

 EDITORIAL
DYKINSON

LA SEGURIDAD DEPORTIVA A DEBATE III

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CAPÍTULO 22. THE ASIAN SPORTS GAMBLING MARKET

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“There is no such thing as illegal or legal gambling. I walk to one side of this street and I am a legal bookmaker. I go to the other side I am an illegal bookmaker. But I do the same thing—it is all nonsense.”

Scorpion Lam - Asian bookmaker.

1. INTRODUCTION

Scorpion Lam had a shark tank with a large predator swimming in the middle of his office. Beside the shark tank was a pen where his eight Pekinese dogs who scampered around his office, slept. There were also lots of women in very little clothes: dozens of young women in dental floss-like bikinis clacked around the room in tall high-heels. Amidst the shark, dogs, bikini-clad women were four-hundred betting traders who, on a wet, typhoon-struck night in Manila were hunched over their desks running one of the world’s biggest bookmakers.

Two of Scorpion’s bodyguards took me down the hall. We walked past women squatting in front of lockers putting on makeup and adjusting their hair. They did not look

as if they would come to my aid if anyone decided to torture me. In fact, they looked the kind that may dislike me more, the louder I begged for help.

We went into the bathroom. I pulled up my shirt so the men could see I wore no hidden wires, but one of them, frowning apologetically, while the other stared coldly, frisked me. They nodded and I was led back into Scorpion's office.

Scorpion was the Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart of the Asian gambling market: a wild, youngish genius with dyed-blond hair whose tactics had transformed the industry. I had come to interview Scorpion about how he and his Asian colleagues had vacuumed up the customer base of many U.K. and European bookmakers. We were also to speak about match-fixing and the corruption that accompanies global sports gambling.

All the time we spoke - several hours - over cups of expensive green tea, I could hear the bikini-clad woman screaming. I asked Scorpion what was making them scream. He smiled and said, "Wait and see. I will show you at the end of the interview." True to his word, after we finished, he walked me back down the corridor. We stopped at a large steel door. Behind the door the screams of the women echoed. He pulled open the door and we walked inside...

*** The code is more what you'd call guidelines than actual rules. ' (Captain Barbossa, The Pirates of the Caribbean)¹*

You want to know the spirit of the sports gambling community of Manila? The Pirates of the Caribbean. Yes, now they wear suits, ties and have business cards but really, the essential spirit of the Asian sports gambling market is the fictional Captain Barbossa, eyes leering, bottle of rum in hand, breathing disreputability and disdain. Three-hundred-years ago their spiritual ancestors were tucked away in Caribbean harbours surrounded by ill-gotten loot and complaining about unfair tax regimes. Now, they are in large apartment buildings in suburban Manila staring at screens of almost every single sporting event going on across the world. And like their pirate spiritual brothers - the best are not western practitioners - like 'Blackbeard' or Captain Kidd - but Asian.

Up to the middle of the 19th century pirates held a sway of terror across south-east Asian waters. Often they did not just seize ships and steal away the merchandise, but overthrew the local nobility and establish their own kingdoms. (See: Antony and Prange, 2012; Bokarev, 2020). Now, the Asian bookmakers are doing the same thing in the sports gambling world.

This chapter is an analysis of the 'illegal' Asian section of the globalised sports gambling market. There are six major companies but tens-of-thousands of smaller

¹ <https://imsdb.com/scripts/Pirates-of-the-Caribbean.html>

bookmakers, in a deliberately-complicated myriad of up-at-midnight-and-down-next-month websites, national agents, master-agents and sub-agents who lay off bets with each other and the big, legal and quasi-legal bookmakers.

It is, roughly, the same pattern seen across the world in illegal or grey markets in North America and Europe (LE1, B 1- 3). This has driven a wave of mergers and acquisitions as formerly blue-chip European gambling companies struggle to survive against their nimbler, quicker and mostly untaxed Asian business rivals.

This largely unregulated market has also catalysed a wave of match-fixing in international sports. In the European Union between 2010 - 2015 there were 34 national police investigations into arranged corruption in football. The cases ranged from World Cup qualifying matches, Champions League games to a “referee mafia” in Czech and Slovakian football (see: Vilikovská, 2013). Estimates by executives in the sports integrity monitoring industry claim that currently up to 1% of all European football matches are fixed. (see: Mansel, 2010). The situation in tennis is even worse. The Independent Tennis Investigation Unit issued a report in 2018 that spoke of a ‘tsunami’ of match-fixing at the lower levels of the sport (Lewis et al., 2018). One match-fixer that the author spoke to claimed, “We were fixing so many games that sometimes we just couldn’t be bothered. A player who call us up to say they were going to fix a game and we just didn’t have the time to make the bets” (MF 8). It is not only the traditional sports that have been effected by this gambling-related fixing.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is currently (2022) investigating a sophisticated match-fixing ring in e-sports (LE 4, B 6 and see also Staff Reporter BBC, April 2021). The common link in these fixing scandals is that the bets were mostly placed in the Asian market. This chapter is an explanation of the size, structure and operations of this market as well as the methods of the match-fixers who travel the world arranging the corruption of sports events.

