

Mourinho at Manchester: A Study of Power at the World's Most Valuable Soccer Club

This paper draws on John Kenneth Galbraith's bestselling book, *The Anatomy of Power*, to reflect on the operation of power in the context of a professional soccer club. Galbraith's framework, which is composed of three sources and three instruments of power, is first described and then illustrated via an analysis of José Mourinho's brief tenure as manager of Manchester United. The findings offer support for Galbraith's suggestion that the role of 'personality' (in this case managerial personality) is often overemphasized in accounts of power. The paper concludes with a discussion of Galbraith's 'dialectic of power' – its tendency to produce countervailing expressions and positions – and focuses in particular on the social media-enhanced power of celebrity players.

To paraphrase Marx, while soccer managers may make their own history, they do not do so in circumstances of their own choosing (Wagg, 2007: 442).

Introduction

Shortly after the death of world-famous economist and public intellectual, John Kenneth Galbraith, fellow economist Milton Friedman characterized his work as 'not so much economics as it is sociology' (Frank, 2006). There is much evidence to support such a characterization. Throughout his life, Galbraith fought for social justice and argued for a new kind of socialism. Indeed, rather like renowned political economist, Karl Marx, Galbraith may well have been a sociologist at heart. His most widely-read works, including the best-selling *The Affluent Society* (1971) and *The Anatomy of Power* (1985), the subject of the present paper, drew heavily on social theory – the latter beginning with an extended account of Max Weber's theorization of power. It is for these reasons, perhaps, that in his obituary in

Time magazine, Amartya Sen wrote that Galbraith ‘forced people to think and rethink about an astonishingly broad range of ideas. In analyzing the contrast between the private affluence of many and the public penury of all, or the special features of the new industrial state, and many other social issues, he led us toward a powerful understanding that raises questions about values and policies in a compelling way’ (Sen, 2006).

This paper has three aims. First, it seeks to demonstrate why John Kenneth Galbraith’s approach to power remains relevant in the current conjuncture. Power is amongst the most studied of all subjects in the social sciences, attracting thinkers as diverse as Max Weber, Michel Foucault and Joan Acker. However, the downside of such an abundance of scholarly attention, Roscigno observes, is that the concept remains ‘theoretically ambiguous’ (Roscigno, 2011: 349). With this in mind, the paper suggests that Galbraith’s clear-sighted, institutional approach facilitates the study of power in a wide range of social contexts. Second, the paper aims to demonstrate why Galbraith’s framework offers a particularly useful lens for studying power in the context of professional soccer – a sport which is governed by a number of bodies, including the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), but which has come increasingly under the influence of powerful soccer clubs. Despite this, discussions of power in the context of professional soccer very often focus on the assumed influence of club managers while ignoring other factors. Finally, the paper aims to highlight, following Galbraith, some of the ways in which power tends to generate ‘countervailing’ or oppositional forms – such as the power of fans, agents, and players.

In line with the abovementioned aims, the paper is divided into three parts. The first part describes Galbraith’s study of power and the various components of his framework. Galbraith wrote that ‘never in the consideration of power can we assume that there is only one source or one instrument of power at work’ (1985: 48). Instead, he offers us a framework

composed of three sources of power (personality, property, organization) and three instruments of power (condign power, compensatory power, conditioned power), which are explained here in the context of professional soccer. The second part of the paper presents a short case study of a single manager's tenure at a single club, with a view to demonstrating how Galbraith's framework might be applied. A fuller case study might include interviews, documentary research, and other sources of data, however the aim here is chiefly illustrative. BBC news coverage of José Mourinho's relatively short-lived spell as manager of Manchester United – a club with an estimated value of \$4.1bn and listed by Forbes as the world's most valuable as of 25 March 2019 (Ozanian, 2018) – is analyzed for both sources and instruments of power. Here the analysis aligns with that of Stephen Wagg whose critique of the 'manager myth' – or the tendency for a team's performance to 'be reduced to a single determinant: the stewardship of its manager' (2007: 442) – draws attention to the 'structural' and other factors that can affect the outcomes of matches.

Galbraith argued that the exercise of power in modern life is profoundly competitive: 'Power is a compelling topic today not necessarily because it is more effectively exercised than before but because infinitely more people now have access to either the fact of power, or, more important, the illusion of its exercise' (1985: 170). The final part of the paper considers some of the ways in which power tends to generate 'countervailing' or oppositional forms, with particular attention given to a new form of power that could not have been anticipated by Galbraith when writing in the 1980s. Numerous writers have recently documented the emergence of digital technologies and their ostensibly 'disruptive' effects on power relationships. (More critical scholars have focused on the powers of the technology companies behind these innovations). The final part of the paper considers some of the ways in which the power of managers has diminished in recent times – by, for example, the introduction of Directors of Football at some clubs – and focuses primarily on how the social

media-enhanced power of some celebrity players, which is a source of commercial advantage for both player and club alike, can also directly and indirectly undermine the power of the manager. In Galbraith's terms, we can suggest that social media have become both instruments and sources of power. In concluding, it is suggested that what might be termed 'player promotional power' can potentially overwhelm the power of a manager, even one as singularly charismatic and influential as José Mourinho.

