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SPORT SPECTATORS’ SEGMENTATION

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Introduction

For many observers, the importance of sport in our modern or postmodern societies has significantly increased in people’s everyday lives, in terms of either participation or spectatorship, which is characterized by a general trend towards a diversification of sport activities but also of its public. As for sport viewership, times have changed and sport crowds are no longer only composed of local sport fans – individuals who have a special attachment or bond to a team or an athlete – but are now full of consumers looking for extraordinary experiences (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982), in these re-enchanted sporting arenas that are called “cathedrals of consumption” (Ritzer, 2010). According to Ritzer (2010), individuals are now disenchanted about society and try, through consumption in general and consumption of sporting events in particular, to escape from everyday life and its hyper-rationalized and standardized environments.

If all sport fans are spectators – this statement can even be challenged as being a fan cannot be reduced to attendance – all spectators are not fans, and the terms should not be used interchangeably (Gantz and Wenner, 1995). Sport fans represent a particular type of emotionally committed and strongly identified spectators for whom the issue of the game or the competition is of a high importance, although “sport spectators” designates all viewers of live and mediated sport. Acknowledging this basic distinction is the first step in acknowledging that sport crowds are not homogenous, which has huge implications for sport managers and marketers. Indeed, sport crowds cannot be treated as monolithic; they are composed of numerous individuals who consume sporting events in different manners, to fulfill different goals and needs, which means that they have different expectations (Stewart, Smith, and Nicholson, 2003). Therefore, the satisfaction of these expectations, which should be a priority goal for sport managers both for its own sake and because it represents a powerful trigger for favorable organizational outcomes such as consumer loyalty, can only be achieved by strategically and operationally adjusting the service offer to customers’ demands.

From a strategic marketing point of view, it is essential that sport managers identify which kinds of individuals make up their crowds of spectators, who they are, what they look for and how they can accurately be clustered based on common characteristics. This is the purpose of segmentation which is defined as
the process of dividing a large, heterogeneous market into more homogeneous 
groups of people who have similar wants, needs, or demographic profiles, to whom 
a product may be targeted.

(Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton, 2000: 102)

When different groups are identified, managers have then to decide which segments they 
should target based on their organization’s identity, their organizational capacity and the 
potential profit each segment could generate, but also on the consistency and the degree of fit 
between these segments, in terms of both characteristics and expectations.

In the case of sport spectatorship, two different but complementary approaches can be used 
(Liu, Taylor, and Shibli, 2008). The first one relies on the identification of existing observable 
groups among the population and explains \textit{a posteriori} why and how they differ (i.e., from the 
segments to the variables) whereas the second consists in the identification and the use of one 
or several relevant variables which help managers to cluster the spectator population (i.e., 
from the variables to the segments). The first approach tends to use observed segments which 
are close to the reality of a specific situation which is highly relevant for managers of similar 
sporting events. However, these results can hardly be generalized to other situations and do 
not always provide a comprehensive analysis of how they differ. On the contrary, the second 
approach relies on variables that have generally been recognized as relevant in different 
sporting contexts allowing generalizations and comparisons. Nevertheless, some of these 
segments can appear artificial or too reductionist and stereotypical. The number of groups 
(i.e., two, three or four) created from a single variable, especially when psychological, is an 
example of this shortcoming. Nonetheless, no best approach can be identified as it depends on 
the use of the segmentation, the characteristics of the sporting contexts and the final use (i.e., 
knowledge-oriented \textit{versus} practice-oriented).

\section*{Observation-driven segments}

As mentioned in the introduction of this section, one segmentation approach consists in 
identifying visible groups based on common patterns. As reality is complex, the first step 
of the process often consists in identifying extreme cases alongside a continuum, which 
corresponds to what Stewart et al. (2003) named dualistic approaches. These authors reviewed 
several studies conducted in a dualistic way (e.g., Bristow and Sebastian, 2001; Ferrand 
and Pages, 1996; Lewis, 2001; Nash, 2000) and identified that fans had been previously 
categorized as old/new, genuine/corporate, traditional/modern, expressive/submissive, irrational/ 
reasonable, symbolic/civic and die-hard/less-loyal. These kinds of typologies represent a first step to 
segment but they oversimplify the reality. Specifically, even if extreme cases on a continuum 
are easy to identify, the differences and then the boundaries between the categories are not so 
clear-cut.

