academic interest in Europe – particularly in Ireland, France and Germany – than in North America or other parts of the world. Furthermore, and as importantly, research interest in sponsorship has all but ceased over recent years. Since 1996, a considerable number of articles have been published all over the world. Thus a more encompassing and updated review of the sponsorship literature may be of use for all those interested in this particular form of communication.

This article has three major objectives: first, the state of sponsorship research as presented by Cornwell and Maignan in 1998 will be complemented by additional studies published in Europe prior to 1996. Second, the evolution of sponsorship research within the period 1996 to 2001 will be reviewed. Finally, the extent to which researchers have been following the research directions suggested in 1998, and to
which new sponsorship issues remain to be tackled in the future, will be analysed.

LITERATURE SEARCH

In order to allow comparisons with the existing base and to be able to analyse the evolution of sponsorship research, this review adopted, to a very large extent, the same selection criteria as Cornwell and Maignan (1998; see p. 2 for additional details). All articles reporting an empirical or conceptual investigation of sponsorship as a marketing communication tool and published in English, German or French (all languages understood by the researcher) are included.

In addition to the sources used by Cornwell and Maignan, conference proceedings and journals with a stronger European focus were used. For the nine journals reviewed by Cornwell and Maignan, the search was extended for the period 1996 to 2000. Another five journals were searched for the period 1985 to 2001: European Journal of Marketing, Psychology and Marketing, Recherche et Applications en Marketing, Revue Française du Marketing (both French), Marketing – Zeitschrift für Forschung und Praxis (German). The ancestry approach led us to articles published in more than 15 other journals. Professional meetings attended exceeding the scope of Cornwell and Maignan's effort were the conferences of the European Marketing Academy, the French Marketing Association, and the Congresses of the Association of German University Professors.

Another valuable source of information was the European Society for Market Research (ESOMAR) which, since 1985, has (co–)organised several conferences devoted entirely, or partly, to sponsorship. However, among the ESOMAR contributions only those which have been published in conference proceedings and which are not primarily professional product/service presentations or practice descriptions were included in this survey. Similarly, ESOMAR contributions of which a later version was published subsequently in a marketing journal (e.g. Easton & Mackie 1998; Grimes & Meenaghan 1998) were integrated in their final form. Results of studies conducted by professional research institutes (SRI, Sample Institute and so on) known to the authors were included only to the extent that they have been published in one of the aforementioned sources (e.g. Abel & Long 1996).

In this way, a total of 233 studies on sponsorship was identified. Eighty of these studies have already been commented on and conveniently summarised by Cornwell and Maignan (1998, pp. 3–10 in particular) and will not be presented a second time. The remaining 153 studies will subsequently be analysed, or at least briefly summarised, by research streams.

ASSESSMENT OF THE RESEARCH STREAMS

Initially, the same five basic research streams as suggested by Cornwell and Maignan (1998) were used to give an overview of the topics addressed and the evolution of sponsorship research: (1) nature of sponsorship, (2) managerial aspects of sponsorship, (3) measurement of sponsorship effects, (4) strategic use of sponsorship, (5) legal and ethical considerations in sponsorship. However, due to the large number of studies identified relating to the first four research streams, articles focusing on legal and ethical aspects were omitted from further analysis. Appendix 1 presents a summary of the articles identified, grouping them by research stream. Of the 153 articles, 25 relate to the nature of sponsorship (16 studies in Cornwell and Maignan's review), 32 to managerial aspects (26), 83 to the measurement of sponsorship effects (19), and 13 (5) to sponsorship strategies and counter–strategies.

Nature of sponsorship

Most of the additional articles found about the nature of sponsorship date from the 1980s and early
1990s. Only eight such articles identified have been published after 1995.

**Defining sponsorship**

As in 1996, there still does not exist a generally accepted definition of sponsorship. Among articles published in English, the definition by Meenaghan (1983) is found with some frequency. The French-speaking research community refers most frequently to Derbaix et al. (1994), while articles published in German often quote Bruhn's definition (1987). The lack of consensus regarding the definition – across but also within countries – reflects the remaining ambiguities concerning the nature of sponsorship and the way in which it touches on other methods of communication.

Among the articles reviewed, minimum agreement exists that sponsorship is based on an exchange between sponsor and sponsored, and pursues marketing (communication) objectives by exploiting the association between the two. Risk is considered an intrinsic attribute of sponsorship due to the non-predictability of the outcome and/or diffusion of the event. Risk is particularly high if individuals are sponsored (Cégarra 1986; Piquet 1998). Several other characteristics of sponsorship, however, remain to be debated controversially and continue to make it difficult to draw a clear line between sponsorship and other communication tools.

**Differentiating sponsorship from other promotional communication**

For a large majority of researchers, the intended exploitation of the association between sponsor and sponsored distinguishes sponsorship from corporate philanthropy and/or patronage (Cégarra 1985; Baux 1991; Zentes & Deimel 1991). On the same basis, corporate giving should be distinguished from sponsorship (Bruhn 1987).

Advertising and sponsorship are increasingly considered complementary elements of an integrated communication strategy (Cégarra 1994). They partly share the same objectives (e.g. awareness and image), but deliver their messages in different ways. Advertising messages are generally more direct, explicit and can be more easily controlled. Sponsorship, on the other hand, can overcome certain communication barriers and has practically unlimited target selection possibilities (Erdogan & Kitchen 1998).