The Anatomy of Power

For much of the twentieth century, John Kenneth Galbraith stood amongst the most prominent economists and public intellectuals in the world. He was an active member of the Democratic Party and served in the administrations of four presidents: Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. Many of his books were international bestsellers, notably *The Affluent Society* (1958) and *The Anatomy of Power* (1985). Galbraith approached the study of economics from an institutionalist perspective, which also shaped the approach to power he developed over numerous books and papers, culminating in *The Anatomy of Power* – the focus of this paper.

Galbraith proposes that there are three main instruments and three main sources of power and his book is largely given over to describing these and how they have changed over the course of history. First, he describes the *instruments of power*, which are condign power, compensatory power, and conditioned power. Condign power is the oldest form of power and entails the winning of submission by inflicting or threatening pain (physical, emotional, reputational etc.). In the context of professional soccer, this mainly manifests as verbal rebukes by managers or club directors, fines for inappropriate behavior, the benching of players for poor performances, and public shaming or condemnation by fans – although some

studies, such as that by Kelly and Waddington (2006), suggest that managers can also occasionally be *physically* abusive to players. Compensatory power, on the other hand, rewards individuals for their support. ‘In less abstract language, condign power wins submission by the promise or reality of punishment; compensatory power wins submission by the promise or reality of benefit’ (1985: 30). When applied to a professional soccer player, especially one playing top tier soccer in a European league, it is easy to see the instrument of compensatory power at work. For example, according to Sportingintelligence, the average weekly wage for a Premier League player rose above £50,000 for the first time in 2017 (BBC Sport, 2017). It should also be noted that top players usually earn *more* than their managers – a situation that is clearly not the norm in most professional organizations.

The final instrument of power, conditioned power, overlaps with the other two but has one important difference: ‘It is a common feature of both condign and compensatory power that the individual submitting is aware of his or her submission – in the one case compelled and in the other for reward. Conditioned power, in contrast, is exercised by changing belief’ (1985: 23). Galbraith explains that where condign power and compensatory power are ‘visible and objective,’ conditioned power is subjective: ‘neither those exercising it nor those subject to it need always be aware that it is being exerted’ (ibid. 39). In the case of a professional soccer club, conditioned power rests primarily in the hands of the manager and his or her support team, who are expected to cultivate confidence, solidarity and ‘team spirit’.

Galbraith explains that allied to his three instruments of power are three *sources of power* – namely, personality, property, and organization. He suggests, firstly, that the ‘effective personality wins submission by persuasion’ – by cultivating belief, by ‘exercising leadership’ (ibid. 53). He notes also that of the three sources of power, it is ‘personality’ that has attracted the most attention – a suggestion that is borne out in the numerous biographies

and documentaries made about sports managers and coaches (as opposed to club directors and executives). Interestingly, Early (2018) notes that soccer managers themselves are often avid readers of biographies of great leaders, in particular those of Napoleon and Churchill. Galbraith argues that human beings have always exaggerated the role of personality in the exercise of power. He suggests, in fact, that oftentimes the supposedly inspirational leader is merely the one who correctly reads the collective mood and delivers what his followers want: ‘His power is that of the preacher who, correctly judging the rain clouds, proceeds to pray for rain’ (1985: 56).

Property is Galbraith’s second source of power and he suggests that historically the opinions of the wealthy carried considerably more weight in social affairs. He notes, however, that wealth *per se* no longer guarantees influence. ‘The rich man who now seeks influence hires a public relations firm to win others to his beliefs. Or he contributes to a politician or a political action committee that reflects his views. Or he goes into politics himself and uses his property not to purchase votes but to persuade voters’ (ibid. 61/2). Finally, Galbraith argues that we are now living in the age of ‘organization’ – his third source of power and the one he considers most important. Moreover, he argues that it is the emergence of organization that chiefly explains the decline in power deriving from both property and personality. Organization is now dominant because rather than relying on a single individual – even a charismatic and independently wealthy one – organizations *divest* individuals of power and disperse it amongst persons and divisions. He further points out that the word ‘organization’ covers a striking diversity of bodies and institutions, including the army, political parties, and corporations. For Galbraith, however, it is the modern corporation that best represents the rise of organization.

Galbraith suggests that in some cases power can be limited to a single source – personality, property, or organization – but that a combination of sources is much more common. He also maintains that conditioned power and compensatory power are the most important instruments of power in the age of organization. In what follows, it is suggested that the modern professional soccer club offers a useful illustration of Galbraith’s overlapping sources and instruments of power. Professional soccer clubs reflect the increasing professionalization, commercialization and bureaucratization of the sport, yet social and journalistic commentary continue to overemphasize (managerial) ‘personality’.

The ‘Special One’

The Portuguese professional soccer manager José Mourinho is one of the most well-known and most written about sporting managers in the world. Mourinho has enjoyed spells at some of Europe’s biggest clubs, including Benfica, Chelsea, Internazionale, Real Madrid and Manchester United, and has established a reputation as a charismatic yet somewhat divisive figure. He has inspired countless debates about coaching prowess and is the subject of numerous biographies, including Barclay’s (2005) *Mourinho: Anatomy of a Winner*, Beasley’s (2016) *José Mourinho: Up Close and Personal*, and Kirby’s (2016) *José Mourinho: The Art of Winning*. Gibson (2016) describes Mourinho as ‘a managerial juggernaut’ who ‘has helped write his own legend with spectacular triumphs on the pitch, volatile behavior off it, and saber-toothed soundbites from which no-one in soccer could count themselves safe’. To some, he is the ‘special one’ – a moniker he gave himself when he first arrived at Chelsea in 2004: “We have top players, and – I’m sorry I’m a bit arrogant – we have a top manager. I am the European champion. I think I am special” (in Hudson, 2010). To others, he is a loose cannon – an antihero who is too unpredictable to be

dependable. Regardless, it would appear that Mourinho's powers of persuasion were evident early on in his career. His former mentor at Barcelona, Louis Van Gaal, once said of him that he was "an arrogant young man, who didn't respect authority that much, but I did like that of him. He was not submissive, used to contradict me when he thought I was in the wrong. Finally, I wanted to hear what he had to say and ended up listening to him more than the rest of my assistants" (in Wilson, 2018).

