How Gambling Corruptors Fix Football Matches

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How Gambling Corruptors Fix Football Matches

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ABSTRACT   How do gambling corruptors fix football matches? How do a group of disparate players and gamblers come together, organize themselves and then perform a con in front of a large audience including their own team-mates and officials? This paper examines the difficulties and challenges faced by corruptors in both organizing this type of fraud and approaching the players. It is based on both quantitative and qualitative methods of research: over 220 interviews with players, referees, sports/law enforcement officials, as well as gambling industry representatives and corruptors; the creation of several databases including the Fixed Match Database which has over 130 legally certified examples of fixed matches, and a control group of 120 matches that can be presumed to be played honestly: and finally the collection of police or other transcripts of corruptors taped while attempting to corrupt matches. The findings are that the corruptors have five distinct stages in fixing matches – access, set-up, calling the fix, performance and payment - and that their methods of approaching players are similar to the business strategies of some erotic dancers.

Introduction

It is very, very, very easy to propose a player [to fix a match] . . . I will say I am from the newspaper. So I will make a card you know something official like this. And then once they finish the training, I will talk to them and maybe go for a drink or whatever. Then I will talk to them. You know I can just talk to him for 20 minutes to half an hour and I will know if I can bribe them or I cannot bribe them (C 1).

How do you fix a football match? How do a group of disparate people come together, organize themselves and then perform a con in front of a large audience including their own team-mates and officials? Graham Sharpe, a British gambling executive who has written extensively on potential match-fixing, claims that arranging a fix is so difficult that "the

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percentage proved to have been manipulated, rigged or fixed is so tiny as to be virtually imperceptible" (Sharpe, 1997, p. 88). Other commentators, including some of the corruptors themselves, declare successful match-fixing to be an extremely difficult task. They claim that access to participants has to be arranged, the pay-offs successfully negotiated and players have to be coached in performing the fix in a believable way before the matches have even begun. One claimed:

> But what I do is not a simple job ... we have to teach them ... Everything we have to teach to the players ... Fixed match—not an easy job! [sic] So you have to know how to do, how to make. You know lot of things in these fixing matches ... (C 3).

In this paper, I present first a case study on how *not* to organize a fixed match, a section on the role that networks have in ensuring a successfully fixed match and an examination of the five stages of implementing a fixed match. I use network theorists, such as Baker and Faulkner (1993), Granovetter (1973) and Lin (2001), to explain how successful corrupt networks differ from unsuccessful corrupt networks. At the centre of the examination, is also the question of *how* do gambling corruptors approach players to propose dishonest deals to them. I suggest that the literature in deviant theory on erotic dancers—Thompson and Harred (1992), Skipper and McCaghy (1970) and Salutin (1971)—is actually very helpful in understanding the different methods that match corruptors use in proposing corrupt deals to players. In this paper, I only examine "gambling fixes", that is games where the motivation of the fix is to rig bets, as well as the game itself.

Methodology

The work is based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative work relies, in part, on 223 interviews with players, referees, sports officials, police officers, prosecutors, gamblers and corruptors who have experience in fixing matches. Most of the interview subjects reported that the topic of match-fixing in football is immensely controversial and that they feared recriminations from either the corruptors or the authorities if they spoke out. Because of the controversial nature of the topic almost all of the interviews were "off the record". Particularly, people who were still serving in the game stressed that if they were to be quoted, either publicly or in such a way as to allow people to guess their identity, they would lose their job or possibly face more severe consequences. A number of bookies and corruptors were also kind enough to share some of their time and knowledge with me. Their criminal "*bona fides*" were thoroughly checked, either through law enforcement or 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 organized gambling, let alone fixing matches, is illegal. Accordingly, the interview subjects in this paper are identified only by their profession in the following fashion: Sports Officials (SO); Journalists (J);

Corruptors (C); Players (P); Law Enforcement Officials (LE) and Agents in the Gambling Industry (Odds compilers, book makers or professional gamblers) (B). The few interview subjects who did insist on being on the record are identified both by their last name and their profession: for example, Blatter, SO44, 2008 or Gregg, P23, 2005.

There is considerable discussion among social scientists about the best methods of qualitative interviewing (see Maguire, 2000 for some of the more general themes; Atkinson, 1998; Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990). However, the practical issues generally divide along the following themes: access, nature of the interview and recording of interview (Varese, 2001, pp. 11–12). In arranging the interviews, each subject was told that I was a researcher from the University of Oxford interested in studying match-fixing and that the resulting research would be published. They were then invited to a sit-down meeting, or, if they preferred, a conversation on the telephone (this was done only if they were not in the immediate geographical location). The interviews were generally held in a location where the subject felt comfortable talking. These locations varied from the subjects' offices to a favourite restaurant or coffee shop. For some of the more sensitive subjects, the interviews were held in a private and secure location, so that the subject would discuss the issue more freely. There is also considerable discussion (Sayer, 1992; Morse, 1994) about types of interviewing: some researchers prefer "long", "unstructured" interviews; while others prefer "life histories" or a chronological approach (Atkinson, 1998; Denzin, 1989). In this case all of the interviews were focused on the subject of match-fixing. This seemed to be the appropriate choice as it was a subject that was under discussion rather than a person's biography or profession. The interviews usually began with general questions about the subject's role and career to date, but as the interviews went on the questions became more focused on the subject of match-fixing and their personal involvement. As for the recording of interviews, the preference was always to tape-record for greater accuracy. However, most of the interview subjects displayed a significant reluctance to allowing themselves to be taped. In his work on the Russian Mafia, Varese had similar problems and remarked, "there is a trade-off between bad memory and evasive answers: tape-recording made subjects extremely uncomfortable, resulting in evasive answers" (Varese, 2001, p. 12). I encountered similar issues, so I had to rely on note taking at the time of the interview, with a formal typing up of the notes done as quickly as possible after the interview. All interviews were transcribed (the total count is over 250,000 words) and coded using a method described in the next section. Follow-up interviews were conducted and relationships were maintained to re-check statements and ensure accuracy of views.

