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Sport and Globalisation: Local Identities, Consumption and Global Basketball

by

Mark Alan Falcous

A Doctoral Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

June, 2002
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Abstract

This thesis explores the manner in which globalisation processes are exerting transformative influences on local cultural contexts. Specifically, it utilises a case study of basketball to address the issues surrounding the juncture between local cultural identities, sport and global processes: the local-global sports nexus. Characteristic of globalisation processes are the activities of sports-related transnational corporations (TNCs) in global markets. The presence of such TNCs raises questions regarding the juncture with ostensibly indigenous cultures and identities associated with sport. The thesis constitutes several interlocking components which seek to address the multi-faceted nature of the local-global basketball interplay. First, a review of literature details both the political-economic context of the development of 'indigenous' English basketball, and the interdependencies surrounding National Basketball Association (NBA) expansion to Britain. Second, media representation within the local-global interplay is addressed in a comparative textual analysis of NBA and indigenous game coverage on British television. It is argued that local and global basketball are represented in a varying manner, which reinforces a local-global basketball hierarchy. Third, a two season multi-method ethnographic case study, incorporating: participant observations, interviews, a questionnaire and focus groups explored the consumption of 'local' basketball. The findings reveal complex responses and engagement with global processes, contextualised by the heterogenous nature of basketball fandom. Specifically, local identities and affiliations, while associated with consumption, also mediate broader global processes. The findings are discussed with reference to the relationship between local and global basketball in Britain and within the wider theoretical debates surrounding the globalisation of sport.
Acknowledgments

Sincerest thanks are extended to my supervisor, Professor Joe Maguire for his guidance throughout the project. He has impressed upon me the sociological craft and the importance of traversing the fine line between ‘gilding the lily’ and ‘coming not to praise but to bury Caesar’. I also thank him for being supportive and nurturing of our theoretical differences. Additionally, his financial support of conference attendance and writing-up fees has made the educational experience far richer. For this assistance, I am deeply grateful.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The intent of this thesis is to provide a sociological account of the interplay between sport, global processes and local cultural identities. This is intended to shed light upon the questions that surround the increasing global interconnectedness of social life at the turn of the Third Millennium. Specifically, this entails a detailed investigation of British basketball in the context of wider global dynamics.

The project has three principal components. First, a systematic overview of relevant literature conceptualising global sport is presented. Second, an overview of the political-economic context of global basketball is provided. This makes linkages between the ‘local’ dynamics of British basketball and the wider global structures of the sport. It also considers the expansion of the American National Basketball Association (NBA) in this context. The third, component presents empirical investigations of specific facets of the local-global basketball nexus. Initially, I examine the role of the media, considering the representation of issues surrounding the local-global interplay. I then present an investigation of the local consumption of British basketball fans, with reference to local-global issues. Within a concluding chapter, these observations are then summarised and linked to both the globalisation of sport debate and the wider globalisation of culture debate.

Methodologically, this research adopts an interpretive approach. It draws upon two principal sources of material. First, consideration of theoretical conceptualisations and broader contextualising draws upon a range of secondary sources. Specifically, the review of literature utilises academic material from within the social sciences. Doing likewise the political-economic contextualising also draws upon a range of popular sources such as newspaper and magazine articles. These were used to highlight some of the issues involved and their practical manifestations. The project also draws upon two main strands of empirical work. First, a comparative textual analysis of televised basketball coverage in Britain. Second, a two-year ethnographic project drew upon a range of methods: a self-completion questionnaire, participant observations, interviews...
and interviews ‘focus groups’ explored consumption. This multi-method approach was intended to shed light on the multi-faceted local-global nexus.

1.1 The ‘Problem’ of Global Processes and Social Change

The propensity for localised cultures to be influenced, affected and shaped by global interdependence has accelerated in recent times. The lived experiences of virtually all of the world’s population are increasingly affected by global patterns of interaction in some way. The characteristics of the interconnectedness of the world include: the emergence of a global economy; a transnational cosmopolitan culture and a range of international social movements; a multitude of transnational or global economic and technological exchanges; and, the growth of communication networks and migratory patterns (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994). These developments have led to increased interdependence of social relations, with an elevated sense of the world as a whole. As a consequence, it is increasingly difficult to comprehend local or national circumstances without recourse to global processes.

The way in which people, goods, money, images, ideas and services move around the globe, has been captured by Appadurai (1990) in his conception of ‘flows’. Appadurai (1990) proposed these spatial movements manifest themselves along five dimensions. First, ‘ethnoscap es’ are the result of the movement of peoples, facilitated by improved transport networks and increased mobility. Second, ‘technoscap es’ are manifest in the global flow of machinery, plant and methods produced by both national government agencies and national and multi-national corporations. Third, ‘financescap es’ are created by the movement around the world of money, credit and its equivalents, which increasingly transcend the relevancy of national currencies. Fourth, ‘mediascap es’, are facilitated by the flow of images and information globally via the mediums of newspapers, magazines, radio, film video and television. Particularly influential is the pervasive reach of television. Finally ‘ideoscap es’ exist in the diffusion of ideas, philosophies and outlooks, such as orientations toward the environment or human rights issues. An awareness of these interdependent global flows has become pivotal to the development of
sociological conceptualising of global interaction. Additionally, Appadurai (1990) highlights the need to be aware of the disjunctures between economy, cultural and politics (that is separation and difference). Specifically, he calls for greater attention to be afforded “global fragmentation, uncertainty and difference” (p.308) to overcome overly crude narratives of systematicness, in explaining the nature of global interdependence.

The concept of globalisation has emerged within the social sciences to capture the worldwide interconnectedness of social relations. The term, Robertson (1990) proposes, “refers to both the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (p.8). Giddens, meanwhile, conceives globalisation as, "[the] intensification of social relations at the world level, linking distant locations such that local events are structured by events occurring across the world" (1990: p. 341). Central to globalisation is a form of time-space compression. The rapidity of global interactions and flows act to compress spatial and temporal boundaries, effectively diminishing time and shrinking the globe, in terms of social relations. Consequently, localised spatial and temporal frames of reference are transcended, to leave the central conception of living space as the globe.

This time-space compression, Bauman (1998) argues, is implicated in the “ongoing multifaceted transformation of the parameters of the human condition” (p.2). Echoing this, Robins (1997) proposes the consequences of the ‘logic of globalisation’ for human relations are considerable. Familiar structures and orientations, he argues “are weakening, and we are increasingly exposed to new and disorientating horizons of possibility” (p.12). Hence, the global ‘condition’ heralds the potential for significant transformations and shifts. Globalisation, Robins expands:

is about the increasing transnationalization of economic and cultural life, frequently imagined in terms of the creation of a global space and community in which we shall all be global citizens and neighbours. With these globalizing dynamics we come upon new experiences and encounters, with the promise of new possibilities, but also the prospect of new uncertainties and anxieties (Robins, 1997: p12, emphasis in original).

As Robins captures, processes of globalisation present a series of both enabling and constraining transitions to the human condition.
Within the social sciences, there have been various conceptualisations, usage and application of the term globalisation. In the first instance, it is worth clarifying the meanings attributed to the term, which has tended to lack consensus. One source of misapprehension may arise from the etymology of the word. The suffix -isation - denoting process, and the term global - referring to the whole planet, are ostensibly suggestive of macro-processes of increasing likeness and similarity on a global scale. Ferguson (1992), noting this tendency, has referred to the “mythology of globalization” which falsely portrays the processes as only associated with greater uniformity. Such a casual misconception, Robertson (1995) notes, is very misleading.

Alternatively, globalisation should not be associated with theories only of greater likeness. On the contrary, scholars have argued that homogenisation (uniformity) should be tempered with the acknowledgment of a dual process of heterogenisation (difference) characterising global interaction. As Featherstone explains:

one paradoxical consequence of the process of globalization, the awareness of the finitude and boundedness of the planet and humanity, is not to produce homogeneity but to familiarize us with greater diversity, the extensive range of local cultures (1991: p.43).

Increasing awareness of cultural ‘otherness’ and recognition of difference, then, is a constituent feature of globalisation. Hence, globalisation is constituted of countervailing processes of integration and fragmentation simultaneously underway on a world scale. Regarding this, Robertson (1995) notes that conceptions of homogenisation and heterogenisation tendencies as being opposed, should be overcome. Alternatively, he argues “it is not a question of either homogenization or heterogenisation, but rather of the ways in which both of these two tendencies have become features of life across much of the late-twentieth-century world” (1995, p.27, emphasis in original). In light of the countervailing properties of ‘globalisation’ processes, there is a need to transcend the tendency to regard the local-global problematic as involving a straightforward polarity. Illustrating this point Robertson has invoked the term ‘glocalisation’² as a means of capturing the complexity and subtle dynamics of the locality, avoiding the apparent association of globalisation with the view that the local necessarily
stands against globalising trends. That is, avoiding the locality cast as oppositional or resistant to the "hegemonically global" (1995, p.29).

Further addressing the 'mythology of globalisation'. Robins (1997) notes two important qualifications to the understanding of the 'logic of globalisation' to overcome what would otherwise risk being too facile an argument. First, globalisation does not supersede and displace everything that preceded it. Alternatively, he argues, "globalization may be seen in terms of an accumulation of cultural phenomena, where new global elements coexist alongside existing and established local or national cultural forms" (1997, p.19). The consequence is a juxtaposition and combination of old and new elements as characteristic of the global condition. Second, the consequences of globalisation are complex and diverse. Processes of global change, Robins explains, "are multifarious and experienced differentially by all those who confront them" (1997, p.20). Globalisation then, may be uneven, unequal and differential in its consequences in a variety of locales. These cautionary points, then, assist the social scientist in attempting to comprehend 'what in the world is going on'?

1.2 The Local-Global Nexus

Conceptualisation of the consequences of the interplay between global and local processes has been characterised by differing perspectives and terminology. Scholars have highlighted the range of potential outcomes utilising terms such as indigenisation (Appadurai, 1990), third cultures (Featherstone, 1990), creolization (Hannerz, 1990), glocalisation (Robertson, 1995), hybridisation and 'global mélange' (Nederveen Pieterse, 1995). Withstanding the range of conceptualisations and terminology regarding the global-local nexus, what these writers generally highlight is the need for greater work on the impacts, consequences and actions/reactions within local-global development.

Whilst scholars have called for more research into the local-global nexus, much of the work has taken as its starting point, what are seen as the powerful facilitators of globalisation: nation states, transnational corporations or the wider global capitalist system. In contrast to this, a greater sensitivity to the complexity of the local is necessary in comprehending global flows and their consequences
(Alger, 1988). In particular, sensitivity to the 'internal' dynamics of the locality is necessary to comprehend the lived consequences of global interdependence.

In relation to these shifts and developments, the task for the social sciences, Bauman (1998) urges, is that of "unpacking the social roots and social consequences of the globalizing process" (p.1). Likewise, Ferguson (1992) calls for clarification of the meaning, evidence and evaluation of globalisation. The deeper questions, she notes, is 'cui bono?' (who wins)? That is to say, central questions emerge regarding the distribution of power, resources and influence in the 'global age'. To this end, this thesis also responds to the call to comprehend: "what is emerging and how different subject positions are being transformed or produced in the course of the unfolding of the new dialectics of global culture" (Hall, 1991, p.19). Noting that academic disciplines have lagged behind 'real life' in comprehending local-global processes, Robertson proposes the need "to engage in direct and serious study of the empirical historically formed, global field per se" (p.26). This thesis represents an attempt to address this need.

1.3 Global Sport

Sport has been both constituent of and a facilitator of greater global interdependence; both adding scope to global processes, and also being shaped by the influences of globalisation patterns. Concurrent with observations regarding the long-term nature of globalisation, Houlihan (1994) suggests that the worldwide organisational infrastructure for sport "has existed for some time" (p.356). Houlihan (1994) outlines the key features of the global sporting infrastructure as: the emergence of unified international sports federations facilitating the spread of sport; the world wide acceptance of governing bodies; the establishment of global sporting events, such as the Olympic Games, Football (soccer) World Cup and the proliferation of World Championship titles annually hosted; the rapid development of a major international sports goods industry and the embracing of sport by the media, and of television in particular. Modern sport, then, is global.

Making links with Appadurai's (1990) dimensions of global flows (noted above), Maguire (1993a, 1999) suggests these processes can all be detected in
contemporary sports. At the level of ‘ethnoscapes’, for example, the global migration of sporting personnel: administrators, coaches, athletes, and ancillary staff continue to accelerate. The flow of finance surrounding the international trade in sports personnel, prize monies and endorsements, meanwhile, is symptomatic of ‘financescapes’. In terms of ‘technoscapes’, the flow of sports, goods, equipment and technology in the form of artificial playing surfaces, equipment innovation and arenas is visible. The global transmission of images of global sport, by various media outlets, meanwhile, is constitutive of ‘mediascapes’. Finally at the level of ‘ideoscapes’, a series of, philosophies that are transnational in nature, surround the organisation, marketing, and presentation of sport around the globe.

Globalisation processes have led to, and continue to play a crucial role in the structuring of modern sport. Events such as the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup, the Tour de France, the Wimbledon tennis championship and Olympic Games, for example, have emerged as global spectacles. The creation of corporate alliances, international media synergies, corporate and state sponsorship and concerted marketing and promotion on a world scale underpin such events. Conforming to this model, sporting spectacles have transcended mere sporting status to become international media and commercial events (Whitson, 1998). As a realm of social life, sport is entwined interminably with globalisation processes, which have implications for localised cultures and identities.

The debate surrounding the role of sport within increased global interdependence has been vibrant. The initial lines of discussion have been comprehensively summarised (Harvey & Houle, 1994; Houlihan, 1994; Maguire, 1994a; 1998, 1999; Donnelly, 1996; Harvey et al, 1996). What is clear within these reviews is that the early debates revealed globalisation to be conceptualised in a series of, at times, competing ways, with a lack of consensus surrounding the exact parameters of the processes. Further to this, a series of competing theoretical explanations of globalisation in sport have been advanced. Frequently these utilise differing terminology. The result has been a degree of confusion within the sports literature. Initially, the debate centered on whether conceptualisations of globalisation or Americanisation were most adequate, to
explain the processes shaping global sport. More recently, the debate has focused attention specifically on the interplay of local and global processes - the local-global nexus.

The principal conceptual challenges of the local-global sport nexus debate, Jackson and Andrews (1999) argue, surrounds two key questions. First, how to conceptualise 'the local'? Second, what is the nature and extent of global economic and cultural forces on local processes. Echoing the argument of Robertson (1995), noted above, and drawing upon Grossberg (1997), Jackson and Andrews are critical of conceptualisations plagued by an assumed opposition between the local and global. With reference to the second question, they advocate the need to conceive of globalisation as constituted by "multiple processes which are engaged to differing degrees, at differing intensities, and in differing spatial locations" (1999: p32). The consequence, borrowing from Appadurai (1990), are disjunctions. They define these as: the diverse set of consequences that result when global forces and local contexts meet" (Jackson and Andrews, 1999: p32). Whilst disjunctions, they argue, can provoke conflict, incongruence and resistance, they also are manifest in expressions of accommodation, acceptance and ambivalence.

Despite a worldwide 'reach' and organisational infrastructure, sport should not be associated with processes of homogenisation at the cultural level. Indeed, Houlihan (1994) highlights that the existence of a global infrastructure "is a long way" (p.357) from being characteristic of cultural homogenisation. Alternatively, myriad historical antecedents, local distinctions and cultural ties constitute important factors in global sport. The structuring of local-global interactions, Andrews (1997) expands "are necessarily structured according to the historical, cultural, political, economic and technological specificities of the locale in question" (p.89). Hence careful consideration of historically formed local characteristics and contexts are essential for a comprehension of global sport.

The prominent role of games and leisure forms in the expression of cultural distinctiveness and identity, has meant that sport is highly visible in the transformation of local cultures in the context of globalisation. Highlighting the potential for the examination of sports to shed light on this debate. Tomlinson (1996) suggests "[sports] embody dramatically the tensions of the local-global
dualism, offering as they do forms of sub-global identity and affiliation within the
globalized discourses of international sporting contacts and exchanges" (p.589-590). Consequently, the analysis of global sport provides fertile ground to consider local-global interplay. Indeed, in unique ways, it also has the potential to shed light on aspects of the broader globalisation debate.

The symbolic and often highly visible role of sport in cultural identities, at times, represents an element of local or national cultural forms which generates tension and friction with global processes. On this issue, Maguire (1994a) has noted that overemphasising the power of established groups would be folly, as indigenous peoples have a range of mechanisms available, necessitating a close analysis of issues of interpretation, resistance and ‘recycling’. The work of Stoddart (1989), An and Sage (1992), Cantelon and Murray (1993), and Falcous (1998) illustrate aspects of global sports being subject to resistance in local contexts. In this way, the locality not only maintains distinctive cultural elements consequent to global flows, but may in fact be strengthened by them.

Having acknowledged the potential for reinterpretation and resistance within local cultures, it should be emphasised that the local-global interplay constituent to globalisation is not characterised by unconstrained actors. Indeed, it is predominantly the rationalised game forms of the dominant political and economic powers, which are diffused throughout the world. This highlights the importance of power and privilege within globalisation patterns (Cantelon and Murray, 1993). Indeed, Houlihan (1994) notes that the nature of power relations set the parameters of the negotiation process, and a careful consideration of these restraints is necessary in comprehending the varying ‘layers’ of local-global interplay. That is to say, it may be possible for cultural distinctiveness to be evident at surface levels, yet consideration of the deeper structural and ideological levels may reveal closer alignment with global influences.

Within the expanding research agenda of the local-global sports nexus debate, Horne (1996) has highlighted “the need to examine the cultural meanings attached to social changes involving sport and leisure activities in particular places” (p.528). To explore the varied meanings attached to sport in varying locales, he advocates ‘ethnosociologies’ to unravel cultural diversity in the meanings of sport. Similarly, Maguire (1993a) has called for research to

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comprehend the structured ‘choices’ associated with consumption for ‘global sport’. The following chapters are an attempt to address such calls.

1.4 Global Processes and Basketball

This thesis uses the case of basketball as a means of exploring the questions surrounding the local-global sports junctures noted above. The rationale for selection of this particular case study was based upon several factors, which rendered it a fruitful area of enquiry. First, the American based, National Basketball Association (NBA) has recently employed marketing strategies in Britain, as part of an attempt to expand its product to global markets. Symptomatic of this expansion of transnational corporations, the NBA provides an example of the marketing of ‘global’ sports which brings them into contact with ‘local’ contexts. Crucially, NBA expansion, Andrews (1997) speculates, “was predicated on the media (in terms of images) and economic (in terms of commodities) dissolution of regional and national boundaries” (p.84). It is to a critical evaluation of such claims, and to a consideration of the role of these regional and national boundaries that this thesis is addressed.

Second, basketball is a sport with an existing global network, following its ‘first wave’ diffusion during the late 19th Century and the early part of the 20th century to Britain, from the United States. The existence of ‘indigenous’ basketball structures, with attendant cultural ties and meanings, coming into contact with NBA expansion provides a prime example of the local-global sports interplay. Several questions arise regarding such ‘parallel’ local sports, in the face of domineering ‘foreign competitors’ underpinned by corporate synergies and marketing initiatives. For example, what happens to local varieties when aggressively marketed ‘global’ sport infiltrate local markets? Are they strengthened or weakened? How do local consumers respond? What is the role of the mediation of local and global sports? This thesis attempts to evaluate British basketball with reference its status within the global structures of the sport, and the presence of the NBA.

Third, ‘indigenous’ British basketball is itself entwined in influential ways with global processes. Although the initial commercial development, of the
British game has been well documented by Maguire (1988), the rapidly shifting dynamics of British basketball as a commercial enterprise and its position on the British sporting 'landscape' at the turn of the Third Millennium, require charting. Fourth, little has been written on the specific case of the NBA expansion to Britain. The exception is the work of Andrews et al (1996) and Andrews (1997), which whilst providing valuable insights, in focussing on racial discourse, leave dimensions of the local-global nexus untouched.

Notes

1 Throughout this thesis, I spell the term globalisation with an 's' rather than a 'z'. The Oxford English Dictionary, indicates either spelling as acceptable within the English Language. I choose to use an 's' on the basis that the use of a 'z', in this instance, is more closely associated with American English. Readers will also note that a number of direct quotations within this thesis feature the 'z' spelling. In the interests of accurate referencing, I include 'z's' in direct quotations where they are used in the published version.

2 The term is formed by 'telescoping' global and local, to make a blend. The term, as Maguire (1999) notes, rather 'grates' upon the palate, which may account for its lack of adoption.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several conceptualisations of the global system emerged within the social sciences prior to the concept of globalisation gaining credence. Indeed, numerous approaches have been applied to capture the structures and processes of social organisation on a global scale. This chapter offers a systematic review of these conceptualisations. Initially, I document theories of the world system to precede the concept of globalisation, specifically modernisation theory and Marxist variants: imperialism, dependency theory and world-systems theory. I then address differing conceptualisations of globalisation, outlining: figurational, cultural studies and post-modernist approaches. I outline their key tenets and their relative strengths and weaknesses as they relate to understanding global sport.

2.1 Modernisation Theory

Initial attempts at theorising patterns of global development, dating from the post Second World War era, followed the functionalist sociological tradition. Grounded in the work of Auguste Comte (1798-1857), Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Talcott Parsons (1902-1979), this work posited theories of societal evolution based upon structural functional assumptions. These modernisation theories largely developed amongst economists and policy makers, gaining credence amongst sociologists during the 1950’s and 1960’s. Amongst the most prominent scholars, Smelser (1964), Etzioni and Etzioni (1964), Hoselitz and Moore (1963) and Lerner (1958) viewed developing societies as social systems undergoing change as a result of the successful diffusion of the Western economic/technological complex.

Additionally, they preconceived the process by which societies were thought to become developed, as inevitable. Lerner (1958) illustrates this, suggesting the Western model of modernization exhibits certain components and sequences whose relevance is global. . . . the model evolved in the West is an historical fact. . . the same basic model reappears in virtually all modernizing
societies on all continents of the world, regardless of variations in race, color (or), creed (1958: p.46).

This quote also demonstrates the way the term Westernisation is often considered a synonym for modernisation.

In conceptualising patterns of global interconnectedness, modernisation theories view societies as progressing through developmental stages in a fixed order. On this basis, Foster-Carter (1985) proposes "we can think of the world as a kind of continuum, with different 'societies' ranged at various points along what is claimed to be the same route. Latecomers follow in the footsteps of the pioneers" (p.3). The consequential assumption is that as societies progress toward modernity they will, over time, become increasingly similar to one another.

