Olympism, myth and reality: British media portrayals of the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the portrayal of Olympism in the British media coverage of the 2002 Salt Lake City winter Games. A figurational framework was implemented in making sense of the interdependencies that exist in the sport-Olympic-media complex. Coubertin, as the founder of the modern Games, established the Olympics with Olympism as the ideology underpinning them. Still today, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) maintains that these principles are central to the Games (IOC website, 2004). In this examination, the question of whether the presence of Olympism is a myth or reality in the mediated version of the Games was addressed. A qualitative content analysis was carried out of the British press and BBC television coverage of the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics. Using a coding system, themes relating to Olympism were searched for and, where found, evidenced. Working inductively, any other themes which emerged from the data were also identified.

The findings demonstrated that there was a general absence of ideas relating to Olympism in the British media coverage of the Games. Instead, the dominant themes or characteristics which emerged were: politics; a nationalistic bias; gendered treatment of athletes; and a focus on high performance sport. It is proposed that this framing of the Games directly opposes several elements of the Olympic ideology: international understanding; cultural exchange; equal opportunity for all; and the separation of sport and politics. The conclusions drawn from this study are that whilst the IOC is a significant body in sportisation, and global processes more broadly, it is by no means all powerful. The Olympics retain their place at the forefront of world sporting competition only when interpreted as reflecting the dominant ideology of the time, that is, the achievement sport ethic and capitalist consumption. The IOC and media institutions are highly interdependent, however, the media institutions retain a degree of autonomy which means they are able to frame the Olympics in a way which suits their own needs: those of consumption. Any elements of the IOC's own, alternative, ideology (assuming that the ideology stated is actually that which is of central interest) which do not fit with the dominant sport model do not feature in the mediated public experience of the Games.

Keywords: Olympics, Olympism, media, globalisation, gender, politics, excellence, nationalism.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Issues to be examined

The problem with Olympism is the Olympic Games. All things considered, the Olympic Games of the twentieth century are a paradox. The basic contradiction is that the games, in their contemporary incarnation are the antithesis of the very ideals they ostensibly cherish. (Wamsley, 2004, p. 234)

As the above quotation by Wamsley demonstrates, cynicism clearly exists with regards to the legitimacy of Olympism as the raison d'etre of the Olympic Games. In light of this, the following study looks to examine the extent to which Olympism finds expression in the mediated reality of the Games. It has been widely acknowledged in the academic sphere that the Olympics today are a global media phenomenon (Maguire et al, 2002; Whannel, 1992; Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Tomlinson, 1999). Moragas et al (1995), however, go a stage further, suggesting that in this format, the Olympics are a vehicle for the production of 'shared meanings that allow diverse members to feel part of an Olympic family' (p. 3).

The media presentation of events is a less than transparent process (Rowe, 1999; Boyle and Haynes, 2000), and is inevitably imbued with ideology. Several academics have noted that in western society, the media reinforces a capitalist ideology, reflective of the broader political economy in which it is situated (Gruneau, 1989; Jhally, 1989b; Kinkema and Harris, 1998; Maguire, 1993a; Rowe, 1999; Boyle and Haynes, 2000). Despite the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) claims in the Olympic Charter that the Olympics are a vehicle for the spread of the Olympic ideology, evidence in this study suggests that in the mediated reality of the Games at least, a set of ideals contrary to Olympism are reflected in coverage.
Tied up with broader processes of globalisation, the media has played a large part in realising the founder Pierre de Coubertin's internationalist aims of the Games having a global reach. Coubertin was reportedly astute to the potential of the media as a means to publicise his Olympic project, and in the inaugural Games took on the role of journalist himself (MacAloon, 1981). Coubertin soon lost control as sole reviewer of the Games, as the press took an increasing interest, and reporters interpreted the Olympics in their own way, not necessarily positioning Olympism as a core concern (Slater 1998). With this being the case, it may be asked whether Coubertin, in effectively handing his Games over to the press as a means of achieving international recognition, sacrificed the spread of the very ideals he saw as central to the project. This question is also pertinent when considering the arrival of television onto the Olympic scene, soon after the Second World War. Through the sale of television rights, the media became a key institution to the IOC, in not only bringing the Games to a global audience but also financing the Games (Barney et al 2002; Pound, 2004). Thus, the nature of the relationship between the IOC and the media is characterised by a high degree of interdependency. The following study has used the case study of the British media's portrayal of the 2002 Salt Lake City winter Games to discover if the Olympic ideals have proven to be sufficiently resilient to retain visibility and meaning in the context of global capitalist relations.

This research project's field of study includes global studies, Olympic studies, media studies and figurational studies. The originality of the research lies in several areas. Firstly, this is the first PhD thesis on the British media portrayals of the winter Olympics. The investigation also constitutes the first study into the Olympics from a figurational perspective. Finally, the review of the current body of literature would
indicate that this is also the first study into the representation of Olympism in the media portrayal of a specific Games. Given these claims to originality, it is argued that this research project makes a contribution to the body of knowledge that exists in the field of study described above.

1.2 The Olympic Movement and Olympism – A model?

The Olympic Games differ markedly from other global sporting events in that they have at their core and as their raison d'etre a set of fundamental principles applicable not only in a sporting context but also more broadly as a moral ideology for life. According to sociologists (Kidd, 1984; Young, 1987) it was the ideals of Olympism, along with the founder's organisational ability, that set Coubertin's Games apart from earlier attempts to revive the ancient Olympics such as that at Much Wenlock in Shropshire, England (Tomlinson, 1999).

The ideals behind Olympism stem from several sources, including the ancient Olympics in Greece, the Victorian English public school system, American collegiate sport, late nineteenth century peace initiatives in Europe, the World Expositions of the late nineteenth century, and the Ecole Libre of France. The eclectic set of ideals that arose from these influential institutions was woven together by de Coubertin to form the basis of the modern Olympic Movement. Whilst Coubertin's initial interest in sport was, according to Guttmann (1992), fuelled by a desire to improve the capacity of the French military in the wake of his country's defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, having travelled across Europe and to America the Baron formed a more internationalist agenda.
The current documents stating the aims of the Olympic Movement are markedly different from the original Olympic Charter. Whilst Olympism as a "philosophy of life" (IOC website, 2004) appears to be universal in character, the principles which underpin it are very much temporally and culturally specific. Tomlinson (1989) observed this in his discussion of the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. This is also evident in the recent inclusion of gender equity and environmental concern as part of the role of the IOC and in the diminished emphasis on amateurism.

The changing nature of Olympism makes it a difficult concept to define; indeed Wamsley (2004) has described it as a 'metaphoric empty flask' (p. 232). In carrying out the following investigation, however, it is necessary to attempt to formulate a working model that can be compared against the ideological framework in which the media and corporate projections of the Olympics are situated. Both Segrave (1988) and Loland (1994) have attempted to draw up models of Olympism, breaking the ideals into sections or "unit ideas" (Loland 1994). The task is clearly a problematic one. In his paper "Toward a Definition of Olympism", Segrave succeeds in outlining seven key issues as central to Olympism. These are: education, international understanding, equal opportunity, fair and equal competition, cultural expression, independence of sport and excellence. This model appears to be comprehensive, with the exceptions of one or two recent additions, and will be used as the basis for the development of a point of reference in identifying the promotion or neglect of Olympism in the coverage of the Salt Lake City winter Olympics. A more detailed discussion of Segrave's model or definition of Olympism can be found later in this introduction.
Several writers (Guttmann, 1992; Segrave, 1988; and Gruneau, 1989) have criticised Olympism for being inherently contradictory. According to Guttmann (1992), the very beginnings of Coubertin's interest in sport and physical activity arose from the political and nationalistic desire to improve the physical fitness and ability of the French military. This aim seems to stand in direct opposition to the apolitical nature of the Olympics Coubertin proposes in Olympism. Whilst it may be claimed that Coubertin's wish to improve his country's prospects in war was not his direct inspiration to initiate the modern Olympics, it could be argued that the Olympic aim of peace through internationalism is also a political one. The hope of encouraging internationalism through sport is undermined in the nationalistic structure put in place by the IOC, which states that athletes must compete in national uniform and parade under their country's flag. The notion of amateurism is a further element of Olympism that could be seen as antagonistic to other elements of Coubertin's Olympism. Whilst in the original Olympic Charter, Coubertin celebrates the notion of amateurism — a concept initiated by the Victorian middle and upper classes to legitimate the exclusion of the working classes from sport — he also promoted the ideal of opportunity for all to participate in sporting activity. Finally, the opportunity for all proposal could be argued as being countered by the celebration of elite sport in the Olympic Games.

1.3 The Olympic Movement and globalisation

As noted earlier, Coubertin's aim in his revival of the Olympic Games was always to reach a worldwide audience, both in terms of competitors and followers of the Olympic way of life (Coubertin, 1896 cited in Segrave and Chu, 1988). At the first
Games, however, only 13 countries were represented (Davenport, 1996). In the 2004 Games in Athens competitors from 202 nations competed (IOC website, 2004). This demonstrates the extent to which the Games have internationalised since their inception. What is not so clear, however, is the degree to which the ethos of Olympism has spread across the globe. Neither is it obvious how or by what criteria this can be measured. As is seen in the work of Maguire (1999), the consequences of the process of globalisation may be both intended and unintended and this premise is evident in the global spread of the Olympics. Issues of globalisation are central to an examination of sport, particularly Olympic sport, and the media. The Olympics represent a very clear example of globalised modern sport and the media has heavily influenced this process of global expansion and penetration.

Using Appadurai’s (cited in Featherstone, 1990) concept that globalisation takes place through a variety of different ‘scapes’ it is possible to see that the media is very influential in the globalisation process as it acts as a mediascape, a financescape and an ideoscape. The media has been a particularly important influence in the globalisation of the Olympics as has been outlined earlier. With reference to the multi-directional flows described in figurational sociology, in the context of the media’s representation of sport, it could be argued that the media is one of the key agents in encouraging the dominance of western values regarding achievement orientated sport and commercial sport. Similarly, the corporation acts as both financescape and ideoscape, particularly in its relationship with the IOC and the media. The very nature of the interdependent relationship between the IOC, the media and the corporation illustrates the complexity of the relationships within figurations. This study has examined the question of whether the
media merely reproduces the dominant ideological framework of the society within which it operates, or whether it encourages alternative messages to be read: for example, the traditional Olympic ideals with their emphasis on the struggle, not the victory, and internationalism as opposed to nationalism.

1.4 Role of the media in the IOC's financial support network

The two main sources of income for the IOC are The Olympic Partners (TOP) programme, and the media (Gruneau, 1984). Before the generation of income via the sale of television rights, which began in the 1960s (Slater, 1998), the IOC was supported solely by contributions from its members. Coubertin himself covered a large proportion of the costs of establishing the Games, with both his own, and his wife's money (MacAlloon, 1981). Until 1966, the IOC took no share in the revenue generated from television rights, with the organising committee of the host city taking the profits. It was in 1966 that the IOC first formalised the distribution of the revenue of television rights. This may have been in response to the Mexico Organising Committee selling the rights for $4m and giving only $150,000 to the IOC (Slater, 1998). An agreement was drawn up in which the first million dollars would be shared among the IOC, National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and International Federations (IFs); of the second million, one third would be given to the host city organising committee, with the remainder being divided equally between the IOC, NOCs and IFs. Any sum generated above this would be distributed as two thirds to the organising committee and one third to the IOC. Five years later, in 1971, the IOC changed this charter, stipulating that all the revenue from the sale of television rights go to the IOC. According to Slater (1998) by 1974, more than 98% of
the IOC income was generated from the sale of television rights. The majority of the profit made from television rights comes from the U.S., as this is one of the few nations to have a solely commercially supported base of television networks. This reliance on the income from television rights led to a high level of control being gained by the U.S. television companies, and to the diminished autonomy of the IOC.

The TOP scheme was initiated in 1985 and saw the movement of the IOC away from dependence on television companies for financial survival. The TOP scheme allows exclusive rights to the Olympic rings and name to a limited number of commercial companies in their advertising. This idea of monopolies in advertising rights was one adopted by Peter Ueberroth in the organisation of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. This scheme works to generate large sums of money from few companies and is promoted by the IOC as a means by which the commercialisation of the summer and winter Olympics is controlled.

The idea of advertising and sponsorship also comes to the fore in the televising of the Games. This is the means by which television networks profit from gaining rights to the Games. This also makes prime time viewing and scheduling an extremely important aspect to networks as without this advertising time is very much devalued. This was of particular relevance in the Seoul Olympics in 1988, when the time difference between South Korea and North America was such that, should the proposed track and field timetable have been used, many of the finals would have taken place in the early hours of the morning in the United States. This would have had such an adverse impact on the American television networks in terms being able to generate revenue from the sale of advertising space that the television rights to the Olympics would be worth relatively
very little. As a result, pressure was put on the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) to change the finals times to the early morning in order to coincide with prime time viewing in America. After a considerable amount of negotiation and, according to Simson and Jennings (1992), the changing hands of large sums of money, the timetable was changed.

The income from television rights comprises 55% of the IOC financial support with the revenue from sponsorship contributing 32% of the total income (Barney et al 2002). This makes a total of 87% of the IOC’s financing being made up from two commercial sources. The remainder is generated from ticket sales (10%), licensing (2%) and other sources (1%). (Barney et al, 2002; Pound, 2004)

1.5 Taking a figurational approach

Many of those who have studied media sport to date have taken a cultural studies approach (Jhally, 1989a; 1989b Rowe, 1999; 2004; Wenner, 1994, 1998). However, the processual approach of the figurational school is one which also lends itself well to the study of such issues, especially those tied up with globalisation, as has been demonstrated by Maguire (1999; 2004) and Maguire et al (2002). The understanding of society as being comprised of interdependencies or figurations forms a useful framework for examining the movement of the global flows described earlier. The observed increase in numbers and reach of interdependency chains provides a useful explanation for the apparent ‘shrinking’ of the world, in terms of space, and a speeding up of time (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994; Waters, 1995). As the IOC forges interdependent relations with media institutions across the world, increasing numbers of viewers from various countries are able to experience the Games simultaneously, from a live broadcast. As Moragas et al
(1995) noted in the excerpt at the beginning of this chapter, television consumers across the world are able to 'share' in a global experience, without leaving their own living rooms. That experience of the Olympics is provided by the same, central feed for all national broadcasters, with each country adding its own commentary and format.

Therefore, whilst there are diminishing contrasts (Maguire, in press) between each national interpretation of the Games, there is also an increasing variety in the different programmes produced (Messner, 2002; Moragas et al, 1995). This is also true of the ideology that accompanies the spread of the Olympics. This study has noted a dominance of the values of modern achievement sport in the British media portrayal of the Games, and whilst the Olympics may encourage the spread of such essentially western notions of sport, it is also possible that some media representations may reinterpret the Games in light of their own culture's understanding and experiences of sport.

The figurational concept of power also helps make sense of the relations between the key bodies involved in the media-Olympics-political economy nexus. Rather than viewing power as dominance of one group over another, the Eliasan standpoint proposes that all parties hold some degree of power and that it is more enlightening to understand the balances that exist. According to Maguire (in press) within figurations, power is a structural process that can be understood using the related ideas of functional democratisation and the monopoly mechanism. Functional democratisation occurs as power balances become relatively equal, and, consequently, outcomes of actions are likely to be unplanned and unintended. The monopoly mechanism, however, refers to the process by which 'social differentiation and integration among increasingly larger groups
becomes dominant' as a result of lengthening interdependency chains, and power becomes increasingly concentrated. Tracking the changing relationship between the IOC and television companies, Slater (1998) noted that power balances were very much characteristic of the partnership as both parties, along with TNCs, vie for the upper hand. Academics have begun to cast aside the cultural dupe thesis, noting that viewers and readers play an active role in interpreting the messages put in front of them by television producers and newspaper editors.

The following chapters have utilised this epistemology to make sense of the interdependent relations between Olympism, the Olympic Games and the media within the context of globalisation. Particularly, it has looked to understand the interplay of 'mediascapes' and 'ideoscapes' (Maguire, 1999) in examining how, and which ideologies are articulated and reproduced in media sport, and specifically in the media portrayal of the Salt Lake City winter Olympics. Chapter 3 further details this theoretical framework and the methodology to be applied in this examination. The empirical findings arising from this analysis are discussed in chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 looks at the observed tendency of the British media coverage to highlight political issues. It also discusses the nationalistic bias evident both in the press and on television. Both issues observed here represent an inconsistency with the idea that the Games should encourage international understanding and act as a forum for cultural expression and exchange. In Chapter 6, two characteristics contrary to the notion that the Olympics should reflect opportunity for all are examined: gendered treatment of athletes; and a focus on high-level performance. The findings are summarised and evaluated in the final, concluding chapter. The chapter that
follows provides an overview of the current fund of knowledge in the areas in question, to which the findings of this study look to add to and build upon.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The objective of this research project was to explore the media's articulation of Olympism in coverage of the Salt Lake City winter Games. Before making an empirical analysis, however, the broader research context must be defined and detailed. The following chapter reviews the research texts on the related areas. These areas are defined as: the conceptualisation of Olympism; media sport; and globalisation.

2.1 Conceptualising Olympism

In order to explore the articulation of Olympism in the media, it is necessary to formulate a working definition of the term. 'Olympism' has proven difficult to conceptualise, as was outlined in Chapter 1. This section will, however, build on the existing literature on the area to identify the key tenets of Olympism. In the Olympic Charter, Olympism is described in the following way:

A philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles. The goal of Olympism is to place everywhere sport at the service of harmonious development of man, with a view to encouraging the establishment of a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity. (IOC website, 2004)

Whilst this "philosophy of life" is effective in drawing together the notion of Olympism, this description is not helpful as a distinct point of reference from which to analyse the ideology behind the modern Olympic Movement. Both Lenk (1976) and Segrave (1988) have highlighted the need to define Olympism more clearly. In his essay 'Toward a Definition of Olympism', Segrave (1988) argues:
Despite the ubiquitously of the term Olympism, and the rhetorical uses to which it has been put, a clear, precise, and simple definition that goes beyond generality has yet to be formulated...Olympism may be conceived as a set of specific goals or aspirations that provides the blueprint for the conduct of the Olympic Games. (p. 151)

Here, Segrave notes a lack of clarity and specificity in the understanding of Olympism and this is a problem also noted by Wandzilak, (1980). The contradictory nature of this Olympic philosophy is a further area seen to complicate the task of clarifying a definition of it (Gruneau, 1989; Segrave, 1988; Tomlinson, 1999). One such paradox includes the promotion of sport-for-all, whilst reinforcing elitism (Segrave, 1988; Tomlinson, 1989). Another area of conflict is the tension between the goal of international understanding, and the nationalism, engendered by the format of the Olympic Games (Segrave, 1988).

Segrave (1988) also found incongruity in Coubertin’s claim that the Olympics are apolitical, whilst using the IOC’s political standpoint of democracy to promote the Games problematic. Gruneau (1989) is critical of Olympism for similar reasons. He asserts:

There was great irony in the fact that to ensure the success of this cultural project de Coubertin was forced from the outset into compromises with purely entrepreneurial interests. At any one of a dozen moments during this century the inherent contradictions of Olympism should have become clear: the compromises that had to be made to mount such a project in an increasingly capitalist world system would inevitably threaten the basis of the project itself...Furthermore, however much it was meant to express ‘universal’ human values, the Olympic model could never be separated from a conservative theory of mass culture and the class and gender biases of Victorian athleticism. (p. 7-26)

Whilst Segrave (1988), portions much of the blame for the failings of the Olympic Movement at the feet of modern sport itself, Gruneau (1989), appears to claim that Olympism was inherently contradictory from the outset. It would appear that evidence
exists for both arguments: Olympism was never without its contradictions, but these have been exaggerated by recent developments in modern sport.

Tomlinson (1989) has noted that Olympism is very much temporally and culturally specific, and denies that Olympism consists of a set of immutable ideals. He observes: “The Olympic ideal has always been moulded in the image of the time and place of the particular Olympiad or Games” (p. 7-3). That this is the case is evident in the constant updating of the Olympic Charter that has taken place, (IOC website, 2004). Notable alterations that have been imposed are the recent inclusion of environmental concerns, the addition of gender equity issues, and the acceptance of professional athletes in the Games.

Several writers (Segrave, 1988; Loland, 1994; Lucas, 1988) have attempted to draw together the vast amounts of writings on Olympism and construct a model of basic ideas. Whilst these various models have shown some areas of consistency, the marked differences between them clearly demonstrate the problematic nature of the task. Lucas (1988), in his ‘conception of modern international Olympism’, breaks down Coubertin’s philosophy into three main strands: the religion of Olympism; the peace of Olympism; and the beauty of Olympism. Using the concept of ‘unit ideas’, Loland (1994) understands Olympism as consisting of four basic units, those being: to educate and cultivate the individual through sport; to cultivate the relation between people in society; to promote international understanding and peace; to worship human greatness and possibility. In contrast, Segrave (1988) argues that seven distinct areas of Olympism are apparent: education, international understanding, equal opportunity, fair and equal competition, cultural expression, independence of sport, and excellence. Whilst none of
the models described here are flawless, the proposed definition put forward by Segrave (1988) is the most comprehensive. When viewed alongside the Olympic Charter, it is apparent that Segrave's account incorporates most of the ideas put forward by the IOC in this document and does so in a clear and logical way. Segrave's model will, therefore, be used to form the basis of the point of reference for the analysis of the Salt Lake City winter Olympics. The remainder of this section will comprise of a detailed review of the literature on the aspects of Olympism outlined by Segrave (1988).

2.1i Education


While Coubertin committed his life to the reestablishment of the Olympic Games, he forever drafted sport into the larger service of social change and social education. For Coubertin, the Games remained only the "pedagogical manifestation" of a much more deep-seated belief in the liberating values of amateur sport. (p. 152)

Coubertin's interest in educational reform is said to have stemmed from dissatisfaction with his own educational experiences in a traditional Jesuit school (Loland, 1994). According to Loland (1994), Coubertin was particularly critical of the neglect of physical education and is cited as commenting: "In France ... physical inertia was till recently considered an indispensable assistant to the perfecting of intellectual powers. Games were supposed to kill study." (p. 28). One of the most well-documented influences on Coubertin's views on education and Olympism was the English public school system of the late nineteenth century (Loland, 1994; Tomlinson, 1999; Lucas, 1988; MacAlloon, 1981). In particular, Thomas Arnold, the headmaster of Rugby School, is reported to have contributed greatly to Coubertin's ideas regarding education (MacAlloon, 1981).
According to some sources (Lucas, 1994), Coubertin's interpretation of Arnold's methods was idealised, and based solely on the romanticised recollection of Rugby School seen in Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's School Days*. Loland (1994) reports that Arnold saw sport as distinct from work and not as his primary concern.

It is suggested that Coubertin overlooked the repression and power hierarchies in the English public school system, and formed a selective understanding of this aspect of Victorian England (Loland, 1994). This point does appear, however, to be somewhat contentious as Lucas (1988) predicts that, "Had Thomas Arnold lived to see the first Modern Olympic Games in 1896, he would have, I think, beamed his approval." (p. 91).

In his understanding of the English public school system, Coubertin was also greatly influenced by the writings of Taine (Loland, 1994; MacAloon, 1981). This was, however, also said to have been interpreted by Coubertin in an optimistic and eclectic manner (Loland, 1994). Coubertin produced much work on education, and in particular on the education of peace (Kruger, 2003). This is an essential theme that runs through Olympism and will be discussed in further detail later in this review of literature. According to Segrave (1988), the objective with regards to education in the Olympic ideology is that sport, and in particular amateur sport, help to build moral character. He states:

Not least of Olympism's educational aspiration is the expectation that the athlete embody the high ethical values, which Coubertin himself ascribed to amateur sport, of chivalry, honesty and sportsmanship. (p. 153)

Coubertin's emphasis upon education is, in theory, a key theme of Olympism, which works to interconnect several areas of the Olympic ideology, including:
international understanding (Kruger, 2003); cultural expression (Eassom, 1994); and fair and equal competition (Segrave, 1988). Education is also recognised as an objective that is relevant today, over 100 years since the first of the modern games, as is evident in the recent global Olympic educational package developed, *Be A Champion in Life!* (Jobling, 2002).

Education was seen not only as a means by which to improve the character of individuals but also to increase knowledge and understanding of other nations and to contribute to international understanding (Coubertin, 1988). The place of internationalism in Olympism will now be considered.

### 2.1.ii International Understanding

According to Coubertin: "Wars break out because nations misunderstand each other" (Coubertin, 1896, cited in Segrave, 1988). The Olympic Games were intended to provide an opportunity for athletes, coaches and officials to come together in a friendly atmosphere in an attempt to overcome these misunderstandings, (Segrave, 1988). In making sense of the concept of international understanding, in the context of the Olympic Games, it is important to look at the global, social climate of the late nineteenth century, and at the biography of Coubertin. According to Guttmann (1992), Coubertin's interest in issues surrounding peace and internationalism stemmed from his bitterness at the defeat of the French in the Franco-Prussian war. Whilst it is reported that Coubertin’s first interests in sport were of a nationalistic nature, to improve the French military (Guttmann, 1992), this was apparently replaced with a more peaceful, international agenda, following his travels to England and North America (Loland, 1994). Quanz
(cited in Loland, 1994) also suggests that the Peace Societies, formed in 1892 were highly influential on Coubertin's attitudes towards peace and international understanding. According to Kidd (1984), it was the international nature of Coubertin's revival of the Olympics that separated it from other, localised, attempts to stage modern versions of the Games in places such as Much Wenlock in Shropshire, England and those of Greece, earlier in the nineteenth century.

It has been argued that the staging of the 1900, 1904 and 1908 Games in association with the world expositions helped incorporate capitalism into the Olympics, thus acting as a vehicle for western imperialism (Roche, 2000). If this was the case, then the Games were not a forum for international and cultural sharing, but were a means of imposing the ideology of one area of the world on other nations. This scepticism surrounding the genuine internationalist nature of the modern Olympics is shared by Tomlinson (1999), who states:

Coubertin was always aware that international sport could create tensions between nations quite as much as harmony. Yet he persisted in his belief that an international athleticism could tip the balance towards peace. The five rings of the Olympic symbol were meant to represent the unity of the five continents. But such a notion of unity was born of inequality, for the Baron himself was born into a fading elite looking for a new role at a time when the imperialist powers still had their fingers on the pulse of world history. (p. 213).

Perhaps then, this statement highlights the need to distinguish between the understanding of the Olympics as promoting international interaction and the idea that this interaction will lead to peace and greater understanding.

For some (Kidd, 1984; Tomlinson, 1999), Olympism is seen as a distortion of the values and rituals associated with the ancient Greek Games. According to Kidd, the idea of peace through internationalism is an example of this kind of misinterpretation, in
particular, of the notion of the Olympic Truce. He points out that the Olympic Truce in the ancient Games was not implemented for humanitarian reasons, in protest to war itself, but for practical purposes to allow safe passage for competitors and prevent Elis, the site of the Olympics, being invaded. It is suggested by Kidd that ideas such as these were manipulated by Coubertin in order to steep the modern ideals in the antiquity of the Greek Games.

In critiques of recent Olympics, concern has been expressed at the patriotic and nationalistic overtones of the Games (Gruneau, 1989; Tomlinson, 1989). Particularly, the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1984 Los Angeles Games have been identified as nationalistic. Gruneau observed of the Los Angeles Olympics:

ABC's coverage often emphasised show business at the expense of sport and was characterised by a vulgar national chauvinism, glaringly at odds with the Olympic Movement's own claims to internationalism. (p. 7-25).

Here, the role of the media in undermining the principles of Olympism in modern times is highlighted; this being an element of central importance in this study. This argument is particularly pertinent, when considering the media debate that surrounded the appropriateness of the inclusion of a flag that had been salvaged from the Ground Zero site opening ceremony of the Salt Lake City Games. It has been noted that the motivations of audiences to tune into Olympics broadcasts often centre primarily around nationalistic and patriotic interests (Billings and Eastman, 2000; Sabo et al, 1996). According to MacAloon (1989), the element of festival is central to the formation of an international atmosphere of communication and cooperation at the Games and he is critical of the media for under-representing this aspect.
Teichler (cited in Kruger, 2003), undermining the view of the Olympics as internationalist, makes associations between Olympism and fascist ideology. Teichler criticises Coubertin for his cordial relations with the Nazis and highlights links between the body cults of the Nazis and the Olympic ideal of connecting the spirit to the muscular body. The aim of international understanding in Olympism is closely associated with the globalisation of the Games. Given the both intended and unintended consequences that have been shown to arise from this process (Maguire, 1999), it should not be surprising that there have been some negative responses to the international growth of the Olympics. For example, Hoberman (1986) argues that the Olympic Movement is based on an 'amoral universalism' that 'strives for global participation at all costs, even sacrificing rudimentary standards.' (p. 2). Issues associated with globalisation will be discussed in a later section of this literature review. Attention will now turn to two of the elements identified as contradictory in Olympism: opportunity for all and excellence.

2.1iii Equal Opportunity and Excellence

In his essay 'Toward a Definition of Olympism', Segrave (1988) makes the distinction between the reality of the elitism of the modern Olympic Games and Coubertin's democratic objective to make sport the 'dowry of all races' (Coubertin, cited in Segrave 1988, p. 154). This highlights one of the most obvious contradictions of Olympism: the tension between sport for all and the celebration and privileging of excellence (Buggle, 1986; Krotee, 1981; Segrave, 1988). As much of the work on these aspects of Olympism centres around this conflict, the two issues will be considered here together.
Coubertin is said to have viewed the Olympics as a model for mass participation in sport (Segrave, 1988). The Olympic Charter states: “The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport in accordance with his or her needs.” (IOC website, 2004). Coubertin looked to address the contradiction between this and the elitism associated with excellence. He suggested the following formula: ‘100 people have to participate in sports so that 50 achieve higher performances, leading to another 20 with even higher results in order to finally attain 5 top class performances’ (cited in Buggle, 1986, p. 45). According to the IOC (website, 2004) in accordance with this objective, the Olympic Movement established a working group to study mass sport in 1984.

It has been argued that this ideal of opportunity for all does not sit comfortably with the notion of amateurism (Tomlinson, 1999). Whilst the issues surrounding amateurism will not be discussed at length at this point, it is important to note that the Victorian concept of amateurism is, by its very nature, exclusive and thus does not promote mass sport in its truest sense. Krotee (1981) notes that the structure of the IOC is extremely elitist in its oligarchy and thus does not support the democratic ideal Coubertin suggested was behind the Olympic Movement. As Krotee notes:

> Although he was always the champion of individual freedom, human rights, democracy, moral humility and integrity, Coubertin, on June 13, 1894, at the International Athletic Congress in Paris, personally hand-selected 14 men to serve as the foundation for the reconstruction of the modern Olympic Movement as he believed it should be constructed. (p. 115)

Lenskyj is also critical of the IOC and what she terms the ‘Olympic Industry’ (2000). Her critique questions the idea that the Olympics have a positive influence on society outside the IOC and competitors in the Games. In particular, she examined the case of the
residents of host cities. In a case study of the preparation for the 1996 Atlanta Games, Lenskyj (2000) voiced concern over the way in which the Olympics served to detract, both economically and politically, from issues of poverty and homelessness. She is also critical of attempts to 'clean' the streets of the homeless. Such examples highlight the negative impact of the Olympics on a significant proportion of the population. In cases such as these, Olympic sport is clearly not for all.

Excellence can be seen to be represented in the Olympic motto: citius, altius, fortius. It is recognised as being an essential aspect of Olympism (Segrave, 1988; Loland, 1994). Within this philosophy, however, excellence is seen to apply not only to sporting endeavour but also to "activities of the mind and spirit" (Segrave, 1988, p. 158). The extent to which the realisation of excellence in mind and spirit is reflected in the contemporary media portrayal of the Games is perhaps questionable, and will be examined in the empirical analysis of this project.

As with the notion of international understanding, Kidd (1984), argued that Coubertin echoed the ethos of the ancient Olympics in his inclusion of excellence in Olympism. Kidd noted that in the ancient Greek Games: "competitors prayed for 'either wreath or death' because victory alone brought glory" (p. 75). He also, however, explains that excellence in ancient times is not reflected in the same terms as in the modern Olympics as records did not exist, and measurements were not considered important, showing a different value system to today's concept of sport. The modern interpretation of the ideal of excellence in Olympism is very much in line with Weber's view of modern society as rationalised. It also shows connections with Guttmann's (1978) development of Weber's ideas in the former's work, *From Ritual to Record*. 
Gruneau (1989), in his discussion of television coverage and Olympic ideology, focuses on the media representations of Olympism. He argues that:

Olympic television discourse might work to naturalize: (1) a social definition of sport as a highly specialized set of physical practices necessarily committed to record setting and logically dependent upon the marketplace; (2) conceptions of the human body and physical excellence that effectively narrow our understanding of the boundaries of normality; ... (5) the liberal ideology of meritocracy as a means of reconciling the rival claims of freedom and meritocracy. (p. 7-30).

Here, Gruneau’s work overlaps with the ideas expressed by both Hoberman (1992) and Guttmann (1978). He notes how Olympic sport encourages narrow definitions of humanity, and conceptualises physical activity only in terms of particular, specialised practices. It is also noted that the elitist notion of meritocracy is used to formulate an understanding of the sports arena as an opportunity for freedom. Most interestingly, he suggests that this process of naturalising such ideology is carried out primarily through television. This indicates that, rather than promote Olympic ideals, such as opportunity for all and the harmonious development of man, the media representations, in fact, undermine Olympism. The following section deals with the issue of the independence of Olympic sport from politics.

2.1iv Independence of Sport

What Segrave (1988) is referring to with regards to the goal of the independence of sport is the separation of sport and politics. According to Segrave (1988), Coubertin’s aim to keep sport independent from politics was inspired to a large extent by the views of his mentor in France, Frederic Le Play. Segrave (1988) notes that the objective of Coubertin was to ‘isolate the Olympics from political interference and sectarian
interests.' (p. 157). Avery Brundage, IOC President from 1952 – 1972 was also concerned with the goal of maintaining the political independence of sport. He stated ‘We are a sports group, organized and pledged to promote clean competition and sportsmanship. When we let politics, racial questions or social disputes creep into our actions we’re in for trouble.’ (cited in Segrave, 1988, p. 157). These views of Brundage were reflected in his response to events that influenced the Olympics during his reign. For example, his decision to continue with the Munich Games in 1972, despite terrorist attacks on Israeli athletes demonstrated such a stance.

According to Tomlinson (1999) this aim went unrealised from the very beginning of the modern Olympics:

It did not take long, right from the very beginning, for the Olympics to take on political and economic meanings undreamt of by de Coubertin. Unwittingly, the dislocated aristocrat’s legacy to the modern world has been its biggest non-military propaganda machine. (p. 214)

The suggestion here is that whilst the Games have taken on political meaning and have been utilised in political agendas, this was unwitting, and that Coubertin’s objectives were not political. However, it has been argued that Coubertin was, in fact, an imperialist (Guttmann, 1992; Roche, 2000; Tomlinson, 1999). As noted earlier in this section, Coubertin has been criticised for holding the Games in conjunction with the world expositions because this directly linked them with a capitalist ideology (Roche, 2000). The legacy of this can be seen in the recent intensification of commercialisation of the Games witnessed, particularly in Los Angeles, 1984 (Tomlinson, 1989).

It has been observed that the projection of the Olympics on to the world stage has, to a large extent, undermined the efforts to keep separate sport and politics (Gruneau, 1989; Toohey and Veal, 2000; Triesman, 1984). It has been argued that the global stage
provided by the media spectacle of the Olympics encourages nations and individuals to make political statements to a captive worldwide audience (Toohey and Veal, 2000; Triesman, 1984). Examples of this include the black power salute of Tommie Smith, John Carlos and Lee Evans at the 1968 Mexico Games. Ironically, the global stage provided by the Olympics is also actively sought after by the IOC in its attempt to fulfil the aim of internationalism. The boycotts of the 1980s have also been used to illustrate the futility of the objective to isolate the Olympics from politics (Nafzinger, 1988; Ramsamy, 1984; Toohey and Veal, 2000; Triesman, 1984). It is noted that these incidents expose as myth the ideal that governments do not intervene in national Olympic committees. Furthermore, it has been argued that the IOC itself is complicit in the incorporation of politics in the Games in its expulsion of South Africa due to its political situation (Ramsamy, 1984).

More recently, the bribery scandal surrounding the selection of Salt Lake City as host for the 2002 Games has underlined that politics is an inherent part of the bidding process for host cities. It was found that in the build up to the vote for the hosts of the 2002 winter Olympics, several IOC members took bribes from Salt Lake City Organising Committee representatives in exchange for their votes. Several members implicated in the incident were dismissed from the IOC (Lenskyj, 2000). Examples such as this demonstrate not only that IOC members themselves have been party to bringing politics into the Olympics, but also the corruption that this can bring: the very scenario against which Coubertin and Brundage were seeking to protect the Games.

Several writers have noted the inherently political nature of the Olympics (Guttmann, 1992; Segrave, 1988; Tomlinson, 1999; Toohey and Veal, 2000). Segrave
stated: "The Olympic Games mirror the problem rather than the resolution of the 'sport and politics do not mix' formulation." He goes on to note the existence of the contradictory nature of this objective in the very first Olympic Charter, noting that:

Although Coubertin consistently advocated the political purity of Olympism, he forever proselytized the democratic character of the Olympic Movement, willingly manipulating political forces to further his aims. (p. 157).

Evidence would suggest that the ideal of the Games as apolitical is, and never was, likely to be fulfilled. The global stage is too appealing to those with political agendas to be ignored in the name of Olympism. Furthermore, the very structure of the Olympics is political, and according to several academics, has been from their outset (Segrave, 1988; Tomlinson, 1999; Toohey and Veal, 2000). The section that follows goes on to examine the Games as a forum for cultural expression.

2.1v Cultural Expression

The Olympic Charter states: 'Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort' (IOC website, 2004). This extract underlines the idea that the Olympics are intended to be more than simply a sporting context but that they represent a 'blend' with culture and education as well. Segrave (1988) reinforces the idea that culture and education are linked in the concept of Olympism. According to Segrave, the expression of culture in the Games is aimed to celebrate the 'inner harmony of mind, body and spirit.'

In understanding the ideas of Olympism, the cultural, historical context that it arose from is important to consider. As noted earlier in this section, links have been made between Coubertin's emphasis on culture and the aesthetic, and the World Fairs or Expos
of the late nineteenth century (MacAloon, 1981; Roche, 2000; Tomlinson, 1999). The World Fairs displayed products emanating from the cultural sphere of an increasingly global capitalist marketplace. Tomlinson describes them thus:

This then was the context in which de Coubertin developed his vision. As a new world sought to show off its cultural wares in the global marketplace, the Baron ... argued more and more publicly and persuasively for the development of an international culture of the body. (p. 201)

As indicated here, Coubertin's interest in cultural exchange was very much in-keeping with the broader social climate at the turn of the 20th century. Just as the World Fairs were an arena in which entrepreneurs from different nations could 'show off their cultural wares' (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 201), the Olympic Games provided a global stage for cultural expression. Coubertin's interest in culture may also have been influenced by his own biography, as his father was a painter (MacAloon, 1981). MacAloon (1981) also notes that Coubertin himself won a medal for poetry, at the Stockholm Games of 1912, thus illustrating his own interest in and commitment to the arts and cultural aspects of the Olympics.

Coubertin's concept of the Olympics and its ideology Olympism is eclectic, borrowing ideas from a range of sources. Not only did the globalising trends of the late 19th century inspire his interest in cultural issues, but the ancient Games are also argued to have influenced Coubertin on this matter (Kidd, 1984; Bandy, 1988). Bandy describes the importance of culture in the holistic approach taken by the Greeks in their view of human beings and links this to Coubertin's desire to combine 'in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind' (IOC website, 2004). When making such links between the modern and ancient Games one should, however, bear in mind Kidd's warnings that Coubertin often misrepresented the meanings attached to the ancient Olympics.
Whilst much has been written on the history and roots of the inclusion of culture in the Olympic Movement, there is little literature on its current place in the Olympics. This could be due to the fact that this element is poorly publicised in comparison with the sporting timetable (Segrave, 1988, p. 156). Bandy (1988) reveals that the cultural competition set in place by Coubertin was abolished in the early 1950s and suggests a reason for this. Whilst she states that there were questions raised regarding the professional status of the artists taking part in the competition, the main reason she proposes for the decline of the cultural aspect of the Olympics was the failure to achieve a union of sport and art in the same way that the Greeks did. This, Bandy argues, was due to a modern tendency to think in dualistic terms, which is antagonistic to the development of the view of the harmonious human.

2.1vi Fair and Equal Competition

The importance of fair and equal competition had always been emphasised by Coubertin as part of the Olympic ideology. He wrote:

The important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well. To spread these percepts is to build up a stronger and more valiant and, above all, more scrupulous and more generous humanity. (cited in Segrave, 1988, p. 156)

These sentiments are echoed today in the words of the Olympic Charter, 'Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort.' (IOC website, 2004). The Olympic oath also reinforces this notion of fair play: 'In the name of all competitors I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them' (cited in Segrave, 1988, p. 156). Despite this emphasis, few writers have picked up on Olympism and fair play in relation to the use of performance
enhancing drugs. Whilst Strenk (1988) briefly touches upon this point, writers such as Segrave (1988), Loland (1994) and Tomlinson (1999) make no reference to this form of cheating. In the main, writings have tended to examine the issue of amateurism (Segrave, 1988; Strenk, 1988; Gruneau, 1984; Eassom, 1994).

Amateurism is very much the focus of Segrave's (1988) discussion of fair play with relation to Olympism. He reports that Coubertin was a promoter of the amateur ethos, and saw prizes as detracting from 'the struggle'. As with other aspects of Olympism, Coubertin attempted to steep the notion of amateurism in the tradition of the Games of ancient Greece. However, it is likely that this is an idea that arose more directly from the Victorian England class structure (Kidd, 1984). Kidd also suggests that stories of the demise of the ancient Olympics being due to the entry of professionals were manipulated to promote the amateur code of the modern Games:

Historians, aware that some Olympic champions had been rewarded with fortunes, wove a tale of decline and fall, of a later generation of professionals who, motivated by a 'win at all costs' ambition, drove true amateurs out of athletics and lowered the standards of sporting behaviour. This argument was then used to justify the harsh amateur code that governed eligibility in the modern Games until 1979. (p. 80).

The influence of the Victorian class relations on the amateur code of the Olympics is also outlined by Eassom (1994), who states 'amateurism has less to do specifically with prize money and wages, and more to do with a reinforcement of an usurpation by the middle classes of the aristocracy's mantel of gentility.' (p. 117). Some have noted that these origins of the amateur code have contributed to the expression of class power in the Games, which has significantly contributed to the structure of the power hierarchies in Olympic sport (Guttmann, 1984). Furthermore, it is has been argued that there is a clear
contradiction in placing the concept of amateurism in the capitalist context of the modern Olympic Movement, which eventually led to the commercialisation of the Games (Guttmann, 1984).

The term "amateur" was removed from Article 26 of the Olympic Charter in 1971 (Strenk, 1988) and thus began the process of the professionalisation of the Games. Before this, however, the issue of amateurism was inherent in many problems associated with the Olympics (Strenk, 1988). For example, the arguments surrounding endorsements by shoe companies such as Adidas (Strenk, 1988; and Simson and Jennings, 1992). Similarly, the issue of financial incentives and appearance fees was seen to be problematic (Strenk, 1988). Having discussed these issues, with reference to individual case studies, Strenk went on to conclude that: 'rather than promoting virtue, good sportsmanship, and honesty, the amateur code encouraged hypocrisy, dishonesty, and corruption.' (p. 321).

Rose (1986) traced the demise of the amateur code through the events of the cold war. He argues that the state sponsorship of athletes in the communist block led to a loosening of the amateur code, with honour not being linked so much to sporting success as to the health of nations and political systems. Capitalist countries followed suit and embraced the commercialism of the Games, which allowed for professionalism and the Western athletes to compete with the success of the Soviet and East German athletes. According to Gruneau (1989) this shift from amateur to professional in Olympic sport was, by the late 1980s, intrinsic to the discourse of the media coverage of the Games. Arguably, this trend has since gathered further momentum. This is an issue examined in the following study of the political economy of the Olympics in Salt Lake City.
2.1 Environmentalism

The issue of environmental concern has only been included in the Olympic Charter relatively recently, in the early 1990s (Lenskyj, 2000), and is thus not incorporated into Segrave’s (1988) definition of Olympism. More broadly, outside of the Olympic and sporting arena, the issue of the environment has become increasingly prominent since the early 1990s (Maguire et al, 2002; Cantelon and Letters, 2000). Selman (cited in Maguire et al, 2002) has argued for the need for sustainable development, and sees this as centring around three key principles. Firstly, inter-generational equity, this is the need to see future generations inherit the Earth in the same state it was found by the previous generation. The second notion is that of intra-generational equity – that within a particular generation, all people around the globe, regardless of social status should have their needs taken into account in the formulation of strategies of sustainable development. Finally, Selman argues that there should be a degree of transfrontier responsibility, with there being an emphasis on individuals making use of their own, local resources, rather than exploiting those of others. Environmental pressure groups have become increasingly vocal and influential as awareness of the implications of abusing the environment has been raised. Sporting events, and in particular mega events such as the Olympics have been targeted as a key concern in terms of man’s destruction of the environment (Cantelon and Letters, 2000).

This issue is highlighted by Lenskyj (2000) in her critique of the Olympic industry. She points out that the Olympics, and in particular the winter Games, can have extremely detrimental effects on the local environment of host cities, both in terms of the construction of sporting facilities and the influx of large amounts of spectators. The
IOC's concern over the environmental impact of the Olympics is articulated in its guidelines put forward for the requirements of host cities (IOC website, 2004). However, this awareness of environmental issues on behalf of the IOC has only been relatively recent and came in response to attacks by 'green' pressure groups in the wake of the destruction of the local ecosystem caused by the Albertville winter Olympics in 1992 (Cantelon and Letters, 2000).

Cantelon and Letters (2000) argue that the winter Olympics have a particularly adverse impact upon the environment because they demand precise modifications to the natural environment, in-keeping with the highly structured nature of Olympic competition. Despite the widely reported damage caused by the Albertville Olympics, and demonstrations by environmental groups at the opening ceremony, the IOC refused to admit to the extent to which the Games had caused destruction (Cantelon and Letters, 2000). The next winter Games, in Lillehammer, were seen to be a turning point in the IOC's perceived consciousness regarding the environment, however, Cantelon and Letters (2000) have claimed that the responsibility for this lay more at a local level, with the Norwegian organisers. Nevertheless, from this platform, the IOC built upon the legacy of Lillehammer and incorporated environmentalism as the third strand of the Olympic Movement, alongside sport and culture. According to Maguire et al (2002), environmental awareness has been included as a key criterion in the selection of host cities of both winter and summer Games. They also note that in Australia, during the build up to the Sydney Olympics in 2000, an independent, non-governmental environmental watchdog group emerged, representing a coalition of a variety of 'green' pressure groups. This body, 'Green Games Watch 2000' monitored the organisers in
awareness of and regard for sustainable development in sport. Despite this, work by Lenskyj (2000) and Maguire et al (2002) suggest that scepticism remains as to the real impact of the IOC’s apparent concern for environmental issues. For example, despite being known as the ‘Green Games’, the Sydney Olympics still caused significant damage to local natural resources and ecosystems (Maguire et al, 2002).

The issue of environmentalism is one which appears to be of increasing importance to the public generally, government bodies, the IOC and, more specifically, Olympic host cities. Both Cantelon and Letters (2000) and Maguire et al (2002), note how, within the context of globalisation debates, concerns over the environment underline the connection between the local and the global. For example, an event such as the Olympic Games has severe local environmental impacts upon the host city’s ecosystem, but this also impacts directly upon the global reputation of the IOC as a transnational organisation. In turn, the policy decisions of the IOC also have consequences for the protection of the local environment of future host cities.

In summary, it appears that much of the work currently existing on Olympism is related to the history and formulation of the ideology behind the Olympics Movement. Whilst critical work does exist, little of this is directly related to the concept of Olympism. This study will attempt to address this issue, and form a critical analysis of Olympism with specific relation to the political economy and the Salt Lake City winter Games.

2.2 The Media-Sports Complex

Involvement in media sport is, according to several researchers (Maguire, 1999; Wenner, 1989; Whannel, 1992; Jhally, 1989a), the most common way of experiencing
sport in contemporary society. Jhally (1989a) notes the importance of the media to the political economy of sport, stating: “As soon as we concentrate specifically on the subject of sports in capitalism, it becomes apparent that we can talk only about a sports/media complex” (p. 77). Given this assertion, sports media research would appear to be of great significance. It is surprising, then, that Buscombe is viewed by many as a pioneer in this area with work as recent as 1975 (Whannel, 1992; Real, 1989; Kinkema and Harris, 1998). The belatedness of sports media research is put into context by looking at the beginnings of mediated sport.

Whilst sources vary as to the exact dates involved, Goldlust (1987) states that the first newspaper coverage of sport began in the early eighteenth century. The first sports dedicated publications were produced in the early 1800s in Britain, with America quickly responding with their own journals (Goldlust, 1987). It is more generally asserted, however, that sports reporting in the press began to gain momentum at the end of the nineteenth century, with the development of the telegraph (Birrell and Loy, 1981; Goldlust, 1987; Maguire et al, 2002). The first radio broadcasts took place in the 1920s, with the first NBC network being established in this medium in 1926 (Birrell and Loy, 1981). Records regarding the first television broadcast of sport vary between the 1939 FA Cup final (Maguire et al, 2002), the 1937 Wimbledon championship (Barnett, 1990) and a 1939 baseball match between Columbia and Princeton (Birrell and Loy, 1981). Whichever event can claim the prestige of featuring in the first televised sports coverage, it would appear that it was broadcast at some point in the late 1930s.

Since its somewhat delayed genesis in the 1970s, research into media sport has taken two distinct paths: that of a sociological approach (Rader, 1984; Goldlust, 1987;
Maguire, 1993) and that of semiotics or communication studies (Buscombe, 1975). Recently, however, Boyle and Haynes (2000) have noted that researchers such as Whannel (1992) and Blain et al (1993) have attempted to synthesise these two ways of thinking.

Within these ways of approaching media sport, the area has been divided into three constitutive elements: the ownership and control in production processes; the sports media texts themselves; and the audience. (Maguire, 1993; 1999; Cantelon and Gruneau, 1988a; Hall, 1980). Whilst it is recognised that these distinctions are not complete and that interconnections inevitably exist (Jhally, 1989a), dividing the area of concern up in these ways is helpful in making the task of examining media sport more manageable. In the following review, these three levels will be examined separately. The first two sections, considering production processes and the media sports text will be given greater attention than the audience as these will form the main focus of the research task at hand. Throughout the discussion, examples from the Olympics will be used in order to relate the concept of media sport to the current study.

2.2i Ownership, control and production of media sport

The importance of issues of ownership and control in the media sport complex is highlighted by Boyle and Haynes (2000) who argue:

Anybody who wishes to understand sport whether an academic, a fan or journalist, needs to understand the economic and political forces which are shaping and reshaping the contemporary sporting experience. (p. 222)

The interdependencies within this area are highly complex and will be discussed in the following review within a structure which attempts to address the questions: who are the
key players?; who are the owners?; what is the role of advertisers?; and who controls the media institutions? The consequences of this for cultural production will be considered in the examination of the media sports text. Maguire (1999) outlines the need to answer similar questions, he states: "The pattern of ownership and the consequences of this pattern for control of cultural production must be traced." (p. 149).

The media sports complex is widely seen as being comprised of three parts (Maguire et al, 2002; Maguire, 1999; Kinkema and Harris, 1998; Boyle and Haynes, 2000). The three bodies involved include: sports organisations; media groups; and transnational corporations who advertise in the media. The interplay between these groups is both interdependent and multidirectional. This is lucidly illustrated by Maguire et al (2002) in the following model:

![Fig. 2.1 The Media Sports Complex](image)

From this, it is possible to see not only the interconnectedness of the bodies involved in the production processes, but also how these relate to the other levels of the media sport
complex: the audience and the texts. Boyle and Haynes (2002), use the example of the American basketball player Michael Jordan to demonstrate how this interplay occurs. They argue that the phenomenon surrounding this individual "epitomises the degree to which sport, promotional media and popular culture are embodied in the contemporary mega-star" (p. 99). Maguire (1990) also traces these interdependencies in his examination of the introduction of American Football in the UK. Here, it was clear how each element of the production process was integral to the successful launch of the sport, with Anheuser Busch underwriting the costs of the original broadcast and owning the majority of the ensuing British League. In addition, the Daily Telegraph newspaper published promotional magazines and underwrote costs for production editing. Cheerleader Productions and later Trans World International were responsible for the packaging of the programme for Channel 4 television; and the NFL headed the marketing campaign. This case study is effective in underlining not only the ways in which different groups cooperate in producing media sports texts, but also the power relations that exist in this relationship.

Having identified the key components of the media sport production process, the question of "who owns the media institutions?" needs to be addressed. As seems inevitable from the complexity of the linkages between the key players in this process, the question of who owns is not a straightforward one as the economics of the media sports production process are extremely intricate. In some cases, it may be that several parties have economic investment in the same project as was the case in the launch of American Football in the UK (Maguire, 1990). It may also be true that some individuals influence more than one element of the production complex which can be seen in the
commonly cited example of Rupert Murdoch (Miller et al, 2001; Rowe, 1999; Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Maguire, 1999; Coakley, 2001), who owns several media corporations (Fox, BskyB), sports teams (Los Angeles Dodgers), sports facilities (Staples Center, Los Angeles) and newspapers (The Times, The Sun, The New York Post).

In the case of the Olympic Games, it is interesting to map out patterns of ownership with regards to the mediated Olympics. The IOC owns the rights to each Olympic Games and then sells these to the highest bidder, thus passing the ownership of the rights to the Games to an outside party. Since the sale of television rights in the Olympics began, the commercial, US networks have paid significantly more than other bidders to cover the Games (Slater, 1998). Several writers have noted that this has led to them having a high degree of power in dictating issues such as the scheduling of Olympic programmes to accommodate US viewers. Until recently, the Canadian, Dick Pound was the IOC chief negotiator in the sale of television rights (Pound, 2004). These two factors perhaps underline the argument that the current state of the media sports complex supports the assertion that North America has a disproportionate influence on world sport (Guttmann 1994; Klein, 1991). This issue will be examined further in a consideration of issues of control and the relationship between sport and the media.

The role of the state in owning and dictating patterns of ownership is also of central importance. The area of media control can be seen as two distinct sections; that of commercially funded media and that of state or publicly funded media. In Britain, the BBC was the first media outlet in television, and is publicly funded. This position was then challenged by the arrival of ITV, a commercial channel in 1955 (Barnett, 1990; Maguire, et al, 2002). Newspapers, whilst never directly owned by the government in
Britain, were subject to a high degree of censorship by the state in their early years (Goldlust, 1987). The American press was the first to detach itself from political groups, with the launch of the commercial press (Goldlust, 1987). Britain followed suit in the 1850s. Currently, the television networks in the United States are all commercially based (Jhally, 1989a), whilst in Europe the patterns of ownership are still mixed. However, as Boyle and Haynes (2000) note, this may be changing in Britain with the introduction of Murdoch’s BSkyB network, and the establishment of Channel 5, meaning that even on terrestrial television, commercial channels out-number those that are publicly funded.

Several writers attribute this shift from publicly to privately owned media to the political climate created by the government of Margaret Thatcher (Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Rowe, 1999; Whannel, 1992). Similarly, Miller et al (2001) implicate the Canadian government as being instrumental in the same shifts in patterns of ownership that have taken place in both Canadian television and sports. Issues of ownership are further complicated by dual rights existing for certain sports. For example, the BBC has, at the time of writing, secondary rights to the English Premiership and thus may show highlights of coverage (Boyle and Haynes, 2000). In the current arrangement, Sky paid £1.024 billion for the primary rights to show live matches, whilst the BBC paid £105 million for the rights to show a highlights programme up to twice weekly (BBC website, 2004). The BBC, in recent years have blurred the boundaries between publicly funded and pay TV by using licence fees to fund the creation of channels available only on pay TV.

An example of governments dictating patterns of ownership in the sports media complex can be seen in Rupert Murdoch’s attempted take-over of the English football
club, Manchester United. In owning the club, Murdoch would have had a distinct advantage in the negotiation of television rights, being in the privileged position of being both buyer and part seller (Miller et al., 2001). This move was, however, blocked by the Tony Blair's government due to the monopoly giving Murdoch an unfair advantage in bidding for television rights (Boyle and Haynes, 2000). Interestingly, other European governments did not make similar moves when AC Milan and Paris St Germain were bought by media corporations (Boyle and Haynes 2000).

Sports marketing agencies are another group involved in the ownership patterns of the sport media complex. Examples of these include: West Nally, International Management Group (IMG), and William Morris Agency (WMA). According to Boyle and Haynes (2000), the West Nally marketing group were responsible for pioneering the Olympic Marketing model regarding the sale of both advertising rights and television rights, which they then sold to the IOC. The role of sports marketing agencies is, primarily, to construct models for the regulation of marketing. They are then either employed by sports bodies or individuals, or alternatively, they sell the model to a buyer, such as the IOC.

According to Sage (1998), television is primarily an advertising business rather than a journalistic venture. In sports coverage this is particularly apparent, especially when considering the claim that the NBC coverage of the Atlanta Olympics consisted of more advertising time than sports footage (Miller et al, 2001). Wenner (1989) discusses the appeal of mediated sports to advertisers, rationalising that it is an attractive space for commercials because the viewers watch with such intensity. He argues that 'the content per se is not what is being sold; rather it is the audience for that content that is being sold
to advertisers.' (1989, p. 22). Statements such as these make clear the interconnections that exist between the different levels of the sports media complex, as we see here, strong links exist between the advertisers in the production processes and the audience as a market. One of the more controversial issues in sports advertising has been the place of tobacco companies in this relationship.

The ban of advertising of tobacco on television in Britain in the 1970s signified a key moment in the commercial sponsorship of sports teams (Whannel, 1992; Boyle and Haynes, 2000). Tobacco companies could no longer pay television companies to advertise. Instead, they sponsored sports teams who would gain television exposure. Ironically, this meant the tobacco companies were able to display their brands on both commercial and publicly funded channels. The Labour government's ban on tobacco companies' sponsorship of sports events has ended this relationship, although significantly not for Formula One motor racing. The sport was controversially granted exemption from the legislation until 2006, following a £1 million donation to the Labour party from the sport's key financial backer, Bernie Ecclestone. Although the cheque was later returned by the government, concern remains over the Labour party's close relationship with the formula one mogul (BBC website, 2004). The sponsorship of sports by other corporations still exists (Natwest – cricket; Norwich Union – athletics; Carling – football) and gives rise to criticism that the boundaries between sports and brands are becoming increasingly blurred (Jhally, 1989a; Wenner, 1994).

In tracing the influence of advertising in media sport, the example of the Olympics is informative. The Los Angeles Games of 1984 is generally viewed as the watershed for sponsorship in the Olympics (Boyle and Haynes, 2000). As these were the
first commercially funded Olympics, the host committee felt it important to attract audiences in order to profit from advertisers (Meadow, 1989). Following the commercial success of the so called 'Hamburger Games' (Jhally, 1989a), the IOC followed their marketing model which was characterised by the licensing of rights to the Olympic logo and name to a small number of corporations who formed the TOP venture (Moragas et al, 1995). According to Whannel (1992), Samaranch felt that the IOC needed this new form of revenue in order to achieve "global, capitalist rationalisation" (p. 37). Whilst the IOC claims to have ensured control of the commercialism of the Games by banning the placing of advertisements in the Olympic arenas (Moragas et al, 1995; IOC website, 2004), they have no control over television advertising. With the large sums now paid by broadcasters for the rights to the Olympics – US$793 million for the 2004 Games (Slater, 1998) – advertising revenue is imperative to the financial survival of television networks.

The opening ceremony of the Barcelona Olympics showed that advertisements featured very heavily in coverage across the world, with 11% of commercial broadcasts being comprised of advertisements (Moragas et al, 1995). In the NBC coverage, 60 minutes of the opening ceremony were dedicated to commercial breaks. Interestingly, without being an official member of the TOPs scheme, the lead broadcaster also benefits from using the Olympics as a brand to advertise their network. Pound (2004) informs us that NBC are prepared to lose money in buying the rights to the Games because the 'kudos' which accompanies being able to brand itself as the 'network of the Olympics' underwrites the deficit in ensuring high future audience figures. The case study of the Olympics is thus illustrative of the economic importance of advertisers in the sport media
complex, both in terms of funding television coverage, and, in directly funding sports organisations.