Another and a more elaborate example of this approach is illustrated by the work of Tapp 
and Clowes (2002), who distinguished British supporters of English Premier League (EPL) 
clubs based on matchday activities and behavior – before, during and after the game:

- \textit{Mine’s a pint} segment gathers people who come for a drink or two and meet casual 
  acquaintances;
- \textit{Juggling the kids} segment gathers families;
- \textit{Thermos at row D} segment gathers lonely and regular supporters;
- \textit{Season ticket friendlies} segment gathers regular social supporters;
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- **Loyal cash and chanters** segment gathers regular and committed supporters;
- **Dads and sons** who are generally loyal and quiet.

Interestingly, Tapp and Clowes (2002) tried to characterize these segments in relation to the consumers’ level of attendance and life stage, creating a two-dimension classification. Even if this classification may only describe supporters and not all English Premier League spectators, there is no doubt that it might be relevant for EPL managers as it closely fits the reality. However, the main limitation of such a classification is that it cannot be directly applied to other sporting contexts such as other sports in the same country (e.g., rugby union, cricket) or the same sport but in different countries (e.g., in Spain or Italy). Some may even argue that it may not be applicable to all clubs from the EPL. Finally, the main challenge from a marketing perspective is to estimate the level of differences or commonalities between each segment in terms of socio-demographic characteristics but also in terms of expectations in order to adjust both strategic and mix marketing.

In a similar vein and in relation to English football, Giulianotti (2002) created a classification of football fans based on two dualistic dimensions which relate to the type of identification spectators can express towards a specific club. The *traditional/consumer* dimension reflects the relationship spectators have with their club, ranging from a local and popular cultural identification (*traditional*) to a market-centered type of relationship (*consumer*). The second dimension, the *hot/cool* axis, reflects “the different degrees to which the club is central to the individual’s project of self-formation” (Giulianotti, 2002: 31); *hot* forms of loyalty characterizing an intense identification and a strong solidarity with the clubs, and *cool* forms being the contrary. The combination of these two dimensions creates four types of spectators: supporter (*traditional and hot*), fan (*consumer and hot*), follower (*traditional and cool*) and flâneur (*consumer and cool*) (Giulianotti, 2002). This framework can be seen as a mixed approach as it is both practically and theoretically driven, relying on spectators’ football identities and the types of relationship they have with their club – creating the four profiles of the classification, but also linking them to the specific motivations and the spatial relationships of these spectator identities. As for the previous frameworks, the clear allocation of a spectator to a specific group is not based on clear and specific indicators.

Adopting a similar approach using sport spectator profiles or group identification based on the observation and the interviewing of sport spectators, Bourgeon and Bouchet (2001) identified four spectator profiles.1 These authors based their framework on the work of Holt (1995), who identified four metaphors of sporting event consumption classified upon two dimensions which are the purpose of action (i.e., hedonistic versus instrumental actions) and the structure of action (i.e., object actions versus interpersonal actions). *Consuming as experience* characterizes the consumers’ subjective and emotional reactions; *consuming as integration* refers to how consumers acquire and manipulate objects’ meanings and symbols to “enhance the perception that a valued consumption object is a constitutive element of their identity” (Holt, 1995: 6); *consuming as play* refers to how consumers use the consumption object to interact with fellow spectators; *consuming as classification* refers to how consumers use the objects to classify themselves to create and shape their social identity. For Holt (1995), each metaphor can be found in each individual but is expressed at various levels, which does not allow the identification of specific groups or profiles of spectators.

However, this work was further extended by Bourgeon and Bouchet (2001), who created a four-profile model based on spectators’ representations and expectations towards sporting events and the values they associate with them. These authors identified the *supporter* profile based on non-existential values such as performance and efficiency and which corresponds to...
a partisan consumption pattern as supporters essentially look for a victory of the team or athlete they support. The *aesthete* profile is based on existential values such as the beauty of display, the drama and athletes’ achievement, and corresponds to a contemplative consumption pattern. The *interactive* profile is based on non-utilitarian values such as entertainment, hedonism and shared emotions and corresponds to a play consumption pattern. Finally, the *opportunist* profile is based on utilitarian values such as interest and image, corresponding to a pragmatic consumption pattern. This last profile is interesting because many researchers have focused on the experiential dimension of sporting events in line with the work of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) but have omitted the fact that some sport spectators can also consume for instrumental reasons. Even if these *opportunist* individuals rarely represent the majority of spectators they are worthy of note to fully grasp the spectators’ heterogeneity. Interestingly, this framework theoretically identifies the relationships (i.e., complementarity, discordance and contradiction) between the profiles which are very useful to inform the targeting strategy, especially when looking at several segments.