Central to the modernisation framework is the identification of ideal-type constructs by which theorists have attempted to gauge the shift from the pre-modern or traditional (most often associated with the Third World) to modern patterns. These ideal-types are best summarised by Brown (1976) who notes their polar characteristics. Stability, localism, an ascriptive paternalistic hierarchy, an absence of specialised roles, and a dependence on manual labour, he proposes, mark traditional society. Society at this stage is further characterised by the preponderance of ritual; no precise boundaries exist between the secular and religious life, or between work and leisure time. The result of this outlook is acceptance of the existing structures, with little innovation. In contrast, modern society is viewed as dynamic, cosmopolitan, technological and characterised by a functional structure. Central to this structure is rationality. The consequence is a forward-looking orientation characterised by individual autonomy and innovation.

Amongst modernisation theories, Rostow (1960) proposed a five-stage model through which all developing societies must pass to achieve modernity. These stages were identified as: the traditional society, the pre-conditions for take-off, take-off into economic growth, the drive to maturity and, the stages of mass high consumption. As Foster-Carter (1985) points out, four linked aspects of Rostow's model, which characterise the broader modernisation school can be observed. First it is
evolutionist; it sees change as unfolding through a fixed set of stages. It is also unilinear in that all countries must pass by the same route, without short cuts or alternative routes. Furthermore, it is internalist. Despite hints to the contrary, it views all dimensions of societal change as being internally generated. Last, it is recapitulationist, in that it holds that undeveloped countries must follow the same path to modernity, as did the developed countries. Such themes of immutability, hold that developing societies will inevitably come to take on the characteristics of the developed ones. For example, Grunebaum (1955), commenting on the modernisation of the Middle East, has characterised the process as, "a rationalist and positivist spirit" against which "Islam is absolutely defenceless" (p.12).

Whilst Rostow's stages approach has been one of the most prominent modernisation approaches, there are several variants. (Foster-Carter, 1985). The use of a basic dichotomy to judge development from the traditional to the modern (on the basis of the ideal-type constructs highlighted previously) has been a common approach. The lack of processual comprehension leveled at this approach resulted in ideas of diffusionism, that suggest the modern will gradually spread its influence to absorb the traditional. Psychology alternatively has attempted to locate the lack of development within the culture or psyche of the Third World. By the end of the 1960's, Harrison (1988) suggests, "modernization theory was a somewhat hotch-potch collection of rather different perspectives, in which neo-evolutionism, structural-functionalist and diffusionism were all to be found" (p.61). Clearly, a wide variety is evident in all that has been termed modernisation theory.

2.1.1 Modernisation Theory and Sport

Advocates of modernisation theories view the institution of sport to have been subject to the diffusion of rationality, which characterises modern societies. The most prominent application of the concept of modernisation has been made by Guttman (1978) who documents the emergence of modern sports from pre-modern origins as symptomatic of broader societal changes. The characteristics of modern sport he
views as: secularism, equality, bureaucratization, specialization, rationalization, quantification, and, obsession with records (Guttmann, 1988: p.5-6).

Guttmann (1978, 1988) notes that these seven characteristics interact systematically to characterise modern sports as a unique adaptation to modern life. According to Guttmann, it was the expansion of a scientific worldview, which undermined the ritualistic tie between sport and tradition. He notes, "it underlay the development of a new kind of rationality in sport... that culminated in the creation of sports organizations, and in the emergence of modern instrumentalities" (Guttmann, 1988: p.14). Several theorists adopting modernisation approaches to the development of sport have also traced the shift from traditional games and pastimes to modern sports.

Baker (1982) for example, has traced the development of sport from antiquity to modern status, as contingent with broader societal shifts. For example, old field sports and traditional activities he views as subject to adaptation as a result of "the new realities of town life produced by economic and population changes of the seventeenth century" (p.85). What Baker (1982) has termed the 'quest for order' is viewed as propelling the institution of sport to modern forms. Similarly, Mandell (1984) in tracing the cultural development of sport has used elements of modernisation theory. In a case study of New York City (1820-1870), Adelman (1986) contends "the basic structure of modern sport and the ideological sanctions of modern athletics evolved during this half century" (p.1). Notably, it is the "increasing emphasis on rationalism and its logical extension, the desire to establish rational order" (p.5), which Adelman argues is a critical factor in the transition from pre-modern to modern patterns. Finally, Clignet and Stark (1974) use the modernisation construct to consider patterns of change in Cameroon associated with colonial influences, and also the role of soccer as a facilitator of social change within the broader process.

Whilst lending itself to historical approaches as well as specific case-studies the modernisation concept also facilitates a comparative outlook. It is not surprising then that this approach has been utilised in specific relation to the development of
sport in Africa (Baker and Mangan, 1987), and both Africa and Asia (Wagner, 1989). In broader terms both Guttmann (1991) and Wagner (1990) have employed modernisation concepts to comprehend the cultural diffusion of sport at the global level, stressing the manner in which traditional sports are subject to modernisation processes along 'Western' lines.

Wagner (1990), commenting on the increasing global interconnectedness of sporting culture proposes, "the larger international process of development and modernization...are fundamentally responsible for changes in the world of sport" (p.401). As traditional societies undergo change, he suggests, their populations may be more receptive to Western games such as soccer or basketball. Wagner's (1990) chief concern is to temper the tendency to view Americanisation as the key process in the global patterning of sport, citing examples of the way sporting forms such as martial arts and stick fighting forms, originating in Africa and Asia, have diffused to the US. His account, however, is at times ambiguous, lacking explanation of the processes that underlie the 'mundialisation' of sports culture he proposes. The only explanations are references to the impulse within traditional societies for "young men and increasingly young women (to) search for pastimes, and cultural forms coming via the media, such as soccer and basketball" (p.402). Similarly, he concludes that the global patterning of sport "ultimately must reflect the will of the people" (p.402). What is clear within this account is Wagner's contention that global sport is characterised by increasing similarity. What we have, he suggests "is a homogenisation of world sports" (p.400).

Also commenting on global sports diffusion, Guttmann (1991) advocates the use of the concept of modernisation to account for the global patterns of sports diffusion. In this manner, whilst the forms may differ, the substance of them, he argues, is increasingly along more rational lines. Guttmann (1991) concurs with Wagner in pointing to homogeneity of the formal-structural characteristics of sport. Adding the caveat that traditional sports can survive, he notes, however, "there is a powerful tendency for them to become ever less traditional" (p.188). Guttmann (1991) is careful to note the potential within modernisation processes for reversal, as
well as the capacity for the survival of traditional sports relatively untouched by modernisation. Nevertheless, the social transformation to a more secular and more rationalised world is viewed as the dominant force in shaping the global patterning of sport.

The uses of modernisation theory to sporting developments have mirrored the broader applications of modernisation theory, characterised by variation. Guttmann (1978, 1988) and Adelman's (1986) use of established traditional and modern 'ideal-types', for example, is considerably more rigid than Clignet and Stark's (1974) use of the concept. Despite these variations, Gruneau (1988) identifies five contingent arguments, which characterise the application of modernisation theory to sport. First, modern sport is seen as the result of a progressive evolution. Second, sport has become increasingly democratised resulting in greater opportunities for minority groups. Third, the development of modern sport is viewed as a 'rational adaption' to the demands of urban industrial society, emerging from the 'need' for the rational organisation of games. Fourth, social conflicts in sport were simply transitory features of the emergence of modern sport. Fifth, there is a supposition that the characteristics of sport are essentially homogenous throughout modern societies, hence, there is a tendency to view the model of modern sport as inevitably providing the model for societies in transition. These applications of modernisation theory to sport have not been without their critics. The following section is an attempt to assess the value of modernisation theory and its worth in comprehending the development of a global system and subsequent applications to sport.

2.1.2 Modernisation Theory: Strengths and Weaknesses

Modernisation theories have been subject to sustained criticisms. At the ideological level, the most frequent criticism is that as a model for patterns of change it suffers from ethnocentrism. Indeed, Hoogvelt (1976) proposes “theories of modernisation have in fact very usefully served as an ideological mask camouflaging the imperialist nature of Western capitalism” (p.62). The perceived attempt to universalise historically specific values and institutions deriving from Western
'modern' societies has been the subject of vehement criticism from Marxist scholars (Frank, 1969, Hoogvelt, 1976, 1997). Ingrained notions of evolutionary 'progress' are a clear failing of modernisation theories, as are the notions of imminence and inexorability which arose from the notion that traditional societies would necessarily follow the West's 'familiar' path to modernity.

Withstanding the ideological critique, which has called for its wholesale rejection, modernisation theory has also been subject to conceptual and empirical criticism. The teleological nature of much of modernisation theory's applications, for example, has been pointed out as a particular weakness. Hence, as a commentary on social change modernisation theory makes reference to end states which are worked toward. In this way, systems of stratification, for example, may be explained by reference to the need societies have for the efficient discharge of tasks. Thus the causes of social phenomena are explained by the purpose they serve rather than their causes - a circular argument. The teleology inherent to modernisation theories stems from the dichotomous use of ideal-type constructs to gauge social change. Indeed, the lack of a processual focus is clearly a weakness. The result is that much of the modernisation work has been of a descriptive nature.

A further weakness surrounds the failure to emphasise inter as well as intra societal connections, that is, the relationship between as well as within societies. This failing stems from the methodological premise of structural-functionalism, which takes individual societies (most often nation states) as the unit of analysis. By concentrating only on internal aspects of social structure, modernisation ignores external sources of influence and change. As Tipps (1973) argues "any theoretical framework which fails to incorporate such significant variables as the impacts of war, conquest, colonial domination, internal political and military relationships ... cannot hope to explain either the origins of these societies or the nature of their struggles" (p.212). Furthermore the inevitable generalisations which result from ideal-type constructs are a methodological weaknesses. Broad notions of modernisation are open to criticisms of lacking sensitivity to local circumstance. Indeed, the notion of tradition, Tipps (1973) notes "was formulated not upon the basis of observation but
rather as a hypothetical antithesis to 'modernity'" (p.212). Neither variation from, nor resistance to the pre-ordained path is adequately accounted for.

A consequence of the internal focus is that the colonial experience of developing societies is unaccounted for. This, Tipps (1973) suggests, causes an additional problem for modernisation theories, as the result of the imposition by colonial powers of components of modernisation on traditional societies "produces a hybrid society, neither 'traditional' nor 'modern'" (p.213). The only recourse for advocates of revision of modernisation theory is to treat colonialism as an instrument of modernisation. The alternative is to view it as a transitional phase between tradition and modernity. Neither of these, however, satisfactorily deals with the impacts of colonial domination to which Tipps refers.

A further limitation is the mutual exclusivity of the notions of traditional and modern. As a result of these dichotomous categories, there is no capacity to acknowledge that modernisation may not necessarily result in the eradication of all traditional elements. It is overly simplistic to equate modernisation with the destruction of tradition. Moreover residual elements may remain pervasive and in fact compliment social changes associated with modernisation processes. Conversely the attributes of modernity, for example resulting in improved communications, may facilitate the reinforcement of traditional values. To reduce social development to a choice between the 'modern' and 'traditional' is too simplistic. This recognition of the balance between transitions toward modernity and traditional elements exposes the weakness of viewing the attributes of modernity as forming a 'package' appearing simultaneously rather than in isolation.

In light of the sustained critiques, some scholars have proposed a revision of modernisation theory to address weak points in its application. In one way or another however, each of these weaknesses, Tipps (1973) suggests, may be related to some manifestation of the fundamental ethnocentrism of modernisation theory. It is precisely on these grounds that the Marxist school, have advocated its wholesale rejection. Despite the widespread dismissal of the modernisation concept, advocates counter that much of the criticism has been unwarranted, and that there may still be
value in the issues raised. For example, Stearns (1980) notes it "acts as an important reminder of the huge change that industrialization has entailed" (p.193). Similarly, Grew (1980) argues that the concept should be retained as a useful historical concept. A further merit Stearns (1980) argues is that modernisation keeps analysis attuned to interconnections that may otherwise be treated in undue isolation. That is to say that social constructs such as leisure or family life should be considered part of the broader process to comprehend their context. Evidently, advocates of modernisation, in the face of criticism have refused to abandon the concept, stressing its value as a framework for understanding social change. The following section evaluates its worth to the comprehension of the structure and development of global sport.

2.1.3 Modernisation Theory and Global Sport

On the value to an understanding of sport, Gruneau (1988) notes, modernisation approaches to industrial society "have been extremely useful and have generated significant insights into the social development of modern sports forms and practices" (p.16). The principal virtue, Gruneau suggests "lies in the ability to focus attention upon major epochs . . . to convey the central organizing features of these phases in a simplified manner" (p.17). Similarly, Guttmann (1988) advocates "Is there a better way to understand the contrast between the medieval free-for-all known as folk-football and the globally televised spectacle of the World Cup?" (p.10). As well as highlighting the relationship between sport and the modernisation of society, Adelman (1986) suggests the modernisation framework helps facilitate a comprehension of "the evolution of modern sports structures and ideology" (p.5). In this light, the modernisation theorists emphasis on the desire to establish rational order, Adelman argues, "provide an important missing link in the analysis of modern sport" (p.5).

The contributions of Wagner (1990) and Guttmann (1991) to the globalisation of sport debate, drawing upon modernisation approaches, have as a principal strength, an awareness of the important changes to global sport that modernisation patterns have heralded. As Guttmann notes, the substance of sport has become "ever less
traditional” (p.188). Certainly there has been widespread diffusion of increased rationality to traditional sports. Illustrating this, Guttmann points to the traditional Afghan game of buzkashi, contested by horsemen with a headless goat, which now exists as a modern sport. Wagner’s (1990) application of modernisation concepts has as a major strength an awareness of the propensity for emulation of modern sports forms to replace traditional forms. Both Guttmann and Wagner have been subject to criticism stemming from the use of modernisation theory. Such criticisms of these applications to sport are reflective of the broader critique outlined above.

In offering an explanation of the patterns of modern sport, modernisation theory offers little in terms of causative explanations. In this case, Gruneau (1988) notes that there has been an overemphasis on descriptive ‘mapping’ of change along the modernisation model, rather than explanation. Description of the form of changes alone is clearly insufficient in comprehending the complexity of the global sporting arena. Furthermore the rigidity of the modernisation framework, Gruneau (1988) notes, results in significant differences between the characteristics of sport at varying moments being overlooked. As an example, he highlights the different levels of bureaucratic organisation and political intervention in sport, between the USA and Canada, two typically ‘modern’ societies. As outlined above, if such differences were recognised at all, they could only be understood in terms of variations in the degrees of modernity of each country. This is inadequate as it ignores fundamental differences in their political and economic history.

The tendency to view the arrival at ‘modernity’ as the completion of modernisation conveys the impression that the development of sport is an essentially completed phenomenon. On the contrary, Gruneau (1988) notes, new ways of playing, or new meanings have the potential to develop within any society - modern or not. This contested nature of the development of sport, both historically and contemporaneously, is of pivotal importance to conflict theorists such as Gruneau, which modernisation fails to comprehend. Additionally, the failure to focus on internal aspects of social change is also apparent when applied to sport. ‘External’ factors have played an important role in contouring ‘modern’ sport. The global
diffusion of sport has been shaped in significant ways by issues of dominance, power and control by colonial powers. The lack of clarity within modernisation theory in whether this is acknowledged, indeed advocated, and if so, to what degree? is a considerable weakness.

Examples from within sport also emerge to expose the shortcomings of mutually exclusive constructs of 'modern' and 'traditional'. Ironically, it is Clignet and Stark (1974) in their use of modernisation theory, who highlight the players use of 'witchcraft' within the ostensibly 'modern' strictures of Cameroonian soccer. Clearly the characteristics of traditionalism have not been overwhelmed in this case. The resilience of such 'traditional' features demonstrates contingent problems with dichotomous ideal types when applied to sport. Further illustration of this weakness is the survival of numerous folk games and other sporting forms shrouded in tradition and ritual, which co-exist with 'modern' counterparts.

There is also a tendency, Gruneau (1988) notes, to assume that the dominant structures and meanings of sport in modern societies will inevitably provide the model for sport in undeveloped countries. On the contrary, the complex global diffusion of sport demonstrates that there are instances of traditional games and activities, such as the martial arts, which may diffuse from the 'traditional' to the 'modern'. The complex patterns and cultural 'terms and conditions' of global sports flows require more sophisticated scrutiny and attention than modernisation theory can offer.

Evaluating the contribution of Wagner (1990) and Guttmann's (1991) modernisation approaches, to the ongoing globalisation of sport debate is far from simplistic. Neither of the two use modernisation theory in any rigid sense. Guttmann confusingly integrates notions of both cultural imperialism and hegemony theory with modernisation. Wagner's account alternatively, whilst proposing modernisation as the key process in global sports diffusion, exercises a puzzling element of pluralism, demonstrated by his "will of the people" summation, to account for global sport development. As exemplars of modernisation models to the globalisation of sport debate, they represent applications in the loosest sense. Perhaps the confusion that
pervades both the Guttmann and Wagner contributions is illustrative of the malaise of modernisation approaches applied to sport, characterised by vagueness and weak assumptions.

The complex global patterning of sport has undoubtedly been impacted upon by the kind of changes which modernisation theory highlights. Alone, however, these constituent components lack explanatory power to comprehend the complexity of both the global patterning of sport and the processes that underlay it. If the argument against modernisation is to be conclusive, Tipps (1973) notes, it must be shown not only that the conceptual apparatus of modernisation theory is inadequate, but also that there are more viable alternatives. It is to these alternatives, emerging from the critique outlined above, that the following section turns.

2.2 Marxist Accounts: Imperialism and Neo-Imperialism

Grounded in the work of Karl Marx (1818-1883) lines of theorising, surrounding the concept of imperialism, have emerged to explain the dynamics of the global system. Marx’s work provides a basis for analysing social development in terms of economic relations between nations rather than solely within individual societies. The basis of Marx's analysis is that human social life is founded upon the nature of economic relations at any given time – that is, human history is explainable with recourse to ‘dialectical materialism’. Within industrial capitalism Marx identified two classes: the ‘bourgeoisie’, who own the means of production; and the larger class of ‘proletariat’, who are the industrial workers. The proletariat are in a position in which they can sell only their labour to the bourgeoisie, who use this labour to sell commodities for profit. “Thus, for Marx, every capitalist society has within it a system of exploitative relations founded upon the pattern of social relationships of production (that is class relations)” (Harris, 1988: p.37).

Being concerned with Western capitalism, Marx did not consider global development as a central focus of his writing. Despite this, writers such as Kautsky (1902), Luxemburg (1913) and Bukharin (1915/1972) theorised with specific
reference to global capitalism. In particular, the work of Lenin (1917) emerged as the exemplar of the Marxist position to comprehend social relations on a global scale. Lenin (1917) argues that an international system of exploitation emerges "as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristic of capitalist production" (1917: p.82). Capitalist industrial societies are thus seen to have obtained, and to maintain their dominant position in the world through exploitative relationships with less developed societies. This process, termed 'Imperialism', Lenin noted is:

"capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance . . . in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed (1917: p.83)."

The quest to dominate markets, Hoogvelt (1976) notes, results in imperialist rivalries between the advanced states. Subsequently there is a need for direct political domination and administration to ensure the incorporation of underdeveloped economies into that of the 'mother country'. The result was the emergence of an imperial system.

In order to maximise the commercial 'efficiency' to the imperial powers it was necessary to change largely agrarian modes of production and organisation in less developed countries to be more congruent with the socio-economic organisation of the developed country. The consequence is systematic transformations of the economic, social and political systems of less developed nations. In all cases the aim was to maintain the unequal terms of trade which characterised the next phase of development, that of colonialism. In essence, Harris (1988) suggests, the entire internal structure of colonised societies were altered by a process of enforced socialisation, to produce a replica of the dominant powers economic and social organisation. The changing nature of the relationships between developed and underdeveloped countries since 1945, notably the collapse of formal empire, resulted in the emergence of 'neo-Marxist' accounts of the changing world situation.

Specifically, the decline of formal political control by means of the colonial system prompted a new wave of theorising from Marxist scholars. Subsequently,
theories of neo-colonialism sought to account for forms of dominance and exploitation that remained after the formal independence of ex-colonies. As Nktumah (1965) clarifies "the essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside" (p.ix). This latter phase of the domination by Western states, Nktumah goes on to suggest is "imperialism in its final and perhaps most dangerous phase" (p.ix). The reason it is viewed as most potent is that whilst formal colonialism was visible and could ultimately be overthrown, with neo-colonial domination the oppressor is less tangible and therefore less easily challenged.

Alongside economic and political dominance, theorists, such as Tomlinson (1991) highlight domination of culture as a critical form of neo-imperialist subjugation. Cultural elements are viewed as developing in accordance with the aims and objectives of this system of domination. Advocates of the 'cultural imperialism' argument propose that cultural elements are imposed upon local contexts, which serve to sustain their subordination to the central powers. Schiller's suggestion (1976), has emerged as the most widely accepted definition of cultural imperialism, as:

[the] sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced and sometimes even bribed into shaping social systems to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating center of the system (p.9).

This definition offers a wide spectrum of all that could be considered mechanisms of cultural imperialism. Rather than unified applications of the cultural imperialism concept, Tomlinson (1991) notes, a better comprehension is, "as a variety of different articulations which may have certain features in common" (1991:p.9). Indeed, its varied applications have included consideration of the media (Mattelart, 1979; Tunstall, 1977; Golding, 1974); global communications (Schiller, 1976), the music industry (Laing, 1986), advertising images (Sinclair, 1987; Hamelink, 1988), and even Walt Disney comics (Dorfman &Mattelart, 1984).

Despite the debate over all that could rightly be considered forms of cultural imperialism, it is broadly acknowledged as a process of control, with a degree of
intentionality, exercised by dominant forces and facilitated by the imposition of supportive forms of culture. ‘Unpacking’ cultural imperialism, Tomlinson (1991) posits four discourses: media imperialism, focusing on the role of the media institutions in cultural domination; a discourse of nationality, which posits the invasion of an indigenous culture by a foreign one; a system of global capitalism, which focuses on the political-economic system of domination; and, a critique of modernity, which perceives a shift toward a particular ‘modern’ way of life as representing a global cultural homogeneity. Each of these, he considered an element of the broader process. The development of these constructs, whilst grounded in Marxist roots, have moved far from Marx’s central concerns. Indeed, internal critiques have seen Marxist applications of the global system develop through various stages, to account for the changing world situation. These theorisations have subsequently informed the study of sport.