2. METHODS

I will tell you everything except about the Russians. If I tell you about them, they will kill not only me but all my family and friends.

2.1. European Match-Fixer, interviewed by law enforcement, June 2013.²

In 1967, the American criminologist Donald Cressey wrote of the difficulties of conducting research into serious or organized crime (Cressey, 1967). One particular challenge

² Anonymous in discussion with the author, July 2013: re-confirmed by law enforcement sources, October 2019.

that he highlighted was the inability to gain access to and interview criminals. Almost forty years later, the British criminologist Mike Maguire also wrote of the “neglected art” of actually talking to criminals. Maguire claims that it is comparatively rare for researchers to speak directly to criminals, outside of prison, concerning their motivations and methods (Maguire, 2010).

This was one of the research methods that this chapter is based upon: interviews with people who were not only inside the professional sub-culture of gambling, but also those who had some direct experience in the deviant sub-culture of match-fixing. There were interviews with sports officials and police officers who have tried to fight against fixing; journalists who were investigating match-fixing; referees who had been bribed or offered bribes to corrupt games; and players and coaches whose teams, or sections of teams, were fixing games. Most importantly, there were interviews with corruptors (match-fixers) who arranged fixed-matches, and players who took part in these games. A number of “illegal” bookies and corruptors also were kind enough to share some of their time and knowledge. Their criminal bona fides were checked thoroughly, either through law enforcement, criminal sources, or by court records, before the interviews to ensure that they were genuine match fixers. For them, the risk was extremely high, as in many jurisdictions organised gambling, let alone fixing matches, is illegal (Hill, 2010). There are also other, illegal challenges.

The above-cited quote, independently verified from both the match-fixer and law-enforcement officials, demonstrates some of these challenges—in this case, a fear of the Russian mafia—of getting interviews about sports corruption. Because of these issues the interview subjects are numbered and assigned a code depending on their professions using the following codes:

- LE - Law Enforcement**
- B - Bettors/Bookmaker**
- MF - Match-fixer**
- SO - Sports Official**

2.2. Confession Databank

We are suffering from a plethora of surmise, conjecture, and hypothesis. The difficulty is to detach the framework of fact — of absolute undeniable fact— from the embellishments of theorists and reporters. Then, having established ourselves upon this sound basis, it is our duty to see what inferences may be drawn and what are the special points upon which the whole mystery turns.. (Arthur Conan-Doyle, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, 1892).

In researching such controversial subjects as illegal gambling and match-fixing it is necessary - as Sherlock Holmes (Conan-Doyle) advises - to get the framework of fact. The Norwegian academics Jentoft and Olsen (2017) write, among others, of the 'triangulation' of good social science research.

To ensure that the interview subjects were being truthful - there are frequently conscious or unconscious bias - two other methods of research were used. The first was that a 'confession databank' was compiled. The sources of these 'confessions' range. Some were given in newspaper interviews or books; sometimes they were police covertly taped conversations or trial transcripts. The key is that the text of each item in the databank consists of the actual words of the person who fixed a match or took part in one.

A few examples: the recorded telephone conversations of a Russian football club owner in his attempts to fix a match; the covertly taped conversations of the Belgian corruptors of the Semi-Final of the UEFA Cup of 1984; and the judicial confession of the Italian gambling corruptors who attempted to fix Serie A matches in the 1979-80 season. One of the most useful and pertinent texts were the police confessions of Malaysian and Singaporean footballers from the 1995 investigation. These confessions have never been publicly examined. They contain a rich material of primary data on how the players rigged matches and tournaments. Another source of information were the Singapore court transcripts of eleven cases that were tried in court between 1986 and 2000 on match-fixing in football. These too contained a great deal of information that outlined methods, strategies and structures of the gambling syndicates and their relationships with various players, coaches and referees within the game.

The confession databank and transcribed interviews consists in 2022 of over 1,000,000 words. They were coded using textual analysis software system and then analysed for themes and consistent patterns. Each interview or text was examined to see if it contained examples of 49 sociological codes — values such as trust, internal markets, anomie or coercion.

To meet Jentoft and Olsen's appeal for triangulation of research, the following quantitative methods were also used. The gambling market is largely akin to the stock market. Just as each company has a share value roughly equivalent to its profits over earnings (P/E), revenue and long-term growth expectations: each sporting event has a 'price' or an odds value. The strong team - say Manchester United - is given a probability to beat a weaker team - say Macclesfield Town. In the British market this price - or the odds - are expressed in fractions - 1 to 4 or 2/5, etc. However, just as a company's share price can move up and down depending on internal company news - the successful, visionary CEO retires - or external effects - few people buy spats any more - so the odds of a sporting event can change. The 'internal news' -

a star striker has an injury, the entire squad eats a dodgy lasagna - or the ‘external effects’ - change in the weather, choice of referee, etc - can also effect the odds of a game.

These odds movements can be monitored to detect potential corruption. A multi-billion-dollar industry has developed in the last fifteen years to do this type of work for sports leagues. The author has also used this analysis of betting odds to verify the qualitative work of interviews and ‘confession databank’. In this way, through qualitative interviews and text analysis of corruptors’ words and quantitative focus on odds movements Maguire’s plea for researchers to speak directly to criminals and Conan-Doyle’s appeal for a ‘framework of fact’ is answered.