Sponsorship and advertising coincide when sponsors use billboards or similar supports (Walliser 1997a). Another interesting overlap between advertising and sponsorship exists with regard to broadcast sponsorship. At the same time it presents elements of advertising, such as buying airtime from a television or radio station, but is also a form of association, although indirect, to an event or activity. Broadcast sponsorship is used increasingly by sponsors to achieve a stronger impact on their targets (see below: 'Measurement of sponsorship effects') but is also popular among 'ambushers'. By associating themselves with the broadcast of an event, the latter are perceived as sponsors by large parts of the general public without ever paying a sponsor fee. This is exactly the reason why Derbaix et al. (1994) exclude broadcast sponsorship from sponsorship. For them, sponsorship should involve 'direct investment' in an event.

**Perception of sponsorship**

Public opinion about sponsorship is analysed in different ways. Notable differences in the perception of sponsorship are observed depending on the sponsorship area (e.g. sport vs. art, environment), the activity sponsored (e.g. athletics vs. golf), and the industry/products of the sponsor company. Generally, sponsors are more easily accepted in association with sporting events than with arts or social causes.
When it comes to social sponsorship, for example, sponsors are accepted more easily if people believe them to have altruistic motives (Gierl & Eichenseer 1990; Meenaghan 2001).

Interesting cultural differences are revealed by a study comparing the public perception of (sport) sponsorship across five European countries. At first glance, it appears that Europe is united in broadly perceiving sponsorship as advertising. Asked whether 'Sponsorship is no different from advertising' (Marshall 1992, p. 162), 78% British, 62% French and 83% Germans 'agree strongly' or 'slightly'. Similarly, between 70% and 85% of all Europeans think that sponsorship is done purely for commercial reasons. However, if probed further, European respondents also recognise some notable differences between advertising and sponsorship. Sponsors are perceived to be 'good corporate citizens' who are giving something back to the sport at the same time as advertising their own name. At least a minority of respondents in Europe perceive an altruistic element on the part of the sponsors. Sponsorship – especially sport sponsorship – is widely accepted as 'part of life' but unlike advertising is 'not something a company has to do' (Marshall 1992, p. 156).

Sponsorship generally raises public opinion of the sponsoring company and – to a much lesser extent – makes consumers more likely to buy the sponsors' products. But important differences between countries become evident with regard to all these dimensions. The rise of public opinion, for example, varies between 29% of respondents in Spain having an improved opinion of a company because of its sponsorship activities, compared to only 9% in France (Marshall 1992).

Managerial aspects of sponsorship

The managerial process of sponsorship includes setting objectives, selecting, organising and executing the sponsorship, and, finally, controlling its outcome. While some studies focus on one specific stage of this process, others review several, if not all, stages at a time, either comparing different countries (Wolton 1988; Farrelly et al. 1997; Quester et al. 1998), focusing on one specific country (i.e. Germany: Hermanns et al. 1986; Weidner 1989; Drees 1991), an industry (distribution: Anonymous 1986; music: Püttmann 1991), a company (Corones 1991) or a sponsorship area (e.g. environmental sponsorship: Arcan et al. 1994). All together, 32 studies analysing the managerial aspects of sponsorship have been identified, of which 14 were published after 1995.

Sponsorship objectives and sponsorship selection

Overall, enhancing image and increasing awareness for brands and/or companies have traditionally been the most important sponsorship objectives. However, variance of sponsor objectives is large and depends on many specific factors (Copeland et al. 1996), such as sponsorship area and activity as well as sponsor industry and company size. Social and environmental sponsors, for example, seek primarily to demonstrate social responsibility. For art sponsors, on the other hand, hospitality is a major motivation (Drees 1991). Manufacturers are more frequently seeking media coverage and publicity opportunities, whereas service sponsors are more inclined to improve employees' morale (Quester et al. 1998). In one of the rare studies taking into account small businesses, it is shown that 'giving back to the community' is the most important objective for them (Mack 1999).

Not surprisingly, the list of selection criteria applied to choose a sponsorship activity is long and company–dependent (McCook et al. 1997). The following priorities have been observed (Hermanns et al. 1986; Püttmann 1991; Thwaites et al. 1998): perceived affinity between sponsor product and sponsored activity, affinity between targets of sponsor and sponsored, the popularity and image of the potential sponsored party and its willingness to cooperate (on a long–term basis), geographical reach, contact frequency, contact quality, expected sponsorship costs/benefits, the type of rights received,
possibility to integrate the sponsorship into the communication/marketing strategy.

**Sponsorship organisation**

One focus of research on sponsorship organisation is the locus of sponsorship decision–making within the sponsor company. It appears that the level of decision–making depends on the familiarity and experience with sponsorship. In American firms, for example, sponsorship decisions are made more routinely by middle–management as compared to Australian companies (Quester et al. 1998). It is argued that an increased involvement by advertising departments and product managers indicates a stronger integration of sponsorship in the communication mix by way of more cross–functional communication (Farrelly et al. 1997).

A more recent stream of research examines sponsorship from a network perspective (Farrelly et al. 1998; Erickson & Kushner 1999). Potentially, such an approach makes it possible to deepen the understanding of the nature of the exchange processes inherent to sponsorship, and to specify the relationships between all participants – inside and outside the sponsor company. It shows, among other things, how the value of the network, as well as the value of each network member, increases with each new connection a new partner brings into the network. Interestingly, a similar approach analysing sponsorship from a system theory point of view had already been suggested two decades before (Bette 1981). At that time, however, little attention had been focused on seeing sponsorship arrangements as organised exchanges between social systems.