As with other famous soccer managers, assessments of Mourinho vary considerably. The retired Brazilian player Anderson Luís de Souza, known as Deco, has praised him, saying that "there are many coaches with the same ability as Mourinho, but no one works as hard as him" (in Hudson 2010). In sharp contrast, Romanian coach and former player Adrian Mutu said in an interview with the soccer magazine *Australian FourFourTwo* (2016) that "Mourinho doesn't know how to work with players and their feelings. He is only looking after himself ... Players' feelings do not enter his head. As long as he's happy and in control, all is good for him. It didn't matter how big the player; he still had to be in complete control".¹ This passage helps to explain why Jason Burt (2016) describes Mourinho's managerial style as 'intense' and 'aggressive'. Burt further points out that Mourinho has a reputation for precisely timing his training sessions, often using a stopwatch, and that he is known to use what he refers to as his 'bible' – a training file that is meticulously updated daily. However, Ken Early, who likens Mourinho to Napoleon, argues that the Portuguese's success is not simply due to such training innovations but is also a consequence of his abilities as a mythmaker and self-propagandist:

It must have occurred to José Mourinho that he has had the most Napoleonic career in soccer. A PE teacher with a flair for languages, who never played professionally, who

¹ It is important to note here that Mutu received a seven-month ban for cocaine use soon after Mourinho arrived at Chelsea, which may have colored his view of the manager.

nevertheless reaches the top of the game thanks to a series of astonishing victories and opportunistic strokes; a master propagandist who built a myth of genius around himself. Mourinho shared the key Napoleonic insight that many people desperately want to believe in the existence of genius – that there are some among us touched with the divine spark, that there’s more to all this than just the blind leading the blind – and he enthusiastically sold them the myth (Early, 2018).

If Ken Early likens Mourinho to Napoleon, Callum Patrick likens him to Machiavelli: ‘Soccer doesn’t have a strong correlation with philosophy but it has been said before that Mourinho is a Machiavellian leader and it would be hard to disagree. Mourinho ... is an unquenchable winner, it is his only purpose in soccer and he believes that winning should be the only objective of the game’ (2019). Such accounts of Mourinho – the man, the manager, and the myth – provide fertile ground for the study of power. Viewed through the prism of Galbraith’s framework, it would appear that Mourinho utilizes all three instruments of power – condign, compensatory, and conditioned power. For example, in the following passage we see the mixture of all three:

Mourinho is harsh, he motivates through confrontation. Of course there is a charismatic, inspiring side to him as well, as shown in the famous story of how he told a 26-year-old Frank Lampard that he was going to be the best midfielder in the world. At the time, maybe even Frank didn’t believe that. Yet talk to Shaun Wright Phillips and Joe Cole and they’ll tell you about the other side. He can be brutal in taking down players, substituting them to make a point, shunning them and belittling them (Jenas, 2018).

Accounts from other players offer support for the above claims. For example, Vítor Baía, a former goalkeeper at FC Porto and Barcelona, has described Mourinho as a gifted influencer

who can accommodate himself to different player personalities: “He knew everybody so deeply that he could control our emotions in every situation ... In my case, he would just pat me on the back and I was ready to go. However, there were players who needed motivation, who needed to be praised, and he knew which ones needed what, that’s what made him so good” (in Wilson, 2018). Wilson points out, however, that Mourinho’s treatment of Baía also highlights his Machiavellian streak: ‘In September 2002, Baía was banned from all club activities for a month after a training-ground row with Mourinho’ (ibid.).

Methodological Considerations

On 27 May 2016, José Mourinho was appointed manager of Manchester United. However, on 18 December 2018 – just four months shy of completing his three-year contract – the club let him go. Mourinho’s short spell at United provides a useful opportunity to study power in the context of professional soccer in a temporally circumscribed way. It also enables us to apply Galbraith’s framework to a single club and a single manager – in this case using a single news source. It is important to reiterate, however, that the study reported here was carried out primarily for exploratory and illustrative purposes and was hardly exhaustive – neither in its application of the framework nor in terms of the data source used. The case study method was used because it is inductive, iterative and open-ended, and in some respects is better thought of as a ‘strategy’ than a method (Yin, 1993). Furthermore, as noted above, a fuller case study would most certainly utilize other data sources and methods. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the approach demonstrates how Galbraith’s framework might be fruitfully employed to study power in the context of a professional soccer club.

The study was carried out in two stages. First, a broad variety of source material relating to soccer managers and clubs was read, including newspaper reports, academic studies, player and manager memoirs, interviews, biographies and so on, to develop a sense of how Galbraith's three instruments and three sources of power might be understood in the context of a professional soccer club. The results of this stage of the research are summarized in Figure 1.