2.3. The Asian Sports Gambling Market

The Asian sports gambling industry is like the global porn industry: billions of people like its product, but many of them do not like to admit that they do. Another similarity is also a large - much larger than society, generally, knows - industry with sections that have an indeterminate legal status - as well as connections with organised crime. It is also enormously profitable. Various commentators have tried to estimate the size of the American porn industry. Almost all of them have written of the difficulty of accurately measuring it.

This challenge is partly due to the presence of organized crime in some sections of the industry but also the curious moral nature of the industry. Many fully-legal companies make a lot of money out of porn. For example, a number of international hotel chains make a large proportion of their “in-room” profits on guests renting sex videos. However, these companies do not like these facts becoming well-known. There are similar issues with the Asian gambling industry, because it is often “illegal” and thus, like the porn industry, difficult to measure (See Lane, 2000, Rich 2001, Ackman, 2001 and Adult Video News, 2022).

A 2006 study in the American Journal *Foreign Policy* valued the entire Asian gambling industry, both legal and illegal, at \$450 billion U.S. a year (Holliday, 2006). In comparison, the Asian pharmaceutical industry is worth roughly \$106 billion U.S. a year (Liew, 2006). It is difficult to know how accurate the gambling figure is or how much of it is spent on sports gambling. For example, the Remote Gambling Association (RGA) (a trade group that represents many of the private bookmaking companies) in a complaint before the European Union in 2009, claimed that the total of all gambling and betting in the world is only \$335 billion. However, the RGA added a statement saying:

Complete and accurate data on the gambling and betting sector, and in particular the remote gambling and betting segment, are not available. However, a number of sources offer sufficient information to provide an *approximate* [emphasis added] picture of the size and structure of the gambling and betting sector (*Remote Gambling Association, 2009:16*).

The problem in getting accurate numbers on this industry is that much of it is run by ‘illegal’ operators. However, in the summer of 2020, Europol — the continent-wide police organisation — claimed that the total world sports gambling market is worth \$1.69 trillion dollars with approximately 65% in Asia (Europol, 2020). Putting aside any possible inadvertent exaggeration, the market is still very large. One example, in 2011 the gross turnover of just one Asian bookmaking company was estimated to be over-four times higher than that of Adidas, the well-known sporting goods company (Buschmann & Wulzinger, 2011). This is a comparison that should be viewed carefully, as the profit margins of Asian bookmakers are much smaller than traditional retailers like Adidas. But even so when the range of other countries that share gambling organisations — Indonesia, China, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia — are factored into the estimate, the size of the illegal Asian sports gambling industry can be safely estimated to be well into the hundreds-of-billions of dollars.

2.4. Legal and Illegal Markets

The terms ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ are difficult to assess in this market. There are a number of legal entities such as the Hong Kong Jockey Club - the largest government regulated sports book in the world whose profits help pay for two universities in Hong Kong, the Aquarium and a large swath of the social services in that jurisdiction (see: Hong Jockey Club, 2022). There are similar government sanctioned bookmakers in South Korea, China and Singapore (see: Singapore Pools, 2022, Rick, 2018 and South Korea Lotto, 2022). Little of the following analysis of the Asian gambling market has any connection with these companies.

There is also a second level of legitimate bookmakers who have chosen to establish themselves in offshore tax havens in Asia. They are the equivalent - although far larger - to the European bookmakers who choose to headquarter in low tax-havens like Gibraltar or Malta. The final section of the Asian sports gambling market are the criminal bookmakers. We will examine their networks in a later section of this paper. However, let us now focus attention on *why* are the Asian bookmakers so popular with gamblers across the world?

2.5. Low Vig, Zero Taxes and No Know-Your-Customer

Every bookmaker in the world charges some form of ‘commission’ or ‘vig’ on the bets they offer. Even betting exchanges - the E-bay of the gambling world -where bettors gamble against each other - take between 2% to 5% commission on winning most bets (see for example: Betfair, 2022). The Asian gambling companies, in general, have much lower commissions than their European or North American rivals. Some Asian bookmakers take a commission of less than 1% whereas the European government sanctioned rivals - like *Danske Spil*, the Danish government regulated sports book — might charge as high as 30%. Thus

gamblers from around the world try to place their money with Asian bookmaker as the money that they may win, will be far higher (B 1 - 8 & 12).

As for 'legality' - one of the nuances is the series of domestic agents who open up accounts for offshore customers or simply place their bets for them. A professional gambler in the U.K. who places bets worth millions of pounds does not want to lose money in commission fees, will use third-party agents to place their money in the Asian market. This practice of using agents is followed by regular gamblers who either want to take advantage of low commission or may be in jurisdictions where gambling is illegal.³

This low commission model also makes Asian bookmakers less concerned with match-fixing. Because their essential business models are based on what Scorpion Lam describes as "volume-volume-volume" (more bets from far more people) the bookmakers do not lose as much money as a European bookmakers would do from fixed matches (B 1-12: Note also that several European betting sources claim that his paradigm is rapidly changing as non-Asian bookmakers reduce their commission rates).