**Control**

Sponsorship control issues have consistently interested researchers. Two broad categories of study may be distinguished. One is primarily descriptive in its approach, tracking to what extent, and how, companies are controlling their sponsorship efforts (e.g. Thwaites 1995; Thwaites et al. 1998). The second is more analytical, suggesting methods and instruments for sponsorship evaluation. Studies belonging to the latter category generally begin with an account of features which render sponsorship evaluation particularly difficult: interdependencies and interaction effects due to the simultaneous use of several communication instruments, spill–over effects/influence of external variables, carry–over effects, decay effects, variety of (heterogeneous) sponsorship activities, non–predictable character of the event (Perlstein & Piquet 1985; Hermanns 1987; Hermanns & Glogger 1995). When it comes to the design of, and the tools for, control, the first step seems to be to look separately at sponsorship impact and sponsorship process. Process control involves auditing the basic assumptions, objectives, strategies, actions and organisation sponsorship (Hermanns 1991). A detailed account of the approaches and instruments used to evaluate sponsorship awareness is given by Anne (1992).

To conclude this section, it should be noted that the way sponsorship is managed depends largely on whether or not a company has a written sponsorship concept/policy in existence. Companies that do have such a policy are more likely to have a sponsorship department, to cooperate with both specialised (advertising, sponsorship, media) agencies and other sponsors, to have a more significant sponsorship budget, and to resort to empirical control measures (Drees 1991).

**Measurement of sponsorship effects**

By far the largest proportion of the studies reviewed concern the measurement of sponsorship impact. Eighty–three such studies have been found, of which 54 have been published since 1996. Most of the time, tracking techniques are used to evaluate sponsorship effects. Less than a quarter of the studies are experiments.
Awareness

A large majority of studies measuring sponsorship effects have chosen awareness as an independent variable. Three broad approaches may be distinguished: measuring to what extent the public takes notice of sponsors; identifying factors influencing sponsor recall/association, and analysing the internal processes related to recall taking place in the spectator's mind.

Especially among the early studies examining sponsorship effectiveness, many focus either on general awareness of sponsors in the public's mind (e.g. Renner & Tischler 1977) or on awareness levels of sponsors associated with specific events and activities (e.g. Müller 1983; Couty 1994; Easton & Mackie 1998). The results of these studies are inconsistent. Recall or association scores naturally vary depending on a large number of factors; identification of these factors has been the objective of a second group of articles (e.g. Anne & Chéron 1990; Deimel 1993; Cornwell et al. 1997; Meir et al. 1997; Quester 1997a; Moore et al. 1999). Factors influencing recall may be categorised into five groups (Walliser 1994): conditions of exposure, product, message and target characteristics, and, finally, sponsorship integration. There is considerable evidence that recall increases as a function of duration of exposure to sponsors, previous brand awareness of sponsors, message length and design, socio-demographic variables of the spectators, such as age and spectator involvement with, and interest in, the activity sponsored. With regard to the integration of sponsorship and other communication tools, an increase of awareness scores is observed when sponsorship is used in conjunction with broadcast sponsorship (Lardinoit 1998, 1999) or classical advertising (Eilander 1992; Du Plessis 1997; Quester & Thompson 2001). Some go so far as to claim that stand-alone sponsorship activities – even when used for a longer period of time – are not very effective in generating additional brand awareness (Koschler & Merz 1995). Classical advertising can help to create a link between the sponsor and the activity or event sponsored if it explains the logic of the association (Crimmins & Horn 1996). Conversely, the link is less likely to be perceived if competitors' advertising accompanies the event. Broadcast sponsorship messages not only have an awareness effect on their own (Iordanov & Nobi 1989) but even seem to overwhelm most, if not all, messages from event, team or other kinds of sponsor (Millmann 1995).

The evolution of recall scores over time has been at the centre of studies by Cornwell et al. (1997), Quester (1997b), Schapira (1999), Walliser and Nanopoulos (2000), and Wright (1988), among others. These show that each brand has a basic recall level which rises shortly before and during an event and falls back close to its initial level a few weeks after the event. Duration and magnitude of the variation depend on the overall communication effort of the sponsor.

A limited number of contributions examining the factors influencing sponsor awareness go so far as to establish indices (Anne & Chéron 1992) or models (Gabrielsen & Hansen 2000) to estimate recall effectiveness. Olivier and Kraak (1997) calculate a comparison factor of sponsorship versus advertising effectiveness.

The third group of contributions relative to sponsorship awareness adopts a consumer behaviour perspective. McDaniel (1999) and Hermanns and Drees (1989) evaluate the influence of the perceived match or mismatch of brand attitudes on consumer response. Lardinoit (1998, 1999) focuses on the positive role of enduring involvement on memorisation, and Johar and Pham (1999) investigate the individual heuristics of sponsor recall. If the association between the sponsor and the event has been perfectly encoded, spectators later retrieve the sponsor name from their memory without any problem. Conversely, if encoding has been weak, as is typically the case in cluttered media environments (Pham & Johar 2001), sponsor identification involves a substantial degree of construction. Spectators then use market prominence and brand–event relatedness as major heuristics to infer sponsor names. This might explain at least partly why many authors note a substantial degree of erroneous recall ('incidental ambushin': Wright 1988; Quester 1997b; Nicholls et al. 1999) or confusion between sponsors and
advertisers (Cornwell et al. 1997).