Although Bourgeon and Bouchet (2001) partly defined the profiles based on these theoretical semantic relationships, it seems that they might not be as exclusive as theoretically suggested and that, as for Holt (1995), some segments may combine several consumption patterns (Bouchet et al., 2011). Some parallels can be drawn between these profiles and the types of fans (i.e., *super*, *social*, *experiential* and *contextual* fans) identified by Richelieu and Pons (2005), but the ways they are theoretically defined and practically measured are significantly different. Specifically, the Richelieu and Pons (2005) fan types were created thanks to a typological analysis using spectators’ behavioral characteristics (e.g., attendance, purchase and viewership) and their orientation towards sporting events. In this sense, this approach represents a multidimensional segmentation strategy initially based on theoretical concepts which will be covered later in this chapter. Nevertheless, it is worth noticing that two different segmentation strategies can present outcomes with similarities. This tends to prove the relevance of both approaches.

After reviewing some sport spectator segmentation approaches driven by the observation of sport crowds to identify several relevant segments, the following section deals with the reverse approach, which consists in identifying relevant theoretical variables upon which further segments will be created.

**Theory-driven segments**

**Socio-demographic segmentation**

The most used segmentation variables are socio-demographic and describe extrinsic facts about consumers which are then easy to measure, such as their gender, age, income, education and social class (Tapp and Clowes, 2002). Furthermore, it seems relevant to add cultural and ethnic backgrounds to this list because of their influence on consumer behavior.

The gender issue regarding sport spectating has received quite a lot of interest but, as was noticed by Ridinger and Funk (2006), a clear picture is difficult to draw because many of these studies were limited to college students or to a single-gender team as the object. Regarding the long-lasting question of the difference in sport involvement as spectators between men and women, Adams (2003) observed that the proportions of women fans in major North American Leagues were close to those of men (e.g., women represented 49 percent for Major League Soccer, 47 percent for Major League Baseball, 46 percent for National Basketball Association, 43 percent for National Football League, 41 percent for
National Hockey League and 41 percent for NASCAR) but strong variations exist between sport, leagues, levels, countries and cultures which hinder the possibility of a universal answer. Nevertheless, many authors such as Gantz and Wenner (1991), Ridinger and Funk (2006) and Sargent, Zillmann and Weaver (1998) found that differences can be observed between women and men spectators in terms of motives, which strongly supports the use of gender as a segmentation variable.

The second important demographic variable is age, and here mixed results have been found. For instance Thrane (2001) and White and Wilson (1999) found that younger individuals were more likely to attend professional sporting events. The relationship between age and sport spectating, especially with live attendance, may not be as simple and linear as expected, as it can be thought that some age effects will be linked with the income and lifestyle variables.

Among the traditional socio-demographic characteristics, income has been shown to influence sport spectating, especially live attendance. For instance, Thrane (2001) and White and Wilson (1999) found that high-income groups are more likely to attend sporting events than lower income groups. Beyond income, the levels of education and cultural capital have also been found to impact sport spectatorship. White and Wilson (1999) estimated that education was a predictor of sporting event attendance and Mehus (2005) found a negative relationship between education and live attendance although Thrane (2001) found a positive relationship in Norway, a negative relationship in Sweden and no significant relationship in Denmark. These results highlight the importance of this variable but also highlight the variations between cultural and sport contexts. Also for Thrane (2001), the results regarding cultural capital, measured by the cultural events’ and activities’ frequency of attendance, were not consistent and varied between countries. Following Bourdieu (1978, 1984), these variables were also shown to influence tastes and preferences for some sport. For instance, White and Wilson (1999) and Wilson (2002) found that highly educated and high cultural capital holders tend to dislike “prole” sport such as auto and motorcycle races. The exact nature of the relationship between economic and cultural capital on sporting event attendance is, however, highly dependent on the cultural context, which highlights the importance of these variables to the segmentation of spectators.