This low-commission business model is also based in a laissez-faire culture where few taxes are paid and there is very little government regulation. This leads to two other commercial advantages for Asian bookmakers: there is no government tax on winnings and almost anyone can place a bet. The second point cuts across all sectors of the market from the top professional gamblers - who often find it difficult to get European or North American bookmakers to accept their bets (B4-8) to the heavily-losing addicted gamblers:

The real business model of a lot of bookmakers is rely on the degenerates. They will talk about 'family entertainment' but really the average gambler is a loss to these bookmakers. They take up a time and energy. The real money is to be made by identifying the heavy loser. In public, the guys will use terms like 'whale', 'stand-up guy' or 'high-roller'. In private, we just call them what they are - degenerates. The kind of person who would gamble away the baby's diaper money (*Asian bookmaking executive, interview with author, 2013*).

The practice of restricting addicted gamblers or 'know your customer' is almost unknown in the informal gambling market. Most gambling executives who work in this sector laughed when asked about the issue or provided answers like the one above. This gives these bookmakers a significant commercial advantage over their tax-paying, government regulated bookmaker (B 1 - 18). There is another issue that aids 'illegal' bookmakers - credit.

The biggest reason why there'll always be a guy (bookie) at the bar or an offshore book is because of one thing: credit. Casinos aren't going to give you credit. Sometimes a guy

³ Note, the bookmakers are not in themselves doing anything illegal. The agents take considerable time and care in establishing their credibility.

gets paid on Friday and wants to bet on Sunday, the casino's not going to let him bet \$220 on the Eagles. So I've always said that credit is the biggest thing sustaining it (*Smiley, 2018*).

Illegal' bookmakers will often lend their regular customers money to bet with them, safe in the knowledge that they will, over the long-term, almost always lose. The above quote, taken from an interview with a North American 'illegal' bookmaker illustrates this trend across cultures and countries.

The final advantage that the Asian gambling market enjoys is speed of payment. In fact, the reputation of prompt and ready payment by illegal Asian gambling networks is actually *higher* than their 'legal' counterparts among professional gamblers. B7 is a professional gambler and his comments are typical: The UK gambling market has no balls... I go to pick up my winnings and I am told, "Oh, our shop had an off-day. Sorry, but you'll have to come back tomorrow when we have had a chance to go to the bank." I can't place a big bet in my own name anywhere in London... but with the Asian syndicates, there is never any problem. In fact when XXXX [a British bookmaker] tried to set up in Asia during the World Cup, they were creamed by the competition. They were paying out bets six weeks late, which in the Asian market is unheard of (B7).

This reputation of prompt payment seems to be a universal feature of 'illegal' gambling networks, even outside Asia. Joe Pistone was "Donnie Brasco," who worked as an undercover FBI operative in two New York mafia families. As a purported mobster, he ran an illegal casino and bookmaking operation in Brooklyn for several years. He spoke about the gambling operations. He said that this high emphasis on trust is based on good business sense:

[As a bookmaker] the odds of anybody beating me over the long run is very very slim. And once the word gets out that you welched, no one's going to bet with you anymore, you know?... Somebody who has been in business for a while, is not going to do that because, like I say, over the long run the bettor's gonna win. And, once you welch on one person, the word gets out and they're going to go to somebody else (LE16).

This is not to say that the reality of trust in Asian gambling organisations is universal for *all* bookmakers or that there is no violence associated with gambling organisations. Rather, interview subjects displayed what Dasgupta refers to as "a trust in the enforcement network" (Dasgupta, 2000). Meaning, they trusted that the gamblers would beat them up - or worse - if they did not pay their losing bets.

3. STRUCTURE OF THE ILLEGAL ASIAN SPORTS GAMBLING INDUSTRY

In this section, we examine the purely informal or 'illegal' network in the Asian gambling market. Again, the emphasis is on legality as often what is strictly illegal in one

jurisdiction is transformed when the money is transferred to another jurisdiction. There are roughly two-dozen national-level bookmakers across south-east Asia. One of their associates claimed they don't like the term 'bookies'; they prefer "super-agents" and the people who work for them are "agents". Part of the reason may be what some academics call "neutral terms for deviant behaviour": and the rest of the world calls "using nice words to disguise criminals". When Kenyan police extorted me in a late-night traffic stop in Nairobi, they did not ask for a bribe, but rather "dinner money for the boys, as it's so cold." Bookmaking is illegal in most Asian countries, so the term bookie attracts too much unwanted attention. But really these "super-agents" are bookies and they are based in Hanoi, Bangkok, Johor Bahru (a small city just across the Malay Peninsula from Singapore), Taiwan, Jakarta and, most frequently, Manila (B-4-12). The ownership, structure, and essential role of trust in this level of the illegal gambling networks is similar to the Asian heroin traffickers and relies on inter-ethnic Chinese community connections:

In the distribution of heroin throughout Southeast Asia, a very important role is played by the "mafia" of expatriate Chinese... They form networks of kinship and relationship extending across geographical frontiers into a dozen major Asian cities and a similar number in Europe... In this way, a clandestine financial network is set up, based on mutual *trust* (emphasis added) among the members of a single community — and on ruthless reprisal should that *trust* be broken (Lamour and Lamberti, in Arlacchi 1986, 198-199).