Having looked at issues of ownership, it is now important to attempt to address the question of 'who controls media sport?' The debate surrounding the balance of power between sports organisations and media and marketing bodies is often raised in discussions of the media sports complex (Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Lenskyj, 2000; Maguire et al, 2002; Maguire, 1999; Miller et al, 2001; Rowe, 1999; Wenner, 1989). Whilst some see this relationship as being symbiotic (Ruttle, 1989), others highlight the growing dependency of sports on media for financial survival (Whannel, 1992; Wenner, 1994; Miller et al, 2001).

One of the key arguments put forward in support of the assertion that media institutions control sport is the observation that sports often change form for the purposes of television (Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Birrell and Loy, 1981; Rader, 1984; Sage, 1998;). Fundamental changes have taken place in the US national sports of basketball, baseball and American football since the 1960s, in order to increase the appeal of the sports to the impatient viewer (Rader, 1984). In Britain, Boyle and Haynes (2000) cite examples such as the introduction of one-day games in cricket and the shortening of snooker matches, again anticipating an audience with a limited attention span.

Whilst some (Miller et al, 2001) seem convinced of sports organisations' lack of autonomy in the sports media complex, several writers believe that the relationship is a complex one (Coakley, 2001; Maguire et al, 2002; Rowe, 1999). Maguire et al argue that: 'There seems to be an interdependent relationship between the media and sport' (p. 56). They also claim that the relationship is characterised by both 'enabling and constraining
features for both institutions' (p. 57). Both Maguire et al (2002) and Coakley (2001) point out that only some sports forms are influenced by the media, whilst others (such as recreational sports) are participated in by large numbers without interference.

It should be recognised that the degree of autonomy also depends on factors such as which sport form is involved and the size of the teams or organisations (Rader, 1984). This is evident in ITV Digital pulling out of a television deal with the Nationwide League, in 2002. This had massive financial implications for the smaller football clubs in Britain (Independent, 22nd March, 2002). Some writers view sports organisations as complicit in their own exploitation. Boyle and Haynes (2000) argue that “far from stealing the soul of sport, sports have only been too keen to pass it to television for financial gain” (p. 78). Concern is also raised in this work, about the consequences of this close relationship for the possibility of critical public debate about the media sports complex.

The IOC’s relationship with media and marketing bodies is often cited in considerations of the power relations between sports and its sources of income (Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Gruneau, 1989; Larson and Park, 1993; Lenskyj, 2000; Maguire et al, 2002; Maguire, 1999; Moragas et al, 1995; Ruttle, 1989; Whannel, 1992). One of the more notable conflicts of interest is that of the scheduling negotiations, which took place prior to the 1988 Seoul Games (Jennings and Simson, 1992). Not only were the athletics finals scheduled at times unsuitable for optimum performance, for the benefit of American television coverage, but the South Korea government also incorporated daylight saving hours to further consolidate the time differences (Larson and Park, 1993; Whannel, 1992). There are also suggestions that the dominance of television interests
leads to a disproportionate influence of the US more generally in the IOC, in terms of the appeal of American cities as prospective hosts for the Games (Maguire et al., 2002; Whannel, 1992; Larson and Park, 1993). It is asserted by some that the danger of over reliance on the revenue from television rights led Samaranch to seek new sources of income in the form of the TOP scheme (Whannel 1992).

There is an interesting complex of interdependencies at work in the struggle for control of the Olympics (Lenskyj, 2000). Journalists are said to be paid by the IOC to write favourable articles about the Olympic Movement, thus prising power out of the hands of the media (Lenskyj, 2000). Lenskyj also reveals that those who buy the television rights to the Games are viewed as employees of the IOC and are expected to represent the Olympics accordingly. To add to this intricacy, the bid committees are also said to employ sections of the media to both enhance their city’s chance of winning the Games and damage the prospects of rivals. In turn, members of the IOC, as was uncovered in the case of Salt Lake City’s bid, are paid by the host cities for their votes (Jennings and Sambrook, 2000). A backdrop to these interdependencies of power and control is the notion asserted by Jacques Rogge, IOC President (Trans World Sport, 2002), that the Games could not exist in their current format without commercial backing. If this is, then, the case, the control is neither with the media, nor with sporting bodies, but rests firmly in the hands of those who provide the finances. That said, one must be wary of falling into the economic reductionist trappings of a Marxist account.

Having, at least to some extent, mapped out the patterns of ownership and control in the media sports complex, it is to the consequences of these relationships for cultural
production that attention must now be turned. This issue is most clearly illustrated by looking at the media sports texts themselves and the messages and ideology they contain.

2.2ii Media sport texts

Lyotard (cited in Blain et al, 1993) informs us that discourse cannot convey truth but is always used with vested interest. It should be noted that such postmodern arguments can be questionable when taken to the extreme (Blain et al, 1993), however, the assertion is useful as a starting point in understanding that media texts should not be viewed as transparent or neutral. Rowe (1999) supports this argument, stating that: “Media sports texts...are almost perfect prototypes of signs in circulation, heavily loaded with symbolic value” (p. 68). In this section, current work on media sports texts will be examined in an attempt to understand both where the messages and ideology in sports media texts emanate from, and how this manifests itself.

Whilst media sports texts are very much influenced by the motivations of those involved in the production processes (Boyle and Haynes, 2000), it is also true that they are multifaceted in terms of the messages encoded (Maguire, 1993a). Maguire (1999) proposes that the discourse of media sport works not only to increase the commodity value of sport, in the interests of the production team, but also reinforces other “systems of domination” (p. 154). The consequences of production are evident in media sports texts, in the packaging of sports as commercial entertainment commodities (Rader, 1984; Maguire, 1993b; Rowe, 1999), and in sustaining the status quo within society (Jhally, 1989b).
The packaging of media sports is often seen as reflective of the entertainment industry (Cantelon and Gruneau, 1988a; Gruneau, 1989; Maguire, 1993a; 1993b; Rader, 1984; Rowe, 1999; Tomlinson, 1989). In understanding the reasons for this, it is important to realise the need for large audience figures in the media. This is the case for both commercial institutions, who require high ratings to attract advertisers, and for non-commercial media, who need to reach large audiences in order to fulfil missions to educate and inform. Large audiences are also of direct economic significance to newspapers, magazines and pay television as the audience pays to consume. Barnett (1990) recognises that attempts to increase the entertainment value of sports media texts stem from a need to widen the target audience. Looking at cricket, he points to the example of Kerry Packer's Australian Channel Nine packaging of test cricket which included cartoon ducks superimposed on the screen to accompany batsmen out for no score. He suggests that coverage of this nature works only with the aim of holding the interest of those who would otherwise not watch.

Rowe (1999) examines the deliberate trivialisation of footballers in coverage of Italia '90, as an attempt to attract female audiences who were not previously targeted. The focus on entertainment in the packaging of sports for the media does not arise solely from the media institutions themselves, however. This is illustrated by Tomlinson's (1989) analysis of the opening ceremony of the 1984 Olympics. Tomlinson (1989, pp. 7-9) observes that the event was structured to prioritise the entertainment of the audience, he states that: “television images do linger on; and those of the Los Angeles Olympics of 1984 can only be said to owe more to the spirit of Liberace than to that of de Coubertin”. Whilst in this case, the television coverage may have contributed to the packaging of the
ceremony as entertainment; much of this framing was carried out by those who organised the event itself.

In understanding the ways in which overriding messages manifest themselves in media sport, Whannel (1992) identifies four elements involved in the manipulation of texts to convey certain ideologies. These are: hierarchisation - the privileging of some aspects over others; narrative - attaching a story to events; personalisation - the process of focussing on and reducing events to the individual; and frames of reference - placing events within the wider context of society. The packaging of sports events as entertainment for the audience echoes the idea put forward earlier that sports are positioned within the broader context of the entertainment industry. This is achieved in Olympic television coverage by adopting conventions associated with other areas of visual entertainment such a fast pace, the use of graphics and the presentation of multiple events (Real, 1996). Several authors have referred to televised sports as the male soap opera (Rowe, 1999; Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Kinkema and Harris, 1998) again suggesting that sports are commodified in the media to fit with the general sphere of entertainment.

The idea of televised sport as a soap opera is also indicative of the ways in which the media attach stories to sports events. Whilst the narrative of sports events often centre around the question ‘who will win?’ (Cantelon and Gruneau, 1988a), there are also often sub-plots, which arise from the tendency of the media to construct heroes and villains (Boyle and Haynes, 2000). This also demonstrates the way in which personalisation takes place in an attempt to sustain the audience’s interest beyond the level of the game. This is particularly useful when events themselves may not have intrinsic attraction, as was the
case in the media construction of Eddie ‘the Eagle’ Edwards in the 1988 winter Olympics (Whannel, 1992). With little British prospects in the Games, the novelty factor of a daring no-hoper provided a story line to attract audiences that may otherwise have been lost. It also attracted a wider audience than the winter sports enthusiast who would normally have made up the viewing base.

In terms of ideology attached to sports media texts, most researchers seem to agree that media sport reflects a capitalist ideology (Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Gruneau, 1989; Jhally, 1989a; Kinkema and Harris, 1998; Maguire, 1993a; Rowe, 1999). This would seem to arise from the profit making motives of those involved in the production processes of many media forms. However, as Whannel (1992) points out, the media institutions themselves are also caught up in the wider context of capitalism. He sees this as rooted in Britain in the Thatcher government of the 1980s, which celebrated privatisation, entrepreneurial efforts and the focus on the individual. When considering this proposal, it becomes immediately apparent that personalisation in media coding supports the ideology of capitalism. Personalisation may be achieved through the use of camera zooms on athletes, in both individual and team sports. This is now being taken a step further with the possibility of accessing ‘player cam’ through digital television coverage of team sports, thus allowing the viewer to choose a camera angle dedicated to a specific player for certain periods of play. Newspaper reviews of matches, which mark players’ performances out of ten is also common and adds to the focus upon the individual. Rowe (1999) examines the media focus on sports celebrity, and argues that this works to detract attention from the role of the social collective. Boyle and Haynes (2000) make a similar argument in the case of drug abuse in sport, suggesting that media
often individualise the issue, bestowing all blame on the party found guilty, ignoring the part played by social conditions. They argue that the media cannot implicate the sports structure as a whole as this would effectively be killing the goose that lays the golden egg" (p. 107).

Hierarchisation supports the ideology of capitalism in media sport, as it tends to places professional sport above amateur activities (Boyle and Haynes, 2000). This may seem paradoxical, given the ascendancy of the Olympics in the media, as traditionally, the Olympics has been associated with amateur sport. It should, however, be recognised that a process of professionalisation has taken place in recent years, since the IOC’s decision to abolish the term ‘amateur’ from the Olympic Charter in 1971 (Strenk, 1988). Television has also played a significant part in the transition of the Olympic Movement into the capitalist era, as is noted by Nixon (1988) in relation to the 1984 Games: “Although big business in general played a crucial role in the financial success of the Capitalist Games, television – as a corporate commercial enterprise medium – added to its own status as the predominant influence over the Games” (p. 244). Furthermore, it is suggested that the financial success of the television deal in Los Angeles meant that there was an expectation of large profits from broadcasting rights in future Games and thus the Olympics have become trapped in a capitalist media relationship (Gruneau, 1989; Nixon, 1988; Rowe, 1999).

The prevalence of advertising in media sport also underlines the extent to which it operates in a capitalist context. This occurs not only in print media, the radio, and commercial channels but also on non-commercial channels through the placement of advertisements on hoardings, clothing and sponsorship of events. Notable examples of
this include the Barclays Premiership in football; the lucrative deal Manchester United made with Vodaphone; and the recent naming of the new Leicester City Stadium as the Walkers' Stadium. This signifies the importance of consumer culture in media sport, as Nixon (1988) argues: sports media programmes are "commercials for commercials" (p. 246). This emphasis on consumption can be seen as a consequence of the role of transnational corporations in funding media sport. An archetypal example of this is the Los Angeles Olympics (Cantelon and Gruneau, 1988b; Jhally, 1989a; Nixon, 1988). Jhally argues that:

The auctioning off of the Los Angeles Olympics was perhaps the most spectacular example to date of this linking of the spheres of commerce and sport ... Indeed, given the prevalence of brand names in the athletic events themselves and the use made of sporting themes in the advertisements that appeared between the events, the blurring of the line was so complete that, at times, it was difficult to tell exactly what one was watching. (p. 79).

For many, it seems that major sporting events have become synonymous with advertising. Further discussion of the consumer culture that permeates media sport will take place in a later section of this review of literature.

2.2i (a) Gender and media sport

As MacNeil (1988) outlines in her study of gender representations in the media, not all areas of ideology in media sport texts are linked directly to the political economy of sports production. Other aspects of social relations are also reinforced through sport in the media such as: gender, national identity and 'race'. Whilst the connections between these messages and the production process may not appear to be as clear as those highlighted earlier, Graham (1989) suggests that social, political ideas appear in sports texts as "the media pick up official prevailing policies, beliefs and attitudes and pass
them on” (p. 2-4). Thus, whilst it may not happen at a conscious level, those who produce media sport act to reinforce the status quo of the social relations in which they are key powerful players.

Much work on gender and media sport has, to date, been informed by a feminist cultural studies framework (Creedon, 1994; Hargreaves, 1994; Messner 2002; Stevenson, 2004). Even if writers resist overtly labelling themselves as such, the language used - describing ‘hegemonic notions of femininity and masculinity’ (Stevenson, 2004, p. 279) and sports media as a ‘contested ideological terrain’ (Messner, 2002) – suggests that gender relations in sports media is, for the most part, understood from a cultural studies or critical theory perspective. Studies on the area have examined both the comparative representation of men and women in sports media and the construction of dominant notions of masculinity and femininity. The role of the media as a key institution in the production of ideology is central to this cultural studies explanation, however, the acknowledgement of the possibility of resistance to hegemony and the opportunities for incorporation are also important characteristics. Whilst Maguire (1999) and Maguire et al (2002) have looked at the media sport complex in terms of production, little work has been carried out on issues of gender relations in the sports media from a figurational perspective. Despite this, figurational theory has the potential to lend itself well to such an examination. For instance, the way process sociologists explain social control in terms of balances and shifts in power, rather than in absolute terms may help make sense of the consumer as active in the interpretation of media messages. Additionally, by looking at relations as multicausal, the figurationalist may examine how gender identities are constructed through the interplay of several institutions within an interdependency, of
which the media is just one. Similarly, when examining mediated realities, figurational sociology encourages the investigator to look at gender as one of many dimensions to social relations. Thus, the complex and multifarious nature of society is emphasised. Below, the major issues raised in the current fund of literature on gender in the sports media are reviewed.

The role of the sports media in reinforcing the gender order has been cited in the majority of studies on the area (Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Carlisle Duncan and Messner, 1998; Cohen, 1993; Creedon, 1994; Daddario, 1994; Kane and Greendorfer, 1994; Lenskyj, 1998; MacNeil, 1988; Messner, 2002). For Kane and Greendorfer, this is unsurprising, as they claim: “perhaps more than any other social institution, sport perpetuates male superiority and female inferiority” (p. 31). They also argue that media images are “a product or tool of patriarchal oppression of women” (p. 29). With these two claims in mind, it is possible to see how the sports media is an arena in which notions of male superiority are reinforced. Findings on gender in the sports media have, however, not looked only at the incongruent portrayal of male and female athletes. They have also gone on to examine what definitions of femininity and masculinity are positioned as dominant in the sport media. Cohen (1993) identified three aspects of sports media texts through which gender relations are reproduced: quality of sports production; structure of sports media texts; and the portrayal of athletes. These areas will be used as a structure for examining the findings of the current research findings on gender in the sports media.

Whilst not widely reported on in literature on sports media and gender, Cohen (1993) argues that the quality of the production of programmes featuring female athletes is inferior to that of their male counterparts. She claims that women's sports productions
are often characterised by more mistakes than men's programmes, and implement a lesser degree of technology. The suggestion here is that less effort and fewer resources are dedicated to the production of female sports than of men's. Such differences are likely to be less pronounced at major events such as the Olympics, world athletics championships and grand slam tennis tournaments, where both male and female sport are covered, presumably using the same pool of equipment and expertise. It has been acknowledged, however, that with the recent increase in coverage in women's sport, some of the disparities in quality of programming have been lessened (Urquhart and Crossman, 1999; Vincent et al., 2000). More widely documented than the quality of sports programming in relation to gender is the structure of televised sport and it is to this that attention will now turn.

It has been noted that in sports programmes, women's events are often at the beginning of the schedule, and function as a 'warm up act' to men's sport, which is viewed as the 'real' event (Cohen, 1993, p. 73). Cohen also notes that whilst men's sport is afforded dramatic and historical status, the female equivalent is produced with a more recreational flavour. Messner (2002) argues that in both men's and women's sports programmes; the male voice is afforded the place of authority in terms of presenters, commentators and pundits. It may be argued that British television is witnessing a move away from this with the introduction of those such as Kelly Dalglish, Gabby Logan and Kirsty Gallagher presenting on traditionally men's sports such as football. However, all these women have two attributes in common: they fit with established notions of heterosexual attractiveness; and have famous sporting fathers. Thus, it could be argued that patterns indicate that women are only afforded status as 'experts' through an
association with *male* sports icons. It also raises questions about the sexualisation of females in the sporting context, positioning them for the male gaze.

Other writers have also noted that some ways of structuring sports media texts can reinforce patriarchal relations (Toohey and Veal, 2000; Gerbner, 1978; Lenskyj, 1998). Gerbner used the term 'symbolic annihilation' to describe the process by which females are under-represented in the media. Such tendencies to ignore women's sport continue to be observed in studies of the sports media (Toohey and Veal, 2000; Messner, 2002; Lenskyj, 1998). An examination of the 1988 and 1992 summer Olympics, found that female sport was consistently covered less extensively than men's, despite audience data suggesting women's events were as popular, if not more so than equivalent male versions (Toohey and Veal, 2000). Improvements in the *amount* of coverage of female sport have been observed in recent years (Messner, 2002; Toohey and Veal, 2000). However, an increase in quantity does not necessarily mean a move towards equality in terms of the nature of coverage. This issue is addressed later in this section.

Incorporation of women's sport into media coverage has not been total and remains, to a large extent, conditional (Messner, 2002). Messner has noted that in coverage on US television networks, female sport is confined to specific channels, which are often small scale and marginal. He suggests that the result of this is not a feminist revolution but that: "While this may be good for a few fans of women's sports, it leaves largely intact the masculinist cultural center of the sport-media-commercial complex" (p. 92). Additionally, Messner observes that inclusion of the female athlete is very much selective. It is argued that athletes are given exposure on the (unofficial) condition that they offer a high profit potential and this usually necessitates heterosexual attractiveness.
Here, the ways in which female athletes are portrayed when they are given coverage in the media is addressed, and this is the third aspect of gender disparity in media sports texts to be examined here. As Messner's (2002) work has illustrated, the inclusion of women in sport is generally restricted to those who conform to certain hegemonic notions of femininity. The identification of particular roles, traditionally associated with women often characterise the portrayal of sporting females. For example, it has been noted that media coverage consistently positions sportswomen as sexual objects through both the use of language and images (Bernstein, 2000; Cohen, 1993; Harris and Clayton, 2000; Kane and Greendorfer, 1994; Lenskyj, 1998; Messner, 2002; Stevenson, 2004). Infantilisation - the framing of women in a childlike manner - is a further means of female oppression cited in research (Bernstein, 2000; Carlisle Duncan and Messner, 1998; Kane and Greendorfer, 1994). The use of the term 'girl' as opposed to 'woman' is one example cited as contributing to this process, others include the creation of narratives which position a (usually male) coach as parental figure, or the use of images which make the athlete look particularly childlike. Therefore, the literature would suggest that in the media framing of athletes, only certain types of women are acknowledged and the particular type of femininity viewed as acceptable is that which does not threaten traditional gender hierarchy or undermine the relative power of males.

Trivialisation has been cited as one of the principle means by which women's sporting achievements are undermined (Lenskyj, 1998). Achievements of females are often directly compared to those of males, especially in measurable sports, such as athletics and swimming. If not stated overtly, it is often the implication that women's sport is less valid than men's, as Kane and Snyder (1989) put it: “a bastardized perhaps
even counterfeit version of the “real” men’s sport” (p. 92). As noted in the extract from Kane and Greendorfer’s work earlier in this section, sport is viewed as a suitable arena in which to emphasise the superiority of men in certain biological traits, and the media place value on all those activities that give primacy to such characteristics.

As the media are a key party in reinforcing hegemonic gender ideology, the typical sporting female is problematic as she flouts many of the conventional notions of femininity (Stevenson, 2004). Many have noted that this apparent mismatch between dominant notions of what it is to be female, and the sporting body gives rise to ambivalence in reporting on women's sport (Duncan and Hasbrook, 1988; Kane and Greendorfer, 1994; Lippe, 2000). Often, visual images of sportswomen in action are accompanied by a narrative that focuses on their personal lives (Harris and Clayton, 2000). It is also often the case that female athletes are described in terms of what are viewed as gender appropriate characteristics (Bernstein, 2000). For example, Cohen (1993) found that adjectives such as ‘graceful’ and ‘smooth’ were often used to describe women, despite the fact that in their performances they demonstrated other characteristics such as power and aggression.

One should not neglect to note, however, that just as media definitions of femininity are very narrow, legitimate notions of masculinity are also highly restrictive (Dworkin and Wachs, 2000; McKay et al, 2000; Messner, 2002; Sabo and Jansen, 1998; Whannel, 2002). In what Messner (2002) describes as the “televised sports manhood formula” (p. 123), the audience are informed that acceptable masculinity is defined thus:

A real man is strong, tough, aggressive, and above all, a winner in what is still a man’s world. To be a winner he has to do what needs to be done. He must be willing to compromise his own long-term health by showing guts in the face of danger, by fighting other men when necessary, and by giving up his body for the
team when he's injured...But even when he has finally managed to win the big one, has the good car and the right beer, and is surrounded by beautiful women, he will be reminded by these very same voices of authority just how fragile this real manhood is. (pp. 123-4).

As this extract demonstrates, the gender identity positioned as acceptable for men is narrow in definition. It is also, in many respects, contra-indicative to good health, and encourages an alienated perception of the body as a tool to hurt others and prove manliness. Such notions are prevalent in the body of research surrounding pain and injury in the sporting arena, where tolerance of this is seen as an affirmation of masculinity (Messner, 1990; Nixon, 1996; Young and White, 2000). It is argued that television, in particular, actively "heroizes men's aggression and violence" (Sabo et al, 2000, p. 131). Thus, not only are sports which demonstrate these traits most visible in sports media, but also those individuals who represent the heterosexual, hegemonic notion of masculinity are held up as heroes and significantly, role models (Dworkin and Wachs, 2000; Whannel, 2002). Whilst the focus of many feminist studies tends to be the position of women in sport (perhaps in response to the historical and continued oppression of females), the marginalisation of certain groups of men is also an important and well-researched area of examination.

The overarching message of the current fund of knowledge on gender and the sports media seems to be that this is an arena in which the status quo is reproduced. Representations of gender identities are extremely narrow and gender relations mirror the hierarchy which positions men as inherently superior to women. Kane and Greendorfer (1994) explain these observations are a natural response to the infiltration of women into the traditionally male preserve of sport. Their argument is worth noting at length:
Even though those in power may be uncomfortable with this challenge (from women), because of federal legislation (e.g., Title IX) they can no longer exclude or limit women’s participation in sport without fearing legal repercussions. However, it is unlikely that the dominant power structure would willingly embrace a social change that may fundamentally alter its base of control. Therefore, a central question to ask is what strategies of resistance can be employed by those in authority to accommodate this social change without fundamentally altering the balance of power. It has been argued that one central mechanism for accommodation and resisting women’s entry into sport has been through the messages socially constructed in the mass media. (p. 33)

The argument of Kane and Greendorfer seems to be that the process of allowing women a place in the world of sport is one characterised by reluctant accommodation as opposed to full incorporation, and the media is one institution that ensures this. Research to date, seems to support this argument, however, other dimensions of power relations in society also interact to determine what, and particularly who are most visible in the media. For example, is it the case that male athletes are always given primacy over females? If, for instance, a British female athlete won an Olympic gold, she would probably feature more prominently in the national media than any male champion from a different country because of the strong nationalistic flavour of sports reporting. It is to issues of national identity in the media that our attention will now turn.

2.2ii (b) National identity and race in the media

Messages promoting the importance of national identity are also apparent in media sports texts (Blain et al, 1993; Jhally, 1989a; Kinkema and Harris, 1998; Rowe, 1999). Jhally (1989a) argues that language plays a significant role in the incorporation of the individual to the nation state, as the audience is included in ‘we’ of the nation in international sporting contests. Opposition is also constructed as the ‘other’ by placing them in frames of reference that refer to xenophobic stereotypes (Blain et al, 1993). Blain
et al (1993) cite an example of this from the British press, which featured an article comparing Gabriella Sabatini's, "Latin killer instinct" with the "coolness" of her British opponent (p. 8). Here, positive attributes were associated with the British player, and linked to her identity as a Briton, thus celebrating the nation as a whole. This was further underlined by the negative connotations that underpinned the character appraisal of the Argentinean player, which were also related to her country of origin. Political relations between Britain and Argentina, following the Falklands war, also provided a significant backdrop to this comparison. This example demonstrates how personalisation may be used to reinforce ideas about national identity in the media. The focus on the British player also illustrates how, within the national media, the overall narratives employed in international sporting events concentrate on the success of the home nation, even when prospects of winning are not good. Ideology such as this may attempt to unite a nation (Jhally, 1989a, Maguire and Tuck, 1997), and it has been recognised that the notion of a unified nation may be used as an opiate to obscure other areas of conflict, such as gender, race and class (Jhally, 1989a; Kinkema and Harris, 1998; Miller et al, 2001).

An issue closely related to that of national identity is race. Whilst black athletes who are successful are often given high profiles in media coverage (Maguire et al 2002), it is argued that race logic is often used to rationalise this success, particularly in relation to white failure (Coakley, 2001; Jhally, 1989a; Maguire et al, 2002). Race logic works on assumptions that black people are naturally less intelligent than white people but are physically more athletically gifted. It is suggested that white success is often attributed to hard work, whilst black athletes' achievements are accounted for by natural ability (Jhally, 1989a).
Coakley, (2001) argues that whilst the media are becoming more sensitive to issues of race, there remains a tendency to frame black athletes as aggressive and fearsome. This is reinforced in the example cited by Maguire et al (2002) of Nigel Benn’s media image reflected in his title of “The Dark Destroyer” (pp. 59). Similarly, Coakley (2001) notes that Asian sports people are often represented by the media as cognitive and intellectual as opposed to physically able. Blain et al (1993) report that athletes from Latin America are stereotyped as flamboyant. Several researchers have noted the under-representation of ethnic minorities in media sports personnel relative to their success on the sports field (Jhally, 1989a; Maguire et al, 2002; Rowe, 1999). This could again be seen as an application of race logic, or perhaps a response to a lack of role models. Although there appears to be some changes in this pattern in Britain with the appearance of black Britons, such as John Regis, Ian Wright and Garth Crooks, on sports shows, it is notable that they do not hold senior or anchor positions within the team of presenters.

As the above discussion of media sport texts has hoped to illustrate, mediated sport is not a transparent medium, but is inherently laden with ideology. Clarke and Clarke (1982) argue that this is not entirely due to the role of the media but that sport is bound up in ideology in its own right and that this is exacerbated by the media. They also go on to propose that the media work to present sport as apolitical and demarcate it from other areas of news in order that it is seen as a natural phenomenon, and thus the ideology attached to it will become naturalised. Gruneau (1989) supports the idea that ideology becomes naturalised in media sport, stating: “It is easy to detect shameless favouritism, or, in some instances, straight-forward propaganda, on Olympic television programmes. Ideology is harder to identify because it has a more unconscious and systematic
character" (pp. 7-30). Cohen (cited in Larson and Park, 1993) concludes that the press "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (p. 44). This assertion points to the role of the audience in decoding and choosing what it does with media sports texts, and it is to this aspect that the focus shall now turn.

2.2iii Audience

Whilst the importance of considering the audience in gaining an understanding of media sport is recognised, this research project is unable to study the influence of the consumers due to limitations on time and resources. The following section will, therefore, attempt to give an overview of the central issues associated with the examination of the recipients of mediated sport but will be less comprehensive than the previous reviews of the literature on ownership and production and the sport media texts.

Writers have acknowledged the importance of the place of the audience the media sports complex (Jhally, 1989a; Meadow, 1989). Jhally identified four moments in the production of media sport. Two of these are concerned with the part played by the audience: one in the ways the texts are read; and the second in examining the social relations linked to the used of reading texts. The tendency to focus too much on the alleged effects of media sport on the audience has been criticised as treating the consumers as passive and a homogenous group (Cantelon and Gruneau, 1988a). In recent years, work by those such as Maguire (1990, 1999), Whannel (1992) and Boyle and Haynes (2000) on the production processes of mediated sport have gone some way to redressing the balance. It is also noted that research into audience perceptions in the past
decade has been more aware of the audience as a *heterogeneous* group (Wenner and Gantz, 1998; Whannel, 1992;). The following review will attempt to address debates surrounding the sovereignty of the readers of media sports texts; the interpretations of pleasures experienced by the audience; and methods of examining and measuring consumers.

The debate over the position of the audience as either skilled consumers or cultural dupes is central to the discussion of their role in the media sports complex (Maguire, 1993a; Whannel, 1992; Hall, 1980). Cultural studies scholars tend to view the audience as active agents in the struggle for hegemony (Jhally, 1989b), others, however, are more cautious in this reading of the audience, warning that the autonomy of the consumer should not be over-emphasised (Hall, 1980; Maguire, 1999; 1993a). Hall notes that polysemy should not be confused with pluralism. Hall's encoding/decoding model of the mediated production of meaning is central to the understanding of the position of the viewer, reader or listener. This work outlines the audience role in unravelling and interpreting messages encoded in the mediated sports text. Within this model, Hall emphasises that once encoded, a message may be open to a variety of readings by the consumer; the text is polysemic. However, the message intended at the level of production is usually dominant (Gruneau, 1989).

What Hall describes as the danger of pluralism is evident in the postmodern assertion, described by Wenner (1989), that there are no dominant interpretations, only individual readings, all of equal value. Despite voicing opposition to such accounts that risk neglecting altogether the impact of the political economy (Maguire, 1993a), most researchers in media sport agree that texts are to some extent open-ended (Boyle and
Haynes, 2000; Gruneau, 1989; Maguire, 1999). Whilst the matter remains a point of conflict within the field of media research, it seems that most are in agreement that media texts are not entirely deterministic, nor are the audience completely free to interpret infinite possibilities from them. The issue of debate appears to be the position of the consumer on the agency – structure continuum. Moving away from this dichotomous argument, Whannel (1992) is critical of the concept of decoding, seeing it as inadequate for examining emotional or affective dimensions of audience experiences. In order to look closely at these elements, it is useful to consider research carried out into the pleasure of the media sports consumer.

The issue of pleasure in the sports audience experience is demonstrative of the need to adopt, where possible, an interdisciplinary approach to studying the sports media complex. It may be desirable to consider both the social and psychological dimensions of the issue. The symbolic interactionist viewpoint is particularly illustrative of this as it sees emotions as being formed from both internal cues and external influences (Maguire et al, 2002). Several ways of mapping emotions and pleasure have been suggested. Barthes (1975) divides pleasure into two distinct experiences: 'plaisir' – that of contained enjoyment; and 'jouissance' – that which is disruptive, and emotional in character. Alternatively, Dyer (1978) views entertainment as being comprised of five categories: energy, the action of the experience; abundance, the magnitude of the spectacle; intensity, the element of uncertainty; transparency, the realness or immediacy of the event; and community, the level of involvement of the spectator. The two aspects that Whannel (1992) sees as most significant are the intensity – as genuine uncertainty is a rarity in modern media experiences, and the identification of the spectator with the spectacle. The
importance of this can also be seen in the fact that advertisers are willing to pay higher rates for advertising space in the Olympics when the country of the television station has a representative in the event, thus increasing the attentiveness of the spectator (Moragas et al, 1995). As with the examples of attempts to conceptualise pleasure cited above, this area in general, tends to concentrate on the audience experience of television as opposed to other forms of media.

Looking at the broader use of sports texts in society as outlined by Jhally (1989a), Lipsky (cited in Jhally, 1989a) is informative in explaining the sports viewing experience as an attempt to escape social constraints. Ironically, he also outlines the double bind of the way in which mediated sport actually operates to socialise its audience back into those social conditions. Here there are echoes of the agency – structure debate discussed earlier, with Lipsky steering us towards the hegemony argument. The idea of sports viewing as a quest for exciting significance in an increasingly civilized society (Maguire, 1999) has obvious connections to Lipsky’s argument, and marks a movement on from the concept of sports viewing as a cathartic experience. Elias and Dunning (1986) argue that sports act as an opportunity not to vent already existing tensions but to create and arouse emotions, that is, a controlled decontrolling of the emotions, which may then be experienced in the viewing of sports.

More body-centred analyses of audience pleasures conceptualise the viewer as indulging in fetish (Duncan and Brummett, 1989; Mulvey, 1975). Duncan and Brummett (1989) relate the consumption of the media to the developmental stage in a child, when he or she recognises their own reflection and suggest that this is where part of the pleasure lies. They identify two distinct areas from which pleasure is derived; socrophilia
pleasure in viewing alone; and narcissism — taking pleasure in imagining oneself in the position of those being watched. It is argued that bodies are on display in sporting events and that the eroticism associated with this is underlined by sexually implicit language used to describe the spectacle (Morse, 1983). Morse examined the sexual nature of sports viewing. She suggested that homoerotic tendencies are apparent in the exclusive focus on the male body. This, she argued is compounded by the positioning as the female gaze as that of the outsider. Consequently, the male body is framed and displayed specifically for the male audience. A major flaw in this assertion seems to be the neglect of the scenarios in which female sporting bodies are consumed and when the male body is sexualised specifically to attract female audiences (as was the case with media representations of the 1990 football World Cup, Rowe, 1999). Whilst deconstructions such as these may be interesting and informative in some instances, Whannel (1992) warns that reducing all sports viewing experiences to pleasure of this nature may not be constructive in gaining a full understanding of the sports consumer. This more open-minded approach encourages a reading of the sports viewer as an individual who gains multiple pleasures from the media sports experience. A full understanding of all these dimensions must be gained in order to carry out meaningful research and for advertisers and producers to appropriately address audience needs.

As was outlined in the discussion of the place of advertisers in the media sports complex, the consideration, and specifically, the measurement of the audience is imperative in attracting media sponsors and advertisers to media sport. The need to have knowledge of audience ratings and demographics is most obvious in television where close relationships exist with advertisers. This is also the subject of the majority of
research attempting to form an understanding of audience composition. It should be noted, however, that all sports media forms require audience figures and demographics to help inform production decisions. The understanding of audience experiences to inform researchers about sociological issues is also a valid reason for carrying out work into the area. According to Wenner (1989), the audience is sold to the advertisers. The need to attract advertisers, however, is not the only reason media institutions are interested in measuring the attractiveness of their outputs. This is evident in the desire of non-commercially funded organisations to gain high ratings and profile audiences (Rowe, 1999). Rowe states: "All media - public or private, large or small - have to deal with the question of a public" (p. 29). The need of the commercially based media to understand the characteristics of the audience is well illustrated in the work of Maguire (1990) on the launch of the NFL in the UK. In this case study, the synergies between the NFL, Anheuser Busch and Channel 4 television meant that viewer demographics were required in order for Anheuser Busch and the NFL to ensure they targeted the appropriate audience in the marketing of their merchandise. This was cited as the key motivation behind the attempts to introduce the game into this country. Maguire (1990) notes that the impact of Budweiser, the beer made by the key sponsor, Anheuser Busch, was greater and more long lasting in the British market than that of the sport of American football.

Having attempted to outline the need for an understanding of the audience in media sport research, the following will outline some of the means by which this is done and the problems associated with this. The typically heterogeneous nature of the sports audience (Whannel, 1992) makes it difficult to draw clear profiles to inform programming decisions. Work by Whannel, for example, illustrates the falseness of
assumptions of high proportions of sports audiences are male. He reported that in work carried out, males did not comprise more than 56% of the total audience figures in any cases.

Assessing audiences is a more straightforward task for some media forms than it is for others. For example, newspaper readership is judged by sales and internet site popularity may be counted by the automatic registering of 'hits' when individuals log on. For television and radio, audiences are more difficult to quantify. Methods commonly used include surveys (Wenner, 1989; Whannel, 1992), metered television sets (Whannel, 1992), observation of viewers either through cameras or direct observation (Barnet, 1990), and asking participants to keep diaries (Whannel, 1992). From the statistics recovered from these various methods, overall audience ratings are extrapolated. There are several problems arising from these methods. For example, the attention the viewer pays to the television is difficult to measure. Barnett (1990) observes that viewers often use the television as a 'backdrop' to other activities. He also notes that in taking an average of viewing figures throughout an entire broadcast, the common trend (for less dedicated sports fans) to watch only the closing, deciding moments of an event is not taken into account and thus, audience ratings for the beginning of events are markedly lower than that recorded.

The task of assessing audience response to mediated sport beyond the level of figures and profiles poses further difficulties. As Whannel (1992) notes, the pleasure experienced by viewers is resistant to analysis as the audience themselves are often unaware of nature of the pleasures they are experiencing at a conscious level. In examining audience responses and interpretations of media events, the context of viewing
may have a significant impact on the viewer's reading of the sports text (Jhally, 1989a; Whannel, 1992).

The response of the audience to the commodification of sport is an area that has received little attention in sports media research (Kinkema and Harris, 1998). This is somewhat surprising, given the potential importance of this to advertising strategy. According to a study carried out by Moragas et al (1995) in countries where commercialism was very much apparent audiences were reported to be antagonistic to the presence of advertising in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Further work into this area is required. Another area that may form the basis of future research is that of the changing role of the viewer to 'auteur', becoming increasingly interactive in sports consumption (Rowe, 1999). Elements of this are already apparent with the establishment of interactive digital television and the possibilities of the internet.

It is hoped that this review of the existing literature on the media sports complex has demonstrated the interconnectedness of the various stages of cultural production and consumption, and outlined the interdependency of the relationship between sport and the media. The next section of this literature review will examine the processes of globalisation, which form the context in which the Olympics and media sport more generally co-exist.

2.4 Globalisation

The concept of globalisation in itself raises much debate within the range of disciplines in which it is studied. It has been noted by some academics that defining the phenomenon of globalisation is problematic (Held et al, 1999). Held et al also argue there
is some disagreement over whether globalisation is actually occurring. Waters (1995), however, claims that it is generally accepted that globalisation is taking place. He defines it as: "a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding." (1995, p. 3).

Waters (1995) reveals that the term globalisation first appeared in dictionaries in the 1960s and became a topic of academic writings in the 1980s. Most writers seem to agree that globalisation is a much less recent phenomenon than its emergence as a topic of theoretical debate (Held et al., 2000; Jarvie and Maguire, 1994; Maguire, 1994; Therborn, 2000; Waters, 1995). However, there remains some divergence of opinion over the exact time period in which it started. For Waters (1995), there is evidence that, to some degree, globalisation has been occurring since the beginning of time, but that this process had been non-linear until the middle of this millennium. He raises an interesting point when he suggests that if we agree with Robertson's assertion that a key characteristic of globalisation is reflexivity and an awareness of the world as a whole, then globalisation could not have begun until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This is because it wasn't until this point that humans began to gain knowledge of the global nature of the world and the extent of its expanse. Wallerstein (cited in Waters, 2001) seems to agree, arguing that globalisation has been occurring since the sixteenth century. Others (Cochrane and Pain, 2000) suggest that globalisation is a reframing of colonial powers, implying that the process began after colonialisation, much later than is suggested by others.
Perhaps the most in-depth work carried out into tracing the historical roots of globalisation is that by Robertson and Therborn. Therborn (2000) writes of ‘waves’ of globalisation. Beginning as far back as the fourth century of the Christian era, he sees the diffusion of world religions and the establishment of transcontinental civilisations as the first wave. The second wave was brought about by the naval explorations, colonialisation, and the inclusion of the Americas in the transcontinental earth. Intra European power struggles, spanning the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries formed the third wave, with the fourth being driven by bulk trade in the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century, which saw height of European imperialism. The next wave occurred after the second world war, with the cold war and the politics that surrounded it, this was also accompanied by a decline in costs of communications and transport. For Therborn, the sixth and final wave of globalisation brings us to the present day and the supplanting of the political, military struggles of the cold war with financial and cultural ones, following the overthrowing of communism. Therborn also notes that between the waves outlined here, globalisation is at certain points challenged by periods of deglobalisation, and here we can see parallels with Elias’ notion of the civilising process and the decivilising spurts (Van Krieken, 1998).

Robertson (1990), in contrast to Therborn, begins his mapping of globalisation at the later date of the early fifteenth century. Labelling each phase, he begins with the ‘germinal’ phase, which spans from the fifteenth to mid eighteenth century and is located in Europe. In this period, he notes the significance of the growth of national communities, the accentuation of ideas about the individual and humanity, the beginning of modern geography and the spread of the Gregorian calendar. This is followed by the
incipient phase, which tracks the process from the mid-eighteenth century to the 1870s. Here, global processes are characterised by a shift to ideas of the homogenous nation-state, and a formalisation of international relations. The take-off phase, from 1870s to the 1920s saw an increasingly global conception of the acceptable national society and the acceptance of non-European countries into international society. It also saw vastly improved communications and the development of global competitions, such as the Olympics and the Nobel Prize. Robertson terms the fourth phase the ‘struggle for hegemony’, occurring from the 1920s to the mid-1960s. This period saw an increased awareness of and global disputes regarding the globalisation processes of the previous phase. There was also seen to be a focusing of the nature and prospects for humanity in light of the holocaust and threat of the atomic bomb. The final phase, covering the time from the mid-1960s to the early 1990s, witnessed the inclusion of the third world in the world system and an increased global consciousness, perhaps underlined by the moon landing. There was also an end to cold war hostilities and the spread of nuclear weapons. Within a more fluid international system there became an increasing number of global institutions and movements accompanied by societies needing to deal with the issues associated with polyethnicity and multiculturality.

These two models are interesting to examine together, as much for their similarities as for their differences. There are obvious disparities between the two mappings, such as the start point and number of time periods. It is also notable that Therborn’s waves appear to stem from specific events or changes, whilst Robertson seems to identify time-periods and list several transformations as key. It could, however, be argued that Therborn’s model is more sophisticated than Robertson’s in that it
acknowledges the existence of deglobalising flows. It is interesting that both understandings identify the naval explorations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the cold war as influential phases and this fact perhaps underlines the significance of these to globalisation. Both Robertson and Therborn map an increased frequency of phases in more recent history. This could be taken to be indicative of the gathering of momentum of globalisation. However, it should also be considered that this might simply reflect a greater sensitivity to and knowledge of changes taking place in the past century due to better documentation and direct experiences of those transformations for both writers. It should also be noted that both approaches are western, and, more specifically, European centred, thus similarly significant developments in other parts of the world may have been underrepresented. Finally, it is interesting that neither writer highlights the gendered nature of the globalisation processes they outline or the significance of changing gender relations in these processes.

2.4i Theoretical frameworks

A number of different theoretical approaches have been applied to the study of globalisation. This study is informed by the figurational perspective, however, the following section will outline the characteristics of several of the main viewpoints through which globalisation has been studied. These include: modernist, Marxist, cultural studies, figurational, and postmodernist approaches.

Modernisation bears a legacy of functionalism, following this way of conceptualising developments in society. Much of the work in this field has been initiated by those in policy-making positions and enjoyed its most widespread acknowledgement
in the 1950s and 1960s (Falcous, 2002). In terms of global development, the world is seen to be homogenising as all states are developing towards a modern society along the lines of western technological and economic advancement. The modern society is tied up with notions of rationality, as is outlined in the Weberian perspective and in Guttmann's work (1978). The modernisation thesis assumes that all societies are on a continuum towards modernity and those that are not modernised are following in the paths of those states that are. A key issue with this assumption is the dichotomous way in which social development is conceptualised, with there being seen to be only traditional society and modern society. Within the globalisation debate, modernisation comes under criticism as it neglects to examine changes in terms of inter societal relations and sees development as a result of internal forces.

Giddens (cited in Waters, 1995), however, moves the argument on to a certain extent. Giddens sees globalisation as a direct outcome of modernisation, and in particular of four key dimensions of modernisation: capitalism, the inter-state system, military order, and industrialism. He is more sensitive to issues of flows beyond the confines of the individual state and highlights the importance of time-space distanciation in globalisation processes. However, he does not depart from the modernising origins of his theory as he maintains that the nation-state remains a powerful unit in the architecture of global development.

Marxist accounts of globalisation emerged as a critique of functionalist approaches, and view the economic dimension as key to global relations. This theoretical framework proposes the view that international relations are characterised by capitalist, industrial societies maintaining their dominant position through exploitative relationships
with those in a less developed state. This results in the bringing in line of less developed countries' production modes with those of developed nations. The key theorist in this line of thinking in globalisation debates is Immanuel Wallerstein (1980).

Wallerstein maps a world systems theory, which conceives of the world as comprised of core, peripheral and semi-peripheral states. This system is economically based and results in a hierarchy of occupational tasks. This model has been criticised for an over-reliance upon economic factors, (Boyne and Worsley, cited in Featherstone, 1990). Waters (2001) also points out that Wallerstein does not truly present an understanding of globalisation but merely of international relations within a given system. For Waters, a mapping of globalisation is characterised by an understanding of global integration. The world systems theory, according to Waters' argument is representative more of the notion of internationalisation as opposed to globalisation, which describes and explains the global flows that transcend the nation state. Those within the Marxist camp have found fault with others' neglect of issues of internal differentiation within states, particularly of class issues (Petras, 1978). Neo-Marxist accounts moved away from the single causal analysis that focused upon economic issues and looked at the influence of ideology in maintaining relations of dominance. Wallerstein's later work (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1982) also appears to be mindful of this shift and begins to incorporate cultural elements. However, the extent to which a theoretical framework that originates from such an economically based starting point is capable of incorporating such notions must be open to question (Robertson, 1990).

Within the study of sport, Wallerstein's model has had limited usage. Various elements have been borrowed by scholars, such as George Sage (1996), examining the
global distribution of labour processes in sports goods companies. Similarly, Bale and Sang's (1996) insights into the migration patterns of Kenyan athletes incorporate some of the structural elements of Wallerstein's model but fail to acknowledge its origins.

The cultural studies theoretical standpoint moves away from the more deterministic aspects of Marxist analyses. Domination is not seen as being maintained primarily through the economic sphere, nor are power flows seen as one-way. Instead, control is believed to be maintained through ideology. Culture is defined as a whole way of life and is contested terrain. The Gramscian concept of hegemonic control (cited in Ransome, 1992) is central to cultural studies and argues that domination is maintained as the less powerful consent to be ruled. The power relations that allow for the hierarchy to be maintained are presented as being common sense and thus are accepted by those in the subordinate position.

The more popular cultural studies arguments in terms of the globalisation debate are those linked to cultural imperialism and in particular, Americanisation. The Americanisation thesis proposes that the culture of the United States is that which is dominant at the present time and is commonly adopted by other societies. Whilst the USA is seen as the prevailing cultural force, it important to note that cultural studies theorists do not see this as necessarily leading to global homogenisation, nor are the cultural flows unidirectional (Donnelly, 1996b). It is also interesting to note that the cultural studies idea of cultural imperialism is often cited as being in opposition to globalisation. However, this tendency for cultural studies perspectives to reject globalisation may be based upon a narrow definition of the concept. This debate will be discussed at greater length later.
The use of the cultural studies framework to study global sport is informative. Miller et al (2001) reject the Americanisation thesis, claiming that influences are too multidirectional to support this argument, of more importance, they believe, is the influence of capital more generally. Donnelly (1996b), on the other hand, asserts that the influence of capital, which manifests itself in the corporatisation of sport, is inherently tied up with Americanisation. Both Miller et al (2001) and Donnelly (1996b) reject the multidirectional, multifaceted version globalisation put forward by figurationalists, favouring the cultural imperialist argument as distinct to the broader processes claimed to be occurring.

Cultural Studies and figurational approaches have certain aspects in common. For example, the understanding power flows as multidirectional. Figurational, or process sociology, was first established in the writings of Norbert Elias in the middle of the last century. Van Krieken (1998) describes his work as a synthesis of the advanced ideas in sociology at the time, which results in a distinctive approach being generated, or what Jarvie and Maguire (1994) argue to be an overhaul of sociological thinking. Elias sought to highlight the dynamic nature of society (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994). He also saw that humans were interdependent and caught up in what he describes as figurations (Van Krieken, 1998). Here, the issue of human agency is brought into question.

For Elias, the figurations in which people exist determine the conditions in which they operate. Whilst individual actions influence the figuration to a certain extent, that interdependency chain then impacts back upon the individual, and moulds what Elias terms the socialised second nature or 'habitus' (Gouldsblom and Mennell, 1998 p. 61). A further feature of these figurations that relates to the issue of human agency is the
unintended dimension, which is seen to be a key characteristic. For Elias, the unplanned dimension to human experience through these chains was highly significant, especially in the long-term. Whilst individuals may be able to be proactive in influencing their futures in the short-term, according to Eliasian thought, long-term processes are largely unintended (Van Krieken, 1998).

A key element to Elias' work is what he terms the 'civilising process' (Elias and Dunning, 1986). Moving away from seeing human development as a linear move from savage to civilised man, Elias traces the long-term historical process that saw the general pattern of people increasingly becoming involved in larger interdependencies. This, he argued, led to a commingling of patterns of conduct. The result of this was a decrease in the differences between 'established' and 'outsider' groups. For Elias, the formation of the state was a key development in the civilising process. Whilst this was seen to be the general pattern in the civilising process, it is also important to note that the social development was not linear, and is described as being characterised by decivilising processes (Van Krieken, 1998), which have accompanied those civilising developments. This process is seen be occurring relatively autonomously from social actors, with the course along which it runs being unintended and blind. Maguire (1999), writing from the figurational perspective, acknowledges that the commingling of cultures of the established and outsiders is predominantly a spread of the established or Western ways to the outsiders of the rest of the world. This may be both through the colonisation strategies of the established groups and the willing "emulation and imitation actions by outsiders" (Maguire, in press). Maguire maintains, however, that a two-way dependence develops,
and thus results in an increase in cultural varieties. His explanation of this process is worth noting at length:

The representatives of more powerful civilisations not only wish to colonise other cultures, but also to ensure that their own styles and practices are distinctive enough to reaffirm their group charisma and sense of civilised high status and taste. In doing so, and for concerns to do with power struggles within established groups, they also incorporate aspects of other cultures and civilisations into their own. In contrast the representatives of less powerful civilisations seek to resist colonisation and the civilisational assumptions, styles and practices of others. In doing so, they too restyle their own behaviour, customs and ideas and reaffirm outsider civilisational traditions in a more intense way. (In press)

Cricket provides an example of such variety arising from cultural reinterpretation. Whilst the growth of the British empire saw the spread of the English sport to areas such as the Caribbean, the West Indian version of cricket is played in a very different style to its original form and represents a resistance to British colonialisation (James, 1984).

The work of Elias has been moved into the current debate on globalisation and specifically that of sport, largely by the work of Maguire (1999). Using the key elements of Elias’ work, Maguire (1999) sees globalisation as a result of both intended and unintended consequences. He also describes the existence of multidirectional flows and adopts a multicausal analysis. Both cultural studies and figurational frameworks reject the notions of unchallenged domination and global developments being a result of a single factor. The approaches also share the idea that global flows do not result in homogenisation. Maguire (1999) recognises that globalisation, far from giving rise to a single culture, leads to increased varieties and diminishing contrasts. Maguire (1999), however, is more open than cultural studies theorists more generally in accepting that a broad globalisation process is occurring. Whilst Maguire doesn’t deny the continued significance of the nation-state, he does acknowledge that in the context of an
increasingly globalised world, transnational practices are of increased importance to social development (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994). The figurational thesis has been criticised for neglecting issues of power and the importance of the economy in globalisation, however, in their defence, the process-sociologist would argue that it is not a question of neglect, but more an issue of differing emphasis.

The figurational approach has also been accused of paying too little attention to gender issues (Greer and Lawrence, 2001). This critique does seem somewhat blind, however, to various aspects of Maguire’s work that has shown sensitivity to gender in the context of sport globalisation. In recent work, Maguire et al (2002) dedicate some considerable space to the discussion of the gendered nature of sport in global processes. Furthermore, Maguire’s work on the phases and structured processes of globalisation refers explicitly to the issue of the gendered nature of globalisation (1999). It should also be noted that even before this, figurationalists have acknowledged that sport is a ‘male preserve’ (Dunning and Maguire, 1996), and that historically, sportisation processes have patriarchal underpinnings. What is more significant than the alleged lack of centrality of gender to the figurational thesis is the lack of feminist, or indeed female writings on the issue of sport and globalisation. This is surely required to develop a more gender sensitive understanding of sport and globalisation.

Unlike the approaches described above, the postmodernist viewpoint does not constitute a framework as such, as it rejects the notion of grand theory. In relation to globalisation, postmodernist accounts show a commitment to heterogeneity, fragmentation and difference. Whilst this idea of pluralisation, may seem to align it with the figurational idea of increasing varieties, the postmodernist tendency to eschew
theoretical underpinnings and its rejection of the existence of absolute knowledge is, as noted by Featherstone (1990), an important epistemological distinction. The postmodern conceptualisation of globalisation is highly sensitive to regional and particular issues, and reacts against the modernist claims of homogeneity. A significant element of postmodern thought, when considered in the context of globalisation, is the work of those such as Baudrillard, who acknowledge the importance of symbolic material.

This is relevant to discussions of global processes as consumer culture is one of the key outcomes of the current state of globalisation and to which the sign is central (Van Wynsberghe and Ritchie, 1998). For Baudrillard (cited in Van Wynsberghe and Ritchie, 1999), the sign value of an object is inserted between use value and exchange value and embodies the 'prestige element' (Van Wynsberghe and Ritchie, 1999 p. 372) that reflects back upon the consumer. That is, the sign value of a product constitutes cultural capital in society seen, from the postmodern perspective, to be constantly involved in the circulation of signs. Despite the usefulness of some of the concepts that emanate from a postmodern approach, many have rejected this way of thinking due to its anti-epistemological stance (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994). It is also criticised for its apparent evasion of definition that arises from its highly fragmentary and fluid nature. Morgan (1995) also notes the problems associated with the denial of absolute truth and the implication that all knowledge has equal validity and that some is above criticism. These issues associated with the postmodern stance may explain its limited use in the study of sport, although more recently Rail (1998) has made some contributions in this area.
2.5 Global Sport

Sport, like other areas of social life, is influenced by the broad impacts of globalisation. However, it is important to look closely at sport in the context of globalisation and try to determine the specific ways in which sport has been influenced by the global context in which it has developed. As this thesis is examining the specific context of the Olympics, the following discussion will also attempt to focus on examples pertaining to the place of the Olympic Movement and IOC in the global sport process.

2.4i Mapping global sport

Global sport can be mapped historically, and in terms of its dimensions, or flows. Maguire’s work is helpful in plotting developments on both these planes (Maguire, 1999; Maguire et al 2002). In tracing sportisation, Maguire (1999) combines Robertson’s model mapping globalisation and the work of Elias and Dunning (1986), which examines the development of English pastimes. Maguire (1999) formulates a five-phase model of the development of modern sport. This model traces several key structured processes, which Maguire (2004) argues are characterised by seven central elements. These include: the decline of folk body cultures; the development of a gendered sport ideology; the schooling of the body; a medicalisation and scientisation of human expressiveness; a degradation of the environment; the establishment of a sporting power elite; and the reinforcement of existing global inequalities.

According to Maguire (1999), the first of the phases of sportisation occurred during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This period saw the emergence of cricket, horse racing, fox hunting and boxing as modern sports forms. From the early to mid-nineteenth century, the second phase took place, with the development of rugby, football,
tennis and athletics. According to the work of Elias and Dunning (1986), this
development of sport forms was a manifestation of the decreased violence in society,
mirroring broader trends, such as the shift from combat and military to parliamentary
debate in resolving conflict.

Maguire's (1999), third phase was the take off phase. Here, the spread of sport
from England to both the formal and informal empire took place from 1870 through to
1920. The diffusion was of achievement sport, although, at this point, it was still
underpinned by the amateur ethos. This phase also saw the growth of international
sporting institutions and competitions. A prime example of this is the Olympic
movement. Established in 1894 (Lucas, 1988), the movement saw the formation of its
transnational representative body, the IOC, and the genesis of an internationalist
ideology, Olympism (Maguire, 2002). The Games helped spread the achievement sports
forms dominant at this time. This rise of the international ruling body and competitions
was also characteristic of the broader take-off phase Robertson (1990) claimed to be
taking place during this period. Maguire (1999) also points out, however, that whilst the
dominant achievement sports forms were emanating from Britain during this period, there
were also important sports influences from other European countries, such as the German
Turnverein and the Swedish and Danish gymnastic movements. Thus, achievement sport
has never been without its alternatives.

The fourth phase of sportisation, from 1920-1960, saw an increased American
influence in the development of dominant sport forms. This included not only the spread
of sports forms such as basketball, baseball and volleyball, but also the format of and
ideology behind sports. Thus, in the development of sport globally, the struggle for
hegemony, according to Maguire (1999), occurred not only between the West and the rest, but also within the rest. This phase also saw the cultural challenging and reinterpretation of sport, as is evident in studies of Trobriand cricket and Japanese baseball (Maguire et al. 2002). Gender issues and struggles were also evident in this phase, as was seen in the Alice Milliat's Women's Games, held in protest to the exclusion of females from the Olympics from 1922 to 1934 (Hargreaves, 1984). However, Maguire et al. (2002) assert that, despite challenges such as these, western masculine sport prevailed.

Starting in the 1960s, the fifth, and most recent, phase of sportisation has seen increasing challenges to the western domination of sport. Maguire (1999) points out that this has been evident in the Olympics as, increasingly, non-western influences are at work in the power dynamics of the IOC. The power struggles of the Cold War have also been acted out in the Olympics, through the various boycotts (Nafzinger, 1988; Ramsamy, 1984). However, it should also be recognised that the Olympics remain partly responsible for the homogenising elements of global sport. The Games encourage the dissemination of standardised rule structures and western values throughout the world (Maguire, 2002). The fifth phase of global sports development has been characterised by the creolisation of sports cultures, to such an extent that a nation can no longer be represented by one sport (Maguire, 1999). The identification of these power struggles and competing trends fits well with the label Robertson (1990) attaches to his more general model of globalisation – ‘the uncertainty phase’.

Within global sport, Maguire (1999) sees there as being five key dimensions to the flows: those of personnel, capital, technologies, landscapes and ideologies (p. 6). A
similar analysis can be found in the work of Appadurai (cited in Featherstone, 1990) who maps the broader process of globalisation in terms of ethnoscapes, technoscapes, mediascapes, financescapes and ideoscapes. Maguire (1999), in his application of this analysis to sport, represents the interaction of flows in the following way:

Fig. 2.2 Global sport flows

It is around this model that Maguire structures his analysis (1999). The model serves to show the complex nature of the interactions between the various flows that combine to produce global sport. In adopting a long-term historical view, these complexities may be understood more fully. This is acknowledged by Maguire (1999), in his mapping of the five phases of sportisation. The ongoing globalising trend of sport is characterised by the interplay of long-term structured processes, which are often blind, and result in both intended and unintended consequences.
What do such flows reveal about global sports processes? It is helpful to understand the structure of the modern sports corporation in gaining a greater insight into the global nature of the "sports goods industries and technologies". As Sage (1996) reports, Nike has a truly global commodity chain. Whilst the work on design and marketing is controlled by US headquarters, the production process is now shipped out to locations where cheap labour can be found, typically in the Far East (Sage, 1996; Maguire, 1999). Products are distributed globally, with marketing practices encouraging the opening up of new consumer bases. Patterns within these commodity chains are tied in with the broader global process that has seen the growth of consumer culture in recent times (Slater, 1997; Wemick, 1991). Geographically dispersed commodity chains such as these have been made possible by time-space compression. That is, the improved communications and transport systems outlined by those such as Therborn (2000) and Robertson (1990) have meant that labour and goods exportation and global marketing have become common practice for transnational corporations.

Sports labour migration is a further flow identified as characteristic of global sport. Maguire (1999) constructs a typology of sports migration, identifying five types of migrants: pioneers, settlers, mercenaries, nomadic cosmopolitans and returnees. In the case of the Olympics, those who seek to fulfil cosmopolitan migration motivations may find themselves limited in their experiences as, with the exception of Games held in Japan, Korea and Australia, nearly all the Olympics since the war have been held in either Europe or North America. Another important issue raised by increased migration in sport is that of worker rights and legislation regarding freedom of movement. For example, in ice hockey, there are restrictions on the number of foreign players permitted
per team. Arguments surrounding this are bound up with issues of nationalism, underdevelopment of domestic players, and media spectacle.