**Image**

Only a limited number of studies focus primarily on image effects of sponsorship (e.g. Giannelloni 1993; Didellon–Carsana 1998). More frequently, image transfer is investigated in conjunction with awareness and/or purchase objectives.

Nevertheless, there is ample evidence that sponsorship can contribute to the modification of certain image dimensions, at least. Clearly, each sponsorship activity or area has specific image values (Meenaghan & Shipley 1999) which can be transferred to external or internal audiences (Grimes & Meenaghan 1998). Globally, it appears that image transfer was influenced positively by the number of common perceptions of the sponsor and the activity (Gierl & Kirchner 1999), the attitude of the spectators towards the association of the sponsor and the activity (Giannelloni & Valette–Florence 1991), by the spectator involvement with the sponsorship process (Mayer & Christner 1991), and occurred only for sponsors having high visibility during the event (Stipp & Schiavone 1996).

However, as was the case for awareness, image effects are shown to be only temporary (Merbold 1989) and to depend on the integration of sponsorship with other communication tools (Stipp & Schiavone 1996). The perceived benefit and returned goodwill seems to be negatively related to the perceived exploitation of the event. There is much less tolerance of exploitation of environmental and social sponsorship than of sport sponsorship (Meenaghan & Shipley 1999). Thus the right balance between visibility and perceived over-exploitation has to be found for each sponsorship activity.

The theoretical underpinning of image effects is discussed on several occasions (Baux 1991; Walliser 1993; Ganassali & Didellon 1996; Gwinner 1997; Hoek et al. 1997; Courbet 2000). None of the rationales offered, such as emotional conditioning, mere exposure effects, the awareness–trial–reinforcement model or the familiarity–misattribution model has so far proven its superiority in empirical research.

**Purchase intention and other effects**

Respondents to surveys about attitude towards sponsorship typically declare themselves more likely to buy sponsor products as compared to competitors' (non-sponsor) products. If the same question is asked for specific events, it is shown that frequency of attendance and education are significant predictors of purchase intention. Individuals with less than a college degree are the most likely to buy sponsor products. Gender, on the other hand, does not influence purchase intention (Daneshvary & Schwer 2000).

However, when it comes to real behaviour, it should be noted that product use is not necessarily higher for sponsor products than for competitor products (Pope 1998a). Similarly, purchase effects can easily be overestimated due to 'false consensus effects'. Individuals attending an event which they evaluate highly wrongly assume that other spectators have equally positive evaluations of the event and its sponsors (Bennett 1999).

The recent application of event study analysis shows that sponsorship can increase the financial value of the sponsor firm (Miyazaki & Morgan 2001), especially if sponsors have logical or matched ties to the activity supported (Cornwell et al. 2001).

**The strategic use of sponsorship**
While some aspects of sponsorship strategy are addressed in many articles, only a relatively small number of contributions (13) concentrate primarily on this subject. Research interest is split almost evenly between sponsorship strategies and counter-strategies (ambushing). With two exceptions, all contributions found are published after 1995.

A strategic analysis of sponsorship activities is developed by Campos Lopez et al. (1994) who recommend highly differentiated sponsorship projects enabling the sponsors to differentiate themselves from their competitors. The critical role of sponsorship strategy in determining whether or not sponsors are successful is documented in a qualitative study conducted among Canadian firms (Amis et al. 1999). Firms which were successful had developed their sponsorship competently and made it an intrinsic part of their overall marketing strategy. Conversely, companies which had conducted their campaigns on an ad hoc basis because of resource availability or a senior executive's interest were, at best, only temporarily successful.

The integration of sponsorship into the marketing mix is also the criterion chosen by Piquet (1998) to distinguish three types of sponsorship strategies. A first category of sponsors may be described as exposure-seekers. For them, sponsorship is considered an advertising forum. A second group of sponsors strives for a close association with the event and integrates sponsorship with other communication activities. Finally, a third group plays an active role in the event, possibly influencing its content, and opts for a full integration of sponsorship into the company's marketing strategy.

Ambush marketing is enjoying continued research interest. While the contributions of Doust (1997), Hoek et al. (1997) as well as Meenaghan (1996) largely follow the path taken in the years before, an interesting shift towards a consumer perspective is observed in more recent studies (e.g. McDaniel & Kinney 1998). Meenaghan (1998a) focuses on consumer attitudes and reactions to the practice of ambushing. It is argued that the event organisers are responsible for the growing use of ambushing and consumers' apathy to it (Shani & Sandler 1998). Strategies developed by event organisers to counter ambushing are presented by Payne (1998).

THE EVOLUTION OF SPONSORSHIP RESEARCH

Two major objectives of this article were to identify studies about sponsorship prior to 1996 not included in the analysis of Cornwell and Maignan (1998) and to extend the review of sponsorship research to the period 1996 to 2001.

With regard to the first objective, 66 additional studies have been identified and commented on. Most are of European origin. They complement – and partly contrast – the work of Cornwell and Maignan which has a stronger Anglo-Saxon focus. With regard to the nature of sponsorship, the newly added studies highlight notable cross-cultural differences in the way researchers define, and consumers perceive, sponsorship. With regard to sponsorship management, the additional studies do not add new dimensions of sponsorship research. Much of the time, they describe current sponsorship practice in countries not previously covered. At best, control issues are more thoroughly analysed in the European studies than in the contributions previously summarised. Twenty-nine additional studies measuring sponsorship impact before 1996 show that this research stream has been of great relevance to French and German (and other) researchers since the late 1980s. Although the results of these studies were as inconsistent as elsewhere, they advance sponsorship research with regard to the identification of factors influencing sponsorship awareness.