Another significant variable in relation to sport spectator segmentation identified in the literature is the concept of ethnic identity or background, which can be extended to other concepts such as national, regional, local or group identity. For Harney (1985) the choice of a specific sporting event carries a strong cultural meaning and allows individuals to identify themselves with a specific group and a particular culture. In this regard, Pons, Laroche, Nyeck and Perreault (2001) found differences in terms of sporting events orientation and consumption patterns among Italian and French Canadians, with French Canadians being more oriented toward ice hockey and Italian Canadians being more oriented toward soccer. Similarly, Armstrong (2002) estimated that race and ethnicity could represent relevant variables to be considered by marketers to better understand sport consumption. On some occasions, and for international events (e.g., Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup) in particular, nationality can also represent an obvious relevant segmentation variable.

Finally, some other variables such as lifestyle, often measured by family status and family size, and which are related to age, can also be used to segment fan spectators (Mullin et al., 2000).

The purpose of this section was not to provide an exhaustive presentation of the analysis of these variables in relation to sport spectating but to highlight the fact that they all represent important elements for consideration to understand the heterogeneity of sport crowds. It also
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aims to emphasize the fact that, despite being almost universally important, it is almost impossible to establish universal conclusions regarding the influence of these variables as it strongly depends on the sport and the historical, economic and cultural contexts considered. Therefore, they should systematically be taken into consideration.

Psychographic segmentation

As noted by Tapp and Clowes (2002), segmentation profiles often aggregate socio-demographic (or geodemographic) and psychographic variables because the latter capture people’s activities, interests and opinions, which allows more subtle segmentations. They can use either one- or multi-dimensional variables. Among the approaches using one-dimensional variables, the concept of team identification has received considerable attention in the field of sport spectatorship and fanship, and will be reviewed within this section. Regarding the multi-dimensional approaches, the majority of the studies have focused on the concept of motivation. The segmentation strategies using both concepts – team identification and motivation – do not appear in opposition but rather complement each other.

One-dimensional psychographic variable: team identification

From the perspective of contemporary social psychology, a sport fan’s identity is conceptualized using a social identity framework (Haslam, 2004; Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell, 1987). According to this perspective, social identity refers to the groups with which individuals feel connected, together with the emotional importance and the value they attach to these groups. In this sense, social identity is self-defined and for sport fans is thought of as rooted in the identification with a team. According to Branscombe and Wann (1992: 1017), sport team identification reflects “the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as fans of the team, are involved with the team, are concerned with the team’s performance, and view the team as a representation of themselves.”

Since the early 1990s, the role of team identification has taken on a central role in the study of sport fans’ feelings, thoughts and behaviors (see Wann, 2006 for a complete review) and is perhaps the most used variable in the sport psychology literature on sport fans (Bernache-Assollant, 2010). In regard to sport consumption, research has revealed that team identification is a good predictor of the length of team fanship (Bernache-Assollant, Bouchet and Lacassagne, 2007; Wann and Branscombe, 1993), money spent on the team and related merchandise (Fisher and Wakefield, 1998; Schurr, Wittig, Ruble and Ellen, 1987; Trail, Fink, and Anderson, 2003), actual attendance at games (Murrell and Dietz, 1992; Wakefield, 1995; Wann, Bayens and Driver, 2004), intention to attend the team’s future games (Matsuoka, Chelladurai and Harada, 2003; Wakefield, 1995), and time spent following the team on TV or on radio (Fisher, 1998; Melnick and Wann, 2004).

Traditionally, team identification has been examined as a one-dimensional construct. In line with this conception, Wann and Branscombe (1993) developed a single-factor instrument called the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS). According to Wann and Pierce (2003), this scale has been used successfully in more than 100 studies and in different countries such as the United States (Gayton, Coffin, and Hearns, 1998), Germany (Straub, 1995), Japan (Uemukai, Takenouchi, Okuda, Matsumoto and Yamanaka, 1995), and more recently in England (Jones, 2000), Sweden (Antolovic and Ardby, 2003), Australia (Wann, Dimmock and Grove, 2003), Norway (Melnick and Wann, 2004), Greece (Theodorakis, Vlachopoulos,
Wann, Afthinos and Nassi, 2006), France (Bernache-Assollant, Bouchet and Lacassagne, 2007) and Portugal (Theodorakis, Wann, Carvalho and Sarmento, 2010).