The role of the media in sport has been discussed at length in previous section of this literature review. However, it is worth noting at this point the significance of the role of the media in transforming the Olympics into a global spectacle (Tomlinson, 1996). Media coverage is also vital in making the Olympics attractive to transnational corporations as sponsors. Thus, the media has not only enabled the Olympics to reach global audiences, but has also helped fund the growth of the Games as a globally encompassing phenomenon. The main power in the media, particularly in relation to the Olympics, rests in the United States (Slater, 1998). This reflects the process of Americanisation identified in twentieth century globalisation (Maguire, 1999; Donnelly, 1996b).

In looking at the final element of Maguire’s model: ideologies, habituses and identities, the Olympic Movement provides an informative case study. As noted before, the Olympics are underpinned by the ideology of Olympism (Segrave, 1988). Whilst Coubertin saw Olympism as internationalist (Segrave, 1988), the western dominance of the IOC has led some to label the spread of Olympism as a form of cultural imperialism (Eichberg, 1984). As noted earlier, there is a significant distinction between internationalism and of globalisation. According to O’Brien (2000), Coubertin was very precise in his definition of internationalism, suggesting that true internationalism rested upon nationalism. She reports that he explicitly rejected the notion of cosmopolitanism, a world without borders, as being utopian.
Coubertin’s views on nationalism and internationalism highlight the issue of identity, and in particular national identity. The subject of national identity in the context of global sport relates to the sovereignty of the nation-state. According to Bairner (2001), the sport field or terrace - an important area in which to celebrate national identity, as the “imagined community” (p. 17) - becomes more real in this context. He maintains that nationalism retains relevance in the face of globalisation because it has more felt meaning to individuals than notions of cosmopolitanism. For Galtung (1991), sport is central to the formation of national identity and claims that a country’s national character is reinforced by the sports it plays. Galtung’s argument is questionable in relation to countries that do not have sport at the centre of their society.

Maguire (1999) observes that invented traditions play a large part in the interplay of sport and national identity. He goes on to note that in the face of globalisation, people engage in ‘wilful nostalgia’ (p. 189). This, Maguire (1999) suggests, is evidence of the ability of social actors to be responsive to global flows. Elias’ work into identity formation and the I-we relationship suggests that the nation forms the strongest of these identifications (Elias, cited in Maguire, 1999). Elias argues that these relations arise from notions of shared habitus with those of the same nationality. He also asserts that a sense of shared history is required to form strong I-we bonds. With this in mind, it seems unlikely that relatively recent globalising forces will lead to national identities being replaced by notions of cosmopolitanism. In the case of Europe, for example, until there is a sense of history in the notion of a unified, integrated and imagined European community, people are unlikely to feel a stronger sense of belonging to this than to their national societies. It could be argued that the formation of the European Union (EU)
signifies a move towards the development of a more concrete European identity. Following the 2004 Athens Games, it was noted by senior officials in the European Commission that the EU accrued more medals than any other state, thus were the strongest sporting power in the world (Times, 31/08/04). Such statements help support the notion that in the future EU officials hope that a single team will be entered in the Olympics, as is currently the case with golf and the Ryder and Solheim Cups for men and women respectively.

2.4ii Cultural imperialism and globalisation

Within globalisation literature, there appears to be a divide surrounding the relative appropriateness of the terms globalisation and cultural imperialism as explanatory of processes observed. Harvey and Houle (1994) seek to unpack the debate in the following terms:

Analyzing sport as part of either Americanization or globalization processes implies different paradigms. Those who insist on an analysis in terms of imperialism start from the postulate of the primacy of internal logics to explain economical and cultural flows, as well as state action. Therefore, the Americanization or Japanization of sport would be a result of economic, cultural and political dynamics predominantly specific to these countries. On the contrary, an analysis in globalization terms, while taking into account the existence of different nation-states, would underline how economic and cultural flows are the products of dynamics that are independent of these nation-states and that operate at the world level. (p. 345-6)

In these terms, the differing viewpoints are not merely a matter of choices in terminology, but represent opposing paradigmatic positions. In some cases, however, it would appear that a lack of clarity in defining globalisation is the origin of disagreements. For example, Donnelly (1996b) rejects the term on the grounds that it implies equality and balanced interdependence. Similarly, Rowe et al (1994) see globalisation as synonymous with homogenisation and thus question its usefulness in explaining the global process.
Alternatively, Houlihan (1994) suggests that the cultural imperialism thesis is one way of conceptualising globalisation. He proposes that there are two positions: one that sees globalisation as an extension of cultural imperialism; and another that sees it as an outcome that requires both developed and developing countries to reorient their world views. Neither of these positions, however, encompasses the complexities of globalisation processes as described by the figurational stance, outlined earlier.

In terms of the cultural imperialism debate, the main trend claimed to be dominant at the present time is Americanisation (Donnelly, 1996b; Kidd, 1991). Whilst it was observed that the British were the main influence in the sportisation process in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Maguire, 1999; Mangan, 1992), the past eighty years have seen an upsurge of the United States as the major cultural influence (Maguire, 1999). In their examination of Australian sport, Rowe et al (1994) reject the Americanisation thesis, arguing that influences are more diverse. Instead, they claim that the most important influence is global capital, and that its geographic is irrelevant. Donnelly (1996b) does not reject the concept of Americanisation, but outlines the need for a more refined definition of this process. He suggests that it can be understood as either cultural imperialism, which implies a one-way imposition of culture with little resistance, or as cultural hegemony, a two-way but unbalanced process. The second of these descriptions, Donnelly (1996b) believes, overcomes those criticisms of Americanisation outlined by Rowe et al (1994). He also, as outlined earlier, asserts that the corporatisation of sport can be equated with an American influence. However, this assumption is problematic, as there are several areas of the world that operate with the corporation at its centre, and as Guttmann (1992) argues: although the dominant trends in
modern sport are most evident in the United States, this does not mean they emanated from here.

Whilst Donnelly's distinction between cultural imperialism and hegemony may answer some of the criticisms of the Americanisation thesis, questions remain. For example, Harvey and Houle (1994) describe globalisation as transcending national struggles, and see evidence of this in the fact that the major corporations that are influential in modern global sport are transnational, not anchored to any one country. They argue that even if it is the case that those corporations have headquarters located within America, this is not significant as those businesses respond to global, not local conditions.

The notion of balances and blends is significant in examining the validity of the cultural imperialism argument. It is claimed that recipients of sports diffusion have the ability to resist and reinterpret cultural material (Guttmann, 1993). Guttmann argues that the receptivity of a country to new sports forms depends upon its view of the donor nation. An example of this is the Japanese adoption of baseball at a time when the United States was a strong influence both economically and politically. Another example of this kind, which is also demonstrative of the ability of a nation to react against cultural imperialism, is that of the USA itself refusing to adopt English sports forms (Guttmann, 1993). A further line of argument in Guttmann's (1993) work, which is also made by Jarvie and Maguire (1994) and Houlihan (1994), is that upon diffusion, sport forms become restructured. This is significant in the debate over the validity of the Americanisation argument. If sport forms are reinterpreted when taken up in different societies, this would imply not that all countries are becoming akin to the United States,
but that the global sport is characterised by different varieties of sports. For Wagner (1990), Americanisation is but one flow in a broader process of mondialisation, which sees a blending of diverse world cultures. Whilst this argument may overestimate the freedom of countries to choose whether or not to accept cultural influences, Wagner's emphasis on blends and multiple flows is more sophisticated than explanations suggesting a global uptake of American culture.

Bound up with these debates is the question of whether sport is undergoing a process of homogenisation or is seeing increased heterogeneity. For Maguire et al (2002) the answer to this question is both, and this is evidenced in the observation of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties. Using the work of Elias (cited in Maguire, 1999), it is possible to see how the lengthening of interdependency chains has meant that there is increased interaction between culturally diverse societies. This has meant that there are more similarities in tastes and experiences of people including those in the sporting context. The emergence of increased varieties has been outlined earlier, in the discussion of cultural reinterpretation of sports forms in recipient societies.

The proposal that the globalisation of sport leads to increased varieties and diminished contrasts should not, however, be taken to mean that all varieties are of equal impact in the global sports arena. For example, it was noted in Maguire's (1999) model of sportisation, that the emergence of certain sport forms has led to the marginalisation of traditional folk pastimes. Whilst such pastimes have not completely died out, they have become residual. This is perhaps best understood within the wider scope of the model of dominant, emergent and residual trends (Donnelly, 1993). This model suggests that sports forms are not suddenly and completely wiped out by the invasion of dominant global
varieties. Instead, they are made residual, or marginalised. Donnelly also proposes that new forms, challenging the dominant trends are always present, as emergent varieties. This model is useful, as it emphasises the dynamic nature of global sport and the presence of challenges to dominant cultural influences.

For Maguire (2004), at the present time, achievement sport is the dominant form. This is maintained with the support of institutions such as the Olympic Movement, a key force in dictating which sport forms count in global society. The example of snowboarding is interesting to consider in this light. Snowboarding emerged as an 'extreme sport' form but has recently been incorporated into the Olympic Games. This has meant that the sport has adopted a standardised rule structure and judging criteria. As such, it has been integrated into the structure of modern achievement sport (Maguire, 1999). This recalls the distinction made by Houlihan (1994) in terms of homogenisation of sport, that whilst certain sports forms themselves may not be all-pervasive, the dominant organisation and structure of sports may be more penetrative. Although we the same sports are not played all over the world, sport does take on a uniform ideological structure. With the example of snowboarding, it could be argued that in order to be recognised by the formal institution of the IOC, the extreme, or counter cultural characteristics had to be replaced with a structure more fitting with modern achievement sport.

With the focus of this research project in mind, it is also relevant to try to understand the role of the media and global sports marketing in promoting either sameness or difference. Whilst it is recognised that the media promotes homogeneity in sports, and the political economy limits the choices of the consumer, there is also a
celebration of difference observed in global marketing (Maguire et al 2002). Rader (1984) has noted the need for sports to conform to the spectacle format in order to gain media coverage. The strong relationship between media exposure and attracting commercial sponsors (Boyle and Haynes, 2000) means that for sports to enter into the commercial political economy that currently exists, media coverage is vital, and thus the need to conform to the media’s preferred format is imperative.

This would indicate that the globalisation of sport has undoubtedly led to some degree of homogenisation. However, it should also be recognised that emergent varieties continue to be formed (such as parkour – otherwise known as urban obstacle coursing) as a result of the commingling of cultures. Whilst there does appear to be evidence for the formation of such varieties (Guttmann, 1993), perhaps a further point is that raised by Houlihan (1994) in emphasising homogenisation in the structure and underlying ideology of different sports forms. It is also important to consider that these trends are more deeply felt than superficial alterations that result from cultural reinterpretation. This issue is related to the debate surrounding the understanding of global flows in sport as either cultural imperialism or globalisation. Although some of the disagreements on this topic originate from disparities in the understanding and definition of terminology, it has been argued that opposing positions actually rest on divergent paradigmatic positions (Harvey and Houle, 1994). Whilst a cogent argument is put forward that this is the case, it seems that one should be cautious in positioning the explanations as mutually exclusive. As Houlihan (1994) argues, globalisation should be ambitious in attempting to explain all the processes involved, not allowing theoretical framework to mask the true nature of the
processes at work. He also warns that a tidy analysis may be neither possible nor appropriate.

More generally, global sport has been identified as having developed through five phases of sportisation (Maguire, 1999). The phases have been characterised by struggles and are evident still today. For this study, the figurational analysis of sports globalisation will be employed, in understanding the role of media-sport in creating and rearticulating ideology, and as part of larger interdependency chains that make up the political economy of sport and in particular of the Olympics. As has been highlighted by the use of examples throughout this review of global sport, the Olympic Movement is a significant body in the context of globalising processes as it is a transnational sports movement, replete with many of the struggles seen to characterise the globalisation debate more generally.

Having drawn together and reviewed the current body of literature on the areas of Olympism, the media and globalisation in this chapter, the chapter that follows will examine the methodological concerns considered in the execution of this research project.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter aims to outline and address some of the key issues that arise in relation to methodology in carrying out a research project. In approaching research, the first obstacle encountered is often that of the qualitative/quantitative dichotomy. The first section of this chapter will look to outline the characteristics of these opposing paradigms and go on to discuss their relation to the second issue researchers are confronted with: that of the specific research methods to adopt in their investigation. I will then go on to identify and account for the particular techniques to be used in this research project. This task will constitute a substantial part of the chapter. The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to outlining the position of figurational sociology and detailing how this approach will be incorporated into the following study and is related to issues of methodology.

3.2 Quality and quantity: The paradigm debate

The following section will attempt to outline the traditional standpoints of the opposing paradigms in social research studies that often serve as the basis for debate in research methods (Bryman, 1988; Brannen, 1992). Ontology refers to the individual’s perception of the world (in the case of the paradigms to be discussed in the following debate, realism versus idealism) whilst epistemology refers to the way in which knowledge about the world is gained. For Jary and Jary (1995, p. 201), the distinction can be made in the following terms:
(Epistemology is) the branch of philosophy concerned with the theory (or theories) of knowledge, which seeks to inform us how we can know the world. Epistemology shares with ontology, which is concerned to establish the kinds of things which exist, the claim to be the bedrock of all philosophical thinking and all knowledge.

According to most arguments surrounding research methods (Bryman, 1988; Johnson et al, cited in Maguire and Young, 2002), it is upon these issues that the opposing paradigms of positivism and interpretivism rest. The discussion that follows will attempt to outline the two perspectives commonly cited as comprising the research dichotomy and then draw together the relevant strands of the argument as to whether the approaches can be dovetailed in the context of sociological inquiry.

The field of research methods make reference to the existence of two distinct perspectives: the positivist and interpretive paradigms (Bryman, 1988; House, 1994; Smith, 1994; Bauer and Gaskell, 2000). For clarity, the following discussion will use these terms throughout. The positivist approach to social research arises from the natural science tradition, with advocates of this position seeing the world as a single, fragmented reality. They also believe that knowledge is absolute and the knower and the known are independent from one another (Guba and Lincoln, 1998). That is, there is a knowledge that exists separately from the person seeking to gain it. The positivist view of the world is deterministic in that it believes there to be real causes that bring about certain types of behaviour in people, and that these causes are applicable to a range of contexts (Bryman, 1988). This paradigm encourages thinking that social science should work to discover universal laws of society, generalisable to large populations. For Silverman (2001, p. 248) 'generalizability is a standard aim in quantitative research'. This claim stems from the understanding that society is made up of a collectivity rather than individuals acting
independently. Guba and Lincoln (1998) explain that in terms of the relationship between theory and method, positivists use ungrounded theory in their research, using studies to test hypotheses arising from already existing knowledge on the area. They also go on to argue that consequently, the methods traditionally associated with this epistemology are very much in line with the natural science methods of investigation and are, in the main, quantitative. Typical methods of research include experiments, surveys, and structured interviews. The data obtained from studies is often tested statistically for significance in an attempt to establish laws about human behaviour (Silverman, 2001).

In opposition to the positivist view of the world, stands the interpretive paradigm. The ontology associated with this way of thinking describes the world as having multiple realities, which only exist in the perception of the individual (Bryman, 1988). Therefore, the epistemological view differs from that of the positivist in that it asserts that the knower and known are seen as inseparable, with knowledge about the world and its reality only ever being personal. Generalisations are not possible in the purist interpretive paradigm as behaviour is seen as time and context bound. This approach believes in voluntarism, and is critical of the positivist deterministic stance that argues that human behaviour is part of a cause and effect relationship.

Interpretive researchers argue that the positivist approach looks too simply at the relationship between variables in terms of causality. According to Bryman (1988) researchers subscribing to the qualitative paradigm often accuse their quantitative counterparts of neglecting the 'intervening variables', that is, the processes which link the independent and dependent variables is not sufficiently accounted for. Society is believed to be comprised of individuals acting singly or together. In interpretive research, theory is
grounded and emerges from research, but does not precede it. Within this model only working hypotheses are possible. Adherents to this position argue that research on society cannot be carried out in the same way as natural science as humans do not react in the same way as inanimate objects. The methods used in interpretive research are generally qualitative, in the form of participant observation and unstructured interviews.

The above synopsis of the two main paradigms in sociological research has attempted to give an overview of the debate, both in terms of ontology and epistemology. The dichotomous nature of the paradigm debate has meant that much criticism has been exchanged between the epistemological camps, with what Potter (1996) describes as an 'adversarial stance' being taken by researchers in the opposing schools of thought.

Positivists are often criticised for being overly deterministic and reductionist in their treatment of human subjects and behaviour (Searle, 1999). This issue is often raised with particular reference to the positivist tendency to atomise variables in a false way for the purposes of research. In return, the interpretive paradigm is accused of being too vague in the definition of its paradigm (Potter, 1996). Richardson (cited in Potter, 1996), in pointing to the convoluted writing style often associated with the interpretive writers as a weakness of the approach, asserts that interpretive research:

Could be reaching wide and diverse audiences, not just devotees of the topic or author. It seems foolish at best, and narcissistic and wholly self-absorbed at worst, to spend months or years doing research that ends up not being read. (p. 253).

It would seem that much of the criticism made of the alternative paradigms and their execution of research point to the aspects of the opposing school's ontology, which are not oversights, but deliberate moves rooted in differing overall understandings of the world and are thus unlikely to be resolved.
Guba and Lincoln (1998) begin to deconstruct this dichotomy, suggesting that four paradigms exist: positivism; postpositivism; critical theory and related ideological positions; and constructivism. Of these paradigms, the positivist and constructivist positions represent the two extremes of the continuum, whilst postpositivism and critical theory offer more complex treatments of the approach to research. Positivism is the stance that sees the world as 'real and apprehendable' (Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 203) and that in gaining knowledge about this world, it is possible to be objective and findings can claim to be the truth.

Constructivists take the other, relativist end of the spectrum. They see realities as mentally constructed, socially based and dependent on the individual forming the interpretation of reality. It is proposed that finding out about those is subjective. Knowledge is claimed to be produced in interaction between the investigator and subjects. Conceptions of reality for the investigator are in constant flux as "their constructors become more informed and sophisticated" (Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 208). In the view of constructivists, the process of investigation itself creates the world discovered in the findings. Thus, ontology and epistemology become less clearly separated.

Postpositivism is most akin (as the name would suggest) to the positivist standpoint. However, whilst it assumes there to be an objective reality, it argues that this reality can only be imperfectly understood due to both the nature of the phenomena and the frailties of the human intellect. In terms of epistemology, postpositivists believe that we may gain an approximation of the social world, but to do so findings must be
rigorously tested, focusing on the falsification of hypotheses as opposed to their verification.

Critical theorists state the case for historical realism, that over time certain factors have shaped social structures, leaving the current situation in which they are taken to be 'real' (Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 205) although this is, in fact, merely reification. However, the critical theorist asserts that without insight, these structures can be as limiting as if they were real. Critical theorists' findings are very much tied up with values, and thus the distinction between ontology and epistemology is not as clear as in the positivist and postpositivist approaches. Guba and Lincoln (1998) urge us to 'note that this posture effectively challenges the traditional distinction between ontology and epistemology; what can be known is inextricably intertwined with the interaction between a particular investigator and a particular object or group.' (p. 206). This, like the constructivist approach is more relativist as it sees 'reality' as inevitably tied up with the interpreter.

The position adopted here reflects assumptions held by the Eliasian school. The extremes of positivism and relativism are rejected; a path between the two ends of the continuum is sought. The synthetic nature of this figurational approach makes it somewhat resistant to crude categorisation. It could be argued that Elias' processual approach to conceptualising society shows some affinity with the historical nature of the critical theorist. However, the close alliance with the relativist camp is not something that fits with his approach to the study of society. Elias argues that in the study of society, it is possible to gain an "approximation of the truth" (Maguire and Young, 2002, p. 6). It is claimed that whilst it is not possible for any one individual to grasp completely social
reality, an approximation can be built, using knowledge deemed to be of 'relative adequacy' (Van Krieken, 1998). This notion of the adequacy of knowledge avoids the extreme relativism that suggests all interpretations of 'reality' are of equal validity. Neither, however, does it suggest that there is a concrete, knowable reality, which exists independently of the individual trying to understand it.

An alternative to Guba and Lincoln's (1998) understanding of field of social theory as broken down into four categories, is the framework proposed by Johnson et al (cited in Maguire and Young, 2002). They underline the importance of looking at social theory in a multidimensional way. A model that interprets social theory as set out on the two continuums of nominalism versus realism and materialism versus idealism is proposed. Opposed to what they term the 'crisis of fragmentation' with regards to theory, Johnson et al (cited in Maguire and Young, 2002) noted that all theorists tend to address the same fundamental questions in approaching the nature of the social world: those of epistemology and ontology. With this in mind, they assert that there is a strong basis for comparison amongst the range of theoretical standpoints taken. The model is shown below:

**Fig 3.1: The Nature of Social Reality**

![Diagram of the Nature of Social Reality](image)

Johnson et al (cited in Maguire and Young, 2002, p.12)
Johnson et al (cited in Maguire and Young, 2002) recognise that the divisions they make between empiricism, substantialism, rationalism and subjectivism are imperfect, and that there is a crossover and blending of approaches in many cases.

As mentioned above, a characteristic of figurational sociology, and one that makes it an attractive framework, is that it cannot easily be pigeonholed. It looks for blends and balances (Dunning, 2002) and whilst the above model is a useful guide to understanding the various dimensions of social theory, it would not be productive to attempt to constrain Elias' theory to any one box (Mennell, 1992). Essentially, Elias looked to transcend dichotomies and so it would be missing the point to position him within these dualisms. As has been detailed in the previous chapter, the figurational approach to sociology explains the interdependent nature of social relations in a way that fits well with debates surrounding globalisation. Elias, and those who have followed in his tradition, have also paid much attention to issues of methodology and the nature of the relationship between the empirical and theoretical (Goudsblom and Mennell, 1998; Maguire and Young, 2002; Elias, 1987; 1974). It is to a discussion of this approach that the analysis now turns.

3.3 Figurational sociology

For Elias, the social world is comprised of figurations (Van Krieken, 1998). That is to say, humans are not governed by some external, social force but that they themselves are that social structure. The actors in these figurations are interchangeable, and the chains are in a constant state of flux (Goudsblom and Mennell, 1998). Individuals are always interdependent with one another and thus their lives are moulded by others in
the figuration. Elias was keen to overcome the agency – structure dualism, and saw that the figuration concept achieved this. In figurations, whilst individuals partake in short-term intentional actions, these actions have long-term unintended implications which then act back upon the individual and the figuration more widely, structuring the environment for future actions (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994). Elias argues that whilst social development may be blind and unplanned, it is, however, structured by the circumstances that have arisen from past actions and the fund of accumulated social knowledge (Elias, 1971).

Another defining feature of figurational sociology is its concern with the dynamic nature of society, both temporally and spatially. This is a characteristic which is particularly helps make sense of globalisation. Elias believed his developmental approach should not have been a distinguishing feature, as he believed that all sociological thought should deal with society in a longitudinal manner. For this reason, he was uncomfortable with the term 'process sociology' as it implied that non-processual sociology was possible (Van Krieken, 1998). In understanding the historical/processual nature of figurational sociology, the concept of intended and unintended consequences is useful. In this light, the present is moulded from the unintended consequences of the past. Therefore, when a person engages in an action, there are some intended outcomes, however, according to the figurational sociologist, these are mainly short term. Of greater significance are the long term unintended consequences which may influence social conditions beyond the lifetime of those actors who initiated them (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994). From the viewpoint of figurational sociology, society is characterised by ongoing processes of development and change, far reaching in terms of both time and space.
How then does the figurational ontology and epistemology manifest itself in terms of a methodological approach? As stated earlier, Elias wrote on the subject of approaching research and the relationship between theory and evidence. The aim of the figurational sociologist is to achieve an “approximation of the truth” (Maguire and Young, 2002, p. 6). Whilst this line of thinking avoids dealing with issues of the truth or falsity of statements, it instead looks at the “adequacy” of knowledge (Van Krieken, 1998, p. 71). Unlike the extreme end of the interpretive standpoint, which professes perception of reality to be relative to the individual, and thus all accounts to be of equal validity, the figurational position argues that some knowledge is superior to others, with sociological knowledge being of greater value than that produced by, for example, the media. For instance, the results of a sociological investigation into the representation of Olympism is more adequate than one carried out by the IOC marketing section. For knowledge to gain adequacy in terms of validity and reliability it must not reflect or arise from groups with vested interests in the outcome of a given study. In the example given above, the outcome of an investigation into the relevance of Olympism carried out by an IOC marketing section may reflect the interests of the IOC. A sociologist, uninvolved with the IOC is likely to be more objective as there are no vested interests at stake that may compromise the authenticity of findings. An appropriate level of detachment on the behalf of the investigator should be adopted in carrying out sociological research.

For Elias, of central importance to the production of ‘adequate’ knowledge is the achievement of an appropriate balance between involvement and detachment (Elias, 1967). In using these terms, Elias attempts to overcome the problems associated with the objectivity/subjectivity dichotomy. The researcher’s position must constantly shift
between the poles of involvement and detachment, with the two not being seen as mutually exclusive. Sociological inquiry, unlike the research carried out by the natural sciences, necessarily means the researcher is involved with the subject of study: society. The investigator is inescapably part of a figuration that makes up the social world. Therefore, there is always an element of *verstehen* in sociological research and this is desirable. It is important to empathise, and understand the meanings produced by the individuals and groups under investigation. However, the researcher must also have the capacity to stand back and take the observer – interpreter stance (Maguire and Young, 2002). The extent to which the researcher is able to achieve this depends upon several factors: their level of knowledge and understanding of the subject matter as well as the wider social world; how adequately the techniques of investigation are carried out; and the external pressures on the project (for example, the interests of those who are funding the project).

For example, in this study it is important that as the researcher I gain as much knowledge as possible about the interdependencies between the parties involved – the IOC and the media. It is also important to take a long-term perspective, as this also helps in trying to detach and take as broad a view as possible. Elias' historical approach looks to avoid the constraints of a short-term view, and understand better the likely outcomes and unintended consequences of people's actions (Van Krieken, 1998). In achieving sufficient detachment, it is also important that the methodological techniques used can be held up to scrutiny in terms of reliability, validity and accuracy. Content analysis is an appropriate method of investigation in this sense as it is highly methodical (Deacon et al 1999). As the study is being funded by Loughborough University, which has no vested
interests in the outcome of the investigation, there are no political pressures on me as a researcher to impose bias on the results.

The dangers of failing to maintain sufficient detachment from the subject of study are outlined in what is often termed 'going native'. Reichardt and Rallis (1994) describe an anthropological study carried out by Margaret Mead, in which the investigator became so involved with the group of Samoans she was studying, she left herself open to being told misleading information, which she failed to corroborate with further evidence. Taking a long-term perspective when examining society helps the researcher to achieve a sense of detachment as it encourages a stepping back from the particular case study. This enables the investigator to take on a wider view of the dynamics of society (Maguire and Young, 2002; Van Krieken, 1998). Maguire and Young (2002) point to the usefulness of the personal pronoun model in taking a 'detour via detachment' (Elias, 1967). They advise:

The sociologist must avoid, static, non-relational concepts and words. Instead the use of a personal pronoun model (I-We-Us-Them) can be employed to better represent the set of co-ordinates in terms of which human groupings and societies can be plotted. (Maguire and Young, 2002, p. 17)

Another guideline offered is the need to maintain two way traffic between theory and evidence. This avoids the uncritical imposition of grand theory on empirical data, or abstract fieldwork, lacking in theoretical understanding. Instead, there should be a constant interplay between the two. Empirical investigation should aid theoretical formulation and, thus, individual studies continually contribute to an overall theoretical understanding of the social world. However, by constantly referring back to their theoretical framework, the researcher is able to distance themself from the case study in
hand and provide a more detached, yet academically informed view of the subject matter. In this study, whilst the figurational theory has formed the backdrop to the understanding of the relationships and representations observed in the media portrayal of the Salt Lake City winter Olympics, the empirical work has also attempted to help develop the theory itself. The theoretical framework, whilst forming a central point of reference to understanding the context of this examination, is not a closed book and benefits from constant updating and reaffirmation from such empirical data.

3.4 Research Strategy

This investigation, as outlined in the Introduction, aims to map the relationship between the ideology behind the Olympics and the political economy that supports the Games. In tackling this issue, a media analysis will be carried out to understand how and to what extent the issues associated with Olympism are portrayed in the media and whether it plays a real and meaningful part in the mediated public experience of the Olympics, or whether the existence of the values of the philosophy is in fact a myth. The media is significant, as it forms the medium through which the majority of spectators have access to the Games (Wamsley, 2004), and is a key part of the political economy supporting the Olympics (IOC website, 2004; Slater, 1998).

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the commercialisation of the Olympics (Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Rowe, 1999). Generally seen as a legacy of the first privately funded Games in 1984, in Los Angeles (Nixon, 1988; Cantelon and Gruneau, 1988b), the Olympics have continued to grow both in size and profitability. With an increased reach, both in terms of nations competing and those with media access
to the two yearly festival of sport, the Olympics have undoubtedly become part of the wider pattern of globalisation (Maguire, 1999). The relationship that now exists between the IOC and corporations in the form of the TOP scheme is symptomatic of the current trend of TNCs infiltrating global markets. Given this backdrop of globalisation, and the growth of influence of the political economy, it will be interesting to see whether the Olympic philosophy finds mediated expression within the new context.

The study has looked to understand how the media frames the Olympics, both in the press and on the television in Britain. An analysis has been made of the dominant messages evident in the media texts and these were compared to the ideas put forward in Olympism. In addition to examining the media texts themselves, the area of production has also been investigated, with interviews being carried out with representatives from the media.

3.4i Media Analysis

In the contemporary climate, particularly in the western world, sport is most widely experienced through the mass media (Whannel, 1992). This is particularly apparent in the Olympics (Wamsley, 2004). The growth of the role of television in giving an increasing number of people access to the Olympics since the 1960s (Slater, 1998) means that the media provides most people's experience of the Games (IOC website, 2004). It is important to note that the media is not merely a window on the world, through which audiences observe events as they happen. Events are subjected to an array of production processes and decisions that mediate public experiences of those incidents (Gruneau, 1989). Given that this is the case, it is imperative that we try to uncover how
the media works in constructing and conveying these accounts, and to begin to understand the motivations behind media production processes.

According to Lasswell (cited in Perry, 1996 p. 5) the study of the mass media can be broken down in the following way: Who says what, in which channel, to who, with what effect? This model covers the three areas into which the media is typically divided when it comes under analysis: the production, text and audience. The ‘who’ and ‘in which channel’ accounts for the production issues, whilst ‘says what’ refers to textual analysis and ‘to whom’ and ‘with what effect’ looks at audience studies. For Perry (1996) this way of looking at things is not all encompassing, but outlines the traditional way of looking at the media. For many writers on media research, this is still the most common way of breaking down the study of the media.

Research into the production of the media tries to understanding the nature of the political, ideological and technical issues that mould what is produced in media texts. In this study, interviews with BBC personnel have tried to make sense of the relationship the media has with the IOC, and with the Games themselves as an event. Within a sociological investigation, the role of the mass media in society in general is also defined. This area of interest may be the most difficult to gain access to as it depends largely upon the cooperation of those in powerful positions within the media, who typically have extremely busy schedules. Most commonly, interviews are the key means of gaining data in the study of media production.

An area increasingly of interest for media researchers, perhaps triggered by the work of Stuart Hall and the cultural studies group at Birmingham, is that of the audience. Hall (1980) suggested that audience reception of what is produced in the media is less
straightforward than was at one time proposed. In his encoding-decoding model he argues that whilst media texts contain messages with dominant or preferred meanings, the audience plays an active part in the process of decoding those messages and may take up alternative meanings to those intended by the production team. With this in mind, the need to look at audience response to media, rather than simply infer it from the dominant messages evident in texts has been increasingly appreciated and addressed. Researchers have become more sensitive to the fact that audiences should not be treated as homogenous entities, but are highly diverse in terms, of class, ethnicity, race, gender and age (Moores, 1993). Audience research can be difficult to execute as it involves access to large numbers of the public and variables are often hard to control. It should also be realised that the audience may not always be aware of the full impact of the media on them at a conscious level and so conclusions may not be wholly accurate.

Perhaps the most straightforward area of media analysis, in a practical sense, is that of media texts. The study of texts looks to draw out the preferred meanings and locate their position within the wider social question. It is important to note, however, that (as is detailed in Hall’s model) texts are polysemic and open to alternative interpretations. That said, it is still true to say that texts are constructed to steer audiences towards a particular meaning, usually reflecting the dominant ideological position, thus it is important to try to uncover the reasons behind this. It often helps to look at media texts alongside either the production process or audience reception, to avoid isolatory analysis. Media texts are a popular area to examine, as they are easily accessible, and once collected can be stored, analysed and revisited at the researcher’s convenience.
A thorough discussion of these areas is provided in the opening section of the literature review in the previous chapter. Due to various constraints on time and resources, this investigation has concentrated upon media texts and involved some interviews with BBC personnel. Given greater scope in terms of resources and time, the study would also look at the audience reception of the messages in the texts studies. However, in trying to gain an understanding of the relationship between the media and the Olympic Games, the production end of the spectrum was anticipated as being more revealing. Given the absence of audience analysis, it must be emphasised that the messages and themes that are extracted from analysis are not presented as the only possible interpretations, but as preferred meanings.

Specifically, the textual analysis will take the form of a qualitative content analysis. The analysis will be guided by themes identified and documented in a codebook (see Appendix 1). This will look at all the data collected, which includes the British press (Daily Mail, Sun, Mirror, Daily Express, Daily Telegraph, Independent, Times, Guardian and the Sunday equivalents where appropriate) and selected elements of the BBC television coverage. Detailed case studies will involve an examination of the coverage of the British women curlers and the opening and closing ceremonies. A content analysis had been deemed most appropriate for this study, mainly due to the volume of data to be examined and is also a reflection of my own analytical skills. However, other types of discourse analysis exist and will briefly be outlined below.

Semiotic analysis makes a close textual examination of language in terms of a system of signs. The relationship between the signifier (the word) and the signified (that to which the word refers) is revealed to be arbitrary but to have been naturalised over
time. In terms of media analysis, a semiotic examination tries to understand how signs are used in texts to generate meanings. It fits well with Hall’s proposal that texts are polysemic, as it looks not only at what is denoted by a given signifier but also at the various connotations that it produces as a result of cultural associations it has collected in the social context (O’Sullivan et al, 1998). Berger (1991) describes the role of signs in the following way “semiology – the science of signs – is concerned primarily, with how meaning is generated in ‘texts’ (films, television programmes, and other works of art). It deals with what signs are and how they function” (p. 3). To put this in context, if a semiotic analysis were to be carried out in this study, it would look at television coverage as a network of signs produced by a “grammar” (Berger, 1991 p. 27) of technical choices. For example, various camera angles are seen to connote certain power relations, and framing is believed to infer the audience’s social relationship with the subject. Whilst this kind of analysis can paint an interesting and informative picture of events, it is extremely time-consuming and requires a highly detailed treatment of the data. Semiotic analysis has also been criticised for having too great a concern with the constituent elements comprising the text and neglecting to consider it as a whole (Berger, 1991). A more holistic textual treatment is derived from analysis of narrative codes.

Narrative code refers the way a text is organised with a view to tell a story. Narrative studies examine how realist techniques and conventions are used in textual organisation, giving rise to the production of a logical narrative (Burton, 2000). Specific media forms (such as detective programmes) have developed formulaic narratives in terms of structure (O’Sullivan et al, 1998). The audience is alerted to the narrative structure of a text by the use of familiar conventions, which means it is recognisable in
different contexts. However, as Burton (2000) points out, the presence of narrative structure is not restricted to fictional texts. He argues that every television programme has narrative because they all have a degree of intention and structure behind them (p. 96). In sports coverage, certain techniques are implemented to generate specific meanings, contributing to an overall story and adding to the dramatic excitement. This is also often supplemented by emphasis given in the build-up coverage to events (Gruneau, 1989). (A more detailed discussion of this may be found in the media section of the literature review in the previous chapter). A narrative analysis is often combined with a semiotic examination in enabling the researcher to understand the narrative codes at work. This, to some degree, overcomes the restrictions of a purely semiotic analysis, which may fail to look at the text in its entirety.

Deacon et al (1999) outline what they term a 'linguistic analysis' of news items. This way of looking at texts avoids the particularism of semiotics which tends to look more at individual words and sentence structures and is more interested in examining the overall structure of texts and how certain ideologies and values are represented (Deacon et al 1999). They propose five stages of linguistic analysis. The first of these looks at the position, composition and intertextual relations of the article. That is, it's placement on the page and relation with surrounding articles. The linguistic analyst looks to unpack the reasons that underpin the these relationships.

Stages two and three look at thematic structure and discourse schemata. According to Deacon et al (1999), the thematic structure is "a preoccupying conception or proposition which runs throughout a media text, usually around an initiating topic" (p. 169). This helps make a text cohesive and gives a central theme to the story. The
'discourse schemata' is the term describing the organising of the text into an order that reflects the sequencing of events and the hierarchy of information. Deacon et al (1999) argue that the discourse schemata reflects news values in a story or type of story; encouraging the reader to conceptualise what is being said in culturally specific ways. In examining these issues, the investigator must look at the sequencing structure, the sources used, and framing procedures, i.e. are some sources or arguments framed by other statements that will affect the reading and positioning of the overall bias of the article?

Stage four looks at lexical choice and how this may support the thematic structure of the text and particular points of view. Lexical choice is argued to be indicative of the underlying ideological assumptions expressed in the article. Unlike some forms of semiotic analysis, however, this way of looking at words and their role is always linked with the overall structure of the extract as a whole. In the fifth stage of analysis, Deacon et al (1999) urge the examiner to look again at the thematic macro-structures and the role they play at each stage of the discourse schemata. This, they argue, should be specific to the issues relevant to the particular case under investigation. It asks the observer to look for relations of the thematic structures in the text to broader ideological positions and the value-laden strategies of journalistic discourse.

3.4ii Content analysis

Jary and Jary (1995) define content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, quantitative and systematic study of communication content” (p. 119). Several writers have been quick to dismiss content analysis as only a quantitative technique (Burton, 2000; Perry, 1996; Silverman, 2001). Bauer (2000), however, argues that
content analysis has some qualitative elements, and bridges the gap between qualitative and quantitative methods. He does not, however, recognise that content analysis may also be qualitative in its own right. Priest (1996) and Berg (1998), on the other hand, argue that content analysis can take on qualitative characteristics. Berg, in particular, provides a detailed discussion of how content analysis can be used qualitatively and suggests qualitative and quantitative content analysis may be used in combination. In making this case, he states

I argue here that content analysis can be used effectively in qualitative analysis - that "counts" of textual elements merely provide a means for identifying, organizing, indexing, and retrieving data. Analysis of the data once organized according to certain content elements should involve consideration of the literal words in the text being analyzed, including the manner in which these words have been offered. (p. 225)

For Berg, any item that can be made into a text can be analysed using content analysis. In this study, the data to be analysed using this technique are newspapers and television footage.

In terms of deciding whether content analysis is able to give the researcher access to latent or only to manifest levels of meaning, Berg (1998) suggests that the best resolution is to examine both, where possible. It is useful, he argues, to be able to use statistics to describe the magnitude and frequency of observations, however, this must be supported by an attempt to discuss latent meanings evident in data. Berg is mindful, however, that both levels of analysis should be exposed to stringent checks on both reliability and validity. He specifies that in the use of latent symbolism, researchers should provide detailed extracts that support the observations made, and adds that as a general guide, three independent examples should be found to document each interpretation. This assertion that content analysis can be used to look at the latent
elements in texts means that it is a more useful method than is suggested by those who see it as merely a means of looking at the surface features of data (Gruneau et al., 1988; O’Sullivan et al., 1998; Perry, 1996).

A further criticism of content analysis is the debate as to whether investigation should be inductive or deductive. The deductive approach begins with the formation of a set of themes, drawn from a theoretical perspective, and searches the text for evidence of these in the hope of finding support for a hypothesis. Inductive research, alternatively, sees the researcher immerse her/himself in the data in an attempt to identify themes that emerge out of the text. Berg (1998) again opts for a collaborative approach on this issue, suggesting that inductive and deductive approaches can be combined. He does, however, argue for a greater emphasis on inductive research ‘in order to present the perceptions of others (the producers of messages) in the most forthright manner’ (p. 230). This amalgamation of methods fits well with the figurational standpoint, with regards to methodology as it encourages an ongoing dialogue between theory and empirical data (Maguire and Young, 2002). To incorporate deduction or induction in isolation would run the risk of putting too much emphasis on theory or the empirical respectively.

In this investigation, the data was piloted to ascertain what themes emerged from the data. These themes were then used in conjunction with ideas about what constitutes Olympism in order to establish a set of categories to refer to when analysing the media texts. In doing this, it is hoped that the study has avoided neglecting to consider issues that don’t fit with a preconceived theory but were inherent in the data. Thus, theory has not be simply been imposed upon the evidence, but the texts have been allowed, to a large degree, to speak for themselves. Examples that don’t support the overall trends
observed have been evidenced, and explained where possible. This, along with the presentation of several pieces of detailed evidence for each claim made about messages within the text will hope to counter the charges of anecdotalism often directed at content analysis and qualitative research more generally (Silverman, 2001).

3.4iii Interviews

Whilst media texts are the primary focus in this study, some interviews with media personnel have also been carried out in order to gain a broad understanding of the production processes involved, and put the study into a broader context. Before detailing the specific strategies implemented in this examination, it is necessary to give some background to the methodological concerns related to interviewing.

The interview format can range from highly structured to unstructured. Highly structured interviews involve the interviewer addressing all respondents with the same set of pre-determined questions, with a limited set of response categories (Fontana and Frey, 2000). These often deal with surveys or questionnaires, which, with well-controlled variables can lead to a good basis for comparison between interviewee responses. Unstructured interviews are usually associated with ethnographic work. May (1993) notes that the interviewer using the unstructured approach does not have a set of questions to be asked but merely an overall aim in mind when talking to respondents. These exchanges are open-ended and allow the subject to talk freely about their experiences, and give the interviewer an insight into their concerns. This approach to interviewing is very much qualitative (Bryman, 1988).
The aim of the interviews carried out with BBC personnel in this study was neither to compare responses in a quantitative manner nor to find out about the specific experiences of the individuals interviewed. Rather, the presenters and producer were interviewed in an attempt to gain an insight into the production processes they were involved in, in packaging the coverage of the Salt Lake City Games. In order to gain the knowledge desired, it was felt that a semi-structured interview format would be most suitable. The semi-structured interview, as its name suggests, employs elements of both the structured and unstructured interview. Whilst there is a set of predetermined questions, there is flexibility to the schedule, which allows the interviewer to pursue any unanticipated issues that arise in the interview (Robson, 2002). This was appropriate for the interviews carried out for this research, as it was important to have predetermined questions in order to ensure that all the necessary information was obtained. However, without an in-depth insight into television production processes prior to the study, it was not possible to anticipate all the concerns and areas of interest that arose in exploring such practices and thus it was important to retain a degree of flexibility in questioning. An unstructured interview would also have been inappropriate because my own limited experience in interviewing meant that a higher degree of structure was required in order to avoid losing the objective of the questioning.

The interview with BBC producer, Jonathan Bramley took place over telephone, as he was unable to arrange a face-to-face interview. This brought with it the advantages of being inexpensive (compared to travel expenses of meeting in the BBC London office) and less time consuming. However, as has been noted by academics (Robson, 2002), it can be more difficult to build rapport with the interviewee over the telephone, and the
lack of visual cues can sometimes lead to misunderstandings by both parties. The presenters, Clare Balding, Steve Cram and Sue Barker were not available either for face to face or telephone interviews, but agreed to respond to questionnaires via email. This questioning, therefore, had to be much more structured. This was not the most desirable method of gaining information regarding their roles as presenters, as it did not allow for the probing of their responses or clarification of any misunderstandings. Nevertheless, the questionnaires still generated a useful contribution to gaining an understanding the packaging of Olympic television programmes. It also meant that there was no need to transcribe the interviews, which can be very time-consuming. The insights gained from the questionnaires and interview are discussed in Chapter 4 and transcripts of the questions and responses can be found in Appendix 3.

This chapter has attempted to outline the structure of social theory and map the place of figurational sociology — the approach to be adopted in this study — in the underlying framework. Rather than simply describing the position of this approach in an abstract manner, it has been explained how figurational theory has been applied, in a practical sense, to data collection and interpretation. The importance of maintaining a balance between involvement and detachment has been highlighted, as has the need to maintain two-way dialogue between the relationship between the theoretical and the empirical. The following chapters will detail the findings of the analysis and discuss their significance. Chapter 4, which follows, gives some context to the substantive findings in providing an overview of the production processes and audience response to coverage of the Salt Lake City Games.
CHAPTER 4
PRODUCTION PROCESSES AND AUDIENCE RESPONSE TO THE SALT LAKE CITY GAMES

4.1 Introduction

As outlined in the methodology chapter, in studying the media, there are three potential areas of analysis: the production, the text itself and the audience. The focus for this study is the media texts of the British press and BBC television coverage of the Salt Lake City Games. However, in order to give a broader context to these media texts, this chapter will give some background to the production processes and, to a limited extent, audience reaction to the media portrayal of the Games. Whilst not a comprehensive, in-depth treatment of these areas, the chapter looks to give an overview of those aspects of the media-sports complex not considered in the central analysis of this research.

The following chapter is broken down into four main areas: the history of television involvement in the Olympics; an examination of role of the television in the Olympic Movement in the modern era, including interviews with BBC production personnel and presenters; market research into audience reaction to the Games; and an overview of the contribution of the press to the Olympics. As far as possible, both the press and television have been examined. However, information on television production and audience research was much easier to obtain than that for the press coverage. Having sought information on the area, it appears that formal research is not carried out to assess the reader response to the press coverage of particular events, such as the Olympic Games. With this being the case, the section focusing on market research of audience reaction to the coverage of the Games will look at the television viewers' response.
4.2 The entry of television to the Olympic arena

The watershed in the breakthrough for television broadcasting of the Olympics is generally recognised as the Rome Games of 1960 (Barney et al, 2002; Slater, 1998). However, other notable landmarks in the entry of television into the Olympics took place in the years leading up to this. In 1936, delayed coverage of the Garmisch Partenkirchen winter Olympics marked the first television coverage of the Games. (Barney et al 2002). In the same year, at the summer Games in Berlin, pictures, some of which were live, were transmitted across Berlin, and this is acknowledged as the first live television sports transmission, using a form of closed-circuit television. Whilst doubtlessly a moment of innovation, the picture quality was reportedly poor, and failed to captivate viewers beyond initial interest in the novelty of the venture (Slater, 1998).

With the Second World War preventing the 1940 and 1944 Games, the 1948 summer Olympics were the next to be held, in London. This saw the first official sale of ‘rights’ to broadcast the Games. The BBC paid 1000 guineas to the London organising committee to transmit live pictures of the Games to the immediate London area (Barney et al, 2002; Slater, 1998; Toohey and Veal, 2000). However, it has been alleged that the London OCOG never cashed the cheque, in order to avoid inflicting financial hardship on the BBC (Toohey and Veal, 2000). Whilst the geographical scope of this broadcast was more limited than the German enterprise, 12 years previously, average audience numbers were higher in London and, perhaps more significantly, a precedent had been set in the payment for rights to broadcast the Olympics.

No notable moves forward regarding media coverage took place in either the summer or winter Games of the following Olympiad. In 1956, however, the organisers of
the Cortina winter Games generated a broadcast feed from the opening ceremony that was made available to eight European countries. Facility costs were predominantly paid for by Radio Audizone Italia and the OCOG, although television networks from several of those countries receiving the transmission contributed to the technical expenses incurred (Barney et al, 2002).

The Melbourne organisers were more forthright in demanding remuneration from the television networks seeking to use footage from the Games. Unsurprisingly, the television and newsreel network personnel objected to this, arguing that they had the rights to access the Olympic coverage as a news event (Barney et al, 2002; Slater, 1998). In discussions leading up to the Games, the television networks emphasised that their position was that of a branch of the press with a responsibility to provide the public with reports of the Olympics. The Melbourne OCOG argued against this, claiming that they were to produce a film of the Olympics for sale after the Games and felt that not only would the television broadcast take away from the commercial value of the film, but that they had no protection against the television networks producing their own, rival productions (Barney et al, 2002; Slater, 1998). Throughout this debate, the IOC, and in particular, Avery Brundage (IOC President at the time) refused to enter into the arguments. The Melbourne organisers eventually agreed to allow limited international coverage of the Games but their insistence on editorial control of the footage did not please the television networks, and thus with no resolution of the matter, virtually no overseas broadcast of the Melbourne Games took place (Barney et al, 2002).
4.2i Formalising the sale of rights: the ‘Rome formula’ and beyond

Although disappointment arose from the lack of coverage of the Melbourne Olympic Games, the row did prompt the IOC to seriously consider the issue of television rights to the Games. Several sources have documented the reluctance of Brundage to form a relationship with television, apparently declaring: “the Olympics have got along very well without television for sixty years and could do so in the future as well” (Pound, 2004, p. 164). However, following the difficulties of the Melbourne negotiations, the need and, indeed, advantages for the IOC in participating in the introduction of television into the Olympic infrastructure became apparent. Brundage addressed the issue that proved to be the crux of the stalemate in Melbourne: the status of Olympic coverage as news or entertainment. In a revision of rule 49 of the Olympic charter, a clear distinction was made between the ‘news’ coverage of the Games and the transmission of live footage. The new version of the rule also stipulated that the sale of television rights to the Olympics were to be negotiated between the television networks and the host organising committee, subject to approval by the IOC. Revenue derived from this was to be distributed by the IOC (Barney et al, 2002).

Olympics historians have noted Brundage’s position as a staunch defender of the ‘purity’ of the Olympic Movement, and his concerns over the infiltration of commercialism into the Games accompanying the involvement of television (Barney et al 2002; Guttmann, 1992; Pound 2004). However, it would appear that he could not ignore the mutual benefits of an income from the sale of television rights, especially given the financial instability of the IOC at the time (Slater, 1998). In the rewriting of rule 49 of the
Olympic Charter, Brundage ensured that the IOC would receive the rewards of the ‘sell out’ to television without dirtying their hands with the negotiations.

Theoretically, by the 1960 winter and summer Olympics, the model for the sale of television rights should have been in place, however, both the OCOGs of Squaw Valley and Rome protested at the implementation of a ruling (specifically, that which conceded ownership of the funds derived to the IOC) apparently not disclosed at the time of the bidding for the Games (Barney et al 2002). Rights to both the Games were sold for relatively little, and the conflict between the IOC and OCOGs in deciding the main beneficiary of television revenue was established. In light of this, rule 49 was changed once more, in preparation for the 1964 Games. This alteration ensured that the IOC would sacrifice control of the distribution of television monies, settling instead for a fixed payment to be shared with the international sports federations (ISFs). According to several sources (Barney et al 2002; Slater, 1998; Toohey and Veal, 2000), the alleviation of tension between the OCOGs and the IOC achieved by this resolution soon gave way to discomfort from other sources, namely the ISFs and National Olympic Committees (NOCs) who were unhappy with their shares of the profits from television rights. Pound (2004) argues that the IOC were slow in taking ownership of the issue of television rights, allowing too much autonomy to the OCOGs and television networks, in both the finances of the deal and in the representation of the Olympic Movement through television (p. 169).

By the Tokyo Games of 1964, the advancement of satellite technology, and the possibility of transoceanic transmission meant that the value of Olympic rights increased substantially (Barney et al, 2002; Slater, 1998; Toohey and Veal, 2000). As worldwide
interest increased, prices paid for the rights to broadcast Olympic coverage continued to rise each year. The IOC refined what was termed the 'Rome formula' (Barney et al, 2002, Toohey and Veal, 2000), securing its own share of the income and working towards placating the ISFs and NOCs. In 1984 Los Angeles Games, the hosts took over half of the fee paid by ABC for themselves (in the guise of facility expenses) before dividing up the remaining $100 million according to the IOC's formula. Following this, the IOC began to take back control of television rights, demanding to negotiate jointly with the OCOGs over broadcasting fees.

The increased importance of television's involvement with the Olympic Movement, in promoting the Games to the widest possible audience, and perhaps more importantly, in a financial capacity (according to Slater (1998) by 1974, 98% of the IOC's income was derived from television revenue) has led to structural changes in the Olympics. As well as the widely documented changes in competition timetables to fit with US television peak viewing hours and the adoption of daylight saving time changes in South Korea to better accommodate the time difference between themselves and America (Larson and Park, 1993), in 1986, the IOC made the decision to alternate the summer and winter Olympics on a two year cycle, to be implemented after the Albertville Games of 1992. This rescheduling was primarily to allow television networks to be able to spread payments for the rights to the Games (and thus potentially pay more per festival). The decision seems contradictory to the IOC's move, in 1995, to sell the rights to the Olympics as a multi-Games package, up to two Olympiads in advance.
4.2ii Paying the price of commercialism: Contribution of US networks

The dominance of US television networks in dictating its needs to the IOC may be better understood when the proportion they contribute to total worldwide television rights revenue is taken into consideration. Since 1972, the fees paid by US television networks has made up more than half of the total revenue taken from the global sale of rights to the Olympic broadcast (Slater, 1998). This reached a peak at 95%, when ABC bought the rights to the Calgary winter Games, outbidding rivals NBC at a price of $309 million. This unexpectedly high bid resulted in an overall loss of $65 million for ABC in producing the Games and the network has not covered the Games since (Pound 2004). According to Slater (1998), the inflated contribution by US networks is possible due to their commercial status, and results from fierce competition between the networks to gain the status of the ‘network of the Olympics’. Since their move to be more prominent in negotiations over television rights, the IOC have capitalised on this competition, structuring the bidding process so as to reap maximum revenue (Barney et al 2002; Pound, 2004; Slater, 1998). Roone Arledge, head of ABC sports at the time of the Calgary Games negotiations, described the climate in which the bidding took place thus: “They want us to be like three scorpions fighting in a bottle, when it’s over, two will be dead and the winner will be exhausted” (cited in Slater, 1998, p. 56). It has been suggested (Arledge cited in Slater, 1998; Pound, 2004) that US networks are treated unfairly by the IOC in the prices paid for Olympic television rights.

In comparison, most other areas of the world gain access to coverage of the Games through non-commercial, government-owned systems with much lower budget and therefore claim to be unable to afford fees as high as US television (Barney et al
2002, Pound, 2004). Perhaps the most well documented example used to demonstrate this discrepancy is that of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU).

4.2iii Samaranch, the EBU and the importance of blanket coverage

The EBU is a consortium of non-commercial television networks from various European countries. In securing rights to the Olympics, the EBU makes a joint bid, agreed by its members. The costs are shared between the networks, relative to their wealth. Established in 1950, the EBU was involved in the first year of official television rights negotiations for the 1960 Games in Rome (Barney et al, 2002). The EBU have gained the European rights to the Olympics every year since then (Slater, 1998). Several writers have observed a favouritism of the IOC towards the EBU, not only in condoning and encouraging their monopoly on the European rights to the Olympics, but also in accepting fees lower than they could afford (Pound, 2004).

Pound (2004), IOC member and chairman of the IOC television negotiations committee until 2001, has been outspoken about his concerns over former IOC President, Antonio Samaranch's bias towards the EBU, particularly in terms of the relatively low bids accepted for rights to the Games. He reports that Samaranch refused to allow him to intervene in the negotiations over the European rights to the Olympic broadcast and questions the truth of the EBU's claim to poverty:

EBU had somehow managed to convince everyone that its members – for the most part, state-owned broadcasters – could not afford to pay reasonable rights fees. They could afford to pay millions of dollars for regular episodes of programs such as Dallas for viewers who had to be protected from the dangers of American culture, but apparently had no money to pay for the Olympics...This was ridiculous and I said as much whenever possible. It was, in fact, arrant nonsense, but Samaranch seemed to be bewitched. (Pound, 2004, p. 178)
Such accusations were deflected by Samaranch, arguing that the EBU continued to secure the contract, despite their poor bids because they were the only entity capable of offering blanket coverage across Europe, as opposed to the small market share of their cable and satellite competitors (Barney et al, 2002; Pound, 2004). He continually refused to engage in talks with EBU’s rivals: private, commercial networks. In negotiations for the LA Games, Peter Ueberroth, head of the LA Olympic organising committee, fought harder than any of his predecessors in ensuring the EBU paid more reasonable fees than they had done in previous years (three times that which they paid for the 1980 Moscow Games). The real breakthrough, according to Barney et al (2002), came in the bidding for the 1996 Atlanta summer Games, when competitive bidding from a private German network (UFA) drove the EBU offer up from $94.5 million to $250 million. Accusations of Samaranch’s favouritism towards EBU remained, as their final bid still trailed that of UFA by $50 million, however, it was argued that the EBU offered more widespread coverage of the Games. That said, it would appear that the threat of competition undermined the EBU’s complacency in its security as Europe’s Olympic broadcaster. This is evident in the $1.442 billion deal paid for the multi-festival package including: Sydney, 2000; Salt Lake City, 2002; Athens, 2004; Turin, 2006; and Beijing 2008. This represented a substantial increase (averaged per festival) from previous offerings. The case of the EBU is significant to this study, as the coverage that was analysed was from the BBC, who received its rights to the Salt Lake City Games as member of this consortium.
4.3 Constructing the spectacle: BBC coverage of the Salt Lake City Games

British coverage of the Olympics has always been received via the BBC, who secures rights to broadcast the Games through its membership of the EBU, which bids on their behalf. The EBU provides the BBC (and other member networks) with technical and operational facilities. As the rights-holder, the EBU receives an international signal package, comprised of 40 feeds, from the host broadcaster and distributes them to its members. Each rights-holding network receives the same pictures from a central feed, provided by the host broadcaster. The host broadcaster is the body selected and employed by the organising committee to carry out the camera work and produce the visual element of the coverage. Each broadcaster receives that feed and, therefore, for the most part, the pictures seen by television audiences across the globe are identical.

The audio element of the broadcast is the responsibility of the individual broadcast networks, for obvious linguistic reasons. Also, this allows broadcasters to angle coverage so as to be most relevant to national audiences, in terms of focussing narrative on ‘home’ athletes or, for example, explaining sports which may be less familiar in a particular country. Editorial control over the live feed also adds a sense of identity to the broadcast produced in each country. For instance, the BBC may choose to show coverage of sports or events in which British athletes are most likely to have success, as was the case with curling and skeleton in the coverage of the Salt Lake City Games.

In addition to this, some networks are able to take a limited number of their own cameras to the Games to capture pictures of their home athletes in cases where the central feed may not cover them. According to BBC producer, Jonathan Bramley (interview carried out with Bramley, 11/02/04), the BBC usually provide additional footage at the
summer Games but did not for Salt Lake City, as British interest of the winter Olympics is relatively low, and therefore, the level of comprehensive coverage that is produced for the summer Games is not warranted. The BBC did, however, take some cameras to the Salt Lake City Games for use in extra, feature articles, previews and interviews with British athletes. All other, live event coverage was taken from the feed of Salt Lake City's host broadcaster, International Sports Broadcasters (ISB).

Salt Lake City was the first Olympics in which the BBC made use of its 'interactive' technology, allowing viewers with access to digital satellite television to choose from a range of events being covered simultaneously (BBC website, 2004). It also ran highlights and replays of the events of previous days continuously throughout the duration of the Games. How this limited access to extended coverage was used in calculating audience figures for the coverage of the Games is not made explicit in the BBC audience research findings. Such extra coverage increases the number of hours of footage available in total, but if some of that broadcast is limited only to a certain percentage of the aggregate audience, then the figures for viewing hours offered may be misleading. If all the hours of the three streams of coverage running simultaneously are included in the total hours offered, whilst it is technically the case that x number of hours is produced, the viewer is unable to watch all of those hours of coverage because they overlap with one another. The section that follows will provide a critical analysis of the results of the BBC's own audience research.
4.4 Who watches and why?