For the period from 1996 to 2001, a total of 87 studies has been found. Most of these contributions come from North America, Europe and Australia/New Zealand. The evolution of sponsorship research over
the past six years as compared to the period before is outlined out below.

**Differentiation of sponsorship from other communication and promotional techniques**

Globally, it appears that no major breakthrough has been achieved regarding the differentiation of sponsorship from other communication and promotional techniques. Definitions vary from country to country and from researcher to researcher. Considerable agreement exists when it comes to distinguishing sponsorship from corporate philanthropy, patronage, corporate giving and product placement, although in some cases the limits are difficult to define with precision. Conceptually separating sponsorship, broadcast sponsorship and advertising appears even more complicated. Sponsorship has at least some elements in common with all the other techniques mentioned and is such a versatile communication instrument that in very specific cases it can be confounded with them. For example, sponsorship relying primarily on the exploitation of signage is conceptually and instrumentally close to (outdoor) advertising. Over the past six years, only a very small number of articles have addressed the conceptualisation of sponsorship. It appears that researchers have recognised that a sufficient number of definitions of sponsorship exist and that it is impossible to reach complete agreement on a single one.

Instead of continuing a possibly never-ending academic debate about concurrent definitions of sponsorship, it may be more useful to focus research on the perception of sponsorship by its different targets. In this respect, research has advanced over the past few years. Furthermore, instead of drawing lines between communication instruments, it might be wiser to analyse how they may be combined. Studies addressing the integration of sponsorship into the communications and/or marketing mix have been flourishing at both the conceptual and the empirical level. This does not mean that the relative contribution of each communication instrument is fully understood. However, at least it is clearly recognised that the impact of sponsorship is much greater if it is used in conjunction with other instruments rather than in isolation. Summing up, sponsorship today seems legitimised as a versatile, multi-functional communication tool whose benefit is greatest when used as one element of an integrated communication strategy.

**Understanding the relationship between stated objectives and achieved results**

Research into sponsorship management has certainly advanced over the past six years, but, while some issues have received great attention, others are still completely ignored. Recent studies relating to sponsorship management confirm that sponsorship objectives, selection, organisation and control vary according to the type of company engaging in sponsorship (small vs. big, consumer products vs. industrial products, services), sponsorship area (sports vs. arts, social causes, environment), and even sponsored activity. But overall, research is too focused on consumer goods and services companies engaging in sports sponsorship. Industrial companies and public sector bodies are practically neglected, although they are engaged heavily in sponsorship. Sponsorship areas such as the arts, the environment and social causes also only attract a little attention. Similarly, although a long list of sponsorship objectives has been established, only two of them – awareness and image transfer – are placed under scrutiny by a larger number of studies. The impact of sponsorship on the internal corporate audience, for example, has generated only one study. Hospitality activities are barely mentioned in the existing literature. Similarly, little interest has been shown in researching the functional affiliation of sponsorship within firms, in personnel requirements and in budgeting processes. On all these issues, there have been only marginal research advances.

A more positive picture may be drawn with regard to two other points: sponsorship control and sponsorship networks. Control levels, processes and tools are clearly identified, as are obstacles to
sponsorship control. More importantly, new methods/models to evaluate sponsorship effectiveness have been developed. As with the control instruments, they are partly borrowed from advertising and enlarge the range of control possibilities available to sponsors. The focus has shifted from measuring exposure to measuring intermediate results of sponsorship such as awareness and image.

An evolving stream of research is examining sponsorship from a network perspective. The application of relationship marketing concepts may be used to specify the links between the sponsorship company, its internal and external audiences, the sponsored activities, the media, the intermediaries, regulatory organisations and so on. The network approach will be beneficial in addressing the growing complexity of interaction phenomena inherent to sponsorship and thus provide a new impulse to sponsorship research.

The call for holistic evaluations of the sponsorship management process (Cornwell & Maignan 1998) has been partly answered. Research has begun to tie the management of sponsorship to its specific context and objectives. The cross–national comparison of sponsorship management (Quester et al. 1998) is one example, and several more will follow in the future.

**The impact of sponsorship**

The evaluation of sponsorship impact is, without doubt, the area where sponsorship research has progressed most over the past few years. This is demonstrated not only by the sheer number of studies focusing on this issue but also by the quality of the contributions. The impact of sponsorship on awareness and – to a lesser extent – image transfer have received most academic attention. Results are still not always consistent, but knowledge about awareness levels and factors influencing awareness is incomparably greater today than six years ago. There are several reasons for this positive trend. Research has gradually shifted from:

- Exploratory to confirmatory approaches: (partial) replication of studies has led to more certainty about certain effects, especially concerning socio–demographic and psychographic variables influencing sponsor recall.

- Descriptive to causal designs: causal modelling is used increasingly to study the relationships between several variables at a time, thus facilitating the analysis of richer, non–directly observable concepts such as attitudes, involvement and arousal.

- Analysing the isolated use of sponsorship in studies about the combined use of sponsorship, advertising and/or broadcast sponsorship.

- A managerial to a consumer perspective: studies are no longer limited to measuring the awareness scores of sponsors following an event, but increasingly investigate the internal processes going on in the receiver's mind.