As well as interviews, I also analyzed the confessions of various match corruptors. The term "confession" is used loosely here. The sources are sometimes confessions given in newspaper interviews or books, but often they are covertly taped conversations or trial transcripts. The key is that the actual 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 in 2004; 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 1979–1980 season. However, the most useful and pertinent texts were the police confessions of Malaysian–Singaporean football players from a 1995 investigation. These confessions have never been examined and I was fortunate to be granted access to them by law enforcement sources in the Malaysian–Singaporean community. They contain a rich material of primary data on how the players rigged matches and tournaments.

Finally, some of the data used in the paper comes from an analysis of a number of databases that I created.[1] The principal one is the Fixing/Non-Fixing Players Database (the FPD database). I constructed the databases by finding in newspaper articles, interviews or through the compilation of the confession databank, examples of fixed matches. The FPD is composed of 117 players who either fixed matches or were approached to fix matches. This database has 30 different variables ranging from categorical variables such as, "Was the player coerced into taking part in the fix?" to informational variables, such as name, team and date. The key variable in this database is whether a player agreed to take part in the fixed matches or not. There are 93 players listed who, when approached, agreed to fix a match and 24 players who, when approached, refused (I do not include players that did not fix matches, who were not asked).

A number of academics, using mostly quantitative methods, have explored match corruption in sports. Most famously, Levitt and Duggan (2002) examined collusion in the final rounds of Sumo wrestling tournaments; but there have also been papers by Taylor and Trogdon (2002) and Wolfers (2006) on basketball and Moul and Nye (2006) on chess. All these papers examine match-fixing based on tournament incentives, rather than the gambling match-fixing that I examine in this paper. However, two other economists—Ian Preston and Stefan Szymanski (2003) —used police reports on match-fixing in cricket to write their excellent paper, which lays out some of the essential nomenclature of fixing and discusses the issue of *desparity of desire* in motivating some of the fixes. All of these commentators' work and predictions were useful in formulating my thoughts on fixed matches, but because they do address the issues of gambling match-fixing were not specifically used in this paper.

Overall, this paper is structured both in its methodology and format to meet an explicit challenge laid down in the academic literature on corruption. A number of commentators have pointed out that in corruption studies, while there is a considerable body of theoretical writings, and some survey-based research (see Hunt & Laszlo, 2005), there is, relatively little empirical work. Andvig (2000, p. 35), for example, writes:

> Ideally, the data applied in research on corruption should be based on direct and first-hand observations of corrupt transactions made by unbiased observers who are familiar with the rules and routines in the sector under scrutiny ... This kind of empirical studies hardly

exist, however, and for obvious reasons we cannot expect many more in the near future . . . One of the major difficulties in corruption research has consequently been the lack of a solid empirical basis.

This paper attempts to respond to Andvig's invitation by analyzing the actual words of corruptors as they attempt to carry out a specific illicit transaction—fixing a professional football match.

How Not to Fix a Match

On April 6, 2005 Kenan Erol walked into the Sebatspor football stadium in Eastern Turkey with a bag full of €500 notes. He was going to try to bribe Hakan Olgun the goalkeeper for the Turkish Super League side Sebatspor. Their opponents in the match were Kasyeri. The morning of the match, someone had entered a betting shop in the nearby town of Trabzon and bet over €210,000 with a Turkish betting agency that Sebatspor would lose. Someone wanted Sebatspor to lose the game and was willing to pay a lot of money to make sure that they did. Kenan Erol was their man.

Erol had talked to at least seven other players on the team, but he needed to make sure the goalie, the player who could destroy a team's chances with a couple of mistakes, was on board. Kenan Erol met Hakan Olgun that morning. This is a verbatim transcript of part of their conversation:

Kenan Erol:	I have spoken to all the other players about this fix. The others know about it.
Hakan Olgun:	What? The whole team knows?
Kenan Erol:	Don't worry about it!
Hakan Olgun:	I don't understand. Do you want me just to leave the goal area and "eat" a goal?
Kenan Erol:	First half you will be ahead 1-0. But Kayseri should win the game. You should let in 2 or 3 goals in the second half.
Hakan Olgun:	Can I trust you?
Kenan Erol:	The money is in the car. Let me show you.
Hakan Olgun:	You mean it is betting? Or do you have an arrangement with the other team? Does our team management know?
Kenan Erol:	If you talk about this to your management you won't get a single lira! I'm trying to do you a favour. These people are trying to bet 500–600 billion lira.[2] (He shows him the bag with the money inside.) There are two hundred thousand Euro in the bag and there will be more. Just get the score we want.
Hakan Olgun:	Brother! They are all €500 notes. I have never seen that much money in my life! Are you going to give it to me?
Kenan Erol:	When the match is finished, it will be in your pocket.
Hakan Olgun:	I have 130–140 billion Turkish lire debt. How much will I get?
Kenan Erol:	At least 75 billion Turkish lire. The rest will go to your friends.[3]

The identity of "these people" who were purportedly willing to bet 500–600 billion Turkish lira on the game has never been revealed. But the potential payoff of the bet could have been spectacular—for getting the score

line exactly right the unknown bettors could have netted twenty-five times their initial stake. However, when Veli Sezgin, the chairman of Sebatspor, heard about the attempts to bribe some of his players, he fitted out his goalkeeper with a tape recorder. The fix attempt failed and the game was drawn. However, his bravado may have cost him. In August 2005, four months later, someone ambushed Sezgin and shot him. He was severely wounded but survived. The transcript of Erol's meeting with Olgun did give the Turkish Football Federation an accurate record of what happened. Their administrative board suspended six players, including a Turkish national team player, for their roles in the attempted fix, gave Hakan Olgun 50,000 Turkish lira as a reward for his coming forward, and invited Kenan Erol to explain his actions before their committee. Perhaps unsurprisingly Erol declared that he was unavailable to meet with the committee and, perhaps surprisingly, the local police declined to pursue the case. Possibly they believed Erol's original statement when he declared that the whole thing had been an eastern Turkish joke that had been unappreciated by the Istanbul sophisticates (Arlsan, 2005; Staff writers, 2005a, b, c, d, e; Tuncer, 2005).