4.4i BBC Audience Research on Salt Lake City

The BBC audience research from the Salt Lake City Olympics covered various statistics of viewing figures, carried out by the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB); calculations of traffic to the BBC web pages dedicated to the Games; and Quest surveys of the audience reaction to the Games and its coverage. Quest is a BBC commissioned weekly survey of 4000 panellists who represent audiences across the UK and give views on programming. BARB provides the industry standard audience measurement service for television broadcasters and the advertising industry. 'Overnight' data is produced the next day from the previous day's transmission. Broadcasters, such as the BBC, use overnight data to provide them with an initial idea of how the previous day has performed. The overnight data from the BARB research on the audience figures was summarised thus:

- The tournament averages 1.5m, 13% network share, in line with the 2001 slot average for audience, and marginally up in share.
- Audiences were up considerably on the Nagano winter Olympics in 1998 – by 0.7 – but coverage was at even worse times for the viewing audience that Salt Lake – so this increase was to be expected.
- Network share is a much better indicator in this instance to compare the tournaments – and the Winter Olympics 02 were up by more than 2 share points on Nagano 4 years ago.
• Our most successful night of coverage was the second Thursday, for the Great Britain Women's Gold medal in the Curling. Audience peaked this night at 5.7m on BBC1, and a massive 5.6m on BBC2 at 23.45-24.00

• Extra programming was put on to cover the Curling Gold medal, so that from 21.50 through until post midnight there was continuous coverage between BBC1 and BBC2.

• BBC2's coverage was up on the slot considerably more than BBC1.

(BARB overnight data, cited in BBC Sport Audience Research, 2002)

The term 'network share' refers to the percentage of total television viewers (for a particular country) that tuned into the channel in question. For example, according to BARB data, the average percentage of viewers watching BBC channels for the coverage of the Salt Lake City Games was 13.4%, whereas the average for those particular slots for the same time of year in 2001 was 13.2%. Therefore, the coverage of the Games increased ratings from what might be expected during normal programming. It should be noted, however, that this increase is by only a very small margin and is unlikely to prove to be statistically significant.

When looking more closely at the data, broken down into each day of coverage, it is clear that the hugely increased audiences (compared with the normal slot average) for the curling final skew the data somewhat. To clarify, the very large increase in audience for that one slot will make the average ratings for the whole period of the Games seem more elevated than was really the case for the majority of programming. The BBC research argues that network share is a better indicator than total number of viewers
because it overcomes the difficulties of making comparisons between programming shown at different times. It was expected that higher audience figures for the Salt Lake Games than for the previous winter Olympics in Nagano would be merely a result of the more favourable hours due to a smaller time difference. However, by looking at network share, it is possible to deduce that Salt Lake City was more popular with viewers than Nagano per se, even when the time difference is taken into account, as a greater percentage of viewers at the given times chose to tune into the Olympics coverage as opposed to programming on other channels.

Research also indicates that British success is a determining factor in viewing figures for the Olympics. BARB data shows an increase of 3.3 million viewers compared with figures for the normal slot during the coverage of the women's curling final. As detailed above, the total viewers peaked at 5.7 million during the BBC1 coverage of the match, between 11pm and 11.45pm, an audience almost matching that for the FA Cup Final in 2001, aired at 3pm on a Saturday afternoon. Furthermore, the top four programme slots from the Salt Lake Games, in terms of the peak audiences, involved British interest, from either the curling team or Alex Coomber (Britain's bronze medallist in the skeleton). A further two of the top twelve slots were taken up by the medal ceremony for the women's curling competition and a preview feature for the women's curling final. The absence of Alain Baxter's bronze medal performance in the peak viewing figures is explained as a result of his success being so 'unexpected'. In recent years, the range of mediums through which the BBC provides coverage of the Games has expanded to include the internet. During the Salt Lake City Games, the BBC dedicated a
section of their website to the winter Olympics. The data collected on the accessing and use of those web pages is detailed below.

The research on the BBC website is not of central concern to this study as the mediums examined in this project do not include the internet. Despite this, some discussion is warranted. This overview of data on audience behaviour will give a brief synopsis of the research carried out. The BBC's research on the website was quite basic, looking at numbers of 'hits' to the website's pages from a temporal perspective and per events page or area of the site. Unsurprisingly, the pages with information on sports in which Britons were successful were among the most popular with users of the website. However, the most popular area of the site (14% of traffic) was the skating section, and the BBC attributed this to the skating judging scandal involving the Russian and Canadian pairs, and to the story of Australian Steven Bradbury, who won an unexpected and somewhat fortunate gold medal in the speed skating (all the other skaters fell before the finish line). The second most popular area of the site was the home page with 13% of the total hits. In terms of overall traffic to the site, the second week was much more popular than the first, with 2.8 million hits compared with 1.9 million in week one. This coincided with the British medal successes, all of which took place in the last week of competition.

The Quest research on the audience was of a slightly more qualitative nature. Rather than merely counting audience numbers, the study involved a survey of a representative sample of 5,000 British adults, which took place during the week immediately after the end of the Salt Lake City Games. Quest outlined their objectives thus: "To measure interest levels, people's perceptions and claimed viewing to the winter
Olympics, to the tournament as a whole and the individual events. In addition it was important to look at the make up of interested groups in the individual sports.” (BBC Sport – audience research). The findings show a low participation rate (7.5% of those questioned) among Britons, but of all those questioned, the highest numbers of those who did participate came from the 16-24 age group. It also found that the greatest level of involvement came from the higher socio-economic classes, who are more likely to have access to such expensive sports.

The participants in the study were also asked about their interest in watching the winter Olympics on television. 48% of those asked replied positively to the question of whether they were interested in watching the Games. In term of differences in interest across the age groups, in contrast to their low participation rates, the over 65 age group reported the highest level of interest in viewing the Games. This is most likely to be as a result of this age range being the highest consumers of television more generally and being more likely to have access to only terrestrial television (BBC sport – audience research). Interest in viewing was quite consistent across the other age groups. In terms of socio-economic class, groups AB, C1 and C2 showed similar interest levels (48-49% expressing interest in watching), whilst group DE had least interest. The top three most popular sports were bobsleigh, curling and figure skating. Presumably, the high interest in curling arose from the success of the British women’s team in Salt Lake City. Awareness of the BBC as the British based broadcaster of the Games was high, with 81% of those surveyed identifying them as such. 84% of those asked agreed that the Olympic coverage was credible. Only 26% of participants were aware that Eurosport also showed coverage from Salt Lake City.
When asked if they believed the winter Olympics were not an important event, 72% of respondents disagreed. It is not clear why this question was oriented in the negative sense, however, it should be kept in mind that this may have had some bearing on the responses given. 74% of respondents agreed that they watched the Games for British medal hopes, whilst 69% said they watched for the sport itself and 67% claimed to watch because it was the Olympics. It should be noted that the format of the questionnaire did not negate the possibility of cross over between responses, for example respondents may have agreed with both statements ‘I watched for British medal hopes’ and ‘I watched for the sport’. What the data does suggest is that 5% of viewers were interested in the British medal hopes but not the sport itself. 78% of those surveyed claimed to have enjoyed the winter Olympics more than they expected.

Again, the influence of national success in attracting television audiences was apparent in this research. Curling was the most watched sport by the respondents, with 82% of the study's participants claiming to have watched part of that sport during the Games. However, when asked about how much they enjoyed the sports they viewed, subjects ranked curling as their third least-enjoyed sport. Bobsleigh was reportedly the most enjoyed sport of those watched throughout the Games. The general pattern of enjoyment identified the 'high octane' sports (BBC sport – audience research) as the most popular among Britons.

Overall, the BBC audience research data seems to suggest that the Olympics were received in a positive light by the public. Both audience ratings, and perhaps more significantly, audience share, were increased in comparison with the previous winter Games in Nagano. Again, one should be cautious in taking such data at face value, as it is
not made explicit whether methods were consistent in the research for both Games. Data can influenced by the methods of questioning and types of questions posed, and whilst independent research bodies in the form of BARB and Quest were used to carry out the research, the extent to which the BBC were involved in the process is also unknown. Having examined the data available on British audience response to the Games, the next section will look at research on audience figures on a global scale.

4.4ii Global audiences: an expanding picture

The research on audience figures for the Salt Lake Games was taken from publications by the IOC, who employed the independent bodies: Sports Marketing Surveys and Harris Interactive. Despite the use of ‘independent’ research groups to carry out the research, data produced by a body such as the IOC, who have a clear vested interest in presenting the Olympics in a positive light, must be approached with a critical eye. Data provided in this Olympic marketing report is statistically based, giving figures of the global viewing figures, but fails to address the more qualitative aspects of audience response to the coverage provided. Figures of the revenue generated by the sale of broadcast rights are disclosed, with an outline of the distribution of those funds.

With in excess of 6000 personnel, the total worldwide television network staff outnumbered the athletes at the Games by more than 2:1. Overall, the Games attracted 2.1 billion global television viewers across 160 countries. The report claims that the most accurate means by which to measure the appeal of the Olympic broadcast is through total viewer hours. This figure is calculated by multiplying the number of viewers per programme by its duration, to give the viewer hours for that particular programme. The
sum of viewer hours for every Olympic programme broadcast gives the total viewer hours for the Games. The total viewer hours for the Salt Lake City Games were calculated as 13.1 billion hours. The report does not offer a comparison with the total viewer hours of previous Games, which would have given some context to this statistic. Per continent, the greatest proportion of viewer hours came from Asia at 49%, with Europe providing 31% of the total and North America 11%. The remaining 10% of viewer hours were shared thus: Central and South America 7.5%; Oceania 1%; and Africa 0.5%.

Digital coverage increased the hours of Olympic broadcast available in Europe, with the BBC offering an additional 500 hours, and Germany an extra 400 through its dedicated Olympic channel on Premier World. In North America, host country broadcaster, NBC, doubled the viewer hours of Nagano in its coverage of Salt Lake City, whilst in Canada, the men’s hockey final attracted the highest rating in Canadian broadcast history, with 8.6 million viewers. In Asia, Japan generated 1.8 billion of the continent’s 2.2 billion viewer hours, with an increase in total coverage over the 1998 Games, which it hosted in Nagano. Elsewhere, India broadcast free to air coverage of the Olympics for the first time, reaching over 100 million people. South America proved to be one of the key growth areas for winter Olympic television coverage, with an increase in viewer hours by over 65%. In Oceania, just over 5 hours per day of coverage from Salt Lake City was broadcast by the Seven Network, and ratings were reportedly better than expected. The majority of viewer hours from Africa came from South Africa, with only limited access being available throughout the rest of the continent.
Of the total revenue generated by the various marketing schemes for Salt Lake City, capital raised through the Olympic broadcast contributed 35.5%, at $738 million (US). This was added to the total marketing revenue, which included money from the Olympic Properties of the United States (OPUS) partnership (scheme managed jointly by the Salt Lake Organising Committee and the US Olympic Committee to raise money for the hosting of the Games); the TOP V programme; ticketing; and licensing. The total revenue ($2,071 million) was then divided between the Salt Lake Organising Committee (67%) and the Olympic Family (33%). The Olympic family consists of the IOC, National Olympic Committees, International Sports Federations and the Olympic Solidarity. Of the IOC generated revenue, the Olympic broadcast fund still constitutes the majority of the income, with the TOP V programme raising only a third as much as the sale of television rights. It should also be noted that increased television exposure means the sponsorship rights are of greater value and thus the TOP V programme generates more money for the IOC. In this respect, the television rights are actually of even greater value to the IOC than the $738 million directly generated.

Thus far, this chapter has looked to give some historical background to the role of television in the Olympics, and has provided some figures related to audience response to the Salt Lake City Games. The next section details the findings of some primary research carried out with BBC personnel, in the form of interviews and email questionnaires.

4.5 Probing the production process

In an attempt to gain some insight into the media production processes involved in covering the Olympic Games, interviews were carried out with various members of the
BBC production team. The most in-depth of these took place with Jonathan Bramley, BBC executive producer for Grandstand, and the skiing producer for the Salt Lake City Olympic Grandstand. Interviews were also carried out with presenters on the Salt Lake City Olympic Grandstand: Clare Balding, Steve Cram and Sue Barker. Questioning attempted to unpack the ways in which decisions were made regarding the packaging of the Games, and to ascertain what factors influenced such choices. More specifically, it was attempted to determine the place of Olympism in the BBC's portrayal of the Games. The interview with Jonathan Bramley took place via telephone, whilst Sue Barker, Clare Balding and Steve Cram were only available to respond to email questionnaires (transcripts of all these interviews can be found in Appendix 3). The findings from the interview with Bramley are detailed below.

The first area discussed with Bramley was the issue of the decisions made on content of the Olympic coverage. In Britain, the coverage of the winter Games is less extensive than the summer Olympics and thus, there are editing choices to be made in deciding which events are to be included in the broadcast. When asked how it was decided which sports and events would get priority in coverage, Bramley revealed that the primary concern was with viewing figures. He stated:

I would say that's (decisions over which events are included) pretty dictated by what's gone on in, to start off with, what history suggests, so in terms of the British audience we know from just taking raw viewing figures, figure skating is one of the most popular events.

Other factors he cited as influential were British interest in terms of medal hopes – thus supporting the argument that television frames the Olympics in a nationalistic manner – and the events given exposure regularly on the BBC. Skiing was identified as the only winter sport for which the BBC have a regular strand (on the Ski Sunday programme)
and thus scheduling of the Games tried to provide a large proportion of live coverage of this. Overall, Bramley suggested that the choices made in terms of the content of Olympic coverage were very much driven by consumer preferences, in trying to ensure audience satisfaction and maximise ratings.

In terms of the logistics and technical issues of the BBC’s coverage of the Games, Bramley revealed that the BBC had minimal input in terms of the visual images broadcast of the Games. He noted that this was particularly the case for the winter Games (as opposed to the summer Olympics): “In the winter Olympics especially, we don’t really have any additional event coverage ourselves. It’s pretty much all the coverage we are taking is pretty much all provided by the host broadcaster.” The only extra cameras taken to Salt Lake City were utilised solely for interviews and recording preview and feature articles, not to capture live sports action. In contrast, at the 2004 summer Games in Athens, footage from BBC cameras showing pictures of British athletes were shown when the host broadcaster was focussing on other action. Bramley disclosed that the summer Olympics warrant a greater budget than the winter Games in this country, which was one of the reasons for the lack of extra BBC event footage. The other reason for this was apparently restrictions put in place by the host broadcaster. This also demonstrates the extent to which the structure of the Olympic broadcast (in terms of the way in which pictures are received from the central, host feed) limits the autonomy of the national broadcaster in deciding what viewers see of the Games.

Given the relative lack of popularity of winter sports in Britain, it was interesting to establish the strategies the BBC used to make the Games more appealing to the public.
Bramley noted that one of the key features of the winter Games used to capture audience interest was the locations and their scenery:

It's the whole, you know, the scenery and the mountains, the sunshine, the snow, it's almost you know, a kind of fantasy in a way really. As you say, winter sports aren't popular here, mainly because we don't do it, we don't have the climate, we don't have the terrain, the weather. So that whole, the great images it provides from those, sort of, mountain adventures, that's one thing we sort of hope to get across.

This attraction was exploited also in the marketing across BBC programming as The Holiday Programme featured locations related to winter sports in the run up to the Games to try to establish the Olympics as a significant event in the public mind.

Bramley also revealed how the nature of many winter sports as being fast, dynamic and skilful was used as a selling point. The excitement associated with such activities was hoped to attract viewers who would perhaps not normally be avid sports fans. The BBC, according to Bramley, used feature articles in programmes such as Grandstand to introduce the audience to, and explain winter sports in the build up to the Games. It was also underlined that a younger demographic was targeted through the culture surrounding sports such as snowboarding. Bramley noted that newer events such as these have appeal to a younger, section of the audience who are typically not big consumers of winter Olympic coverage. He also suggested that this was an area of interest the BBC were looking to build upon in the marketing of subsequent Games as this was not fully successful in the Salt Lake City coverage.

When prompted, Bramley agreed that the Olympic banner and the status of the Games as a significant event was also an attraction to audiences. However, this was not something he identified in his initial response to the question regarding the marketing of
When Bramley failed to identify the kudos of the Olympics as adding marketability to the winter Games, the following exchange took place:

**Katie Butler:** Do you think that the fact that these winter sports in the Olympics are under the Olympic banner adds marketability to the Games?

**Jonathan Bramley:** Definitely, you can say that apart from skiing, there aren’t any other of those events that we cover regularly on BBC television. So that’s absolutely the case. The fact that they’re an Olympics, that’s what people tune in for. It’s the epitome of those sports.

**KB:** What do you think it is about the Olympics that would attract a mass audience in that way?

**JB:** Because it’s the Olympics, it’s an event that transcends sport, I think you’d find a lot of people who weren’t interested in any individual sports, when the Olympics comes along it becomes a much bigger event. It’s an event you know that will regularly appear in the newspapers, perhaps front pages as well as back pages. It’s an event that will find its way onto the news, find its way into other programming perhaps as well. So it tends to draw people who perhaps normally wouldn’t be avid viewers. It’s more than just a sporting event.

Bramley also went on to claim that this was an aspect that would consciously be featured in the BBC’s packaging and marketing strategies — that as the Olympics, the event is more than a sporting one, with greater significance than other sporting competitions. Despite arguing that this is the case — that the Olympic Games is ‘an event that transcends sport’ — Bramley makes no mention of the idea that it may be the value system (Olympism) that the Games supposedly represent that marks them as different.

Linked to this idea of the Olympics as more than merely a sporting competition, is the notion that the Games should be used to spread the philosophy of Olympism. It was interesting to find out how a member of the production team interpreted the ideals of Olympism and what level of awareness there was of these amongst those who produce the Olympic broadcast. When asked about the Olympic ideals and their place in the television coverage of the Games, Bramley firstly talked about the strand of excellence, saying: “As you say you’ve got those Olympic ideals as well and that’s fairly obvious in
any sport we cover, in that you know we like to think that we always go for the top level or the top quality or the top dedication from the athletes.” He then went on to identify the notion of the Olympics being concerned with effort in taking part, rather than simply the medal winners: “It’s also about those perhaps who are coming from nations who aren’t perhaps traditionally winter sports...you know look at Eddie the Eagle for example, that’s a perfect example” (my emphasis). The notion that Eddie the Eagle was a representation of the inclusiveness of the Olympics is perhaps a little romanticised here, and sidesteps the fact that the media actually framed him as a figure of ridicule when he competed in the 1988 Games, thus undermining him as a positive role model. Nevertheless, in this statement Bramley demonstrates at least some awareness of the Olympics as an event beyond its representation of sporting excellence. However, there was an indication that the BBC’s motives in terms of including such elements in coverage were to create a story to capture the imagination of the viewers, rather than necessarily being concerned with educational aspects. Bramley commented:

You’d also show the guys who are right down the field who are providing entertainment because of their endeavours which weren’t quite coming up to scratch...You’re obliged to show those top performances in terms of the pure kind of sporting ability, but you also want to tell a story as well, you know going back to that wider audience.

This suggests that the interest in the lesser athletes at the Olympics was more tied up with their role in entertaining and attracting a broader audience, than conveying a deeper or alternative way of understanding sport. Particularly revealing here is Bramley’s phrase ‘you also want to tell a story as well’. This substantiates claims made by media researchers such as Whannel (1992) that in the portrayal of events in the media, narrative is a commonly used tool in the production of sports events. It also belies the notion that
the media is merely a window through which the world is a presented, instead events are packaged and framed in particular ways to serve the needs of those who produce them.

Despite this, there does seem to be some overlap between the objectives of the BBC as a broadcasting body and Olympism. When asked about the BBC's responsibilities in terms of educating audiences, Bramley revealed: “It's part of the BBC's remit to educate as well as to inform and entertain so that's obviously part of our formal aims of broadcasting.” However, when he elaborated on this, it became apparent that the education was more about the introduction of new sport to the audience than the teaching of ideals: “Especially with the Olympics, you know, because it's something that's not that well watched and perceived amongst the TV audience in general so, you know, educating actually has the bonus of informing people.” When asked directly about education regarding ideals such as cultural exchange and international understanding, Bramley suggested that there was some attempt to relate the culture of the host cities to audiences, particularly if the location was thought to be less familiar to British audiences. He stated: “Very much part of our objective at an event like that is to inform about the culture of where an event's taking place. Especially, you know, if it's somewhere that's less familiar”. This claim, if true, may constitute one means by which the BBC contributes to the remit of Olympism that encourages education and cultural exchange through the Games.

Questions were also asked about the BBC's handling of stories that arose during the Games, such as security and the politics of 9/11 in the opening ceremony; the British curling success; and the pairs skating judging controversy. The freedom of the media to express opinions arose, particularly with reference to the parading of the World Trade
Center flag in the opening ceremony. The following exchange took place on the handling of this particular incident:

KB: There was the issue of the World Trade Center flag and it as quite interesting that the press in the build up, very much focussed on this and the politics that surround that and what kind of precedent it would set, but interestingly in the BBC coverage, there was not the same kind of critical dialogue round it and I was wondering why you think that might have been the case and was that a deliberate decision?

JB: It was a deliberate decision as in the fact that we’re not really here to provide comment on it, we’re to provide the facts really in a way and it’s sort of up to the audience perhaps to take their own interpretation from it. And I think that’s just about being as objective as possible really and not kind of, you know, influencing people’s own opinions of what’s being shot.

KB: Ok would that be something that’s within the BBC’s general guidelines?

JB: Absolutely, it’s kind of complete impartiality really, in terms of we tell it like is, what you see. We shouldn’t be in any way influencing opinions about what people are seeing.

This stance of impartiality is reflected in the BBC’s values as stated on their website, where it claims to be “impartial, independent and honest” (BBC website, 2004). Bramley’s comment, above, raises the question of the role of sports reporters and journalists. Whilst reporters in other areas, such as politics, are investigative, and often critical in their treatment of controversial issues, it seems that sports reporters and sports programmes are not expected to address such contentious matters. As Bramley stated: “We’re not really here to provide comment on it, we’re here to provide the facts really...that’s just about being as objective as possible really.” Analysis in this study would suggest that this applies specifically to television sports journalists, as there is evidence that newspaper sports reporters were sometimes more candid in their discussion of controversial issues.

When Bramley was questioned on the BBC’s stance in other stories that arose throughout the course of the Salt Lake City Games, differences in style between the press
and television were clear. Bramley argues that the BBC has a responsibility to report on, and show coverage of events without expressing opinions on controversial or political issues. If this is the case, it would seem that the BBC are a suitable broadcaster of the Games, as they share with the IOC the professed adversity to becoming involved in political debate. Also as outlined earlier, there is also the common interest of educating the audience. When asked if this non-political stance was influenced by the fact that the Olympics themselves are supposed to be divorced from politics, Bramley claimed that the BBC's approach was not in any way different than it would have been in covering any other sports event.

In contrast to the BBC, areas of the press were much more outspoken on issues and breaking stories in its coverage of the Olympics in Salt Lake City. When asked about this point of deviation from press coverage of the Games, Bramley underlined that the BBC avoided passing judgement on potentially controversial issues, focussing on presenting the public with the facts on given situations. He did, however, reveal that there was some relationship between the press and the BBC coverage, in that newspaper coverage was monitored to help identify significant or newsworthy stories. Bramley stated:

If it's a big story then, even in the US press or otherwise, if it's a big story then people are interested, we want to serve that interest. Again anything that moves from the back pages to the front pages...we'll kind of feed off that, we'll kind of play to it in a way.

This emphasises the idea that reporters in the press are generally able to take a somewhat more autonomous stance in their coverage of the Olympics, having more freedom to express views. The fact that television producers look to the press' lead in prioritising stories suggests that the press is more involved in investigative journalism than broadcast
coverage. Television has been observed as being more concerned with entertainment and attracting audiences (Tomlinson, 1999). There is, however, some contradiction in what Bramley says here. Whilst he states that producers look to the stories featured in the press as the lead in the angles they choose to take, in the build up to the opening ceremony to the Salt Lake City Games, press reports were dominated by discussion of the role of the World Trade Center flag, but the BBC chose to avoid the issue. This would suggest that rather than simply reflecting the broader trends in news reporting, there is a process of selection and censorship of stories in BBC coverage. Aside from the general BBC guidelines, Bramley claimed there were no official angles dictated to presenters in the handling of specific events or news stories that arose from the Salt Lake City Games.

In the analysis of the BBC’s coverage, a gendered treatment of the female curling team was identified in some instances. Whilst this was less prominent than in areas of the press, stereotypes were evident nonetheless. Examples include the framing of the women in a very domestic setting for a feature article on the eve of the final, and the use of a Bridget Jones style diary to track the team’s progress. When asked about such gendered framing, Bramley responded:

I don’t recall the feature exactly and I don’t know if there might have been some sort of you know, tongue in cheek references there. I mean obviously at the time there was kind of the press line about this whole thing you know of housework on ice and this sort of thing, I mean I would have thought that if that kind of line was taken at all it would have been done purely tongue in cheek with the full blessing of those involved.

In this response, Bramley immediately distances himself and the BBC from the ‘housework on ice’ framing, labelling this as the ‘press line’. However, he then goes on to reveal that the BBC may have made a similar interpretation, but that this was defensible because it was done less seriously. This justification suggests that it is deemed
acceptable to use gendered stereotypes if they are portrayed in a humorous, 'tongue in cheek' manner. Bramley's defensive stance here illustrates that there is awareness that gender stereotyping is problematic and unacceptable. However, the actual texts demonstrate that this is not carried through into influencing production processes. It also is also suggested that the use of stereotypes is unproblematic, as long as those involved give their 'full blessing'. Bramley does not acknowledge the broader implications of such restrictive labelling in contributing to the reinforcement of a patriarchal gender order. As those such as Lenskyj (1998), Messner (2002) and Hargreaves (1994) have noted, media portrayals of women that trivialise their achievements serves to underline their position of inferiority, particularly in the sports arena.

Finally, Bramley was asked if there was any way in which he felt the BBC could have handled the Games better, and whether an official appraisal of the coverage took place. He revealed that whilst there was no specific appraisal of the 2002 winter Games coverage, audience research was carried out (as detailed earlier in this chapter), and the results of this would be used to plan future Olympic productions. This suggests that the audience preferences and popularity of events is the key factor considered in looking to improve the BBC's broadcast. This would seemingly support the statement made on the BBC website that "the audience is at the heart of everything done" (BBC website, 2004). However, one may be sceptical of the validity of such a claim in light of the response to the question of possible improvements in coverage of future Games. In terms of specific moves to be made in improving coverage for the next winter Olympics in Turin, Bramley said that the main area to be addressed was in tapping into the younger market, through the promotion of sports such as snowboarding, and carrying out research to discover what
members of that age bracket would react well to in terms of coverage. Here, we see that the BBC are interested in not only responding to the needs of its audience but also in creating new audiences, using methods that may, in fact, alienate its existing viewers.

To summarise the findings from this insight into the BBC production process, it would appear that the success of British athletes was one of the primary aims coverage, and this was presumably tied in with meeting the demands of the British audience. From a technical perspective, it seems that all tailoring of footage to the interests of the home audience comes from commentary and the inclusion of specific features and interviews as the feed broadcast offers little choice in terms of event footage itself. The desire of the IOC to spread the Olympic philosophy through the Games and its media exposure appears to remain unrealised for the most part. Although Bramley demonstrated some awareness of elements of Olympism when pushed, it was not an issue that appeared to be central to the BBC’s production choices. Even when talking of the BBC’s role as educators, Bramley appeared to be describing more of a process informing the audience about unfamiliar sports than an education about ideals and principles, as Olympism was hoped to be at the outset of the modern Games. Having gained an insight, here, into the decisions made behind the cameras, attention will now turn to the interviews carried out with the BBC presenters.

The interviews with Clare Balding, Steve Cram and Sue Barker were carried out via email and so could not be conducted using the open ended questioning technique as in the telephone interview with Bramley. Both Balding and Cram worked as presenters on the Salt Lake City late night highlights programme, whilst Barker hosted the programmes showing live event coverage. All three presenters worked in the London studio
throughout the Games. In this role, the presenters were unlikely to be able to provide much insight into the decisions involved in the actual production processes. However, it was interesting to gain some awareness of their perceptions of the Games, and Olympism in particular, as they represented the ‘face’ of the British coverage. The same questions were put to all three presenters and so the responses will be discussed together, below.

The first area of questioning surrounded the presenters’ experience and preparation for their work on the Games. This was relevant because, as has been highlighted elsewhere, winter sports are not popular in Britain and thus the general population are not particularly knowledgeable about the winter Olympics. With this in mind, it was interesting to find out whether those presenting the Games to the nation took the role of educators or whether they were able to sympathise and, to an extent, learn along with the audience. Balding and Cram, who presented together, were both working on their first winter Olympics, but claim to be recreational skiers. Balding had previously presented on the skiing world championships. In terms of experience in the Olympics, both presenters also worked on the Sydney Games in 2000. Barker has worked on winter Olympic coverage since Lillehammer, 1994.

In preparation for the Salt Lake City Games, all the presenters told how they were given notes on the sports and competitors, but Balding noted how she was briefed that “our audience would, for the most part, not be experts in winter sports, it would be better not to assume too much knowledge and not to be afraid to ask our experts the ‘obvious’ question”. Cram also noted that whilst he had some knowledge of winter sports, he was advised to “try to sympathise with the less knowledgeable viewer” in the highlights programme, in the hope of appealing to the wider audience. Barker, having had greater
experience in presenting the winter Games said that most of her preparation centred around gaining knowledge about particular athletes, specifically British hopes, and "swotting up on new sports, such as the skeleton for women and some of the snowboarding events". All three presenters agreed there were clear overlaps between the summer and winter Olympics in the skills required to be knowledgeable about a range of sports, and appealing to a broader audience without patronising the more educated viewer.

When asked if there was any particular advice given from producers in how to handle the Games, and what emphases to make, Balding, Cram and Barker all highlighted the focus on British hopes, thus reinforcing the nationalistic nature of coverage. Barker noted:

This was a great Games for Britain, as we had some real medal chances, able to compete with athletes from nations with a greater winter sports history. In the past we've had to make the most of characters such as Eddie the Eagle and of course Torvill and Dean as kind of one-offs. In Salt Lake City, however, we had not only those who won medals to cheer about, but some talented youngsters who have a lot of potential for future Games. This kind of success is always the best kind of story and helps the Olympics sell themselves from the British point of view. (my emphasis)

Of the focus on British hopes, Balding said, "We did make as much as we could of the British competitors (whether successful or not)". She also went on to identify the appeal of unusual or humorous stories, such as the Venezuelan luge athlete who fell off her sled. Balding suggested that the feel to her and Cram's late night highlights show was one which attracted "an element of cult viewing", and the more quirky stories helped create this mood.
The presenters were asked what role they felt they had in terms of commenting and passing judgement on the more controversial stories that arose in the Games. Balding was emphatic that she felt her position was not to give opinions on any contentious issues, but that her place was more one of chairing such debates between experts. In particular reference to the row that emerged over the pairs skating result, she stated: "As a presenter, my opinion was not required and not offered... I'm there to ask the questions, not to answer them and wouldn't feel qualified to do so." Cram, on the other hand, said that he did not feel aware of any restrictions on voicing opinions on issues, he argued: "When issues like the skating controversy come up I think the viewers like to see presenters engaging in some lively debate and sometimes frank and honest opinions can be a breath of fresh air." He also claimed that playing the role of "devil's advocate" gave voice to some of the viewers' questions and helped stimulate some interesting responses from expert guests. Cram's attitude was reflected in his style of presenting on the Games, where he was often one of the more outspoken members of the anchor team. On the same issue, Barker said that she felt her position was primarily one of mediating discussion with expert guests, such as Jayne Torvill, although in posing questions she would "try to keep in mind audience views expressed in letters and emails" in an attempt to keep the interview relevant to the viewers. She also went on to say that whilst there was obviously a need to maintain an overall position of neutrality, in her experience, allowing debate to develop naturally usually leads to the best discussions even if this sometimes led to "moving off the fence for a while". Evident, here, is an interesting range of interpretations of the BBC's claims to impartiality in broadcasting.
The main story of the Games, from a British perspective, was the women’s curling team’s gold medal. The success was very much unexpected and the sport was unfamiliar to the majority of Britons. In light of this, the presenters were asked what approaches were taken in the framing of the event, and how it was made more accessible to the average viewer. Barker responded, saying:

The women’s success did kind of blind side us a little, and I don’t think we ever really tried to pretend otherwise! For most of us, in week one certainly, all eyes were on the failure of the men’s team to fulfil the hopes we had for them, whilst all the time the women were quietly making steady progress towards the final. I think we really picked up on the story at the play off stage, when it looked like we were going out and then the way they turned it around really captured people’s imagination. To be honest I think the girls themselves did all the selling of the story, we just tried to provide information on the rules and show as much coverage as possible. (My emphasis)

Balding agreed, commenting: “Nothing sells a sport like success.” She also described how attention was paid to the team’s family members who had travelled out to support the players. Cram noted that whilst the sport itself was perhaps not the most high profile or exciting of the Games, the fact that the “nation was gripped bore testament to the draw of success and the significance of Olympic gold in the minds of the public.”

Another area of interest in relation to the curling was the gendered treatment of athletes. It was put to the presenters that some areas of the media made use of gender based stereotypes in its framing of the curlers, and they were asked how sensitive they thought the BBC were to such issues. All three said they believed the BBC dealt with the story in a gender-neutral manner. Balding stated:

We covered it as we would have done any sport in which Britain suddenly enjoys unexpected success and about which the audience know very little. I know we didn’t slip into patronising ‘housewives with brooms’ nonsense.
This statement is interesting, given Balding's description of the team's efforts in the introduction to one of the highlights programmes as: "Sweeping Mrs Doubtfire would be proud of", a direct reference to a well known fictional housewife. Cram said that he felt that 'the team's sex was not an issue in the portrayal of their success and they were treated in just the same way as a men's team would have been'. Barker agreed claiming that she 'was not aware of any stereotypes or sexist coverage of the team.' This is not, however, corroborated by the evidence cited in Chapter 6, which found there to be at least two examples of gendered stereotyping in the BBC portrayal of the British curlers.

When asked about their awareness of the Olympic ideals, Balding, Barker and Cram all said they were familiar with the principles of Olympism. Balding was perhaps most convincing on this issue, claiming: "I am a strong believer in the cultural and educational importance of sport, its role in society and its ability to enrich lives." She also went on to detail the ways in which she felt the BBC coverage of the Games helped convey these ideas in the inclusion of features on the history and culture of the venue and the focus on not only the success of medal winners, but also on: "those who achieve their goal, just by competing." When asked if she thought that such values were important to the viewers' enjoyment of the Olympics, she agreed that they were. However, the extent to which this apparent awareness of Olympic values manifests itself in the packaging of the Games for television is questionable, given the empirical findings detailed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Cram identified the Games as separate from other sporting competition, primarily because of their widely acknowledged status as the pinnacle of sporting excellence and the fact that multiple sports are incorporated in the same festival. Cram said that he
believed the Olympic ideals were important to the public in their view of the Games, and that the coming together of nations in sporting competition "given the current climate of international hostilities" was something that "really stood out in the opening ceremony, when the World Trade Center flag was carried through". Cram’s highlighting of the role of the World Trade Center flag in the opening ceremony as significant is worthy of note here, bearing in mind Bramley’s comments (cited earlier in this section) claiming that a deliberate decision was taken by the BBC to not focus on this incident. Barker said she was aware of Olympism as an “important element of the Olympics” and said she believed that the stories of athletes such as ‘Eric the Eel’ in the Sydney Games showed that sport doesn’t have to be only about those who win the medals but that “the Olympics really is about the achievement in effort as well as performance.”

Overall, Barker, Balding and Cram were quite consistent in their responses to the questions posed. The BBC handling of the Games appeared to be orientated around the viewer less familiar with winter sports and thus the presenters’ style was encouraged to sympathise with this position. The importance of focusing on British success was again apparent in appealing to the home audience. This supports the idea that there are nationalistic overtones to the BBC coverage of the Olympics, and, thus, some conflict with Olympism’s ideal that the Games should be about cultural exchange and international understanding. That said, all three presenters claimed to be aware of the ideals of Olympism and felt they, and the BBC more broadly, reflected this in their portrayal of the Games. The extent to which this was actually the case will be examined in the subsequent chapters, analysing the BBC coverage of the Salt Lake City Games.
The next section addresses the background to the other area of the media examined in this study: the press.

4.6 The Press in the early years

The majority of writing on the Olympics and the media has, to date, concentrated upon the relationship between the IOC and television (Barney et al, 2002; Slater, 1998; Toohey and Veal, 2000). This is unsurprising, as the IOC's relationship with television broadcasters is much more direct than it is with the print press, due to the sale of broadcast rights. The print press operate on a more independent basis, with covering the Games as a news event. In the first modern Olympics, in 1896, the IOC were considerably more concerned with keeping close relations with the press than they are now, as before television, the print press was the principal means by which the Games were publicised (MacAlloon, 1981). Coubertin had aspirations of using Olympism to educate through sport, and, thus, the help of the mass media was required in reaching a wide audience. According to Slater (1998), whilst the press was willing to give coverage to the Olympics, it did so on its own terms, which did not include the promotion of Olympism, instead creating "heroic myths" (Slater 1998, p. 51), which were more likely to attract readers.

MacAlloon (1981) noted that Coubertin himself was a journalist. In the years leading up to the first modern Olympics, Coubertin wrote articles for the French publications: *Revue Athlétique* and *Les Sports Athlétiques*, serving as editor for two years on the former. Coubertin utilised this platform to publicise his Olympic project. According to Slater (1998), at the 1896 Games in Athens, Coubertin fulfilled the role of
official news source, writing an account in *The Century*, an American magazine. In gaining wider coverage of the 1896 Athens Games, it is reported (Slater, 1998) that Coubertin was able to persuade 12 journalists to report on them, although resulting worldwide coverage was minimal. It wasn’t until the 1912 Games that the Olympics began to elicit substantial attention in the newspapers on a global scale (Mandell, 1976).

Historically, press reporters have indulged in myth-making processes, projecting athletes into superhuman status in order to capture the imagination of its readership (Chandler, cited in Slater, 1998; MacAlloon, 1981). This means the focus has tended to be on performance, rather than the values Coubertin hoped would be spread through sport in the Olympics. In the first Games in Athens, myths were created surrounding Spiridon Loues, winner of the marathon. Newspaper journalists apparently made up biographical 'facts' about Loues, in order to build stories to interest readers. This has meant that finding historical sources with valid information on athletes, such as Loues, has been problematic (Mandell, 1976). In this sense, accountability of the press was an issue in the early days of the Olympics, a problem that was exacerbated by the fact that the newspapers then constituted the only source of information on the Games.

Even in the early period of media involvement in the Olympics, when Coubertin himself was guarding the Olympic ideal, evidence suggests that the spread of Olympism was sacrificed to cater for the commercial agenda of the press (MacAlloon, 1981). It is little surprise then, that the press today, whilst giving wide publicity to the Olympics, does so in a way that is not necessarily supportive of the Movement’s purported aims to promote Olympism. In fact, coverage is often highly critical of the IOC.
Whilst formal rights to the Games have never been offered to the print press, the importance of newspapers to the IOC in supporting and publicising the Games in the early years, meant that moves were made to help stave off competition from other mediums. In the Amsterdam Olympics of 1928, the organising committee ruled that radio could not broadcast results of the Games, in order to preserve the press monopoly on Olympic coverage. Radio was utilised only to transmit encoded messages to members of the press, notifying them of results (Slater, 1998).

In the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics, American radio stations broadcast live coverage of the Games to the domestic audience, and in 1936, the Berlin Games witnessed the first live radio broadcast to a worldwide audience (Roche, 2004). Whilst this led to increased press coverage of the Olympics on a global scale (Roche, 2004), it also marked the end of the press’ monopoly on covering the Games and the introduction of a range of media to Olympic broadcast. In light of this change, the following section examines the role of the press in the Olympics today.

4.6i Cheerleaders or whistleblowers?: The press and the Olympics today

As was noted above, the relationship between the press and the Olympic Movement is, today, a relatively loose one. There is no direct financial link between the print press and the IOC, as there is with the television broadcasters, and, thus, the press is able to report on the Olympics with a great deal of autonomy. According to the work of writers such as Lenskyj (2002), Jennings and Sambrook (2000) and Simson and Jennings (1992), newspaper reporters are responsible for much of the investigative journalism that takes place into the Olympic Movement. Jennings and Sambrook (2000) revealed how
the bribery scandal surrounding the Salt Lake City bid for the 2002 winter Games was uncovered by local journalists. Indeed, Jennings, himself as an investigative journalist, has been highly critical of the IOC and its dealings in recent years. The press has also been prominent in the production of propaganda for, as well as critiques of, the bids of host cities and its subsequent operations (Lenskyj, 2002). Beyond these roles of bid cheerleaders or whistleblowers, the press also covers the sporting competition of the Olympics, thus fulfilling its function to entertain as well as to inform, persuade and educate (Slater, 1998).

Despite there being no formal, financial link between the press and the IOC, it is interesting to note that the Australian newspapers, Fairfax and News Limited were official sponsors of the Sydney Games in 2000 (Lenskyj, 2002). This is particularly interesting because the status of Olympic sponsor usually allows the sponsor exclusive rights to the use of the Olympic symbols and name in advertising. However, the IOC charter stipulates that Olympic events must be open to be covered by all news media, to ensure maximum exposure, and, thus, the two press sponsors of the 2000 Olympics did not gain any exclusivity in coverage. Instead, the Sydney Organising Committee gave the two newspaper groups first rights to information regarding promotional events, although not to news events. According to Lenskyj (2002), however, some debate took place as to where the line between promotional and news events should be drawn. Controversy also arose from the potential influence this relationship would have on the editorial slant of the apparently free press. Matthew Moore was Olympics Editor for the Sydney Morning Herald (a newspaper from the Fairfax group) at the time of the Sydney Games, and wrote several articles criticising the organising committee’s allocation of tickets for the
Olympics. When asked in a radio interview whether the position of sponsor presented a conflict of interest in his reporting, Moore answered:

> It complicates things I think, yes. I get not a lot, but continuous questioning from members of the public about how this works...it's kind of confusing to have a newspaper also sponsoring an event which they're often kicking the tripe out of. (Ausport website, 1999).

As this demonstrates, issues over freedom of the press and editorial autonomy mean the relationship between the press and the Olympic Movement requires further investigation, especially given state control of the Chinese print as well as electronic media.

According to Reg Gratton, who managed the press centre for the Sydney 2000 Games, whilst the radio and television constitute the dominant media presence at the Olympics, press journalists are responsible for 'opinion making' (Ausport website, 2004).

Of the differences in press and television coverage of the Olympics, he said:

> TV companies like NBC who paid over a billion dollars to have the rights to the 2000 Games in Sydney obviously focus on the sports competition. I mean that's what got their tremendous ratings in Atlanta. Whereas news organisations like Reuter's, who really don't get any advertising revenue in return for their coverage, would look at the Games as a whole, not just as a sports competition, but as a news event as well. (Gratton, Ausport website 2004)

This corroborates BBC producer, Bramley’s claims that the press lead the forming of opinion on breaking stories. Bramley twice referred to the significance of stories from the Games “moving from the back pages to the front pages” of newspapers, and went on to reveal that if stories were big in the press, then the BBC would look to include that in its coverage.

As detailed at the beginning of this section, literature on the press involvement in the Olympics is relatively sparse. This is perhaps a result of there being no formal relationship between the print media and the Olympic Movement, as well as the
dominance of television as a driving force in the projection of images of the Games across the globe. Despite this, it is important to note that the press has a distinct and important role in providing information on the Olympics, as both a sports and news event. This may not be as visible in coverage on television because of its need to maintain a favourable relationship with the IOC and attract viewers. It is difficult to assess reader reaction to newspaper coverage of the Olympics, as the press tends not to carry out research on its consumers in the same way that television networks do. Despite there being a need to address this apparent gap in the research, in-depth audience research lies outside the scope of this study.

4.7 Conclusion

As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, the aim of this work on production and audience perception of the Olympic coverage in the press and on the television was aimed at providing an overview of the two areas. With the current literature base favouring emphasis on the involvement of television involvement in the Games as opposed to the newspaper coverage, the chapter has reflected this bias. Historically speaking, literature documents that the media has been of central importance to the survival of the modern Olympics, since their inception in 1896. However, the role of the media, as desired by Coubertin, in spreading the ideals of Olympism has generally not been realised, as the media have worked to their own agenda of attracting the largest readerships and audiences possible.

In interviews, BBC personnel argued that production practices are very much audience led, with the viewer satisfaction being of primary concern in making decisions
regarding both content and style. However, as noted earlier, such claims need to be approached with caution, particularly as evidence was also found that producers are also interested in the *creation* of audiences. With regards to this study's central research question, the spreading of and education about the ideals of Olympism didn't appear to be of great importance to the media. Whilst those interviewed claimed to have awareness of the Olympic ideals and philosophy, this was generally only acknowledged when it was referred to directly by the interviewer, or the respondents were pressed on the matter (even then, this was limited in nature). In terms of the framing, the Games were packaged and marketed predominantly around the fortunes of British athletes. In particular, successful British athletes were featured prominently, reflected the general focus on excellence evident in the BBC coverage as detailed in Chapter 5. Also worthy of note in examining the production processes of the media are the differences in roles between the press and television and this is important to bear in mind in understanding the analysis of media texts, as detailed in the empirical chapters that follow.
CHAPTER 5
INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING?: POLITICS AND NATIONALISM IN BRITISH MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF THE SALT LAKE CITY GAMES

5.1 Introduction

The following two chapters present and discuss the empirical findings from the analysis of the British press and television coverage of the 2002 Salt Lake City winter Olympics. As noted in Chapter 3, the content analysis of the texts was carried out in both an inductive and deductive manner. Whilst the themes reflecting Olympism were identified and coded in the analysis, themes that emerged from the data were also identified, and constitute a major part of the findings. In particular, four themes dominated the British media coverage of the Games: politics, nationalism, gender and excellence. This chapter examines politics and nationalism, due to overlaps between those areas, as is highlighted in greater detail throughout. Chapter 6 discusses two aspects of coverage that would appear to be in conflict with the Olympic ideal of opportunity for all: the gendered treatment of athletes and the elitist celebration of excellence in the Games. Television and press are looked at together in the discussion, weaving together evidence from both media. Where appropriate, any notable differences in television and newspaper coverage have been highlighted, and explained if possible. Attention in the following section turns, specifically, to the theme of politics in the media portrayal of Salt Lake City.

5.2 Politics and Olympics

Evidence suggests that the media have a heightened awareness of the issue of politics in the Olympics. It is an ideal that was reinforced by Avery Brundage in his reign as IOC president from 1952-1972. Brundage spoke passionately about the need to
separate sport from political interference (Segrave, 1988). However, writers such as Tomlinson (1996) have argued that such aims have been fruitless from the outset, with the very reasons for the establishment of the modern Olympics being tied up with politics. Articles illustrative of this linkage can be found extensively in the media coverage of the Salt Lake City Games. Take, for example, the following section from an article by Mike Rowbottom in the Independent:

Beneath a sky busy with Black Hawk helicopters bearing heat-seeking surveillance equipment, it was possible to wonder whether the Olympics made sense any more as a joyous event. But perhaps that aspiration has never been entirely realistic. Olympic innocence is often said to have disappeared with the terrorist attack on the 1972 Munich Games. But, four years earlier, the Mexico Games were preceded by the slaughter of hundreds of protesting students. Thirty-two years before that, the whole exercise was set up by the hosts as an intended demonstration of Aryan superiority. (10th February, 2002, p. 14)

Rowbottom makes the point that historically, politics and the Olympics have been intertwined. The insinuation that political interference runs contrary to the Games being a "joyous event", and the use of the word "innocence" suggest that the writer is making a value judgement, that the Games should, as the Olympic Charter states, be carried out in isolation from politics. The choice of examples used also reinforces this stance. The three incidents cited are all negative: terrorist attacks, the 'slaughter' of students and the reference to Hitler's Nazi regime. The article appears to hanker after the ideals of Olympism, with regards to an independence from politics, but outlines a picture of a grim reality that undermines this. The following article, written by Mark Steyn featured in the Daily Telegraph a week later, and also addressed the same issue of politics in the Olympics:

A week or so before the Salt Lake Games, the International Olympic Committee, as is traditional, issued an earnest plea that politics not be allowed to taint the Olympic ideals and sully what's meant to be a grand 'festival of youth' that
transcends all boundaries. Meanwhile, down the road, the international skating mafia were, as is also traditional, getting a jump on their hectic schedule by pre-deciding the results of the ice-dancing competition – a month in advance. Allegedly...Despite the IOC’s public deploring of politics, in figure skating the Cold War hasn’t ended and the French are still non-participating members of Nato...For all that pious guff about not tainting the ‘Olympic ideals’, the best Games have always been those infected by politics: a racially inferior Negro driving Hitler nuts by taking four medals in 1936; the mad-as-hell Magyars who, a month after the Hungarian uprising, whupped the Soviets in a brutal water polo match in Melbourne in 1956. Alas, the USSR went belly up and those genetically modified Eastern Bloc lady shot putters with facial hair that even Mullah Omar might find a tad excessive, faded from the scene. And, to be honest, in the past decade the Olympics hasn’t been what it was. But what happened this week was, as with Jesse Owens or the 1980 US-Soviet hockey match, not just a clash of sportsmen, but a clash of the dominant political philosophies of the day. (17th February, 2002, p. 21)

Here, Steyn also questions the possibility of separating sport and politics in the Olympics, and the structure of the article supports this reading. The opening section, detailing the IOC’s official stance on the separation of Olympic sport from politics is followed immediately by an outlining of the conflicting incidence of the pairs figure skating judging controversy: “Meanwhile, down the road, the international skating mafia were, as is also traditional, getting a jump on their hectic schedule by pre-deciding the results of the ice-dancing competition – a month in advance.” (Daily Telegraph 17th February 2002, p. 21). This juxtaposition of the ideal with the reality could be interpreted as undermining the significance of the IOC’s plea to uphold the claim that Olympic sport should maintain independence from politics.

In contrast to the extract from the Independent, however, Mark Steyn in the Daily Telegraph appeared to actually endorse the interference of political issues in the Olympics, as is illustrated in the following statement: “For all that pious guff about not tainting the “Olympic ideals, the best Games have always been those infected by
politics.” Steyn, in the *Daily Telegraph* frames the history of politics in the Games in a markedly different way to his counterpart in the *Independent*. Take for example, the case of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, used in both articles. In the *Independent*, the events are angled in a negative light, with the use of the Games to showcase “Aryan superiority” being emphasised. In contrast, the *Daily Telegraph* positioned the event in a light which focused upon the part played by Jesse Owens in undermining Hitler’s fascist regime and ultimately interprets the event as a moral victory over racial oppression. It is unclear from this article whether the apparent sentiments of the reporter were a genuine expression of an appreciation for the political incidents, which no doubt make for good newspaper stories, or whether it is a deliberate expose and condemnation of the IOC’s lack of commitment to the independence of sport from politics.

In the *Observer* an article written at the end of the Games, by Duncan McKay, examined the specific issue of the Russian threat to boycott the final days of the Salt Lake City Olympics in response to alleged judging discrepancies. McKay also broadened his consideration of the issue to link it with wider political concerns:

> It was hoped that here at last was an opportunity for a little much-needed global fraternity. But this has been spectacularly overridden. In an atmosphere that has drawn parallels with Olympic disputes during the communist era, Russia and the United States find themselves at loggerheads. Boycott, a word the Olympics thought it had erased from its lexicon, is suddenly back on everybody’s lips...The only conclusion is that then, as now, politics is hopelessly intertwined with sport and that a gold medal carries just as much cachet outside the sporting arena as in it...The Russian fury over Olympic officiating reflects intense pride dating back to Soviet-era scandal when medal counts were a measure of national prowess and competing itself was frequently held hostage to politics. (24th February, 2002, p. 12)

There are several interesting points to arise from this article. Firstly, it illustrates that the press coverage focused upon not only the internal political issues, such as the judging
controversy of the pairs figure skating, but that it drew these specific cases out to make connections with geo political matters. For example, in the passage above, McKay tells the reader that: “The only conclusion is that then, as now, politics is hopelessly intertwined with sport and that a gold medal carries just as much cachet outside the sporting arena as in it” (Observer, 24th February, 2002 p. 12). However, upon the evidence presented in this article, the only overt link made with the broader political climate and history was that assumed by McKay, who notes: “The Russian fury over Olympic officiating reflects intense pride dating back to Soviet-era scandal when medal counts were a measure of national prowess and competing itself was frequently held hostage to politics.” This ‘reflection’ of what the reporter terms the “Soviet-era scandal” is merely presupposed by him, with there being no evidence presented that the Russian team made such connections. The press reporters themselves, whilst seemingly keen to wistfully condemn the infiltration of sport with politics, were in many ways complicit in creating the ‘atmosphere’ that encourages the drawing of such parallels.

The reference to the cold war tensions, which gave rise to the boycotts of the 1980s as the “Soviet-era scandal” is also worthy of note. Significantly, the United States were not named as part of the scandal, despite the fact that both countries boycotted one another’s Games in the early part of the decade. This term suggests sole apportion of blame to the Soviet Union for the politically charged discord in the Olympics during this period of the cold war. The article also demonstrates that the issue of politics in the Olympics leads inevitably to the highlighting of other elements of Olympism, such as international understanding and cultural exchange. The idea of Russia and the United States being at “loggerheads” does little to reinforce feelings of global friendship and
gives rise to a climate in which cultural exchange is unlikely to take place. The reference to the emphasis placed on the medal table also reminds the reader of those elements of the Olympic structure that are antagonistic to international cooperation, instead promoting nationalism within and between countries.

Although the articles cited here varied somewhat in the position they appear to take in terms of whether sport and politics should remain separate, all seemed to agree that attempting to do so has proved extremely problematic, and have outlined various situations in which sport has been infiltrated by politics. They also demonstrated that politics is very much a relevant topic when reporting on the Olympics in a general sense. The range of newspapers from which the articles have been taken illustrates that this is the case regardless of the publications' political leanings. The articles also spanned the two-week period of the Salt Lake City Games, suggesting that the inclusion of political matters in reports on the Olympics was not a chance occurrence due to some external factor or happening. The remainder of this section will go on to address the more specific examples of the press' treatment of politics in the Games, beginning with events at the opening ceremony.

5.2i 9/11 and the Salt Lake City opening ceremony

At the opening ceremony, two key political overtones dominated proceeding: that of the tribute to the victims of the World Trade Center attacks and the revisiting of the cold war tensions of the 1980s with the choice of the victorious 'miracle on ice' US hockey team to light the Olympic torch. The following article by Brian Reade, in the Mirror outlined the part played by these two issues:
In Salt Lake City, America has annexed the Olympics for themselves, christened them the Healing Games conveniently erasing from memory the shameful bribery and corruption scandal that clinched them the right to be hosts. Now they’ve got it they’re flaunting it. After a national outcry they were allowed to parade the battered World Trade Center flag, held by New York fire and police officers, around the arena while one of the firemen sang God Bless America. President Bush said a main function of these Games was to allow America to forget the terror attacks for a short while. The Olympic flame was lit by an ice-hockey team who became heroes for beating the Russians during the Cold War. And as the US team entered, and NBC did a live link to American troops in Kandahar, the teary eyed audience burst into their skinhead anthem: ‘You-Ess-Ay’. (14th February, 2002, p. 17).

The issue that first dominated the headlines in the press was the role of the Ground Zero flag at the opening ceremony and how this fitted with the IOC’s policy with regards to politics in the Games. As will be discussed later, there are several linkages that can be observed between the two issues under scrutiny. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, five months prior to the Salt Lake City Games, had been a prominent topic in the British press and, with the winter Olympics being the first major international event on US soil since then, unsurprisingly, much attention was focussed on them. In particular, primacy was given to security issues and how the victims of the attacks would be honoured in the opening ceremony. This issue underlined a direct conflict between the Americans’ desire to commemorate the loss of life, and the IOC’s stance on the interference of politics with the Olympics. This was recognised by Damien Whitworth in the following extract from the Times:

After American outrage, the committee agreed to allow a tattered flag recovered from the rubble of the World Trade Centre to be carried into the stadium. Officials had baulked at a dangerous precedent, fearing that host countries would use the Games to commemorate events in their own histories that might be politically controversial. (9th February, 2002, p. 15)
This article outlines the meeting of different levels of politics in the Games, both geopolitics, concerning the clashes between the West and the Middle East, and more localised political problems arising from the IOC and the very infrastructure of the Olympic Movement.

Unlike the press, BBC reporters were guarded in their discussion of political matters that arose. The issue of the World Trade Center flag playing a part in the opening ceremony is a case where this was clearly evident. As detailed above, the press paid much attention to the internal and geo-political tensions arising from the decision to parade the flag recovered from the Ground Zero site. Reporters stated their opinions on the matter and discussed, in detail, the principles in question, and ramifications of such a move. In the press coverage of the build up to the opening ceremony, the majority of newspapers led with this, essentially political, story. In contrast, the BBC dealt with the live parading of the flag with just the following comments by Barry Davies:

Flag carried by noted athletes from the United States. Greeted in silence, it is a very public grieving. As the president of the Salt Lake Committee said, this is the first time the world has come together since September 11th, people of 80 nations lost their lives in that tragedy. The concern about precedent is surely outweighed by such an unimaginable tragedy.

In comparison with the opinions expressed by those writing in the press, Davies' remarks are relatively tempered. Whilst there is a clear endorsement of the parading of the flag, which is, in itself, a political statement, the broader political arguments are not discussed in detail here. Clearly there are practical production limitations at work here in determining the degree to which such issues can be considered in detail. In a live event, with the action constantly moving, there is limited space for extensive discussion of such complex and potentially far-reaching stories. The other key factor that may influence the
television treatment of such an event is the guidelines to which the broadcaster adheres. For example, the BBC claim to report on events with impartiality and thus avoid making political statements in their coverage of events, as is detailed in the online version of these guidelines. They state: ‘Audiences must be able to trust the integrity of BBC programmes. They should be confident that decisions are made only for good editorial reasons, not as a result of improper pressure, be it political, commercial or special interest.’ (BBC online website, 2004). This was reiterated in the interview with Bramley, who spoke about the BBC guidelines of impartiality impacting upon production choices made.

Another story that centred around the issue of the terrorist attacks of September 11th was the heightened security measures in place in Games. In his opening statement to the opening ceremony, Barry Davies announced:

It’s here that the chill of the night air meets the warmth of the emotion of the crowd. At a temperature that probably only the Americans can produce, especially now. Many of them have been in their seats for at least two hours and before then waited probably for two or three hours standing in line as they say in this country, queuing as we would say it, waiting to go through security. The volunteers, the police, the army are everywhere to be seen. We’re in a no fly zone, the airports of Salt Lake City closed but as you can hear from the crowd, the enthusiasm for the start of the winter Olympic Games of 2002 is not to be dampened.

In this introduction, Davies framed the Games in a way that drew audience attention immediately to the issues of security that arose from the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, and thus the geo political backdrop, as focussed upon in the press reporting of the event. Davies also went on to describe the ‘warmth of emotion’ of the predominantly American crowd, juxtaposing this with the threat of attack. This framing serves to paint a picture of resilience of the American public in response to outside attack and overtly suggests sympathies with the US position.
Potentially one of the most politically charged and controversial moments of the parade of nations was the entrance of the Iranian team, who had in the weeks prior to the Games been labelled as part of the 'axis of evil' by George Bush in his condemnation of middle eastern terrorist activities. Without making direct reference to this, the fact that Davies explicitly noted that the reception for the team from Iran was 'warm' could be interpreted as a response to the concern that the welcome may have been expected to be stilted, due to the wider political issues at stake. This emphasis on geo-political relations is compounded by the fact that the response to Great Britain (the previous team in the parade), an ally in the 'war on terror' was observed to be warmer than that given to other teams, Davis noted: 'Every team being given a huge welcome, there was a little extra though, I believe for Great Britain'.

5.2i(a) The lighting of the torch

In the press, several reporters noted the significance of the choice of the 1980 US hockey players to light the torch, given the political climate in which the Salt Lake City Games took place. Giles Smith, for instance, writing in the Daily Telegraph, suggested that the role of the hockey team was highly symbolic, and drew clear parallels between the present day and the era of the early 1980s:

How was that for symbolism? This was the American team who flattened the Soviet Union to take the Olympic gold when the Cold War was at its froziest. Three years after that victory, Ronald Regan described the Soviet Union as 'evil empire'. Recently, George W Bush has referred to Osama bin Laden as 'The Evil One'. That ice hockey team on Saturday night might have looked like a bunch of retired guys in knee pads, but they came trailing memories of another global struggle and of America's will to prevail. (February 11\(^{st}\), 2002 p. 7)
Here, Smith notes that the US has a history of using the Olympics as a forum to express their superiority and, 'symbolically' wage war on different enemies, at different times. The manner in which he draws comparisons between the Cold War and the 'War on Terror' implies that the cases in question are in some way interchangeable, and that the common link is the reinforcement of the position of the USA as a world superpower. The opening question: “How was that for symbolism?” reminds the reader that sport is often a metaphor for political conflicts and this is underlined in the final sentence, attributing political messages to the ice hockey veterans and their place in the opening ceremony.