In the gambling world, all of the super-agents of the national structures are ethnically Chinese. They have very strong interconnections and they will balance their books by "laying-off" bets with one another (B 4 -12). Figure 1 shows an approximate structure of a national Asian 'illegal' gambling industry.

Diego Gambetta and Peter Reuter wrote of the Sicilian mafia providing both political and financial protection for tobacco smuggling operations in Europe (Gambetta and Reuter, 1995). Asian gambling syndicates need similar levels of protection. Thus the national-level bookies/agents receive protection from two sources: a high-level politician or businessman who provides political protection as well as the finances needed for all the problems of bookmaking. Organised criminals - mostly connected with the Triads - provide the physical strength to make indebted gamblers pay as well as protection from other criminals. Both Bertil Lintner and Gerald Posner, claim that for the heroin trade, these two roles can often be played by the same person (Posner, 1989 and Lintner, 2002).

Below this level is an important racial difference. The lower-level agents are not necessarily ethnic Chinese. These street-level agents are in charge of "counting centres". The author visited one in Klang, a coastal port in Malaysia. It was housed above a car repair shop. There were no signs or advertising of any kind, but most people in the neighbourhood seemed to know of its location and existence. These counting centres are where the bets are tallied and

the larger bets are passed up the chain of the syndicate. Underneath the regional bookies are a series of “runners” and the actual bettors who number in the tens of millions across Asia. The bettors can place money on a truly bewildering array of different bets.

In the last two decades, globalisation has impacted this physical market. In the early 2000s, a number of international organisations entered the betting markets in South East Asia (J 23 - 24, B 4 - 12). They conducted a series of “table talk” negotiations with local bookmakers. The international companies consolidated the market but providing the intellectual property - they calculated the odds movements on far more sports events.

The local network collected the customers and street-level cash. Thus, while on a local level the structures of “agents” and “super-agents” are unchanged, there has been a remarkable degree of consolidation at the head of the networks. At the time of writing, most of the local or national level agents pass their bets on to the larger offshore bookmakers, whose headquarters are often located in jurisdictions where sports gambling is legal, even though the bets of their sub-agents may be in jurisdictions where gambling is illegal (LE 10-22, B 1 - 22 and see also, Vittorio, 2022).

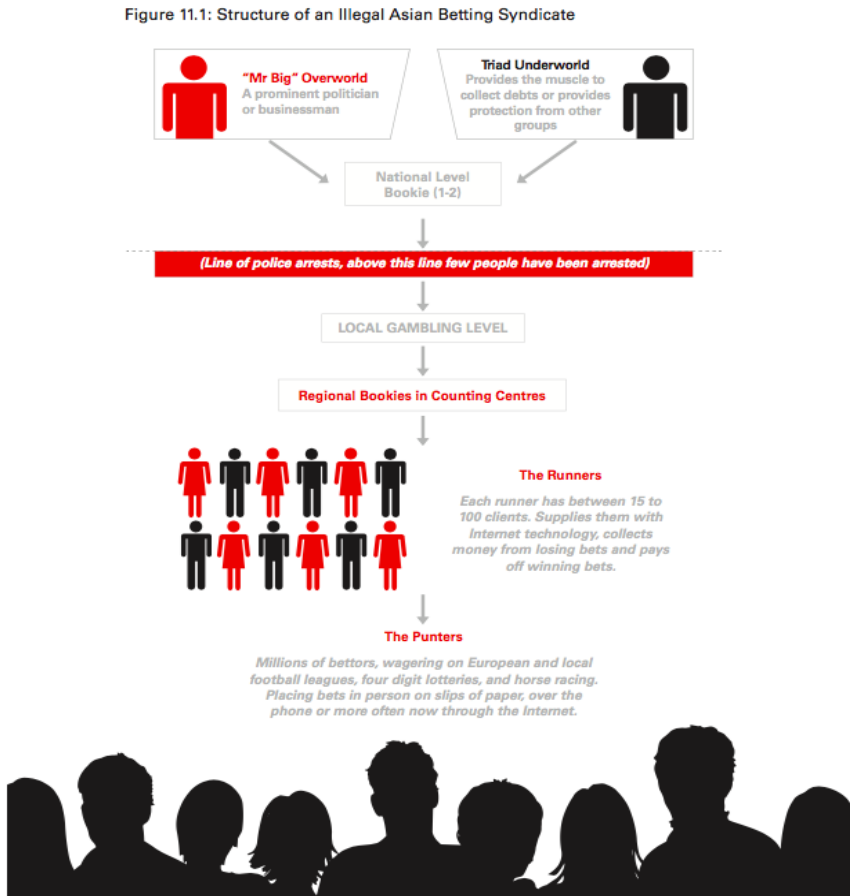
In recent research on the illegal sports gambling networks in North America, a similar structure was described by participants. Agents and sub-agents (the interview subjects used the same terms as the Asian market) were, effectively, anyone who could bring in customers. Yet the top of the top of the structure had to be either a patched member of a biker gang or an ethnically “pure” member of a particular ethnic group. This North American organised crime sports gambling network were linked into the globalised bookmakers in Costa Rica or the Philippines. So the organised crime members were essentially the brokers of the offshore market. (LE 12 & 45, B 4 & 38).