It is important to reiterate that 'power' in the broader soccer/sport context is clearly not confined to a single club or manager (although these are the focus here), but is spread out amongst a number of parties and bodies, including national and international governing bodies, such as FIFA and UEFA; media organizations; fans; players; agents, and so on. These configurations are also unstable: the sports field is constantly evolving, with adjacent industries developing around digital technologies and data, such as eSports, virtual sports, online betting, social gaming, and fantasy sports (see Lopez-Gonzalez and Griffiths, 2018). Furthermore, at club level, while the club manager may wield considerable conditioned power when it comes to his players, 'conditioned power' (in the broad sense) encompasses the image and attractiveness of the club/brand to external parties, such as soccer fans. Likewise, while players will generally receive praise from their manager and fans following a strong performance, 'compensatory power' – in the strict sense of financial and other rewards – is largely in the hands of club directors and external parties, such as governing bodies.

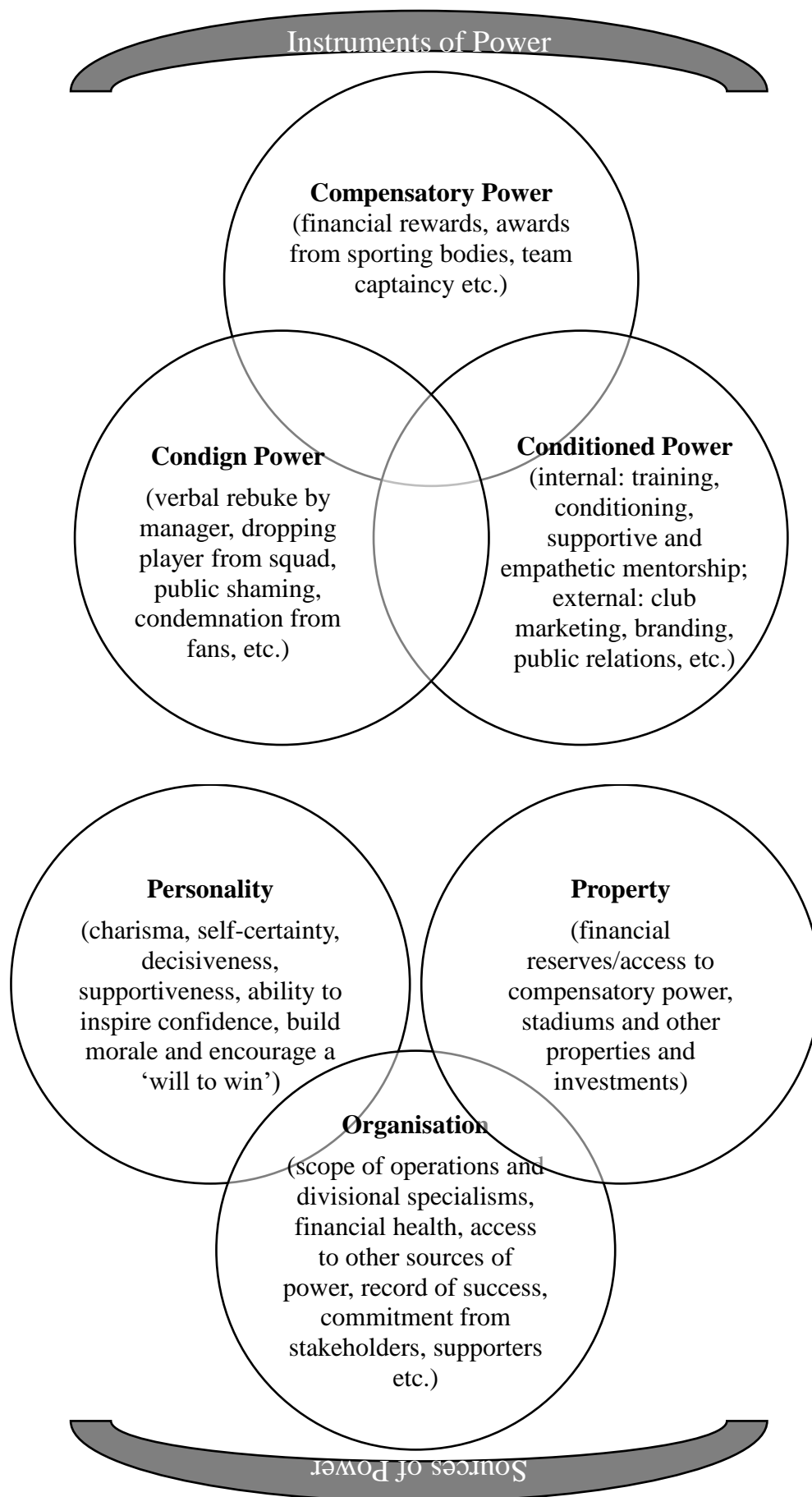


Figure 1: Galbraith's framework applied to professional soccer club

The second stage of the study involved a more detailed analysis of Mourinho's time at Manchester United. Specifically, Galbraith's instruments and sources of power, described above, were used as an analytical template to study Mourinho's time at the club. In the interests of avoiding partisan assessments of the manager and his performance (cf. Lopez-Gonzalez, Guerrero-Sole and Haynes, 2014), *bbc.com* (a public service broadcaster) was searched and analyzed between May 2017 (when Mourinho was appointed) and December 2018 (when he was let go by the club). The search terms 'Mourinho' and 'Manchester' were used, producing well over a hundred results. Excluding duplicates, videos and podcasts, as well as unrelated news items – such as articles about tax disputes, Mourinho's plans post-United, and simple descriptive reports of matches or club standings on league tables – this resulted in 48 articles, which were subsequently analyzed. The articles were manually coded (headlines and body) and subjected to a theoretical thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) based on Galbraith's three instruments and sources of power. Again, it must be remembered that instruments and sources of power overlap considerably and that, in the exploratory case described here, individual articles sometimes refer to more than one instrument and/or source of power. Relatedly, few if any of the articles explicitly refer to 'property' (as described in Figure 1) because this is largely folded into 'organization'.