The way in which the newspapers structured their reports of the opening ceremony, interspersing the story of the lighting of the torch with that of the September 11th terrorist attacks - and thus indirectly the American invasion of Afghanistan - gives rise to a preferred reading which links the 2002 political climate and the cold war hostilities of the early 1980s. For example, Graham Duffill wrote in the Times:

It is easy to understand why Mike Eruzione and his team mates from the 1980 Lake Placid Games won the pivotal role in the $10m pageant. Twenty-two years ago, professionals were not allowed to compete at the Olympics and the US team was a collection of college players, averaged age 22. Against all odds, they played the game of their lives to beat the Soviet Union 4-3 in the semi-final and then went on to win gold. The game had an extra dimension: Russia's troops were in Afghanistan, and where better to wage a cold war than on ice? Friday evening's get-together in Salt Lake City effused a different but no less powerful national sentiment. September 11 weighs heavily on American minds. When seven US athletes carried into the arena the torn flag recovered from the World Trade Centre, the crowd fell silent. As the freezing wind seared through a hole in the flag, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir began to sing the Star Spangled Banner and a nation once again remembered the victims of that bleak morning. (February 10th, 2002, p. 27)

Here, Duffill has sewn together the two politically controversial aspects of the opening ceremony under the common denominator of a “powerful national sentiment”, and less overtly, by the mention of Afghanistan (occupied by the Soviet Union in 1980 and US
The period during the 1980s was replete with boycotts fuelled by cold war tensions, and is well documented as a significant era in terms of the infusion of the Olympics with politics (Espy, 1988; Nafziger, 1988). The drawing of such parallels between the Salt Lake City opening ceremony and this time served to emphasize the notion that the imposition of politics in the Olympics is unwelcome. However, deciphering the position of media personnel on such issues can be problematic. The very fact that primacy is given in coverage to political issues surrounding the Olympics means that the press and television could be seen as party to underlining the connection between politics and the Games, even though, at times, they condemned that relationship.

5.2i(b) Inseparability of politics and the Olympic Games

Throughout the parade of nations on the BBC coverage of the opening ceremony, Davies referred to the political history of several of the countries, almost, it seemed, as a matter of course. Of Azerbaijan, he reported: ‘This incidentally, the first Soviet Republic to declare independence.’ Similarly he noted: ‘Belarus, formally White Russia’, and, upon the entrance of Bosnia commented: ‘It’s sad to think Bosnia Herzegovina, the hosts of 1984, how terribly things went wrong after that.’ When the Czech Republic entered the stadium, he informed the audience that: ‘Incidentally, they’ve kept the flag of Czechoslovakia, both countries, when they broke up were intended to choose a new flag. None of the above commentary could be said to flout the BBC’s guidelines of not making editorial choices based on ‘improper pressure’ due to politics, neither are political positions explicitly expressed. However, the very choice to mention those specific issues regarding political status and history of certain nations helped frame the Games, or at
least the opening ceremony, as political. Bearing in mind the claims made in the BBC’s guidelines (that the making of political statements is avoided), it would seem unlikely that the highlighting of political factors was *planned* in the production of the opening ceremony. However, despite the fact that not only do the BBC look to avoid political statements in their broadcasting, but that the IOC also purport to keep the Games separate from politics, political issues remain to the fore. This demonstrates the extent to which the connection between international sport and geo politics is both unavoidable and naturalised.

Mike Rowbottom, writing in the *Independent* articulated the argument that Olympic sport and politics are inherently connected in a fairly explicit manner:

> In its uncertainty over how to deal with the arrival of the Ground Zero flag at the opening ceremony, the International Olympic Committee has graphically demonstrated the difficulty in separating sport from politics. Perhaps inevitably, they have failed to draw the two apart. (9th February, 2002 p. 20)

Rowbottom uses the specific issue of the parading of the Ground Zero flag at the opening ceremony to draw a broader conclusion about the relationship between sport and politics. The final sentence: ‘Perhaps *inevitably*, they have failed to draw the two apart’ (my emphasis) suggests that Rowbottom believes that sport and politics are inseparable, that it is not possible for the IOC to uphold its policy of keeping the Games clean from political influences. Also, the word ‘uncertainty’ used to describe the IOC’s treatment of the matter once more implies a lack of strength of conviction in their governance of the Games. The internal tension in the IOC is the issue to which attention will now turn.

As noted earlier in this section, politics has manifested itself in the Olympic arena not only on a geo political level, but also internally: within the IOC and the sporting and
organisational bodies involved in the Games. The debate over the parading of the US flag from the Ground Zero site was an issue that particularly highlighted the political nature of relations between the Salt Lake Organising Committee (SLOC) and the IOC. In the week leading up to the opening ceremony, reporters in the press noted the IOC's firm stance in dictating to SLOC that they could not include the flag in the proceedings. This is illustrated in the following extract from Duncan McKay's article:

The organisers have been told by the International Olympic Committee to tone down overt shows of patriotism during the 2002 winter games' opening ceremony here on Friday and not to honour the victims of September 11. (Guardian, 4th February, 2002 p. 26)

Following widespread media coverage of this debate over the flag, and an American "national outcry" (Reade, Mirror, 14th February, 2002, p. 17), the press began to report the relenting of the IOC on the issue, eventually allowing the flag to be included. It was also noted that the turnaround had led to conflict within the IOC. Duncan Campbell, also writing in the Guardian summarised this change in policy:

Initially the IOC had decided that allowing the flag to be carried would be inappropriate and create a precedent but yesterday, after a furious American response, it reversed its decision. Some IOC members have already expressed dismay about America turning the Games into a show of patriotism. (7th February, 2002 p. 30)

These two passages are significant in that they highlight some notable points about the nature of the relationship between the IOC and SLOC. In the first extract, the focus was upon the power exerted by the IOC initially, in telling the US organisers that they could not make overt mention of the victims of the World Trade Center terrorist attacks. However, the second piece describes the subsequent backing down of the IOC to an angry American response, and immediately goes on to detail the divide inside the IOC as a result of this, suggesting that several members were unhappy with the decision made by
the body as a whole. Therefore, in two ways, the press framing undermined the authority of the IOC: by the revelation that a U-turn had been made, with them bowing to American public (or perhaps more accurately, media) pressure; and by the suggestion that there was divide within the organisation. Concerns over the parading of the flag were cited as being, to a large extent, due to a fear of overt American patriotism. The following section looks in greater detail at this matter.

5.2i(c) Patriotism

The press discussion of this issue illustrates the interplay between politics and international understanding or, conversely, patriotism. Whilst Whitworth’s article in the Times (cited earlier in this chapter) noted the concerns of officials over the precedent set for allowing the Games to be used as a stage for political demonstration, Campbell, (Guardian, 7th February, 2002) focuses more on the ‘dismay’ over patriotism in the Games. This demonstrates the inescapable link between nationalism and politics, and thus it should be noted that the eight elements of Olympism, as identified in the literature review, are not entirely distinct.

Mihir Bose, writing in the Daily Telegraph, also identified the Salt Lake City Games as overtly patriotic, and used the context of the opening ceremony to illustrate his argument:

Whatever the Games do for the Mormons, they will undoubtedly do much for American patriotism. September 11 has overshadowed the Games, as demonstrated by tightened security, and will make the Games a showcase for a surfeit of flag waving. The 1980 US ice hockey team that upset the Soviet Union to win gold may light the torch in a show reminding Americans who won the cold war. 4th February, 2002, p. 7, supplement)
In the first line of this excerpt, Bose draws attention to the fact that the hosting of the Games is tied up as much with the celebration of the nation, as it is with the more localised cultural expression of the host city. He then goes on to draw the parallel between the geo politics of the terrorist attacks in New York and the possible outlet this will provide for patriotic displays. The reference to the cold war and the symbolic gesture of the victorious 1980 hockey team lighting the torch, with the phrase: “in a show reminding Americans who won the cold war” suggests that patriotism and nationalism are linked with the politics of war. Such connections reinforce the fact that the US was very much on a war footing at the time of the Games.

This general worry over jingoism, particularly by US Olympic hosts, was highlighted by Tomlinson (1999) in his review of the 1984 opening ceremony. Such articles are reflective of what would appear to be a general apprehension over overt US patriotism, as was evident in the British press coverage of Salt Lake City, and was particularly illustrated in Simon Hart’s article in the *Sunday Telegraph*:

There were disturbing signs of what is to come. Host broadcaster NBC, who will package the Games for the American public, with prime time highlights programmes, were not as restrained as the organisers of the opening ceremony. As the American athletes marched into the stadium the network cut from their coverage to a live link-up with American troops in Kandahar. (10th February, 2002 p. 10)

The revelation that the ‘Miracle on Ice’ US Olympic champions in the 1980 ice hockey final had been chosen to light the Olympic torch at the ceremony served to fuel the press accusations that the Americans used the Games for a nationalistic show of political dominance. Similar sentiments were seen in the commentary by Brian Reade (quoted at the beginning of this section), who cited patriotic chants by the crowd, and the claims by Bush that the primary function of the Games was to help the American nation come
together after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, as evidence of nationalism. All these articles from the press particularly focus upon matters of war and civilisational struggles – in direct opposition to the ideology of Olympism, which claims to view the Olympics as a vehicle to aid international understanding. On the contrary, this particular framing of the opening ceremony reinforces the assertion made by George Orwell that international sport is ‘war minus the shooting’ (cited in Maguire, 1999, p. 11).

As is evident from the above discussion, both the BBC and the press addressed the issue of the role of the Ground Zero flag in the opening ceremony, in the first week of the coverage of the Games. The BBC’s dealing with the politics of the story was shown to be more implicit than that of the press. The press in particular, focussed upon the tension between the IOC and the organisers and noted the eventual deference of the former. It is interesting that the press chose to apportion prominence to the role of the 1980 ice hockey team and the symbolism of the cold war that accompanied this, given that the theme arose again in the following week in the context of the figure skating judging controversy. However, in analysing such apparent coincidences, it is important to bear in mind the extent to which the press is responsible for manipulating events to sell newspapers and engender public interest. That is to say, were the cold war tensions reported to have been evident in the pattern of judging in the pair’s skating really as significant as the media suggested, or was it simply framed in this way to create a story to fit with ongoing political tensions? The following section will look to examine this issue and the British media’s treatment of the events surrounding this well-documented controversy.
Politics in the pairs figure skating: “Skate Gate”

In the final of the pairs figure skating, controversy arose over the allocation of the gold medal to the Russian pair over the Canadians, who appeared to have performed a better routine. Surprise was expressed by several commentators and experts. For example, Olympic medallist, Jayne Torvill was cited as one such authority:

Britain's Jayne Torvill, who with Christopher Dean was embroiled in a voting controversy at the Lillehammer Games in 1994, said: 'Everyone watching around the world guessed the right winners. The Canadian duo were clearly better than the Russians. It was definitely an East European thing. The Canadians are the people's champions.' (Daily Telegraph, 15th February, 2002 p. 1)

The revelation that the voting pattern included the Russian, Polish, Chinese, Ukrainian and French judges voting for the Russian couple, with the Canadians winning the American, Canadian, German and Japanese votes led to press speculation that political allegiances had played a part in the deciding of the result. As with the ice hockey team's lighting of the Olympic Torch in the opening ceremony, the press framed the events surrounding the figure skating as linked to Cold War hostilities. A reporter from the Times made this connection in the following passage:

What was unsettling was the nationalistic divide in the adjudicating; old allegiances seemed to resurface. Berezhnaya and Sikarulidze found favour with the Russian, Polish, Chinese and Ukrainian judges, Sale and Pelletier enjoyed the support of the United States, Canada, Germany and Japan. Only the French crossed the divide. It was as if someone had cranked back the clock fifteen years and rebuilt Checkpoint Charlie and the Ice Centre. (13th February, 2002 p. 44)

Martin Samuel, writing in the Daily Express put it rather more bluntly: “So the pairs was a straight four-four Cold War split with one double agent.” (13th February, 2002, pg. 72).

All four English broadsheets made reference to the influence of cold war relations on the
gold medal placing in the pairs figure skating event. However, according to the following excerpt from the Times, this interpretation of events was not confined to the British press:

Cold war rhetoric and conspiracy theories are again sweeping North America after the most controversial decisions in figure skating in years... 'Skating’s Cold War resumes' a banner headline in USA Today said. ‘Cold War returns to the ice,’ the Ottawa Citizen said... Some initial analysis displayed a shaky grasp of France’s geographical and political location by suggesting this was an Eastern bloc conspiracy. Then a number of news organisations alleged that Russia and France had made a deal. (14th February, 2002 p. 20)

As with the coverage of the opening ceremony of the Salt Lake City Olympics, the press appeared to be eager to give primacy to a political reading of events, particularly looking to create a backdrop of broader, geo-political concerns. However, the final sentence of the above article from the Times suggests that the focus was also on the level of politics within ice-skating itself. The alleged vote fixing between the French and Russian judges transpired to be the real reason behind the contentious awarding of first place to the Russians. This led to the press switching attention to the internal politics of how the IOC dealt with the situation. Power relations between the IOC and the International Skating Union became central to the debate. Peter Nichols, writing in the Times noted the ongoing tensions between the two bodies:

Initially, when the Canadian Olympic Association filed its formal appeal against the decision on Tuesday and demanded an inquiry into the judging, the IOC stayed in the wings, emphasising that this was an internal matter to be dealt with by skating’s governing body... The issue was threatening to overwhelm the Games and it was evident that holding off the decision-making process until Monday would only keep the pot boiling. Rogge, less than nine months into his first term as President, was also keen to exert his authority, not least to impress the IOC sponsors. (16th February, 2002 p. 39)

The role of Jacques Rogge in asserting his, and the IOC’s, authority in the early stages of his reign as IOC president is picked up here, and suggestions are made that the handling of the scandal has wider implications in terms of the IOC’s profile and its relations with
the transnational corporations who sponsor the Olympic Games. Thus, it is implicated that other, external factors influence the decisions of those responsible. Other writers highlighted the role of the media itself in the controversy. In the Observer, Duncan Mackay was critical of Rogge’s management of the affair and suggested the decision to award a second set of gold medals to the Canadian pair was made due to media pressure:

The judges’ decision is final...unless NBC Television decides otherwise. That is the only conclusion that can be drawn from the extraordinary decision of the International Olympic Committee to award a second gold medal for the pairs figure skating after a five-day campaign driven almost exclusively by the North American media...Thanks to the American media, the story has been front page news in The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times and USA Today...The truth is that public opinion had swung so far behind the Canadians that the PR-savvy Rogge needed a victim and Le Gougne fitted the bill perfectly. (16th February, 2002 p. 13)

Other reporters were less critical of the final decision (actually proposed by the International Skating Union, not the IOC – though this was not widely recognised by the press). For example, Steve Bunce of the Independent on Sunday, argued: “If there was a clear winner last week, it was the IOC’s new president Jacques Rogge. It was the week he leapt from being an Olympic hopeful to the new lord of the sporting rings” (16th February, 2002, p. 26). Although there was some disagreement over the appropriateness of the final resolution passed by the IOC, it is interesting that common across all interpretations in the press was the framing of the incident as politically significant for Rogge and the IOC.

Unlike press reports, television coverage of the pairs skating judging controversy did not dwell on an interpretation of the incident as mirroring cold war relations. Once again, the BBC seemed to avoid taking a political stance in the manner in which it covered the event. Whilst the press overtly connected the event to broader international
relations, making observations such as: "It was as if someone had turned the clock back fifteen years and rebuilt Checkpoint Charlie here at the Ice Centre" (Times 13th February, 2002 p. 44), the BBC focussed on the internal political wrangling between the IOC and skating’s international federation, the ISU from the outset. The only mention made of an East/West divide was in the live coverage of the event, when Barry Davies suggested:

Well it’s perhaps worth checking though the position of each judge. The Russian judge had the Russians first and the Canadians second. The Chinese judge had exactly the same, the Canadians second. United States had the Canadians first, France had the Canadians second. Poland had them second, Canada had them first, Ukraine had them second, Germans and the Japanese, those two judges had the Canadians in first place. The one who is out of kilter, as far as east and west are concerned, it has to be said, is France.

Even here, although an East/West divide is explicitly mentioned, it is not implied that this is the reason for the contested result. Rather, it is immediately suggested that it is likely that collusion may have taken place between the skating judges to benefit their own athletes as opposed to a broader political statement being made. That said, it was the non-conformity of the French to the traditional political affiliations that immediately aroused the suspicions of the BBC commentators to their involvement in a manipulation of the results. Interestingly, in an interview between Sue Barker and Jayne Torvill the day after the final, Torvill suggested that the Chinese judge was involved in vote swapping:

Sue Barker – ‘But I’m afraid what is does all bring up again, and we can go back to Lillehammer ’94 and the political side of if. I mean which you and Chris were very much involved in, only winning the bronze.’

Jayne Torvill – ‘Yeah I felt that some of those scores were probably political, yeah.’

Sue Barker – ‘You mean what? Helping each other, helping.? ’

Jayne Torvill – ‘I think so, I mean I’m sure the Chinese wanted to have a bronze medal and therefore perhaps helped the Russians to get the gold.’
As the story unfolded, it transpired that it was, in fact, the French judge who claimed to have been pressured to place the Russian pair first in exchange for favourable voting for the French in the ice dance competition. What is interesting, however, is the use of the term ‘political’ to describe the corrupt judging. Robin Cousins, who worked on the BBC commentary team for the ice-skating also referred to the events as “political unfortunateness (sic)”. The labelling of such incidents as ‘political’ in this manner supports the notion that politics in sport detracts from the supposed purity of sport. Steve Rider points this out in an interview carried out with Barry Davies:

Steve Rider – We understand, Barry, the damage that it’s doing to ice-skating, is there a feeling that it’s also doing damage to the Games themselves?

Barry Davies – I think the IOC are probably thinking that and that’s why they’re putting pressure on the ISU to do something about it. An Italian, the president of the ISU, I think he has to be a bit like Caesar’s wives, he has to be above suspicion. I’m disappointed that he didn’t immediately make changes to the judges for the ice dancing because of the allegation, they had to be seen to be doing it correctly...The ISU don’t seem to realise just what this is doing to the sport. The IOC undoubtedly do. And already, Dick Pound, who is quite a voice on the IOC and is a Canadian, has said beforehand that he wants to get rid of ice dance.

As Davies’ response illustrates, the political dimension to the pattern of judging led to power struggles between the bodies tied up with the Olympics, that is in this case, the IOC and the international sporting federations. As the above exchange suggests, there is a feeling that the IOC need to protect their own status and prevent their reputation from being tarnished by hosting sports that tolerate corruption. The BBC seems to share this concern and thus support the notion that a connection between sport and politics, at this level at least, is undesirable. It would appear then, that the media are looking to endorse the notion that there should be a separation of sport and politics in the Olympics. The mediated reality of the way the Games are portrayed, however, is that the Olympics are
highly political. That is, the ideal and the reality are very much at odds with one another. In the context of politics and the independence of sport as a key element of Olympism, the BBC's coverage is in keeping with those ideals, whilst also upholding its own policy of accurately reporting the event. That is, it reports the political tensions and issues that arose within the Games, whilst denouncing their presence. If this is the case, then it demonstrates a certain level of consistency between the IOC and the BBC in the messages conveyed. However, according to BBC producer, Bramley, this is not evidence of the BBC pro actively endorsing Olympism, but apparently represents simply a coincidental overlap between ideologies.

The reference to hostilities dating back to the cold war with an East–West divide became a recurring theme in the media coverage of the Salt Lake City Games more generally. As has been detailed, the opening ceremony and the figure skating controversy were both framed in such a light. Also, later in the Games, a row over the disqualification of a South Korean speed skater; Russia's complaints at drugs-related disqualifications; the meeting of Russia and the US in the ice hockey semi final; and the threat by both the Russian and South Korean teams to boycott the final few days of the Games were all referred to as a re-emergence of tensions of the cold war era. Rupert Cornwell, a correspondent in America for the Independent, commented, in an article privileged with front-page status, that:

It may not quite be the Cold War, Act II, but it certainly feels like it. A Russian president proclaims his country to be the victim of American 'bias and unfairness' and nationalist politicians demand that the country's Olympic team be recalled 'at once' from Salt Lake City with 'a spit in the face at the hosts'. The bear, in short, is growling and angry as hell. (23rd February, 2002 p. 1)
The threat of boycott, as highlighted here, was used by the press as a direct and explicit link to the political tensions between Russia and the United States in the early 1980s. In terms of an overall framing of the Salt Lake City Olympics, this story helped to neatly tie the various elements of the Games together. This linking of events through the common theme of the cold war was underlined in the following report in the Guardian:

The appeal against the women’s figure skating ... added to the tension surrounding the games, which the Russian government has condemned as a “disgraceful winter carnival of commerce, bias and scandal that besmirched the Olympic ideal”... The cold war rhetoric and the strongest incentive to come out of Moscow since the crisis surrounding the 1984 summer games in Los Angeles, which the Soviet Union boycotted, set the scene last night for a tense ice hockey semi-final pitting the angry Russians against their US host.

It was the decision by the local organisers to have the winning US ice hockey team from the 1980 Olympics to light the flame at the opening ceremony two weeks ago which first upset Russian government officials. Their victory by a team of college students over the Soviet Union in the semi-final was dubbed ‘miracle on ice’ at a time when the relations between the two countries were near their worst. (23rd February, 2002, p. 13)

As this excerpt underlines, the Olympics are an arena rife with conflicts between nations and ideologies. However, it should also been noted that through the gathering of teams under a national flag can lead to the expression of conflicts and political tensions within nations as well. For example, Hargreaves (2000) has written on the Catalan nationalism in the Barcelona Olympics. Similarly, issues surrounding the Scottish devolution and ongoing political tensions in Northern Ireland, Great Britain also provide an interesting case study when examining the politics of a particular nation. The following section examines the ways in which such issues were framed in the British media coverage of the Salt Lake City Games.
5.2iii Politics of British involvement

When press attention turned to the fortunes of the Great Britain and Northern Ireland team in Salt Lake City, political issues arose in a variety of forms. In the first week, in response to a lack of British success, many areas of the press questioned the politics of the choice to send and fund athletes without medal potential. Concern was particularly expressed at the spending of funds derived from the national lottery — money seen to have come from the British public — on the indulgence of athletes unlikely to be competitive in the Olympic arena. Such views were evident in the following article:

What is the point, seriously, in sending a 50-strong team (with the same number of officials, psychologists, coaches and management consultants listed in the official handbook), backed by millions in Lottery funding, halfway around the world to trouble the statisticians and take up places on the results sheets?...The BOA are playing fantasy Olympics with everyone else’s money. The cost of this Olympic campaign has been £5million. (Daily Express 16th February, 2002 p. 109)

The views expressed in this article were not shared by all commentators in the British press, for example Simon Barnes of the Times argued that the British Olympic Association were right to take athletes of varying ability to Salt Lake City as it is in-keeping with the ideals of Olympism, which states that the Olympics should provide opportunity for all and that the struggle is as important as the triumph. This article provided a rare occasion upon which Olympism was explicitly mentioned and supported in the press. Such debates surrounding the justification of sending athletes not deemed likely to medal or make final placings did not arise in the television coverage.

Politics related to tensions between the home countries also emerged in the press, particularly in light of the success of the Scots in the women’s curling and Alain Baxter in the final week. Reporters specifically focused upon the story of the row caused by the saltire (symbol of the Scottish flag) Baxter had dyed into his hair upon arrival at the
Games, and IOC's interpretation of this as a political statement regarding Scottish devolution:

Alain Baxter resisted the temptation to wear a kilt at the medal ceremony for the slalom event. Resisted too, was any notion of a head-bowed, tartan-gloved salute. The strange blue hue of his head testified to the event that the man known as on the skiing circuit as "The Highlander" had subsumed his Scottishness in the British cause. (Independent, 25th February, 2002 p. 12)

Here, the distinction between Scottish and British identity is clearly made, with the implication that Baxter had to sacrifice a certain degree of his Scottish identity in representing Britain at the Games. It is also interesting that the reporter appears to undermine the IOC's objection to what was interpreted as a political statement made by Baxter in dyeing the St Andrew's cross into his hair. The tongue in cheek comments made regarding the wearing of a kilt at the ceremony and the "head-bowed, tartan-gloved salute", in reference to the 1968 black power protest by American's Tommy Smith and John Carlos, serve to make light of the situation and ultimately undermine the IOC's stance on combating politics in the Olympics.

To summarise, the British media coverage of the Salt Lake City Games as a whole, addressed and indeed underlined the issue of politics through several stories. Both geo-political, and local or internal politics arose in the British press' portrayal of the Games. In terms of the stance taken by the media in relation to the place of politics in the Olympics, it was hard to decipher a consistent trend. However, the high frequency of references made to the issue of political tensions meant that the overall representation of the Games was one that framed them as a highly political sporting arena. In this sense, it would appear that the strand of Olympism recommending that the Olympics should maintain independence from politics is not reflected in the British media's portrayal of
the Salt Lake City Games. As was highlighted earlier, there are no distinct divisions between the various aspects of Olympism. As noted throughout this section, the issue of politics overlaps with the elements of nationalism and cultural exchange. It is the subject of nationalism or international understanding to which attention will now turn.

5.6 Nationalism

According to Larson and Park (1993), nationalism and politics are inherent parts of the structure of the Olympic Games. They argue: “The intrinsically political nature of the modern Olympics derives, in part, from their structure which is built around the nation state.” (1993, p. 34) They go on to explain that: “Partly as a consequence of this structure, the nemesis of nationalism has plagued the modern Olympics since their inception in 1896” (1993, p. 35). Espy (cited in Larson and Park, 1993, p. 35) concurs: “The nation state is the primary actor in the Games, albeit acting through the sport organizations.” However, not all blame is apportioned to the IOC and their structuring of the Games, as Larson and Park noted:

However, the ceremonial practices or formal structures prescribed or encouraged by the International Olympic Committee are not the only factors responsible for problems caused by nationalism in the Games. The media and the participating nations themselves also play an important role. Weeks and months before the Games begin, it is common for the narrative in mainstream news media around the world to stress the question of which country will ‘win’ the Games or where particular nations will place. In nations both large and small, winning athletes are frequently treated as national heroes. (p. 35)

Several interesting points arise from this analysis. That is, it is recognised that the media play a large part in the expression of nationalism in their framing of the Olympics for the public. Also, the rivalry between nations that is engendered by the ranking of countries in the medal table is highlighted. Lastly, the lionisation of athletes who are successful -
particularly those who win medals - and the celebration of their contribution to national prestige are linked to media's role in promoting nationalism when covering the Olympics. Of interest in this examination of the British press' coverage of the Salt Lake Games is the expression of British nationalistic sentiment, and the response to the threat of jingoism from the host nation, the United States.

The concept of national identity can refer to both an individual's sense of self in relation to the country from which they perceive themselves to originate, and also to the way in which other 'outsiders' view a particular nation. The formation of national identity is a social, not organic process, as Maguire and Tuck (1997) claim: "Identities are manufactured through the production of meanings about the 'nation'" (p. 80). If this is the case, then the media have the opportunity to play a significant role in the production of such meanings, where international sporting competition is seen to be an important vehicle for the expression and reinforcement of national identity. Again, Maguire and Tuck (1997) note:

It has been widely acknowledged that sport and national identity have been closely associated throughout history. The development of international sport has been closely linked with the invention of traditions making sport an important avenue for a sense of collective behaviour and popular consciousness. (p. 81)

Sport constitutes a significant vehicle through which the nation becomes 'real' for the established group. Sporting traditions evoke memories of past glories and, according to Elias (1994), the imagined position of an established group as superior is kept alive through both the teaching of history, and the celebration of new achievements that confirm the greatness of the past. Both these processes take place in the international sporting arena. This may help make sense of the media's portrayal of events in the Salt
Lake City Olympics with regards to the framing of British success and its relation to the issue of nationalism.

In terms of the media representation of Olympism, the promotion of nationalistic sentiment directly opposes the belief expressed in the Olympic Charter that the Games and the Movement more generally should promote international understanding. International understanding is one of the key elements identified in Segrave's (1988) definition of Olympism and reflects Coubertin’s claimed desire to promote peace through the modern Games.

Moragas et al (1995) explain the significance of this type of Olympic television coverage in the following terms:

Not only does the Olympics as a television event reach across virtually all political and cultural borders in the world — however unevenly — but its nature as an event, produced and participated in by an unprecedented number of international constituents suggests that it may produce unique and shared meanings that allow diverse members to feel part of an Olympic family or community. (p. 3)

The suggestion here is that the Olympic television experience helps to unify people from disparate nations, and essentially transcends national boundaries, in the understanding of “shared meanings” produced by the coverage of the Games. However, the assumption that such commonly understood messages arise is based on the idea that each national broadcaster interprets events in the same way and packages them as such. This is proved to be a false assumption, however, in light of the findings presented by Moragas et al (1995) themselves, in their work examining the various representations of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Despite such findings, this remains a commonly asserted truism: that through the mediated expression of Olympism, people across the world are united in a common understanding and experience of shared ideals. The following section looks to
examine whether the BBC coverage of the Salt Lake City winter Olympics achieves this kind of international understanding through the communication of the Olympic ideals.

As detailed in Chapter 4, the pictures of the Olympic Games shown in every nation's coverage are exactly the same, being derived from the central feed of International Sports Broadcasters (ISB). According to BBC producer, Bramley, there were few choices available to editors involved in national production of the televised Games in terms of shots and camera angles used. With this in mind, it seems fair to assume that at any given time in the live coverage of the Olympics, the pictures seen by all television audiences across the world, for each event, are the same. Thus, to some degree, worldwide viewers are sharing in a common visual experience of the Games. However, it may be the case that the US, the host nation were able to include footage from their own cameras. As consistent with the broader processes of globalisation, the transmission of identical images to all nations, in the television coverage of the Olympics supports the claim that there is a diminishing visibility of local culture in our conception of the world, in exchange for a global monoculture. However, this is not a process of absolute homogenisation, as Maguire and Falcons (2005) argue in their work on English basketball subcultures, global flows are not unidirectional, and we are not looking at a situation where globalising forces quash all resistance from local varieties. They maintain that:

Local cultural affiliations are a resilient factor mediating local-global sports consumption. Notably the reception of the NBA is mediated by existing cultural identities and affiliations that surround “local” sporting practices. (p. 29)

As this statement suggests, processes involved in globalisation are highly complex. This is illustrated if we take a closer look at the television coverage of the Olympics. Whilst
the images fed to all rights-holding nations may be identical, pictures do not stand alone, and thus the importance of the commentary to these Games in the production of particular messages and more broadly, ideologies is great. It is through national broadcasters' packaging, and interpretation of those images that there is the opportunity to convey more local nuances. Whether this is the case, or whether the BBC looked to portray the Salt Lake City Games as an unbiased arena of international cooperation, thus transcending nationalistic interests in terms of results, is the question to which attention will now turn.

The first issue of concern is the way in which the press and television dealt with the expression of US patriotism throughout the Games.

5.6i US jingoism and the British media

Duncan McKay, writing in the main news section of the Guardian, summarised the opinions voiced in several areas of the British press regarding the first week of the Salt Lake City Olympics:

The wave of American jingoism and intense security that has marked the first week of the Winter Olympics here has led to senior officials of the International Olympic Committee privately expressing concerns about whether the US can ever stage another Olympic event. The games have already been dubbed the 'red, white and blue Olympics' because almost every event has patriotic overtones in the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11. Nationalism has always been a part of the Olympics but IOC officials here feel the event is being used simply as propaganda for the US war effort... The host broadcaster, NBC also linked the opening ceremony with the war effort when, during the parade of nations, it referred to the Iranian athletes as part of Mr Bush's 'axis of evil'. During the ceremony NBC made frequent crosses to American troops in Afghanistan, who pointed to the flag on their uniforms and chanted 'USA'. (15th February, 2002, p. 3)

With particular reference being made to the opening ceremony and the political overtones in which it was immersed, McKay was careful to avoid an outright condemnation of the
US, but hedges such criticism in the reporting of the 'concerns' of IOC officials over such patriotism. As with the political framing, detailed in the previous section, the opening ceremony was the initial focus for the press' featuring of the issue of nationalism. The article reveals the manner in which the media (in this case, NBC) are active in promoting nationalistic fervour in viewers. In his explanation of Olympism, Coubertin (cited in Segrave, 1988) noted that nationalism and pride in one's country was required in order to promote cultural exchange. However, as this description of the NBC coverage of the opening ceremony demonstrates, patriotism can also promote conflict between nations. McKinlay, writing in the Mirror, displayed such antagonism towards the American hosts, precisely because of their nationalistic attitudes:

How about the opening ceremony for the American Games – sorry the Winter Olympics? Patriotic tub-thumping is clearly the latest sport to become a medal event – can't wait for the ceremony to hear 'The Star Spangled Banner' yet again. After all the hoo-ha (or should that be yee hah!), I was expecting just the one team to turn up, but there are apparently one or two others in it. (16th February, 2002, p. 50)

The use of such irony marks a hostile attitude in parts of the British press towards the Americans and their overt shows of patriotism. Martin Samuel, reporting for the Daily Express shared this stance, saying of the United States: "Think of how we view United and times it by a million. That's how most other nations see America." (23rd February, 2002, p. 108). Accompanying this article was the following cartoon, depicting Uncle Sam in full national uniform, with the Olympic rings in one hand, stamping on the logo of the Salt Lake City Games:
The cartoon presents a vivid portrayal of overt US nationalism, and suggests that this is damaging the Games themselves. In the comment which is also cited, Samuel referred to the football team Manchester United, comparing the world’s view of the US with non-Manchester United fans’ attitude towards the successful English club. Samuel does not expand on this, however, the informed reader may draw comparisons with the generally hostile attitude towards Manchester United, perhaps due to the club’s perceived arrogance; their dominance of the English football league for several years; and a highly corporate approach. All these elements are also observable in the general worldview of the US in contemporary global sports context. However, it has been noted that individual nations are not solely to blame for the expression of nationalism in the Olympics, but that the organization of the Games has also contributed to this.

The very structure of the Olympic Games that is put in place by the Olympic Movement promotes the segregation of world into nation states. As Larson and Park (1993) pointed out, the parading of athletes under the national flag at the opening
ceremony; the fact that competitors take part for their nation, in national kit; the playing of national anthems at medal ceremonies; and the organisation of the Movement into national committees all contribute to the sense of ‘we’ in terms of a collective national identity, and thus reinforces the positioning of the rest of the world as outsiders.

The situation becomes more complex, however, upon consideration of the Olympic Charter, which calls for the promotion of peace through international understanding between nations competing in the Games. This requires the conceptualisation of the nation and the individual’s identity in relation to it to transcend the we/they distinction (Elias, 1994). What role then do the British press play in clarifying the role of the nation and nationalism in the Olympic Games? With regard to the general condemnation of US nationalism by British newspaper reporters, with frequent criticism of US patriotism, the press seemed to support Olympism, denouncing such jingoistic sentiment. However, elsewhere, the British media have demonstrated its own bias towards British athletes, and this was acknowledged by BBC producer, Bramley in an interview. Additionally, in general the media, and, in particular, the press’ interpretation of the reality of the Olympics was that it became a nationalistic exhibition for those who chose to exploit the occasion in such a way.

This framing of the Games as a display of US patriotism continued in the coverage of the events surrounding American athlete, Apolo Anton Ohno in the speed skating event. Controversy arose with the disqualification of the South Korean skater, which promoted Ohno to the gold medal position. This was interpreted in the British press as further proof of American jingoism and bias. David Powell, from the Times summarised the situation in the following way:
The Winter Games was digesting its second skating controversy of these Games yesterday after Apolo Anton Ohno, the teenage whiz-kid of short-track skating was awarded the 1,500 metres gold medal after a disqualification that, it was alleged, may have been influenced by the athlete's showmanship and excessive host-nation patriotism. (22nd February, 2002, p. 44)

Like McKay, cited earlier, Powell hedges his accusation of nationalist bias, with the phrase “it was alleged”. The incident here is significant, in that it underlines the discomfort expressed in the press having changed from the general condemnation of excessive nationalistic sentiments and “flag waving” (Daily Telegraph, 4th February, 2002 p. 7), to the insinuation that such patriotic fervour was influencing the decision making in the outcome of the events themselves. The suggestion that patriotism exists to such a level that it would lead to the breaking of rules to gain medals illustrates the importance of winning Olympic medals to the nation as a whole. Such an assertion was supported by Duncan McKay, writing the following extract in the Observer:

The only conclusion is that then, as now, politics is hopelessly intertwined with sport and that a gold medal carries just as much cachet outside the sporting arena as in it... The Russian fury over Olympic officiating reflects intense pride dating back to Soviet-era scandal when medal counts were a measure of national prowess and competing itself was frequently held hostage to politics. (24th February 2002 p. 12)

Here, the importance of Olympic sport as a 'shop window' for nations in terms of international relations outside, as well as inside the sporting arena is highlighted.

Mihir Bose, writing in the Daily Telegraph also observed that Olympic medal counts are of central importance to international status. He claims that the United States manipulated the medal table, using total medal count rather than numbers of gold medals to determine rankings, to elevate their own position in the competition between the competing countries. Bose argued that such acts serve to reinforce America's exclusory self promotion and celebration:
Nothing illustrates this sense of alienation more than the medal table. This shows United States second to Germany, but this has been achieved by standing the normal Olympic medals table on its head. At other Olympics, the country with the most golds heads the table; the total number of medals won is a secondary factor. In these Games, the Americans have discarded the gold standard to show themselves in a better light. (21st February 2002 p. 54)

This excerpt illustrates the importance of the medal table not only to the United States but Bose's critique suggests implicitly that he also acknowledges it as a significant measure of 'success' in the Games.

The British press' reaction to, and extensive reporting on the extreme patriotism of the host nation may be interpreted as repugnance at this kind of nationalist sentiment. However, there is little evidence to suggest that this necessarily represents sympathy with or promotion of Olympism. Such moralising over the expression of patriotism should be examined with caution, as it has been observed that British media coverage also centres around national interests. In some articles, it appeared that the opposition in the press was not to nationalism in general, but specifically to that of the United States. This was illustrated in the article below, with Martin Samuel writing in the Daily Express:

In their way, these Games are no more biased for the home nation than Sydney was for Australia, or Euro '96 was for England's footballers (three group games, all at Wembley, even France didn't dare try that stunt). But then Australia has never been at war ideologically with the rest of the world, so their patriotism isn't seen as a gauntlet thrown down. The most depressing aspect of these Games is the revelation that the planet is still divided by mistrust dating back 40 years. It could be argued America and Russia deserve each other. Maybe. But surely, then, the rest of the world deserves better than this? (23rd February, 2002, p. 108)

Samuel, here, notes that nationalism is inherent in international sporting competition and, in particular, argues that overt patriotism of the host nation is to be expected. That this is the case is also borne out in previous research on national identity in major sporting competitions (Maguire and Poulton, 1999). However, Samuel claims that when these
sentiments come from the US, a global superpower, "at war ideologically with the rest of the world" there is less tolerance of such jingoism. The implication seems to be that nationalism in sporting competitions is acceptable, as long as it doesn't serve to reinforce the broader political US world order. In the Daily Mail, (17th February, 2002, p.114), similar antagonistic sentiments towards American patriotism were expressed in a cartoon depicting George Bush on skis and a disgruntled bulldog (representing British interests) looking on:

Fig. 5.2 Bush and Bulldog cartoon, Daily Mail

This image not only parodies US jingoism in the Games, but also highlights the place of the British, in the first week, as outsiders in their lack of success. It would appear that national expression does not necessarily lead to harmonious and well-received cultural exchange. For Coubertin (cited in Segrave, 1988), the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympics were intended to provide an opportunity for cultural expression. The extent to which this is realised in the contemporary Games is discussed below.

Jackie Hogan (2003), in a study of the opening ceremonies from Nagano, Sydney and Salt Lake City, looked at the expression of nationalism through those cultural celebrations. Hogan notes that discourses of nationalism are without doubt expressed, but that it is a particular version of nationalism which is articulated, which reflects social
hierarchies of a given nation, specifically along the lines of gender and ethnicity. It is also noted that the staging of the opening ceremonies is very much influenced by the 'economics of a globalized mass media' (p. 103). As the primary global superpower, the USA is seen to be pervasive in influencing other cultures across the world (Klein, 1991). How, then, does perhaps the most influential nation on the globe - in terms of culture, politics and economics - present itself on the world stage and how does the television frame such discourse? The understanding of the US identity was injected with an extra dimension in the Salt Lake City Games, as it was the first global event since the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, and was being hosted on American soil. The threat to US national security and the American response to this undoubtedly impacted upon the identity of the USA as a country (Atkinson and Young, 2002). Such issues were clearly evident in the ceremonies of the Salt Lake City Games. With the 9/11 attacks being such a high profile event across the world, national television broadcasters were also likely to be sensitive to the way this would effect the expression of US patriotism in the Games. To draw on Hogan's work, the national identity expressed by the US in the Salt Lake City Games reflected a particular version of American identity: that associated with it as a nation at war.

From the very first statement made in the broadcasting of the opening ceremony from Salt Lake City, the political climate of the Games was made apparent. Attached to these political tensions, was a sense of US nationalism, and this was made clear in Barry Davies' opening BBC commentary:

Yes I'm waiting at the sporting heartbeat at the University of Utah, it's here that the chill of the night air meets the warmth of the emotion of the crowd. At a temperature that probably only the Americans can produce, especially now. Many of them have been in their seats for at least two hours and before then waited
probably for two or three hours standing in line as they say in this country, queuing as we would say it, waiting to go through the security. The volunteers, the police, the army are everywhere to be seen. We’re in a no fly zone, the airport of Salt Lake City closed, but as you can hear from the crowd, the enthusiasm for the start of the winter Olympic Games of 2002 is not to be dampened. We await the countdown.

The fact that the very first words spoken in the commentary on the Games placed them in the context of the American defiance in the face of the terrorist attacks meant they were immediately framed as a nationalistic celebration of the US resistance to terrorism. Hogan (2003) noted in her study of media portrayals of opening ceremonies that the visible presence of the national guard made the ceremony “another front in the US ‘war on terror’” (p. 117). In the statement by Davies in the BBC portrayal of the event, this military presence and heightened security is highlighted. This served to reinforce the impression of the Games as an arena in which the US’s war on terror could be waged.

The structure of the images shown during the parading of the Ground Zero flag appeared to be crafted to give rise to a specific reading of the event. Upon the entrance of the flag to the stadium, during the performance of the American national anthem, a close up was shown of the sombre faces of President Bush, Jacques Rogge, and head of the SLOC, Mitt Romney. The camera then cut to another close up, this time of the torn World Trade Center flag, thus reminding the audience – should it need reminding – of its origin and the destruction caused by the terrorist attacks. The final shot in this sequence was of the raising of a different stars and stripes flag, symbolising the continued strength of the US nation in the wake of strikes on New York and Washington. Such framings are not accidental, and give rise to a deliberate dominant reading of the event as a demonstration of the US prevailing in the face of attack. Given that ISB, the host broadcaster responsible for the images shown in the Olympic coverage is an American
company, such messages, encouraging identification and sympathy with the US, are not surprising. Throughout the Games and in the closing ceremony this issue of US patriotism continued to feature in British coverage of the event.

In the closing ceremony of the Games, Barry Davies made several telling comments about the nature and reception of the Salt Lake Olympics in terms of international understanding and cultural exchange. In reference to the decision made to alter the traditional order of the ceremony to fit in with NBC (the official American broadcasters of the Games) scheduling, Davies commented:

Very unusual for the real stars of the show to come on first. They come on intermingled by sports and country, but they're going to be allowed only 15 minutes to parade around the stadium. The reason for that is that NBC, the American broadcaster want the closing ceremony to end in time for the eleven o'clock news out in the East. So the athletes' time is being limited. They've had an opportunity NBC, during the course of these Games, to present the smiling face of America to the visitors from abroad but that final decision has not endeared themselves to athletes, officials or indeed, fans.

Here, Davies makes the case that NBC was a key protagonist in ensuring that the Games were used to “present the smiling face of America”. He suggests, however, that they failed to do this in putting ratings ahead of the athletes’ interests in the staging of the closing ceremony. Davies was also critical of the US' overt patriotism throughout the Games. Commenting on the athletes in view in the parade in the closing ceremony, he said of the speed skater, Ohno: “If you'd have been watching television here, you'd have thought there was only one competitor, called Apollo Anton Ohno. Sounds like something from Cape Canaveral or Cape Kennedy as it's called now”. Not only does this reference underline US patriotism, but it also reminds the audience of the tension that arose in the short track skating 1500m final, when the South Korean skater who crossed
the line first, was disqualified upon dramatic protestation by Ohno. As a result of this incident, South Korea threatened to pull out of the Games, accusing officials of US bias. Two minutes later Davies made reference to another issue of controversy surrounding the Americans in the Games, on this occasion regarding the medal table: "The Americans, medals to show. Counted in total number rather than number of golds to decide who was top of the pack."

Davies, in this connection, without making an explicit reference to the issue, touched upon the debate surrounding the US' manipulation of the medal as detailed in the extract from Bose, earlier in this section. In a more open reference to the unease at the extreme US patriotism in the Games, Davies in his closing summary of the Salt Lake Olympics stated: "Very American Games and as such absolutely packed full of enthusiasm. At times it might be said that the style was difficult to adjust to for some foreigners. The Russians particularly, latterly". Here, the mention of the Russians was presumably in relation to their threat to pull out of the Games amid accusations of unfair treatment of their athletes. This followed the contentious decision to award double golds in the pairs ice-skating and the elimination of the Russian cross-country relay team in light of positive drugs tests. It is interesting that, as with the initial remarks from Davies in the opening ceremony, his final speech in summarising the Games placed emphasis on the nationalistic interests of the US hosts. Thus, the Salt Lake Olympics were literally framed in a way that suggests US nationalism was a key feature of the Games. It is also illustrative of the general unrest of British presenters and journalists at this patriotism, despite the fact that they, themselves, also used nationalistic bias in their presentation of British athletes.
In making sense of the reportedly nationalistic behaviour of the Americans at the Salt Lake City Games cited in this section, it may be useful to look directly at the work of Elias. Elias (1994) made use of the personal pronoun model in relation to the established/outsider conceptualisation of collective identity. Elias posed the following question of this relationship:

How and why human beings perceive one another as belonging to the same group and include one another in within the group boundaries which they establish in saying “we” in their reciprocal communications, while at the same time excluding other human beings whom they perceive as belonging to another group and to whom they collectively refer as “they”. (p. 37)

Elias asked why humans seem disposed to orientate themselves in the formation of a ‘we’ identity with apparently similar individuals, and yet position themselves as other to those outside that established group. That is, the formation of identity as part of an established group seems to necessitate the viewing of those not included in that community as outsiders (Maguire, in press). Tuck (1999) builds on this work of Elias in relation to the sporting arena. He notes that: “when established ‘we’ groups are confronted with outsiders, national habitus codes tend to harden and become more explicit” (p. 63). This statement is useful in trying to understand the position of both the US and Britain in the media’s portrayal of expression of national identity in the Salt Lake City Games. The media have, in several examples cited here, positioned the observed US patriotism in the context of the perceived threat to American national security. Therefore, it is possible to see the ways in which the celebration of achievements of national sporting sides, and the teaching of history (in the highly symbolic choice ‘cold war heroes’ to light the Olympic torch), is used to reinforce the group’s superiority (imagined or otherwise) in light of the
threat to that position of dominance. Maguire (in press) notes the significance of such strategies in the reaffirmation of the established group:

Whichever way the balance of power tips, at the level of the nation-state, and civilisational relations more broadly, established groups and peoples almost invariably experience and present themselves as more civilized, and outsiders are constructed as more barbaric – this is vividly evident in the geo-identity politics following the events of what have become known as 9/11.

In these terms, it is possible to understand how the US, upon facing attack from an 'outsider' civilisation, with the help of the media (Atkinson and Young, 2002), used the Olympic stage to establish its 'we' identity as the established group.

In similar vein, the British press condemned such overt displays of US patriotism. Samuel's statement cited earlier, in relation to the view of America as a nation disliked by the world, firmly establishes the Americans (viewed as having eclipsed Britain's past position as one of the key global empires) as outsiders. Correspondingly, the media also go on to reaffirm the 'we' of British national identity by focussing on successes of home athletes and encouraging a national sharing in the achievements of the Olympic team. This process is discussed in greater detail in the next section on the media portrayal of 'home' athletes.

If it were to be argued that the British media's criticism of US patriotism, as cited throughout this section, was a deliberate attempt to positively reinforce the ideology of Olympism, the reporting of British involvement would have to be unbiased and not infused with nationalistic sentiment. This is, however, not the case. The following paragraphs will examine the press coverage of the British athletes in Salt Lake City with regards to the expression of nationalism.
Nationalistic sentiment in the British media coverage of ‘home’ athletes

Rowe (1999) reminds us that the BBC was, in fact, one of the first broadcasters to utilise sport as a means of unifying the nation and exploring and reinforcing notions of national character and patriotism. He claims:

Just as it was in Britain that the social institution and cultural form of sport first emerged it was the British state, through its public broadcaster the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), that pioneered the use of great sporting occasions as festivals of nationhood. (p. 23)

Is it the case then, that there is a deliberate and underlying ideological motive behind the media’s framing of events in a nationalistic manner, or is it simply that the producers are responding to audience demands to feature British athletes predominantly and celebrate their successes? Jhally (1989a) argues for the former. He notes that the tendency for television producers to give primacy to home interests in sports coverage encourages the creation of a unified nation, which in turn works as an opiate, masking the tensions and inequalities that exist within that country. Kinkema and Harris (1998) make similar observations. They state:

Media representations of Olympic events that provide nationalistic images are important in ideological struggles. It has been suggested that these nationalistic images not only obscure existing ethnic, gender and social class boundaries, but also undermine attempts to challenge or alter exploitative relations that exist within a particular nation, thus supporting the status quo. (p. 35)

The suggestion is that the invitation to the audience to be part of the ‘we’ of the unified nation creates a patriotic nation of people, encouraged to be loyal to the state, and thus reduces internal conflict. According to Jhally (1989a), the formation of national identity in the media occurs through two processes: the unification of the perceived members of the home nation through shared and common experiences of life and values; and also through the separation of ‘us’, the nation, from ‘other’ foreigners. Kinkema and Harris
(1998) note that this is often achieved through the use of racist/ethnic stereotypes in the framing of overseas athletes. It is easy to see how sport is used as a key vehicle for the bringing together of the nation. Sporting success for a national side which is celebrated in the media, and then framed as a triumph to be shared, and which reflects upon the whole nation, is likely to make affiliation with that nation all the more enticing. This, then, as leads to the diversion of attention away from the more localised conflicts that exist and encourages loyalty to the state, in this case, to the UK (Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Jhally, 1989a; Kinkema and Harris, 1998).

In the BBC coverage of the Salt Lake City winter Games, the overall pattern of coverage was fairly broad in terms of covering a range of events rather than only those which fostered a possibility of British success. It must be taken into account, however, that the status of winter sports in Britain is such that the likelihood of success is relatively low, and thus does not stand alone as a selling point for the Games. When potential medal winning performances for British athletes were taking place, however, this took precedence over other events. For example, when it transpired that Great Britain’s women’s team had made the final of the curling competition, scheduling was rearranged both in Olympic Grandstand coverage, and of the BBC’s broader programming. In the original programme of events to be aired that evening, the women’s ice hockey final was timetabled to be shown live, and thus was essentially seen as a more appealing spectacle than the curling. However, the national interest in winning an Olympic medal meant that the curling was automatically seen to be of greater significance to the audience. That is, the vested interest in seeing the curling team win a medal, apparently on behalf of the whole country (the issue of whether the nation in question is Britain or Scotland is
addressed later in this section), was a more influential factor than the appeal of the sport itself. This is interesting on several levels. Firstly, the idea that the medal was won and to be *shared* and celebrated by the *whole* nation is something often naturalised by the media. However, the ideals of Olympism state that national chauvinism in the Olympic Games is undesirable and works in opposition to the quest for international understanding (Segrave, 1988).

During the BBC's coverage of the women's curling competition, the idea that the exploits of the British team were on behalf of the whole country was frequently reinforced. This was particularly the case in the commentary on the final. For example, at the close of the programme that covered the final, Clare Balding remarked: "It's a wonderful night for Great Britain". Whilst it is conceivable that the comment was in reference to Great Britain/Scotland as a team, rather than the entire nation, the context of the comment suggests otherwise. Just prior to that statement, Balding claimed that: "The *nation* is a nation of curlers!" The reference here to 'nation' was not to the particular Great Britain *team* but to the British state and public more broadly. Throughout the tournament, the implication of the term 'Great Britain' was ambiguous in terms of whether it was in reference to the team or to Britain more broadly. This was the case on several occasions, such as Dougie Donnelly's comments in the round robin game against Switzerland: "A splendid result for Great Britain' and 'a serious mistake which Great Britain will benefit from." However, when the team's success increased – in the securing of a medal and later winning the gold – the commentators then began to claim the achievement more broadly in an overt manner and were more inclusive of Britons in general in the attribution of the glory. Reporting directly from the Ogden Ice Centre,
where the final was played, Hazel Irvine, who is Scottish, informed the audience that:

"This constitutes Britain's best result at a winter Olympics since 1936" (my emphasis). Thus, the achievement of the British women's curling team was immediately interpreted in terms of what this meant for Great Britain in Olympic history.

As with the television coverage, from the outset of the Games, the press took ownership of the British athletes as our "own" (Daily Express, 24th February, 2002, p. 108). The athletes were seen to be there as ambassadors of 'our' country, with their success reflecting directly upon the nation state as a whole. Such sentiments are expressed in the headline that appeared in the Independent, exclaiming: "Baxter steals snow show for Britain" (24th February, 2002). The implication, here, was that Alain Baxter's glory in winning a bronze in the slalom reflected on the whole of Britain and that the medal was won not for himself but for the nation state. Similar overtones are evident in the reporting of other British success at Salt Lake City. Duncan McKay, writing in the Guardian reported: "It was Britain's third medal of the Games – after its women won gold in the curling and Alex Coomber’s bronze in the skeleton – for the country's best performance at the Winter Games in 66 years." (25th February, 2002, p. 16). Here, McKay wrote of "Britain's third medal" (my emphasis) that is, the medal was not attributed to Baxter at all, but claimed directly as belonging to the nation. Moreover, the summary of the success of British athletes' is seen as important for the fact that it culminated in the "country's" best performance for 66 years.

The medal table was also referred to in several newspapers with regard to British success. Such reference does not fit with the promotion of international understanding, as it supports the idea of competition rather than cooperation between countries. As Duncan
McKay's article in the Guardian, showed, pride was taken in Britain's 'beating' of other nations: "Among the countries they finished ahead of in the overall medal table, were Sweden, a huge national embarrassment for them." (25th February, 2002, p. 16).

Incidents of antagonism towards other countries were also evident in the press coverage of the winter Games. As noted earlier, there was a hostile response to what was perceived to be excessive US patriotism at the opening ceremony of the Salt Lake City Olympics. In light of this perceived US nationalism, Brian Reade, writing in the Mirror made the following comments about the nature of the British:

Can you imagine the organisers of London's 1948 Olympics getting Blitz veterans and Japanese POWs to lead the parade with a flag left on a beach after Dunkirk while the BBC crossed to our army on the Rhine? No. Because we're not made like that. We don't believe the world revolves around our country and our own problems. And as a result we're not despised the world over. Let's keep it that way. (14th February, 2002 p. 17)

There is an interesting irony in this passage: that Reade makes a proud and patriotic statement about the humble national character of Britain, in criticising the US' nationalistic celebrations. Whilst suggesting that the British do not revel in past victories, Reade uses reference to the Second World War and the military successes there to illustrate his point about the modesty of the British in not imposing such celebrations upon the rest of the world. However, research (Maguire et al 2002) indicates that the British media do, in fact make overt and nationalistic celebrations of British success. Furthermore, in his article, Reade himself commended British national character, highlighting the success of the country in the world war. In doing so he emphasises international political tensions, and makes an attack on the conduct of the US, whilst at the same time claiming to condemn the hostilities brought about by extreme patriotism. As suggested earlier, the conflict between international understanding and nationalism in
the Olympics is a fine balance and press reporting has done little to relieve the complexity.

The editorial decisions in terms of which sports and events to feature can also contribute to a national bias in Olympic coverage. Whannel (1992) asserts that: “Plainly, television celebrates nationalism and national identity, and mobilises viewer identification with British chances” (p. 191). Here, Whannel underlines the fact that framing of sporting events in terms of nationalistic sentiment and affinity to national representative teams/individuals is, in fact, a technique of production which has been naturalised with time and repetition. The use of this strategy in the winter Olympics is evident in the BBC’s packaging of the Salt Lake City Games. According to Bramley, one of the senior producers working on the Salt Lake City coverage, one of the three key factors deciding the pattern and distribution of airtime to the events of the Games was the likelihood of British success. As suggested earlier, the sport of curling was not deemed to be one to attract large audiences in itself, as the only coverage scheduled prior to the Games was of the men’s team (originally predicted to be the more successful of the British teams). Even during the women’s final coverage, a tense match, Clare Balding complained about the pace of the game, observing: “it’s a slow burner, this curling.” However, the winning of an Olympic medal for the team was seen to be of enough significance to the British audience that rescheduling took place to ensure the final was broadcast live. This focus appears to have been justified as BBC viewing figures for the final peaked during the match, reaching 5.7 million. Such large audiences would suggest that, as Whannel (1992) claims: ‘viewer identification’ was very much mobilised 'with British chances'.
The patriotic celebration of the British team’s success took place not only in the commentary and general coverage of live matches but also in preview features, including interviews with the team, explanations of the game, and round-ups of the path to the final. The pictures used in these reports and the rink-side presentation by Hazel Irvine, in the final were footage outside the main feed provided by ISB. During breaks between ends, Irvine conducted interviews with various individuals including relatives of the British players; Craig Readie – a Scot, and British representative on the IOC, and Margaret Morton the British team’s reserve. This allowed room for the BBC to make the coverage more tailored to the British audience, and add a bias that could not have been achieved using only the central, impartial feed.

In a review of the television coverage of the night that saw medals for the British team in the women’s curling and for Alex Coomber in the women’s skeleton, Will Buckley’s observations, in an article for the Observer, supported the notion that television coverage of the Olympics should reflect and engender patriotic interests:

In the top box we had the final of the women’s skeleton. In the middle box, we had the final of the women’s skeleton. And in the bottom box, an ice-hockey match involving two teams, neither of them British, which consequently shouldn’t have been there at all. (24th February, 2002 p. 12)

Such remarks, whilst obviously intended to have comic effect, are also revealing about the attitude generated in the British press with regards to interest in sport not directly involving the British. Interest only in the achievements of British athletes undermines the notion that international understanding can and should be endorsed through sport and specifically the Olympics. Reporting for the Times, Barnes reiterated the importance of British success in engendering enjoyment and interest in the Games, stating: “It was a
thoroughly agreeable Games, the more so for Britain’s utterly unexpected haul of three medals” (25th February, 2002 p. 37).

As outlined at the beginning of this section, national identity refers not only to the individual’s sense of identity, as related to the nation, but also to the way in which the nation itself is perceived by the outside world. The British press also used the Salt Lake City Olympics to help paint a picture of the national character of Britain. For example, in the *Daily Telegraph*, Mark Steyn wrote of the links between the British success in the curling – a sport particularly popular in, and associated with Canada – and what he saw as Blair’s ‘Canadianisation’ of Britain, in a political sense. He commented:

> Consider the increasingly fraught ‘Blair project’. Since 1997, Britain’s queen of preen has replaced the hereditary House of Lords with an Ottawa-style senate of pliant has-beens; he’s introduced Quebecois ‘asymmetrical federalism’ to the Celtic regions; he’s toyed with a new flag and introduced a rock arrangement of the national anthem, part of his unceasing Candianesque demand that ancient institutions and symbols ‘modernise’ themselves for the needs of a multicultural society. And now in the most telling example of the remorseless Canadianisation of Britain, he’s somehow seen to it that you’ve taken up Canada’s national sport. Maybe the EU isn’t the bogeyman after all. (24th February, 2002 p. 23)

Whilst Steyn suggested (albeit slightly tongue in cheek) that the sporting exploits of the female curlers at the winter Olympics reflected the wider changes taking place in the nature of Britain, towards a Canadian style government, his main concern was revealed in the final statement: with the EU. This anti-European stance is likely to be reflective of the politically more right-wing readership of the *Daily Telegraph*. Such natiocentric attitudes again undermine the element of Olympism that calls for the Games to be used to spread international goodwill. Other bastions of traditional British culture were associated with British successes in the press coverage of the Olympics. For example Steve Rogers, in the *Mirror* (24th February, 2002, p. 62) noted that the women’s curling team received a letter
from Prince Charles. With reference to the national flag, Andrew Baker referred to the British supporters as the "Union Jack squad" (as opposed to the saltire) (Daily Telegraph, 21st February, 2002, p. 55). This last example is interesting as reference to the British flag brings with it questions regarding the validity of a Great Britain and Northern Ireland team in the face of Scottish devolution and the political tensions in Northern Ireland. The next section will discuss this in relation to the media coverage of the Salt Lake City Games.