4. THE GLOBALISATION OF CORRUPTION

In the last ten years, international sport has been hit with a wave of match-fixing. There have been scandals in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, China, Cambodia, South Korea, Australia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, England, Norway, Finland, France, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and many other countries.⁴

⁴ Please see the special section in references with a list of these national match-fixing cases.

Figure 1. Structure of an Illegal Asian Betting Syndicate



The Asian gambling market was the driver for this vast swath of match-fixing in sports. Because it operates 24/7 and 365 days a year. It has a massive appetite for sports events - any - sports events to gamble on. During the Covid lock-down, the amount of money bet on Belorussian football increased several-fold. This increase in money led to a series of match-fixing scandals. Indeed, even ghost-fixed matches. Where the corruptors simply made up fictitious games or teams and placed them on the market (B 1, 6, 27, 42).

This fixing, linked to the 'illegal' Asian market, has a history dating back several decades. In the early 1990s Asian gamblers recognised this potential market for globalised corruption long before any one in either the gambling or sports world. A Chinese-Indonesian fixer - 'Uncle Frankie' - began travelling to international football tournaments and offering

bribes to players and referees to underperform. The first confirmed sighting of his group of fixers was at the 1991 Men's under-17 World Cup in Melbourne, Australia (SO 2, 14, F 1, 2). However, a similar operation had been done 'domestically' in 1986 in Singapore when players on the senior Canadian men's team fixed a game against North Korea (McKeown, 1989).

The former Head of the Ghana Football Association (GFA), now banned from the game for accepting cash payments while being covertly filmed by investigative journalists, is typical of the interview subjects when he confirmed the presence of fixers at most international football tournaments:

In every competition you find gamblers around. Yes, every competition, every competition, they are there. It is done all the time in major competitions. In all the major tournaments, World Cup, Cup of Nations. The gamblers are not Africans, they are Europeans and Asians. So they have a lot of money to do bet on these things (SO14).

These views were confirmed by the former president of the world football agency - Sepp Blatter. He began an interview with the author by saying, "Ahh yes,... you want to speak to me about the Asian match-fixers. I have known about this problem for years."

Since these two interviews, there have been large, multinational investigations that have secured convictions confirming the presence and activities of these match-fixers. The fixers have not only been going to the large international football tournaments but they travel around the world fixing leagues and sports in every continent apart from Antarctica. They are aided by the following factors:

4.1. Market for games

The sports gambling provides a vehicle for profit maximisation on sports events that previously were unprofitable or inaccessible to bet on. The key point is that this market is now globalised. Twenty years ago, the world gambling market was divided up into countless little local markets. If a corruptor wanted to fix a Singaporean high school field hockey league (Staff Reporter, Hindustan Times, 2013) or a Slovakian football match (Staff Reporter, Agence France Presse, 2013) or a tennis game in the Netherlands (Staff Reporter, Netherlands Time, 2021) - (all examples of matches that have been either corrupted or attempted to be corrupted) - they would have had to find access to the local market. It would have been reasonably difficult to access this market and place enough cash in an anonymous way to be able to successfully fix the match.

Now, with the globalized sports gambling market a potential fixer can access the 60,000 sports events a day. They can place money down. With the network of agents and sub-

agents who are being paid on 'volume' of business they bring rather than the rate of corruption in international sport has risen at an exponential rate.

4.2. Relative exploitation

The level of sports leagues where players and athletes struggle to receive a proper recompense is perhaps extraordinary to a reader. Player's strikes during FIFA World Cups are relatively frequently. One example, during the 2014 tournament in Brazil the President of Ghana actually had to charter a plane to bring in the player's salaries otherwise they would refuse to play (Staff reporter, Associated Press, 2014).

In 2011, senior football players in La Liga - Spain's top professional football league - united for a strike. Their union (AFE) claimed that hundreds of their members were owed professionals are owed over 50 million euros (\$72 million). Some of these players had not received a salary in six months.⁵ The notable section is not that the players were going on strike but *who* the players were and the teams they were playing for. They were some of the very best players in some the top teams - six of whom were nominally bankrupt - in the league (Pinto, 2011). A few years later, a major police investigation revealed a number of fixed matches in Spain (Staff Reporter, Reuters, 2020).

Tennis that has been hit by a "tsunami of fixing" (Lewis et al., 2018) has a financial reward system where a few of the players make enormous amounts of money while most of the players struggle to cover their costs.

This situation ensures that there are competitive markets: while the globalised sports gambling market provides a 'murky market' that is willing to pay players/coaches/referees and team officials very well for doing their job badly. Meanwhile, the regular sporting market often pays these same professionals badly for doing their job well.