Findings

Illustrative examples of each instrument and source of power are given in Figure 2; however, it is worth drawing out three principal findings. First, the majority of articles (65%) were written in 2018, when things were going poorly for Mourinho. To some extent, this may reflect the tendency of sports news to promote conflict narratives (Lopez-Gonzalez, Guerrero-Sole and Haynes, 2014) and to focus on 'heroes and villains, triumph and disaster,

achievement and despair, tension and drama' (Poulton and Roderick, 2008: xviii). Second, of the *instruments* of power, compensatory power received little attention, with articles only occasionally mentioning player/manager salaries or awards. Conditioned power features mainly in relation to Mourinho himself, with players variously described as 'not playing' for him (McNulty, 2018) or not having 'given up' on him (BBC Sport, 2018b). Interestingly, the instrument of power that receives most attention is Mourinho's use of condign power – or its use against him (44%). For example, several articles refer to his perceived maltreatment of players such as Luke Shaw, Paul Pogba, and Bastian Schweinsteiger. Indeed, one article notes that Dejan Stefanovic of the Slovenian Players' Union claimed Mourinho was 'bullying' Bastian Schweinsteiger and had told him to find another club (Stone, 2016).

Third, of the *sources* of power, as noted above, property receives little specific attention. In contrast, the power of 'organization' receives explicit attention (39%), especially with regard to Mourinho's hiring and eventual firing. On the latter, some commentators, such as former United captain Gary Neville, were heavily critical of the club's board in how it went about dismissing the manager (Stone, 2018b). Likewise, the power of organization is explicit in articles describing Mourinho's frustrations in dealing with the club's directors and owners. For example, in an article dated 4 December 2018, Mourinho negatively compares Manchester United to other clubs he has been at, commenting: "The manager cannot choose. The manager cannot coach. The manager cannot speak about the player. It's the only club" (Stone, 2018d). In another article, dated 2 September 2018, it is suggested that Mourinho's efforts to sell French forward Anthony Martial and buy an additional central defender were blocked by the club's directors – an episode which, in view of Stone (2018a), highlights that 'Mourinho cannot win an internal power battle'.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, and in keeping with Galbraith's analysis, the source of power that receives most attention is 'personality' (49%). The vast majority of these articles focus

on Mourinho's personality, which is variously described as a help or a hindrance (to both himself personally and to the club). An article from 2 November 2016 describes Mourinho's 'charm' and 'sparkle' (BBC Sport, 2016). In contrast, in an article dated 9 October 2018, ex-Premier League striker Chris Sutton claims that in every press conference he goes into, Mourinho "is negative, negative, negative – obstinate, awkward" (BBC Sport, 2018a). Mourinho's tendency to clash with managers, players and fans at other clubs is also noted. For example, an article dated 7 November 2018 describes the explosive reaction of Juventus players, following their home defeat to Manchester United, when Mourinho was seen cupping his ear to fans (BBC Sport, 2018c).

Instruments of Power	
Condign power	‘The Portuguese publicly questioned defender Luke Shaw, 21, and Chris Smalling, 26, for missing Sunday’s 3-1 win at Swansea with injuries’ (9 November 2016)
	‘Full-back Luke Shaw was among those singled out for criticism, with his manager “not happy with his performance”’ (19 March 2018)
Compensatory power	‘Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho has named Scotland midfielder Scott McTominay his special one this season. Goalkeeper David De Gea was named the club’s player of the year on Tuesday’ (2 May 2018)
	‘Mourinho’s sacking comes after a fall-out with £89m record signing Paul Pogba’ (18 December 2018)
Conditioned power	‘It is not a conscious thing. Players are not sat in the dressing room stating they will not follow the orders; it happens subconsciously and if that creeps in with just a couple of players then the collective performance will inevitably suffer’ (19 August 2018)
	‘Over the years, Jose has been a brilliant coach - his record suggests that. He’s been one of the very best ... He’s got some real quality in the squad who are very low in confidence’ (5 October 2018)
Sources of Power	
Personality	‘Mourinho is a changed personality from the charismatic one that first came over in 2004. He is picking silly, personal squabbles’ (19 March 2018)
	‘The mischief-making, soundbite-spouting Special One with a neat line in wind-up celebrations’ (10 November 2018)
Property	‘Such is Woodward’s close relationship with the Glazer family, who own United, Mourinho cannot win an internal power battle’ (2 September 2018).
	‘Mourinho’s response to a direct question about how the world’s richest club cannot simply buy players was ... a reference to the financial fair play allegations made against Manchester City in Der Spiegel three weeks ago’ (30 November 2018).
Organization	‘On Tuesday, Woodward said ... the United “board, investors and everyone at the club are aligned with the fans on what we need to do on the pitch. That is to win trophies. That’s one of the reasons we hired Jose”’ (26 September 2018)
	‘The decision to sack Mourinho, which will cost more than £18m, has been taken in the long-term interests of United with a view that the club is bigger than any one individual’ (18 December 2018)