The latter trend is probably the weakest so far and needs to be reinforced in the future. Decay effects are but one issue deserving a closer look. Simultaneously, research should concentrate more strongly on image effects. Today, studies relating to this issue are at about the stage where research on awareness stood six years ago. Some theoretical foundations of image transfer have been discussed and a number of mostly exploratory studies yield promising results. But overall, little is known about the conditions which lead to successful and durable image transfer from the activity supported to the sponsor.

As has been said before, objectives other than awareness and image also need to be addressed. It is more
than surprising that the impact of sponsorship on employee motivation has not received more attention. The integration of personnel in all stages of the sponsorship management process could possibly lead to spectacular results concerning employee morale.

On the methodological side, sample quality and size can still be improved considerably. Too many studies rely on convenience samples of students. Although the student population – luckily – is a prime target of many sponsors and therefore can be easily justified, extending research to other age and professional groups would be beneficial for sponsorship research. Furthermore, a more frequent use of longitudinal designs would make it easier to study how sponsor awareness may be maintained and under what conditions image transfer takes place. Very broadly speaking, research on sponsorship impact allows the following claims to be made today:

- It is known that sponsorship can increase company/brand awareness, and the conditions most favourable for such an effect to take place are partly known.

- There is reason to believe that sponsorship can modify company/brand image, but it is not known why and how.

- It is strongly believed that the combined use of sponsorship with other communication techniques increases its (awareness and image) impact.

The theoretical and conceptual foundations underlying sponsorship research

Several of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks highlighted by Cornwell and Maignan have been applied to sponsorship in the meantime. The promising role of relationship marketing and integrated marketing communications has been mentioned above. Further use of network concepts should be encouraged. They have the potential to advance sponsorship research on two crucial points in the future: the shift of power within the sponsorship network and the optimal size of sponsorship networks. As the total number of sponsors and sponsorships is increasing, the choice of the right events including the right co–sponsors becomes of strategic importance. The greater the numbers of brands associated with an event, the more difficult it becomes for each of them to achieve the desired effects. Network approaches may be used to identify the participants and links which drive the network. The tendency of large (communication) companies to absorb media, events, sports teams and other sponsored entities deserves particular attention in the future. If the sponsored entity loses its independence, the face of sponsorship will be fundamentally changed.

Frameworks explaining sponsorship effects such as congruence theory, memory structure, and others (emotional conditioning, mere exposure, meaning transfer) have been discussed and partially validated. However, none of them has received sufficient empirical support to emerge as a leading theory.

LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Although an important effort was made to include as many studies about sponsorship as possible, this review is neither exhaustive nor truly global. Writings published in English, French and German should be reasonably well covered, but the work of researchers publishing in other languages is occulted. The majority of the contributions summarised come from highly industrialised Western countries. Asia, Africa, the Middle East, South America, Eastern Europe and emerging countries in general are, at best, marginally represented.

Due to the large number of studies identified, many are only briefly summarised in Appendix 1 and not
as thoroughly discussed as they would deserve. Thus, at times, this review might appear almost as piecemeal as some of the studies it analyses. The author's desire has been to give an overview of sponsorship research rather than to pre-select and comment only on the studies judged most relevant. Nevertheless, one research stream – ethical and legal aspects – had to be omitted due to space considerations.

To conclude, it is confirmed that sponsorship (research) is here to stay. In addition to the 80 studies identified by Cornwell and Maignan, 153 have been reviewed in this article. Thus, with a total body of over 230 studies about sponsorship, future contributions can no longer claim – as was frequently the case in the past – that research on sponsorship has been sparse. And much more is yet to come. Globally, research about sponsorship is in a growth phase. However, not all issues benefit equally from the accrued interest in sponsorship. If judged by the number of contributions per period, research concerning the conceptualisation and definition of sponsorship seems to have reached maturity, if not already decline. Inversely, for others issues – sponsorship impact other than awareness and image – and areas – art, social and environmental sponsorship – the research life cycle is very much at its beginning.

Major advances have been made over the past six years concerning the evaluation of sponsorship effects and strategic sponsorship management, but the most positive development of all may be the shift towards a better understanding of sponsorship perception by the final receiver. This evolution should be beneficial for sponsorship companies. As sponsorship expenditure continues to increase all over the world, sponsorship will remain under scrutiny. Investment will have to be justified in a context which is becoming increasingly difficult. With the proliferation of sponsorships and sponsors, public acceptance of sponsorship may decrease, and sponsors will find it more difficult to stand out. In the past, advertising clutter and legal constraints to advertising accelerated sponsorship growth. In the future, sponsorship clutter and legal constraints to sponsorship may become a threat to sponsorship development.

This review has revealed important cultural differences in the degree of acceptance of sponsorship across different countries. As a consequence, global sponsorship budgets should be allocated in proportion to the likely value to be achieved through sponsorship in each market. On this point, the input from research is crucial. More international comparisons of sponsorship practice and effects are needed. This implies, as a first step, a better knowledge about the state of the art of sponsorship research worldwide. And, on exactly this point, the contribution of this review may be most valuable.

APPENDIX 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDIES IDENTIFIED

Table 1.

REFERENCES


NOTES & EXHIBITS

Björn Walliser

Björn Walliser is Professor of Marketing at the University of Nancy 2 (France) Institute of Business Administration, where he is director of the doctoral programme in business administration and the director of the research centre in management (GREFIGE). His main research interests lie in the field of international marketing and marketing communication. He has authored and co–authored several books on sponsorship and international marketing, and has published on these subjects in leading French, German and international journals.