One thing is clear from the transcript shown above: Kenan Erol is a terrible match-fixer. If he wanted to, how could he improve his performance? The problem was that he seemed to be trying to do in a few minutes what more skilled corruptors take hours, if not days or weeks, to do. His approach was the equivalent of a stranger walking up to you on the street and asking you to buy their car. It may be a tempting offer, but the risk assessment time is simply too short. Good corruptors have five stages of setting up a fixed match, each one separate and distinct from the other and, generally, the greater the time lapsed between the first three stages, the greater the chance of successfully arranging a fix.

The five stages are: access; the set up; the calling of the fix; the performance; the payment. However, good corruptors also rely on networks well governed either by coercion or by trust. The next section is an examination of how corruptors use networks to establish a successfully fixed match.

Efficient Corrupt Networks

So far in this work I have made the assumption that all players are equally likely to be corruptible and all corrupt interchanges have only three actors: A—the corruptor; B—the player; and, possibly, C—an agent who introduces the two actors or guarantees the transaction. Reality is more complicated. All players are not created equal since some players are able to affect the outcome of a match to a greater degree than their team-mates because they are better players or have a more influential position on the field. There are also some players who may reveal the fix. How does a corruptor deal with these issues?

The first part of the solution is to remember Gambetta's (1988, ch. 11, 7) definition of organized crime as "a successful cluster or a coalition of clusters", not as a network of individuals.[4] But Kenan Erol, the unsuccessful Turkish corruptor, in his attempt to fix a game, treats the players as a
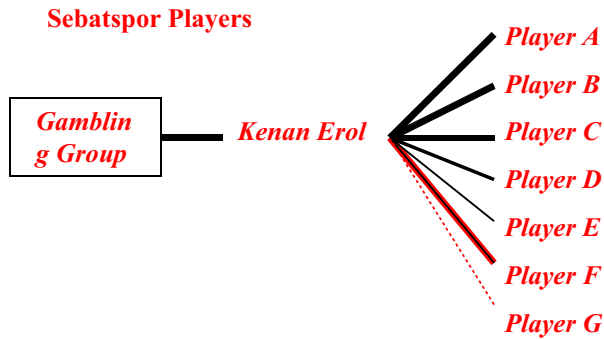
Figure 1. Fixing network on Sebatspor—as organized by Kenan Erol

collection of individuals. Figure 1 shows the network plan with which Erol was working.

Mark Granovetter (1973, p. 1360), writes of "strong and weak ties" between actors in a network (see also Lin, 2001, ch. 5). In Figure 1, we can see the lessening of the strength of the relationships as Erol approaches players until finally the dashed lines (. . .) indicate a betrayal of trust. Erol's attempts at fixing were discovered precisely for this reason. He had gone to so many players on the Sebatspor team that he eventually stumbled on an honest player.

A more effective plan would have been for Erol to charge one player with the responsibility of organizing a fixing network within his own team. The player knows far better than an outsider which player can most affect the game and, more importantly, who is likely to be persuaded to fix a match. As one former player said, "The fixing groups generally divide along the cliques in the team. Not by position" (P7). In other words, players in the network are frequently chosen not because of their playing capital or position but because of their social connections with the corruptor, who then knows about their potential corruptibility. It is this player, who generally does have high playing capital, who becomes the head of the fixing network inside the team. This method is seen frequently in the interviews. One former player referred to this role as "the project manager".

> What happened with our mob was that there was a ringleader. And the bookie would contact him and say, "You're playing such and such a team, we are desperate for you to lose the game. Here is $50,000, how you distribute is up to you". So then he would know that there were 5 or 6 corrupt guys on the team and he would go up to five of them and say, "OK here is 4 or 5 thousand for you after the game. I will pay you cash if you help me lose the game". He would pay out $25,000 and keep the rest for himself (P6).

Figure 2 represents a more efficient network. We can presume that Erol knew at least one of the players well. This player is the bridge who, along with Erol, would link the two clusters. Note in Figure 2, unlike Figure 1, all the ties in the network are strong. However, the bridging person (A) has to be a senior player, someone with the authority to bring along several of his team-mates. Players E, F and G (in Figure 2) are far less likely to betray the
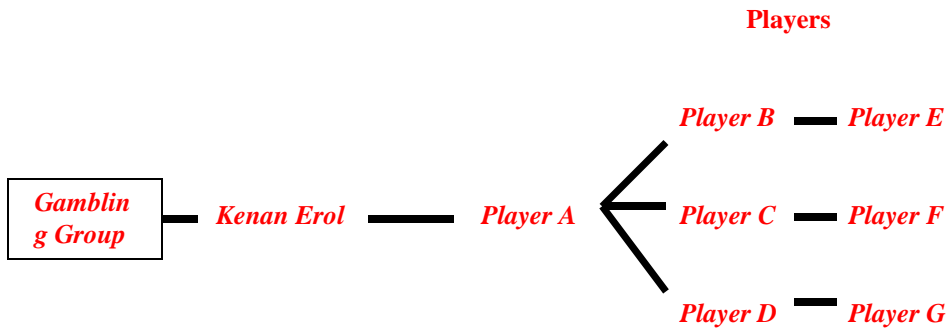
Players

Figure 2. A suggested network for fixing players on the Sebatspor team

fix if they feel their teammates are organizing it rather than an outsider like Kenan Erol.[5] P2 played for one of the top teams in Malaysia that fixed many of its games. He reported that this role was aided by the strict hierarchy that existed inside the team:

> The [fixing] problem was with the senior players. You have to understand that there was a hierarchy. The senior players were very influential. The coach couldn't even name the starting line up without the senior players saying what was what. These were established international players and if they said something that was it (P2).