Figure 2: Illustrative examples of instruments and sources of power in BBC articles

Accounts of José Mourinho's leadership skills frequently point to his ability in managing the media. For example, Ilharco offers several examples of Mourinho's impressive skills in handling and predicting 'the media', which Ilharco problematically describes as an 'enabling context' (2019: 320). In contrast, Wagg emphasizes the vulnerability of soccer managers and how media-endowed powers can be symbolically 'stripped away' at any time (2007: 455). Furthermore, conflict is conspicuously absent in Ilharco's hagiographic account of Mourinho – the assumption being, it would seem, that when it comes to the media, the manager and his players are always and invariably on the 'same team'.

An additional theme that emerged in the analysis of bbc.com, especially towards the end of Mourinho's tenure at Manchester United, concerns escalating player power. Just like managers, players clearly have their own unique 'personalities' and these can act as sources of power, both on and off the field. However, this theme is less concerned with personality in the narrow sense of character or disposition and relates rather to how it can be leveraged commercially. As discussed in the final section, towards the end of José Mourinho's tenure at Manchester United it appeared that some within the club's hierarchy felt his continued stay was causing damage to the Manchester United brand and its other commercial assets, notably celebrity players. This form of power – what I term 'player promotional power' – is largely a product of the social media age and has implications not only for the power of managers but also for sporting organizations more generally.

Discussion: The Dialectic of Power

As with many scholars writing about the rise of the large corporation in the twentieth century, John Kenneth Galbraith painted a picture of power trickling downwards from finely-groomed men who had submitted themselves fully to the ‘organization’:

The person on the shop floor or its equivalent gives more or less diligent and deft physical effort for a specified number of hours a day. Beyond that nothing in principle – not thought, certainly not conformity of speech or behavior – is expected. Of the high corporate executive a more complete submission to the purposes of the organization is usually required. He (or she) must speak and also think well of the aims of the enterprise; he may never in public and not wisely in private raise doubt as to the depth and sincerity of his own commitment. Many factors determine his large, often very large compensation, including the need to pay for the years of preparation, for the considerable intelligence that is required, for the responsibility that is carried, and for the alleged risks of high position. As a practical matter, his rate of pay is also influenced by the significant and highly convenient role the executive plays in establishing it; much that accrues to the senior corporate executive is in response to his own inspired generosity. But there is also payment for the comprehensive submission of his individual personality to that of the corporation. It is no slight thing to give up one’s self and self-expression to the collective personality of one’s employer (1985: 31/2).

Galbraith was keenly aware that power tends to produce countervailing expressions and positions – what he calls the ‘dialectic of power’. In other words, he recognized that power is not a static thing; that it flows between persons and parties, new and old. For example, in the context of professional soccer – a ‘notoriously closed social world’ (Kelly and Waddington, 2006: 149) – there has been a gradual shift away from the days of managers having complete

control of the playing aspect of a club and imposing their will, sometimes physically (think Tony Pulis headbutting James Beattie), to a more professionalized, collaborative and decentralized decision-making process, which increasingly involves coaching teams and recently, the introduction of directors of football at some clubs. Such developments have arguably diluted some of the power of managers, while in sharp contrast, the power of the sport's top players has grown – reflected in the fact that many earn more than their managers. Another important development, though also beyond the scope of this paper, concerns the growing power of agents, such as Jorge Mendes (Cristiano Ronaldo's agent) and Mino Raiola (Paul Pogba's agent). In the remainder of this section, we will consider one particular instance of countervailing power: the social media-enhanced power of some celebrity players.

Galbraith was writing in the context of a pre-internet world and his framework does not single out the media (let alone social media), although he does acknowledge that media organizations wield considerable conditioned power. In sharp contrast, many contemporary writers argue that media networks have entered every domain of our existence and that our embedded, interconnected lives are now *media lives* first and foremost (Deuze, 2012). In particular, much recent analysis suggests that social media are disruptive technologies for a number of reasons but primarily because they act as vehicles for countervailing power and as conduits of independent self-expression. Social media give the man and woman 'on the shop floor' a voice, but, paradoxically, they also place upon them the same range of public expectations and evaluations that are placed upon the corporate magnate, the movie star or the sportsperson. However, in contrast to Galbraith's highly paid 'high corporate executive', whose loyalty and obedience went unquestioned, today's elite sports stars often have social media followings and brand cachet that are potentially more valuable to sports organizations than even their athletic prowess.

Several articles appearing on bbc.com towards the end of Mourinho's tenure at Manchester United suggested that the manager's public conflicts with celebrity players, notably Paul Pogba, played a role in his eventual dismissal. In an article dated 6 October 2018, Paul Pogba, Anthony Martial and Alexis Sánchez were identified as three players who had 'major issues with their manager' (Stone, 2018c). In an article dated 18 December 2018, it was claimed that Mourinho's sacking came 'after a fall-out with £89m record signing Paul Pogba, who was an unused substitute for the defeat at Anfield on Sunday' (BBC Sport, 2018d). A sense that celebrity players (and the club's hierarchy who wished to retain them) were undermining Mourinho was expressed most vociferously by former United captain Gary Neville in an interview with Sky Sports, in which he insisted that there was "something rotten to the core" with the club's decisions (Stone, 2018b). For Neville, player power was the root of the problem: "The dressing room is leading what's happening. The tail is wagging the dog at the soccer club" (ibid.).