5.6iii Identity crises within the 'British' team

Further complicating and fragmenting the sense of international understanding in the media framing of the Games, was the politics arising from the separation of Great Britain into the separate home nations. Boyle and Haynes (2000) outline the complexities of the politics of Britain:

Within the UK’s sporting environment, there exists the problem of mediating the complicated political and cultural relationship between the different component parts of the UK (for example, Scotland and England) – a situation which is already becoming more acute in the late 1990s with the devolved Parliament in Scotland and the Assemblies in Wales and Northern Ireland beginning to reconfigure the political relationships which exist within and beyond the Union. (p. 151)

As detailed here, the British national identity is one that is very much fragmented, both politically and culturally. From the very outset of the Games, reports in the press highlighted such tensions arising from the Scots competing under the Great Britain flag. The focus was particularly on the Scots, as the several of the athletes identified as potential medallists were Scottish. The following excerpt from an interview with Hammy McMillan, Scottish skip of the British men’s curling team exemplifies the shifting sense of identity tied up with the notion of Britishness:
“We know ourselves that if we do win we'll help curling right across Scotland. Or I should say Great Britain. I mustn't forget that we're representing the whole of Great Britain. An easy slip to make: Team McMillan (in curling the team always takes the surname of its skip) is Scottish through and through.” (Guardian, 4th February, 2002, p. 14, my emphasis)

Later in the Games, similar issues of identity arose with the women's curling gold medal winning team and Alain Baxter, also Scots. Baxter was a particularly controversial character where this issue was concerned, as his dyeing of the Scottish flag, also known as the ‘Saltire’ into his hair led the IOC to demand he remove it, for fear of it being interpreted as a political statement regarding Scottish independence from Great Britain. Articles such as that in the Independent (25th February, 2002, p.12) cited earlier in this chapter, detailing the story, illustrate the press interest this story generated. The highlighting of such issues in the media served to heighten the feeling that there was a divide between the Scots and Britain as a whole. Significantly, when Alex Coomber won her bronze in the skeleton, her Englishness was not underlined in the same way as the national identity of her Scottish counterparts. In this way, the Scots, whilst being celebrated for their achievements, were also positioned in the press as ‘outsiders’ to a certain extent, and not fully naturalised as part of Great Britain. This tension was brought to light by Mark Steyn, again writing in the Daily Telegraph. Of the medal ceremony for the women's curlers he observed:

Yet even in the hour of glory, with the entire country united in curling fever, gripped by the thwack of bristle on granite, there are discordant voices. Scottish nationalists bristled like a shedding brush in an extra end at the sight of an all-Scots team having to stand for 'God save the Queen' rather than 'Flower of Lanark' or 'Thistle of the Central Region' or whatever it is. (24th February, 2002 p. 23)
The tone of the article here is interesting as Steyn is somewhat dismissive of Scottish devolution and, with the line: “rather than ‘Flower of Lanark’ or Thistle of Central Region’ or whatever it is”, is mocking of the cause. Such derision of these tensions felt within Great Britain served to highlight the conflict that exists in relation to this issue. This reference did, however, demonstrate that local identities retain meaning and significance in the context of globalisation.

Allusions were also made to the Scottish independence in the press framing of the women’s curling tournament, and in particular, Rhona Martin’s final stone of the competition. On three occasions, headlines referred to the winning shot as the ‘stone of destiny’, making reference to the stone upon which Kings of Scotland were crowned between the 9th and 13th centuries, before Edward I removed it and placed it in Westminster Abbey. The Independent (23rd February, 2002, p. 25) referred to Martin as “The girl who threw the stone of destiny”, and the Daily Telegraph featured an article headed: “Rhona Martin on ‘The stone of destiny’” (23rd February, 2002, p. S1). Such references were highly significant in exploring the articulation of national identity in the media, as the stone of destiny has great meaning to the Scots as a “powerful symbol of national sovereignty” (Devine, 1999, p.567). Given the topicality of Scottish devolution in the current British political climate, these examples demonstrate the extent to which wilful nostalgia and invented traditions (much myth surrounds the changing hands of the stone) play a part in the formation and reinforcement of national identity.

As highlighted earlier, Maguire and Falcous (2005) argue that sports coverage in the media sees attention paid to both the global and the local. Dealing with Scottish/English/British tensions in the media coverage of sporting events emphasises the
continued importance of local identities, even in global mega events such as the Olympic Games. As Maguire (1999) argues, globalisation is not an all-pervasive and uncontested phenomenon, but encounters opposition in the form of resistant, local cultural flows. The argument that we are witnessing the growth of a global monoculture is clearly flawed in light of such observations that even within a particular ‘nation’ (Great Britain), there is a plurality of national identities in existence and in competition with each other.

Blain et al (1993) examined this plurality of British identity, as portrayed in the English and Scottish press coverage of the Barcelona Olympics. The study found that in general, the newspapers referred to the English members of the British team as ‘British’, whilst Scottish athletes’ Scottishness was highlighted by both the Scottish and English press. It was suggested that this pattern reflected the fact that Englishness and Britishness are viewed as synonymous in the eyes of the English, whilst the Scottish press took the opportunity to claim a stake in the success of English athletes, in the absence of Scottish medals at the Games.

In the coverage of the curling in the Salt Lake City Games, a strong Scottish element was present, as all the members of both the men’s and women’s teams were Scottish. Furthermore, the game of curling itself was noted to have Scottish origins, and was essentially seen as a Scottish game, with there being no curling rinks in England. Dougie Donnelly, during the coverage of the women’s final commented:

It’s a sport which is gaining popularity in the British Isles, it’s confined almost exclusively to Scotland, where the game began. England and Wales have both competed in world championships, admittedly with teams made up largely of ex-pat Scots. All began in frozen locks and rivers, back in the 16th century. While some of our ancestors were hitting balls into holes in the ground in the links land, others were hurling clods of earth or lumps of rock across frozen rivers. So the games of golf and curling emerged.
This Scottish flavour was evident in the BBC coverage of the event in several areas of production. For example, both commentators on the curling throughout the Games: Kirsty Hay and Dougie Donnelly are Scottish, as is Hazel Irvine, the rink-side reporter for the final. Interestingly, the overt identification of the curling team as Scottish rather than simply British took place consistently throughout the competition, even as the chance of winning a medal became more likely. For example, in explanation of full coverage of the final only being shown on BBC Scotland, Steve Rider informed the audience: “It is their sport after all!” This comment illustrates again how Elias’ pronoun model is useful in understanding the intricacies of national identity (Elias, 1994).

Captured in the earlier rounds of the competition, was the image of a British supporter, waving both a Union Jack flag and the Scottish Saltire, wearing the traditional Scottish dress of the kilt and a tartan beret. This shot was then shown again in the BBC’s video montage, at the start of the programme of the final. In this respect, from the very outset, the final was framed as an event with a Scottish bias and the tensions arising from the dual British/Scottish identity highlighted. It was later revealed in an interview conducted in the interlude between ends of the final, that the supporter shown was the father of Fiona McDonald, one of the British team members. Irvine refers to him as: “The Cheerleader supreme, he’s got the full highland regalia on. The kilt, everything.” The choice to carry out the interview with a Scotsman in “full highland regalia” rather than any other relatives of the team present, and then to draw attention to this indicates the choice made to further highlight the Scottish nationalism, and the particular version of Scottishness, that was present.
This image was further enhanced by McDonald's father's statement about his daughter's performance: "Makes me very proud, I should think she makes the whole of Scotland proud, in fact the whole of Great Britain proud, let's get that right!" There are a number of possible interpretations of this comment. It could be argued that the initial 'slip' made here is significant in further reinforcing the fact that the identity of the team as British is not a natural one, but is assumed for the duration of the Olympic competition. However, rather than discontent, there appears to be some pride evident in the fact that his daughter is making the whole of Britain proud and not Scotland alone. In making sense of such a statement, the need to understand the complexities of the politics of Great Britain becomes apparent. It is important to recognise that Scottish identity may differ according to political views. In this example, for instance, it may be the case the McDonald is a Scot and unionist, therefore, supporting the Scottish affiliation to Great Britain. The complexity and multi-layered nature of national identity should not be underestimated (Maguire and Tuck, 1997).

As the above examples suggest, rather than emphasising the 'British' success of the team, the English presenters on the Grandstand programme appeared keen to make the Scottish identity of the team clear. According to BBC producer, Bramley, the decision to not show the match in full in England was a result of the BBC schedulers being unwilling to sacrifice the regular programmes due to be broadcast that day. However, the fact that this was acceptable in Scotland suggests that the final was deemed to have a greater significance to Scottish audiences than it did to English viewers, despite the fact that the team was competing under the British flag. Even upon the winning of the gold medal, Steve Cram announced: "It's a win for Great Britain, but it's a huge win for
Scotland!" Such statements emphasise the fragmented nature of British identity. Whilst the home nations gather under the title of Great Britain in the Olympic arena, the English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish identities are, or never can be, totally subsumed; this is emphasised and perhaps perpetuated by media portrayals.

This lack of permanence in the concept of a unified Britain is demonstrated in the financial support structure for British sport. This was underlined when Dougie Donnelly described the funding system in place to support the team’s Olympic campaign:

This British team have had terrific support from many quarters, the Scottish Institute of sport, certainly, both financially and technically with all the support staff. Both British teams as well prepared as any curling team ever to play in a national and an international competition.

Despite the repeated reference to the ‘British teams’, Donnelly reveals that the underlying financial and general support services operate from a decentralised structure. This comment highlights the incongruities in the notion of a unified Britain, which appears to exist symbolically (in the parading under the Union Jack flag, the wearing of the British vest and playing of the national anthem), but increasingly less so in practice and organisation.

It could be argued then, that the attention drawn to the fragmented nature of the British Isles did not serve only to highlight political tensions that may arise from the divisions that exist, but that the Olympic arena gave rise to opportunity to celebrate the success of the Scottish in a non-confrontational manner. That is, it would appear that, in the face of a globalising world, local identities can be retained and expressed with pride (Falcous and Maguire, 2005). To a certain extent, this could be said to support the Olympic aim of international understanding. As the evidence cited from the BBC
coverage demonstrated, Scottish identity and culture was explicitly acknowledged and framed in a positive light. However, as was seen in some portrayals in the British press, such differences were not always celebrated, as some reporters highlighted the frictions which arise from a fragmented British identity.

5.7 Conclusion

Overall, the British media coverage of the Salt Lake City Olympics saw the issue of nationalism arise in several forms. Thus, an overriding trend towards the continued expression of identification with the nation state prevails. Whilst there were, at times, suggestions made that international exchange took place, the dominant ideology reinforced the celebration of British success above the achievements of individuals from other nations. The overall structure of scheduling centred around this. It could be argued that the tensions arising from the diverse make-up of the British team, in terms of the expression of Scottish national identity served to reinforce the fact that focus upon the nation state can give rise to conflict and discord. However, evidence from television coverage also illustrated a positive acceptance and celebration of the diverse culture of Britain, thus showing some support for the Games as an arena to at least dilute tensions within nation states, if not promote international understanding.

In the portrayal of the US, particularly in the opening ceremony, the status of America as a country at war was emphasised. It must be noted that this portrayal owes as much to the structure of the ceremony itself as it does to the television's framing of the event. However, as detailed in the main body of this chapter, certain elements of the media's representation of this helped highlight these issues. The robustness of the nation
state as a politically and culturally significant entity, despite the globalising forces of transnational bodies such as the Olympic movement is evident in the media portrayals of the Salt Lake City Olympics. Whilst global mega events such as the Games may be international, in that they bring together the nations of the world in one place, the media representations, and thus the majority of people's experiences of such occasions, remain embroiled in nationalistic interests and sentiment (Moragas et al., 1995). This particular reading of the BBC's coverage of the Salt Lake City Olympics supports the argument made by figurational research elsewhere (Maguire and Tuck, 1997; Maguire and Poulton, 1999) that despite the tendency for many theories of globalisation to underplay it, the nation, national identity and nationalism still have a real significance in contemporary society.

The next chapter considers the Olympic ideal of opportunity for all in light of the gendered nature of British media coverage of the Salt Lake City Games, and the focus on elite performance as opposed to the value of participation.
CHAPTER 6
OPPORTUNITY FOR SOME: BRITISH MEDIA FRAMING OF EXCELLENCE AND GENDER IN THE SALT LAKE CITY GAMES

6.1 Introduction

As outlined at the beginning of Chapter 5, the analysis of the media texts found four dominant themes, or characteristics of the British press and television coverage of the Salt Lake City Games. Having discussed the interrelated issues of politics and nationalism in the previous chapter, this chapter examines the gendered nature of the British media coverage, and then focuses on the theme of excellence and elite performance. As highlighted in Chapter 5, both the disparity in treatment of male and female athletes and the privileging of elite performance in media framing does little to support the Olympism's agenda to promote equal opportunity. As with the discussion of politics and nationalism, in the previous chapter, evidence from both television and the press will be examined together in the following analysis of gender and excellence.

6.2 Gender and sport

Before detailing the findings of the analysis of the BBC and British press coverage, this introductory section will first give a brief overview of some of the previous work carried out in relation to gender and the media as has been discussed in greater detail in the review of literature. In particular, this opening section will outline those issues that have been found to be of significance in the media portrayal of the Salt Lake City Games.

Gender in media coverage of female athletes has long been an issue of concern in sociological examinations of the contemporary sport. Whilst earlier work tended to take
the form of quantitative analyses of the coverage of female and male athletes, more recently, the need to look at data for the latent meanings in the portrayals of athletes with regard to gender has been addressed. According to Stevenson (2004) "The media are central technologies controlling hegemonic notions of the ideal non-threatening female athlete" (p. 274). Lenskyj (1998) concurs: "Overall, the critical research on the sport media concludes that women's sporting involvement is marginalized and trivialized through distorted visual images and language, if not through omission" (p. 20). The media often appears to struggle with conflicting image and ideology when covering women in the sports arena. As Stevenson (2004) argues, the media are a key party in reinforcing hegemonic gender ideology, and the typical sporting female is problematic as she flouts many of the conventional notions of femininity. The media, then, are left with the choice of sexualising the athletic female body, or else making clear the mismatch that exists. That is, the disparity between the ideal of the petite, heterosexually appealing image of the female, and the muscularly developed, more stereotypically masculine body of the strong athletic woman.

In her examination of the media portrayal of the Australian tennis open, Stevenson (2004) observes a contrasting treatment of the players Mauresmo and Hingis in the media. She notes a tension in terms of making sense of the gender identities of the players. She states: "As has been repeatedly demonstrated, the media have considerable difficulty dealing with sporting women who challenge hegemonic ideas about femininity" (p. 280). When the sporting body itself cannot easily be interpreted as one reflecting hegemonic notions of femininity, other means are utilised to convince the audience of the maintenance of the gender order. Stevenson (2004) goes on to note, "Media references to
feminine credentials, such as to boyfriends, husbands and children, are commonplace to reassure audiences of gender priorities" (p. 280).

It has been observed that the media have incorporated various means by which to rationalise the position of women in the sporting arena. As Lenskyj (1998) noted in the extract above, this does, in some cases, involve straightforward exclusion. However, in more recent times, with a generally heightened awareness of equity and political correctness in the press and broadcast media, pressure has been put on editors and producers to include more coverage of women's sport. While this has by no means meant an equal coverage of men and women's sport, quantitatively speaking, it would appear that inroads are at least being made (Bernstein, 2000). More informative, in terms of the gendered treatment of athletes, is the manner in which they are represented. Lenskyj (1998) has noted that female athletes undergo a process of 'symbolic annihilation'. This describes the "process of trivialising, stereotyping and under-representing women's sporting achievements" (p. 20). The following section outlines the extent to which the British female athletes in Salt Lake City were subjected to such treatment in the media. In particular, the British medallists: the women's curling team and Alex Coomber (in the skeleton event) we examined in detail.

6.3 Gendered treatment of British athletes

In this analysis of the British media's portrayal of the Salt Lake City Games, whilst the progress of the British women's curling team forms the central case study for analysing the treatment of female athletes, some of the coverage surrounding Alex Coomber, Britain's other medallist at the Games will also be used. Each televised match and highlights of matches have been examined for both commentary and graphics and
articles on the Games in the eight main English daily newspapers have been analysed. The overall findings suggest that there is evidence of a gendered treatment of the British women's curling team by the British media in the coverage of the Salt Lake City Games. The following section will outline these claims in detail.

With the somewhat unexpected success of the women's curling team in Salt Lake City, came a series of decisions which had to be made by the BBC, in terms of the production and framing of the event. At one level, decisions had to be taken regarding the scheduling of the programmes. The broadcasting of the final, for example, became problematic as the women's ice hockey final took place at the same time and was scheduled to be broadcast live, ahead of the women's curling final. This led to a rather disjointed programme of events for both the ice hockey and the curling. The broadcasting of the curling switched between channels BBC 1 and BBC 2 several times throughout the final, making room for the ice hockey and other, regular prime time programmes. The status of the curling was that of a minority sport (in Britain, at least), and furthermore, a minority sport being played by women, who according to several studies (Billings and Eastman, 2003; Higgs and Weiler, 1994; Tuggle and Owen, 1999) are typically afforded less exposure than their male counterparts in Olympic broadcasting. That this final still was seen as important enough to justify the rescheduling of programming demonstrates the significance of British national success in the Olympic Games.

In the press coverage of the Games in the first week, the reporting on the women's team was secondary to the attention given to the men's progress. All articles led with the details of the men's team, with the women's curlers only being mentioned at the end of the article, often only in passing. This was the case till the much later stages of the
tournament, when the men were knocked out and it became apparent that the women's team stood a chance of winning a medal. However, whilst the female curling team enjoyed *more* exposure than perhaps anticipated, looking more qualitatively, it is significant to note that the *nature* of this coverage, and the ways in which the athletes were framed reflected and reinforced hegemonic notions of femininity.

Lenskyj (1998) has noted the trivialisation of female athletes in her discussion of symbolic annihilation of sporting women in the media. She notes that this process of making the position of sportswomen invisible occurs not only through a failure to cover female athletes, but also through the undermining and neutralisation of the athletic female when she is featured. The extent to which this is evident in the English British media coverage of the women's curling team in Salt Lake City is the issue to which this study will now turn. Several means by which female athletes were subjected to the process of symbolic annihilation have been identified in this analysis, these being: infantilisation; use of hierarchies of naming; framing of athletes in the domestic role; emphasising the ordinariness of sportswomen; sexualisation; underlining female athletes' reliance on men; and a focus on the emotional state of women. These will form the basis for the structure of this review of the findings of the analysis of gender in the British media portrayal of the Salt Lake City Games.

6.3i Infantilisation

The trivialisation Lenskyj (1998) refers to can take various forms in the media portrayal of women. Several writers have observed that female athletes are often infantilised (Carlisle Duncan and Messner, 1998), a process whereby women are framed
in a childlike manner. This portrayal undermines the seriousness of the athlete, and defuses the threat posed by a successful and physically strong female. Comparative studies with equivalent coverage of men's sport demonstrated that males were rarely referred to as 'boys', thus the practice of calling women 'girls' is a reinforcement of the inequalities between men and women as represented in the media. This was very evident in the press coverage of the Games. This was the case both in the broadsheets and tabloids. In the Mirror, a headline, which was featured the day after the final, read "Golden Girl Rhona" (23rd February, 2002, p. 53). In a similar vein, Mike Rowbottom, writing in the Independent described the transition of Martin's profile throughout the course of the Games in the following manner: "From the 35-year old Ayrshire housewife to the girl who threw the stone of destiny" (24th February, 2002, p. 12). The second of these examples is interesting in that there is suggestion of a kind of evolution of Martin from a 'housewife' to a sports and national heroine, however, there remains some ambivalence, as she was still referred to as a 'girl' rather than a woman. Such a paradox was underlined by the mentioning of Martin's age, which clearly denotes that she is a woman, not a girl.

Similar patterns were found in the BBC's coverage of the British women's curling team. It was observed that the players were frequently referred to as 'girls' by commentators and presenters. Interestingly, this was not a practice reserved for the male members of the presenting team. Kirsty Hay, former Olympic curler, working as commentator for the Salt Lake Games often used the term 'girls' when talking about the team. This suggests that the use of such language to describe women in sport has been naturalised to the extent that its implications as a subordinating term are not immediately
evident. It should, then, be noted that the process of reinforcing and articulating gender based power relations is not one carried out by men only. As Lenskyj (1998) points out, it is important to look beyond male oppressor - female victim relationship in gender relations. That is, women can be complicit in their own repression in conforming to dominant modes of behaviour, without necessarily being conscious of this because a particular ideology has become so naturalised, as was seen to be the case with both female and male commentators using the infantilising term, 'girls' when referring to the women curlers.

In the press coverage, females were also infantilised in other ways. For example, Alex Coomber was described by Malcolm Folly, in the Mail on Sunday as “waif-like and fearless” (17th February, 2002, p. 112). The term waif, presumably used here in reference to Coomber's physical size, carries connotations of a childlike image and a person in a helpless state, thus undermining Coomber's strength and power as an athlete. The description carries some ambivalence as the observation that Coomber is “fearless” appears to be in spite of her also being “waif-like”. Elsewhere, Coomber was described as 'petite' (Sun, 21st February, 2002, p.53) and a 'small female' (Times, 21st February, 2002, p.45), again adding to the image of Coomber as having a diminutive and childlike form. Writing in the Independent, Mike Rowbottom reported of Coomber: “A self-confessed tom-boy in her youth, Coomber always had an affinity for extreme sports. Despite her mother’s protests, she became a frequent parachutist.” (20th February, 2002, p. 9). There are three aspects of this statement that carry gendered implications. Firstly, the label ‘tom-boy’ contributes to the process of infantilisation. It also supports the notion that some types of behaviour are inappropriate for girls, and thus, they are branded as pseudo
boys. In a similar vein, the idea that Coomber is a "self-confessed tom-boy" (my emphasis) implies that there is some shame in engaging in behaviour deemed traditionally appropriate for boys. Thirdly, the seemingly unnecessary mention of Coomber's mother's reaction to her partaking in parachuting underlines the mother-daughter relationship, and paints a picture of a defiant child going against her mother's wishes. There appeared to be some tension in the general attitude surrounding Coomber in the British press. There seemed to be a need, in the press, to rationalise the involvement of a woman in what was interpreted as an 'extreme' sport.

6.3ii Hierarchies of naming

Researchers have also observed the practice of using first names when referring to female athletes, and refer to this as a hierarchy of naming (Carlisle Duncan and Messner, 1998). Studies by Messner et al (1993) noted a disparity along gender lines in terms of address using either first or second names of athletes. Several studies have shown that female athletes are more commonly referred to by their first name, whilst male athletes are addressed by their surnames in the majority of cases. This was certainly borne out in the way in which females were addressed in the BBC coverage of the British women's curling team in Salt Lake City, where surnames were rarely used in reference to the players and if they were, only when accompanied by the first name. For example, Rhona Martin was either called 'Rhona' or 'Rhona Martin'. Without conducting a comparative study of the coverage of the men's team (practically speaking, this would prove problematic to carry out, due to the early exit of the men's team from the tournament) it is difficult to make claims regarding the extent to which the coverage reflects differential
treatment for male and female athletes. However, Messner et al (1993) and Carlisle Duncan and Messner (1998) observe that an informality of address indicates an attitude of subordination towards the person, and in the cases of the comparative studies they carried out, the practice was shown to be gender specific, marginalising women. They state "Research suggests that these linguistic differences both reflect and (re)construct inequality" (Messner et al, 1993, p. 226).

Interestingly, however, in the BBC commentary on the British curlers in Salt Lake City, there was also an instance in which the commentators called the British men's players by their first names. Clare Balding stated: "Hammy and the boys may be burgered". This is significant in that it is not only an example of the male athletes being referred to by a first name, but also being called "boys", which is a practice widely unreported in previous research on the gender-based language differences. This, then, raises the question of whether the use of first names is merely a gender related practice or if there is some other factor that brings about such familiar address. In the Billings and Eastman (2003) paper and in Stevenson's (2004) work on gender representation in the media, the interplay of nationalism is raised.

In understanding global media sport, the notion of multicausal processes being at work is important to consider. In this particular instance of the treatment of national teams in the Olympics, it may be the case that the use of first names only in reference to players is a manifestation of the commentators' attempt to encourage identification with the athletes in a nationalistic and patriotic sense. The implication is that as a fellow compatriot, we, the audience, should feel a level of affinity that makes us feel as though we are familiar enough to be on first name terms with athletes representing Great Britain.
It should also be noted that cross cultural differences between the UK and the United States in terms of language use could also lead to different findings in the use of the term ‘boys’, which is perhaps more common in Britain when referring to men, particularly male sports teams. However, notwithstanding that these are plausible arguments, it may still be the case that gender based inequalities are also articulated and reinforced through this practice, assuming that for the most part there is disparity in the frequency of occurrence when referring to men and women.

In one particular instance, during the commentary on one of the early games in the women’s tournament, Kirsty Hay made the observation: “Rhona and Debbie chatting over how much ice to take”. This comment is interesting, in that the use of the informal first names is accompanied by the description of the players “chatting” about tactics. The term chatting could be described as a gender loaded term, generally not associated with men, and particularly not in the context of the sports field. The use of it here, in the context of a serious discussion of tactics between athletes in an Olympic tournament represents the ambivalence described in the framing of successful female athletes (Carlisle Duncan and Messner, 1998; Whannel, 1992). Whilst the athletes were being shown making tactical decisions about the game at, arguably, the highest level of competition, at the same time the informality of the use of first names, and the term “chatting”, served to trivialise, and thus undermine the seriousness of the situation. The picture presented on screen itself: of two women huddled together, whilst in deep discussion, leant over their brushes (the implements used in curling to sweep a path in the ice for the stone), carried connotations of stereotypical female roles associated with the
domestic scene, and the choice of words used to describe that image worked to reinforce those overtones.

A similar framing is evident in an article written by Jim Holden in the Sunday Express who observed:

What a curious sight they are at first glance, a couple of housewives unleashing primeval screams as they chase a chunk of grey speckled kitchen worktop along an ice rink with some boisterous brushing of broomsticks. Once the action stops, the ladies instantly recover their decorum, begin smiling sweet smiles again and gossip happily among themselves as if standing in a supermarket aisle discussing the price of fish. (24th February, 2002, p. 111, my emphasis)

Here, the description of the curlers as housewives, accompanied by the reference to household items such as "broomsticks" and "kitchen worktop" makes light of the sport and the use of the term "gossip" brings with it similar connotations to the word "chatting", in the previous example: that the image of the curlers is not one of high level sports performers but of 'gossiping' housewives. Thus, in both these cases, the women were positioned in the traditional role as homemakers and consequently, their status as successful international athletes was 'symbolically annihilated'.

In the press there was less of a marked tendency to refer to female athletes by first name only. In the majority of cases, both male and female athletes were referred to by either surname or forename and surname together; there was no apparent differentiation on the basis of gender in this practice by reporters in either the tabloids or broadsheets. That said, after the team won the gold medal, press interest in the women increased and in particular, much attention was given to their personal lives. Several articles took the angle of painting detailed vignettes of the team members' home lives and appeared to be encouraging reader identification with the women. They often combined this with the use of first names only. For example, Michael Calvin, writing in the Mail on Sunday
remarked "It is not surprising Rhona is being portrayed as a cross between Mrs Merton and Delia Smith" (24th February, 2002, p. 108). Here, Calvin makes a direct comparison between Martin and two of Britain's well-known female figures associated with the domestic sphere. Mrs Merton is a comic elderly lady's character; and Delia Smith is perhaps the nation's most famous female television cooking expert. The context of this extract, in which Calvin underlined the ordinariness of the curlers (as will be discussed in greater depth in a subsequent section of this chapter), explains the use of the first name only, as an attempt is being made to make Martin seem more familiar to the reader. Whilst there were a few examples such as this in the press in the days following the curling victory, there was not a significant shift, with reporters in most cases continuing to use more formal forms of address for the curlers. Similarly, Alex Coomber was also referred to in nearly all cases as either her full name or simply as 'Coomber' throughout her involvement in the Games.

6.3iii Association with domesticity

The theme of the association of female athletes with roles of domesticity arose on several occasions in the footage aired of the women's curling team throughout the tournament. The very nature of curling lent itself to the creation of such connections. For example, the prominence of sweeping of the 'brushes', carried out by the curlers in directing and determining the speed of the stone's path along the ice. This association with housework was particularly likely to be something picked up on, given the unfamiliarity of the majority of viewers with the sport. In making the game more accessible, producers look to utilise elements with which the audience may be familiar,
even if this is, at times, derisive and irrelevant. In the press coverage, such a crude parallel was openly drawn in the featuring of a cartoon in the broadsheet, the *Times*. The cartoon depicted a man watching television and a woman ironing, with the caption: “That’s why women are better at curling, it reminds them of ironing.” (8\textsuperscript{th} February, 2002, p. 31). This cartoon is featured below:

![Curling and Ironing cartoon, Times](image)

Whilst clearly intended to have comic effect — comparing the action of releasing the stone along the ice with the movements of ironing — such observations carry with them much ideological baggage. The cartoon suggests that the natural explanation of women being more successful than men at a particular sport is a transfer of skills from their traditional role as housewives. David Powell, on the same page in the *Times*, wrote: “Thirty-something housewife with a dodgy knee wins Olympic medal. Sounds improbable, but Rhona Martin, broom in hand is taking the long slow walk towards the podium.” (18\textsuperscript{th} February, 2002, p. 31). He went on to inform the reader that: “Martin describes herself as
"part-time curler, part-time housewife." (18th February, 2002, p. 31). Reinforcing this notion of Martin as a housewife, the Mail on Sunday (24th February, 2002, p. 108) featured a cartoon of her with a broom, wearing slippers and pulling away a housecoat to reveal a wonder woman costume. This depiction clearly demonstrates the ambivalence in media portrayals of female athletes:

Fig. 6.2 Martin as Wonder Woman cartoon, Mail on Sunday

The continual positioning of the curlers in the domestic role worked to reinforce the idea that there is some connection between the women's team's success and the sports supposed connections to domesticity.

In the television coverage, BBC's Clare Balding, introducing the highlights of one of the early matches, described the action as: "sweeping that would make Mrs Doubtfire proud." Here, Balding was making reference to the fictional cross-dressing nanny and maid from the film and novel, Mrs Doubtfire, drawing a direct comparison with the curlers and housewives. In the press, again focussing upon the link between the bushing
action involved in curling and household chores, Robert Phillip, writing in the Daily Telegraph describes the team in the following way: “Rhona Martin and the four bonnie lasses she employs to sweep up” (25th February, 2002, p. S6). This kind of description trivialises the sport and the team itself, undermining the success of the curlers. Here again, the association of housewives and domestic chores is made with the female curlers, a technique which not only makes light of the achievements of the team and the sport in general, but also neutralises the threat of female success by framing the women in traditional, subordinate roles. This is particularly relevant in the case at hand, where direct comparisons were being drawn between the men’s and the women’s teams, with the British men’s team underperforming in their respective competition, thus the women’s apparently unexpected success potentially posed a threat to the male domination in the sport. It is unlikely that, were the situation reversed, the men would have been portrayed in ways that positioned them as househusbands or referred to their roles as fathers.

On several occasions, in both the press and television coverage, Rhona Martin was described in her role as a mother. For example, at one point in the BBC coverage, the camera showed Martin in close up facial shot. This was accompanied by commentator, Dougie Donnelly informing the audience, “Rhona Martin, 35 year old, mum of Jennifer and Andrew.” Similarly, in the next match, he announced “Rhona Martin, mum of 2 young children. Would love to take them home an Olympic medal.” The BBC was not alone in supplying such details of the domestic lives of the team. In the Independent, Mike Rowbottom introduced Martin as a “35-year-old housewife from Dunlop” (17th February, 2002, p. 10), and in the Times, team member, Debbie Knox was described as
“a 33-year-old mother of twins” (24th February, 2002, p. 19). These extracts comprise just two examples of numerous similar references in press reports on the women’s curling team.

Such framing served to continually reinforce and reassure the viewer that the athletes they are watching are, in fact, ordinary women. Whannel (1992) has noted that this is a common practice in the media framing of women in sport. He observes: “The audience is reassured that despite their involvement in sport, they are still real women, an assertion backed up by reference to family, husbands and children (the implication being that sport is a mere diversion)” (p. 127). This apparent need to reconcile what is seen in sections of the media as a tension between females’ sporting and domestic roles was clearly evident in an article written by Steve Jones in the Sun newspaper, he reported: “Next week the women will be reunited with their families and, for Rhona and Janice, that means seeing their children again and acting like mothers and not Olympic heroes” (23rd February, 2002, p. 64). The suggestion seems to be that there is an incompatibility between the behaviour of “Olympic heroes” and that of mothers, implying that in pursuing their sporting careers, Rhona Martin and Janice Rankin have departed from their role as mothers. An article written by Andrew Baker in the Daily Telegraph carried similar overtones, he wrote:

Jennifer Martin is nine years old, and her brother Andrew is six. They don’t quite understand what the Olympics are all about. They know they miss their Mum, Rhona. She has been away for a long time at some big curling tournament on the other side of the world, and now they want her back home in the village of Dunlop in Ayershire. She won a gold medal but they don’t really know what that means. (23rd February, 2002, p. S1)

Here, Baker, using the perspective of the children who “miss their mum” and “want her back home” not only reinforced Martin’s role as a mother, but also suggests that her
children have suffered because of her commitments to her sport. Thus, once again, it is implied that there is conflict between women being mothers and being sportswomen. Rarely, in the reporting of male sporting success, is it suggested that fathers compromise their parental responsibilities in being away from home for sporting competitions. Interestingly, several reporters in the press also chose to focus upon the fact that Rhona Martin’s husband stayed at home to look after the children. It is unlikely that the wife of a male athlete and father doing the same would be deemed noteworthy in press reporting of events.

6.3iv Ordinariness

The producer for BBC Grandstand, Jonathan Bramley, when interviewed about the ways in which the BBC had tried to proactively make the curling more appealing to the public, stated:

We also wanted to bring out the personalities of the athletes themselves, I mean you know, part of the story was that you’ve got sort of four fairly ordinary Scottish housewives to all intents and purposes so you know what you’re sort of saying here is that these people you can identify with.

Here, Bramley makes clear that from a production perspective, the framing of the curlers as “ordinary Scottish housewives” (my emphasis) was deliberate, and, in fact, a move to help make the programming appealing to the public. This framing of the curling team as 'ordinary' was also evident in the press coverage of the Games. Across the full spectrum of the British daily newspapers, the consistent theme surrounding the curlers was the underlining of the ordinariness of the women. Under the headline, “Curlers prepare for a life less ordinary”, Martin Samuel (Daily Express) posed the question: “How many Olympic gold medallists will be remembered not for their athleticism or pushing the pain
barrier beyond the boundaries of human tolerance, but for their utter ordinariness?” (23rd February, 2002. p. 109). Leading with a strikingly similar headline - ‘A life less ordinary waits for ice heroes’ - in the Guardian newspaper, Kirsty Scott wrote:

Rhona Martin, mum, housewife and skip of Britain’s Olympic curling champions will be at the school gates the village of Dunlop on Wednesday to drop off her two children. Her team mates Janice Rankin, Fiona McDonald, Debbie Knox and Maggie Morton will disperse across Scotland to homes and office jobs remarkable only for their ordinariness. (23rd February, 2002, p. 12)

The insinuation in the press was that this “ordinariness” was a reason for the British public to embrace the curling team as heroes with whom the public could identify. As Michael Calvin informed the reader in the Mail on Sunday: “Curlers may think a VO2 max test is a supermarket promotion for a fizzy drink but it does not make them bad people, it makes them you, and me” (24th February, 2002, p. 108, my emphasis). With this final claim, ‘it makes them you and me’ it is possible to draw parallels with Duncan and Brummett’s work (1989) on audience pleasures and narcissism, whereby the viewer or reader takes pleasure in imagining themselves in the position of the person being watched. Whilst their work looks chiefly at television audiences, it is possible to see how Calvin’s article encourages the reader to not only identify with the curlers, but to actually imagine themselves in the position of the gold medal winners. This is achieved primarily by underlining the ordinariness of the curling team. In addition to creating a façade of familiarity with the curlers, this process of positioning them as normal, unremarkable individuals serves to undermine the superstar status often attributed to Olympic champions, and thus neutralise any threat to the gender order that may be posed by the powerful and successful sporting female.
This image of the everyday housewife was also evident in the BBC’s feature interview carried out with the curling team the night before the final. In this piece, Hazel Irvine joined the team in their chalet, in the Olympic village, with the first half of the interview taking place in the kitchen, showing Rhona Martin answering Irvine’s questions, whilst making cups of tea for the rest of the team. This scene connoted not only female stereotypes of domesticity, but also generated overtones of a certain sense of Britishness regarding a taste for drinking tea. That said, there is some ambiguity in such a connection as it could be argued that the drinking of tea is an English, not a British stereotypical characteristic. The typical home-centred theme for the setting of the interview, alongside the presumably unplanned, yet significant remarks made by commentators and reporters throughout coverage of the women’s curlers demonstrates an overriding representation of them as ‘typical’ women who led unremarkable lives, conforming to the traditional image of females in society. This framing of the curlers as down-to-earth, ordinary housewives, could perhaps be argued to be at odds with claims that the media representation of women sexualises female athletes. The following section will examine the extent to which this was the case in the British media coverage of the Salt Lake Games.

6.3v Sexualisation

The sexualisation of athletes in the media is a commonly cited area of exploitation of women. According to Carlisle Duncan and Messner (1998, p. 183) “It has become all but a cliché to point out that much media commentary emphasises sportswomen’s sexuality, femininity, or status as wives and mothers, thereby effectively trivializing their
athletic achievements." The implication of such a statement is that producers believe that women's achievements on the sports field do not stand alone in attracting audiences but that a process of sexualisation must take place in order to sell female sport to the viewing public. Carlisle Duncan and Messner (1998) go on to note that the sexualisation of women involves positioning them in a submissive and passive way. They also observe that there is no equivalent framing of male athletes in an overtly sexualised manner, and that conversely, men are generally portrayed as dominant. Within the context of the Salt Lake City Games, the curlers were an interesting case study. The curlers' uniform on the ice consisted of tracksuit bottoms and sweatshirts, thus unlike other sports, such as the figure skating, there was little room to sexualise the women in terms of the images presented. In the press, however, in descriptions of Alex Coomber, emphasis was often placed on her appearance. Comments such as "The blonde RAF officer" (Daily Telegraph, 21st February, 2002, p. S4) and "She dismisses the weight on her slender shoulders" (Daily Telegraph, 21st February, 2002, p. S4) contribute to the painting of a feminised physical picture of Coomber, drawing attention to attributes unrelated to her sporting performance. Interestingly, similar attention was not paid to the physical appearance of the female curlers in the press.

One particular incident during the BBC's coverage of the final, however, served to portray one of the British team, Fiona McDonald, in terms of her sexuality. During one of the breaks between 'ends' in the match, Hazel Irvine, reporting from rink side, was interviewing McDonald's father and husband, Euan - a member of the men's curling team. Towards the end of the interview, the floor was opened up to the presenters in the London studio, Steve Cram and Clare Balding. At this point Cram directed a question at
Euan, asking him to confirm rumours regarding his and Fiona’s alleged abstinence from sex during the period of competition at the Games, he probed:

This is a little bit man-to-man, this is for Euan, there’s nobody else listening Euan. Erm but earlier in the week there was rumour that er yourself and Fiona had erm, let’s say you had a vow of chastity till things were over with. I mean a) is this true and b) has it worked so far?

No direct answer was offered by an obviously embarrassed Euan, who diverted attention back to the sporting performance, replying:

Erm I think you might need to speak to Fiona about that one! I heard a little bit about that as well, which was news to me, you know, but er no, we’re delighted the way things are going so hopefully they’ll keep it up.

The shot then returned to the live match at the ice centre, with Cram not granted the opportunity for a follow-up question to Euan’s response. This line of questioning from Cram served to very directly position Fiona McDonald in a sexualised way, and also to relate her performance to her level of sexual activity, thus detracting from the idea that her success could be attributed to her own inherent skills and abilities.

The Daily Telegraph (24th February, 2002) also featured this story, noting that as the first married couple to compete for Britain in the Olympic Games, the McDonalds abstained from sex for the duration of the Games. The paper also featured a section giving profiles of the players, and under Fiona McDonald’s details the final line read “Most likely to say – ‘Not tonight darling, I’m curling’” (24th February, 2002, p. 19). It could be argued that the high level of interest in the sex life of the McDonalds arose from the novelty of a married couple competing for Britain at the Games, and that Euan would have received the same treatment, had it been the men’s team who were the more successful. However, when combined with the other processes of symbolic annihilation at work in the media treatment of women at the Games, and of the curling team in
particular, this open discussion of Fiona McDonald's performance in light of her sexual activity serves to further trivialise the women's success. It was also observed that the focus on Fiona's relationship with her husband framed her success in light of that relationship. The extent to which female success was attributed to the existence of a male support network will be examined in the following section.

6.3vi Highlighting of influence of males in female success

It was observed that there was a consistent practice of associating the women's curling team members with significant male figures in their lives in both the press and on the BBC. As illustrated in the previous section, Fiona McDonald's marriage to Euan (a member of the men's team) was frequently mentioned by commentators. Not only that, but her father was also interviewed, and shown in shots of the crowd. Also, following their victory, the women were shown being embraced by male coaches or relatives in the crowd. The following picture was featured in the Independent (24th February, 2002, p. 15):

Fig. 6.3 Fiona and Euan Embrace, Independent
The notion of female dependence on men was made overtly in the interview with Euan McDonald during the final, when Steve Cram, in reference to the team’s earlier loss to Germany, asked: “Euan, have you been able to pick the girls up after their disappointment?” (my emphasis). With this question, Cram implies that the women were unable to cope alone with the disappointment of earlier poor performances and that there was a reliance upon others (men, in this case) to regain composure. This relationship of female submission to the protective male is reinforced by Cram’s use of the term ‘girls’ when referring to the team.

Picking up on the famous husband of another of the curlers, both the press and television coverage highlighted the fact that Elisabeth Gustaffson, a member of the Swedish team is married to the famous speed skater Tomas Gustaffson. Mike Rowbottom, in the Independent, informed the reader “Her (Rhona Martin’s) opposing skip, Elisabeth Gustaffson, married to Tomas, a three time Olympic speed skating champion” (20th February, 2002, p. 25). In the television coverage, Dougie Donnelly, in the BBC commentary box, went into some detail over the story of the couple’s meeting on a television show. Donnelly reported that Tomas “consoled” Elisabeth by asking her out. This again places the female in the position of dependence upon the supportive male figure. Mention was then made of their son, once again reassuring the audience of not only the woman’s retention of her domestic duties as wife and mother, but also of her heterosexuality.

Reporters in the British press on several occasions implied that the success of both the curling team and of Alex Coomber in the skeleton could be attributed to the help of predominantly male support networks. In the case of Coomber, this suggestion was
made outright in the Times. The article detailed the input of members of the British coaches and technical staff, particularly male skeleton competitor and one of the key design engineers, Kristen Bromley, closing with the statement: “If Coomber wins today, she will be the first to admit it was a team effort.” (20th February, 2002, p. 48). In particular, several reporters in the press noted the fact that Coomber’s husband, Eric was also one of the official skeleton coaches in Salt Lake City and focussed on the support he provided in the competition. Duncan McKay, writing in the Guardian observed “She (Coomber) has been helped by her husband, Eric a Royal Navy lieutenant-commander...the couple met through the sport” (22nd February, 2002, p. 32). Other newspapers featured articles detailing the couple’s relationship and included images of the pair embracing after Coomber’s final run, such as the one below, from the Daily Express (21st February, 2002, p. 78):

Fig. 6.4 Coomber and Coach Embrace. Daily Express

In relation to the curling success, Rhona Martin’s career in the sport was accredited to her brother, who introduced her to the sport. Andrew Baker, writing in the Daily Telegraph, described Rhona Martin as “The woman who was persuaded to try curling by her brother at the age of 17” (24th February, 2002, p. 19). In an article by
David Powell in the *Times*, a quote was included from Rhona Martin, claiming: “without my brother’s persuasion I probably wouldn’t be here now” (18th February, 2002, p. 35).

The press also made reference, in the *Independent*, to her father: “Martin’s father, Drew who died seven years ago was one of the key supports in her early career. ‘He used to follow her everywhere he was so keen she would do well.’ Mrs Howie recalled ‘She was the apple of his eye.’” (24th February, 2002, p. 12).

More broadly, the women’s team were often compared to the men’s curling team in Salt Lake City. All press articles in the first week of the tournament that reported on the curling competitions in the Games featured details of the men’s progress for the majority of the report, mentioning the women’s team only briefly at the end. Whilst it this may have, initially, been due to the higher expectations of the men, articles continued to lead with reports of Hammy McMillan’s men’s team, even in the later stages of the tournament, when it was clear that the women were outperforming their male counterparts. Only when the men were eliminated from the competition did the press focus on the women’s success in their own right.

In the BBC coverage, commentators and presenters mentioned that the men’s team were those expected to have greater success. Such observations were rather patronisingly hedged with statements such as “but we’re delighted that they’ve proved us wrong.” The suggestion that the women should need to ‘prove’ their credentials as medal contenders would seem unjustified, given their success at world championship level, previously gaining a silver medal. The press took a similar line in expressing surprise at the women’s performance. Mike Rowbottom, in the *Independent*, claimed: “Britain’s curling team exceeded all expectations…few held out realistic hope.” (21st February,
Across the British press, reporters appeared to be of the same opinion, making comments such as: “The women have performed above themselves” (Times, 18th February, 2002, p. 26); “It was left to the unfancied women’s curling team...to take gold” (Daily Express, 24th February, 2002, p. 108); and “Their extraordinary success, which must rank as one of the biggest shocks in Britain’s Olympic history, never mind the Winter Games” (Times, 23rd February, 2002, p. 33).

Despite their achievements, this constant reminder that the team had exceeded expectations constantly reinforced in the minds of the audience that the media’s confidence in the team’s ability to perform well was low. The question then needs to be raised as to why there was such a tendency to compare the women against the men, and ask whether similar comparisons were made in situations where men out-performed female counterparts. For example, Chemmy Alcott was highly rated as one of Britain’s strongest skiing prospects in the build up to the Games, however, Alain Baxter’s slalom bronze medal was not framed in relation to her in any way. Perhaps, then, this reflects an expectation of males to raise their performance in high-level competition, but that for women to do so is noteworthy.

6.3vii Underlining of emotional state

In their examination of the portrayal of tennis and basketball on American television, Carlisle Duncan and Messner (1998) comment that women’s failure in sport is often attributed to a lack of emotional stability and inability to hold their nerve. In contrast, men’s failures are more likely to be explained in terms of the superior performance of their opponents. In line with these findings, throughout the media
coverage of the women’s curling tournament, reference was made to the emotional state of the athletes. For example, in one of the round robin matches BBC commentator, Kirsty Hay said of Rhona Martin: “I think they’ll be a few butterflies under that cool exterior.” The term ‘butterflies’ here is interesting as it is arguably a feminine term, unlikely to be used in relation to a male athlete. There is also evidence of ambivalence in the description of females, in that, whilst Hay recognised a strength of nerve in Martin, the idea that she demonstrates a “cool exterior” (my emphasis) suggests that there was a superficiality to that quality, to be brought into question in times of high pressure. Reinforcing this notion, in the match the following day, Martin’s apparent break down into tears, was discussed at great length by Hay and Donnelly: “Well she’s er gone. Needs a few minutes I think just to get her composure back. She was definitely quite upset there, there were a few tears.” This description was accompanied by close up facial shots, capturing Martin’s distraught face. Overall, there appeared to be a disproportionate dwelling on the emotional response of Martin, which served to undermine her reputation as a player with a strong nerve.

The television coverage was not alone in conveying contradictory messages regarding the emotional state of the curlers, and in particular of Rhona Martin. In a positive light, writing in the Daily Mail, Neil Wilson described Martin as “An island of calm” (23rd February, 2002, p. 88). Similarly, Simon Barnes in his column in the Times enthused: “Whenever we seek an example of sporting courage we can think of that last stone. There are competitors who choke on the moment of truth and there are competitors who play their best” (25th, February, 2002, p. 37). Such endorsements of strength of nerve were, however, undermined by focus elsewhere in the press upon Martin’s crying after the team’s defeat to Germany in the qualifying rounds of the tournament. Steve Jones, in
the Sun noted: “Three days ago a distraught Martin reacted tearfully to defeat by Germany” (21st February, 2002, p. 52). In the same vein, Tom Knight (Daily Telegraph, 20th February, 2002 p. S8) described a “Tearful Rhona Martin”, and in the Guardian, Kirsty Scott observed: “Rhona Martin thought she would take home only tears for souvenirs from the winter Olympics” (21st February, 2002, p. 32).

It is interesting that such disproportionate attention was given to the only incident of emotional display by Rhona Martin in the entire tournament. Evidence from the television coverage showed Martin to demonstrate little emotional instability throughout the majority of the competition, yet the press framing of the event paints a picture of Martin as a highly-strung woman, prone to tears. Reinforcing this focus on the emotional response of the team, the first statement of Hazel Irvine, following the team’s victory in the final was to note: “There have been tears and tantrums along the way.” Such language not only detracts from the composure shown, particularly by Martin in the final end, but also the term “tears and tantrums” suggests an irrational and childlike response, and contributes to the infantilisation of the women.

Messner et al (1993, p. 227) noted that in media portrayals of sporting success and failures:

Men appeared to succeed through a combination of talent, instinct, intelligence, size, strength, quickness, hard work, and risk-taking. Women also appeared to succeed through talent, enterprise, hard word and intelligence. But commonly cited along with these attributes were emotion, luck, togetherness and family. Women were also more likely to be framed as failures due to some combination of nervousness, lack of confidence, lack of being ‘comfortable’, lack of aggression and lack of stamina.
This claim appears to be supported by evidence from the media coverage of the women's curling. It is also the case that the importance of families was frequently mentioned in the maintenance of emotional stability for the players. In addition to the references to Euan McDonald, Kirsty Hay pointed out in the final that family members of the players were in the crowd, noting: "It's really great for them to have families out to support them, it really makes such a difference, especially when it's been such a tough time for them." Here, Hay was referring to the earlier defeats by both the US and Germany, which almost saw the British team eliminated from the tournament. As Messner et al (1993) found, the role of family in aiding the success of female athletes is often highlighted in the media, with this suggesting a need for an emotional support network in order to ensure success.

6.3viii Conclusion

Overall, the British media's coverage of the Salt Lake Olympics provided evidence to support the findings of much previous work into gender based inequalities in the press and television's portrayal of sport. Female athletes were subjected to processes of infantilisation, sexualisation, stereotyping and a general trivialisation of their sporting achievements. This was consistent in both the press and the television coverage. In terms of quantity, a relatively high volume of coverage was given to the British female athletes. However, as the examination of the press reports on the curling illustrated (in giving priority to the men's team until the later stages of the tournament), female athletes had to prove themselves in performance before being afforded this attention. In an industry increasingly sensitive to the need for political correctness, particularly in relation to gender issues, more obvious sexist coverage would not be expected, and was not
witnessed. However, a deeper examination of the media, such as this, highlights the extent to which a gendered treatment of female athletes has become naturalised in the media, and serves to reproduce hegemonic gender ideology, as identified in previous studies.

Whilst the study lacks a sound and equivalent comparison with the men's game, the findings do seem to show a reinforcement of stereotypes associated with females, and demonstrates a treatment unlikely to be seen in the representation of male athletes. This clear discrepancy in coverage of males and females represents a clear flouting of the Olympic principle of equality, and thus, the commitment of the television to support Olympism should be questioned. Also central to the question of equality in Olympic coverage is the extent to which the 'opportunity for all' principle is upheld in relation to promoting participation at all levels of performance. The next section looks at the British media's tendency to focus upon elite performance in the Olympics.

6.4 Excellence – Introduction

The following section examines the media framing of the Olympics as an event reflective of the values of high performance, modern achievement sport. This approach was evident in both the press and BBC coverage of the Salt Lake City Games. In analysing this, the following section consists of three subsections: the Olympics as the elite of sporting competition; focus on medal winners and records; the construction of British 'successes' and 'failures'. Before looking in detail at the empirical data, a brief overview is given of recent writings on the high performance model of sport, in order to give some context to the findings.
Several writers (Donnelly, 1996a; Guttmann, 1978; Hoberman, 1992; Maguire, 2004; Rigauer, 1981) have made contributions, in recent times, regarding the focus upon high performance and excellence in contemporary sport. Guttmann (1978), in his book, From Ritual to Record, develops Max Weber's ideas on the 'iron cage of rationalisation' and applies them to the sporting arena. He notes seven dimensions to the changing nature of sport, those being: secularisation, specialisation, rationalisation, bureaucratisation, quantification, equality, and striving for records. It is particularly the specialisation and focus upon the record that is of interest when considering the transformation of traditional sport forms to the high performance model. Bero Rigauer (1981) also discussed the rationalisation of sport, defining it as "the orienting of behaviour to principles of order" (p. 28). Comparing the rationalisation of sport with that of the industrial workplace, Rigauer noted how the structured nature of top-level sports allows it to serve as an instrument of socialisation. Since this work, others have also written on the connections between sport and the workplace (Beamish and Borroway, 1988; Ingham, 1983). Like Guttmann, Rigauer also observed the growing preoccupation with the pursuit of records, and argues that this is at odds with the maintenance of health: "Top level sports, with their focus on records, no longer serve the purpose of maintaining or improving physical well-being" (p. 90).

Sigmond Loland (2004) has also written on the consequences of both the pursuit of the record and specialisation in contemporary sport, and the Olympics in particular. Loland juxtaposes the claim of the Olympic Charter to promote "combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind", with his observation of a high degree of specialisation in sport. Not only does Loland highlight the contradiction between a
narrow honing of performance for a specific skill and the idea of a "balanced whole", but he also goes on to argue that as sport becomes more specialised, it also becomes more vulnerable to "morally problematic manipulation" (p. 190). He identifies the use of performance enhancing drugs and genetic technologies as examples of such problems. Loland also goes on to suggest that it may be that his argument addresses only part of the issue at hand, and that: "high performance sport in general is a degenerate social system based on unhealthy competition, self-interest, and a blind belief in unlimited growth" (p. 198). He argues that such problems in the Olympics exist at a systemic level, and that changes need to be made accordingly in order to overcome them.

Donnelly (1996a) has also examined the issue of the narrowing focus of high-level sport, in his paper: 'Prolympism: Sport monoculture as crisis and opportunity'. He notes a convergence of the ideologies of Olympism and professionalism in sports, forming a way of conceptualising sport that is characterised by exclusivity, and an increasing focus on outcome as opposed to process. This intertwining of what were, at the beginning of the 20th century, in many ways opposing ideologies has meant that a monoculture of sport has emerged, "composed of limited forms of sport, and a form of participation that is only meaningful in terms of seeking victory" (Donnelly, 1996a, p. 36). Significantly, in light of the study at hand, Donnelly points to the media as a driving force in the infiltration of Olympism with many of the tenets of professional sport. He states:

If sponsors began the turn to an outcome orientation (because sponsors expect results from their investment) then the involvement of the media, particularly international television, completed the process. Television, much more than the print media, is in the business of providing a particular audience segment to particular sponsors. (p. 29)
Here, Donnelly also notes the significance of the structure of the political economy of the Olympics in determining the ideology it represents. He argues that central to the concern with outcome orientation is the need to satisfy sponsors and deliver to them a specific audience demographic. Others, however, look to factors other than the economic sphere to explain the dominant sports model.

Dunning (1986) has communicated some insights and observations from the figurational perspective. He maps the growth in the seriousness of sport and views it as inevitably tied in with the civilising process. He argues that with the lengthening of interdependency chains that accompanied industrialisation and the process of state formation, people became increasingly socialised into adopting more restrained standards of behaviour and thus were unable to participate in sport in an unrestrained and uninhibited manner. As industrial societies became more unified, the infrastructure was put in place to allow for a national competitive sporting framework, which was lacking in previous times of low state formation. With increased competition, Dunning argues, the focus in playing sport has become one of winning and long-term strategies (for example, when playing in cup or league competitions), and this has marginalised the aim of short-term enjoyment that arises from each sporting encounter being an “end in itself” (p. 221).

More recently, Maguire (2004) has noted how sport has become increasingly concerned with winning, excellence and ‘performance efficiency’. He discusses the moral and social implications of giving primacy to the quest for ultimate human performance, underlining issues such as drug use, and the potential intervention of genetic manipulation in sport. Maguire argues that such a preoccupation leads to the neglect of the development of the human in the round. If the Olympic Games, then, are viewed as
the pinnacle of contemporary sporting competition, and modern day sport is conceptualised in the ways described above, it is possible to see the tension between the reality of the Olympics and the IOC's purported belief that "Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind." (IOC website, 2004). Maguire (2004) notes that in the context of the current sports-industrial complex, the infrastructure of UK sport is outcome orientated and cites the UK sport rationale of sports funding for the 2000 Sydney Olympics as evidence of this:

Prioritisation criteria focused on: medal potential; evidence of a performance system that should continue to produce a high number of talented athletes; track record; and the significance of the sport in the eyes of the public. In terms of decision making, most attention was given to the criteria relating to: medal potential (which hinges on whether the performance gap to the podium is bridgeable); the number of World Class athletes; and the number of medals targeted. Track record merely provided some confidence in the level of risk in the investment. (UK sport cited in Maguire, 2004, p. 306)

Here, it is clear that justification of funding for sport in the UK centres around the achievement sport ethic, and the production of high performance athletes who will win medals at major sporting events. At no point is consideration given to the provision of opportunity for all, alternative body cultures, or rounded human development through sport – all supposedly issues which are central to the Olympic ideology.

The work cited here would support this assertion, that there is some contradiction between the desired development of the balanced whole, placing value on participation and the actual quest for the record and ultimate performance capabilities. Olympism itself contains the inherent contradiction of a promotion of mass involvement in sport and a focus on the taking part as opposed to winning, whilst at the same time championing the relentless pursuit of the supreme performance, as is embodied by the Olympic motto: 'Citius. Altius, Fortius' - faster, higher, stronger. The motto calls for the individual to
continually seek to improve performance, and push the limits - a sentiment very much in
keeping with today's sport ethic, which reinforces the notion that the "athlete accepts no
limits in the pursuit of possibilities" (Coakley, 2001).

As Lenk (1984) notes, however, this does not take into account the humanitarian
or aesthetic strands of Olympism. If then, as Maguire (2004) claims, modern sport is
caracterised by a focus on excellence, and this is accompanied by a disregard for the
human development model, then the search through Olympism for both the celebration of
excellence and the promotion of the rounded human is highly problematic. Such inherent
contradictions were outlined by Segrave (1988) who believed that "Coubertin never fully
resolved the contradictions inherent in promulgating a lifetime, sport-for-all philosophy
while at the same time patronizing a specially privileged elite of achievement and
performance." (p. 158). With these points in mind, it would seem that the element of
excellence in the Olympic Charter in a contentious one from the outset. As one of the few
points of Olympism to overlap and agree with the dominant sports model in
contemporary (particularly western) society it is not surprising that it is the most
frequently occurring theme of the Olympic ideology to arise in the British media during
the 2002 Salt Lake City winter Games (as will be evidenced and discussed in the
remainder of this section). As Donnelly (1996a) noted, the emphasis towards excellence
in the Olympics has become such that the commonly perceived idea of Olympism has
merged with the ideology of professionalism, with the emergence of what he terms the
monoculture of 'prolympism'.

260
The Olympics as the elite of sporting competition

When examining the status of the Olympics in the context of contemporary world sporting competition, the views of the founder of the modern Games are worth noting. In his paper written in 1908, Coubertin made the following distinction between the modern Olympics and other sporting world championships:

But, I may be asked, what difference do you make between the Olympic Games and what are nowadays called world championships? Were the games of antiquity anything else than our competitions for world championships, on their own lines, and taking into account the then meaning of the word 'world'? I do not deny that, and I agree that world championships do form part of the Olympic Games: Nevertheless the Olympic Games are 'something else' as well, and it is just this 'something else' that matters, as it is not to be found in any other variety of athletic competition. (cited in Segrave, 1988 p. 102)

Coubertin isn't specific in explaining what he means by that "something else" but he clearly was of the opinion that the modern Olympics were to be set apart from other sporting competitions that took place on a world-wide scale - a belief that is evident in both the press and in the BBC coverage of the Games today (as will be discussed below). That is to say, the focus on excellence concerns not only the calibre of athletes and performances, but also the elite status of the Olympics as compared with other sporting competitions.