2.2.1 Neo-Imperialism and Sport

Marxist accounts emerged to critique earlier functionalist understandings of sport as associated with social harmony and character development. Most notably Hoch (1972), Brohm (1978) and Rigauer (1981) viewed sport as a component of the global capitalist system, channeling proletarian energies away from political insurrection. As with classical Marxism, these accounts were less centrally concerned with the impacts of imperialism than with the internal dynamics of capitalism. They do, however, highlight imperialism as an integral component of global capitalism. With specific reference to global development, Brohm notes “contemporary sport is nothing but an auxiliary structure of imperialistic finance capitalism” (1973: p.136). Similarly, Hoch suggests “ideological weapons, such as militarised sports, are . . . closely linked with nationalism, militarism and imperialism” (1978: p.70). For Brohm, sport is intimately linked to imperial projects and systems of domination. Specifically he argues “Olympic accumulation is also an element of the economic and cultural colonisation of the oppressed third world by international capital” (p.121).
Eichberg (1984) has also considered sport as an instrument of imperial domination, suggesting Olympism functions as a medium for Western domination, perpetuating international inequity. The Olympic structure, he argues, "demonstrates a remarkable national-cultural inequality" (1984: p.97). In particular, Eichberg's (1984) analysis of the Olympic movement highlights the superimposition of 'neo-colonial' game forms on indigenous cultures. Such is the domination of Western Olympic sport, he suggests "there are initiatives to expand Western sport disciplines into the last village in Africa, Asia and Indio-America at the cost of the national physical culture" (1984, p.100). The marginalisation of indigenous cultures then, is at the centre of his analysis.

The work of Arbena (1988, 1993a, 1993b) considers the imperial impact on the development of sport in Latin America. Within Latin America, Arbena notes the structure and practice of sport . . . are fundamentally an expression of international forces . . . put another way, we cannot understand the evolution of Latin American sport over the last hundred years . . . apart from an international - both regional and global – context (1993b: p.151).

Specifically, he suggests that imported sports had a partially imperialistic impact in that they helped to shape local elites and their values in ways beneficial to the Europeans.

Mangan (1986) has also invoked this perspective to highlight the imperial role of the 'games ethic' promoted by English Victorian Public Schools. The ideal of character training through games, Mangan argues, was disseminated throughout the British Empire and was an important tool in providing the necessary qualities within British imperial leaders and the deference of colonial subjects. Victorian notions of 'manliness' fostered in team games, Mangan proposes, were "a useful instrument of colonial purpose"(1986: p.18). Highlighting the role of the diffusion of games and the ethic they spread within the British imperial project, Mangan continues: "in the most bizarre locations could be found those potent symbols of pedagogic imperialism - football and cricket pitches" (1986: p.43).

Early Marxist accounts of sport have been subject to widespread critique. Gruneau (1983), for example, has criticised Brohm's (1973) account for being
reductionist, deterministic and static in outlook. Hoch's (1972) work also lacks sophistication in failing to acknowledge the "historically shifting limits and possibilities" (Gruneau, 1983, p.38) that characterise the cultural terrain of sports. The evaluation of later neo-Marxist works, for example those using neo-imperial accounts of the global patterning of sports, is not simplistic. The applications of Eichberg and Arbena, for example, do not rigidly apply Marxist themes but are characterised by 'hybrid' applications. Indeed, in anticipation of criticisms concerning suggestions of the 'inevitability' of Western sports prevalence against 'helpless' native cultures, both scholars incorporate elements beyond the rigid Marxist approach.

For example, Eichberg (1984) highlights areas where resistance to 'neo-colonial tendencies' can exist. Alternatives, he suggests, are evident in the revival of indigenous and national games, the resurgence of 'open-air' movements, expressive activities and meditative exercises (pp.100-101). Additionally, invoking the Gramscian notion of 'hegemony' Arbena (1993b) highlights the 'sport-recreation complex' as an important arena for the struggle between dominant 'imperial' powers and those that may seek to resist cultural imposition, by reaffirming local cultures through sports. Consequently, Arbena identifies sports as harbouring the potential, not only to work as a colonial tool of domination, but also to emerge as a source of anti-colonialism/nationalism. Additionally it may, he adds, function to promote development and be used as a component of foreign policy by those previously subjugated nations. Examples of this, Arbena (1993b) notes, include hosting international sports competitions and also the preparation of athletes capable of winning on the 'international playing field'.

Rather than adhering to a rigid framework, the work of Arbena and Eichberg is characterised by a loose application of the neo-imperialism construct. Considerable debate has, however arisen to question if the diffusion of sports resulting in a complex global patterning can best be considered the result of forms of cultural imperialism on behalf of Western Europe and the US (see Guttman, 1994; Wilcox, 1993). Analysis based solely on economic dimensions is subject to shortcomings.
The global patterning of sport, whilst obviously substantially impacted upon by patterns of economic power, is less directed than a rigid neo-imperialist approach would suggest. Indeed, the multi-directionality of global sports diffusion is highlighted by the emergence of Asian sports such as kabbadi in the UK or the appearance of jai-lai, a Cuban version of Basque Pelota, in Florida (Guttmann, 1994). Such flows are not indicative of the dominant economic patterns between such locations. In fact, the numerous examples of multi-directional flows help to kerb notions of uni-directionality, of which the Neo-Imperialism thesis is suggestive.

Additionally when applied to the diffusion of sport, neo-Imperialism is suggestive of imposition, when in certain cases, the indigenous population may be implicated in active solicitation. Indeed, Guttmann notes "those who adopt a sport are often the eager initiators of a transaction of which the 'donors' are scarcely aware" (1994: p.179). The embracing of American basketball by French youth, highlighted by Emerson (1993), is a good example of this. Viewing sport solely as a tool of domination ignores the enabling/emancipatory potential of sporting practices for recipient cultures. As Arbena (1993b) highlights, sport may hold potential for the crystallisation of anti-imperial/colonial sentiments.

The role of imperialism in the diffusion of modern sports is undoubted. In particular the British Empire was influential. As Wilcox affirms, games such as cricket, rugby and football played a role in “the establishment, buttressing, and celebration of nineteenth and twentieth century British Imperialism”(1993: p.30). More latterly, during the 20th century the dominant role of the United States has been matched by the diffusion of basketball, US football and baseball, to American spheres of influence. For that reason, it cannot be ignored in attempting to comprehend global sporting patterns. Theories of neo-imperialism are thus important in keeping the analysis attuned to issues of economic and political power and dominance which have been central features of the contested terrain of sports diffusion.

The application of rigid theories of neo-Imperialism, however, is subject to failings in attempting to explain the complex patterning of global sport. Acknowledgement of multi-directional flows for example requires a more sensitive
framework. This does not mean however that it has no use as a sensitising tool. Evidently neo-Marxist applications have acknowledged potential weaknesses and attempted to adapt to criticisms by considering the emancipatory potential of sport as well as its role in subjugation. The cultural imperialism thesis is of value in highlighting the dominance of 'Western' sports, of which examples abound. Additionally the notion helps maintain a sensitivity to issues of inequality and dominance which pervade the conditions under which certain sports have diffused. Arbena's application of the term 'cultural hegemony', for example, is a necessary addition, adding much needed sophistication, in highlighting both the powerful 'imperial' impact of Western nations in Latin America, but also the capacity for 'local' agency.

Along the four indices of cultural imperialism identified by Tomlinson (1991): media imperialism, discourse of nationality, critique of global capitalism and critique of modernity, Wilcox (1993) has considered the utility of the concept of cultural imperialism to comprehend sport. Highlighting examples of resistance and multidirectional sports flows, Wilcox, notes that as opposed to imperialism (which implies the intended spread), the notion of 'globalism', suggesting interconnection and interdependency that happen in a far less purposeful way may be preferable. In this light, elements of imperialism, whilst evident in many instances can perhaps best be considered component to a broader process. Indeed, the examples of Arbena and Eichberg that have diverged from a rigid neo-imperialism framework perhaps demonstrate the acceptance of the limited use of this concept in isolation. Neo-imperialism can account for several dimensions of global sports diffusion, however elements that do not follow dominant economic, political or cultural relations remain crucially unexplained. In this respect, to comprehend global sport the neo-imperialism framework in isolation must be rejected. In the interests of accounting for these elements a broader framework, which takes account of multi-directionality and multi-causality is needed.
2.3 Dependency Theory

As the previous section has outlined, the emergence of neo-Marxist applications of imperialism were precipitated by the fact that classical Marxist accounts were concerned primarily with the advanced capitalist nations. In this context neo-Marxist theories of underdevelopment and dependency were developed. The notion of dependency emerged to comprehend capitalist relations on a global scale, with reference to their role in Third World underdevelopment and deprivation. As with the previous theories analysed within this chapter, it is most appropriate to view underdevelopment theory in the plural. The notion of dependency, Jarvie and Maguire note "refers to a set of paradigms in the sense that there is no one theory of dependency but several competing theories and explanations." (1994: p.238).

Baran (1957/1973) developed the origins of dependency theory. Baran considered it to be in the interests of Western capitalism to have underdeveloped countries to extract raw materials from, provide profit, and furnish investment opportunities. The 'backward world' he suggests "has always represented the indispensable hinterland of the highly developed capitalist West" (1973: p.120). In particular, Baran (1973) noted, deprived areas were denied their economic surplus through mechanisms of exploitation. As a consequence, he argued the actions of the developed countries, in their own interests, actively retard the development of the Third World.

Baran's work was developed by theorists working for the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA). They wished to understand the structural disadvantages of that region within the world economy, and the corresponding failure of national development (Harrison, 1988). Within this school, the work of Prebisch, Dos Santos, Cardosso and Faletto came to prominence in the 1960's. Although having been developed in reference to the case of indigenous Latin American underdevelopment, this work is recognised as significant in the formulation of dependency theory, later applied at a global level. The dependentistas, as they became known, asserted that "the now developed countries were never
underdeveloped and the contemporary underdevelopment was created. Ironically, the very same process (the expansion of capitalism) through which the now developed countries progressed brought underdevelopment to Latin America.” (Chilcote and Edelstein, 1986: p.20). The situation of depravity and ‘stunted growth’ is thus viewed as the result of a dependent structure, which perpetuates the problems of underdevelopment. Dos Santos defined dependency as;

a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected. The relation of interdependence... assumes the form of dependence when some countries (the dominant ones) can expand and can be self-sustaining, while other countries (the dependent ones) can do this only as a reflection of that expansion (1970: p.231).

The ECLA critique, which focused on Latin America, was soon developed and expanded into a wider critique of global development in the Third World. In particular it was popularised by the economist Andre Gunder Frank.

Frank, much influenced by Baran and the ECLA, set out to offer an alternative to the prevailing modernization theories of the 1960s, of which he was a fierce critic. He argued that dependence occurred as the result of the historical development and contemporary structure of world capitalism. The subsequent structure, Frank (1969) argues, is characterised by a chain of metropolis-satellite relations. Not limited to the international level, this chain is evident within nations. As Frank explains:

each national and local metropolis serves to impose and maintain the monopolistic structure and exploitative relationship of this system... as long as it serves the interests of the metropoles which take advantage of this global, national and local structure to promote their own development (1969: p.6-7).

Indeed, Frank emphasises this in highlighting that dependence is not simply an ‘external’ relation between the Third World and its capitalist metropolis, but equally is internal to Third World society itself. In this manner, he suggests, provincial cities act to link the centre with satellite communities, in turn functioning as centres of exploitation. Consequently an effective chain of metropoles and satellites is envisaged relating all parts of the system from the metropolitan centres in Europe to

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the farthest satellites of the Third World hinterland. The effective function of the chain, Frank (1969) argues, is "to suck capital or economic surplus out of its own satellites and to channel part of this surplus to the world metropolis of which all are satellites" (1969: p.6). Hence the chain of dependency serves to maintain underdevelopment of various regions. Crucially, "the development of the national and other subordinate metropoles however is limited by their satellite status" (Frank, 1969: p.9)

Dependence, Frank emphases, "is reflected not only in international and domestic economics and politics but also has the most profound and far-reaching ideological and psychological manifestations of inferiority complexes and assimilation of metropolitan ideology" (Frank, 1972: p.20). Concurrently, Frank noted that dependence generates a reaction that manifests itself in the form of nationalism, growing class struggle against the capitalist system and the development of scientific social analysis which disassociates itself from 'bourgeois ideology' by highlighting the issue of dependence (among which Frank would class himself). Finally, Frank proposed that dependence could not be reversed until Third World peoples "destroy the capitalist class structure through revolution and replace it with socialist development" (1972: p.19). Frank did concede that there was the potential for the development of satellites, which was at its greatest when ties with the metropolis are weakened. Despite this potential, Frank viewed the capacity for growth as limited, with the satellite ultimately being reincorporated by the metropolis, its underdevelopment consequently deepened.

Although only one interpretation of dependency theory, Foster-Carter (1985) has attempted to summarise the characteristics that Frank's analysis shares with other interpretations as follows. First, underdevelopment theory is externalist; for the underdeveloped, all decisive and determining changes are viewed as imposed by outside forces. Second, it is bilinear. Metropolis and satellites are considered to pursue varying paths dependent upon their differing positions in the system. Although these paths may progress side by side, no convergence is envisaged. Third, it is stagnationist, in proposing that the satellite must make a radical break to end the
cycle of underdevelopment. Outside of the revolutionary action that Frank (1972) proposes as the only alternative, underdeveloped satellites will remain terminally locked into dependent relations with the metropolis.

2.3.1 Dependency Theory and Sport

Elements of dependency theory, Jarvie and Maguire (1994) note have been applied to the analysis of Latin and South American sport. Arbena (1988) and Stoddart (1988), for example, have applied the dependency argument to Latin American and Caribbean sport contexts respectively. In his examination of the Caribbean, Stoddart (1988) highlights the perpetuation of links with the imperial 'mother country' through the 'moral codes' associated with cricket. Emphasising the significance of this, he suggests, "the colonial elites established a cultural primacy through cricket as much as through economic power and political position" (1988: p.251). Stoddart, also drawing on the class elements of dependency analysis highlights the importance of Caribbean elites in the promulgation of dependent ties with the imperial 'metropolis'. He notes "in all aspects of Caribbean cricket . . the colonial élites hold, organization and philosophy were deep seated, with ramifications into political, commercial and cultural life" (1988: p.252).

Arbena (1988) locates sport within the context of underdevelopment and the dependent relationships of Latin America. The adoption of sports, rather than indigenous innovations, Arbena suggests "may prove to be another graphic indicator, highly correlated with, and partially determined by the economic, political and military indices of Latin America's overall weaknesses and dependency in the world community" (1988: p.3). Despite drawing upon the dependency construct to situate Latin American sport, Arbena does acknowledge that "sport need (not) be understood solely within this global "dependency" framework" (1988: p.3).

Focusing on baseball in the Dominican Republic, Klein's (1989) work has emerged as an exemplar of dependency theory to comprehend the global diffusion of sport. Specifically, Klein highlights the role of American major league baseball organisations in the underdevelopment of Dominican baseball. Locating this within
systemic Dominican-United States dependent relations, Klein notes, “following the
trajectory of other multi-nationals, major league teams are duplicating the process that
has come to be called the “internationalization of the division of labor . . . and are
further underdeveloping peripheral nations” (1989: p.95). Concurrent with the
broader underdevelopment of the Dominican Republic, Klein argues that American
intervention “wind(s) up crippling the organization of Dominican baseball while at
the same time making it more dependent on the US” (1989: p.96). The ties created by
the presence of American baseball academies, established and run by major league
organisations, Klein suggests “work to increase the direct influence of the US teams
while eroding the autonomy of Dominican baseball” (1989: p.104). In summary.
Klein notes that it is within the seemingly innocuous area of popular culture,
including film, fashion, music and sport that dependency is often fostered.
Significantly, however, he notes that baseball, amongst other elements of popular
culture, which obscure political and economic domination, serves to mediate
indigenous cultural resistance. In this respect sport is identified as playing a
potentially significant role in the maintenance of dependent relations and hence
underdevelopment.

Additional to these investigations of dependent relationships between
developed and underdeveloped nations, Kidd (1981) and Jarvie (1991) have extended
the sporting analysis to metropolis-satellite dependencies within developed nations.
Kidd’s analysis considers state intervention in Canadian sport and the degradation of
national identity within the expansion of US domination of commercial sport. The
Canadian state, Kidd notes, “has unwittingly assisted the process of cultural
disintegration in those sports which have been heavily commercialized” (1981:
p.715). Kidd situates Canadian sport in a dependent role to her dominant
teleological neighbour; characterised by US ownership, talent migration and media
penetration, facilitated by the dynamics of capital which undermine Canadian national
identity.

Utilising a less deterministic approach, Jarvie (1991) has located his
investigation of the Highland Games within the notion of cultural dependency.
Situating the emergence of the Highland Games in the cultural struggles within Scottish society, Jarvie notes, that “social structures and patterns of social development are greatly influenced by relations of power and dependency that occur between a metropole and a hinterland . . . [which] lend itself to an explanation of Highland development” (1991: p.13). In highlighting the role of the Highland Games in Scottish cultural identity, Jarvie emphasises that such forms must be considered within the “historically structured relations of conflicts between Scotland and the British state” (1991: p.104). Thus Jarvie locates ‘dependency’ within a wider context, including political and cultural domination.

The work of Kidd and Jarvie reinforces the claim that notions of dependency have utility beyond relationships between developed and underdeveloped nations alone. Moreover, they usefully highlight the issues of underdevelopment in ‘developed’ areas associated with differential power relations and internal dominance manifest in the cultural landscape of sport. In terms of trying to assess the use of the application of dependency theory, as with the other theories covered, it is apparent that it is characterised by varied applications. Stoddart (1988) and Arbena (1988) for example use it in a relatively loose ‘cultural sense’. Klein (1989) alternatively, in his examination of Dominican baseball is more rigid, paralleling the exploitation of raw materials with playing talent, and subsequent refinement with the training of players, to conclude that US baseball organizations “operate(s) as a small scale neocolonial enterprise interested only in its own ends” (1989: p.107). Of the studies which examine dependency and underdevelopment within the ‘developed’ world, Kidd’s (1981) application is more aligned with neo-Marxist interpretations of dependency, highlighting the dynamics of transnational capitalism. Jarvie alternatively has utilised both elements of dependency theory, Gramsci and figurational sociology. The following section attempts to evaluate the usefulness of dependency theory in the context of comprehending the globalisation of sport.
2.3.2 Dependency Theory: Strengths and Weaknesses

During the late 1970's and early 1980's a growing internal critique argued that dependency was not Marxist enough (e.g. Warren, 1980; Laclau, 1979). Leftist criticisms of underdevelopment theory have been summarised by Leys (1977) as follows. First, the meaning of 'development' in dependency research is obscure. This ambiguity is a central concern, as it is upon this construct that any notion of underdevelopment must be based. Indeed, despite various dependency interpretations, either strictly econometric or incorporating other factors, what actually constitutes development remains unclear. Second, criticism has surrounded the issue of exploitation. Within the construct of underdevelopment, Leys notes, it "is unclear whether the masses suffer from exploitation or not and if so to what extent" (1977: p.94). Certainly the macro-focus of much of the dependency work does preclude analysis of the exact material impacts of exploitation through dependent relationships.

Also criticised is the use of what Leys (1977) has described as 'primitive concepts'. For example the centre-periphery metaphor "is seldom if ever replaced by a concrete typology of centres and peripheries" (1977: p.95). Similar criticism is leveled at the notion of dependence, which it is proposed, may sensitise research to only one dimension of a more complex interdependency. The ultimate cause of underdevelopment, Leys notes, is not identified apart from the assertion that it emanates from the centre of the system. This point is evidently linked to the lack of clarity concerning exploitation. This weakness, shows how dependency theory "offers only a general interpretation of a current situation, a system of mechanisms broadly taken as 'given', rather than putting forward a theory of the 'laws' governing the historical appearance and subsequent evolution of those mechanisms" (Leys, 1977: p.96)

A further Marxist criticism is the assertion that dependency has treated class formation and class struggle as residual (Harrison, 1988). The root of this Leys (1977) suggests is 'economism' which relegates, alongside social class, the State, politics and ideology. As Sklair (1995) acknowledges, a central point of controversy
surrounding dependency theory has been the debate over whether the spiral of underdevelopment in the Third World was solely the result of capitalism. Warren (1980), for example, has contended that, contrary to the contention of dependency theory, capitalism is an effective means of promoting development. He suggests that the prospects for capitalist development in the Third World are good, that considerable development has occurred, and that it is the internal aspects of the Third World that are the greatest obstacle to development.

Harrison (1988) notes that at the conceptual level, it has also been criticised as tautological, as whilst it largely rules out the possibility of exceptions to underdevelopment, in acknowledging this possibility it posits that it will in fact deepen the level of dependency. The increasing number of Third World countries which were in fact rapidly industrialising during the 1970s, Hettne notes, meant that “this tautological argument gradually lost credibility” (1990: p.94). A further criticism, Harrison notes, is that to highlight issues of dependency, is to state the obvious. To some degree, he argues, every society is dependent, and the blanket use of the term may in fact obscure more than it reveals. As Hettne (1990) notes, even those countries normally not conceived as underdeveloped, do make imports, are dependent to a degree on exports, and many emulate the consumption patterns of other nations. Consequently “the exercise of distinguishing ‘dependence’ from ‘nondependence’ soon breaks down (1990: p.94). Alternatively, Harrison (1988) notes it may be more accurate to refer to interdependence of relationships, but to revert to dichotomous categorisations is a paralogism. Examples of crude economism have also been criticised for reducing all social action, interactions and culture as the representative of economic interest alone. Additionally, Platt (1980) asserts that in the case-study of Latin America it is necessary to look at internal factors, such as the shortage of skilled labour, lack of exploitable raw materials and fuel, small domestic market and a scarcity of capital for investment, to account for the lack of development.

Withstanding the criticism, dependency theory certainly does have strengths. Whereas Marxist-Leninist notions of Imperialism focused upon the ‘core’ imperial
powers, theories of underdevelopment have helped to give ‘voice’ to the Third World. Specifically, dependency theory has highlighted the manner in which their internal situation is tied to their location within a global system. Dependency accounts thus avoid the criticism of dealing only with internal dynamics, to which modernisation theory was open. Additionally, dependency, particularly in the conception of Frank, is valuable in highlighting the varying levels of dependency within the Third World and the role of indigenous ‘agents’ of dependency. Thus the agrarian hinterland is viewed as the satellite of the provincial cities of the Third World. In this way, sensitivity to internal indigenous dynamics is maintained.