One contrast of figures to show the relative sizes of these competing markets. According to the business magazine Forbes, Russia, the country that hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2018, spent an estimated \$11 billion dollars on infrastructure, promotion, transportation, security and similar costs on the tournament. The broadcasting rights for the 64 games were globally worth, approximately \$3 billion (Badenhausen, 2018).

It is difficult to truly know the gambling market as so much of it is 'illegal' and the figures are not publicly available. However, the sports gambling company hired by FIFA -

⁵ In 2011, six of the clubs in the top division in Spain - Uche's Zaragoza, Racing Santander, Real Mallorca plus the three teams promoted at the end of last season, Real Betis, Rayo Vallecano and Granada - are in some form of bankruptcy protection.

SportRadar - to monitoring the betting odds, estimate that \$155 billion dollars were wagered on the games, with the average amount per game of approximately \$2.55 billion dollars (Scimia, 2018). For comparison's sake, let the reader assume that this figure is grossly exaggerated. Divide it by half, then divide it by half again. The figure then gained - \$38.75 billion - is still more than \$24 billion than the entire amount spent on the tournament by the Russian government and the global broadcasting rights.

4.3. Hill's Law

The author proposes the following “law” to predict the level of corruption in a sports tournament or league: the amount of money bet on an event/league divided by the median salary of players in that league. The classic case is African and Latin American football. In the last five years, there has been a growing number of fixed matches in these continents as more of the leagues have been offered on the international gambling market (B 8, 12, F: 4: see also Editor, National Daily, Nigeria, 2019).

All of these factors and others - like gambling addiction and ease of fixing in a particular sport - have been aided by the final factor - sports governance.

4.4. Lack of Governance

(The) Defendants ... held positions of trust within FIFA and other national or international football organisations, or were sports marketing companies and executives with whom FIFA's member associations and confederations did business. Over many years, the Defendants grossly abused their positions of trust to enrich themselves, while causing significant direct and proximate harm to FIFA. The harm includes large financial losses ... as well as damage to FIFA's reputation, intellectual property, and business relationships. The damage done by the Defendants' greed cannot be overstated ... the loss amounts are believed to be at least in the tens of millions of dollars.

United States of America vs. Jeffrey Webb et al. (2015),(No. 15-CR-0252-RJD), Victim Statement and Request for Restitution in the Indictment.

It is difficult to overstate the levels of corruption and criminality of the officials running some international sports. Boxing has, according to an internally launched, international investigation been riven by a culture of high-level match-fixing and tournament corruption (Staff Reporter, Associated Press, 2022). Weight-lifting was run in a manner “symptomatic of corruption or criminal activity” by its senior officials in another independent report (McLaren, 2020).

The head of the international association that administered world track and field Lamine Diack - according to his criminal conviction in a French court in September 2020 - received tens-of-millions of dollars in bribe money to cover up doping offences and push valuable contracts to countries (Leicester, 2020). And there is the case mentioned above of FIFA-the organisation that administers football. The United States Department of Justice (DoJ) arrested and then convicted 27 of its top senior officials for bribery, corruption and racketeering (DoJ, 2015).

The widening net of match-fixing cases around the world occurred at precisely the same time that much of the senior leadership of the organisation that led soccer—FIFA—was being indicted and then convicted of wide-spread financial fraud and embezzlement (Department of Justice, 2015). Much of the toleration of corruption enabled the match-fixing. In fact, in one case in South Africa just before the 2010 World Cup, the fixers were directly helped by one of the officials responsible for the organising of the tournament itself (Hill & Longman, 2014).

5. HOW DO THE FIXERS WORK?

September 2008, in a Vienna hotel room, two gangs of match-fixers met. They had a problem. The German-based Croatians - the Sapinas - had been fixing top football matches across Europe and Canada for years. The Singaporean-based Chinese - led by Tan Seet Eng - had largely taken over from Uncle Frankie and were linking up with the Sapinas. They were criminals with vast experience and ability. They had fixed games in dozens of countries and tournaments including the Champions League and World Cup qualifying rounds. Yet they had a fundamental issue - how much was a fixed game worth? How could the fixers know its value? What occurred, according to the covertly recorded transcripts of their conversations and in subsequent interviews with gang members was that the European fixers had been contacting their Asian colleagues and saying, for example 'We have fixed a game in the Champions League.' The Asian fixers would place bets with bookmakers but had no idea of the value of the 'fix and were losing money (Hill, 2014).