In the television footage of the Salt Lake Games, it was observed that the word 'Olympic' was used frequently by commentators and presenters, in describing 'Olympic gold' and 'Olympic title', as if constantly reminding the viewer that the title or medal at stake is of 'Olympic' proportions, and, therefore, carries extra kudos. Dougie Donnelly, when commentating on the BBC coverage of the women's curling, overtly made such claims regarding the uniqueness of Olympic competition. During the final game, he said
of the teams: “All these players have played many times at a very top level, world championships, Europeans, but they've all said, this is something else again.” The implication here was that the Olympics are not only the elite of sporting competition, but that they are somehow different from other tournaments. There was no attempt by Donnelly to elaborate on what is meant by this, it is left as if implicit.

The term ‘Olympic’ has become synonymous with greatness, and specifically, the pinnacle of sporting performance. This is reflected in the following extract from an interview with Olympic curler, Hammy McMillan in the Guardian:

‘Winning the world championships means a lot to those within the sport, but the Olympics means something to everyone. I was brought up on the Olympics, watching Daley Thompson, Steve Ovett, Seb Coe. You’re world champion for a year, you’re an Olympic gold medallist for life. We’re not going to let this chance slip.’ (4th February, 2002, p. 14)

A distinction is made here between the world championships in curling and the Olympic Games. The difference seems to be the athlete's perception of how the public view the Olympic Games. McMillan seems to suggest that there is something more universally appealing about the Olympics and that this makes it more important than other major sporting competitions, and the Olympic success more enduring. The contention that the Olympics matter to the public was made by MacAloon (1989) who argued: “In one way or another, at one time or another, to one degree or another, nearly everyone cares about the Olympics” (p. 279). The implication is that the Olympics somehow embody excellence in sporting competition, that Olympic competition is the best competition. Such an assertion was reinforced by the commentary on Michelle Kwan, the US figure skater, in the Guardian:
'She has grace under pressure' said John Nicks, the British-born coach of the American team. 'She has the ability to handle anything that comes along. That is a tremendous talent.' But it is a talent which will always be seen as unfulfilled unless Kwan crowns it with an Olympic title. (6th February, 2002, p. 26.)

In the last line in this extract, it is implied that Kwan will have failed in her career if she does not achieve the status of Olympic champion. The Olympic title is thus described as the 'crown' of accolades, suggesting it is the pinnacle of sporting competition. Such claims reinforce the notion put forward by Donnelly (1996a) that the Olympics constitute the "world championships of world championships" (p. 35) in the current context of global sport. It is also implied that participating in the Olympics does not, contrary to the Olympic Charter, suffice, but that for an elite athlete to have had a successful, fulfilling career they must have won an Olympic title. In this way, the Olympics is conceptualised as an event synonymous with excellence and eliteness. If then, the Games themselves are framed in the media as the epitome of excellence in sport, it is interesting to examine the portrayal and emphasis on those who achieve success in such an arena. The following section looks to examine the British media's focus upon medal winners and the setting of records in the Salt Lake City Games.

6.4ii Medal winners and records

As outlined in the introduction, Donnelly (1996a) has noted the convergence of the ideologies of professionalism and Olympism in recent times. A key component of this shift is the tendency in the Olympics to focus increasingly on the achievements of those at the top end of the performance spectrum. Donnelly identified the mass media as a significant factor in the central concern with 'outcome orientation' in the Olympics.
Despite the fact that the mediated experience of the Games, according to Donnelly, reflects this ideology of modern achievement sport (that winning is paramount), the Olympic Creed maintains that: "The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well." (BOA website, 2004). The following analysis seeks to assess whether, in the British media coverage of the Salt Lake City Games, the philosophy articulated in the Olympic Creed, or that of modern achievement sport prevails.

In general, both the press and television coverage of the Salt Lake City winter Games focused very much on those at the upper end of the performance scale. The medal winners in events were widely reported on, and especially those athletes who broke records or won an unprecedented number of medals. For example, one headline in the *Sunday Times* (17th February, 2002, p. 17) claimed: “Aadmodt hailed greatest Olympian after seventh medal”, with reference to the Norwegian skier’s winning of more medals than any other skier in Olympic history. The article labels him as “the greatest Olympic skier of all time” and twice makes mention of his record-breaking status. Other newspapers also gave prominence to champions, and particularly record breakers in their reports on the Games.

In a similar vein, the BBC coverage included regular Olympic news ‘round-ups’, which generally featured either news of the fortunes of British athletes or details of medal (mainly gold medal) winners. In addition to this, towards the end of the Games, for the majority of the second week, a section of each day’s coverage was dedicated to looking at and discussing the medal table. This focus of ranking countries according to medal count
was evident in the BBC commentary that accompanied the closing ceremony. As each
country paraded through the arena, Barry Davies mentioned medal counts, and with the
help of the camera work from the central feed, identified any medal winners in the teams.
For example, as Germany made their appearance, Davies informed the viewers:
"Germany at the top of the table again. 12 golds, 16 silvers, 7 bronze; a total of 35
medals." Again underlining the emphasis on achievement, those countries that didn’t win
medals were dismissed in the face of such failure: “Kazakhstan, no success for them, or
indeed for Brazil.”

In some cases, even the winning of medals, if not gold, was termed as
unsuccessful. For example, figure skater, Michelle Kwan’s achievement of gaining
bronze was described by Davis as ‘disappointing’: “Michelle Kwan, for her
disappointment, only a bronze.” Comments such as this imply that only first place is
worthy of commendation. This attitude is reaffirmed when looking at an exchange
between Sue Barker and Jayne Torvill, earlier in the fortnight’s coverage, when
discussing the judging of the pairs skating competition. Barker observed: “But I’m afraid
what it does all bring up again, and we can go back to Lillehammer ’94 and the political
side of it. I mean which you and Chris were very much involved, in only winning the
bronze medal.” To this, Torvill responded “Yeah, I felt that some of those scores were
political.” Agreeing with Barker, Torvill appears to accept the notion that the bronze
medal constituted a disappointment. The implication here, once again, in describing it as
‘only a bronze’, is that third place constitutes an underachievement in the Olympic arena.
Similarly, in some areas of the press, Alex Coomber’s bronze medal in the skeleton was
portrayed as a disappointment, given her status (constructed for the most part by the
media) as favourite prior to the event. The following cartoon from the Daily Mail (21st
February, 2002, p. 81) demonstrated this attitude, suggesting a comical reason for
Coomber’s 'failure' to win gold:

Fig. 6.5 Coomber Afternoon Tea cartoon, Daily Mail

Just as any result deemed by the media to be below that expected (in some cases, any
achievement less than a gold medal) was labelled as disappointing, those who did win
Olympic titles were held up as heroes and their performances eulogised over. This
celebration of excellence reinforces the idea that in modern achievement sport, and the
Olympics, as the pinnacle of this, winning is everything. Furthermore, if an athlete
rewrites history in the process, that is all the better.

As Loland (2004) and Maguire (2004) have noted, such an approach raises several
issues in terms of sporting ethics and humanity more broadly. In particular, Maguire talks
of the dangers of moving towards a reliance on technology in developing performance
beyond natural human capabilities. He also warns of the possible emergence of the
human as a cyborg with advances in genetic manipulation. His concerns are worth noting at length:

And what of eugenics and the production of the cyborg?...Implicit within the logic of the sport ethic, and in the Olympic motto of ‘Faster, Higher, Stronger’, is the idea that human beings must quest beyond their present state of imperfection. As Norway’s Olympic gold medal speed skater Johann Olav Koss recently remarked: ‘This is not an issue for sport, it’s a broad ethical issue for human beings.’ Viewed in light of Max Weber’s concepts of rationalization and vocation, athletes are compelled to strive for perfection: it is their duty (Weber, 1949). And, to succeed, athletes, their coaches and their sports science support teams must adhere to the performance efficiency model. This form of the sporting body has also become a key figure in global conceptions of humankind. (Maguire, 2004 p. 305)

Here, Maguire details the place of the athlete in defining human progress in a wider context than simply the sporting arena. The breaking of sports records reaffirms the notion that mankind is constantly ‘improving’ and evolving; that modern man is superior to previous generations, and the measurement of sporting performance allows this to be quantified physiologically. Writing more than 20 years before Maguire, Rigauer (1981) went as far as to claim that: “achievement has become an ideology, achievement has become central. The name of the person who has set the record is not important; the quantitatively measurable value is.” (p. 90). Rigauer seems to imply that top-level sport has become so inherently tied up with measured performance that concern is only with the figures that define the progression of humankind, rather than with the individuals who achieve those records. Maguire also underlines the extent to which preoccupation with this need to continually demonstrate improvements in physical human capabilities can lead to the disregard of a broader conception of the human in a more holistic sense. With the progression of technology and genetic manipulation, there is clearly concern that the
fundamental notion of what it is to be human will be overlooked as we move toward what Maguire terms the human ‘cyborg’.

The mass media is a key institution complicit in rearticulating hegemonic notions that sport is inherently tied up with testing the limits of human capabilities, and celebrates the pushing of boundaries in the quest for the record. British television and press coverage contained much material supporting such an ideology of excellence in sport. For example, in the press, Alexei Yagudin, the men’s figure skating champion’s routine was described by Duncan McKay (Guardian, 16th February, 2002, p. 13) as “closer to perfection than any other man has managed in Olympic history.” Similarly, the Independent reporter, Lindsay Harrison wrote of how “Janica Kostelic created Winter Olympic history yesterday as the first Alpine skier to win four medals at one Games. The Croatian completed an amazing miracle comeback from injury with victory in the women’s giant slalom.” (Independent, 23rd February, 2002, p. 25). Here again, the reporter focused upon the historic nature of the athlete’s achievement in winning a record number of medals. The words ‘history’ and ‘historic’ were frequently used in conjunction with those who are given prominence as champions and record breakers, reinforcing the idea that the current athletes are the best ever, and that sporting performance is continually improving and evolving. Superlatives were also commonly used to describe medal (particularly gold) winners, for example, as noted above, readers were told that Aadmodt was the “greatest Olympic skier of all time” and that Yagudin was “closer to perfection” than anyone before him.

The press was not alone in its tendency to frame athletes and performances as supreme and surpassing all those to have gone before them. In the final of the women’s
curling tournament, the match and entire tournament rested on Rhona Martin (the British skip’s) final delivery. The stone was successful, securing the gold for the British team. As the stone entered the house and came to rest, BBC commentator, Dougie Donnelly exclaimed: “You will never see a better stone under greater pressure!” When claims such as this are made in relation to individuals and performances, they serve to project the athletes in question to an almost superhuman status. This supports the ideal stated in the Olympic motto that the surpassing of the current conceptions of human capabilities should be encouraged and celebrated. Hoberman (1992) outlines the dangers of such a conceptualisation of the athlete, noting the tendency to view elite sportsmen and women as machines or ‘mortal engines’, trained and manipulated to perform as efficiently as possible. Hoberman questions the logic and merits of this as the dominant sports model.

As detailed earlier, others, such as Loland (2004) and Maguire (2004) have also recently held this preoccupation with the record up to scrutiny, and suggested that such specialisation increases the likelihood of moral deviance to achieve such continual improvement. It would appear that the relentless striving for betterment is not confined only to the athletes when it comes to the Olympics, but that the Games themselves are showing signs of an exponential growth. In his time as IOC President, Avery Brundage, warned of the dangers of giganticism in the Olympic Games and in recent times, current President, Jacques Rogge has taken (arguably token) steps to curb this by attempting to restrict the number of sports and putting in place qualifying standards for athletes (IOC website, 2004). However, in other elements of the ‘Olympic spectacle’ (MacAloon, 1989), such as the opening and closing ceremonies, displays continue to show increasing extravagance, and this was picked up on by the media in the Salt Lake City Games.
During the live coverage of the closing ceremony of the Games, before the finale of the firework display, commentator Barry Davies gave the following description, which is worth noting at length:

The finale in all gold. I’m informed that eight 24-inch shells are being set off at once. This is the most 24 inch shells that have ever been set off at once. They love a statistic in this country. But it is a wonderful display. The Olympic rings that have been illuminated on the mountains all the way through these Games will eventually die. 9953 fireworks. Faster, higher, stronger and these winter Games ever bigger, involve more athletes and more competition than ever before. Very American Games and as such absolutely packed full of enthusiasm.

In this extract, emphasis is again placed on the historic nature of the display, in that it involved the setting off of more shells than ever before. Davis then went on to link this to what has been described as the increasing giganticism of the Games, citing the exponential growth in athletes and the number of sports in which they compete. He observed: “These winter Games are ever bigger, involve more athletes and more competition than ever before.” What is also interesting is that Davis incorporates the Olympic motto in this evaluation of the Games, identifying the Olympics as being inherently about pushing boundaries and the constant striving for improvement.

The Olympic Charter states that: “the Olympic motto ‘Citius. Altius. Fortius’ expresses the message which the IOC addresses to all who belong to the Olympic Movement, inviting them to excel in accordance with the Olympic spirit.” (IOC website 2004). The last clause of this extract is worthy of note: that the invitation is “to excel in accordance with the Olympic spirit.” This would suggest that the achievement of excellence should not be sought at all costs, as is encouraged in the dominant sport ethic (Coakley, 2001). The Charter does not define what is meant by the term ‘Olympic spirit’, however, one would assume that it refers to an appreciation of all the elements of
Olympism, such as fair play and a commitment to the development of “the balanced whole” (IOC website, 2004).

With this in mind, it is useful to examine two extracts: one from the press - David Powell’s article, featured in the Times, headed with the assertion that: “New ice age starts avalanche of world records” (11th February, 2002, pg. 33) - and television commentary from Kirsty Hay on the women’s curling final. Powell’s article went on to note the high number of world records being set at the Salt Lake City Games and outlines the technological advances that have enabled such improvements in human performance. Powell wrote:

The rewriting of sports record books began on Saturday. Two world records in the first event, the men’s 5,000 metres, enhanced the claim that all ten events will be won in a record time. A 5,000 metres world best was set first by Derek Parra, from the United States, and then by Jochem Uytdehaage, from The Netherlands, with 6min 14.66 sec. To what extent the records were human-powered, and the degree to which they were technology-assisted, it a moot point. The Utah Olympic Oval offers unprecedented advantages of fast ice and high altitude and Uytdehaage and Parra almost certainly benefited from the aerodynamic assistance of a newly designed skin suit. (11th February, 2002, pg. 33)

Here, Powell underlines the extent to which improvements in modern sports performance are increasingly dictated by ergogenic aids, outside the human body. This reference reinforces the claims made by Maguire (2004) that there is an increasing technologisation of sport, particularly at the highest level. It also raises questions about the extent to which human capabilities are reaching their limits and there is an increasing reliance on technology to allow for the progression that the climate of modern achievement sport demands.

Similarly, in the television coverage, Kirsty Hay, commentating for the BBC on the final of the women’s curling tournament, noted how both the men’s and women’s
British teams benefited from various areas of technical support in their preparation for the Olympics. She informed the viewers:

They have a range of support services they can access there from strength and conditioning specialists - the national coach they've spent a lot of time training with - sports psychologists, biomechanists, performance analysts, the list goes on!

Here, Hay provides an insight into the spheres through which modern sports performers look to hone their skills and capabilities, even in a sport as seemingly steeped in tradition and low-tech development as curling. From the list Hay gives, it would appear that nearly all elements of the human entity are tuned towards efficiency at a particular activity. Like Powell, Hay substantiates some of the concerns of Loland (2004) and Maguire (2004), as discussed earlier.

According to the arguments of Hoberman (1992), Loland (2004) and Maguire (2004), the pursuit of the record through the implementation of such scientised and technological advances as described by Hay and Powell in the Times, may lead down a dangerous path. This is one which sees the concentration on the development of the human as a performance 'machine' (Hoberman, 1992) in one given discipline, rather than trying to understand the capabilities of the body and mind in all possible areas, as is recommended in the Olympic Charter, which promotes the “balanced whole of body, will and mind!” (IOC website, 2004). The British media, in its celebration of such advances, and eulogising of those who become new record-holders, as is seen in the coverage of the Salt Lake City Olympics, are complicit in perpetuating a climate in which the pursuit of the record is promoted. The measure of Britain’s success as a nation was also framed in terms of medal count rather than fulfilment of any other elements of Olympism. The
following section will look in detail at the portrayal of the British team in relation to the focus on elite performance.

6.3ii Construction of British ‘failure’ and ‘success’

As outlined in the section on nationalism in the media portrayal the Salt Lake City Olympics, one of the key areas of focus in the British press was on the fortunes of Great Britain athletes. By far the greatest amount of column inches and airtime were devoted to those British athletes who won medals: the women’s curling team, Alex Coomber and Alain Baxter (although this medal was later withdrawn). Also interesting, however, was the media, particularly the press’, reaction to the lack of British success in the first week of the Games. Several reporters were critical of the BOA’s decision to send athletes who were unlikely to win medals. For example an article in the Daily Express (16th February, 2002, p. 109) led with the headline “Waste of cash is snow joke”. Alongside this, the following cartoon was featured (see overleaf):

Fig. 6.6 Snow Joke cartoon, Daily Express

Martin Samuel, the reporter in question went on to suggest that lottery money had been misspent on sending athletes to the Olympics with no chance of success, he quips:
“Higher, faster, stronger is the Olympic motto. Team GB can now add one of its own. Never mind the quality, feel the width.” It is interesting that Samuel chooses to cite the Olympic motto in support of his argument (albeit in the wrong order!). However, it may be argued that the assertion that the taking part is as important as winning and the premise that there should be opportunity for all as stated in Olympism has been somewhat conveniently overlooked by Samuel. He does little to support the idea that excellence should be achieved in accordance with the Olympic spirit. On the contrary, he seems to have no concern with the humanitarian aspect of sport, but only with the winning of medals, and more specifically the winning of medals by British athletes, an attitude that echoes the funding rationale of UK Sport (Maguire, 2004), which was cited earlier in this chapter.

This statement also raises the question of the role of state funding for Olympic athletes. The point made by Samuel was that the funding for many of the British Olympic competitors came from lottery funding, and that this is essentially money which comes from the pockets of the general public. Based on this argument, Samuel was suggesting that there is some accountability required in justifying selection of athletes not likely to achieve success (defined by the British media in terms of medals). If, then, it is deemed a ‘waste’ of money to fund athletes who are unlikely to finish in the top three places, then Samuel is implying that the raison d’etre of the Olympics is to win medals and perform at the highest levels. However, perhaps Samuel was merely reflecting the mission statements of UK sports bodies and the UK sports industrial complex (Maguire, 2004). Interestingly, the Daily Express (the publication that featured the cartoon and article stating “waste of cash is snow joke” in the first week of the Games), in the second week
of the Olympics (24th February, 2002, p. 108) published the following cartoon next to an article celebrating the British success and attributing this to funding from the national lottery:

Fig. 6.7 Rhona's Golden Shot cartoon, Daily Express

Such a turnaround in the attitude of the press demonstrates the extent to which apparent *principles* regarding funding are actually very much dependent upon the tangible rewards this financial support yields. More broadly, this also highlights issues surrounding the position of the state in supporting Olympic athletes. If it is considered the responsibility of the government to cover financial expenses incurred in sending a national team to the Olympic Games (either directly or indirectly, via schemes such as the national lottery), then how does this influence the autonomy of the athlete in terms of their behaviour at the Games and the expectations placed on them? Questions may also be raised as to whether it *is* in fact the responsibility of the government to fund Olympic athletes. For example, does Olympic success for a few individuals have a sufficient broader impact on the nation to justify the spending of public money? Furthermore, it is interesting to examine by what criteria the allocation of such funding decided, and which notions of what is valued in
sport guide such judgements. According to the views expressed in areas of the press, by
those such as Samuel, it would seem that what is deemed worthy in sport is medal
winning and success at the elite end of the performance spectrum.

Simon Barnes, on the other hand took a line of argument much closer to the
'Olympic spirit'. Of British participation in the Games he wrote:

The idea of refusing to compete is mere sulkiness - I don't want to play unless I am
going to win. This is not a plea for the inclusion of hopeless cases. Eddie has
served his turn and the world and sport have moved on. Instead, it is about the
quest for improvement and that is the very stuff of all sport, whether you are Sir
Steven Redgrave or me or Glynn Pedersen. The Brits start behind the eight-ball in
the Winter Games, but what is the point of a disadvantage unless you try to
overcome it? The negative stuff simply adds up to "don't go near the water until
you can swim". The point of the Winter Games is not to wring your hands about
the state of the nation. Rather, we should accept the fact that when it comes to
sliding, we struggle. We should enjoy the foreign, unfamiliar masters of these
unfamiliar sports and give a quiet cheer for the British aspirants. (Times, 15th
February, 2002, p. 43)

It should be recognised, however, that the attitude of Barnes was very much against the
flow of commentary in the British press, which often dismissed the Games as widely
irrelevant. For example, Neil Wilson argued: "It's the snow thing, you see. Snow and ice,
we just don't get on with them. Others do, but we don't. Ah well, one more week..."
(Mail on Sunday, 17th February, 2002, p. 114). In similar vein others, like Samuel,
questioned the value of sending those without medal hopes to the Games. Many areas of
the press suggested that a gold medal from favourite in the women's bob skeleton, Alex
Coomber was required to 'save' the British team. For example, Simon Hart, writing the
Sunday Telegraph reported:

Coomber's event cannot come fast enough for Britain. Outclassed on the ski
slopes, outgunned on the biathlon field, flat on their backs on the speed-skating
rink, Britain started badly and failed to improve. Last and second-last in the very
first event of the Games, the women's moguls, Team GB have remained stuck in
reverse gear. Their final positions have made sorry reading: 43, 17, 25, 79, 81, 48,
...more like a game of bingo than an Olympic campaign. (17th February, 2002, p. 10)

This article is typical of several reporters who were eager to mock the British team for their lack of achievements at the Games. For example, Bose, writing in the Daily Telegraph, claimed: “Britain’s best hopes are well into the second week and so far, sad to say, the most dominant British presence here has been the British ticket touts.” (Daily Telegraph, 21st February, 2002, p. S5). As highlighted elsewhere in this section, other writers such as Samuel (Daily Express) and Wilson (Daily Mail) also made similar derogatory comments about the British team. This attitude of disappointment and consequent disinterest in the Salt Lake City Games expressed in the press is illustrated in the following cartoon, which appeared in the Sunday Telegraph (17th February, 2002, p. 32 – see overleaf):

Fig. 6.8 TV Down the Ski Run cartoon, Sunday Telegraph

Such commentary helped to support the suggestion that the sole reason for participation in the Olympic Games is the winning of medals and proving of athletic ability. This attitude is interesting, as it contradicts the idea that the Olympics are in any way different from other world championships in sport, as was suggested both by Coubertin (1988), in
the extract cited earlier in this chapter, and in areas of the media itself, as highlighted earlier in this section.

The BBC’s reaction to the lack of British success in the first week was less negative, which is perhaps unsurprising, given the vested interest they had in keeping viewers interested, enthusiastic and tuned into the coverage they provided. At times comments were made and discussions had regarding various disappointing performances. For example, Clare Balding’s remarked that “Hammy and his boys may be burgered” in relation to the defeats of the men’s curling team. The seemingly inevitable exit of the women’s team, following losses in the round robin stage of the competition, was also discussed at some length among the presenters. Despite this, there was not an overall framing of the Games in a way that concentrated on this to the same extent that the press did. Whilst both good and bad British performances were reported, the lack of British success did not feature as a central story for the BBC in coverage. Instead, in the first week of the Games, when British success was scarce, the BBC tended to focus on medal winning performances of athletes from other countries, and stories of interest that arose, such as the controversy over the judging of the pairs skating competition.

Upon the medal winning achievements of Coomber, the women’s curling team and Alain Baxter in the later stages of the Games, the press attitude towards the British team was marked by a stark turnaround. At a press conference after the Olympics, Simon Clegg, the British team’s chef de mission addressed the media with the opening line: ‘Ye of little faith!’ Before the Salt Lake Olympics, Clegg had set the British Team’s target for the Games at surpassing the tally of two bronzes. Having met this target, Clegg clearly felt that media, and in particular the press criticism of British team in the first week of
competition was unjust. In the BBC coverage, attention turned from stories involving athletes from other countries to a focus upon the British success, which was defined as one gold, and (before the disqualification of Baxter), two bronze medals. Although coverage of the women's curling final was interrupted, the rescheduling of BBC programming that took place to allow for it to be broadcast live, demonstrates the extent to which showing coverage of success for British athletes was a priority for the BBC. Similarly, the press led the back pages with stories of the successes of Rhona Martin and the curling team, Alex Coomber and Alain Baxter in the last week of the competition.

Aside from the overall pattern of coverage on the BBC (i.e. the disproportionately large amounts of air time dedicated to British athletes, as opposed to more successful athletes from other countries), observations made by commentators also demonstrated a direct link between interest in British athletes, and their success, which was generally measured in terms of medal winning chances. In introducing the closing ceremony, Hazel Irvine summed up the Salt Lake Games in terms of British success. Her opening statement was:

From Great Britain's perspective, it has been a fortnight of firsts. Alex Coomber became the first woman to ever be presented with an Olympic medal in the bob skeleton. Alain Baxter claimed the country's first medal on skis. And of course Rhona Martin and her curling team won Britain's first gold for 18 years. But not before putting almost six million of us through an emotional ringer. Not for 66 years have things gone so right on snow and ice.

This dialogue was accompanied by pictures of the athletes in question celebrating and receiving their medals. Not only did this synopsis of the Games focus upon the British success - that is, medal winners - but also on the historic nature of the athletes' achievements. Irvine claims it to have been "a fortnight of firsts" (although this is a
slightly tenuous claim, given the curling gold medal was merely the first for 18 years, not the first ever).

Such framing of events in terms of momentous, breakthrough achievements for British athletes underlines the idea that sport and in particular, the Olympics, are deemed to be about the progression of performance and breaking records. This evaluation of Britain's success in the Games in terms of medals won was echoed in commentary throughout the closing ceremony, with comments from Barry Davies such as: "The flag of Great Britain being carried across the stage and deserving to be carried higher than any time since 1936, at Garmisch-Partenkirchen." Later in the ceremony, Davies reiterated the historic nature of the British team's performance, again measuring the success in terms of medal count. He observed: "The Games have had so many highlights, not least for Great Britain. The most successful Games since Garmisch-Partenkirchen, in 1936. One gold for the team of curling and two bronzes." These examples, and the overall scheduling of the BBC coverage to give prominence to British medallists (or potential medallists) illustrates the extent to which interest in home athletes was limited to only the elite, that is, those likely to reflect glory on the nation. Those who merely participated, however, were seldom mentioned and certainly afforded no praise for their involvement. In fact, in some cases, participants were help up as comical figures, as was the case with the Venezuelan women's luge competitor, mentioned in Chapter 4.

6.3iii Conclusion

As examples such as these demonstrate, media personnel seem to believe the medal count to be a very important measure of success, both of individuals and of nations
- as is apparent from the regular and widespread publishing of the medal table in British newspapers. Analysis of the press and television in Britain over the period of the Salt Lake City Olympics, shows that excellence is promoted. In this respect, as excellence is one of the key elements of Olympism (as defined earlier in this thesis), the media were supportive of this element of Olympic ideology. However, it did not promote, to the same extent, the quest for excellence in not just the physical domain but also the character and mind. Evidence from the press and television examined would support the assertion made by Maguire (2004) that contemporary sport is concerned in the main, more with performance efficiency and the breaking of records, than with human development. If this is the case, then the picture of sport projected in the media is not in keeping with the ideas of excellence put forward in the Olympic Charter. However, it must also be noted that the concept of excellence within Olympism is controversial in itself. Some writers (Buggle, 1986; Krotee, 1981; Segrave, 1988) see the promotion of excellence as contradictory to the idea that the joy is in the struggle as much as the triumph. They argue that the celebration of the elite detracts from the notion that sport is for all. Despite this tension, it is unsurprising that the element of excellence is the most frequently featured in the media coverage examined, as it is the strand of Olympism most in line with the currently dominant sport ethic, which states that winning is of paramount importance (Coakley, 2001).

The two areas discussed in this chapter: the observed focus on the elite end of the performance spectrum, and the gendered nature of coverage directly oppose the Olympic ideal of opportunity for all. Similarly, the political and nationalistic focus detailed in Chapter 5 conflicts with Olympism, as it undermines the aims of international
understanding, cultural exchange, and the separation of sport and politics. The chapter that follows draws together the findings discussed in these two empirical chapters, and begins to draw some conclusions in light of the questions posed at the beginning of this research project.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This final, concluding chapter will summarise the empirical findings of this study, and relate that discussion to the broader research context of sport, the media and globalisation. The research will then be evaluated in terms of the methods used and possible improvements. Suggestions will also be made for possible directions of further research.

This thesis set out to examine the British media’s portrayal of Olympism in its coverage of the Salt Lake City winter Olympics. As the most high profile global sporting competition - with a transnational governing body and internationalist ideology - the Games are a key party in sportisation, and the structured processes of globalisation more broadly. With this in mind, the ideologies or ‘ideoscapes’ (Appadurai, cited in Maguire, 1999) that form part of these global flows are of primary concern. The central question to the study was whether Olympism is a myth or reality in the mediated form of the Olympics. Whilst the notion of Olympism is often touched upon in work on the Games, to date, there has been little attempt to address its relevance to the mediated experience of the Olympics. Using a qualitative content analysis of British press and television coverage, the study examined which, if any, of the aspects of Olympism were evident in media framing of the event. Working inductively, the investigation also looked to identify any themes that emerged from the data, and considered whether these were reflective of the Olympic, or other dominant ideologies, such as capitalism or the achievement sport ethic.
7.1 Summary

Before examining the validity, limitations and implications of this study, the following section will first draw together and summarise the key findings. Evidence found in the British press and television demonstrated a general absence of references to the Olympic ideology in coverage of the Salt Lake City Games. Moreover, the themes that did feature strongly in the media texts were often in conflict with the ideals of Olympism. The themes identified as being most evident in the newspapers and on the BBC were those discussed in depth in the empirical chapters, 5 and 6, they were: politics, nationalism, gender and excellence.

It is suggested that several factors are at play in determining the dominant characteristics in Olympic media coverage. Firstly, the need to attract as large an audience/readership as possible means that stories or angles that were covered highlighted those elements which were most exciting, or with which the public were most likely to identify. For example, in the build up to the Games, press focus centred around the controversy surrounding the inclusion of the World Trade Centre flag in the opening ceremony. Following the events of September 11th, 2001, the World Trade Centre attacks and issues connected to that, such as the ‘war on terror’ featured strongly in the news and media more broadly. With the sports that make up the winter Olympics being relatively unpopular in Britain, it is suggested that the highlighting of issues such as the role of the Ground Zero flag served to provide a point of reference to the British public could relate. It is also suggested that it is the case generally that politically centred stories help ‘sell’ sports coverage. As Mark Steyn, writing in the Daily Telegraph observed: “For all that
pious guff about not tainting the 'Olympic ideals', the best Games have always been those infected by politics” (17th February, 2002, p. 21).

As well as geo politics, coverage also highlighted the tensions from politics at an internal level. Conflicts arising from the dispute between the IOC and SLOC, upon the issue of the inclusion of the World Trade Centre flag were well documented. Similarly, the controversy of the fixed votes in the ice-skating was framed in terms of both nationalistic tensions dating back to the Cold War, and the political manoeuvring of Rogge in attempting to resolve the situation. This focus on the political aspects of the Olympics in both the press and the television resulted in an overall framing of the Games inherently tied up with politics, an assertion made by several writers on the Olympics (Guttmann, 1992; Segrave, 1988; Tomlinson, 1999; Toohey and Veal, 2000).

Linked to the issue of politics was the nationalist flavour of British coverage of the Games. With what was perceived in the media (and the press in particular) as a poor first week’s performance in the Games by British athletes, several reporters began to question the politics of the decision to allocate funds to pay for athletes to compete in the winter Olympics. Headlines such as: “Waste of cash is snow joke” (Daily Express, 16th February, 2002, p. 109) appeared in the press. There was a stark turnaround in attitudes to the British team in the second week of competition as medals were won in the curling, skeleton and men’s slalom. At the closing ceremony, BBC presenter, Hazel Irvine informed the viewers: “Not for 66 years have things gone so right on snow and ice”. The centring of British media coverage around the fortunes of ‘home’ athletes demonstrates the degree to which international sporting events serve as occasions for the articulation and celebration of national identities (Roche, 2004; Maguire and Poulton, 1999).
Despite the clear bias towards British athletes in the media coverage examined, members of the press were highly critical of the jingoism of the US hosts. In isolation, this could have been interpreted as an articulation of the Olympic ideal of international understanding, in condemning nation-centric attitudes. However, given the nationalistic bias evident in the British media coverage, this criticism would appear to merely represent antagonism towards the US. This reading is substantiated by comments such as the following by Martin Samuel, in the Daily Express: “Think of how we view United and times it by a million. That’s how most other nations see America.” (23rd February, 2002, p. 108). This response to the US leads to the conclusion that the Olympics, and in particular the mediated version of the Games, encourages nationalistic sentiments, which, in turn, engender resentment between countries, thus undermining the notion of international understanding. Other elements of the Olympic ideology also received little support in the British media, for example, the concept of opportunity for all.

In terms of promoting opportunity for all, both the BBC and the press again failed to show evidence of a consideration of Olympism. The coverage of the Salt Lake City Games was characterised by a gendered treatment of athletes. Female athletes and their performances were subjected to various forms of symbolic annihilation, trivialisation, and gender stereotyping. These findings were consistent with findings from previous research into the media coverage of female athletes (Carlisle Duncan and Messner, 1998; Lenskyj, 1998; Messner, 2002; Stevenson, 2004). Whilst women’s performances at the Games were celebrated in the press (as they represented British success), at the same time the gender order was reinforced by positioning those athletes in traditional and non-threatening roles. For example, the gold medal-winning women’s curling team were
widely framed as ‘housewives’ in the media and reference was frequently made to their domestic lives and relationships. There was also a tendency to focus upon the appearance of female athletes; skeleton silver medallist, Alex Coomber was described as “the blonde RAF officer” (Daily Telegraph, 21st February, 2002, p. S4). Such portrayals exemplify what Kane and Greendorfer (1994) described as: “strategies of resistance employed by those in authority to accommodate this social change (the incorporation of women’s sport) without fundamentally altering the balance of power” (p. 33). Thus, whilst women’s sport is afforded a place or opportunity in media representations of Olympic sport, their inclusion is conditional, and subject to a rationalising of that position. The implication is that women can play, but only if they conform to traditional notions of femininity in doing so.

The British media focus, almost exclusively, on elite performance, records and medallists also undermined the Games as a forum promoting opportunity for all. Those athletes participating at the lower end of the performance scale were for the most part not included in coverage, or else ridiculed. Simon Hart, for instance, reporting in the Sunday Telegraph described the British performances thus: “Team GB have remained stuck in reverse gear. Their final positions have made sorry reading: 43, 17, 25, 79, 81, 48, 29...more like a game of bingo than an Olympic campaign” (17th February, 2002, p. 10). In contrast, athletes who won medals or set new records were lionised and in some instances afforded almost superhuman status. For example, British curling skip, Rhona Martin was depicted in a cartoon featured in the Mail on Sunday as wonder woman (however, it should be noted that this image was somewhat undermined by the inclusion of slippers and house coat in the costume). The inherent contradiction between
opportunity for all and the celebration of excellence in Olympism was clearly evident in
the media portrayal of the Games. Whilst the celebration of elite performance and the
quest for the record seemed to support one aspect of the Olympic ideology, and the
motto: ‘citius, altius, fortius’, at the same time, such a focus failed to recognise the value
of participation in its own right.

Overall, evidence found in this examination of the British media coverage of the
Salt Lake City Games suggests that Olympism, in the mediated reality of the Olympics is
more myth than reality. There was little indication that either the press or television
personnel (despite claims to the contrary when interviewed) had any awareness of, or
concern for the Olympic ideals in producing coverage of the Games. Instead, the values
evident in the framing of the Salt Lake City Olympics reflected the dominant sport ethic
(the importance of winning at all costs); the hegemonic gender order; and nationalistic
sentiment: all characteristics of the western achievement sport model Maguire (1999)
describes. Whilst the IOC is a significant body in sportisation, and structured global
processes more broadly, it is by no means all-powerful. The Olympics retain their place
at the forefront of world sporting competition only when framed to reflect the dominant
ideology of the time. Whilst it is recognised that the IOC and media institutions are
highly interdependent (Slater, 1998), it is clear that the media institutions retain a degree
of autonomy which means they are able to frame the Olympics in a way which suits their
own needs. Any elements of the IOC’s own, alternative, ideology that do not fit with the
dominant sport model do not feature in the mediated public experience of the Games. In
forging a relationship with the transnational corporations, the media, and more
specifically television networks (as described in Chapter 4), the IOC have entered into a
Faustian bargain. In exchange for global media coverage, the Olympic Movement has sacrificed the set values claimed to be at their very core: Olympism. Given their apparent willingness to cast aside the values claimed to be central to the Olympic Movement, questions must be raised as to the commitment of the IOC to the spread of Olympism. Perhaps it is the case that the IOC now views the Games as the pinnacle of achievement sport, and, thus, policies are directed towards the sports-industrial complex and not Olympism per se. If this is the case, then it would seem that there are grounds to agree with Wamsley’s proposal that the Olympics and Olympism “are incongruous and... during the twentieth century, the nebulous concept of Olympism became the structural apologetic for the Olympic Games.” (p. 231)

7.2 Theoretical contributions

This study set out to examine the place of Olympism in the context of globalisation and more specifically, the global media-sports complex. There has been relatively little previous research specifically on the articulation of Olympism in the media coverage of the Games. However, writers have noted an increased commodification of media sport (Jhally, 1989a; Maguire, 1993b; Rowe, 1999; Roche, 2004). It has also been suggested that media sport reflects the capitalist ideology of wider society (Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Gruneau, 1989; Jhally, 1989a; Kinkema and Harris, 1998; Maguire, 1993a; Rowe, 1999). The findings in this examination corroborate this, as it was found that hegemonic gender relations were reflected in the media portrayal of the Salt Lake City Games, as was the western notion of sport as being modern achievement sport.
A figurational framework was used to make sense of the relations at play between the media and the IOC. Both the IOC and the media perform a central role in several of the key long-term, structured processes that contribute to sportisation (Maguire, 2004). For instance, Maguire noted that one of these structured processes was the development of a gendered sport ideology, and, as detailed above, the reinforcement of the gender hierarchy was one of the characteristics identified in the British media coverage examined. Also, a rationalised view of sport is suggested to be central to modern achievement sport, and the prioritising of high performance sport and the quest for the record in the press on and the BBC reinforced this conceptualisation of sport.

Maguire's (2004) model of the phases of sportisation is helpful in gaining an historical perspective of the globalisation of modern achievement sport. This model was discussed in detail in Chapter 2, the review of literature. The IOC is identified as a significant party in the third, 'take-off' phase. This period saw the initial diffusion of occidental forms of 'sport' to the rest of the world. The IOC represented one of the first transnational sporting bodies, and was a prime mover in the growth of international sport. Despite being transnational, however, the IOC is clearly reflective of an eclectic blend of various nuances of western concepts of sport. Through the growth of the Olympic Games, the ideas (both regarding sport, and more broadly) of the established group (western civilisation) have permeated other, non-occidental societies (Maguire, 1999, 2004). Such trends have posed great threat to ludic diversity, encouraging a narrow conceptualisation of what constitutes sport. The Olympic Games reinforce this limited definition of sport as modern achievement sport. However, Coubertin himself claimed that the Olympics have “something else” (cited in Segrave, 1988, p. 102) that sets them
apart from other sporting competition. If this 'something else' is understood to be Olympism, then the findings of this study would question whether, in its most widely accessible form – the mediated experience – the Games actually reflect the Olympic values at all. If this is the case, then the Olympics merely serve as a forum for the re-articulation of the current world order in terms of dominant trends in globalised sport.

The Olympic Games also provide a clear example of the structured process by which the sports power elite has come to be dominated by corporate interests such as transnational companies and media institutions. Within the interdependencies that exist in enabling the continued running and growth of the Olympics, transnational corporations (TNCs) and television networks play a central role. Currently, the IOC receives 84% of its revenue from the sale of broadcast rights and the sponsorship from members of TOP V (IOC website, 2004). If only in their role in the financing of the Games, both the television networks and TNCs have significant power in the operation of the Olympics. This is reflected in a recent statement by Rogge, cited on the IOC website: “Without the support of the business community, without its technology, expertise, people, services, products, telecommunications, its financing the Olympic Games could not and cannot happen” (2004).

The relative power of the media in this interdependency is evident in the findings of this study, as the press and television reflected the dominant ideology of achievement sport, and gave no voice to the IOC’s values of Olympism. In commercial television networks, the interdependent nature of the relations between the IOC, media and TNCs is even more evident. As detailed in Chapter 2, the main source of income for commercial television networks is from advertisers. Therefore, in the case of the relationship between
the IOC, NBC (the American network, who make the largest contribution to the IOC’s income from the sale of broadcast rights) and TNCs, the TNCs provide financial support for both the IOC and NBC. Therefore, corporate interests determine the actions of the IOC and the television networks. Moreover, it has been noted that the US networks often dictate timings of events to the IOC in the Olympics in order to fit in with their prime time slots, and meet the demands of advertisers (Larson and Park, 1993). Thus, the IOC is heavily influenced by TNCs both directly, in the form of its TOP V sponsors and indirectly, through the television networks.

The increasing power of TNCs in the Olympics, sport and global governance more broadly has been interpreted by some as representing a decline in the significance of the nation state (Wallerstein, 1980). However, evidence from this research supports the findings of those such as Roche (2004), Maguire and Falcous (2005) and Maguire and Poulton (1999) who argue that the nation state and national identity are still very relevant to people’s sense of self. This is particularly evident in sporting encounters. The bias towards ‘home’ athletes observed in British press and BBC coverage of the Salt Lake City Games demonstrates that an affiliation with the nation state is still seen to have appeal to the public in the ‘selling’ of media sport. This research, then, supports the argument that globalising processes are not all consuming, and that more local alliances are still central to people’s construction of an I/we identity (Maguire, in press).

The substantive findings of this study have supported previous research from the figurational perspective in relation to globalisation and sport. In particular, Maguire’s (2004) work on the structured processes that characterise globalisation and sportisation has been found to inform, and be substantiated by this examination. The importance of
examining the nature of interdependency networks involved in those processes is evident as the relations between the IOC, media and (whilst not examined in this study) TNCs are central in understanding the presence – or in this case, absence – of Olympism in the mediated version of the Olympics. It is also important to note that the outcomes of the relations forged in interdependency chains are often unplanned. According to Maguire (in press), as power relations fluctuate between different groups within a figuration, and relations become relatively equal (by a process of functional democratisation) ‘the more likely it is that the outcome will be somewhat different to what any single person or group has planned or anticipated’. For example, in entering into a financial relationship with television networks, the IOC may never have anticipated that it would have to sacrifice the values claimed to be central to the Olympic Movement. The section that follows will evaluate the study, identifying its relative strengths and weaknesses.

7.3 Strengths and weaknesses of the research

This examination has addressed the questions posed at the outset of the study, with several interesting, and to some extent unanticipated points arising. The review of literature on the areas of Olympism, media sport and globalisation revealed that, to date, there has been little research specifically on the media’s representation of the Olympic values in its coverage of the Games. In light of this, the findings presented here form a seedbed for future research into this relatively untapped area of investigation. Given the cynicism surrounding the Olympic Movement, following the revelations of the Salt Lake City bribery scandal, and other critiques of the IOC by those such as Simson and Jennings (1992) and Lenskyj (2000), research into the credibility of the philosophy of the
Olympics is likely to be received with interest. Suggestions for the development of this work are made in the next section.

While this study has a robust methodological framework, there are ways this could be improved further. For example, the examination of the production processes involved in media coverage could have been improved by carrying out interviews with more members of media personnel, particularly members of the press. Additionally, a more in depth probing of the BBC presenters Balding, Barker and Cram would have been carried out, had they been available for either face to face or telephone interviews. As the study was primarily an analysis of media texts, it was anticipated at the outset that there would be limitations in the scope of the examination of the production practices.

The gendered nature of coverage was, not, initially, a main focus of enquiry. Had this been different, the project design may have benefited from the inclusion of a comparative case study of the treatment of men and women in the same sport or event. For example, a more quantitatively based comparison of frequency of the use of hierarchies of naming may have informed the study further, and acted as a validity ‘check’ of the arguments made in the qualitative content analysis of the texts. In the case of the examination of the women’s curling team, it was not possible to draw direct comparisons with treatment of the men’s team, who were knocked out of the competition in the early stages.

The qualitative approach to the content analysis lent itself well to an appreciation of the richness of the texts examined. Whilst quantitative methods can be of use in providing statistical validation of patterns observed, they fail to allow the researcher to draw upon the subtle nuances of expression (Berg, 1998). Whilst it is acknowledged that
several readings of a text are possible, it is suggested that, in utilising an appropriate theoretical framework as a lens, the researcher can achieve a certain degree of detachment from the material and avoid subjective experiences influencing their reading of the text.

Additionally, the use of a comprehensive coding procedure (see Appendix 1) meant that whilst the analysis was qualitative, it was still systematic. The system implemented not only encouraged the coding of the pre-determined elements of Olympism, but also allowed for themes that emerged from the data to be identified. This meant that the analysis avoided the imposition of grand theory on the data, and allowed for a two-way traffic to take place between the theoretical and the empirical. This is a feature characteristic of figurational sociology (Maguire and Young, 2002). A more detailed evaluation of the contribution of a figurational perspective in making sense of the issues examined in this study will be made below.

The figurational perspective has provided a fruitful framework for the examination of the issues in this study. In particular, the long-term view of society lends itself well to the study of issues related to globalisation. This developmental approach allows the researcher to be sensitive to the processual nature of globalising trends, avoiding the temptation of ‘retreating to the present’ (Maguire and Young, 2002, p. 4). This was important to the study at hand, as, in order to fully understand the place of the Olympic Movement and its relationship with the media in sportisation processes and wider global trends, it was important to have an awareness of the emergence of this interdependency. The history of the IOC’s relationship with the media was detailed in Chapter 4, and has helped inform the discussion of the findings of this examination.
Furthermore, an understanding of the long term structured processes characteristic of
sportisation (Maguire, 2004) have been used to make sense of the trends observed in the
media coverage of the Salt Lake City Games.

The notion of interdependency networks has also helped inform this research.
Elias argued that people exist within interlocking figurations of social interaction (Van
Krieken, 1998). For Elias, the growth in the number and complexity of these
interdependency chains is a key reason for the civilizing process he observed. In making
sense of the expression of ideology in the media coverage of the Olympics, an
understanding of the interdependent nature of the relations between the IOC, media
institutions and TNCs is vital. A more crude conception of the relations between these
key bodies (as may have arisen from some Marxist approaches) would have neglected the
subtleties of the power balances at work. Slater (1998) argued that the relationship
between the IOC and the media is symbiotic. This is an accurate description in that both
parties benefit from the relationship, however, this study would suggest that within that
interdependency, at present, the media institutions (particularly television networks) have
relatively more power than the IOC, not only in an economic sense but also in terms of
the expression of ideology. It should be noted, however, that power relations are dynamic
and in constant flux within such figurations, and, thus, the domination of one group over
another is never total (Maguire, in press). The notion of interdependencies also accounts
for the multifarious nature of social relations, in that several parties impact and are
impacted by any form of social interaction. For example, the IOC interact with not only
the media, but also TNCs, NOCs, sporting federations and governments, to name a few.
A potential area of weakness of the figurational approach, in light of the findings of this study, is the tendency to overstate the power and pervasiveness of alternative ideologies to those of established groups. Whilst the origins of the Olympics are very much western, elements of its philosophy - which include a celebration of cultural diversity and a focus away from winning and on participation - are at odds with the dominant capitalist ideology which permeates much of the developed world. As an alternative set of ideas, Olympism found very limited expression in the mediated experience of the Salt Lake City Games. This evidence suggests that alternative messages are either ignored in media portrayals, or else rearticulated and incorporated into the hegemonic understandings of social relations. That is not to say that there is no expression of alternative notions of what constitutes sport, but that one should be careful not to overestimate the influence of such forms.

7.4 Implications and areas for further research

On the basis of the findings presented here, it is possible to make both policy recommendations and suggestions for further study in this area.

7.4i IOC policy in sale of broadcast rights

Evidence presented in the findings of this research observed almost a total neglect of the values of Olympism in the media portrayals of the Salt Lake City Games. If the IOC is earnest in its claims made in the Olympic Charter, that the Games are seen to be a vehicle for the dissemination of the Olympic values, then there is clearly a discrepancy between the interests of the IOC and those of the media. In the power dynamics of the interdependency between the IOC and media institutions, the interests of the media are
seen to win out. If the IOC is to realise the objective of using the Games to spread Olympism, then it needs to regain some control in its relationship with the media. This may be achieved by awarding television rights to networks based not only on financial return, but also on proposed style of coverage and the extent to which production will focus on the Olympic ideals.

The IOC has shown some sensitivity to criticisms of the increasing commercialisation of the Olympics, in the banning of advertising in Olympic arenas. Furthermore, the Celebrate Humanity campaign (an IOC initiative which includes anecdotes of instances in the Olympics that were deemed to demonstrate humanity) indicates the IOC's awareness of the need to be more vocal in terms of Olympic ideals. However, it has been noted that some aspects of this campaign are more reflective of the dominant sport ethic (for example, the need to win at all costs) than of Olympism, and provides a very narrow definition of what constitutes 'humanity'. It is also significant that this promotion features only on commercial television networks. This, coupled with the fact that campaign is specifically produced in conjunction with the recognition of the TOP V sponsors leaves the impression that the campaign itself is merely another advertisement, both for the Olympics and the TNCs who finance them. The role played by TNCs in the political economy network surrounding the Olympics is one direction in which future research could develop. A consideration of further development of this research area is made below.
Future research

The findings of this study should be considered within the broader research context, in which the Olympics continue to be the subject of sociological investigation. This is evident in recent examinations by Atkinson and Young (2002), Billings and Eastman (2003), Hogan (2003) and Tajima (2004). As a highly significant global event, the Olympic Games potentially provide the basis for much future work. This research project has been limited in terms of time, length of thesis, and resources. Whilst the study provides an adequate contribution to knowledge on relations between the Olympics, Olympism, media institutions and structured global processes, further work is required in order to gain a more complete picture. The findings of this examination are hoped to act as a seedbed for future research.

There are several directions in which this line of investigation could be taken. As mentioned above, the role of TNCs as part of the sporting power elite, particularly with regards to the Olympics, is an important aspect of the interdependency network in which the IOC exists. The examination of the power and influence of these corporate bodies would provide an interesting insight into the ways in which the Games are presented to the public. Initially, it was hoped that this project would analyse the place of advertising and commercialisation in the Salt Lake City Olympics. However, the IOC ban on advertising in the Olympic arena, and the BBC’s non-commercial status meant that there was little material to work with—perhaps a significant finding in itself! Future work may draw on coverage from commercially funded television networks such as Eurosport, or perhaps include a cross-cultural comparison with coverage from other countries, such as NBC in America, or CBC in Canada.
Given the general lack of popularity of winter sports in Britain, a study of the summer Games may provide a richer source of analysis, with coverage likely to be much more extensive. Additionally, if the study were to be expanded to examine audience responses to media representation of the Games, the summer Olympics would generate a larger audience base from which to select subjects. Moreover, the greater popularity of the summer Games would mean that the impact of this representation of the Olympics would be greater, and bear more significance in terms of public conceptions of the Olympic Games.

Other notable absences in the findings of this study include the issue of corruption surrounding the Salt Lake City Games, in particular the bidding process by which the Games were won by the host city. Whilst it was anticipated that this may have been a significant theme in the media framing of the Games, it was found that the issue was barely touched upon in the British press and television. Reasons for this can only be speculated upon, however, it is suggested that the revelations of the bribing of IOC members, having been uncovered four years previous to the Games themselves were perhaps viewed by editors and production personnel as 'old news'. The discussion of issues surrounding race and ethnicity was also generally absent in the British media portrayals of the Salt Lake City Games. It is argued that this is significant in itself, and reflects the extent to which the predominantly white, western world dominates the winter Olympics. This observation may make an interesting contribution to the debate surrounding the Games as a form of cultural imperialism, as discussed in the Review of Literature.
Finally, despite the IOC's inclusion of it as the third strand of the Olympic Movement, the issue of the environment was entirely absent in the media coverage of the Games examined. Again, this finding was somewhat surprising, given the growing awareness of the importance of environmental issues, both in general, and specifically in relation to the Olympic Games. Further investigation, perhaps from a production perspective, into the significance of, and reasons for these absences would make for interesting future research in this field of study.

7.5 Concluding remarks

In answer to the question posed in the title of this study, 'Olympism: myth or reality?', it would appear that Olympism is, at least in the mediated reality of the Games, a myth. In the current context, the Olympic Games do little justice to the gravity of the issues that Olympism is associated with, such as international understanding, equality and education. Instead, the Olympics appear to reflect media interests, the achievement sport ethic and hegemonic capitalist ideology. Despite this somewhat bleak picture, the Olympics may still have the potential to act as a forum for alternative attitudes and conceptualisations of sport. What must be overcome in order to achieve this is the submission to the notion that 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'. All the time the IOC allows TNCs and television networks to dictate the format and set of values that accompany the Games because of the Olympic Movement's financial dependency on them, the alternative messages of Olympism will continue to be neglected. If the IOC is to turn this power relation around, and proactively go about encouraging the spread of Olympism as an alternative ideology to dominant capitalist ideals (assuming its members
actually believe in the Olympic ideology themselves), then they must take control of negotiations with the media and TOP sponsors. Rather than simply deciding the allocation of rights on a purely financial basis, the IOC should take into consideration the networks’ proposed format of coverage and the educational aspects of the programming. Similar factors should dictate decisions regarding the selection of TOP sponsors.

Whilst narrow, hegemonic notions of modern achievement sport are dominant, it is proposed that alternative viewpoints on movement culture can find expression and offer diversity in the face of the processes of sportisation and globalisation. This process will not, however, simply happen. Parties that represent these alternative viewpoints must work hard and shrewdly to make their voices heard, and seek to change social consciousness. The findings of this study suggest that the Olympic Movement has some way to go in achieving this, and questions whether, in fact, its members are actually motivated to do so.
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19/2/04


IOC website: www.olympic.org. 4/4/04


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Trans World Sport, Channel 4 television, 2002.


APPENDIX 1:

CODEBOOKS AND CODESHEETS – TELEVISION ANALYSIS
OLYMPISM: MYTH OR REALITY?

CODEBOOK FOR THE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PRINT MEDIA

For exclusive use with the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics
LEVEL 1: COPY

All articles and illustrations of the selected print media related to both national and international sport will be analysed.

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**M06** Number of pages of sports section

**M07** Number of pages of sport-specific supplement

**M08** Total number of sports articles
These include any sports-related article
(but not lists of results, tables or statistics)

**M09** Number of articles related to winter Olympics
LEVEL 2: Article

For the purposes of this codebook an article may be defined as a narrative (or story) which deals mainly with themes related to sport. Headlines with no accompanying text (e.g. just associated with an illustration) should be treated as articles. A story continued on more than one page should be treated as one article. Only encode articles featuring sport below national level if national and international aspects (such as stereotypes) are mentioned. Pure statistics, lists of results and tables should not be considered.

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<td>Note one main theme but encode up to three sub-themes. For example a preview article about the history of the Winter Olympics would be encoded M18 = 01.00 (main theme)/17.03 (sub-theme).</td>
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**Code**

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</table>
Variable  Contents

M15  Discourse analysis: Olympism: support for philosophy per se
Support for Olympism as an ideology.
E.g. “The spirit of Olympism sets this sporting competition apart from any other”

M16  Discourse analysis: Olympism: critique of philosophy per se
Critique of the Olympism as an ideology.
E.g.”Olympism is clearly a form western imperialism”

M17  Discourse analysis: Olympism: education (supportive)
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to education.
E.g. “The Olympics serve an important function in educating the youth”

M18  Discourse analysis: Olympism: education (critical)
critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to education.
E.g. “The Olympics are more a corporate circus than an education”

M19  Discourse analysis: Olympism: International understanding (support)
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to international understanding.
E.g. “The Olympics is an occasion for the coming together of nations”

M20  Discourse analysis: Olympism: International understanding (critical)
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to international understanding.
E.g. “The USA are merely using this Olympic stage to enforce their position as the global superpower”

M21  Discourse analysis: Olympism: Equal opportunity (supportive)
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to equal opportunity.
E.g. “In this Games we have seen a real blend of race, religion, gender and nationalities”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| M22      | Discourse analysis: Olympism: Equal opportunity (critical)  
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to equal opportunity.  
E.g. "The winter Olympics really underline the chasm between the developed and the rest of the world in terms of opportunities to participate in these kinds of sports." |
| M23      | Discourse analysis: Olympism: Excellence (supportive)  
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to excellence.  
E.g. "We really have seen the best the world has to offer in ski jumping here in Salt Lake" |
| M24      | Discourse analysis: Olympism: Excellence (critical)  
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to excellence.  
E.g. "These Games are more a reflection of global wealth inequalities than of sporting ability" |
| M25      | Discourse analysis: Fair and equal competition (supportive)  
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to fair and equal competition.  
E.g. "It is of paramount importance that these Olympics are an example of fair play to both the public and the athletes involved" |
| M26      | Discourse analysis: Fair and equal competition (critical)  
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to fair and equal competition.  
E.g. "The Games are riddled with scandal and bias, not helped by a corrupt infrastructure in the form of the IOC" |
| M27      | Discourse analysis: Olympism: Cultural exchange (supportive)  
Encode and give up to three examples of support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to cultural exchange.  
E.g. "The Olympics have provided a blend of cultures from all across the world" |
| M28      | Discourse analysis: Olympism: Cultural exchange (critical) |
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to cultural exchange.
E.g. "The Games have been resistant to the promotion of any culture other than that of the dominant US customs and values"

Variable: Contents

M29 Discourse analysis: Olympism: Independence of sport from politics (supportive)
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to the independence of sport from politics.
E.g. "The Olympics is a sphere of life with which politics should not interfere"

M30 Discourse analysis: Olympism: Independence of sport from politics (critical)
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to the independence of sport from politics.
E.g. "The Olympics are inherently bound up with politics on multiple levels"

M31 Discourse analysis: Olympism: Environmentalism (supportive)
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to environmentalism.
E.g. "The organisers have worked hard to support and sustain the natural environment of the site of these Games"

M32 Discourse analysis: Olympism: Environmentalism (critical)
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to environmentalism.
E.g. "The natural surroundings in which these Games have been placed have been devastated"

M33 Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: brand name sports clothing
Explicit reference to the brand name of sports clothing.
E.g. "Nike hockey shirt"

M34 Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: brand name non-sport equipment
Explicit reference to the brand name of non-sports equipment
E.g. "Kodak camera"

M35 Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: brand name sport equipment
Explicit reference to the brand name of sports equipment
E.g. "Head skis"
<table>
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</table>
| M36      | Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: TOP scheme  
Explicit reference to the TOP sponsors or the scheme as a funding source  
E.g. "The results appeared on the giant screen, provided by Panasonic, TOP partners" |
| M37      | Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: OPUS sponsors  
Explicit reference to the OPUS sponsors or the scheme as a funding source  
E.g. "The curling floor was recently re-surfaced, with financial support from OPUS sponsor, Seiko" |
| M38      | Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: NOC sponsors  
Explicit reference to the NOC sponsors or the scheme as a funding source  
E.g. "The British team in Salt Lake has been funded, at least in part, by the contribution of various official BOA sponsors" |
| M39      | Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: media institutions  
Explicit reference to the influence of media institutions on the Olympics  
E.g. "The NBC network's ratings hit an all-time high" |
Codebook TV analysis:
Content analysis of
Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, 2002
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**LEVEL 2: UNIT OF PROGRAMME**

**V07**

Journalistic style:
Indicate the styles which appear in the programme
(rank in order of occurrence by recording the most prominent first)

- **News/objective Report**: factual information 01
- **Feature**: in-depth feature concerning more than one individual 02
- **Portrait**: detailed story about an individual 03
- **Comment/opinion**: subjective interpretation of events 04
- **Live commentary**: live match/event report 05
- **Highlights**: abbreviated action 06
- **Interview**: conducted by journalist 07
- **Discussion**: forum of guests marshalled by journalist 08
- **Analysis**: in-depth summary of events 09
- **Gloss/satire**: humorous article 10

**V08**

M14

Main theme/sub-theme:
Note *one* main theme but encode *up to three*
sub-themes. For example a preview article about the
history of the Winter Olympics would be encoded
M18 = 01.00 (main theme)/17.03 (sub-theme).