In 1961, Senator Kefauver established yet another controversial committee of inquiry in the United States Senate.[6] He began an investigation into price-fixing in the heavy electrical equipment industry. He discovered that price-fixing was, according to one witness, a "way of life" among certain company executives. Baker and Faulkner (1993, pp. 830–867), studying the transcripts of the inquiry almost thirty years later, found that to facilitate illegal business practices, these executives had established a "decentralized network" whose chief benefits were both the ability to promote secrecy and protect members from possible detection.

A similar type of network is seen in match-fixing. The advantage for the corruptor in this type of network is that it prevents information exchange. P3, a former international player, concurs with this assessment (as did other former players: P6, P7, SO9) when he claims that the junior players actually had no idea who the corruptors were or the size of the entire organization of the corrupt deal.

> [Did you ever see a corruptor?]
> No, I never saw one. It was all done by senior players. There was no direct connection between the players and the top bookies ... We, the junior players, were told nothing. There was nothing obvious... (P3).

However, if successful professional corruptors use the internal hierarchies of teams to arrange corrupted matches, how do they first approach the teams to fix the games? And what are the stages of an effective corrupted game?

Access

The first problem that confronts a gambling corruptor is how to get access to the players. They have to negotiate access to at least one influential player. This is a key challenge for them: if the corruptors cannot speak to the players, then they cannot arrange a fix. Like most professional sub-cultures, access into the world of the players is closely guarded not only by the players but also the people close to them. How then do corruptors get access to the players?

Direct contact: For long-term corruptors working only in a domestic league, the process is something akin to seduction, they may try to establish a bar or club where all the players will feel comfortable (Prosecutors Report, 2005) or they may try to establish themselves in some official capacity at the club.

In international matches and tournaments, however, the constraints are far greater. The players and corruptors may not share the same cultural background or even language, and the time to make the corrupt deal happen is much shorter. In these cases, the corruptors often have to rely on other methods. Several players and corruptors talk about the corruptors man-oeuvring so as to share the same hotel corridor. The corruptors would then also sometimes use prostitutes to establish a connection between the players and themselves. Other corruptors, as shown in the excerpt that began this paper, would pretend to be journalists: they would then request an interview with a player in order to get close to them before they proposed their corrupt deal (C1, C4).

Runner-arranged contacts: The second method of ensuring access to players is for the corruptors to essentially hire that access. In this scenario, they employ agents, known as "runners", to ensure access between them and the players. This is a very common practice; because, depending on the levels of trust between corruptor and agent, it is quicker to ensure and protects the corruptor from detection. In the FPD, there are 117 players who have been approached for gambling match-fixing; in 49 of the cases the corruptors used runners in order to establish access to players.

Examples of this method can be seen in the recent cases of match-fixing in European leagues, where corruptors from Chinese gambling syndicates used player-agents to gain access to players (LE10: Van den Abeele, Dupain, Straemans, van de Weghe, & Dechamps, 2006). In the Malaysian league where the corruption was, purportedly, better established than in Europe, there existed a series of independent runners who worked for corrupt players on each of the teams. These runners could then be contacted by potential corruptors when they wanted to establish a fix (Kannan et al. vs. Singapore PP, *Singapore Law Report*, 1995, 3, SLR; Ong et al. vs. Singapore PP, Subordinate Court transcripts, 1994). In previous work (Hill, 2009), I examined the role of agents as *guarantors*, essentially providing the trust and possible coercion to enable a corrupt deal to take place. In the current example agents are not guarantors, rather their strength is their ability to get access to the corrupt players. Their roles are akin to the middlemen of corrupt oil states that Jacoby, Nehemkis, and Eells (1977) and Aburish

(1985) write of in their works. This is another difference from the corruptors in arrangements who often already have access to the players and referees; here, the agents are providing that access to the gambling corruptors.

P2 is a former player who was approached a number of times to fix games. He also had team-mates who fixed games. He claims that this type of access agent was key to the operation. They would make friends with players, figure out which players may be susceptible to bribes, and then introduce them to national-level bookies.

> . . . there were runners. They were ex-players, good friends of the team. Sometimes they would be guys we would meet in a disco. The owner or someone, they would party with us for months. Then maybe say something. These guys were key. They had to be people with access to the players. They had to be people the players would *trust* [emphasis added]. It was the same as the cricket fixing. You needed people who could contact the team. They were vital. They had to be people who could come to training sessions or games and matches (P2).

The common thread between these two methods—direct contact or runner-arranged contact—is that at this initial stage of the corrupt deal, the corruptor is simply seeking to gain access to as wide an assortment of players as possible. Which players are approached to make the corrupt deal and what is said to them is dealt with in the next stage.

The Set Up

It is not enough for a corruptor simply to be introduced to players. As we saw with Kenan Erol, the Turkish corruptor, being in the same room does not guarantee a successfully fixed match. What is also important is *how* the corruptor approaches a player.

I have written of the difference between leagues of *high* and *low* corruption: or leagues where there is a strong societal norm towards corruption and other leagues where corruption is a relatively deviant act. This is an important distinction for corruptors, for it changes the way they approach referees and players. There are two main types of approaches that corruptors use and, ironically, they mirror the two principal business strategies of erotic dancers in North American strip bars.

In order to maximize profit, erotic dancers need to do as many "lap-dances" as possible during a shift. In a lap-dance a dancer will grind herself against a seated customer for the length of one song. She will receive a set fee for each song. The more songs the customer pays for, the more money a dancer will receive (see Salutin, 1971; Skipper & McCaghy, 1970; Boles & Garbin, 1974; Thompson & Harred, 1992). Dancers generally divide themselves into two business strategies: those who try for "fast bucks"—fast, direct approaches to as many different customers as possible—and those who manufacture "counterfeit intimacy" or pseudo-relationships with specific customers, who then spend more money on the dancers (see Enck & Preston, 1988).