The manner in which dependency theory has been used within the sports literature is eclectic, which characterised later versions of mainstream dependency theory. Indeed, sporting applications are largely removed from Baran’s (1973) original formulation of underdevelopment. Alternatively, for scholars such as Kidd (1981), Stoddart (1988), Ariena (1988) and Jarvie (1991) dependency has been used more as a frame of reference to comprehend the varying contexts they have studied. Klein’s (1989) work into Dominican baseball is a more rigid application of dependency that takes the issue of sport as a component of underdevelopment as its central concern. In evaluating Klein’s work, Stoddart (1989) highlights some shortcomings of the approach to the case study. In particular Stoddart notes, “the paper occasionally takes on a monolithic quality, the “Americans versus the “Dominicans” (1989: p.127). The patterns of interaction, Stoddart argues “are not that simplistic” (1989: p.127, emphasis in original). He notes several points such as; the patterns of baseball ownership, examples of indirect economic benefit, and the impact of returnee Dominican players from the US, which may provide data to question the issue of dependency by highlighting “the full place of the game in the Dominican economic framework” (1989: p.128). This valid criticism highlights that dependency analysis, such as Klein’s, at best presents only one aspect of what is necessarily a more complex relationship involving multi-faceted economic dimensions.
Using dependency as a frame of reference, the applications of Kidd (1981) and Jarvie (1991) are useful additions to the sporting literature, and a reminder that issues of dominance and dependence is not only extant between developed and Third World nations, but pervasive between ‘metropoles’ and ‘satellites’ within these contexts. As was evident with the applications of neo-imperialism to the sporting literature, the loose applications of dependency theory, perhaps, illustrate the acknowledgment of shortcomings. Nevertheless, its presence has had a useful impact upon analysis. Dependency theory has value in that “it quite rightly places the sports activity very definitely into the sociopolitical framework from which it has arisen” (Stoddart, 1989:p.127). In particular it is useful to keep the analysis attuned to the external factors that shape global sporting diffusion and patterns of development. The growing body of literature on sport in the lesser-developed countries is one obvious beneficiary of this conceptual concern.

The shortcomings of dependency theory, however, do limit its use as a sole explanatory tool of the global expansion and diffusion of sport. Too many examples exist of sports diffusing against the dominant economic flows, to look solely at the global capitalist system as an explanation. Undoubtedly it is an important mechanism, but not the only one. Dependency theory’s problems of dealing with autonomous growth and development also present problems. Examples of indigenous sports thriving outside of dependent relations clearly create problems. The ambiguity surrounding the manifestations of exploitation and conceptions of dependency also create difficulties. If we consider Klein’s case-study, for example, it is noted that as well as Dominican players moving to play in the US, so to do US players move to the Dominican Republic. Such an example highlights that in fact consideration of issues of interdependence may be more appropriate. Whilst admittedly characterised by issues of power and domination to varying degrees, dependency may best considered one element of a broader process.
2.4 World-Systems Theory

A further conceptualisation to emerge within the neo-Marxist critique of modernisation theories was the work of Immanuel Wallerstein (1974, 1980, 1989). Specifically, Wallerstein was critical of modernisation perspectives which viewed the globe of consisting of relatively autonomous 'societies'. The appropriate conception of modern social change, Wallerstein (1974) proposed, is of 'world-systems'.

Tracing the historical background of development and underdevelopment, Wallerstein noted that it was "in sixteenth-century Europe that we saw the full development and economic predominance of market trade. This was the system called capitalism" (1979: p.6). In several volumes, Wallerstein noted the growth of the capitalist world economy in three distinct historical stages. First, c.1450-1640, which situated the origins of a European economy in the sixteenth century (1974). Second, 1650-1730, highlighting the emergence of mercantilism and European consolidation (1980). Third, 1760-1917 characterised by renewed economic expansion incorporating vast new zones into the world economy (1989). Wallerstein argued that the only real social systems are world-systems (other than isolated subsistence economies), and that only two varieties of world-systems have previously existed. First, world-empires, in which a single political system is extant. Second, world economies, where political states are integrated by a single economic system. He also acknowledged the potential for an alternative global system of socialism, which constitutes a third possible form of world-system. The world-economy, Wallerstein proposed, is characterised by a division of labour with specialisation of geographical regions. "That is to say, the range of economic tasks is not evenly distributed throughout the world system" (Wallerstein, 1974: p.349).

A critical feature of Wallerstein's argument that differentiates it from dependency theory, Waters (1995) notes, is the focal role of the state structure in the world-economy. Commenting on the role of states in the emergence of a world system, Wallerstein suggests they "were themselves a major underpinning of the new capitalist system (not to speak of being its political guarantee)" (1974: p.133). Hence
the nation state structure is viewed as holding an important role in the world economy. This is predominant within the advantaged areas of the world-economy, which Wallerstein (1974) characterised as the core-states. Within such states, the emergence of a strong internal structure which fosters a national-cultural identity “serves both as a mechanism to protect disparities that have arisen within the world-system, and as an ideological mask and justification for the maintenance of these disparities” (1974: p.349).

Within the world-economy there are also peripheral areas. The characteristics of such areas, Wallerstein noted, are that “the indigenous state is weak, ranging from its non-existence (that is, a colonial situation) to one with a low degree of autonomy (that is a neo-colonial situation)” (1974: p.349). A third category also exists - that of the semi-periphery, which lies between the core and periphery, in terms of economic achievements, strength of the state structure and the level of national development. As components of the world-economy, these areas are in some cases former core regions, whilst in others they may have been peripheral areas that have been promoted within the changing ‘geopolitics’ of the world-system.

Wallerstein notes that the latter category of the semi-periphery is by no means a residual category dealing with those elements that do not fit the analysis. Alternatively, Wallerstein views this category as a necessary structural element in the world-economy. The semi-periphery, he argues, acts to “partially deflect the political pressures which groups primarily located in peripheral areas might otherwise direct against core-states and the groups which operate within and through their state machinery” (1974: p.350). Similarly, the semi-periphery’s growth is inhibited, as its own interests are located outside the political arena of the core-states. Hence the semi-periphery is viewed as playing an important role in system maintenance by mediating core-periphery tensions.

The division of labour, highlighted previously, is held as an important determinant of the three-tiered system of core, semi-periphery, and periphery. This division, Wallerstein (1974) notes “involves a hierarchy of occupational tasks, in which tasks requiring higher levels of skill and greater capitalization are reserved for
higher ranking areas” (1974: p.350). Due to the mechanisms of the capitalist world-
economy which hold accumulated capital, including human capital, at a higher rate 
than raw labour power, Wallerstein argues “the geographical maldistribution of these 
occupational skills involves a strong trend towards self maintenance” (1974: p.350). 
The result of this, Wallerstein concludes, is that the very processes behind the 
development of a world-economy are those that tend to enlarge the economic and 
social disparity between the various regions.

A caveat that Wallerstein adds is the dynamic nature of the structures of the 
‘modern world system’. It is possible, he notes, for particular regions to change their 
structural role in the world economy to their advantage. Those external areas in one 
century, Wallerstein notes, may in turn become a component of the periphery. 
Similarly core-states can become semi-peripheral and semi-peripheral ones 
peripheral. The fluid nature of the system, Wallerstein proposes, means “it is not 
structurally possible to avoid, over a long period of historical time, a circulation of the 

Although the primary concern of world-systems theory has been with 
economic and political elements, through the role of states, later work has highlighted 
the cultural aspect. Hopkins and Wallerstein for example acknowledge culture as “an 
integral aspect of world-historical development” (1982: p.43). Wallerstein’s (1979) 
earlier conception recognised nations, nationalities, peoples and ethnic groups 
considered under the collective term ‘ethno-nations’ thereby acknowledging that 
varieties of culture exist. Emphasising their role within the world-system, 
Wallerstein noted “their significance or consequences can only be fruitfully analyzed 
if one spells out the implications of their organizational activity or political demands 
for the functioning of the world-economy” (1979: p.25). Hence, the autonomous 
importance of social action is subsumed to the overall system.

2.4.1 World-Systems Theory and Sport

Despite the apparent relevance of world-systems theory to a comprehension of 
the globalisation of sport, its use as an explanatory framework has been limited. Both
Bale and Maguire (1994) and Jarvie and Maguire (1994) have noted this somewhat surprising lack of attention from scholars studying global sports development. Despite this, elements of Wallerstein's work has permeated the sports literature. What is clear is that world-systems theory has not been applied as a central thematic, but alternatively has tended to be integrated as a loose framework or via the use of selective elements.

An example of the clearest reference to world systems theory is provided by Sage (1994) who situates his analysis of the American sporting goods industry within "the national and international system of unequal economic and political relationships among the developed and less developed countries" (1994: p.39). Sage considers the impacts of the economic restructuring which has characterised the American sporting goods industry: deindustrialisation, off-shore relocation, export processing and capital flight, on the Third World. Specifically looking at the offshore relocation of Rawlings, manufacturers of baseballs used in the American Major Leagues, and Nike's athletic shoe production, Sage highlights the exploitation of labour and resources of Third World locations. Thus low labour costs, lack of union strength, minimum investment in safety and long working hours have allowed Rawlings and Nike to maximise profits by exploiting the flexibility of the global labour market and capital associated with their concerns. The result is the underdevelopment and exploitation of the Third World. Sage concludes "the neocolonial system of unequal economic and political relationships among the First and Third World countries envisioned by Wallerstein’s world-system model of global development becomes abundantly evident to even a casual observer" (1994: p.48).

Insightfully, Sage (1994) is able to demonstrate the dynamics that govern the manufacture of American sporting goods, and highlight the hollowness of the 'patriotic rhetoric' and 'all-American' image that American professional sports seek to portray. Whilst making no reference to core-states, peripheral areas or indeed notions of a semi-periphery, Sage's analysis demonstrates the usefulness of a conception of a world-system which can highlight important dynamics of aspects of the global sports process.
Further analyses have also situated interpretations of aspects of global sport development with obvious influence from Wallerstein. Kenyan athletics (Bale, 1994; Bale and Sang 1996), for example, and the talent migration of foreign student-athletes to American universities (Bale, 1991) have been placed within the context of a 'world sports-system'. In his analysis of foreign athletic migration to US universities, Bale (1991) highlights, that it is the achievement-sport ideology that typifies the dominant global sports system "[and] has come to dominate and in many cases re-place previous sport-like systems which were much more geographically limited in extent" (1991: p.7). The subsequent erosion of traditional sports, Bale argues, has resulted in a sporting dependency, manifest in the migration of athletic talent to US college sport from peripheral areas. Bale notes that "the US college sport syndrome has unwittingly contributed to the underdevelopment of sport elsewhere in the world" (1991: p.199).

Also situated within a world-systems framework, Bale (1994) and Bale and Sang's (1996) analysis of Kenyan running highlights the underdevelopment of Kenyan running within "a single global market for sport" (1996: p.170). The subsuming of the indigenous body culture in favour of the dominant achievement ideology, they argue, represents the degradation of autonomy. Countries like Kenya, Bale and Sang suggest:

though part of a global system, can be seen as being marginalised. They cannot be said to have joined the global sports system as equal partners with existing members: they take part on unfavourable terms. Indeed . . . the global core has actually exploited peripheral countries like Kenya, hence making the Kenyan athletic revolution, . . even more remarkable (1996: p.170).

The latter point, of this telling passage, provides a hint that exceptions may be apparent and that progression within an exploitative world-sports-system may be possible. Bale (1994) is more specific in his use of Wallerstein's three-tired conception, taking as his context the development of Kenyan athletics. The global sports system, he argues

shares several characteristics with the world political and economic system. There exists a three-tiered structure of inequality with a sports-core, a semi-periphery and a periphery. Countries at the core have incorporated those at the

In this respect the global interconnections of the sporting system are viewed as fulfilling a role in the creation and maintenance of the inequitable world-system of sport along the lines conceived by Wallerstein.

Despite clearly drawing upon elements of world-systems theory, both Bale (1991, 1994) and Bale and Sang (1996), somewhat surprisingly, make no reference to the work of Wallerstein. Indeed, a thorough application and investigation of all the concepts and attendant elements of world systems theory as it relates to a comprehension of sport is lacking. Alternatively, implicit references to it and 'borrowed concepts' have predominated. For example McKay and Miller's (1991) and McKay et al’s (1993) investigations of the changing nature of Australian sport due to global influences have situated developments within the 'capitalist world system'. Australia, McKay et al note "is a producer of raw materials destined for global markets and a consumer of manufactured goods and investment capital from core and newly industrializing nations" (1993: p.10). Thus the susceptibility of Australian sport to outside influences is seen as symptomatic of "its semiperipheral status in the capitalist world system" (1991: p.86).

Such references demonstrate that Wallerstein's concepts have not gone unnoticed by scholars with an interest in comprehending the globalisation of sport. Despite this, avoiding explicit reference to Wallerstein, McKay and colleagues have preferred to call upon concepts such as: post-fordism, the globalisation of consumerism and the cultural logic of late capitalism (McKay and Miller, 1991). Evidently, however, Wallerstein's conceptions have helped to shape their analysis.

2.4.2 World-Systems Theory: strengths and weaknesses

In many respects world-systems analysis, in accounting for the role of state actions, represents an advance upon its dependency forebears. Similar to the dependency school, criticism emerges both from within the Marxist tradition and externally. The use of specifically Marxist categories within world-systems theory is
one area that has come in for criticism. Laclau (1977) for example has suggested that Wallerstein, by defining capitalism as profit-motivated production for the market, has eliminated mode of production from the analysis and thus confused capitalism with the existence of an economic system. Wallerstein’s conception of capitalism defined as ‘seeking profit in the market’, Laclau suggests “is thus unified by a merely subjective principle, while relations of production are reduced to the role of technical accidents dictated by world conditions and the factors of production (1977: p.46). Highly critical of Wallerstein, Laclau goes on to assert that “Wallerstein’s endeavour culminates in a merely factual and erudite survey without the slightest indication of theoretical explanation.” (1977: p.46).

Brenner (1977) also questions the mis-representation of capitalism and it’s origins within Wallerstein’s analysis. Brenner is critical of Wallerstein’s failure to account for innovation as a factor behind the forces of production, and speculation that this is because “to do so would undermine his notion of the essential role of the underdevelopment of the periphery in contributing to the development of the core, through surplus transfer to underwrite accumulation there” (1977: p.31). Brenner, alternatively proposes that “the origins of capitalist economic development in relation to pre-capitalist modes of production becomes that of the origin of the property surplus extraction system (class system) of free wage labour” (p.33). Hence those more orthodox Marxists who view it as central see the residual status of class struggle as a weakness. For example, Petras (1978) is also critical of the lack of centrality of class antagonisms “which is not dealt with adequately simply by looking at the fact of insertion of the world market in isolation from the divisive shifts and changes in class formation” (p.37). This point highlights the weakness of an overemphasis upon the external forces of the world economy, to the exclusion of internal processes. Marxists such as Petras appear to advocate a return to nation state analysis rather than a world-systems approach. External forces, Petras (1978) argues, “cannot be conceptualized as the impersonal forces of the market; but rather they must be marked as part of the internal class alignments” (p.37). Evidently the relative neglect of Third World class
structures by world-systems theorists does represent an oversight in comprehending
the lack of development.

Criticisms from outside the Marxist camp have tended to be at a more general
level. Questions, for example have been raised regarding whether it is entirely
evident that those societies classified as peripheral are in fact underdeveloped by the
core (Harrison, 1988). Similarly, it is not clear how socialist societies fit into the
world-system (Abercrombie et al, 1994). Indeed, although, Wallerstein (1974) does
acknowledge the possibility of a socialist world-system, it is not clear how the co-
existence of socialist societies alongside capitalist ones will impact upon the
dynamics of world markets.

The principal criticism however, surrounds an over reliance upon economic
structures, which tends to reduce all components of any world-system to being
mediated by economic factors. Acknowledging this, Robertson and Lechner
comment upon "the problematic status of the 'cultural factor' in . . . current world-
systems theory" (1985: p.103). Certainly, whilst acknowledged, cultural elements are
a neglected component of the emphasis upon economic processes. Indeed, Robertson
and Lechner (1985) argue that there is a world-system of global culture which is
entirely autonomous from the economic processes of capitalism. For example, they
note "the expansion of the world-system in economic and political terms has not
involved in a symmetrical relationship the expansion of culture to the point that all
major actors on the world scene share the same presuppositions (1985: p.110). Hence
the tendency within world systems theory to see culture merely as an adjunct to a
world-system rather than a component part is problematic. In highlighting this
Robertson and Lechner propose alternative conceptualisation by means of "a multi-
dimensional perspective of global modernity" (1985: p.108) which would overcome
the problematic role of culture within world systems analysis.

World-systems theory has been subject to vigorous critique, elements of
which (particularly the internal leftist criticism) claim that it has been totally
discredited and should be discarded. Whilst certainly not the 'final word' however, it
offers valuable sensitising themes in theorising the global order. The status of world-
systems theory, in the search for a framework to comprehend levels of global interconnectedness is illustrated by Robertson and Lechner, who propose: “Wallerstein's work in the 1970s and early 1980s has contributed much to the 'global shift' in sociological theory” (1985: p.107). Indeed, Wallerstein’s analysis represents an advance on the previous dependency formulations of the global system.

Whilst there are obvious similarities between the assumptions of Frank’s dependency theory and world-systems theory in terms of a global unit of analysis, emphasis on economic processes and the mechanisms of unequal exchange, there are also important distinctions. In particular Wallerstein's triple distinction of core, semi-periphery and periphery are an advance on the metropolis-satellite model. Additionally rather than being pinned to a development of underdevelopment thesis, Wallerstein’s argument incorporates the potential for mobility within the system. Specifically Foster-Carter, observes "at times of economic recession in the existing core (Wallerstein) predicts there is limited scope for a few countries to rise in the system, whether by 'seizing the chance' or through 'development by invitation'" (1985: p.36). Certainly world-systems theory, in accounting for development more satisfactorily represents an advance upon previous formulations, helping attune the analysis to the increased interdependence at a global level. Despite this, Waters cautions against hailing Wallerstein’s theory as a precursor of the more recent globalisation theories that followed, as it is "fundamentally at odds with such formulations" (1995: p.25). As has been highlighted above, for Wallerstein, it is the economic realm in which the increasing levels of global interaction are heralded. Alternatively more recent 'globalisation' frameworks "propose a global unification of cultural orientations which 'turns on' and breaks down the barriers between national politics and local economies. More importantly, the existence of a world-system or systems does not itself imply global unification" (Waters 1995: p.25).

2.4.3 World-Systems Theory and the Globalisation of Sport

The application of world-systems theory to the sporting literature have been limited, and characterised by the selective use of it features. The case studies...
which elements of it have been applied, have focused specifically on the American sporting goods industry (Sage, 1994), foreign student-athletes in American Universities (Bale, 1991) and Kenyan athletics (Bale & Sang, 1996) rather than the broader dynamics of global sport.

The context of Sage's (1994) study evidently lends itself to Wallerstein's work, focusing as it does on expressly economic dynamics of core-periphery relationships relating to sporting goods manufacture. This valuable work, however, can only be considered one dimension of a broader process incorporating additional cultural and ideological dimensions. The multi-directional flows and alternative indices, for example, are apparent when considering the 'export' of games and cultural forms to the core, or the active solicitation within peripheral regions of 'core games' and their associated culture and ideologies. Consideration of such elements considerably clouds periphery-core relationships, of which economic exploitation is merely one element.

Characteristic of studies within the sports literature that use elements of world-systems analysis is the failure to consider the pivotal concepts of the theory within the context it is applied. Bale (1991, 1994) and Bale and Sang (1996) for example fail to identify the parameters of the "three-tiered structure of inequality" (Bale, 1994: p.220) that is identified. In this respect the reader in unaware as to what constitutes the 'sporting core', 'sporting semi-periphery' or 'sporting periphery' that apparently make up this system. Additionally, elements such as the division of labour, which is critical to Wallerstein, are not paralleled within the sports contexts they consider. Furthermore, the work of Bale (1991, 1994) and Bale and Sang (1996) give the impression of a uni-directional exploitation, which at times evokes suspicion of a homogenisation thesis. Both case studies do however acknowledge the potential for opposition, and instances of resistance within the exploitative relationships of global sports dynamics.

McKay and Miller (1991) and McKay et al's (1993) investigations of the broader dynamics of global sport hold only a tenuous link with Wallerstein, evoking the notion of the semi-periphery to highlight Australia's role within global sports. In
their investigation, however they successfully demonstrate the multidirectionality of global sports flows within what would seem to be a fruitful application of this aspect of Wallerstein’s theory. Evidently however, their application is in the form of an eclectic selection of an evocative concept, rather than wholesale recourse to world systems theory. For example, no attempt is made to identify elements of any core or periphery to clarify their use of the concept of Australia as a semi-peripheral component of a global system.

Once again, the sporting literature has demonstrated that, as with the theoretical frameworks discussed above, applications have taken the form of a loose frame of reference rather than systematic adoption. World-systems theory is no exception to this. Certainly the ‘borrowed concepts’ have largely been utilised prudently in their application to specific case studies. The eclectic use of world-systems theory noted above is, perhaps, indicative of the shortcomings of its wholesale application to the complex dimensions of the globalisation of sport. Chief amongst these shortcomings is restrictive economism and the unclear status of the concept of culture.

The previous sections have outlined those sociological perspectives that directly lend themselves to analysis of globalisation processes. Additional to these directly global perspectives there are alternative sociological traditions that have had an impact upon the globalisation of sport debate. The following section is an attempt to identify these standpoints and assess their relative influences and utility.

2.5 Cultural Studies

Within the past four decades a realm of research known as ‘cultural studies’ has emerged, spanning both the humanities and social sciences. Such has been the growth rate of this field that Grossberg (1989) has pointed to the cultural studies ‘boom’ in recent times. The “veritable rag-bag of ideas, methods and concerns” (Sparkes, 1996: p.14) of cultural studies, has filtered through to diverse areas of study including literary criticism, sociology, history and communication and media studies.
The growth in popularity of the cultural studies approach is characterised by the development of specialised research institutes, journals, conferences and associations and the emergence of specialised degree programmes. Lacking any single disciplinary security, the field is locked in internal theoretical debates, diverse methodologies and subject matter. Despite these ‘blurred boundaries’, there is a rich seam of literature documenting the origins and background of cultural studies (Storey, 1996a, 1996b; Grossberg, 1989, 1993; Brantlinger, 1990; Turner, 1990; Grossberg et al 1992; Blundell et al, 1993). These texts are characterised by differing emphases, some focusing on political contexts, others theoretical debates or institutional generation.