TABLE 1:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s) (year)</th>
<th>Main objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author(s) (year)</td>
<td>Main objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of sponsorship (definition, perception, relation to other communication tools)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of contributions: 25 (including 17 published before 1996; 8 published after 1995)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angenendt (1993)</td>
<td>Summary of a large representative professional study of attitude towards sport and TV sponsors, and acceptance of sponsorship for different sports in Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cégarra (1985)</td>
<td>Definition of sponsorship, and overview of characteristics of sponsorship compared with other communication tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cégarra (1986)</td>
<td>Analysis of the suitability of sponsorship as a communication tool for public institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cégarra (1994)</td>
<td>Short article describing the role of sponsorship within the marketing strategy of a company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutler (1999)</td>
<td>Description of the extension of sponsorship to college sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derbaix et al. (1994)</td>
<td>Definition of sponsorship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drews &amp; Angenendt (1992)</td>
<td>Large overview of the perception of sponsorship by the German public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ker &amp; Salcher (1990)</td>
<td>Descriptive study of attitude towards sport, sport sponsorship, and (sport) celebrity advertising in Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall (1992)</td>
<td>Qualitative and quantitative study of perception of sponsorship in five European countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meenagh (1998b)</td>
<td>Summary of sponsorship evolution and outlook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meenagh (2001)</td>
<td>Consumer perception of sponsorship as compared to advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s) (Year)</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walliser (1997a)</td>
<td>Comparison of the recall effectiveness of perimeter and outdoor advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witt &amp; Angenendt (1992)</td>
<td>Summary of a large representative professional study of attitudes towards sponsorship in Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zentes &amp; Deimel (1991)</td>
<td>General article about sponsorship definition, development and activities in Germany.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Managerial aspects (objectives, organisation, control, audience)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous (1986)</td>
<td>Descriptive sectoral study about sponsorship strategies of 18 French distribution companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aguilar-Manjarrez et al. (1997)</td>
<td>Qualitative approach (in-depth interviews with ten sponsor companies) to investigate the sport sponsorship selection process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne (1992)</td>
<td>Presentation of various control measures and approaches, as well as recall and recognition scores from several professional studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arcan et al. (1994)</td>
<td>Short description of an environmental sponsorship project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chéron &amp; Bissonnette (1996)</td>
<td>Modelling of the organisational sponsorship decision process identifying activities, participants and key roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland et al. (1996)</td>
<td>Evaluation of the relative importance of sponsorship selection criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coroanes (1991)</td>
<td>Description of the objectives, management, and results of a sponsorship project within a French bank.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drees (1991)</td>
<td>Description of sponsorship practice in Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrelly et al. (1997)</td>
<td>Comparison of sponsorship management in Australian and US companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrelly et al. (1998)</td>
<td>Article relating the principles of relationship marketing to sports (sponsorship).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herrmanns (1991)</td>
<td>Overview of sponsorship control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herrmanns et al. (1986)</td>
<td>Descriptive study of sponsorship practice in German companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McGook et al. (1997)</td>
<td>Monitoring of the sponsorship decision-making process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Olkkonen et al. (2000) Theoretical overview of how sponsorship research could be
developed further by applying concepts provided by the
interaction/network perspective.
Olkkonen (2001) Analysis of a sport sponsorship arrangement case using the
inter-organisational network approach as a theoretical frame
of reference.
Perlstein & Piquet (1985) Exploratory interviews among ten companies in France
evaluating the management of sponsorship.
Pope (1998b) Review of sponsorship literature focusing on definition,
objectives and evaluation.
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sponsorship in Germany.
Quester et al. (1998) Survey of sponsorship decision-makers in the USA and
Australia with regard to sponsorship objectives, management
and control.
Thwaites & Framework for effective sponsorship management.
Aguilar-Manjarrez (1996)
Weidner (1989) Descriptive study of sponsorship practice in Germany.
Wilson (1997) Discussion of sponsorship objectives and the selection
process.
Wolton (1988) Account of the development and objectives of art
sponsorship in six European countries.

**Measurement of sponsorship effects**

*Total number of contributions: 83 (including 29 published before 1996; 54 published after 1995)*

European Soccer Championship sponsors in the UK.
Anne & Chéron (1991) Evaluation of awareness scores and influencing factors of a
cycling event.
Arthur et al. (1998) Evaluation of the degree of exposure sponsorship stimuli
receive.
Baux (1991) Persuasion models applied to sport sponsorship to explain its
impact on the audience.
Bennett (1999) Evaluation of mere exposure and false consensus effects
among soccer fans.
Cornwell et al. (1997) Examination of the long-term recall and recognition of a
college basketball team's sponsors.
Cornwell et al. (2001) Analysis of the share-price impact of sponsoring the drivers
of a car race.
Courbet (2000) Evaluation of the affective effects of broadcast sponsorship
on sponsor brand attitude.
Cousty (1994) Summary of a large professional study evaluating
sponsorship awareness.
Crimmings & Horn (1996) Analysis of the creation, strength and duration of the link between sponsors and an event (Olympics).

Daneshvary Investigation of the effect of sponsoring an (rodeo) association on purchase intention.


D'Astous & Seguin (1999) Multiple regression analysis showing influence of demographic and psychographic variables on sponsor recall for two sports.

Deimel (1993) Validation of an attitude transfer model applied to sponsorship.


Drees (1987) Investigation of the combined use of sponsorship and advertising.


Easton & Mackie (1998) Professional study evaluating interest in sponsored activities, exposure to other communication stimuli and sponsorship awareness.