The Asian corruptors in leagues of *high* corruption often use the "fast bucks approach". P8 was a player who agreed to play in fixed matches in the Malaysian–Singaporean League. When asked about the methods of approaches he replied, "Oh no, there was nothing subtle. They would just phone us up at the hotel and propose it over the phone" (P8). In the 1990 World Cup in Italy, the FIFA-ranked referees were hidden away in a maximum-security compound used by the Vatican in central Rome. R4 was one of those referees, he reported, "the phone lines were supposed to be confidential and unlisted, but we were receiving phone calls in our rooms from bookies offering us bribes" (R4). In these examples, because there was so much corruption in the league, in the first case; and access was so restricted, in the second case, the corruptors had to use fast, direct approaches.

In leagues of *low* corruption, corruptors face a more difficult job. However, access can, with time or the right agents, be negotiated. It is at this point that the counterfeit intimacy method is frequently used. One example from another sport was described by a US College basketball player in the early 1960s. Art Hicks was black. One day after a white team-mate made yet another racist comment, Hicks decided to fix some games with an organized crime syndicate (Whelan, 1992, p. 137). He was eventually caught and, when he testified, he revealed how the corruptors were "experts at human nature":

> One thing you never heard about the gamblers is how good they were at what they did. They were experts at human nature and that's why so few of the kids they approached ever turned them down. They catch you at just the right time, when you're vulnerable. They can look at a kid's game and see there ain't no love there … Whatever the problem, they knew how to exploit it. The gambler becomes the most reliable person in your life. He replaces the coach (Whelan, 1992, p. 141).

An example of a match-corruptor who used the counterfeit relationship-type approach is the former New York Mafia capo Michael Franzese.[7] Franzese fixed professional sports matches, including, he claims, New York Yankees baseball games (pers. comm., 1999; see also Mortensen, 1991). Although, Franzese's corruption was in a different sport there are similarities in the corruptor's methods. Franzese claims that at first a corruptor will pretend to be friends with athletes. The idea is to find the *weakness* of players: if it is blondes, they use blondes; if it is drugs, they use drugs; if it is gambling, they use gambling. Whatever it is, the corruptors use it to get a hold over the athlete, and then they try to get them to throw games. In this interview excerpt, he describes some of his methods: "You might approach [the athletes] or set them up with a woman. She would get pregnant or pretend to be. That would screw their game up. Or you would get them partying hard the night before the game" (Franzese). Here, a corruptor is *not* trying the direct, fast method, rather the corruptor's actions are more akin to those of a predatory animal stalking its prey. The corruptor gets close to the prey (the sports person), weakens them, or uses their weakness, to propose match-fixing.

However, for all this discussion about relationship building, how do corruptors actually propose a corrupt deal? What language do they use? The German football referee Robert Hoyzer was "turned" by a group of Croatian mobsters. The referee had been invited to spend time in a café owned by the corruptors. Over time they were able to get him to fix matches for them. Afterwards, he struggled to explain how they were able to do so (Kerner, 2005: also C8). He had always regarded himself as very honest and a "well-brought up" person, yet in a relatively short time they were able to persuade him to do something that he never would have considered before:

> It was an ongoing process that I wasn't aware of anymore in the end. It affected me in a way that I stopped noticing things going on around me. I only hung out at this café, at some point it was like my second living-room. I was around all the time. I was there eight days out of the week and was treated by them like a very special person (Kerner, 2005).

A football administrator in Malaysia describes a similar pattern where the corruptors would use language that would allow the players not to "feel criminal in their thinking … they [the corruptors] would call it coffee money [the bribe money]"[8] (SO1). This process demonstrates some of the aspects of Sutherland's ideas of "differential association": the idea that people perform deviant acts when they are surrounded by people doing similar deviant acts—particularly if the language is couched in neutral terms (see, in particular, Sykes & Matza, 1957, p. 664).

The following excerpt is a good example of *how* to set up a fixed match in a league of high corruption. It is a "direct, fast-bucks" approach. In Malaysian match-fixing, one of the chief corruptors—in this excerpt named "Chieu"—was something of "an expert in human nature". He created a network of corruption throughout the league and made a great deal of money. In this excerpt, from a previously unpublished police confession, Chieu has already established a relationship with "David"—a top Malaysian player—who then introduces him to two other players (Ali and Rahil) on his team to help set up a match-fixing ring.[9]

David: This is our friend Chieu.
Chieu: I am Chieu. (Ali and Rahil shake hands with him) … I have come here to talk to you. I will try to help you reach the final of the Malaysian Cup. Okay, I'll make it simple! First, I help your team in 5 games. I will pay you 15,000 RM for winning each game. After winning those five, you will have to lose or draw the game. I will pay you 25,000 RM to draw a game, and to lose a game 40,000 RM.[10]
David: Don't worry! The Boss (Chieu) will help us out.
Chieu: Okay, easy to talk. I control your coach. I brought in your two foreigners. I paid the transfer fees for them, not the state FA.
Rahil: I will think it over fast.
Chieu: (Gives him an envelope full of cash) This is the FA Cup money.
David: Don't worry. Chieu will help. (Malaysian Police Confession: No.6, 3)

This excerpt shows the difference between Chieu and the far less subtle, Kenan Erol. For a start, Chieu does not show up alone to the meeting. Rather

he uses a player to introduce him to other players. This action immediately helps to establish his credibility. David, a prominent player (he had recently won a prestigious award), twice vows for Chieu's trustworthiness.