Institutionally, the origins of cultural studies can be located in the establishment of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham in 1964. The ‘seeds’ of cultural studies as a research field, however, are identifiable in specific political contexts within post-war Britain. As Hall notes,

Cultural studies really begins with the debate about the nature of social and cultural change in postwar Britain. An attempt to address the manifest break-up of traditional culture, especially traditional class cultures, it set about registering the impact of the new forms of affluence and consumer society on the very hierarchical and pyramidal structure of British society. (1990: p.12)

Cultural studies then emerged as a reaction to a specific national context. Specifically, Grossberg (1989) documents there were concerns relating to increasing American influence and new forms of modernisation in Britain, both of which pointed to the emergence of a ‘mass culture’. These changes in popular cultural forms and the subsequent impacts on class formations aroused a specific concern. A second source of impetus was the perceived failure of the extreme left to successfully confront, both theoretically and politically “the beginnings of late capitalism, the new forms of economic and political colonialism and imperialism, the existence of racism . . .the place of culture and ideology in relations of power and the effects of consumer capitalism” (Grossberg, 1989: p.117). Hence, there is a political project at the heart of cultural studies.
The agenda of cultural studies, Grossberg (1989) notes, has not remained static, but has evolved in relation to further developments. The initial concerns and foundations were reinforced during the 1960s following the growth of the mass media, which provoked heightened awareness of the ideological functions of media forms. Additionally, this era was characterised by the emergence of resistant sub-cultures which demonstrated the struggle over the terrain of popular culture (Grossberg, 1989). During the 1970s renewed interest in the dynamics of gender relations opened up cultural studies “to the radical critique and implications of feminist theory and politics” (Grossberg, 1989: p.117). Furthermore, the emergence of the ‘new right’ as a political force, which resulted in large sections of the British working classes voting Conservative, provided further impetus for cultural studies to comprehend how such groupings could align themselves with a political ideology apparently in juxtaposition to traditional working class values. The 1980s saw the retrenchment of the victory of the right, which sustained the cultural studies prerogative to search for answers to this problematic.

Despite specific national origins, the fundamental orientation of the questions raised has spread around world, and topics and concerns have consequently diversified to consider varying contexts. From these origins, cultural studies has spread, cementing strong traditions in the USA, Canada and Australia. Subsequently cultural studies has adopted and incorporated diverse research directions and theorising to account for these differing contexts. A recurrent feature, however, emanating from these origins is the political purpose which emerges from the recognition of imbalances of power, opportunity and resources.

The theoretical development of cultural studies can be understood as a result of engagement with the political backdrop outlined above and the struggle to comprehend these contexts in the light of unsatisfactory precursors. Hall (1981) highlights that theoretically cultural studies emerged from a disjuncture in what had preceded. In critical intellectual work, he notes:

what is important are the significant breaks - where old lines of thought are disrupted, older constellations, and elements, old and new, regrouped around a different set of premises and themes. . . . Cultural Studies, as a distinctive
problematic, emerges from one such moment in the mid 1950’s (1981: p.21, emphasis in original).

Consequently, Hall (1980) argues, the historical developments and political, cultural and economic transformations outlined above, generated new forms of thought around which cultural studies was generated.

Three books are broadly acknowledged to have been influential in the emergence of cultural studies. These foundation texts are Richard Hoggart’s *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), Raymond William’s *Culture and Society* (1958), and E.P. Thompson’s *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963). Within these three works, culture was the convergence point. Specifically they shared the rejection of an elitist notion of culture, which had excluded working class people, and culture from academic inquiry. Alternatively, they evoked a more expansive conception of culture as ‘a whole way of life” (Hall, 1981: p.22). Additionally they challenged the economic reductionism of classical Marxism, and the ‘literal operations’ of the base/superstructure metaphor, which ascribed culture to the superstructure. Alternatively they argued for the importance of human agency and the prevalence of cultural power. Culture is thus understood in a specific political sense - as a terrain of conflict and contestation, “it is seen as a key site for the production and reproduction of social relations of everyday life” (Storey, 1996b: p.2).

The emergence of new ‘critical’ dialogues and problematics that resulted from the changing political and economic structures, outlined above, have raised ongoing fractures for cultural studies. Most notably, the late 1970s saw the ‘culturalist’ tradition (favouring agency and experience) challenged by ‘structuralist’ theories (stressing determination and control). Seeking to address this impasse, Hall (1981) argued for a synthesis through the Gramscian notion of hegemony, to help capture the centrality of culture to relations of power. Rejecting Marxist economism, Gramsci viewed the power of dominant classes resting mainly on ideological leadership exercised through cultural processes. Using this concept, Hall developed the notion of ‘articulation’ to comprehend the dynamics of ideological struggle. As Storey (1996a) explains,
He argues that cultural texts and practices are not inscribed with meanings guaranteed once and for all by the intentions of production; meaning is always the result of 'articulation'... because meaning has to be expressed, but it is always expressed in a specific context, a specific historical moment, within a specific discourse(s) determined by a context of articulation... Meaning is therefore social production; the world has to be made to mean. A text or practice or event is not the issuing source of meaning, but a site where the articulation of meaning - variable meaning(s) can take place. (1996a: p.4).

The result of the plurality of meanings, which can be ascribed to cultural texts, practices or events, renders this arena a site of contestation and potential conflict.

As this brief review has highlighted, the characteristic features of cultural studies are its multidisciplinarity, eclectic methods and diverse subject matter. Grossberg suggests that this is the essential strength of cultural studies. Understanding this 'unity in difference', he notes, "requires us to recognise that it has always responded to the particular conditions of its intellectual, political, social and historical contexts" (Grossberg, 1996a: p.114). The result is that diverse theoretical positions and methods are integral to the cultural studies project. As Grossberg expands...

cultural studies is seen as an open-ended and on-going theoretical struggle to understand, and intervene into the existing organization of active domination and subordination within the formations of culture, then the boundaries of the tradition are themselves unstable and changing sites of contestation and practices (1990: p.114-115).

The reflexivity of the field, which sees its parameters constantly re-negotiated and repositioned to account for altering contexts, far from a weakness is viewed as a strength by its proponents.

Andrews and Loy (1993) demonstrate that cultural studies, specifically at the CCCS, included sport regularly within their analysis. The role of cultural studies within the sociology of sport has since been prominent, and is best considered by Hollands (1984), Andrews and Loy (1993), Hargreaves and McDonald (2000). It is the concern of the following section, however, to consider the contribution of this outlook specifically to the globalisation of sport debate.
2.5.1 Cultural Studies and the Globalisation of Sport

Engagement in the globalisation of sport debate from those working within the cultural studies tradition includes contributions from McKay and Miller (1991), Cantelon and Murray (1993), McKay et al (1993), Rowe et al (1994), Donnelly (1996) and Miller et al (2000). Characteristic of the broader cultural studies field, these contributions are marked by varied approaches and emphases. McKay and Miller (1991), for example, were part of the ‘first wave’ of commentaries, primarily focusing upon the ‘globalisation versus Americanisation’ debate. Highlighting several corresponding points, McKay et al (1993) and Rowe et al (1994) also considered this initial debate with reference to Australian sport. Cantelon and Murray (1993) alternatively have focused upon the local-global nexus element of the debate. Finally, Donnelly (1996) reviewing the debate, has considered the varying contentions surrounding the interpretations of the globalisation of culture.

Within their consideration of globalisation, McKay and Miller (1991) propose that the term Americanisation does not capture the complexity of the Australian sports context within which they situate their work. Alternatively, they note the British, European and Japanese influences which have also shaped Australian popular culture, including sport. Characteristic of the centrality of human agency within ‘culturalist’ cultural studies, McKay and Miller are critical of “the unidirectional logic of straightforward cultural domination” (1991: p.92) of which they equate the term Americanisation. They subsequently dismiss the concept of Americanisation as it “tends to flatten out, to homogenize, and to deny the rich heterogeneity and conflict both within and among the supposed donors and legatee’ (1991: p.92). Alternatively McKay and Miller interpret the changing nature of Australian sport, “as evidence of the integration of . . . sport into the media industries, advertising agencies and multinational corporations of the capitalist world system” (1991: p.92, their emphasis). Concluding that the concept of Americanisation is of limited use, they suggest recent economic transformations of Australian sport should be situated within the context of ‘post-Fordism’ and the ‘globalisation of consumerism’. In cultural terms they view the changes to the form and content of Australian sport as
"exemplifying the cultural logic of late capitalism" (p.93). Pursuing the same topic area, McKay et al (1993), use an in depth case-study to highlight the same conclusions regarding the changing nature of Australian sport. They also identify the need for greater work regarding 'grass-roots' sport, cultural policy, and gender issues which are entwined with the globalisation process.

Emanating from the same group of Australian cultural studies scholars, Rowe et al (1994) revisit the globalisation versus Americanisation debate. Again they reinforce “the processes of commodification, Americanization and globalization (which) have transformed the traditionally amateur and semi-professional bases of Australian sport” (1994: p.668). Rowe and colleagues then embark upon a specific case-study of the changing nature of cultural identities associated with Australian soccer, which ably demonstrates the complexity of “the competing influences of globalizing processes, dominant nation states, regional constraints and local conditions which mediate the cultural economy of sport” (1994: p.672). Regarding the globalisation versus Americanisation debate they conclude “although Australian sport has adopted American styles of production and promotion, its subsequent corporatization and commercialization cannot be typified as the completion of the projects of Americanization or globalization” (p.673). Explaining this, the authors point out that the “simple logic of cultural domination” (p.673) is inadequate as “American marketing and presentational techniques may be ‘imported’ in order to protect localized forms of sport from external (including American) competition” (p.673). The term globalisation is rejected due to “its connotations of economic integration, ideological convergence, political consensus and cultural homogenisation” (1994: p.673) which Rowe et al conclude “conceals as much as it reveals about sport” (1994: p.673). Also highlighting the folly of asserting the primacy of local agency relative to international power structures, they conclude somewhat ambiguously that “in the preferred analytical space between lies neither global nor autarchial sport, but nationally and internationally mediated sport” (1994: p.673, their emphasis). Although they do not develop this, my reading is that they seek to emphasise the ‘negotiation’ of the local and global context.
Focusing on local-global nexus issues, Cantelon and Murray, illustrate regional resistance through sport, arguing "globalization can never be complete" (1993: p.275). Whilst the global marketplace is identified as having an important impact on culture, it is revealed as not the only structural property that contours global sport. Highlighting the contentions that surround the concept of globalisation, Cantelon and Murray suggest the emergence of a global culture cannot result in homogenisation, as the particularities of the local lead to varying interpretations of global cultural trends. To comprehend this, Cantelon and Murray advocate the use of Gramsci's concept of hegemony to highlight issues of domination and subordination characteristic of global sport. Cantelon and Murray subsequently emphasise the heterogeneity within global sport, concluding that "to suggest global sports culture is a one-way street towards greater homogeneity with no possibility of uniqueness or distinctiveness, would be a mistake" (1993: p.287).

The final contribution which could be considered to be from within the cultural studies field is Donnelly's (1996) review of the globalisation of sport debate. Demonstrating the economic and political dimensions of globalisation, he is quick to note that cultural globalisation (if kept as an artificially distinct entity for the purpose of analysis) is far more contentious. Donnelly goes on to investigate the globalisation versus Americanisation debate, specifically highlighting differing conceptions of Americanisation, either as cultural imperialism or as cultural hegemony. Cultural imperialism, he notes, usually viewed in the form of Americanisation, is seen as a one-way process of cultural imposition to the expense of domestic cultures. The alternative to this "overdetermined view of Americanisation" (1996: p.243) is of cultural hegemony which sees the transfer of culture as multidirectional. Under this framework the ideological messages of American cultural products are not viewed as fixed, with recipients having some freedom to interpret and reinterpret. This autonomy of local 'consumers' is subject to limits 'given that individuals are not able to control or decisively influence the source and making of these products' (1996: p.243). For Donnelly, "cultural hegemony may be seen as a two-way but imbalanced process of cultural exchange, interpenetration, and interpretation" (1996: p.243).
Within the sociology of sport debate, Donnelly notes that initial lines of inquiry failed to distinguish imperialistic and hegemonic Americanisation. Donnelly subsequently critiques McKay and Miller’s (1991) interpretation of global sports development. In interpreting changes as the corporatisation of sport rather than Americanisation, he argues in McKay and Miller’s work “[a]ll of the examples that are used to deny the Americanisation of sport may also be interpreted as clear evidence of just that process at work” (1996: p.245). Central to Donnelly’s argument is the notion that the characteristics of ‘corporate sport’: ideologies about competition, excellence, corporate efficiency and what it is necessary to do to win, “have their origins in the US” (p.246). The national origin of the actual sports form or its sponsors, Donnelly argues, is of little importance. What is important, he argues “is that the American style of sport has become the international benchmark for corporate sport” (1996: p246). Evidently Donnelly’s equation of the corporatisation and Americanisation of sport as one and the same is a somewhat contentious presupposition. Commenting on this Donnelly concludes that “Americanization is the most appropriate term to describe these processes in sport at this particular time in history... but only if defined in cultural hegemonic terms as a two-way process in which the recipients have interpretive and resistant powers” (p.248).

In considering the utility of the concept of globalisation, Donnelly, equating the term with homogenisation, is dismissive. For it to be satisfactory and sufficient, he notes, we would have to accept “various countries had contributed in relatively equal ways to the observed changes in sport”, and would need to see “evidence of interdependency rather than evident and specific hegemonic interests involved” (p.248). Whilst ceding that at the economic level these processes may be considered globalisation, he notes that “as a cultural entity, corporate sport is not global, nor is it European, Japanese, or Hispanic; it is clearly Americanized (but that Americanization does not go unchallenged)”(1996: p.248). Hence he favours the concept of ‘American hegemony’ over that of globalisation or ‘corporatisation’, as the dominant explanation of global sports processes.
Clearly, there is a degree of disparity in the relative contributions from cultural studies to the debate. Specifically, Donnelly is at odds with the Australian contributions over the centrality of the concept of Americanisation to the globalisation of sport. The Australian scholars in turn conceptualise Americanisation as a term which "deny(s) the rich heterogeneity and conflict both within and among the supposed donors and legatee" (p. 92) in how they view the variety of international interests which permeate Australian sport. They are dismissive of the globalisation concept equating it with homogenisation. Cantelon and Murray (1993) alternatively hold a more expansive conception of globalisation as characterised by both homogenising and heterogenising tendencies. Thus, they argue, although not characterised by uniformity 'global' sport may still be extant. In evoking the concept of hegemony, they are more closely aligned with Donnelly.

2.5.2 Cultural Studies and Global Sport: Strengths and Weaknesses

What is evident from cultural studies contributions to the globalisation of sport debate is acknowledgement of the processes as multi-directional. McKay and Miller (1991), for example highlight the limitations of the Americanisation thesis to explain Australian sport. Alternatively they argue, Americanisation can only be seen as one constituent part of a broader process that includes alternative cultural flows. Similarly, Rowe et al (1994) usefully illustrate the complexity and problems of the Americanisation (conceived as uni-directional 'imperialism') argument. They also demonstrate that the changes/shifts in global sport are not simply evident in the adoption of certain US sports, but also in the means and forms of presentation. This latter influence, Rowe et al speculate, may in fact strengthen local sports against external cultural flows. In this way they illustrate the reflexivity of local sports cultures and the potential for mediation with the global, thereby demonstrating the complexity of cultural flows. Similarly, Cantelon and Murray (1993) reinforce the cultural heterogeneity inherent to global sport, which usefully tempers homogenisation claims. Donnelly’s differentiation between cultural imperialist and cultural hegemonic Americanisation, is a further useful corrective point. On the issue
of directionality, Donnelly conceives Americanisation, if defined in cultural hegemonic terms, as "a two-way process in which recipients have interpretive and resistant powers" (1996: p.248).

As contributions to the debate, the cultural studies offerings are valuable. Specifically, they have been useful in offering corrective accounts to homogenisation arguments such as those offered by Guttmann (1991) and Wagner (1990). This does not mean that they are without contingent problems. The formulations of the Australian group, which appear in various contributions (McKay and Miller, 1991; McKay et al, 1993; Rowe et al, 1994; Miller et al, 2000) have several weaknesses worth noting. McKay and Miller (1991), for example, conclude that the Americanisation concept is of little use in explaining the cultural changes to which Australian sport has been subject. In its place, however, their offering of 'the cultural logic of late capitalism (1991: p.93) is unelaborated and remains undeveloped. More is needed on this assertion to clarify what it may constitute and what its implications for the globalisation of sport are. Its lack of development and consequent ambiguity, at worst evoke notions of economic determinism and historical inevitability. This requires clarification.

In Rowe et al (1994), the Australian group are dismissive of the term globalisation, which they associate with integration, convergence, consensus and homogenisation. Evidently however this is only one way of viewing the concept of globalisation. Indeed, Robertson (1990) has warned of the "misleading view of globalization as constituting a definite move to 'world peace' and integration" (1990: p6). Furthermore, guilty of ambiguity, Rowe et al fail to expand on "nationally and internationally mediated sport" (1994: p673, their emphasis) as the posited process.

Donnelly (1996) also rejects the concept of globalisation in favour of the term 'American cultural hegemony' to comprehend corporate sport as a cultural entity. Globalisation, Donnelly maintains, would be evidenced by various countries contributing "in relatively equal ways" (p.248) to the cultural milieu of global sport, such that no specific national origin was dominant. This suggestion however is only one way of conceiving of globalisation and using the concept. As Rowe et al (1994)
have pointed out, the adoption of American styles of presentation may in turn be the means of resisting the advances of American sports. This highlights the necessity for careful examination of the complexity of global sports processes. The capacity for local interpretation is considerable, and the adoption of American styles of presentation may not necessarily indicative of the advance of American culture. Further considered empirical work is thus necessary.

Donnelly can also be criticised for his equation of corporatisation exactly with Americanisation. Corporatisation of sport, he suggests, “may easily be extended to indicate the Americanization of sport” (1996: p.246). The utility of doing so however is not clear. Indeed, as noted, Rowe et al advocate careful consideration of the specific reception of American cultural artifacts or ideologies which may be indigenised or associated with local resistance in various national contexts. Additionally the reason for prioritising the process of Americanisation over corporatisation is not made explicit.

It is apparent that there are competing interpretations of aspects of the globalisation of sport debate offered by those working within the cultural studies field. Apparent variations, in part, result from differing conceptions of the key terms – notably, Americanisation and globalisation. Rowe et al, for example, see globalisation as suggestive of homogenisation and greater global unity and thus reject the term. Donnelly alternatively equates globalisation with a blending of the various nation-state actors such that the result has no specific national associations. Whilst he avoids the word, this can only be assumed to be along the lines of a global cosmopolitan culture reflective of a pluralistic homogeneity. Cantelon and Murray alternatively use the term globalisation more expansively, not associating it merely with homogenisation. Alternatively, they suggest “[globalisation] is dynamic, with aspects of compliance, acquiescence and resistance” (1993: p.284).

Evidently the contributions reviewed, whilst containing various underdeveloped themes have also made valuable contributions. Assessing the utility of cultural studies to informing the debate upon this evidence is however problematic. Certainly the outlook of cultural studies, on the evidence of these contributions, does
hold explanatory power, particularly relating to the contestation that surrounds
globalisation processes. The diversity of those papers reviewed, characteristic of
cultural studies itself, however, prohibits a broad-based judgment of the utility of the
field *per se*, for they contain competing interpretations themselves and thus can only
be judged upon their individual merits.

2.6 Figurational Sociology

Despite being written over a period of more than fifty years, it is
predominantly within the past two decades that the work of Norbert Elias (1897-
1990) has been recognised within mainstream sociology. Elias's approach, which has
been branded both figurational and process sociology⁷, is characterised by recurrent
themes that link his various analyses. Consequently, van Krieken (1998) notes, "in
interpreting Elias's work it is important to refer to the relations between all the
various strands, rather than taking any one of them in isolation" (p.8). Despite the
accusation of critics, Mennell suggests, Elias was not concerned with creating his
own 'theoretical school in sociology' (1992: p.251). As van Krieken demonstrates,
Elias's framework represents a synthesis of concepts found in the work of other
What Elias does offer, van Krieken suggests, is "a set of sensitizing concepts, an
orientation to how one thinks about and practices sociology with the potential to draw
many of the various threads of sociological thought together" (van Krieken, 1998:
p.8).

Elias was critical of thinking that reduced processes occurring over time to
something timeless and unchanging. This 'process reduction' Elias argued,
simplified 'complex phenomena by dissecting them into their individual components'
(1978a: p.230). As a consequence, Elias rejected, static terms, which in his view
dominated sociology at the time of his early writings. Concepts such as 'system',
'boundary', 'structure', and 'stratum', which suggest unchanging conditions rather
than continual flux, were rejected by Elias (Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998). The two
key concepts within Elias’s sociology are interdependence and process (Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998).

For Elias, human interdependencies are at “the very heart of sociological theory” (1978: p.134). Resulting from disproportionate levels of interdependence within human relationships power ratios are also usually unequal. Consequently, Elias argued that changing power ratios resulted from the shifting nature of human interdependencies as part of structured processes. As Elias illustrates ‘it is in this order of interweaving human impulses and strivings, this social order, which determines the course of historical change’ (1939/1982: p.230). A further contingent element of Elias’s viewpoint is that this interdependence of individuals gives rise to patterns and changes that are neither planned nor created, resulting in “an order more compelling and stronger than the will and reason of the individual people composing it” (Elias, 1939/1982: p.230).

The primacy of process is a further pillar of Elias’s theorising. Human societies, he argued, “can only be understood as consisting of long-term processes of development and change, rather than as timeless states or conditions” (van Krieken, 1998: p.6). This viewpoint stemmed from the critique of the philosophical assumption that polarised the individual and society - the conception of homo clausus (closed man). Elias’s critique emphasised the processual nature of human relations. Through the concept of ‘figuration’ to serve “as a simple conceptual tool to loosen this social constraint” (1978: p.130), Elias further argued that processual dynamics in the form of figurations operate relatively autonomously from individuals.