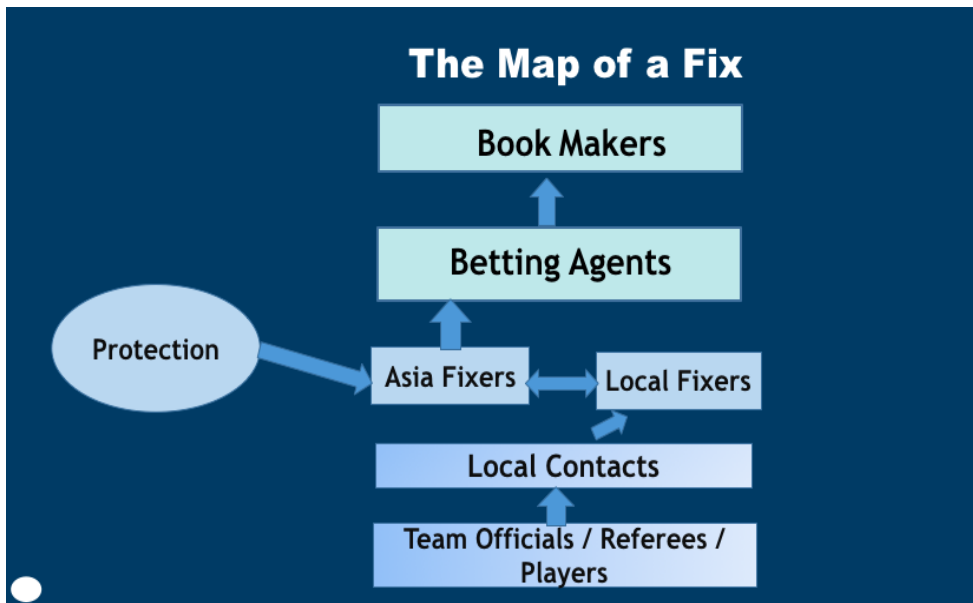
Figure 2, shows the structure of an international match-fixing gang. It is - at its heart - an international business marriage between two groups of criminals. The first group, - the local fixers - in this case the Sapinas - fix the actual game. They do what a reader would expect: bribing and coercing players, referees and officials to under-perform in the actual sports event.

The Asian fixers, led by Tan Seet Eng, corrupted the gambling market. Using agents and 'beards' they placed money on the games that the Sapinas had fixed in the Asian gambling market (F 1 - 8: B 2- 8). How each group worked and their tactics are the subject of a number

of other research papers. However, there was one central question that dominated the meeting in the Austrian hotel room: how much money was each fixed game worth?

The problem was that the ‘local fixers’ -the Sapinas- had communicated with the Asians that certain games were ‘fixed’. The results had not turned out the way they intended and the gang as a whole had lost a great deal of money. Therefore during the meeting the fixers came up with a ‘five-star system’. Each corrupted game would be assigned a specific value which would be worth a certain amount of money on the gambling market. Thus, a ‘one-star’ game would be if the local fixers had only managed to bribe the referee. A ‘two-star’ match was if they had corrupted a key player. Levels three and four were for various combination of players - a goalkeeper and a referee. A ‘five-star’ game was if the

Figure 2. The Map of a Fix



fixers had managed to get both team owners to agree to corrupt the game (Hill, 2014).

Using this system the two groups of fixers were able to continue corrupting hundreds of matches around the world. The leaders, after a successful German police investigation and criminal case, were arrested and convicted. They were replaced almost immediately by other gangs linked to Russia, Armenia and China who, according to law enforcement succeeded in corrupting a wide network of games, including a tennis match at

the U.S. Open. The fixing linked to the Asian gambling market continues (MF 1, 12-16: LE 38-44: see also Staff Reporter, Panorama.am, 2019 and Meers, 2018).

6. CONCLUSIONES

On May 14, 2018 America changed. In a judicial decision, almost equivalent to the overturning of prohibition of alcohol in 1933, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the individual states had control over the rights to offer sports gambling. This ruling began the legal version of the Oklahoma land rush. Gambling lobbyists flocked to state legislatures, court house and news rooms across the country promising if sport gambling was legalised all kinds of social problems would be solved: there would be a chicken in every pot, all roads would be repaired and no child would go to school hungry. This kind of Rainmaker song and dance captivated many American legislators. However, they are only being presented with one part of the story.

This chapter is an attempt to re-assess the situation. It is not to argue against the legalisation of gambling but to show that even in jurisdictions where gambling is legalised, the Asian bookmakers control a large share of the market. It showed the financial size of the world sports gambling market, how it operates and its structure. In the European Union and the U.K. which underwent similar legalisations of sports gambling as in the United States, there have been waves of match-fixing in a range of different sports. In the second section of this chapter, sociological factors - relative exploitation, competing markets and corrupt governance - that lead to 'Hill's Law' - the amount of money bet on a league/event divided by the median salary will give a strong indication of the relative risk of it being corrupted. We also saw how the networks of fixers operate: the local fixers corrupting the actual game; the Asian-based fixers corrupting the gambling markets.

The essential lesson of the chapter is that the match-fixers and 'illegal' bookmakers are not stupid and will take advantage of every human dimension they can to gain a profit.

The steel doors swung open and Scorpion Lam and I walked into a large TV studio. Inside, there were dozens of scantily-clad women screaming and dancing in front of large TV cameras. They were mostly dressed in tiny bikinis and lots of breasts were being shaken, bottoms were being wiggled and tongues were being extended towards the camera.

“What the *?” I asked**

Scorpion Lam shrugged and despite the surroundings looked relatively unmoved. “Men get stupid around good-looking, naked women.” he replied. “Its scientifically proven. So we help them get stupid. It helps our profit. On our websites, where the gamblers are

placing their bets, we show these women dancing and having a good-time. If it just makes a few more of them stupid, we get a lot more money.”

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