**Human interest** 01.00
- Novices 01.01
- Athlete rivalries 01.02
- Family history/heritage 01.03

(M14)

- Scandals 02.00
- Judging 02.01
- Drugs 02.02
- Organisation/infrastructure 02.03

**Training/Preparation/Recovery** 03.00
- Training camp/training methods 03.01
- Injury (playing with/tolerance of) 03.02

- Stadia 04.00
- Security 04.01
- Terrorist threat 04.02
- Public safety 04.03
- Policing strategies 04.04

**Commodification** 05.00
- Direct advert (official, TOP) 05.01
- Direct advert (official, SLOC) 05.02
- Direct advert (official, NOC) 05.03
- Direct advert (unofficial, ambush) 05.04
- Direct advert (unofficial, other) 05.05
## Indirect advert, branding
- Clothing: 05.06
- Equipment: 05.07
- Product placement: 05.08

## Governing bodies
- International: 06.01
- National: 06.02
- Regional: 06.03

## Regulations
07.00

## Performance
- Medal table: 08.01
- British success: 08.02
- Records: 08.03
- Medal winners: 08.04

## Fair play/behaviour
- Conduct of teams/NOAs: 09.01
- Conduct of individual: 09.02
- Conduct of fans: 09.03
- Resignations/expulsions: 09.04

## Violence/crime
- On pitch: 10.01
- Hooliganism: 10.02
- Criminal activity: 10.03

## Gender issues
- Positive male stereotyping: 11.01
- Negative male stereotyping: 11.02
- Positive female stereotyping: 11.03
- Negative female stereotyping: 11.04

## Nationalistic sentiment
- Towards “us” (positive): 12.01
- Towards “us” (negative): 12.02
- Towards “them” (positive): 12.03
- Towards “them” (negative): 12.04

## Patriotism/jingoism
- USA: 13.01
- Great Britain: 13.02
- England: 13.03
- Scotland: 13.04
- Northern Ireland: 13.05
- Republic of Ireland: 13.06
- Wales: 13.07
- European countries: 13.08
- South American countries: 13.09
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<thead>
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<th>Commonwealth countries</th>
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<tr>
<td>Asian countries</td>
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<th>Festivals/cultural events</th>
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<td>Opening ceremony</td>
<td>14.01</td>
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<td>Closing ceremony</td>
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<td>Arts festivals</td>
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| Religion | 15.00 |

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<tr>
<td>Sporting politics (IOC)</td>
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<td>Sporting politics (NOC)</td>
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<td>Sporting politics (Lottery funding -- performance)</td>
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<td>Politics and sport (IOC-external)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics and sport (Geo politics, US, terrorism)</td>
<td>16.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics and sport (Geo politics, US, superpower post cold war)</td>
<td>16.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics and sport (Geo politics, US, superpower Pro US bias)</td>
<td>16.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics and sport (Geo politics, US, internal, Bush Republican democrat)</td>
<td>16.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics and sport (Geo politics, US, internal, SLC)</td>
<td>16.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics and sport (European)</td>
<td>16.11</td>
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<td>Politics and sport (UK)</td>
<td>16.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics and sport (UK, lottery -- UK v Home countries)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Host city culture</td>
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<td>Impact of Games on host city</td>
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| Sports Science/Technology | 18.00 |

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<td>Education (positive)</td>
<td>20.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>International understanding (critical)</td>
<td>20.03</td>
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<td>International understanding (positive)</td>
<td>20.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equal opportunity (critical)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equal opportunity (positive)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excellence (critical)</td>
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<td>Excellence (positive)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence of sport (critical)</td>
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<td>Variable</td>
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<tr>
<td>M15</td>
<td>Discourse analysis: Olympism: support for philosophy per se Support for Olympism as an ideology. E.g. &quot;The spirit of Olympism sets this sporting competition apart from any other&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>Discourse analysis: Olympism: critique of philosophy per se Critique of the Olympism as an ideology. E.g. &quot;Olympism is clearly a form western imperialism&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M17</td>
<td>Discourse analysis: Olympism: education (supportive) Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to education. E.g. &quot;The Olympics serve an important function in educating the youth&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M18</td>
<td>Discourse analysis: Olympism: education (critical) critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to education. E.g. &quot;The Olympics are more a corporate circus than an education&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discourse analysis: Olympism: International understanding (support)
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to international understanding.
E.g. "The Olympics is an occasion for the coming together of nations"

Discourse analysis: Olympism: International understanding (critical)
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to international understanding.
E.g. "The USA are merely using this Olympic stage to enforce their position as the global superpower"

Discourse analysis: Olympism: Equal opportunity (supportive)
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to equal opportunity.
E.g. "In this Games we have seen a real blend of race, religion, gender and nationalities"

Discourse analysis: Olympism: Equal opportunity (critical)
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to equal opportunity.
E.g. "The winter Olympics really underline the chasm between the developed and the rest of the world in terms of opportunities to participate in these kinds of sports."

Discourse analysis: Olympism: Excellence (supportive)
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to excellence.
E.g. "We really have seen the best the world has to offer in ski jumping here in Salt Lake"

Discourse analysis: Olympism: Excellence (critical)
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to excellence.
E.g. "These Games are more a reflection of global wealth inequalities than of sporting ability"

Discourse analysis: Fair and equal competition (supportive)
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to fair and equal competition.
E.g. "It is of paramount importance that these Olympics are an example of fair play to both the public and the athletes involved"

Discourse analysis: Fair and equal competition (critical)
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to fair and equal competition.
E.g. "The Games are riddled with scandal and bias, not helped by a corrupt infrastructure in the form of the IOC"

Discourse analysis: Olympism: Cultural exchange (supportive)
Encode and give up to three examples of support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to cultural exchange.
E.g. "The Olympics have provided a blend of cultures from all across the world"

Discourse analysis: Olympism: Cultural exchange (critical)
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to cultural exchange.
E.g. "The Games have been resistant to the promotion of any culture other than that of the dominant US customs and values"

Discourse analysis: Olympism: Independence of sport from politics (supportive)
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to the independence of sport from politics.
E.g. "The Olympics is a sphere of life with which politics should not interfere"

Discourse analysis: Olympism: Independence of sport from politics (critical)
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to the independence of sport from politics.
E.g. "The Olympics are inherently bound up with politics on multiple levels"

Discourse analysis: Olympism: Environmentalism (supportive)
Support for the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to environmentalism.
E.g. "The organisers have worked hard to support and sustain the natural environment of the site of these Games"

Discourse analysis: Olympism: Environmentalism (critical)
Critique of the position stated in the Olympic ideology with regards to environmentalism.
E.g. "The natural surroundings in which these Games have been placed have been devastated"

Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: brand name sports clothing
Explicit reference to the brand name of sports clothing.
E.g. "Nike hockey shirt"
Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: brand name non-sport equipment
Explicit reference to the brand name of non-sports equipment
E.g. "Kodak camera"

Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: brand name sport equipment
Explicit reference to the brand name of sports equipment
E.g. "Head skis"

Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: TOP scheme
Explicit reference to the TOP sponsors or the scheme as a funding source
E.g. "The results appeared on the giant screen, provided by Panasonic, TOP partners"

Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: OPUS sponsors
Explicit reference to the OPUS sponsors or the scheme as a funding source
E.g. "The curling floor was recently re-surfaced, with financial support from OPUS sponsor, Seiko"

Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: NOC sponsors
Explicit reference to the NOC sponsors or the scheme as a funding source
E.g. "The British team in Salt Lake has been funded, at least in part, by the contribution of various official BOA sponsors"

Discourse analysis: Commercialisation: media institutions
Explicit reference to the influence of media institutions on the Olympics.
E.g. "The NBC network's ratings hit an all-time high"
OLYMPISM: MYTH OR REALITY?

CODESHEET FOR THE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PRINT MEDIA

For exclusive use with the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics
LEVEL 2: ARTICLE

M10: Serial no.  M11: Article no.  M12: Columns

(M13: Position)  (M13: Page no.)

M13: Additional remarks on position of article:

M14: Main theme  M14: Sub-theme I

M14: Sub-theme II  M14: Sub-theme III

M14: Specification/Further themes:
OLYMPISM: MYTH OR REALITY?

CODEBOOK FOR THE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TELEVISION COVERAGE

For exclusive use with the 2002 Salt Lake City winter Olympics
LEVEL 1: COPY

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<td>M03: Day</td>
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<td>M04: Newspaper</td>
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<td>M05: Pages I</td>
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<td>M06: Pages II</td>
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<td>M07: Pages III</td>
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<td>M09: Illustrations</td>
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<td>M10: Specific Articles</td>
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<td>M11: Specific Illustrations</td>
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Additional remarks:
LEVEL 2: ARTICLE

(M12: Serial no.) (M13: Article no.) (M14: Columns)

(M15: Position) (M15: Page no.) (M16: Reference) (M16: Gender)

M16: Additional remarks on reference of article:

(M17: Style)

M17: Additional remarks on journalistic style:
(M18: Main theme)

(M18: Sub-theme I)

(M18: Sub-theme II)

(M18: Sub-theme III)

M18: Specification/Further themes:
### M19: Examples of discourse on globalisation

1. 
2. 
3. 

### M20: Examples of a critique of Olympism per se

1. 
2. 
3. 
### M21: Examples of discourse on Olympism: education - supportive

1. 

2. 

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### M22: Examples of discourse on Olympism: education - critical

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**M23: Examples of discourse on Olympism: international understanding - supportive**

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**M24: Examples of discourse on Olympism: international understanding - critical**

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### M25: Examples of discourse on Olympism: equal opportunity - supportive

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### M26: Examples of discourse on Olympism: equal opportunity - critical

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### M27: Examples of discourse on Olympism: excellence - supportive

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2) 

3) 

### M28: Examples of discourse on Olympism: excellence - critical

1) 

2) 

3)
(M29: Olympism: fair and equal competition - supportive)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>M29: Examples of discourse on Olympism: fair and equal competition - supportive</th>
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(M30: Olympism: fair and equal competition - critical)

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(M31: Olympism: cultural exchange - supportive)

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(M32: Olympism: cultural exchange - critical)

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### M33: Examples of discourse on Olympism: independence of sport from politics - supportive

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### M34: Examples of discourse on Olympism: independence of sport from politics - critical

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19
### M35: Examples of discourse on Olympism: environmentalism - supportive

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### M36: Examples of discourse on Olympism: environmentalism - critical

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### M37: Examples of reference to brand name sports clothing

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### M38: Examples of reference to brand name non-sport equipment

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M39: Examples of reference to brand name sports equipment

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M40: Examples of reference to the TOP scheme

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### M41: Commercialisation: OPUS sponsors

#### M41: Examples of reference to the OPUS sponsors

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### M42: Commercialisation: NOC sponsors

#### M42: Examples of reference to NOC sponsors

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(M43: Commercialisation: media institutions)

M41: Examples of reference to media institutions

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APPENDIX 2:

LETTERS TO TELEVISION
AND PRESS PERSONNEL
30th September, 2004

Martin Samuel,
The Daily Express,
245, Blackfriars Road,
London, SE1 9UX

Dear Mr Samuel,

I am a Research Student in the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences at Loughborough University and am currently conducting doctoral research into the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, globalisation and the media. This study is being supervised by Professor Joseph Maguire, within the school.

As part of my thesis I am investigating media representations of the Salt Lake City Games. This work involves an analysis of media texts such as newspapers with the aim of identifying the main themes evident in the coverage and understanding the manner in which the event was framed. In particular, I am interested in how and whether Olympism, as the ideology purported to underpin the Olympics, is expressed in media portrayals of the Salt Lake City Winter Games.

In order to attain a broader picture of the media’s role in the presentation of the Olympics to the public, I am now looking to gain an insight into the processes involved in covering the Games and the decisions taken by those reporting on them, such as yourself. In order to do this, I would like to conduct interviews with reporters at various newspapers and was hoping that you might be available to answer some questions on the matters involved in selecting angles taken on particular stories and the choices made in framing the Olympic Games for public consumption.

I appreciate your consideration in this matter and hope that you are able to assist. I am looking to conduct the interviews between now and April so if you are able to cooperate please suggest a time that is suitable for you. I will be able to meet you at your offices in London or at a mutually convenient location. Alternatively, if it is more convenient, a telephone interview would also be fine. If you require clarification or further information please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my supervisor at the above address. I am also contactable at the following email address: k.s.butler@lboro.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Katie Butler BA (Hons)
Research Student
School of Sport and Exercise Sciences
Loughborough University
30 September 2003

Senior Producer
Grandstand
Room 5110,
TV Centre,
Wood Lane,
London, W12 7RJ

Dear Mr Bramley,

I am a Research Student in the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences at Loughborough University and am currently conducting doctoral research into the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, globalisation and the media. This study is being supervised by Professor Joseph Maguire, within the school.

As part of my thesis I am investigating media representations of the Salt Lake City Games. This work involves an analysis of media texts such as television programmes with the aim of identifying the main themes evident in the coverage and understanding the manner in which the event was framed. In particular, I am interested in how and whether Olympism, as the ideology purported to underpin the Olympics, is expressed in media portrayals of the Salt Lake City winter Games.

In order to attain a broader picture of the media’s role in the presentation of the Olympics to the public, I am now looking to gain an insight into the production processes from the perspective of those who produce this coverage, such as yourself. In order to do this, I would like to conduct interviews with editors in various media institutions and was hoping that you might be available to answer some questions on the matters involved in decision making processes and the choices made in packaging the Olympic Games for public consumption.

I appreciate your consideration in this matter and hope that you are able to assist. I am looking to conduct the interviews between now and Christmas so if you are able to cooperate please suggest a time that is suitable for you. I will be able to meet you at the BBC headquarters in London or one of the other locations around the country. If you require clarification or further information please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my supervisor at the above address. I am also contactable at the following email address: k.s.butler@lboro.ac.uk. I will contact you in person in the next week or so.

Yours sincerely,

Katie Butler BA (Hons)
Research Student
School of Sport and Exercise Sciences
Loughborough University
APPENDIX 3:

TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS
WITH BBC PERSONNEL
Email interview with Sue Barker: Salt Lake City – Production

General/preparation

How much experience did you have in presenting Olympic programmes and particularly Winter Olympic sport before Salt Lake City?
I’ve presented on the Olympics since 1994, which were actually the winter Games in Lillehammer. So I guess I have quite a lot of experience in Olympic and winter Olympic coverage.

How did it come about that you were asked to present the Salt Lake Games and why do you think this was?
Well of the presenters from Grandstand, I’m one of the most experienced in winter Olympics in terms of presenting so I was asked to head most of the prime time programming, along with Steve Rider. I’m not sure I ever was officially asked to do it!!

Did you receive any specific training or preparation prior to the Games?
The researchers give us notes on the specific sports, which I had a look over, especially the events which were new. I spent a bit of time swotting up on new sports, such as skeleton for women and some of the snowboarding events. Mostly I focussed on making sure I knew who the British hopes were and getting a bit of background on them. Other than that it was pretty much a matter of relying on instinct and experience. Often this is the best way to be as natural as possible, we weren’t there to know all there is to know, and we had panels of experts such as Jayne Torvill and the Bell brothers on hand to cover any gaps in our more specific knowledge.

Having presented for the BBC in Summer Olympics also, did you find there were areas of overlap in terms of style and format of presentation of the Winter Games?
Definitely in terms of managing a range of events and suddenly switching from one to the other. Weekend Grandstand coverage can be a bit like that anyway, but with the Olympics being such a huge event you always have to be on your toes that bit more.

Were you given any advice on which elements to focus upon in coverage? (Eg. British success, unusual stories)
Well obviously the British success stories are given some priority, other than that, we weren’t really given advice but I suppose the focus is primarily on those who make up the medal positions.

If so, to which aspects did you give primacy?
This was a great Games for Britain, as we had some real medal chances, able to compete with athletes from nations with a greater winter sports history. In the past we’ve had to make the most of characters such as Eddie the Eagle and of course Torvill and Dean as kind of one-offs. In Salt Lake City, however, we had not only those who won medals to cheer about, but some talented youngsters who have a lot of potential for future Games. This kind of success is always the best kind of story and helps the Olympics sell themselves from the British point of view.

Were there any stories or issues in particular that you tended to avoid bringing up, if so why?
Not that I know of.
Women’s curling

How prepared were you for the sudden rising to the fore of curling during the Games?
The women’s success did kind of blind side us a little, and I don’t think we ever really tried to pretend otherwise! For most of us, in week one certainly, all eyes were on the failure of the men’s team to fulfil the hopes we had for them, whilst all the time the women were quietly making steady progress towards the final. I think we really picked up on the story at the play off stage, when it looked like we were going out and then the way they turned it around really captured people’s imagination. To be honest I think the girls themselves did all the selling of the story, we just tried to provide information on the rules and show as much coverage as possible. What angle did the production team choose to take in the packaging of the curling?
Mostly it was felt we really needed to basically explain to the majority of the nation what curling was! Just explaining the rules and tactics, and as I said above, the team really sold the story themselves.

The press treatment of the curling was fairly rife with gendered stereotypes of the women’s curling team, how sensitive do you feel you were to this in the BBC coverage of the team’s progress?
I was not aware of any stereotypes or sexist coverage of the team on our behalf and I think that’s just the way we tend to do things in terms of the BBC guidelines.

With the team being comprised entirely of Scots, nationalism politics of Great Britain arose at times as an issue, were you conscious of this and how did you deal with it?
Well it was no secret that the team were all Scots and we were aware of this. I don’t think this affected our style of coverage at all.

As a widely unfamiliar sport outside of Scotland, what elements of the sport of curling did you look to focus upon in trying to ‘sell’ curling to the British public?
See answers to previous questions.

The skating judging controversy

Were you given any advice and how to handle controversies such as the scandal of the judging of the pairs figure skating?
Not really, we are just made aware of the need to remain professional and impartial on these matters. We had a lot of researchers getting information on the ins and outs of the event and we were just there to give the viewers the facts really.

What was the BBC’s consensus of opinion on this story?
That it had to be given as much coverage as possible because it had aroused an awful lot of interest.

To what extent were you at liberty to express your own views on this case?
I was no expert on this story or skating more generally, we had Jayne Torvill working with us and so really I saw my role as just really trying to get an expert opinion from her on the story. My role was to ask the questions the viewers were asking and try to keep in mind audience views expressed in letters and emails to us. Sometimes this led to moving off the fence for a while, to really probe the issues, but I think this is good for discussion.

**What factors constrained this?**

Basically, my own knowledge.

**Did the producers make you aware of the BBC's general production guidelines when dealing with this incident?**

No

**Olympic coverage style**

**What kind of dialogue did you have with producers throughout the Games?**

Daily meetings which were to discuss the format and content of programming but that said, a lot of it is a matter of dealing with things as they happen, which you field as you see best.

**Is there anything unique about the Olympics per se that you were alert to in your presentation of the Games that set it apart from coverage of other major sporting competitions?**

Well it's the biggest festival for all the sports involved so the interest is immense and diverse so you have to cater for that. It's also one of the flagship events in terms of BBC coverage so we have to make sure we do a good job.

**Are you aware of the ideals associated with Olympism?**

Yes

**Were you sensitive to the use of the Games to convey the ideals associated with Olympism?**

Yes, it's an important element of the Olympics and when we see cases like Eric the Eel in Sydney it just goes to show that the Olympics really is about the achievement in effort as well as performance.

**If so, how did you look to achieve this?**

Just by focussing on stories such as those cited above which illustrate the Olympics ideals.

**Do you think the values of Olympism are important to the public in their understanding and enjoyment of the Olympics?**

Yes, I think so, this is probably why they are seen as special.
Email interview with Steve Cram: Salt Lake City – Production

General/preparation

How much experience did you have in presenting Olympic programmes and particularly Winter Olympic sport before Salt Lake City?

Well this was my first winter Olympics, but I’d worked on Sydney in 2000. In terms of experience in winter sports, I do ski recreationally but wouldn’t claim to be an expert on it!

How did it come about that you were asked to present the Salt Lake Games and why do you think this was?

I think because I’ve done the Olympics before and in all honesty as we’re not a nation of winter sport enthusiasts, I suppose there was no one really that experienced in that area, so we were chosen more on generic experience rather than winter sports knowledge.

Did you receive any specific training or preparation prior to the Games?

Just notes on the sports we were going to be covering and some info on the British hopes. Myself and Clare Balding, despite having some knowledge of the sports, in presenting the late night show were really there to try to sympathise with the less knowledgeable viewer.

Having presented for the BBC in Summer Olympics also, did you find there were areas of overlap in terms of style and format of presentation of the Winter Games?

In covering the range of sports and trying to appeal to a range of educated and less educated viewers.

Were you given any advice on which elements to focus upon in coverage? (Eg. British success, unusual stories)

I’m not sure we were actually told this as such but I guess it’s taken as read that we will cover the British fortunes with close interest, with the British audience in mind. Having said that, we obviously cover anyone that does well.

If so, to which aspects did you give primacy?

See above.

Were there any stories or issues in particular that you tended to avoid bringing up, if so why?

I don’t think so, we don’t censor the coverage, we like to tell the viewer how it is.

Women’s curling

How prepared were you for the sudden rising to the fore of curling during the Games?

Not very, in all honesty!
What angle did the production team choose to take in the packaging of the curling?
We were just trying to make sure people knew what was going on, I mean for most people this was their first experience of the sport and we were all pretty much learning from scratch!

The press treatment of the curling was fairly rife with gendered stereotypes of the women’s curling team, how sensitive do you feel you were to this in the BBC coverage of the team’s progress?
The team’s sex was not an issue in the portrayal of their success and they were treated in just the same way as a men’s team would have been.

With the team being comprised entirely of Scots, nationalism politics of Great Britain arose at times as an issue, were you conscious of this and how did you deal with it?
I don’t think we really had to deal with it as such. The team were all Scots, which is no great surprise given its relative popularity North of the border. Our commentators were Scottish as is Hazel Irvine, who was the rink side presenter. All credit to the Scots, it was a great win!

As a widely unfamiliar sport outside of Scotland, what elements of the sport of curling did you look to focus upon in trying to 'sell' curling to the British public?
I really think the success sold itself, everyone wants to see a gold medal and as soon of the press got wind of the team’s progress the interest was there and we just had to make sure we covered it in an interesting and appropriate manner.

The skating judging controversy

Were you given any advice and how to handle controversies such as the scandal of the judging of the pairs figure skating?
No, not that I recall. It was a big story so we gave it due attention and responded to the interest it engendered, informing the audience as far as we could.

What was the BBC's consensus of opinion on this story?
That it was controversial and exciting, therefore newsworthy.

To what extent were you at liberty to express your own views on this case?
When issues like the skating controversy come up I think viewers like to see presenters engaging in some lively debate and sometimes frank and honest opinions can be a breath of fresh air. We had a lot of viewers express their opinions to us on this and I felt playing devil’s advocate was a good way to get some interesting responses from the experts we had in and help answer some of the questions raised in emails etc.

What factors constrained this?
None really, so long as I was factual in what I was saying.

Did the producers make you aware of the BBC's general production guidelines when dealing with this incident?
No
Olympic coverage style

What kind of dialogue did you have with producers throughout the Games?
We had meeting every evening to debrief on what was going on and what the programme would be covering.

Is there anything unique about the Olympics per se that you were alert to in your presentation of the Games that set it apart from coverage of other major sporting competitions?
The Olympics are the pinnacle of sporting competition and represent sport at its best. With the range of sports involved, there is a need to have a much broader range of knowledge than, for example, when I’m working on the world athletics champs. Also, as I said earlier, the need to appeal to a diverse audience as the profile of the Games means that a massive range of people tune in.

Are you aware of the ideals associated with Olympism?
Yes, I think so.

Were you sensitive to the use of the Games to convey the ideals associated with Olympism?
Yes.

If so, how did you look to achieve this?
We try to look at any interesting stories that might show some element of humanity and also that show courage or determination.

Do you think the values of Olympism are important to the public in their understanding and enjoyment of the Olympics?
Yes, and as I say I think we try to reflect this. I particularly remember at Salt Lake, given the current climate of international hostilities, the coming together of nations was something that really stood out in the opening ceremony then the World Trade Centre flag was carried through.
Email interview with Clare Balding: Salt Lake City – Production

General/preparation

How much experience did you have in presenting Olympic programmes and particularly Winter Olympic sport before Salt Lake City?
I had presented the evening highlights programme and the afternoon studio based programmes during the second week of the Sydney Olympics. I had covered the Skiing World Championships for Radio 5 Live in Sestriere in 1997.

How did it come about that you were asked to present the Salt Lake Games and why do you think this was?
I have skied since I was about 10 and had some experience of covering live winter sports but I suspect it was more to do with having presented Grandstand and doing OK on the programmes from Sydney.

Did you receive any specific training or preparation prior to the Games?
We were given a large book of notes on all the disciplines and the leading competitors in each field but were advised that as our audience would, for the most part, not be experts in winter sports, it would be better not to assume too much knowledge and not to be afraid to ask our experts the ‘obvious’ question.

Having presented for the BBC in Summer Olympics also, did you find there were areas of overlap in terms of style and format of presentation of the Winter Games?
Yes, in terms of the wide range of sports covered and the breadth of knowledge required but the late show on which I working was more relaxed, more quirky and had more of a sense of humour than anything I did from Sydney.

Were you given any advice on which elements to focus upon in coverage? (Eg. British success, unusual stories)
We did make as much as we could of the British competitors (whether successful or not) and I particularly enjoyed the unusual stories or the funny footage (like the Venezuelan woman coming down the luge track ahead of her luge). It was a late-night programme and I think we wanted to get an element of cult viewing into the mix.

If so, to which aspects did you give primacy?
Having said that, we focused on the major events, like the men’s and women’s downhill, the ice hockey and, of course, the curling. Never before has a nation known so much or been so interested in such a bizarre sport!

Were there any stories or issues in particular that you tended to avoid bringing up, if so why?
I can’t think of any stories we deliberately avoided.

Women’s curling

How prepared were you for the sudden rising to the fore of curling during the Games?
How prepared were you for the sudden rising to the fore of curling during the Games?
Not at all. I knew absolutely nothing about it until I read the notes.

What angle did the production team choose to take in the packaging of the curling?
Hazel Irvine was sent out to the venue for the final and presented from there, while Steve Cram and I continued to link from London. We did a fair bit on the family members of the team who had travelled out to support them and those who had stayed at home. We explained the rules of curling and I got very excited about a website I had found that showed all of the different moves. I can't pretend that I remember much of it now.

The press treatment of the curling was fairly rife with gendered stereotypes of the women’s curling team, how sensitive do you feel you were to this in the BBC coverage of the team’s progress?
We covered it as we would have done any sport in which Britain suddenly enjoys unexpected success and about which the audience know very little. I know we didn’t slip into patronising ‘housewives with brooms’ nonsense and I got really into the whole thing. I wanted to know more about the various team members and about the tactics of the game. I figured that if I wanted to know more, so did the audience.

With the team being comprised entirely of Scots, nationalism politics of Great Britain arose at times as an issue, were you conscious of this and how did you deal with it?
As it happens, and not intentionally, we had a Scottish presenter in Hazel Irvine and a Scottish commentator in Dougie Donnelly. I didn’t really think about it at the time and I haven’t done since.

As a widely unfamiliar sport outside of Scotland, what elements of the sport of curling did you look to focus upon in trying to ‘sell’ curling to the British public?
The importance of the speed of the stone - that it’s not all about blasting the thing down the ice. We explained the rules at every opportunity but nothing sells a sport like success so I would put the viewing figures entirely down to the team themselves. There was little we could do other than find space to cover the final live, which we did.

The skating judging controversy

Were you given any advice and how to handle controversies such as the scandal of the judging of the pairs figure skating?
The reporting team on site did their bit in terms of getting all sides of the story and we recruited experts who could give an informed view of it. As a presenter, my opinion was not required and not offered. I remember reading out e-mails about it and we got plenty of viewer feedback.

What was the BBC’s consensus of opinion on this story?
It was a great story and created an awful lot of interest.
To what extent were you at liberty to express your own views on this case? (see above)

What factors constrained this?
I’m there to ask the questions, not to answer them and wouldn’t feel qualified so to do.

Did the producers make you aware of the BBC’s general production guidelines when dealing with this incident?
Not that I recall.

Olympic coverage style

What kind of dialogue did you have with producers throughout the Games?
We had meetings every evening and discussed the guests and the sports we would be covering. I would make various suggestions but once we were on the air, much of the conversation just happens as it happens.

Is there anything unique about the Olympics per se that you were alert to in your presentation of the Games that set it apart from coverage of other major sporting competitions?
I love the range of events and the interest the whole thing generates. There is a lot more homework required on different countries and the basics of flag recognition and familiarity with national anthems, as well as pronunciation etc. I am also very aware of the history of the Games and make sure that I know key events that occurred in the modern era.

Are you aware of the ideals associated with Olympism?
Yes.

Were you sensitive to the use of the Games to convey the ideals associated with Olympism?
Yes — I am a strong believer in the cultural and educational importance of sport, its role in society and its ability to enrich lives.

If so, how did you look to achieve this?
By doing historical features on the venue in question to give a broader view of the country and its traditions. Also by not just focussing on the winners and their sporting excellence but on those who achieve their goal just by competing.

Do you think the values of Olympism are important to the public in their understanding and enjoyment of the Olympics?
Yes.
Interview with Jonny Bramely: BBC Exec producer – Grandstand; Skiing producer, Salt Lake City, 11/02/04  
(Experience of four Winter Games)

KB – Prior to the Games, obviously there was a with the packaging, getting an idea of what was going to go ahead. How was it decided which sports and events would get priority in the coverage.

JB - I would say that’s pretty much dictated by what’s gone on in, to start off with what history suggests so in terms of the British audience we know from just taking raw viewing figures, figure skating is one of the most popular events so it’s usually, if the games are taking place in our time zones, they tend to reach prime time. So that’s something that’s given priority and we would certainly tend to take a lot of that live in the evenings. The other events again that we tend to do live would be skiing I mean skiing’s probably the only winter sport that we have a regular strand for on BBC television, throughout the winter, which is ski Sunday, so where we can we would try and schedule a lot of the ski races live. The third factor is probably where there might be some British interest. Traditionally that’s been in events like bobsleigh, which we would try and carry live. Obviously British success in Winter Olympic medals is quite limited, but there was obviously the big example in the last Olympics was curling and that took off and we actually adjusted our schedules to cope with that. We actually scheduled extra live curling when Britain got through to the final of the ladies. So yeah I mean traditionally we would probably go by what our past research has shown us, what the audiences prefer.

KB – Obviously, in general Grandstand has got quite a large team of presenters and anchor people, and commentators. How was it decided on who would be working on the team for the Olympic coverage on Grandstand?

JB - Er, first of all, the Olympics, be it Summer or Winter are our crown jewel events so immediately what we want to do is give those anchor roles to our most respected and experienced presenters, initially. Additionally, I would say, that perhaps because of the winter’s being some events which aren’t that familiar to viewers, it’s also important perhaps to include people who might be able to give it just a little kind of perspective perhaps. For example, if you wanted specifics in Salt Lake City, the late night highlights, the main, live shows were handled by Steve Rider and Sue Barker, out most experienced presenters, but we had the combination of Steve Cram and Claire Balding, you know after the highlights show, and I think what the idea was there was to do, was that kind of programme was perhaps kind of aimed at people who wouldn’t perhaps be winter sport viewers, so what you’ve got there you’ve got Steve Cram and Claire Balding who are experienced presenters but experts in other areas and they were almost bringing it home to the viewers from a viewer’s perspective. Here’s somebody else who perhaps isn’t recognised to be an expert in winter sports so they might kind of be more in tune with the viewers in terms of their kind of perspective and experience of these sports. So it’s giving it, giving it something extra really.

KB – Right, so they’re kind of taking the role of learning along with the viewer almost?
JB - In a way, yes, yeah. Although not at the expense of not being completely ignorant themselves, obviously having some experience in broadcasting.

KB - When the coverage is being drawn up, again prior to the Games, is there a dialogue with the IOC or media representatives from the IOC in terms of how the Games should be packages etc., or is that totally down to the BBC?

JB - I'm not aware that there's any kind of direct influence from the IOC. Erm, obviously, we obviously have a relationship there, and I would say not just the IOC but even more so the BOA. Erm but I wouldn't say there's any kind of direct influence in terms of what we actually show, I mean obviously there's a dialogue, especially in terms of the BOA, we as I mentioned before, if events involved British athletes and especially British athletes with a chance of a medal then we would actually like to give them more promotion, which is probably inkeeping with what the BOA would want, but that's more to do with what the British public actually want, rather than the BOA themselves.

KB - Ok, so would you, for example if you were unsure of how to sort of package an event, would there be any chance of somebody going to the IOC from the BBC at all, or would that not really happen.

JB - Not really, the BBC impartiality really, we wouldn't really be able to be involved with that sort of dialogue really.

KB - Ok, erm, now from what I understand, came from the NBC feed, what sort of choice did the BBC have in terms of selection of camera angles, and shots etc.

JB - Ok it wasn't actually NBC, the Olympic broadcaster is actually ISB, so NBC would broadcast the Games in the States but they actually have an Olympic broadcaster and in Salt Lake City it was a company called ISB who do actually tend to produce coverage for the Olympics. So they were the host broadcaster. And I mean you're absolutely right, in the Winter Olympics especially, we don't really have any additional event coverage ourselves. It's pretty much all the coverage we are taking is pretty much all provided by the host broadcaster, the only additional camera work and images that we provide are by our portable cameras are ENG cameras. Which are providing interviews and features and preview material that kind of thing. In terms of actual event coverage we were taking purely what was available to us on the host feed.

KB - You said that you were getting interviews, etc from your local bbc cameras, what was it you were hoping to capture there that you wouldn't have got from the host feed?

JB - Oh well anything that would normally supplement a live broadcast, so any interviews were done by our own cameras. Any kind of features in terms of setting up events, you know, explanations, guides, that sort of thing. All the supplementary programme which is outside the live event. That would all be done on our own cameras. But in terms of the event cameras, that's all done on the host broadcast.
KB - Winter sports aren’t massively popular in this country, with that being the case, what sorts of decisions did you have to make in terms of making those Games more appealing to the public than they might have been otherwise?

JB - I think there’s a couple of things. Which we hope to kind of get across which we hope will you know, enhance the viewers’ enjoyment. Erm I think first of all it would probably be the locations and erm that’s something which ski Sunday has exploited before, it’s the whole, you know the scenery the mountains, the sunshine the snow, it’s almost, you know, a kind of fantasy in a way really. We don’t as you say, er winter sports aren’t popular here, mainly because we don’t do it, we don’t have the climate, we don’t have the terrain, the weather. So that whole, the great images which it provides, from those sort of mountain adventures, that one thing we sort of hope to get across. Secondly, a lot of the sports, you know, they’re very kind of technical, they’re very dynamic, they’re very fast, they’re very skilful. So there’s an opportunity to try and get across some of those erm, ideas, which would hopefully, perhaps some of those people who aren’t avid sports viewers or certainly not avid winter sport viewers might find exciting. They’re sports where there aren’t a lot of complicated rules, it’s just a question of who can go the fastest, that sort of thing. Erm and those are quite a lot of the ideas we pick up on when we try to sell the Games in terms of the features we do, in terms of the explanation. And then finally I think is something which we are certainly kind of do more of is some of the newer events, like snowboarding and attempt to try and attract a younger audience. Because there is a culture among more and more young people today, it a whole kind of snowboarding, skateboarding culture, which we would attempt to tap into, although I’m not sure quite how successful that was but it’s an idea.

KB - Ok. Do you think that the fact that these winter sports in the Olympics are under the Olympic banner, do you think that adds marketability to the Games?

JB - Definitely. You can say that apart from skiing, there aren’t any other of those events that we cover regularly on BBC television. So that’s absolutely the case. The fact that they’re an Olympics. That’s what people tune in for. It’s the epitome of those sports.

KB - What do you think it is about the Olympics that would attract a mass audience in that way?

JB - Erm, it’s because the Olympics, it’s an event that transcends sport, erm I think you’d find a lot of people who weren’t interested in any individual sports, when the Olympics comes along it becomes a much bigger event. It’s an event you know that will regularly appear in the newspapers, perhaps front pages as well as back pages, erm it’s a event that will find its way onto the news, find its way into other programming perhaps as well. So it tends to draw people in who perhaps normally wouldn’t be avid viewers. It’s an event more than just a sporting event.

KB - Would that influence how you then package and market the Games. Would you kind of play on that Olympic draw?

JB - Absolutely, you know, you’re playing on the fact that it’s the Olympics, it’s the pinnacle of sport, the Olympics, the world cup, you know. These are the biggest
things in sport. Also erm in the build up to an Olympics, we will liaise with other areas of television to kind of cross promote the event. In terms of other areas perhaps like children’s or the holiday programme, that sort of thing to try and build up in people’s minds you know that this is a big sporting event.

KB – The IOC in what they try and put across, would claim that the Olympics is more than a sporting competition as you say, that they’ve actually got a set of values that would actually underpin the Olympic movement. Such as fair play, opportunity for all, international understanding. Is this sort of thing something that the BBC would consider in their production of the Games?

JB – We would do yeah. Urm, obviously, as you say you’ve got those Olympic ideals as well and that’s fairly obvious in any sport we cover, in that you know we like to think that we always go for the top level or the top quality or the top dedication from the athletes. What I think’s also important in the Olympics is that it’s not just about the winning you know and the guys who win the medals, it’s also about those perhaps who are coming from nations who aren’t perhaps traditionally winter sports. I mean, you know that could apply to the Brits, you know look at Eddie the Eagle for example, that’s a perfect example. He just happened to be British but also for athletes from other areas, I think the fact that, you know, they’re kind of there to make the effort, that’s the biggest thing in their lives, if they’re not quite at the top, you know there’s always a good story to be told there.

KB – In terms of what we would see as the viewers, how would that manifest itself, would you do special features, or is it just a general awareness of those issues?

JB – A bit of both, really. I mean for example, let’s say erm in a men’s giant slalom skiing there’s probably 100 competitors, so you’d probably in a cut down yes you’d show the top ten but you’d also show the guys who are right down the field who are providing entertainment because of their endeavours which weren’t quite coming up to scratch. But I think again, if there was a story to be told there, we would do a feature on it. I think in way sometimes you get characters like you know Eric the Eel from the summer Olympics, as an example, who probably hit the front pages ahead of some guys who might win gold medals who will only be on the back pages. So it’s kind of tapping into that as an event, you know and it’s something that kind of transcends you know being the best, you know there’s more to it than that.

KB – There obviously is that need to show the medal winners and those who win, but as you say there’s also this wanting to emphasise as well this taking part. Do you think there’s a tension between trying to see the best of both worlds in that sense?

JB – Tension in terms of our decision making in what we show?

KB – yeah

JB – I don’t know about tension but there’s certainly always some difficult decisions to be made. Yeah. You know there’s obviously a lot of events going on there and you’ve always got limited time so yes there’s always those question marks, you obviously, you’re obliged to show those top performances, in terms of the pure kind of sporting ability, but you also want to tell a story as well and you know going back
to that wider audience. If you take it away from being a pure sporting event to a non-sport event in terms of actually showing some of the stories in terms of those who try and fail, it’s getting the balance right, it’s a fine line to be honest.

KB - In recent years sport generally has become more commercialised and in terms of the Olympics, many would see 1980 as a bit of a watershed with the LA Games being more on the commercial side of things. But in terms of the coverage, there’s kind of a noticeable difference between the BBC coverage and that of a commercial channel such a Eurosport. Now obviously Eurosport have commercial breaks and some programmes are actually sponsored, but other than those obvious differences are there any other ways in which the BBC looks to operate in an uncommercialised way and frame it in that respect?

JB - Are we talking specifically about Olympics again?

KB - Yes

JB - The Olympics are a great event for us because of the lack of sponsorship and commercialism involved. You know, it’s always a problem for us who are you know non-commercial broadcasters where constantly you’ve got sponsor’s banners, and on clothing, I would just sort of say that the Olympics are a great event for us because you don’t have to worry about anything like that. Erm I suppose that can make it a problem for commercial broadcasters. Erm it’s something that’s easier to carry off than most other events to be honest.

KB - Obviously with the Olympics which is very much less commercialised because of the restrictions, you would still get some product placement, for example you’ve got the Nike tick on clothing and stuff. Is there a policy on how much of that you will show, or is it a case of what comes up will get shown and hopefully it won’t be too much?

JB - Yeah I mean in terms of again we’re taking host broadcaster, we’ve got absolutely no control over that to be honest. But you assume that, especially in the Olympics, there isn’t going to be any blatant commercialism anyway, obviously that’s part of the rules of the broadcasting, there’s no kind of sponsors’ influence on the way an event’s covered. Yeah ok if one of the British athletes came into the studio with a sponsor’s name prominently displayed, we ask them to remove it, you know, it’s just kind of as simple as that. Although I think they’d probably be obliged to wear their team GB outfit, so they probably wouldn’t. It’s definitely much less of a problem you know during the Olympics than it would normally be really.

KB - Obviously in something like the Olympics, there’s always going to be breaking stories. Is there an advance policy on how stories such as drug cases and specifically kind of the skating controversy, how they’re handled and what sort of discussion is there between the producers and anchor people on this?

JB - Erm, in terms of advance, nothing probably really beyond the standard sort of BBC guideline really in terms of really you know, just reporting as truthfully and impartially as possible. I don’t think you can really anticipate those sorts of things in a way. Ok, Salt Lake was a good example where there was a lot of heightened security
with the events that happened just before. And that was one of the aspects, you know that we gave due prominence to, the fact that security was at that level. But I mean that was one of the news stories at the time and we were just kind of reflecting that really. Erm any stories that break then we do tend to have our standard guidelines on how we treat them.

KB – Moving on to the opening and closing ceremonies. As we said before there was a host feed of the Games and of the ceremonies, and was it entirely from that host feed or was there any choices the BBC were able to make in terms of the images that we saw?

JB – No we didn’t. I mean just to let you know again, in the summer Olympics, we would tend to have one of our own cameras available to use which we could perhaps focus on the British team when they are parading around the stadium. Due to restrictions from the host broadcaster and our own budgets, we didn’t actually have any cameras of our own during either the opening or closing ceremonies. I mean what you basically saw was exactly what the host was offering.

KB – Ok, within that main feed, was there angles that you got to choose from, or was it literally just a feed that was coming through?

JB – No we didn’t really have any choice it was literally just one feed and we either took it or didn’t.

KB – There’s a structure to the ceremonies, did the organising committee provide information to help sketch plan the ceremonies to people such as yourself?

JB – Not really I mean the ceremonies there are all very very secret. I mean what we do occasionally have a couple of days before, they have a final rehearsal, which is broadcast, but it’s always a feed which is available, which has got graphics, on it saying not for broadcast. So until that’s happened it’s actually kept quite secret. I mean we’re obviously given kind of you know, some basic information for commentators before hand, which is provided in written sheets, you know, in terms of the numbers of participants, that sort of thing. And sometimes the ideologies behind the programme itself and the ceremonies, but that tends not to be released until very close to the time. It’s actually kept quite a bit of a secret, so you know, we don’t tend to really kind of interpret that as such and we’re kind of given facts, you know from the producers of the ceremony and that forms part of the basis of some of the commentary.

KB – Barry Davis did at times appear to be using a script, and I guess that’s kind of from this information as you say.

JB – Exactly, exactly. It’s kind of as I say, I mean we don’t kind of modify it as such but in a way you don’t kind of want to modify it because the script you’re given, I mean it’s not a script, it’s more of an explanation, it’s what’s given to you by the organising committee and therefore you kind of you don’t really want to interpret that you want to tell it as straight as it is really.
KB – I guess that must make it quite hard to commentate on the ceremonies because they’re very much live and you’ve only got so much information to use beforehand...

JB – Very much so, I mean not kind of quoting Salt Lake exactly but other ceremonies there have kind of been dubious moments and it might be quite hard for the commentators to sound you know sincere about it but I think that’s all part of the skill really.

KB – Sticking with the Salt Lake City opening ceremony, obviously there was the issue of the World Trade Centre flag, erm and it was quite interesting that the press in the build up, very much focussed on this and the politics that surround that and what kind of precedent it would set, but interestingly in the BBC coverage, there was not the same kind of critical dialogue around it and I was just wondering why you think that might have been the case and was that a deliberate decision?

JB – It was a deliberate decision as in the fact that we’re not really here to provide comment on it, we’re to provide the facts really in a way and it’s sort of up to the audience perhaps to take their own interpretation from it. And I think that it’s just about being as objective as possible really and not kind of you know, influencing people’s kind of you know their own opinions of what’s being shot.

KB – Ok, would that be something that’s within the BBC’s kind of general guidelines?

JB – Absolutely, it’s kind of complete impartiality really in terms of we tell it like it is, what you see. We shouldn’t be in any way influencing opinions about what people are seeing.

KB – The ceremonies are viewed in a way to promote Olympic values and Olympism, would this be something the BBC try to do in the ceremonies and how would this be discussed in production etc?

JB – Erm, it’s tricky again as I said, the details of the ceremonies are not something we get in advance, we don’t really have any influence in the way we actually provide the programming from the ceremonies. I mean in terms of how we comment on it and how we present that to the extent we can. And that absolutely true, I mean you know the ceremonies they are, they’re very grand occasions and that’s what they’re designed to do and we’ll kind of give it, you know, the sufficient gravitas it deserves you know and where it’s deliberately trying to promote that we’ll reflect that.

KB – Moving on to the skating judging controversy now. In general what would constitute a big breaking story? I mean what is about a story that makes it newsworthy?

JB – A big story is something that is going to get beyond the back pages of the newspapers and hit the front pages. It’s something that the news are going to pick up on, and it’s then it’s a story and it goes beyond sport. In this case, you know absolutely you know I mean, once it became apparent that that was going beyond sport, you know then we have to kind of you know, reflect that in a way.
KB - When you say it goes beyond sport, with this particular example in mind, how would you say that went beyond the sport?

JB - I think because, I think it was probably a fairly unique situation in Olympic history, I'm not sure of my facts there. Partly because it was figure skating, as I already mentioned it is one of the prime sports in terms of the British population erm, again, it was whether it was ice dance or pairs, because of the Torvill and Dean effect, you know, that's something again of worthy of the British population, something they're quite interested in. Erm, but it's I guess it's something that's out of the ordinary, it's controversial, it'll make somebody kind of, you know, sit up and listen and take an interest in something that they might not normally have done.

KB - A lot of the issues that were tied up with it were to do with corruption, a lack of fair play and sort of political scenario, is something very much in contradiction to Olympism, do you think that's something that also made it more newsworthy, because it was something contrary to what we hoped the Games would be about?

JB - Yes. Absolutely. I mean, let's not kid ourselves, obviously there has been a lot of cynicism about the whole kind of the movement, and that's not something we'd shy away from. It's a news issue, you know and we wouldn't kind of duck the issue you know, we'd accept it, we'd confront it and we'd comment on it. And if that's what was kind of interesting people at the time, then we've gotta reflect that and it was a big story, again it's not up to pass judgement, but it's certainly up to us to report the facts and if people wanna see more of that we'll give them more of that, you know.

KB - It's interesting to hear what you say about it being a big story, because I know that during the ongoing coverage of that, I think both Clare Balding and Hazel Irvine both made reference to the US press coverage of the story, to what extent would the press response influence the TV reaction or coverage?

JB - Again if it's a big story then, even in the US press or otherwise, if it's a big story, then people are interested, we want to serve that interest. Again anything that moves from the back pages to the front pages, I know I keep using that cliché, but it's, we'll kind of feed off that, we'll kind of we'll play to it in a way~ If it's something that we think will make an interesting story then certainly, we'll certainly go down that line.

KB - Ok, again a lot of the press coverage on this was on the geo political, east-west divide, but the BBC didn't go along those lines, it was more interested in the internal politics, in the Rogge/Cinquenta, sort of relationship and how they would react and what would be done. Was this a conscious move away from the geo political issues?

JB - It was, because I think that you know again, just to kind of make that point, the east west thing was something that was probably based on speculation rather than fact and I think if we had gone down that line aswell, I think in a way we'd have not been true to our impartiality in reporting the facts, I think erm although perhaps that's something that could have been tapped into because that could have been almost, you know the tabloid approach, to it, again we're just sort of having to make sure that our facts are correct, you know, we are impartial, let's concentrate on the facts and let people decide you know, themselves what they think the real issues are there.
KB – Obviously you’ve got guidelines to impartiality, you don’t want to express political views, but would that be more of an issue in the Olympics, because of the fact that the Olympics are supposed to be separated from politics, or would that not influence it?

JB – No not really, I think that we were just kind of applying our principles of broadcasting really, here you know, it may have been more apparent that way because it was the Olympics, but we wouldn’t have treated that any differently to how we would have treated anything similarly controversial in any other kind of sport at any other level.

KB – So the breaking of the skategate story was pretty much live, and we saw it happen, but did that kind of prompt an official meeting on how the story would be handled from the very top, or was it very much down to as it evolved, up to the anchor people and commentators?

JB – Certainly the decisions on how that would have been covered, would have been taken by the executive editor, that’s Dave Gordon, and being a potentially sensitive issue, there would have been reference back, ultimately to Dave about the way it was covered, about any sort of features that were done, so there would have been a direct sort of line of responsibility in terms of decision making in that area.

KB – Was there a kind of official angle decided upon on how to take the story or was that again that sort of arose out of the situation?

JB – As far as an official line goes, that’s probably one sort of question that I’m not sure that I can answer. I mean I don’t think there ever was one, I could be wrong, but I think again that it’s probably just applying standard kind of principles really. I’m not sure anything extra was added really, if you need to get a definitive answer on that, it’s something I can kind of get back to you on.

KB – Steve Cram is someone that springs to mind as someone that was actually quite outspoken on the incident, and the eventual solution of it. What sort of level of autonomy did anchor people such as Cram and Barker have in expressing their opinions on that?

JB – Erm, I think it’s something that would have been discussed beforehand in programme meetings, I mean, erm. And I’m pretty sure that this issue itself would have been discussed quite heavily. So I mean we wouldn’t have expected the presenters to have had, ok I mean I said you know where was probably no official sort of BBC angle on it, and perhaps it is up to interpretation there, but you know they would certainly have you know, guidelines in how they would handle the event. Yes. You know I’m not saying we’re stifling individuality here, but although perhaps there was no sort of official line there was you know a BBC way of doing things here, and er which is to report the facts, not actually pass to much comment, sort of you know in terms of provoke a reaction but you know, just sort of give the facts as they were you know and just give the best possible information to the public to make sure they’re informed enough to make their own decisions.
KB - Right because the Cram particular incident, he was saying that he disagreed with how it was decided, it was the wrong thing to do, and I was just wondering if that was something you would have expected to have come out?

JB - I think that's just Steve Cram. Being totally autonomous!

KB - The final case study that came up in my observation of the coverage was the women's curling. It was quite a surprise I guess, to everyone, that they did as well as they did. I was just wondering what rearrangement was required to accommodate that increased level of interest that came along with that.

JB - Well it was interesting because the men were expected to do well, not the women's team. So as curling kind of developed, you know we adjusted the schedules slightly because we'd just sort of planned so much. But especially with the final and the semi-final, we did extend out coverage. I think when an event takes off like that it's something that has to be negotiated between BBC sport and network controllers and in that case where it's obvious that you know, that the audiences are big enough, you know to warrant that, then you know, there's no problem there with altering finals. To be fair, with the final specifically, erm, the first 50 minutes of the final were shown on BBC Scotland but not on network. And it was felt obviously that it wasn't kind of justified enough to remove programmes from network for that length of time, but in Scotland where, it was a British team but they were obviously all Scottish, they were actually, and I haven't got the figures in front of me in terms of viewing share in Scotland at the time in comparison with network, but I think you'd probably find that there was a bigger share in Scotland and that was justified in actually showing more of it.

KB - Staying with that issue of the final and how it was aired, was there any public reaction to the fact that England, Wales and Northern Ireland didn't get full coverage?

JB - I'm not sure about that to be honest, I might need to get back to you on that one actually as well.

KB - Ok. And just sort of on the same line, obviously you said you didn't think you able to justify rescheduling that sort of length of time for the final, why was that the case? Obviously it was an Olympic final and there was British interest, with a silver medal guaranteed.

JB - Erm, again I'm not sure what programme was on at the time, which wasn’t displaced, but again I just think you’ll probably find that in terms of BBC sport you know we would have been quite kind of vocal in meetings with channel controllers in wanting to get it on there, but that's from our point of view, obviously they've got their core, their regular audience to worry about, you know, it's always a problem you know, shifting programmes for sport, you really do tend to divide the viewing audience. And it's never and easy decision and in that case obviously it was felt you know, that it wasn’t justified.

KB - But that would be a decision made by programme controllers as opposed to Grandstand itself.
JB - Oh absolutely, yeah I mean there are always constant battles between what we would like to show and what the channel controllers what to show, so there's nothing strange there at all.

KB - Obviously with the heightened profile of curling that arose from the final and the success, did this mean that there had to be some kind of dialogue between the producers and commentators about the style in which the curling would be covered? I mean obviously there was Dougie Donnelly and Kirsty Hay in the commentary and then Claire Balding and I seem to remember Steve Cram having a lot in terms of the studio. Was there an emergency meeting, saying this is how we go with it?

JB - In terms of a meeting, obviously it's quite difficult to call a meeting because Steve and Claire were back in London with the Executive Editor and the others were actually at the venue in Salt Lake, but the, again, I probably couldn't give you the exact scenario of how that was decided. What I do know is we decided that obviously this was the big moment of the Games and we arranged for Hazel Irvine to be there to have a live actual camera there after the event, so that was something that was arranged close to the event, that hadn't originally been planned. So in terms of the status we kind of gave the event, I mean yes, that was it was Britain's big moment, so it was given all the appropriate status. In terms of the actual way it was covered, I don't know I might have to get back to you on that.

KB - So maybe taking it back a few steps chronologically, as the tournament evolved, what kind of steps did the BBC take to try and make the curling a bit more accessible and more appealing to the wider British audience who might not necessarily know that much about the sport to begin with.

JB - I mean, obviously first of all, an explanation of the rules, the commentators, it was emphasised to them that they must continually remember that the audience, you know aren't very familiar, so you know explain the rules all the way along. We also, made sure that we ran features prior to the event to explain what's going on as well. But also as well, we also wanted to bring out the personalities of the athletes themselves, I mean you know, part of the story was you know, that you've got kind of sort of four fairly ordinary Scottish housewives, to all intents and purposes so you know what you're sort of saying here is that these people you can identify with, you know. You know, it shows that you don't have to be an elite athlete here almost in a way someone who you wouldn't normally think to look twice at is actually capable of winning an Olympic medal. So I think you know, the personalities of those involved as well was all part of it.

KB - Obviously there was a real Scottish element to that curling, as the entire team are from Scotland, did this influence packaging and production choices in any way? Obviously showing the final in practical terms in all in Scotland, but other than that, was there anything that would have arisen out of that?

JB - I don't think so. I also don't think we shied away from the Scottish angle, you know it was a British team but they were all Scottish you know, they would have represented Scotland in other tournaments so I mean I don't think there was any erm, obviously you know we would refer to them as a British team, but we wouldn't shy away from the fact that there was, they were proud to be Scottish I mean and they
may have said that they did it for Scotland, which was fine, I don’t think we were
kind of shying away from the fact and trying to pretend that this was just a victory for
Britain but also a victory for Scotland.

KB – Do you think that with that there were perhaps some political issues tied up with
the Scottish nationalism? And if so how did you deal with that?

JB – erm, I don’t there were any political issues for us in terms of how we portrayed
it, to be honest, I think there were probably four very proud Scottish ladies, but you
know, they were doing it for Britain as well. I’m not aware that that influenced the
way we portrayed the event.

KB – Again comparing the press and TV coverage, the press did seem to contain quite
a lot of gender based stereotypes. But for the most part the BBC took quite a less
gendered approach, was there any formal steps taken to ensure this, particularly for
that final?

JB – Not that I’m aware of that there was anything official that was set in stone, that
was set up particularly for that event, I think in way it was actually, the fact that it was
originally the men that were expected to do well and it was the women in the end, I
think that was possibly something that was you know, even celebrated perhaps, you
know. Erm I can’t sort of think that that was something that would have influenced
the way it was covered to be honest. In a way other than the fact that they were more
of the underdogs than the men might have been so it was perhaps you know, even
more of a surprise and therefore even more kind of celebrated in a way.

KB – I guess looking at the coverage closely, there were some instances, where the
women were referred to as girls in some cases, I think one of the issues in the build up
was that they used a kind of diary situation to track the route to the final and there
was a decidedly domestic setting for an interview on the eve of the final. These could
all kind of be interpreted as a gendered way of framing it, do you think that would
have played a part in the choices made, or do you think it was just a coincidence?

JB – Erm, I don’t recall the feature exactly and I don’t know whether there might
have been some sort of you know, tongue in cheek references there. I mean obviously
at the time there was kind of the press line about this whole thing you know of
housework on ice and this sort of thing, I mean I would have thought that if that kind
of line was taken at all it would have been done purely tongue in cheek, with the full
blessing of those involved. I don’t think there would have been any attempt to belittle
the sport or their achievements.

KB – The viewing figures were obviously very high in the final, especially given the
time of day and the general popularity of the sport. I think it peaked at 5.7m at one
point. What do you think it was that caused such as interest? Was it purely the British
interest, or was there something else at play?

JB – Erm, the most important thing was the British success, and that’s always what
drives something like that, but it’s I think the sport as well would have played a part.
If you perhaps compare it to the example of Alex Coomber, although she didn’t
actually win a gold medal, she still won a bronze. I think there are probably three
factors there. First of all it's probably the duration of the event, it lasts long enough to allow you the chance to get absorbed by it, you know it builds up to a climax, that's one thing. Erm, secondly it's the fact that it's not kind of as remote from a normal person's sort of perception as a skeleton for example. It's a bit like bowls, you know, bowls is a popular sport, played by a lot of people they can understand it. I know there's certain nuances in curling but people kind of get it, they understand it. And finally you know I think it was to do with the personalities themselves, it's a team event which often brings people into it, you know, there's personalities there and it was that fact that they were four ordinary people.

KB - In retrospect, do you think there was any way in which you could have handled the production choices differently in the Games? Do you kind of carry out a post mortem of the Games and look back and review and if so what sort of factors are examined and how would it influence future productions, say of Turin?

JB - What you'll probably find is that debriefs tend to be looking ahead more to the next Games rather than a complete... you know, you've obviously seen the audience research that's been done. What we'll do with that research, which is gathered in a period of time afterwards, we will take that forward to when we plan for the next Olympics and refer back to that and some of that can be fairly objective and some of it can be quite subjective in terms of what's gone down well and what hasn't and I think that the sports themselves evolve as well. As I mentioned before snowboarding I think there was an attempt to think that you know just by showing the sport might attract the younger people, I think we need to go further than that, you know we need to kind of tap into the people themselves and their culture to find out what they want. So yes, I mean there is, you can go from the raw figures but I think it's also important to try and speak to the audience and try to see exactly what their needs are.

KB - So would you take audience figures and then look back actually at the Games and say well this is what the audience figures are and this is how we actually handled it, how it looked when it actually came out from the production, or would it literally be a use of the audience figures in isolation?

JB - No it's definitely both.

KB - And finally, in terms responsibilities, do you think the BBC has a responsibility to be educational in sports broadcasting of the Games, obviously one of the elements of Olympism is that there should be education involved, would you kind of combine Olympism into an educational element of the coverage?

JB - Absolutely, on two levels really. First of all, it's part of the BBC's remit to educate itself as well as to inform and entertain so that's obviously part of our formal aims of broadcasting. But especially with the Olympics, you know because it's something that's not that well watched and perceived amongst the TV audience in general so you know educating actually has the bonus of informing people and making them more liable to want to watch the coverage.

KB - Also I mean education along the lines of educating children about international understanding and cultural exchange, do you see that as the role as well or do you think more do you think simply about informing and educating just about the sports?
JB — Actually I think it's important about the event itself, because the winter Olympics is something that's really only hits our screens every four year, there's not a lot in between. So very much part of our objective at an event like that is to inform about the culture as well of where an event's taking place. Especially if it's somewhere you know, that's less familiar.