Mennell & Goudsblom (1998) have usefully summarised the principles underlying Elias’s work within four interrelated themes. First, sociology is about interdependent humans whose lives are significantly shaped by the social figurations they form together. Second, these figurations are viewed as continually in a state of flux, undergoing changes of both a short-term nature and others more permanent. Third, the long-term developments occurring within human figurations are largely unplanned and unforeseen. Fourth, the development of human knowledge occurs
within human figurations, acting as an important element of their overall development.

Although writing about a variety of topics including: the dynamics of social relations, state formation, established-outsider relations, sport and violence, theories of knowledge and the development of the social sciences, Elias's most prominent work, *The Civilizing Process* (1939/1978), forms the premise of much of his work. Elias wished to challenge unilinear notions of human development from 'savagery' to 'civilisation', focusing on the question of how human psychological make-up has changed in the course of long-term social development. Divided into two volumes, the first focused on 'civilisation' as a specific transformation of human behaviour in terms of manners, customs and norms. Volume two, alternatively, focused upon feudalisation and state formation, which marked the seedbed for the changes in manners.

As Mennell and Goudsblom (1998) summarise 'the basic idea underlying the whole book is that there is a link between the long-term structural development of societies and changes in peoples' social behavior and habitus' (1998: p.15). Elias used the term 'habitus', translated in *The Civilizing Process* as 'personality makeup' to convey the sense of a humans 'second nature'. That is, those levels of personality, which neither innate or genetically imbibed, have a feeling of inherence, of being 'natural'; deeply habituated through a process of social learning from birth and shared across social groups. Habitus is thus viewed as moulding human behaviour, but is in turn seen as a product of social situations characterised by power differentials which are themselves embedded in larger social structures which change over time (Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998). Despite the tendency of established groups to use patterns and codes of physical conduct as a marker of distinction from 'lower' social groupings, Elias noted a reduction in the contrasts within Western societies. This "commingling of patterns of conduct" (1939/1982: p.253) is seen as manifest in the increasing similarity of habitus codes between 'established' and 'outsider' groups. Within *The Civilising Process* these notions were situated in the examination of 'very concrete
and vivid historical data' (Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998: p.15) regarding the long-term changes in human conduct and habits.

Elias also recognised the important role of state formation within the course of the Civilising Process, specifically related to the monopolisation of the means of violence and taxation. What Elias termed centripetal forces in this context were, he argued, linked to habitus formation by impacting upon levels of internal stability and security. Elias viewed state formation as one element of a process enmeshing individuals in increasingly complex webs of interdependence. He thus sought “to trace how various causal strands interwove over time to produce an overall process with increasing momentum” (Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998, p.17). A further element of the civilising process, identified by Elias, was its relative autonomy from individual social actors. ‘Civilisation’, he argued “is set in motion blindly, and kept in motion by the autonomous dynamics of a web of relationships, by specific changes in the way people are bound to live together” (1939/1982: p.232). What he terms the blind intertwining dynamics of the individual civilising process, Elias argues “runs its course by and large blindly” (1939/1982: p.243).

Unlike many prominent sociologists, Elias is relatively unique in offering an analysis of what has become termed globalisation, in volume two of *The Civilizing Process* (1939/1982). For Elias, the final observable ‘wave’ of the ‘spread of civilization’ was “the spread of our institutions and standards of conduct beyond the west” (1939/1982: p.253). The dispersion of ‘civilising’ forms of conduct, Elias postulates “follows the incorporation of the other areas into the network of political and economic interdependencies, into the sphere of elimination struggles between and within the . . . West” (1939/1982, p.253). The spread of these Western patterns of conduct occurs, Elias suggests, either through Western settlement or alternatively through “the assimilation of the upper strata of other nations” (1939/1982 p.253).

The results of this process, Elias suggests, are that “we find in the relation of the West to others parts of the world the beginnings of the reduction in contrasts” (1939/1982: p.254). Western nations, Elias proposes perform an ‘upper class function’; an important part of which is the control of ‘behaviour’ which becomes an
important instrument of dominance. The consequence of this however is seen as two-fold, for whilst the Western nations are driven to maintain their 'special conduct' as a mark of distinction, their situation similarly “forces them in the long run to reduce more and more these differences in standards of behaviour” (1939/1982: p.255). Consequently, he argues, the commingling of patterns of conduct is witnessed. The expansion of Western civilization, which results in this ‘double tendency’, is explained as follows

The Western people, under pressure of their own competitive struggle, bring about in large areas of the world a change in human relationships and functions in line with their own standards. They make large parts of the world dependent on them and at the same time... become themselves dependent on them. (1939/1982: p.255).

This process which reduces the differences of power between colonist and coloniser is viewed as largely unintended. Additionally, the spread of Western standards, Elias proposes “are spreading ... to form new unique entities, new varieties of civilized conduct” (1939/1982: p.255). This argument, suggestive of the emergence of ‘hybrid’ elements, Elias explains is dependent upon the historical legacy of each country, upon which “very diverse varieties of affect-formations emerge within the framework of civilized conduct” (1939/1982: p.256). Hence the capacity for increasing varieties also results from the spread of the influence of the West. The transformation of colonial areas toward Western standards, Elias argues, occur originally within the domain of the upper classes, followed by a diffusion, resulting from increased levels of interdependence, to the lower classes “until finally an amalgam emerges, a new style of unique character” (1939/1982: p.256). This increase in varieties in thus a counter process of the diminishing contrasts explained above.

Illustrating his conception of processes at a global level, Elias suggests that the power struggles and monopolisation that facilitated the civilising process and state formation in the West now encompass the planet. The levels of global interdependence, he argues, are driven toward monopolisation at a global level. In a critique of Marxism, Elias argues that these goals are not solely economic, political or
military. Alternatively, he suggests that it is instead both the monopolisation of physical violence and of economic means, in interdependence that 'together form the lock joining the chain by which men [sic] are mutually bound' (1939/1982: p. 231).

Elias continues, to outline how the interdependency of competing states facilitates the drive to be more competitive under the pressure of tensions. The lack of a global monopolisation of force, he proposes, functions to breakdown the equilibrium thus driving international relationships to the 'formation of dominions of a new order of magnitude' (1939: p. 321). Elias terms these new power blocs of 'united states, empires or 'leagues of nations' (p. 321) and 'hegemonial units', which, are involved in the struggle for dominance at a global level, the outcome of which is uncertain.

Largely due to the lengthy delay in its translation into English, Elias's work has been subject to neglect by American and British sociology. In more recent times however his work has succeeded in gaining wider acceptance. Broader acknowledgement has also brought with it critique. Additionally, Elias's terse critique of, and reluctance to acknowledge alternative positions has led to vigorous criticism. Avoiding elements of the voluminous critique and counter critique the following section provides an evaluation of the figurational perspective, specifically as it relates to the globalisation of sport.

2.6.1 Global Sport: Figurational Perspectives

Work from within a figurational perspective has investigated various elements of the debate including: athletic talent migration (Maguire, 1994a, 1996, Maguire & Stead, 1996, 1998; Stead & Maguire, 1997), the Americanisation of European Sport (Maguire, 1990, 1991, 1993a), the role of the media/sport production complex (Maguire, 1993b), the global diffusion of sports (Stokvis, 1989), and national habitus/identity politics (Maguire, 1993c; Maguire & Tuck, 1998; Maguire & Poulton, 1998). The theoretical constructs of the figurational position that underpin these studies are most fully developed in Maguire (1999). This conceptual framework is characterised by four key insights. First the concepts of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties; second, the idea of the commingling of Western
and non-Western cultures; third, the subsequent emergence of a new amalgam from that; and, fourth the ongoing attempts by established groups to integrate outsiders as workers and/or consumers.

The figurational approach to the globalisation of sport, centres upon Elias’s (1939/1982) civilising process and the ‘double-bind’ concepts of diminishing contrasts, increasing varieties (see Maguire, 1994a, 1994c, 1998, 1999). The concepts, Maguire (1994c) argues, “assist in making sense of the global diffusion, patterning, and differential popularization of sports” (p.402). Elias’s position holds that the last observed wave of the civilising process involved “the spread of institutions and standards of conduct beyond the west” (1939/1982: p.253). This spread, within a ‘phase of colonisation’, he posits, was marked by a double-bind process. At one level, he argues, established classes (in the form of Western societies) sought to imprint specific ‘values, behaviour and habitus codes’ onto outsider groups (non-Western societies). Sporting practices, Maguire observes, played a role in this process. The spread of Western societies patterns included, he notes:

their tastes and conduct, including their sports . . . and these practices acted in ways similar to the elite cultural activities and manners within Western societies. They were signs of distinction, prestige and power (1999: p.43, emphasis added).

Concurrent with this however, the concepts hold, established Western nations cannot prevent a ‘gradual seepage’ of their distinguishing models of conduct to outsider groups, whilst outsider (non-western) codes themselves also permeate back to Western societies. The example of the diffusion of Polo from the Indian sub-continent to England, Maguire (1999) cites as evidence of such flows. The overall outcome, in line with the notion of functional democratisation - sees patterns of culture moving in an equalising direction - that is diminished contrasts between Western and non-Western societies.

The figurational approach, however, envisages the global spread and diffusion of sporting practices as not only dependent on the actions of established groups. Alternatively a two-way process is envisaged whereby:
process(es) of cultural interchange cross the semipermeable barriers that established groups... deploy to maintain their distinctiveness, power and prestige. The more they become interconnected with outsider groups, the more they depend on them for social tasks (Maguire, 1994c: p.404).

This results from a 'dialogue' between the external customs and norms of western and non-western societies when they come into contact with indigenous behaviour and traditions. Hence, the potential for increased varieties of cultural forms, such as sport, are seen as component to the process. The manner in which established and outsider groups may be active in interpretation of forms can function to 'fuse' new unique patterns of conduct - increased varieties. The form of this 'commingling', Maguire (1999) notes, is dependent on several factors: the form of colonisation; the status of the location within political, economic and military network of interdependencies; and, the history and structure of particular regions. The 'new amalgams' that subsequently emerge are reflective of these mediating factors.

For figurational sociology, Maguire (1994c) explains, "long-term trends involve broad multifaceted processes where no single causal factor predominates" (1994: p401). Such processes, he views as resulting from a complex interweave of both intended and unintended interdependencies. Furthermore, Maguire highlights the danger 'in overstating the knowledge and power of established groups and underestimating the knowledge and power of outsider groups" (1994c: p.401). The pattern of globalisation, as opposed to following any single inexorable path, is seen as open-ended and subject to different permutations. Globalisation processes, for Maguire (1999) then, 'are multi-directional, involve a series of power balances, and have neither the hidden hand of progress nor some overarching conspiracy guiding them' (p.40, emphasis in original). He continues: "globalization processes have a blind, unplanned dimension to them and a relative autonomy from the intentions of specific groups of people" (1999, p.40).

Extending Elias's (1982/1939) formulation, which remained nation-state based, Maguire (1993b) suggests that neither broader globalisation processes nor those that specifically relate to sport are the direct result of inter-state processes. Alternatively, he advocates comprehending globalisation processes: "in relation to
how they operate relatively independently of conventionally designated societal and socio-cultural processes” (p.309). Subsequently, he highlights the existence of “relatively autonomous transnational practices (TNPs), seemingly possessing their own dynamics that need to be recognised” (Maguire, 1993c: p.31). Borrowing from Sklair (1991), Maguire acknowledges the control and manipulation to which such TNPs are subject by transnational agencies or individuals from the transnational capitalist class (TCC). Although noting speculation of the existence of a ‘transnational culture’, Maguire (1994c) stresses that for figurationalists, a homogenisation thesis is avoided. Indeed, Having noted that the ideological practices of individuals, key state officials and representatives of transnational corporations, organisations and capitalist classes ‘figure strongly in this’ he notes the capability for “interpretation, resistance and ‘recycling’”(1994c, p.401) on behalf of indigenous groups.

Maguire (1994c, 1998, 1999) locates the globalisation of sport within a five-phase sportisation³ model. The term sportisation, Maguire invokes to capture “the transformation of English pastimes into sports and the export of some of them on a global scale” (1999, p.79). Specifically, he adds to the work of Elias and Dunning (1986), that identified two early phases of the transformation of pastimes into modern sport forms. The initial sportisation of pastimes is viewed to have occurred in an 18th Century wave, during which cricket, foxhunting, horse racing and boxing began to emerge as modern sports. The second, 19th century phase meanwhile, encapsulates the emergence from folk antecedents to their modern forms of soccer, rugby, tennis and track and field. Maguire (1994c, 1998, 1999) proposes a subsequent three phases which incorporate the global diffusion of sport.

The third sportisation phase (1870-1920) is envisaged to have “entailed the differential diffusion of ‘English’ sport forms to continental Europe and to both the formal and informal British Empire” (1994c, p.405). This phase, during which the English “were the dominant players”, Maguire argues, saw “the spread of sports to all parts of Europe, Africa, Asia and South America” (1999, p.83). To this Anglo-domination, he adds the influence of other ‘Westerners’. For example, the diffusion
of various Scandinavian and German sport forms, he suggests, “are all examples of the Europeanization phase in global sport development” (Maguire, 1998, p.82). Whilst not characterised by global marketing initiatives, Maguire notes, the third phase “did reflect the prevalence of power in cultural interchange” (1999, p.84).

During the fourth phase occurring between the 1920s and 1960s, Maguire (1994c) suggests, “sport can be said to have become a global idiom” (p.408). Notably, this phase was characterised by a specific ideology of Western masculine culture. In particular, Maguire notes the increasing influence of “North American sports personnel, forms, ideologies and images” which came to compete and supercede the formerly ascendant English gentlemanly amateur ethos. Despite an elaborate political economy during this phase, in which hegemony lay with the West, Maguire (1994c) notes, “[control] was never complete” (p.408). Indeed, there were frequent challenges to the existing balance of power. As Maguire (1998) explains, “On occasions, non-Western people not only resisted and reinterpreted Western masculine sport personnel, forms, models and marketing, they also maintained, fostered and promoted, on a global scale, their indigenous recreational pursuits” (p.85).

The fifth phase of sportisation, commencing in the late 1960s until the present, Maguire suggests, saw non-Western nations begin to rise to sporting prominence and even pre-eminence, as former colonial nations began to beat their former masters, especially the English. Hence, African, Asian and South American nations came (and are) increasingly to the fore. Both playing prominence and increasing control ‘off the field’ marked the emergence of these previous ‘outsiders’. This period saw the control of international sports organisations and the Olympic movement extend gradually beyond the West alone. The Cold War sporting rivalry between the Soviet Bloc and West, is a good example of the contestation characteristic of this phase. The accelerating commingling of sport cultures during this phase, Maguire (1998) notes, is also characterised by the diffusion of cultural forms such as the Eastern martial arts into, and around the West. Challenges to hegemonic masculinity also mark this phase in the form of the gradual assertion of women’s rights. The fifth phase, Maguire
(1999) concludes, “involves a degree of the creolization of sport cultures” (p.87) - that is, increasing varieties are evident with new sports including snowboarding and ‘x-treme’ sports emerging to challenge the achievement sport ideology. Within this commingling process, Maguire (1999) concludes “whilst the West is still very powerful” ‘hegemonic control’ is not complete. Alternatively, he reasons “different civilisational traditions not only resist Westernisation and Americanization but seek to express and develop their own cultural heritage” (p.89).

Summarising what he terms the ‘global sports figuration,’ Maguire invokes the notion of “core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral blocs” (1999, p.91) to capture the structure of “an international rank order of nations” (p.91). Within this, he reinforces, “the control over the content, ideology and economic resources associated with sport still tend to lie within the West” (p.91). Subsequently, he notes however, there continue to be “challenges to the achievement sport ideology and to Western domination” (p.92). Finally, he highlights the need to probe both intended and unintended aspects of global sports development. He argues,

while the intended acts of representatives of transnational agencies or the transnational capitalist class are potentially more significant in the short term, over the longer term unintended, relatively autonomous transnational practices predominate. These practices ‘structure’ the subsequent plans and actions of the personnel of transnational agencies and the transnational capitalist class (1999, p.93, emphasis in original).

Sports talent migration has also been the focus of work from a figurational perspective. Investigations of ice-hockey player migration (Maguire, 1996) foreign cricketers in England (Maguire and Stead, 1996), and European soccer labour migration (Maguire and Stead, 1997, 1998) are located within the framework of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties. Indeed, Maguire (1994a) notes that “sports labour migrants are one of the most visible expressions of this” (p.465). Instances of talent migration are further set by Maguire (1994a) within Elias’s notion of the ‘commingling of cultures’. Within this cultural exchange, he notes:

The flow of people both reflects and reinforces this pluralisation process. The settlement of people in different regions - in both a Western and non-Western direction - has led to the formation of ethnic enclaves within the total national
culture of particular nation states . . . The movement of elite sports labour within and between continents can also be viewed in this light (p.466).

The lines of inquiry that form the core of a research agenda on this subject, Maguire (1994a) proposes, fall broadly under four areas. First, questions of labour rights issues. Second, issues of the ‘deskilling’ of ‘donor’ countries resulting from the movement of athletic talent. Third, questions regarding the impact upon the ‘host’ culture of sports labour migration. Specifically, Maguire (1994a) suggests, ‘the social-psychological problems of adjustment and dislocation need consideration” (p.458). Fourth, the impact on the successes of national teams of increasing levels of sport migration mobility are seen as having an impact upon the issues of attachment to place, notions of self-identity and allegiances.

Further work from a figurational position has included investigations of national identity politics (Maguire, 1993c, 1994c, Maguire & Poulton, 1998, Maguire & Tuck, 1998), and the media/sport production complex (Maguire, 1993b). In this latter study, Maguire emphasises the role of TNPs in globalisation process. For some, Maguire notes “the sports/media production complex is an integral part of this general process” (1993b, p.31). Critiquing earlier nation-state based approaches, he reinforces his view that the globalisation of sport “is connected to the intended ideological practices of specific groups of people from particular countries, but its pattern and development cannot be reduced to these ideological practices” (1993b: p.32).

Subsequently, Maguire (1993b) advocates the adoption of a ‘critical political economy’ to consider the global sports/media symbiosis. Documenting the rise and characteristics of ‘global media sport’, he rejects the notion that sport-media texts are dominated by a single monolithic ideology’ (p.39). Maguire thus notes the codes of production associated with media sport: hierachisation, personalisation, narratives, and frames of reference. These codes, he suggests, sustain “systems of domination” (p.40), along the lines of race and gender. Such knowledge of the economic dynamics of production, Maguire notes, can help shed light on why specific sports, over others, have been ‘globalised’. On the issue of sports consumption, Maguire argues that a
political economy approach to the media/sport production complex successfully steers a path away from the cultural studies view (as he perceives it) of the individual who ‘enjoys unfettered choice’ (p.41). Alternatively, ‘choices’ are viewed as structured by global cultural struggles including the representatives/representations of the media/sport production complex. Maguire concludes that whilst cultural flows do occur within the global capitalist system, they are not determined by them. From the interweaving of cultural processes, he adds, emerges something neither planned nor intended, but that both reflects and contributes to the broader globalisation process. Whilst the importance of political economy is emphasised, the capacity to reinterpret is acknowledged. Further the importance of relatively autonomous TNPs is highlighted. This final point demonstrates the key element of this paper which is the call for the necessity of going beyond nation-state based analysis.

2.6.2 Figurational Sociology and Global Sport: Critiques

The work of Maguire and his figurational collaborators has shed light on numerous dimensions of the globalisation of sport debate. Specifically, Maguire’s writings extend Elias’s conception of diminishing contrasts-increasing varieties and their potential application to the globalisation of sport. In incorporating transnational practices, his work helps refine the figurational approach to contemporary globalisation patterns. Specifically, the figurational analysis within the sport literature has helped attune the debate to the multi-directional, multi-causal and both intended and unintended nature of globalisation patterns.

Withstanding this contribution, several questions surround elements of the analysis, notably, the utility of the frameworks of diminishing contrasts - increasing varieties as an explanatory tool. The concepts, Maguire has argued: “enable the analysis to steer a path between the excesses of aspects of the homogeneity thesis and the simplicities of the volunatarist asumptions that individuals freely choose and cultures freely contribute in equal meausre to global cultural diversity” (1998, p.73). Indeed, as ‘sensitising concepts’ they do assist in capturing the macro developments of the globalisation of sport including, importantly, the capacity for multi-directional
and countervailing flows, and unintended consequences. That is, they highlight the potential for differing outcomes from global flows. Their utility however, is open to critique for lacking explanatory power regarding the key dynamics, which determine the patterns of global culture.

In this sense the pragmatism of the double-bind concepts apparently, defy falsification. Consequently, as an explanatory tool of global cultural interaction it can be argued they are inclusive rather than discriminating, and thus lack explanatory power. Alternatively, it is forms of 'colonisation'; the status of locations within political, economic and military network of interdependencies; and, the history and structure of particular regions, (which Maguire notes as crucial in determining these patterns) which arguably require the focus of attention, in comprehending global sport. For example, several questions arise regarding the exact blend between diminished contrasts and increased varieties. Is it possible for diminished contrasts - in the form of the diffusion of an 'alien' sport - such as American football, to be imbued with indigenous values to thus be considered an increased variety. This is a question of at what level the reach and response of global flows is conceptualised. For example, evaluating American football organisationally, ideologically, or in terms of the interpretive understandings of participants or consumers would reveal differing processes. Furthermore, it is the dynamics of the 'commingling' proposed that are central. With specific reference to contemporary sport, key questions surround: who exactly the established groups are: governing bodies, TNCs, nation states, and how they exercise power? How exactly is the scope for 'resistance' and capacity for 'outsider' groups to influence the global sports 'figuration'? It is these issues which form the basis of critiques.

With reference to Maguire's (1999) approach, Greer and Lawrence (2001) critique the relative balance of emphasis between intended/unintended. Specifically, they criticise the suggestions that globalisation processes have a "blind, unplanned dimension and a relative autonomy from the intentions of specific groups of people" (Maguire, 1999: p.40). Greer and Lawrence continue "[t]here are strong economic imperatives which guide investment and dictate the form sport takes; but at other
times there are the formless flows of capital, labour and ideas. How do these flows occur? What power relations drive them?” (2001, p.96). On this basis, Greer and Lawrence (2001) argue “the embracing of process sociology does not appear to deconstruct the nature of power relations in sport” (p.96). Similarly, critiquing the broader figurational approach on these grounds, Gruneau has argued that whilst power is discussed in various ways “it is rarely connected to a broader theory and critique of domination in social life” (1999: p.121). This criticism mirrors recurrent critiques of figurational sociology. For example, it has been argued that within figurational sociology, there is “a neglect of the overall ‘hegemonic’ and contested functions of sport within a capitalist society” (Horne and Jary, 1987: p.100). The prioritisation of the Civilising Process, Horne and Jary (1987) argue, results in an analytically significant process such as capitalism being marginalised.