Chieu also shakes hands with the players. He shows himself to be from a similar working class background thanks to the Malay vernacular he uses[11] and is friendly and direct with the players. This is in contrast with the attitude of many club owners who tended to treat their players in a class-conscious manner. Often players were expected to kiss the hands of the owners when they met them.[12] Chieu, on the other hand, is friendly, courteous and, he claims, has the same owners on his payroll already. Even if this later claim is untrue, it still poses a risk in the player's head, making them fearful of going to management. Again this is in direct contrast to Kenan Erol, who when asked if he controlled the management responded with a weak threat against the player, showing instantly that he was an outsider with little power. So in a few sentences, Chieu has managed to both be ingratiating and to isolate the players from their management.

David C. Whelan (1992) in his thesis claims that at the beginning of their relationship corruptors pay "win bonuses" to players, encouraging them to play as well as they can. Players regard the win bonuses as relatively benign: they will win and thereby keep the loyalty to their teams, but they still get the financial rewards of fixing matches. However, these payments were often what Whelan calls "gateway crimes" which brought the players into the corruptor's net without them being aware of it.

Chieu uses Whelan's "gateway crime" approach. He claims that if the players co-operate with him, they will not only get money for winning the next five games but that he will also help them reach the final of the Malaysian Cup. Then, he gives the players money for a game they had won several weeks ago. This is an important step, for as soon as the players accept the money, they have *de facto*, accepted Chieu's offer of a long-term relationship. For the acceptance of the corruptors' money by the players, no matter what the motivation, signals the closing of the deal and the end of the possible innocence of the players. A Singaporean police officer supports this view in an interview, "But you know if they take the money once, it is over. They can never turn back because the gamblers will say, 'If you don't do it. We will let people know that you took the money'" (LE5).

Rose-Ackerman (1999) declares this strategy to be "reputational hostage taking" or the threat of exposure. Another corruptor, in a later interview, claimed to use a method similar to Chieu's:

> As soon as [the players] take the money. They have to do what I say. I don't do this thing where I show them the money and say, "This is yours if you do the match." No, I give them the money. I say, "This is coffee money. Take it. But don't cross me. Or I will get you" (C6).

In this excerpt, the corruptor is not only showing the importance of a player accepting the money, but also demonstrating the significant change

in attitude, from friendliness to menace, that drives the next stage of match-fixing.[13]

Calling the Fix

In 1806, English cricket was rife with match-fixing (Pycroft, 1922, ch. 4). William Beldham was a prominent cricketer of that era who was approached by corruptors to throw games for them. He claims that he refused saying, "You never buy the same man but once: ... No, sir, a man was a slave when once he sold to these folk". Two hundred years ago Beldham was describing the attitude change that affects the relationship between the players and the corruptors once the players have taken the money (Pycroft, 1922, p. 138). It is the same transformation that a contemporary footballer speaks of when he said, "The problem is once you have done it once, the bookies have you by the balls ... you were in their arms for life" (P6). Michael Franzese, the New York mafia corruptor, claimed the same thing in his description of his relations with corrupt baseball players, "You don't treat the gamblers as friends... you're more friendly with the guys that don't throw games" (Franzese).

Why would the dynamics of this relationship change so dramatically, particularly after the corruptor has spent so much effort in getting access to the players and then setting up the match-fix? It is because it is in this stage that the corruptor's greatest chance of loss or profit can occur. Gambling match-fixing differs from arrangement fixes. In arrangement fixing the ultimate goal is to fix the result of the game. In gambling, the ultimate goal of fixing is profit-maximization, so there are actually two fixes going on: the fixing of the game and the fixing of the gambling market. To fix the market the corruptor has to find out the spread of the betting market, place the bet that will ensure the greatest profit and then ensure that the players deliver that result (C1). So the corruptor has to make completely sure that the players will follow instructions to the absolute letter. Failure to do so ensures an enormous loss of money on the corruptor's part. The stage of establishing a relationship with the player is over, now it is business.

There are a number of logistical challenges that confront the corruptor in fixing the betting market. He has to know what odds the gambling market is giving on the game. He has to be able to get a sufficient quantity of money on to the market with good enough odds to make the fix worthwhile. He often has to disguise the fact that he is placing the bets or his rivals will be aware of the fix.[14] In the last two years, a number of betting companies and football associations have announced the formation of "early warning systems" specifically established to scan the betting market for any possible fixed matches (Blatter, SO44, 2008: B23). The successful gambling corruptor has to avoid all these problems, and the challenges can be as difficult as fixing the actual game (Konick, 2006).[15] In fact, the obstacles facing a gambling corruptor are now so great, according to the public statements of some of the executives of "early warning systems", as to make fixing impossible. As difficult as arranging a gambling fix may be, these

statements are patent nonsense. They are mostly designed to reassure a nervous public, as some of the same executives privately admit (B14–18). I will discuss some of the ways that gambling corruptors successfully overcome these challenges to fix the gambling market.

The first thing is that no long-term match corruptor, or successful professional gambler, can place a bet in their own name. Even honest professional gamblers, if they become consistently successful, will find it very difficult to place a bet. Two things happen to successful long-term gamblers: either they are prevented from betting or they are allowed to place bets with only small amounts of money. In the first case it is common that many prominent casinos are very welcoming to almost any type of customer so long as they do not win consistently. Failure to lose money can result in a customer being escorted off the premises. In the second instance successful gamblers are allowed to place small bets but those bets are then copied by the bookmakers with other bookmakers for their own profit. Essentially, the bookies steal the research and calculations of the professional gamblers for their own personal benefit (B6–8, 20: Konick, 2006).

To get bets on to the market, both honest professional gamblers and dishonest match corruptors will use third parties to place their bets under disguised names. These third parties are known as "beards", "mules" or "runners". The methods used by the runners could fill another thesis, but essentially they disguise the fact that they are placing the bets for other people (C1, 3–5: B6–8, 20: Konick, 2006).