From a segmentation point of view, researchers generally choose to create two categories of spectators using a median split procedure separating the least identified ones – spectators, for whom fanship identity is only a peripheral component of their self-concept – from the highly identified spectators who are extremely identified with their team, which represents a strong component of their identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Wann and Branscombe, 1990). In short, less identified sport spectators have an interest in sporting events and can sometimes demonstrate allegiance to a specific team but they mainly tend to consume mediated sporting spectacles (e.g., TV viewing at home) because they are particularly sensitive to live events’ constraints (e.g., ticket prices, uncomfortable settings, bad weather; see Trail, Robinson, Dick and Gillentine, 2003). For highly identified sport spectators the team can become an extension of themselves and lead them to possess a great level of knowledge about their team (Wann et al., 2001). In line with this social identity, they tend to talk and read a lot about their team and to have a direct consumption of sport which implies live attendance and the will to have an impact on their environment. It can be noted that some researchers occasionally choose to create three categories of spectators and fans using for instance a tripartite split (e.g., Wann and Branscombe, 1993), or tertile split procedure (e.g., Hillman et al., 2000). These different methods provide a more subtle and probably less stereotypical description of the reality in comparison with bi-category approaches. However, the choice of three categories still needs to be theoretically justified in comparison with four or five categories for instance.

Although Branscombe and Wann’s (1992) definition of team identification has been widely used, recent research in the sport science literature has proposed to rethink this concept in two main ways. First, some authors in the social psychology literature of intergroup behaviors (e.g., Cameron, 2004; Dimmock, Grove and Eklund, 2005; Ellemers, Kortekaas and Ouwerkerk, 1999; Jackson, 2002) follow Tajfel’s (1981) original conception of social identification and suggest that social identification with a group is multi-dimensional and contains a cognitive component representing the knowledge of group membership, an affective component representing the emotional significance of the membership, and an evaluative component representing the value of that membership to the self. This new theoretical frame seems interesting to analyze whether specific dimensions of team identification contribute to particular spectators’ behaviors and could then be used to create homogeneous groups of spectators. Second, Trail and collaborators (e.g., Kwon, Trail and Anderson, 2005; Robinson and Trail, 2005; Trail et al., 2003) have proposed to study other sources of identification or points of attachment than the team such as specific players, coaches, university, community, sport and specific level of sport to better understand spectators’ behaviors. As outlined by these authors, specific sources of identification can be more or less relevant in regard to the types of spectators and to the specific context where sport fanship takes place. For instance, Kwon et al. (2005) found in their study that community identification was considered as inappropriate because the city was small and known to be a university town. Finally, these authors proposed that the different points of attachment could be linked to different types of motivation to attend games and events.

Another psychometric measure of team identification, the Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) scale (Mahony, Madrigal and Howard, 2000), has been developed in the sport science literature. However, because the SSIS and PCT scales are highly correlated and both predict a number of spectator behaviors (Wann and Pierce, 2003), the PCT scale is not further developed in this section.
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Multi-dimensional psychographic variables: motivation and involvement

In the sport spectatorship context, since the seminal work of Sloan (1989), several scientists have paid attention to spectators’ motives for watching sport. Although the specific labels given to these motives change according to the particular theory used, it seems widely accepted in the sport science community that at least eight categories of motivation may exist: entertainment (i.e., the desire to be entertained by sporting events), eustress (i.e., the need for positive stress), self-esteem (i.e., the personal enhancement individuals obtain from their team’s good performances), group affiliation (i.e., the need to belong to a specific group), escape (i.e., an opportunity to escape personal problems), aesthetic (i.e., enjoying the beauty and grace of sport), economic gains (i.e., benefits offered by activities such as gambling), and family needs (i.e., opportunities to spend time with one’s family or spouse).

Researchers have generally classified the relative importance of these different motives using the Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS), a 23-item instrument developed by Wann (1995) and validated by Wann, Schrader and Wilson (1999). From a segmentation point of view, the research that has been done on motives has focused on different theoretical variables. First, some have examined how different demographic characteristics such as gender (Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, End and Jacquemotte, 2000; Fink, Trail and Anderson, 2002; James and Ridinger, 2002; Wann, 1995; Wann, Schrader and Wilson, 1999), race (Bilyeu and Wann, 2002; Wann, Bilyeu, Brennan, Osborn and Gambouras, 1999), age (Pan, Gabert, McGaugh and Branvold, 1997), house income (Wann, 1995), educational level (Wann, 1995, 2002) and family structure (Wann, 1995) are related to sport fan motivation. Others have studied how sport fan motivation is linked to the type of sport attended (individual versus team sport, aggressive versus non-aggressive sport; James and Ridinger, 2002; Wann et al., 1999; Wenner and Gantz, 1989) and to the stadium and home town size and location (Nakazawa, Mahony, Moorman and Hirakawa, 2000; Wann, 1995). Finally, the relationships between team identification and fans’ motives have also been studied. For instance, Wann (1995) found that team identification was positively and significantly related to each subscale and particularly to eustress, self-esteem, and entertainment, contrary to the economic and family ones.