These critiques of the figurational approach, under scrutiny it seems, primarily surround questions of emphasis. Fairly clearly, Maguire’s work acknowledges the important role of the processes within capitalism, and the sportisation model offers insights into the shifting power dynamics of global sports development. Thus the dimensions of global capitalism are incorporated and are indeed inherent to the figurational perspective. Others, however, stress the need for greater emphasis on these dynamics. Notably, such critiques are ultimately grounded in broader epistemological differences, which are dealt with in the later synopsis to this chapter.

Critiques also draw attention to questions regarding the blend between intended and unintended processes that Maguire, (1999) posits. Indeed, the answers to such questions are central to understanding the dynamics of the local-global sports nexus. On Maguire’s suggestion that the practices of transnational corporations, organisations and capitalists classes “figure strongly” (1994a, p.401), the key question remains, exactly how strongly? Similarly, the role of unintended processes and linkages between intended actions and unintended consequences require further exploration. Indeed, Maguire argues that it is in fact “unintended consequences that provide the seedbed in which future power struggles are played out” (p.215). The
balance between these and shorter-term 'intended' consequences, however, requires development.

The five-stage sportisation model proposed by Maguire (1994a: 1998) provides a useful socio-historical model of the development and global diffusion of sports cultures. In particular, it helps demonstrate the transitions, shifting power dynamics and ideologies both on and off 'the field' in global sport development. It has also, however, been subject to critique. Greer and Lawrence (2001), for example note that "while the five phases in the development of sport are, prima facie, a means of understanding historical change, they also impose a certain ordering of events, some of which are open to question" (p.95). Hence, it is possible to contest some of the specific ordering and boundaries of the various phases. Clearly however, attempting periodisation in this manner is a difficult task. The overlapping trends and early evidence of shifts that do not become part of the mainstream for some time complicate chronological sequencing. Despite this, the sportisation model proves of use as a guide to the socio-cultural development of global sport.

Further critique of Maguire's work from Greer and Lawrence (2001) regard inadequate discussions of gender. These criticisms, however, do not necessarily resonate. Indeed, Maguire, at various points incorporates gender analysis noting sport as a "a globalized 'male preserve'"(1999: p.7). Similarly, the sportisation model draws attention to the gendered underpinnings of developments in global sport. Additionally, within his work on identity politics, he has included "an attempt to link aspects of globalization and nostalgia with gendered notions of national identities" (Maguire, 1994a, p.400). Here he identifies the reaffirmation of gender identities in sport through "daily unnoticed practices" (p.412). In this sense, whilst not taken centrally, it is clear that considerations of gender are in no way absent from the analysis.

Withstanding these critiques, it is clear that the figurational work has proved illuminating. In terms of re-orienting the debate from previous uni-causal, uni-directional explanations this work is valuable. Furthermore, the work of figurationalists has been central in mapping out a research agenda. Significantly, the
figurational approach adopted shares a degree of overlap with alternative 'critical'
approaches, such as cultural studies outlined above. This common ground is explored
in the final section of this chapter, that offers an overview of the theoretical positions
reviewed above.

2.7 Postmodernity/ism

Postmodernism and postmodernity have emerged as controversial terms
within the social sciences. Introductory texts on the subject invariably start with an
acknowledgment of the intense controversy which has surrounded the concepts
(Boyne & Rattansi, 1990; Smart 1993; Ward, 1997). A clue to the etiology of this
controversy is the lack of agreement surrounding the key terms. Boyne & Rattansi
(1990) note: "'[m]odernity' and 'postmodernity', 'modernism' and 'postmodernism'
appear and reappear in... a bewildering array of guises" (p.1). Indicative of this, the
terms postmodernism and postmodernity have been used to encompass a wide variety
of movements and shifts in contemporary society embracing a range of meanings and
connotations. Hence, there are multiple conceptions of postmodernities.

The movement from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s came to influence
developments in several areas: architecture, art, literature, cinema, music, fashion,
communications, experiences of space and time, aspects of identity and sexuality, as
well as in philosophy, politics and sociology (Smart, 1993). As a consequence
postmodernity is not, in the strictest sense, a school of thought and cannot be
considered a unified intellectual movement with a definitive purpose or outlook.
Additionally no one theoretician has dominated.

The problem of definition is highlighted in several texts (Ward, 1997; Smart,
1992; Appignanas & Garrett, 1995; Doherty et al., 1992). The suffix 'post' in front
of the word 'modern' means that the concept is defined only by what it follows, or is
not itself. Indeed, Graham et al. (1992) note the attempt of Jean-Francois Lyotard,
who despite devoting an essay to 'answering the question', "hardly resolved the
matter" (p.2). Apparently defying exact definition, Boyne & Rattansi (1993) note
that what has commonly emerged under the banner of postmodernism is a broad commitment to heterogeneity, fragmentation and difference, and a reaction against modernity itself. Usefully, Boyne & Rattansi (1990) note the distinction between ‘postmodernism’ as a term that characterises a series of broadly aesthetic projects, and ‘postmodernity’ as a social, political and cultural configuration, of which postmodernism is a constituent part. Often used interchangeably, a distinction should be drawn between the two.

Despite problems of an accepted definition of the term, Ward (1997) identifies four notions associated with understanding contemporary society, which run consistently through the different versions of postmodernism. First, society, culture and lifestyle are viewed as significantly different from that of 100, 50 or even 30 years ago - we are seen to have entered a new epoch. Second, applications of postmodernism are concerned with concrete subjects, specifically the development of the media, the consumer society or information highway. Third, they suggest that these concrete phenomena impact upon more abstract matters such as meaning, identity and lived ‘reality’ itself. Fourth, they claim that old styles of analysis are no longer useful and that new approaches are needed. Postmodernity then, is not merely considered a time period which follows modernity, but is an outlook that contests modernity itself. The ideals of modernity, associated with progress, optimism, rationality and the search for absolute knowledge are rejected in postmodernist thinking. As Ward (1997) outlines, postmodernism conceives today's society to have lost sight of such ideals, being more associated with exhaustion, pessimism, irrationality and disillusionment with the idea of absolute knowledge.

Some of the defining features of postmodernism, Boyne & Rattansi (1993) note are: an attempt to dissolve the boundaries between high and low culture, and to find new forms of language which go beyond these old divisions; a concern to merge ‘art’ and ‘life’; an eclectic mixing of codes and styles; the seamless interweaving of fantasy and reality; and, the exploration of ethnic minority and feminist perspectives. A further element of what has been considered the postmodern condition is the necessarily global frame of reference. This perspective, Ward (1997) elaborates,
“suggests that global satellite and cable broadcasting systems have created a postmodern environment which has changed the shape of national, ethnic and cultural identities” (p.177). Thus, the post-modern condition is seen as entwined with global processes. Additionally, a sensitivity to regional and particular issues and the question of representation in a post-colonial world have also emerged within post-modern theorising. Indeed, references to the globalisation debate permeate conceptions of a condition of postmodernity.

Influential in discussions of postmodernism is the work of the French social and philosophical commentators, Baudrillard, Deluze, Derrida, Foucault, Guatarri, Lacan and Lyotard. Whilst these authors differ in significant ways, their work has been largely identified under the banner of ‘poststructuralism’, which prioritises the study of language - of texts understood in relation to other texts rather than any conception of objective or external reality. Central to poststructural positions, Boyne and Ratansi (1993) note, is the identification of a ‘crisis of representation’ evident in epistemological, artistic and political contexts. This collection of positions is broadly considered to have contributed to the constitution of postmodernism. Often confused, the two terms are not one and the same. Post-structuralism, Boyne and Ratansi note is more, “an analysis of the limits and limitations of modernism . . . and the dilemmas that follow from facing up to the loss of the vision of redemption through art, literature and culture” (1993: p.21). Despite this, the work of the post-structuralists has contributed significantly to the postmodernity debate.

Lyotard’s (1979/1984) The Postmodern Condition emerged as a key text in the debate. Lyotard extends the analysis of postmodernism to consider the condition of knowledge in advanced societies; how it comes into being, who controls and has access, and how it becomes accepted as valid. Since the Second World War, Lyotard judges the scientific ‘metanarratives’ of progressivity, unity and universality to have collapsed. As a result of this, he argues for the abandonment of the promise of modern science as outmoded. Upon this basis, he conceives postmodernism, in an oft quoted phrase, to be an attitude of “incredulity towards metanarratives” (1979/1984, p.xxiv). The broader resonance of Lyotard’s conception of postmodernism is how
this splintering of knowledge has been paralleled by a wider sense of social and cultural disintegration (Ward, 1997). Indeed, Lyotard (1979/1984) can be read as an overview of the characteristic shifts associated with postmodernism with its attendant repercussions for political and social thought.

The problematic relationship between reality and image in contemporary culture has also been viewed as a component of the postmodern world. Specifically it is the work of Jean Baudrillard that has been influential in this area. “Although he has actually used the term postmodern only sparingly, his work is often seen to provide especially pungent, if mindbending, descriptions of the brave new world of postmodern society” (Ward, 1997: p.59). As Kellner (1994) notes, his writing was quickly appropriated into the discourse of the postmodernists. Central to Baudrillard’s formulations is consideration of the production, exchange and consumption of signs and symbols in a consumer society, which are seen to have fundamentally altered the world. “Baudrillard argues that it is through their form and operation, rather than the content that they carry, that the electronic media of communication have transformed social relations” (Smart, 1992: p.122). Upon rapid and dramatic social change “Baudrillard theorizes the catastropization of the modern... in the advent of the mass media, which have installed a new reality: the hyperreal (Cholodenko, 1983: p.11). Contemporary social life and conceptions of meaning and reality, Baudrillard characterises as governed by the modus operandi of the hyperreal -‘simulations’ - “a set of signs dedicated exclusively to their recurrence as signs, and no longer to their ‘real goal’ at all” (1983: p.41). For Baudrillard these simulations in the form of reproductions, images and representations have saturated reality to the extent that it can only be experienced through a filter of representation. In this way there is no firm authenticity or pure reality left. Significantly, Baudrillard interprets this as the apotheosis of capitalism as it changes from nineteenth century forms of production to its postmodern “perfect manipulation of social representation” (1983, p.128). Viewed as a key figure in the postmodernism debate Baudrillard’s writing has met with reaction ranging from uncritical enthusiasm to outrage and bewilderment (Ward, 1997).
As noted above, a contingent theme of postmodernity/ism is an awareness of globalisation processes, which are seen as intimately tied to rapidly changing social and cultural formations associated with the postmodern condition. Indeed, the emergence of questions surrounding global culture, Featherstone argues, “the concept of postmodernism has served to sensitize us to” (1988, p.207). In particular increasing global consciousness is seen to have resulted in a heightened sensitivity toward regional and particular issues. The dynamic tension between sameness and difference, consequential of such processes, Ward notes, is “one of the defining features of the postmodern landscape” (p176). Morley and Robins (1995) meanwhile, have highlighted communications and media technology as the arena that has affected great change upon the shape of national, ethnic and cultural identities indicative of a postmodern geography.

2.7.1 Postmodernism and Sport

During the 1980s and 1990s, the issues and concerns associated with postmodernism/ity have permeated the analysis of sport. The emergence of writing influenced by postmodernity/ism within the sport literature has however remained relatively small scale (Gruneau, 1991; Bale, 1993; Morgan, 1995, Andrews, 2000). Indeed, Morgan highlights “the conspicuous absence of postmodern analysis of sport” (1995: p.26). In this light Andrews (1993) has argued for the need for “the critical element within sport sociology to confront postructuralist and postmodernist theorizing” (p.148). Elements of the postmodern influence have been evident in studies of the body (Bloch, 1987; Pronger, 1995), mediated sport (Rail, 1990), sport-festival flame ceremonies (Slowikoski, 1991), the Olympic games (Real, 1996), the media’s racial signification of Michael Jordan (Andrews, 1996), and global-local conjuncturalism (Andrews, 1997).

Covering a range of topics these approaches have drawn upon elements of the postmodernism debate to attempt to comprehend contemporary sport. Despite the relatively small scale of analyses concerned directly with postmodern concepts, Morgan draws attention to the ‘postmodernist drift’ within critical sports analysis,
characterised by the ‘seepage’ of the vocabulary of postmodernism into existing perspectives of sport. The result of this, he suggests, is the emergence of ‘hybrid’ postmodern treatments of sport, that attempt to combine the work of postmodern theorists with established critical theories applied to sport.

In relation to the globalisation of sport debate, several investigations are of relevance. Real’s (1996) investigation of the Olympic games, for example, argues that “the breakdown of the modernist project in the 20th century has transformed the modern Olympics into a necessarily postmodern phenomenon” (p.11). Subsequently making linkages, he outlines the necessary global perspectives, suggesting “the Olympic games .. as the preeminent expression of global media culture today, both reflect and extend the postmodern condition” (p.11). Similarly, Rowe and Lawrence outlining the concepts of postmodernity argue for the need to “trace and explain altered patterns of capital accumulation” (1996: pp.6-7), which they see as symptomatic of post-modern culture. Illustrating the complex interplay between the global and the local, they argue “there is no doubt that these events cannot be comprehended without a knowledge of postmodernity and globalization” (Rowe and Lawrence, 1996: pp.12-13). Similarly Rail’s (1990) investigation of mediated sport in a postmodern context, is global in perspective. Considering both the ‘anti-mediatory’ potential of mediated sport, as well as the ‘counter hegemonic’ potential, Rail notes, the “culture strengthening and emancipatory potential of the media” (1990, p.7) which results from cross-cultural interactions. A case study of the American Inuits reveals a degree of mediation at the local-global nexus. These examples from the literature illustrate that a concern for the issues associated with postmodernity have close links to the questions associated with the globalisation debate.

In the most notable treatment of globalisation processes, Andrews (1997) combines postmodern concepts with a cultural studies perspective to investigate ‘global-local conjuncturalism’. A Baudrillardian influence is evident in Andrews stated aim of:
... developing a preliminary analysis of the global structure and local influence of the National Basketball Association (NBA) as a transnational corporation whose global ubiquity inevitably contributes to the hyperreal remaking of identities (Andrews, 1998: p.73, emphasis added).

Documenting the emergence of the NBA in America, Andrews argues that league administrator's “goal was to turn the NBA into one of the popular commodity-signs that had usurped the material economic commodity as the dynamic force in structuring principles of everyday American existence” (p.75). Such an interpretation is evidently built along Baudrillarian lines. The NBA, transformed through television from a struggling and marginal sports league to a 'hyperreal circus' (p.75), Andrews suggests “became a commodity-sign, an imagined commodity that created and in turn nurtured by a phantasmagorical cast of simulated characters” (p.76). It is this assumption about the dominance of the image that underpins Andrew's analysis.

Documenting the TV-aided rise to prominence of the NBA, Andrews argues that Baudrillard's postmodernism can make important contributions towards an understanding of a culture dominated by the imagery of advertising, television, cinema and hoarding displays. He notes, “from a Baudrillardian viewpoint it is possible to characterize the promotional circus engaged by the NBA as an attempt to manipulate popular need and consumption by subjecting the audience to the anticipated verification of their behavior” (p.80). Apparently, cautious to avoid the "pitfalls associated with his apocalyptic and technodeterminist conclusions" associated with Baudrillard's brand of postmodernism, Andrews notes that “it would not seem unreasonable to assert that the NBA's shrewd manipulation of the promotional media both simulated and stimulated popular interest in the economy of commodity signs associated with the league” (p.80). Hence the analysis asserts a mixture of compulsion and enticement associated with the "state of radical uncertainty with regard to individual desire, choice, opinion and will” (p.80) indicative of the nature of cultural identities within postmodernity.

Andrews thus situates the global diffusion of the NBA within the context of the domination of the image, which is the consequence of the global time-space compression consequential to advances in communications technology. The NBA
‘metamorphosis’, is attributed by Andrews, to the leagues transformation into the “structure, appearance, and influence of a global commodity-sign” (1997: p.81). Andrews also argues that it is the intertextuality of the NBA as a commodity-sign, which has been pivotal. Additional to televised game coverage, he suggests “the NBA’s global presence and signification . . . has been realized through the attendant circulation of an expansive economy of mutually reinforcing commodity signs” (1997: p.84). In this context, he highlights the involvement of several of America’s ‘corporate icons’: Mastercard, Coca-Cola and Mars, who have engaged in direct promotional campaigns linked to NBA coverage around the globe. The result of such strategic alliances, he notes is that “both partners benefit from the intertextual association derived from the proximity of two all-American commodity signs” (1997: p.86).

In reference to the local-global nexus, Andrews cautions “it would be a gross over-simplification to view the spread of NBA commodity signs as being indicative of the establishment of a homogenous, primarily American global culture” (1997: p.88). Alternatively, he highlights the built in heterogeneity characteristic to the way in which products and images are consumed. The NBA’s marketing strategy, he argues, have fed into the heterogeneous consumption associated with local mediation with global products. The NBA he explains “explicitly promotes itself as a signifier of cultural difference” (p.91). Specifically it is the ‘American-ness’ which is identified as the distinctive element in the NBA as “not becoming an accepted armature of the local culture but remaining and retaining a sense of the cultural difference upon which much of the league’s popularity is grounded” (p.91). Hence, central to Andrews’ analysis is an acknowledgment of the increasing awareness of difference, otherness and local distinctiveness resulting from heightened levels of global interaction.

Andrews concludes with a case study of the NBA’s expansion attempts in Britain, which he argues “exemplifies the conjunctural localization of global commodity-sign consumption” (1997, p.92). The increasing visibility of the NBA in the British market during the mid-1990s is linked with consistent TV penetration.
increased daily newspaper interest and the emergence of weekly basketball newspapers. Crucially, Andrews notes, the NBA in Britain, in contrast to the US has been marketed specifically "to appeal to a particular market segment - the ever-style conscious youth population - as a marker of cultural and racial difference" (1997: p.94). Commenting on this observed difference, Andrews notes "the contrast between the localized articulation of the NBA in the United States and Britain exhibits the inherent variety and dynamism of (global) popular cultural production and consumption" (1997: p.94). Finally, demonstrating the manner in which he uses postmodern concepts within an existing framework, Andrews highlights his case study as demonstrating "the importance of a globally oriented cultural studies" (1997: p.94). Such an orientation, he argues, would provide the necessary tools to comprehend the global popular as a context "of both progressive and reactionary practices and regimes of signification" (1997: p.94).

2.7.2 Postmodernism: Critiques

In his evaluation of the growing presence of postmodern themes in sport theory literature, Morgan (1995) identifies several areas of convergence, which he suggests are symptomatic of a 'postmodernist drift' in the sociology of sport. First, there is the increasing interest in "disenfranchised and disempowered cultures and social groups" (p.27), in particular the 'imperialistic' ways in which dominant groups suppress differences in these cases. Second, there has been a refutation of binary oppositions, for example, knowledge-opinion, reason-unreason, truth-untruth, freedom-unfreedom. Such oppositions are seen within postmodern thought to privilege the beliefs and values of advantaged groups over others. Third, is the aversion to the "grand modernist narratives" associated with modernist ways of thinking. These sensitising notions, Morgan argues, may hold value in critical sports analysis.

The 'anti-epistemological' stance of postmodern perspectives on sport, Morgan (1995) argues "is important to the critical study of sport in at least two respects" (p.29). The first is the manner in which it helps sensitise theorists to the
culturally bound and contingent beliefs, which characterise previous perspectives. Second, he notes, is the openness of postmodernism. Modernist enquiry, he argues, actually presents an obstacle to the creation of new vocabularies which postmodernism can facilitate. For these reasons, a consideration of postmodern themes argues “it would be foolish to ignore or dismiss out of hand” (Morgan, p.30).

The potential of postmodernist contributions to the sporting literature however can also be challenged on several counts. Morgan (1995), for instance, notes the caricaturisation of modernist accounts in epistemological terms, as seeking only uncontestable truths. Subsequently, the rich diversity of modernist analysis is often ignored in postmodern critiques. The chief target of Morgan’s criticism of the postmodern ‘attack’ is its alleged function “to junk normative evaluation and reasoning and replace them with a partisan, and rather trendy championing of the beliefs of certain social groups” (p.31). Such a tendency he asserts, neutralises social criticism. A further problematic element is the failure to provide guidelines as to “which excluded narratives are to be designated as normatively privileged ones” (p.37).

A further criticism surrounds the privileging of certain groups’ beliefs as ‘exempt’ from criticism. Hence, Morgan (1995) notes, the reduction of criticism to external meddling in ‘local’ matters “brings them precariously close to the arch conservative theorists they despise” (p.46). Upon this basis, postmodernism can be seen to suffer from internal inconsistency, if not contradiction. In the case of sport, Morgan concludes “that buying into their local schemes of unwarranted assertability would be tantamount to committing normative hara-kiri, that it would effectively put an end to the social criticism of sport” (p.40). Ultimately, Morgan urges a suspicious eye should be directed towards ‘postmodernist drift’ within the sport literature. Evidently a full awareness of postmodern analyses and their attendant epistemological baggage is required before they can be employed in a critical sense.

With specific reference to the globalisation of sport debate, Andrews (1997) account warrants careful attention. In terms of strengths, his account brings a welcome degree of sophistication. In particular it is well attuned to the mediation of
the local-global nexus with reference to the global expansion of the NBA (a topic of particular relevance to this thesis). Specifically, Andrews outlines the duality of homogenisation and heterogenisation inherent to the globalisation process, which as this review has outlined, is not always evident (e.g. Guttmann, 1991; Wagner, 1990). Notably, he makes an important contribution in highlighting the “cultural dialectic at work in relation to globally intrusive texts and practices and their influence upon the production of local identities and experiences” (p.73) in the context of sport. In this respect Andrews work represents a valuable addition to the literature.