Gabrielsen Conceptual article discussing 'transfer' as a central element of sponsorship, distinction between endorsement and sponsorship.


Gierl & Kirchner (1999) Investigation of the question of whether an emotional link to a team positively influences image transfer.


Hansen et al. (2001) (Pre-)test of an instrument measuring the emotional impact of sponsorship.


Hermans & Drees (1989) Analysis of the consequences of a perceived mismatch between the sponsor brand and the activity supported.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hermanns <em>et al.</em> (1986)</td>
<td>Experimental design to study attention to, and memorisation of, sponsorship stimuli on race cars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hock <em>et al.</em> (1997)</td>
<td>Article outlining a behaviourist context for sponsorship and using the ATR (awareness–trial–reinforcement) model to compare effects of an advertising and sponsorship stimulus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotschier &amp; Merz (1995)</td>
<td>Presentation of three case studies to illustrate the effectiveness of sport sponsorship, especially integration of sponsorship and advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lardinois (1997)</td>
<td>Analysis of the attitudinal impact of sponsorship plus broadcast sponsorship within a laboratory experiment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lardinois (1998, 1999)</td>
<td>Test of the moderating effect of enduring involvement on the memory impact of the conjunction of broadcast sponsorship and sponsorship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lardinois &amp; Quester (2001)</td>
<td>Synergy between sponsorship and broadcast sponsorship does not always exist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee <em>et al.</em> (1997)</td>
<td>Scale development measuring attitude toward sponsorship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meenaghan (2001)</td>
<td>Framework for understanding sponsorship effects such as goodwill, image transfer, fan involvement etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meenaghan &amp; Shipley (1999)</td>
<td>Focus group research to examine image transfer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meirbold (1989)</td>
<td>Tracking study analysing sponsor effectiveness among product users and general public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore <em>et al.</em> (1999)</td>
<td>Examination of the impact of a video screen and rotational signage system on spectator satisfaction and sponsor recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Müller (1983)</td>
<td>Descriptive study evaluating attitudes towards sport sponsorship and awareness of perimeter sponsors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s) (Year)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicholls et al. (1999)</td>
<td>Investigation of sponsor brand recall and preference of spectators of a golf and tennis tournament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivier &amp; Kraak (1997)</td>
<td>Review of determinants of sponsorship effectiveness and calculation of a comparison factor for advertising vs. sponsorship effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pham &amp; Johar (2001)</td>
<td>Prominance bias in sponsorship identification is more likely to occur in cluttered media environments where learning the event-sponsor association is difficult.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pope (1998a)</td>
<td>Sponsorship awareness leads to an increase of perceived consumption values of sponsor brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quester (1997a)</td>
<td>Evaluation of management practice, awareness levels and influencing factors of awareness for a Formula One Grand Prix.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quester (1997b)</td>
<td>Analysis of the long-term (recognition) effects of naming rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quester &amp; Thompson (2001)</td>
<td>Arts sponsorship effectiveness depends on the degree of leveraging sponsorship investments with additional advertising and promotional activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reiter &amp; Serr (1991)</td>
<td>Evaluation of the awareness of perimeter board advertising during the 1990 Soccer World Cup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renner &amp; Tischler (1977)</td>
<td>Large descriptive study of attitudes towards shirt and perimeter advertising, and of sponsor recall levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schumann (1987)</td>
<td>Analysis of the influence of sociodemographic and psychographic variables on sponsor recall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studiengruppe</td>
<td>Evaluation of memorisation scores of the sponsors of the 1974 Soccer World Cup and attitude toward perimeter advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troll (1983b)</td>
<td>Learning effect concerning perimeter board advertisers' names.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s) (Year)</td>
<td>Study Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walliser (1992)</td>
<td>Evaluation of sponsorship awareness as a function of previous brand awareness, exposure, and additional classical advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walliser (1993)</td>
<td>Article developing a causal model to explain sponsorship memorisation and attitude change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walliser (1996)</td>
<td>Causal model testing the influence of exposure, arousal, involvement and sports interest on recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walliser (1997b)</td>
<td>Analysis of the relation between previous brand awareness and recall of perimeter advertisers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright (1988)</td>
<td>Presentation of partial results from a professional tracking study measuring awareness levels of British soccer sponsors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Notes**

**Strategies and counter-strategies**

**Total number of contributions:** 13 (including 2 published before 1996; 11 published after 1995)

- **Arnis et al. (1999)** Analysis of sponsorship strategy of 28 national and multinational Canadian firms.
- **Campos Lopes et al. (1994)** Conceptual article adapting Porter's five forces model to sponsorship.
- **Doust (1997)** Review of the ethics of ambush marketing.
- **Hoek (1997)** Examination of theoretical and research issues arising from ambush marketing.
- **McDaniel & Kinney (1998)** Recency of ad exposure has a significant influence on post-test sponsor (ambusher) awareness.
- **Meehan (1996)** Discussion of ambush marketing.
- **Meehan (1998a)** Analysis of the phenomenon of ambush marketing from a consumer perspective.
- **Minquet (1999)** Evaluation of sponsorship strategies from a financial point of view.
- **Payne (1998)** The activities of ambushers erode the integrity (and thus attraction) of major events.
- **Piquet (1999)** Analysis and categorisation of sponsorship strategies of the 1998 Soccer World Cup.
- **Shanahan (1988)** Evaluation of the relative impact of different sponsorship strategies on teenagers.
- **Vignali (1997)** MIXMAP-model applied to sponsorship.