As evoked above, Trail and collaborators recently proposed a much more complex view of the identification–motivation link by taking into account different sources of identification or point of attachment (e.g., team, specific players, coaches, university, community, sport and specific level of sport), and other fans’ motives than those proposed by the SFMS (i.e., vicarious achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, social interaction, drama/eustress, escape, family, physical attractiveness and physical skill). Trail et al. (2003), using the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC; Trail and James, 2001) and the Point of Attachment Index (PAI; Robinson and Trail, 2005), revealed for instance that the aesthetics, acquisition of knowledge, drama and skill motives were linked to the points of attachment of type of sport and level of sport in the US football context. They also demonstrated that the motive of vicarious achievement was linked with attachment to the team, coach, community, and university.

Another multi-dimensional concept widely used in the literature in relation to sport spectatorship is the concept of involvement. Specifically, the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) developed by Funk and James (2001) aims to distinguish different stages of psychological connection between a spectator and a sporting team, event or athlete based on involvement levels. Adapting a definition from Rothschild (1984), Havitz and Dimanche (1999) defined the concept of enduring involvement as “an unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest toward a recreational activity or associated product” (p. 123) which presents drive properties. Numerous researchers (e.g., Funk, Ridinger and Moorman, 2004; Kerstetter and
Kovich, 1997; Kyle et al., 2007) have reached a consensus towards a multi-dimensional conceptualization of involvement based on the framework developed by Laurent and Kapferer (1985), which comprised five facets: importance, pleasure, sign, risk probability and risk importance. Some of the dimensions were further developed or modified in the contexts of leisure and sport activities (see for instance Funk et al., 2004; McIntyre and Pigram, 1992; Kyle et al., 2007), but these improvements still support a multi-dimensional vision of the concept, allowing an understanding of different patterns of involvement linked to each facet which is useful for spectator segmentation (Funk et al., 2004). For instance, Kerstetter and Kovich (1997) observed that the rating of the enjoyment facet of involvement varied based on the number of games attended whereas for Funk et al. (2004), spectators’ attendance was related to all facets of involvement.

Funk et al. (2004) developed the Team Sport Involvement (TSI) model designed to assess the relationships between 18 antecedents (e.g., entertainment value, family bonding, community pride and drama) and four facets (attraction, self-expression, centrality and risk) of involvement with a professional sport team. The first testing of the model identified several relevant relationships between some facets of involvement and some of their antecedents. This model shows how the concepts of motivation and involvement can be related and how their links can vary among spectators.

Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to highlight the importance of sport spectators’ and fans’ segmentation based on homogeneous desires and expectations in adjusting sporting event offers. The different segmentation approaches reviewed demonstrated that there is no “best strategy” as they often depend on the objectives pursued, being more oriented either towards practice or towards theory. Nevertheless, the various approaches identified underline the necessity to combine different types of variables in order to fit as much as possible the reality of specific sport audiences. Specifically, the association of socio-demographic and psychographic variables appears highly relevant. However, even if consumer segmentation represents a strategic step of the marketing approach, academics and practitioners should not forget that it only constitutes a necessary step to understand how sporting event organizations can use the elements of the service experience to market to sport spectators and fans (Greenwell, Fink and Pastore, 2002).

For instance, Greenwell et al. (2002) investigated how the demographic variables age, gender, income and family size, and the psychographic variable of team identification influenced spectators’ perceptions of three service elements (the physical facility, the core product and the service personnel) in American minor league ice hockey whereas Bodet and Bernache-Assollant (2009) analyzed the contributions of sport service elements to French ice hockey spectators’ level of satisfaction based on their level of team identification. These studies are highly relevant and constitute the logical consequence of segmentation as they allow sport managers to specifically identify which type of offer would attract or satisfy a specific segment and provide useful information to target multiple segments, which in turn would allow sport managers to capture the heterogeneity of sport audiences and crowds.

Note

1 See also Bouchet, Bodet, Bernache-Assollant and Kada (2011) for a description of the framework in English.
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