The source of this escalating player power, some commentators have suggested, lies in their perceived commercial value. Jenas (2018), for example, compares the reign of Alex Ferguson to Mourinho's time at Manchester United: 'If there was an issue between the manager and a player then the manager would always win: even if the player was David Beckham, Roy Keane or Jaap Stam. Now, Paul Pogba's commercial value sometimes seems more important to Manchester United than the authority of the manager'. Jenas' suggestion is given added weight when one considers that Manchester United's Executive Vice-Chairman, Ed Woodward, made it clear at the time that he would not consider selling Paul Pogba, even with his public spats with Mourinho. This, Hirst suggests, was motivated by commercial and reputational concerns and had little or nothing to do with the player's contributions on the field. In an article in *The Times*, Hirst (2018) writes:

The month after signing Pogba on a five-year deal, Woodward took great delight in telling investors that the announcement of Pogba's medical had generated "the highest daily activity ever on our website" and that "it was also the most retweeted Manchester United post of all time on Twitter". "The Pogba announcement broke industry records," he added. "On Facebook it was the biggest signing day post in soccer history – bigger than [Gareth] Bale and Neymar's signings combined. On Instagram it was the most liked United post ever".

Woodward's comments are doubly useful because they highlight the ways in which brand and commercial interests, media activity, and social media rankings are now inextricably linked. Regarding social media in particular, Jenas (2018) claims that we are now in 'the age of the Instagram footballer'. Players, he continues, now sometimes have 'even more power than media organizations. Certainly, in terms of their social media following, they might have more power than managers in swaying the opinions of young fans'.

Research on the potentially disruptive effects of new media on sport power relationships remains in its infancy. A study by Price, Farrington and Hall (2013) on Twitter use by soccer clubs, for example, found evidence of an ambivalent attitude towards the platform. On one hand, clubs celebrate its ability to 'bring down walls' between clubs and fans by facilitating more open communication, however, on the other hand, clubs remain keenly aware that social media use by players can increase risks of information leaks and potentially undermine the control of managers. While some players have received fines and other sanctions for improper conduct, such as publishing offensive content or openly criticizing their club's owners or board, Price, Farrington and Hall question the effectiveness of these forms of 'condign power' (as Galbraith would put it). Other studies, such as Free's (2018) analysis of Irish rugby players as symbols of post-2008 economic 'recovery', reveal how players are sometimes celebrated for their entrepreneurial endeavors and for optimizing

the business and self-promotional opportunities that come their way. Nevertheless, sports clubs remain wary of social media use by players. In 2017, José Mourinho imposed strict rules on social media use by players, prohibiting them from publishing training pictures from 48 hours up to a game (Pitt-Brooke, 2017). Following his appointment as caretaker manager on 19 December 2018, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer vowed to follow suit and ‘lay down the law’ on player social media use (Robson, 2018).

However, the extent to which United’s current manager can realistically curtail player social media use is debatable, especially given Managing Director Richard Arnold’s increasing push on digital engagement. Speaking at a web summit in Lisbon in November 2018, Arnold celebrated the club’s 659 million social media followers and insisted that an increased focus on digital content and commercial success would ultimately lead to greater success on the field of play:

Commercial success is only possible because of the unparalleled engagement we have with our fans. The end goal is creating a virtuous circle, where more engagement with our fans equals greater opportunities for our partners. And that in turn equals greater revenue, and more opportunities for academy investment and world class signings to deliver the performances and success United fans expect and deserve. Expressed simply, for us to win on the pitch, we have to win off it (in Sikes, 2018).

As we have already seen, not all commentators share Arnold’s triumphalism regarding social media engagement, nor indeed his views on the commercialization of soccer. Indeed, many remain deeply critical of a perceived widening gap between the interests of ordinary fans and the commercial ambitions of clubs. Writing in the *Manchester Evening News*, for example, Samuel Luckhurst (2018) claims that ‘United, like Paul Pogba, have brand awareness but little self-awareness and are oblivious to how irate many supporters become over social

media figures and app ratings'. More fundamentally, he points out that Manchester United's 'absentee owners' – the Florida-based Glazer family – are more interested in American football than soccer, and that their two primary delegates, Ed Woodward and Richard Arnold, both hail from banking backgrounds (ibid.).

In concluding, it is important that we do not overstate player promotional power, as this pales in comparison to the power of organization. Indeed, given the staggering rise of Alphabet (Google), Apple, Microsoft and other technology companies, Galbraith's claim that organization is 'the decisive form of power' (1985: 167) is probably *true* nowadays than it was during the 1980s. Furthermore, while celebrity is indeed powerful, it is also ephemeral, and whatever their individual promotional power, celebrity footballers will generally only retain their appeal so long as they continue to perform on the field of play. This, we should not forget, also applies to celebrity managers like Mourinho, whose own promotional power is evident from his appearances in advertising for companies such as American Express and Samsung.² As put by Stephen Wagg: 'If his soccer circumstances were to change, Mourinho's reputation, the public perception of his abilities and so on, would be changed with them. When his team falters, the myth of an individual manager's powers is rapidly undermined and he may likewise encounter the volatile politics of celebrity in the process' (2007: 449). Finally, it should be noted that despite his public spats with some players, José Mourinho's dismissal from United did not lessen his conditioned power in the eyes of other players. Defender Eric Bailly commented: "Whatever they may say, I will always be thankful to the person who gave me the chance to make my debut at Old Trafford. Thank you for what you have taught me. Good luck, coach" (BBC Sport, 2018e). Likewise, midfielder Jesse Lingard – a young footballing star whose rising promotional power now encompasses 5.3m