A second general theme to understand is that there are many ways of "legally" rigging the betting market. One method is "playing the middle" where a gambler can, strategically, place so much money at specific odds on different teams that he can literally never lose his bet (Konik, 2006, pp. 40–60; also B5). There is the related, more innocent and far more common, "arbitraging", where gamblers search the market for bookmakers whose odds are "out of line" with the rest of the market and then "plunder" the bookmakers by moving in and placing heavy bets. In a hypothetical example, a strong team is to play a weak team. The odds in the market are set at 1 to 4 for the strong team to win—for every four pounds the gambler stakes, he receives one pound back if the team wins—and 4 to 1 for the weaker team—for every one pound the gambler stakes, he receives four pounds back if the weak team wins. Then a day before the game, the strong team's bus crashes and most of the team is injured. At a smart bookmakers, the line will change almost instantly (they will have an agent following the bus or actually on the bus) to higher odds. However, a slower, less informed bookmaker will not know anything has changed for several hours. The successful gambler will move in heavily on the weak team at the original odds and win heavily (B7, 14, 20).

There are also methods of dishonest gambling market fixing. The first is to choose to fix a game where there is so much money (liquidity) in the market that no one studying the market can tell if there are significant swings in the odds one way or another. For example, the gambling market for one of the games in the World Cup Finals is measured in the hundreds of millions of

dollars. It is almost impossible in most circumstances for anyone to detect unusual swings in such a large market. In other, lower profile leagues, matches are much easier to fix on the gambling market than normal matches. This does not mean it is easier to get the players to fix important matches, just that it is easier to fix the gambling market for these big matches (C1, 3–4: B14).

A second method is for a corruptor to fix *with* the market in order to avoid detection. This method means lower short-term profit, but also less chance of detection.[16] For example, a weak team plays a strong team. The market expects the strong team to win. The corruptors fix the weak team to lose by a pre-set amount, pile on as much money as possible for the strong team, and few people will suspect a fix as the result occurs as the market predicted. A Finnish fixing player testified in 2005 to this method:

> I have taken money for a few games. This has been going on for years. The most recent case is from the last season. In this case it was just a normal league game. *We had gone to the game as the underdog and so the loss did not surprise anybody* [emphasis added] (Staff writer, 2005f).

A match corruptor will also rig the market by using tactics similar to a fraudulent stock promoter "puffing up" a phoney company by placing false information in the marketplace. In this method, a corruptor will want the gambling market to lean heavily against the fix: so the team he controls is expected to win. To encourage bettors to bet *for* the fixing team he might spread a "credible rumour" that the other team has been weakened—an injury to a key player, dissension in the dressing room—or, ironically, in leagues of high corruption, that he has fixed the *other* team! (C1, 2).

Because much of sport betting is done in the two hours before the game begins (B3, B4),[17] the later a corruptor can place his bet, the easier it is to place large money bets on the market and the more profit can be made (C1). Say, for example, a corruptor has established a link with players on Team A and he sees the betting market is betting heavily in favour of Team A winning the game. Ideally, the corruptor would want to bet heavily that Team A will lose, at attractive odds (because if he comes in to the market too early, it can cause the odds to change) and then signal to his team to "open up the game"[18]—lose—in the minute before the game is to begin. This would ensure the corruptor the greatest profit. However, the corruptor faces a problem: how can he signal to his players without attracting any attention, and let them give him a signal that they have understood, with all of this happening in the final minutes before a big match when all the spectators, team-mates and officials are watching them? One solution to this problem was described by a corruptor who said:

> What I do is have my runner stand beside the team box wearing a red singlet, if the team is to lose. When they come out onto the pitch, they stand at half-way line and salute the crowd. They see my runner wearing the red singlet and they know they must open up the

game. If I wanted them to play hard, I would get my runner to wear a blue singlet. Now, when the players see the runner, they must put their hands on their hearts, as if they are saluting the crowd. This is their signal to let us know they have seen and understood the signal. They cannot pretend later not to have seen the signal (C1).

The corruptor has now called the fix, ordered the players to rig the game in a certain way. Now it is only up to the players to deliver the right result.

Performance

It is genuinely difficult for a player to fix a match. There are two principal constraints for corrupt players in ensuring a fix: how can they deliberately lose the match and how can they ensure that the audience—spectators, referee, team officials or fellow players—do not notice what they are doing? There is, after all, a certain limit to mistakes that a player can make. If they make too many they will be dropped from the team or make the fix too obvious; too few mistakes and the fix will not work. How the corrupt players and referees get around these constraints I examine in some detail in another paper (Hill, 2009). The essential finding of the research is that the players do not, for the most part, perform fixes, rather they *underperform* to achieve the desired result. I also examine the timing of the fixes during the game and show that there is a trend towards them occurring towards the beginning of the game, rather than the end.

Payment

In the aftermath of the Lockheed scandal in the USA (where airplane manufacturers were found to be bribing foreign governments with US taxpayers' money), Jacoby et al. (1977) compiled a comprehensive listing of the different forms of illegal payments and bribes practised by US companies: it ranged from the provision of prostitutes and scholarships to covert payments and kickbacks. However, the common denominator of these methods in bribing corrupt government officials is that payment is either hidden or "deniable". The same challenge exists in paying corrupt players. The players are, for the most part, public figures. Their salaries are well known. Their lifestyles closely examined. Their honest team-mates work and play with them closely. How then can they enjoy the increased money without arousing suspicion? There are a number of strategies described in the databank. For example, the *Malay Mail* wrote that the corruptors often gave their players winning lottery tickets. The corruptors would buy the tickets from the winners, and then give the tickets to the players who had fixed the matches so that they could claim that the money had been won legitimately (Fernandez, 1993).[19]

However, over 70% of the payments to the corrupt players in gambling fixes were relatively unsophisticated cash payments (FMD B2). The discussion and strategies were much simpler than bribes to government

officials, centring round where the payment would be made or if it would go through a runner or agent (see, for example, Grobbelaar's discussion of "safe lock ups" at Selfridges in Thomas, 2003).

Generally, the gambling corruptors have two stages when making payment to the players. The first, as we have seen, is an advance or "coffee money" paid before the game. This payment is essentially symbolic. It settles the deal and shows that the player will take part in fixing the match. However, the main payment is reserved for after the game, when the player has successfully performed the job. The place of payment is almost always a neutral location away from the football world—a disco, restaurant or airport (Manap vs. Singapore PLP, 1997; Kurusamy vs. Singapore PLP, 1998; Malaysian Police Confession, no. 3).

There is another form of payment not mentioned by Jacoby et al., which successful, long-term corruptors ensure is paid to the player—the psychological one. The corruptors try to ensure a long-term relationship with corrupt players. It may no longer be friendly, but it does need to be maintained in good account. Often players do not feel particularly good about under-performing in matches, so corruptors will provide them with "gifts" along with the payment. Frequently these gifts are women. Z1 was a player who took part in a fixed match for the corruptor Chieu. One in particular was against the Singapore team in Singapore in front of 50,000 fans. Because of cultural rivalries it is very difficult for a Malaysian player to lose to Singapore; to lose in front of 50,000 fans is even more difficult.[20] In Z1's confession he talks about the corruptor providing the corrupt players with women: "On the 28th of June in Singapore. We lost 5-0. I did not play all out. I went back to the hotel. The same night ... Chieu had supplied 4 high-class prostitutes for four players ... " (Malaysian Police Confession, no. 2).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have concentrated on how gambling corruptors fix matches. Initially, it seems a difficult problem. The games are often watched by tens of thousands of people. The team-mates of the fixing players, officials and spectators have an interest in seeing the games played honestly. To examine this question, I conducted 223 interviews with players, referees, sports officials, gamblers, law-enforcement officials and match corruptors. I also assembled a databank of texts where the corruptors are actually taped 'live' while they are attempting to fix a match. Finally, I use some evidence from a database of players who have been approached to fix a match. The data show that a successfully fixed match is possible if a gambling corruptor first establishes an effective network by using a prominent player as his "project manager". The corruptor will pay this player a lump sum of money. Then the player can set up a corrupt network amongst his teammates. Overall, the corruptor follows a pattern of five distinct stages of corruption: access, set up, calling the fix, performance and payment.

Notes

1. The construction of the databases owes much to the advice of Johann Lambsdorff of the University of Passau and Marc Carinici of Betcapper.com. The theoretical model comes from the chapter by Michael Biggs in *Making Sense of Suicide Missions* (Gambetta, 2006).
2. Approximately, £1 million.
3. Yasin Tuncer (2005). My thanks to Chris Wade and Emre Ozlan for their translations and insights into Turkish Football.
4. See also Burt (2001), and his discussion of *Brokerage network* where markets are seen as "a network of separate groups" and Baker and Faulkner's (1993, p. 843) description of "action sets" in illegal networks in price-fixing in the heavy electrical industry of the USA.
5. See Cloward and Ohlin (1998), Benedict (1998) and Skolnick (2005) for a discussion of the internal group norms on sports teams which make informing outsiders about *any* transgressions inside the team prohibited.
6. Kefauver had already come to prominence with the first US legislative inquiry into the existence of the La Cosa Nostra (or LCN) mafia in the 1950s.
7. Franzese is the son of notorious mob hitman John 'Sonny' Franzese. Michael became a Capo for the Colombo crime family while still in his twenties. His quick rise to mafia prominence was partly due to his family connections, but mostly due to an extraordinary gas tax scam he pioneered with the Russian mobster, Michael Markowitz that earned "his family" approximately one billion dollars a year (Hearing before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Governmental Affairs United States Senate: One hundred and fourth Congress, Second Session – May 15, 1996, 36–42).
8. Another popular form of corrupt invitation for corruptors to use is the "You can get *x* amount of money for just ninety minutes of work. Think about it" (C1).
9. The names have all been altered.
10. The currency is Malaysian ringhit (RM): \$US1 $\approx$ 4 RM. The monthly salary of the players was approximately RM4,000.
11. This was stressed a number of times by the translator, although it is, obviously, not apparent in the English version.
12. This is the customary way of greeting Malaysian Royalty—of whom there are a great many as the country is a conglomeration of several indigenous Kingdoms. Many of these people own or run football teams.
13. In the Hoyzer case, after Hoyzer accepted the money, his corrupter said, "Now you're my man" (Da Costa, 2005, p. 18). A reader should also note the difference between the business agent roles described here and the kinship roles that Hill describes for initiates into the Yakuza (Hill, 2003).
14. As well as similarities with fixing in nineteenth-century cricket, the challenges and constraints facing contemporary football match corruptors are almost identical to the ones faced by Arnold Rothstein, the Jewish mobster who corrupted baseball's 1919 World Series. For an entertaining overview of this situation, the film *Eight Men Out* (Sayles, 1988) shows the fix being set up complete with the five stages of corruption, the signalling between the players and the corruptors, and the problems of fixing the betting market.
15. For a good description of the challenges that face even successful gambling syndicates (not corruptors) see Konick's *Smart Money*: a description of a "mule" for a successful sports betting in syndicate in Las Vegas. Konick writes that the casinos made it so difficult for anyone with a consistent winning record to place a bet that the syndicates

would resort to disguises or hiring outsiders, like him, to place their bets (Konick, 2006, pp. 18–110).

16. Game theorists would describe this strategy as a "long-term" mode, as opposed to a "one-shot" game: see Dasgupta (2000) for further discussion of this theme.

17. With the advent of betting exchanges, as much as half of the total stakes is now placed live, while the game is going on.

18. The opposite is to "go all out" meaning go for a win.

19. Conversely, some interview subjects alleged that the payments of the players were augmented by putting their rewards as bets on the gambling market. This had a two-fold advantage, it increased the payout for the players, and it more readily guaranteed their co-operation with the fix.

20. It would be the equivalent of Scotland losing to England.

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