² Mourinho is also the public face of 'Top Eleven 2016 – Be a Football Manager' – 'the most played sports social game with over one million daily subscribers' (Lopez-Gonzalez and Griffiths, 2018: 812).

followers on Instagram and his own 'JLingz' clothing range and aftershave (Boon, 2018) – tweeted 'Thank you for the memories and wisdom' (BBC Sport, 2018e).

Conclusion

In the Middle Ages there could have been little talk or thought of power. It was massively possessed only by the prince, the baron, and the priest. For the citizenry in general, submission to it was natural, automatic, and complete (Galbraith 1985: 170).

In this paper John Kenneth Galbraith's analytical framework, as outlined in *The Anatomy of Power*, was used as a basis to reflect on the operation of power in the context of professional soccer. To illustrate the potential usefulness of the framework, an analysis of José Mourinho's short-lived spell as manager at Manchester United was carried out. Galbraith maintains that 'never in the consideration of power can we assume that there is only one source or one instrument of power at work' (ibid. 48). Consequently, his framework considers three sources (personality, property, and organization) and three instruments of power (condign, compensatory, and conditioned power). Regarding the latter, he rather conveniently notes that all three can be observed in the context of team sport:

The instruments of enforcement are the threat of condign rebuke from teammates, coach, and community; the pay or compensatory power, a matter on which players are far from negligent; and, above all, the highly developed training or conditioning manifest in the team's will to win. The team most strongly combining all of these elements of power will win; it will gain the submission of the opposing team. As in sport, so in life (ibid. 70).

However, when it comes to the sources of power, ‘organization’ undoubtedly trumps ‘personality’ and ‘property’ in the footballing context. As individually charismatic as any individual manager may be, he will always be a somewhat transitory figure when compared to the organization that employs him. Despite this, as Wagg wryly observes, the principal soccer discourse is of *managers* and their abilities or failings (2007: 447). José Mourinho exemplifies this; in fact, the Portuguese may well be the most discussed, debated, and written about soccer manager in the world.

Galbraith recognized that the exercise of power is profoundly competitive and tends to produce countervailing expressions – his so-called ‘dialectic of power’. However, given that he was writing in the early 1980s, he could not have anticipated the communicational impact of the internet and digital technologies, and nor could he have anticipated the seismic countervailing power of social media. Social media have been analyzed as new sources of power – for the politically disenfranchised in particular – but the already-powerful (including celebrities) also use these platforms for their own promotional ends. Writing in the aftermath of Mourinho’s sacking, Ken Early (2018) suggested (if we apply Galbraith’s terms) that the conditioned power of the Portuguese manager had weakened considerably and that he had come to rely almost exclusively on condign power. For Early, Mourinho had ‘lost the ability to inspire ... By the end, at United, he seemed to be taking pleasure in persecuting them [the players]’. However, it also appeared that the manager’s power was to some extent being undermined from within. Jason Burt (2016) claims that ‘leaks from the dressing room’ have always been damaging to Mourinho during his career and that over the years he has learned ‘to cut down on the information given to the players’. Social media have undoubtedly made leaks of this sort much more difficult for all managers to contain, yet it has also been suggested here that their use as promotional tools by celebrity players can be equally undermining.

Some have suggested that José Mourinho is ill-suited to the social media era: ‘Young players, just like all young people, are used to broadcasting their lives on social media. It’s hard for that generation to fit the Mourinho mould of control’ (Jeenas, 2018). However, Mourinho is not alone in his reservations about players using these platforms. For example, after he was let go, former Queens Park Rangers manager Neil Warnock ‘blamed exchanges of tweets between players and the club’s chairman for having undermined his position’ (Price, Farrington and Hall, 2013: 454).³ Likewise, Mourinho is not alone in his concerns that promotional distractions can potentially undermine player performances on the field. For example, Manchester United legends Gary Neville, Roy Keane and Paul Ince recently criticized the timing of Jesse Lingard’s new clothing label launch. Commenting on Sky Sports, Neville said: “I like Jesse Lingard and I have no problem with him launching a clothes range. But before Liverpool away in the biggest match of the season? Don’t do it this week. Do it before Fulham” (Boon, 2018).

In many respects, the same pragmatic, results-focused, media-orientated and commercially-minded logic that José Mourinho embodies and which saw him rise to power also explains his downfall at United – the managerial equivalent of living and dying by the sword. However, it appears that social media may also have played a role. It must be considered deeply ironic therefore that when Mourinho first confirmed he would be the next manager of Manchester United on 27 May 2016, he did so through his brand-new Instagram account (Patrick, 2019).

³ The implication here is *not* that all managers are hostile to or uncomfortable with social media. It is quite possible, in fact, that younger managers, such as Jan Siewert at Huddersfield Town (who is thirty-six years old), may have entirely different views to the likes of Warnock (who is now seventy years old).

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