There are however weaknesses associated with his use of postmodernist concepts. Despite his acknowledgment of Baudrillard’s “technodeterminism” (p80), his account of the popular transformation of the NBA does not escape a deterministic tone. For example, commenting on the influential role of television, Andrews notes “the NBA became a hyperreal circus whose simulated, and hence self-perpetuating, popularity seduced the American masses” (p.75). Similarly he suggests, “the NBA strategically used the televisual domain to seductively engage popular consciousness” (p.76). Such an argument appears to represent the excesses of a Baudrillardian analysis. Indeed, Maguire (1999) notes, such terminology is “akin to that used by Adorno and his fellow contributors to . . . the Frankfurt School” (p.34) which appears to deny the agency and free will of the actors to interpret and reinterpret. At worst, Andrews casts human agents in the role of cultural dupes in their contact with televised sport.

Broader debates surrounding the on-going controversy have been mirrored on a small scale amongst scholars of sport. Indeed, whilst a number have adopted and advocated postmodern concepts (see Rail, 1998), Andrews (2000) notes the “dismissal and haughty disdain” (p.107), from sections of the sociology of sport community. This brief review has highlighted both the potential promise and difficulties with applications of postmodernist concepts. With specific reference to globalisation, the dimensions of Andrews' account with postmodernist underpinnings appear problematic. The result is that the explanatory powers of the concepts of postmodernism/ity in this sense seem unfulfilled. Consequently, as Jarvie and
Maguire (1994) have postulated, with regard to the broader sociology of sport, "whether post-modernity is the most appropriate term to capture and explain such problems remains questionable" (p.226). This sentiment seems also appropriate in reference to the globalisation of sport debate.

2.8 Summary

As this review has demonstrated, the explanatory potential of early theorisation of the global system to the worldwide patterning of sport contains a series of weaknesses. Applications of modernisation concepts, for example, are subject to criticisms for containing descriptive, cultural and evolutionary biases (Grunau, 1988, 1993). Consequently, the explanatory power of the work of Wagner (1990) & Guttmann (1991)\(^4\) is limited by the conceptual framework within which they formulate their explanations. As outlined, modernisation constructs face problems in attempting to account for the multi-directional flows and differential patterning of 'modern' sport which result from the more open-ended set of limits, pressures and struggles which characterise global sport (Grunau, 1993: p.87).

Applications of Marxist and neo-Marxist variants: imperialism and neo-imperialism, dependency theory, and world systems theory represent advances on the work of modernisation theorists. The contributions of neo-Marxists more generally, McKay notes, have acted as "a powerful demystifier of traditional liberal-conservative perspectives on sport" (1986: p.265). In this sense, the earlier neo-Marxist contributions to comprehending global sport are of similar value. Specifically, they attune the analysis to the contested dimensions of social organisation.

One characteristic of Neo-Marxist approaches to the globalisation of sport debate (with the exception of Klein, 1989) is the selective use of the central concepts of various theorists, rather than a systematic application of entire frameworks. For example, notions of dependency have not always been located in the context of rigid metropolis-satellite economic relations. Similarly, the use of concepts, such as core.
semi-periphery and periphery, in the manner of Bale and Sang (1996) are far removed from Wallerstein’s (1974, 1980, 1989) World Systems framework. This selective, eclectic use of the variants of Marxists theorising may itself be symptomatic of the shortcomings of these approaches in comprehending the multi-faceted complexity of global sport development.

In adopting such an approach several of these accounts suffer, to some degree, from a ‘violence of abstraction’ (Jarvie and Maguire, 1996). Notably, the problems associated with this include “the selection of (theoretical) concepts without their original context” (p.53). That is to say, key aspects of various theorists have, at times, been ignored, at the risk of overt theoretical abstraction. A further dimension, involves the tendency “for research to misinterpret or misrepresent grossly alternative traditions of social thought” (Jarvie and Maguire, 1996: p.53). The outcome of this has been, at times, vitriolic debates between competing theoretical ‘camps’. This ‘gladiatorial’ approach has been noted by Rojek (1996).

Within the globalisation of sport debate, figurational sociologists and those adopting a cultural studies approach have largely conceived the most sophisticated theoretical explanations. Notably they have been characterised by differing conceptions of some of the key terms, and differing points of emphasis regarding the processes at work. Despite this, the degree of common ground is worth reinforcing. It is my intention here to briefly consider the relative explanatory power of these approaches in the interests of seeking a framework for comprehending global sport development. This intention conforms to Maguire’s appeal for scholars to seek “common ground and a basis on which to build future work” (1999: p.35). Similarly, Rojek (1992) suggests that considering similarities between theories can correct the misleading view that they are necessarily antithetical. Furthermore, Rojek notes, “by revealing the continuities as well as the discontinuities, critical thought will become more critical, because it will be more accurate” (1992: p.29). In this manner, I would argue, progress in the field is more likely and potentially more fruitful.

In terms of continuities, both figurational and cultural studies “have a common respect for history, an analysis of power relations at the core of their general
frameworks, and a common emphasis on the cultural diversity and richness of social reality" (Jarvie and Maguire, 1996: p.59). Similarly, Dunning (1999) has noted "figurational sociologists share with hegemony theorists a concern with process, with the structuring of social relationships in space and time . . . [and a] concern with the centrality of power, contestation and resistance in social life (p.112). It is clear then that in terms of broad outlook, the approaches share a substantial amount.

This common ground has also been reflected in the globalisation of sport debate. Referring to the way in which the figurational concepts of diminishing contrasts-increasing varieties propose at least a two-way process, and address both homogenising and heterogenising tendencies, Donnelly (1996) has noted, "this is entirely consistent with the cultural hegemony perspective" (p.250). Likewise, Home (1998) has observed that:

both process [figurational] sociology, in which globalization involves flows and resistances, marked by the diminished contrasts and increased varieties of the civilizing process . . and post-Marxist cultural studies . . share with cultural hegemony theory the notion of hegemony as a contingent phenomenon, with the possibility of reversals (p.173).

In this sense it seems clear that the figurational approach and cultural studies variants share similarities in how they conceive the globalisation of sport.

The key distinctions surround the relative emphasis on the importance of the intentional actions of powerful groups/social classes in shaping the limits and possibilities of global sport. Whilst highlighting the intended actions of the powerful, Maguire’s (1999) figurational work emphasises that globalisation is characterised by both intended and unintended processes. Cultural studies proponents have, in turn, focused upon hegemonic struggle and the reproduction of structures of dominance. In this sense the emphasis is likely to focus more centrally upon the ‘intentions’ and practices of hegemonic groups which are contingent to globalisation processes. The difference then, on this issue, is one of relative emphasis rather than fundamental disagreement.

For example, a source of distinction is the relative emphasis placed upon the mechanisms of capitalism. Illustrating this, Sugden and Tomlinson (1996),
responding to Maguire's critique of cultural studies work on the grounds of
economism, reinforce "the relevance of the economic and the culture-ideology
dimensions of transnational practices . . . for an understanding of globalizing sport"
(p.255). Similarly, Rowe has argued for the need, in comprehending the global
diffusion and expansion of sport, for the mechanisms of capital accumulation to be
given "sufficient weight" (1995: p.104). These lines of relative emphasis shed light
on the deeper distinctions between the two positions, which also account for the
'weighting' accorded intended versus unintended processes.

There is not the room to deal with the full complexity of the debates between
the two positions within this thesis. The on-going dialogue, however, is discussed
extensively in Dunning and Rojek's (1992) edited collection. Further critique and
counter-critique have, more recently, appeared in Hargreaves and MacDonald (2000)
and Waddington et al (2000). Ultimately the central distinctions between the two
positions surround deep rooted, paradigmatic and philosophical differences, which, I
now afford brief comments.

This distinction is grounded in differing philosophical positions regarding the
role of sociology, and the goals of the creation of sociological knowledge.
Specifically, cultural studies writers "declare commitment with the struggles of
subgroups and oppressed classes" (Rojek, 1992: p.17). This particular standpoint is a
corollary of their ideological predisposition to recognise, and focus attention on, the
power struggles within capitalist societies. Subsequently, cultural studies very
approach to understanding is linked to, and underpinned by alignment with oppressed
groups, and a project of informing social change. Alternatively, figurationalists draw
a distinction between the creation of scientific knowledge, and intervention and action
in the social world. This is subsequently reflected in their methodological approach.

The figurational approach is centred upon the concepts of involvement and
detachment (Elias, 1987). Not to be confused with a quest for any sense of
'objectivity', figurationalists advocate a balance between relative involvement and
relative detachment from the subject matter at hand. This position is based on a
premise that whilst sociological investigators are always 'involved' (in that they are a

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constituent part of the social world – their subject matter), they should strive for a balance with a position of ‘detachment’. The “mental operation” of detachment, Maguire, (1988) argues, overcomes the “limited vistas” (p.189) that a solely ‘involved’ role can offer.

On the basis of these differences regarding social and political involvement, Rojek (1992) has noted that the two perspectives “really are poles apart” (p.28). This distinction has been the source of sustained critique and counter-critique within the ‘gladiatorial’ debates that have surrounded sport and leisure. The criticism leveled at the figurational stance has been that “it understates the immediate personal consequences of oppressive power relationships and the need for concerted political actions to change the balance of power in particular spheres of social life” (Coakley, 2001: p.49). By means of counter-critique, Dunning argues that commitment to the solution of social problems “arguably leads to a downgrading of the concern with sociology as being about contributing to the development of a reliable fund of basic knowledge about humans and their societies” (2000: p.8). The focus on the solutions of impending social problems, he continues “is liable to be self-defeating and contribute to the production of undesirable unintended consequences” (2000: p.9). This, he argues, would be to the exclusion of understanding per se. Clearly, the debate then shifts to the utility and value of this understanding per se, relative to a political orientation and commitment to social change.

There is not the room here to elaborate on these complex debates. In closing, however, I would reinforce the points of convergence between the two positions highlighted above. Indeed, ironically, given the significant nature of the distinctions noted above, the differences may ultimately be manifest in similar orientations toward the outcomes of social research. Maguire (1999) for example has recently argued that process sociologists, alongside other critical scholars e.g. Marxist, cultural studies and feminists, see their task as a ‘subversive activity’ that “share(s) the consciousness-raising role that others promote” (p.216). Similarly, Dunning (2000) highlights the likelihood of figurational approaches to contribute to “the realistic solution of problems in sport and elsewhere”(p.9) alongside a quest for understanding per se.
Despite this claim, it is clear that political concerns are a less central agenda item to figurationalists than to cultural studies adherents.

Ultimately it is clear, that the distinctions and potential explanatory power of differing schools of social thought remain conjecture in the absence or 'real-life' examples to support the particular theoretical position. In this sense the need for substantively grounded empirical work is pressing; and it is to the end that this thesis is aimed.

Notes

1 Mennell (1992) and Mennell & Goudsblom (1998) illustrate that Elias in fact disliked the term figurational sociology, by which many of his opponents came to term his approach. He preferred the title 'process sociology' which he viewed as "less susceptible to use as a cordon sanitare in with which to quarantine his ideas" (Mennell, 1992: p252).

2 This term refers to the gradual historical tendency toward a more equal balance of power between established and outsider groups.

3 The term 'sportisation' is used by figurationalists to encapsulate the emergence and diffusion of modern sports in a processual manner.

4 It is worth noting the Guttmann's (1994) later work has oscillated between modernisation theories and hegemony approaches, which may signal a change of position on his behalf.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the key methodological issues in qualitative research and details the specific methods that underpin the empirical work of this thesis. The chapter is divided into several sections. First, the opening section considers the paradigmatic debates that have characterised the field of qualitative research. The paradigmatic underpinnings of this research project are then outlined. Second, as a corollary of this debate, consideration is given to the issues surrounding the combination of qualitative and quantitative data that is a design feature of this project. Third, a discussion of the evaluation of interpretive research is undertaken; which also outlines these considerations in relation to this project. Fourth, the processes of designing a research strategy to address the local-global basketball nexus are specified. Subsequently, the methodological considerations of the specific techniques adopted within this project are documented. Finally, a concluding section offers a summary of the chapter.

3.1 Qualitative Research and Paradigm Debates

Studying the local-global nexus as a multifaceted social context requires an empirically grounded formulation of subjects and structures. Such a formulation does not lend itself easily to the theoretical, methodological and analytical lenses of the traditional 'scientific' method – ordinarily associated with quantifiable data. There is therefore a need for qualitative research to help develop frameworks that incorporate both context and meaning into an understanding of the local-global nexus.

Qualitative research is, in a very general sense, an attempt to describe the social world (the events, actions, norms and values) through the eyes of those experiencing it (Bryman, 1988). While it is not possible here to review the extensive literature on the paradigmatic and foundational assumptions of qualitative enquiry, it is necessary to outline how qualitative data are generated and used (the qualitative
'method') to explain social phenomena. 'Qualitative' research crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matter and encapsulates a complex interconnected set of concepts and research assumptions. A preliminary definition has been offered by Denzin and Lincoln as:

... multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (1994: p.2)

As this definition suggests there are numerous methods of gathering 'data' open to 'qualitative' researchers seeking to capture meanings in individuals' lives. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) list these as: case study, personal experience, introspection, life-story, interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts. Accordingly, qualitative researchers call upon a wide range of specific techniques to access such information. These include: participant observations, interviews techniques, life history methods and group discussions; all of which are designed to shed light on social situations from the participants point of view.

Research characterised by qualitative underpinnings attempts to 'see through the eyes' of whoever is being studied as part of the concern for the dynamics of meaning and action within the research context. A principal purpose of qualitative research arising from this is description; providing detailed accounts is seen as one of the main aims. Contextualism, Bryman (1988) notes, is a further feature of the qualitative approach. This is manifest in a commitment to understanding phenomena within their context and in their entirety. Additionally, any kind of reduction would be viewed as distorting 'the picture'. Rather than taking a static view, the processual nature of social phenomena are focused upon. Human existence being experienced in this manner, it is considered, must also be studied in this way. Furthermore, the lack of rigid structure that characterises the qualitative approach avoids the imposition of inappropriate structures, also allowing access to previously unanticipated topics. Finally, the qualitative approach frequently rejects theories and concepts in advance of fieldwork, as they may constrain the research. Alternatively, a set of 'sensitising
concepts’ are employed, with the aim of mapping a general direction of the research without constraining the breadth. The development of such concepts, (drawing upon existing theoretical constructs) was advanced by Blumer (1972), for giving the researcher a general sense of reference in approaching empirical work. Blumer clarifies: “whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitising concepts merely suggest directions along which to look . . . they rest on a general sense of what is relevant” (1972: p.144).

The field of qualitative research is not characterised by any one theoretical stance that is distinctly its own (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Alternatively, multiple ‘schools’ utilise qualitative research methods and strategies. Tracing the history of qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) identify five ‘moments’, or phases characterised by successive waves of theorising. These varying traditions are not discrete, but merge and operate simultaneously, the legacies of which continue to operate in the present. Competing conceptions of qualitative research are thus apparent. The subsequent diversity associated with qualitative methods “embraces within its own multiple disciplinary histories constant tensions and contradictions over the project itself” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: p.4). The complexity of the varied movements drawing upon qualitative research are comprehensively outlined in Denzin and Lincoln (1994).

Frequently a ‘qualitative’ research strategy incorporates two or more methods. Such a multi-method approach, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) refer to as bricolage, which pieces-together the multi-faceted complexity of a given research situation. Significantly, the choice of which particular research tools to use is not pre-determined, but dependent on the research questions being asked and their context. The resultant bricolage is “a pieced together, close knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: p.2). The use of multiple methods in this way also affords the opportunity for ‘triangulation’ of research findings. Specifically, triangulation is defined by Flick as “the combination of methods to shed light on the same phenomena” (1992: p.92). One advantage of triangulation, is that it can provide an alternative to traditional criteria of reliability
and validity associated with quantitative methods, in assessing the credibility of qualitative research (Flick, 1992). Additionally a strategy, of multiple methods, empirical materials, and perspectives in a single study, Denzin and Lincoln suggest “adds rigor, breadth, and depth to any investigation” (1994: p.2).

The emergence of qualitative research in the social sciences is grounded in the controversy over the appropriateness to the study of the social world of a ‘natural’ science model. Specifically, social sciences practitioners began to question the foundational assumptions of the natural science model, regarding how knowledge of the social world should be generated. They argued that the dominant ‘scientific’ model failed to differentiate between the objects of natural science and the people and societies which were the concern of their research, and thus was inappropriate (Bryman, 1988). As Bryman expands:

The debate about quantitative and qualitative research in the social sciences, in particular the relative merits and disadvantages of these two styles of inquiry . . . is a controversy in which philosophical issues tend to be interwoven with discussions about the nature and capacities of different methods of research” (1988: p.1).

The philosophical underpinnings of research to which Bryman refers, concern issues relating to what has been termed the ‘paradigm debate’. This debates surrounds the foundational assumption of research.

The notion of a research ‘paradigm’, was introduced by Kuhn (1970) as “ a set of recurrent and quasi-standard illustrations of various theories in their conceptual, observational, and instrumental applications” (p.41). At greater length Patton (1978) defines a paradigm as:

a world view, a general perspective, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world. As such paradigms are deeply embedded in the socialization of adherents and practitioners: paradigms tell them what is important, legitimate, and reasonable. Paradigms are also normative, telling the practitioner what to do without the necessity of long existential epistemological consideration (Patton, 1978: p.203).
These paradigmatic underpinnings, often take the form of unconsciously assumed tenets of research, which are reflected in the methods used (Ernest, 1994). Characterised by apparently opposing 'schools', most often and misleadingly termed qualitative and quantitative (thus tending to be confused with formats of data), the debate surrounding research paradigms has become pivotal to the legitimacy of scientific research. As Silverman (1993) notes, much play has subsequently been made of distinguishing two schools of social science: positivism and interpretive social science.

Originating as the traditional scientific method, the positivist paradigm "is concerned with objectivity, prediction, replicability, and the discovery of scientific generalisations or laws describing the phenomena in question" (Ernest, 1994, p.22). Specifically, the positivist aims to construct general laws or theories that express relationships between phenomena. Subsequent observations and experimentation are intended to show that the phenomena do or do not fit the theory. Following this, explanations consist of showing whether the findings are instances of the general laws or not. Alternatively, emerging as a reaction to the assumptions associated with positivism, the interpretive position offers contrasting conceptions. The differing assumptions and standpoints of the two paradigms has been well documented, and can be summarised along the following dimensions: ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the theory of knowledge acquisition), assumptions regarding human nature, and methodology.

Ontological assumptions are concerned with the nature of existence, or the essence of the phenomena being studied. Specifically, the question asked concerns the nature of reality? Within the paradigm debate this philosophical issue revolves around the realist-nominalist dichotomy. The realist position associated with the quantitative paradigm contends that objects and phenomena have an independent and objective reality. In comparison the nominalist position of the interpretive paradigm holds that the nature of reality is dependent upon the individuals perceptions, there is no 'objective' reality, but multiple constructed realities.
The concept of epistemology relates to the theory of how we come to have knowledge of the external world. The underlying epistemology, of positivism consists of the belief that science can deal only with what can be observed directly. Positivism is broadly characterised, according to Bryman (1988) by the following: First, it is underpinned by empiricism, the belief that only observable phenomena can be valid as knowledge. Second, it displays methodological naturalism, which entails the belief that the procedures of the natural sciences are appropriate to the social sciences. Third, inductivism, holds that scientific knowledge can be gathered only through the accumulation of verified facts. Fourth, deductivism conveys that it is theories which provide a backdrop to empirical research in that hypotheses are derived from them. Fifth, the stance of positivism on values is that the validity of knowledge is undermined if objectivity is not ensured.

The epistemological underpinnings of the interpretive paradigm meanwhile are largely grounded in an anti-positivist stance. The central underlying theme is that of phenomenology, which largely attributed to the work of Alfred Schutz (1899-1959), "argues that we need to consider human beings’ subjective interpretations, their perceptions of the world (their ‘life-worlds’) as our starting point in understanding social phenomena" (Ernest, 1994: p.25). Central to phenomenology is the view that rather than human experiences being formed by social forces, the creation of the social world results from the uniquely human character of social interaction. A further influential theme has been Max Weber’s (1864-1920) notion of verstehen - translated as 'understanding'. "Verstehen consists of placing oneself in the position of other people to see what meaning they give to their actions, what their purposes are, or what ends they believe are served by their actions" (Abercrombie et al., 1994: p.447). Naturalism is a further theme associated with the interpretive epistemology incorporating the belief "that the researcher should treat the phenomena being studied as naturally as possible . . he or she should seek to minimize the adulteration of the setting under investigation as far as possible" (Bryman, 1988: p.58). The final characteristic is that of an ‘ethogenic’ approach, a central feature of
which is to understand the 'episodes' of social life. This is achieved by attempting to ascertain those structures that underlie meanings to social actors.

Debates surrounding the two paradigms have also documented a philosophical divergence surrounding the concept of human nature itself. Within the positivist paradigm a deterministic view of human action is evident. This view portrays human beings as responding mechanically to their environment, which Burrell and Morgan (1979) note, "tends to be one in which human beings and their experiences are regarded as products of the environment; one in which humans are conditioned by their external circumstances" (p.2). Alternatively, within the interpretive paradigm a voluntarist position is held. This perspective attributes a greater degree of human action to individual 'free will', thus considering human beings as the initiators of their own actions.

Symptomatic of these philosophical differences of ontology, epistemology and models of human nature outlined above, there are distinct differences in the characteristics of the two paradigms in terms of methodology. Investigations that are underpinned by positivism, most often take the form of experimental approaches to data collection. These techniques yield predominantly quantitative data designed to analyse the relationship between the pre-selected factors under investigation. Such a methodological approach is known as 'nomothetic'. Within the interpretive paradigm research methodologies alternatively include methods which involves the researcher immersing themselves within the milieu being studied. The emphasis of such techniques upon the particular, rather than the discovery of general laws, are classified as 'idiographic'.

Although largely unified by a commitment to an interpretive approach and an ongoing critique of positivism, the field of qualitative research is itself characterised by a series of distinctive 'schools' each of which makes demands on the researcher, influencing the questions asked and interpretations brought to them. The four principal schools associated with interpretive research are positivist, post-positivist, critical, and constructivist (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Significantly, they note. these become more complex at the level of 'concrete specific' interpretive communities.
For example there are multiple versions of critical approaches, including neo-Marxist and feminist.

The diverse strands within the critical paradigm are reviewed by Sparkes (1992) and detailed in depth by Denzin and Lincoln (1994). This thesis is considered a contribution to the field of cultural studies, and subsequently is located within the critical-interpretive paradigm. Although broadly shaped by the tenets of the broad interpretive paradigm, critical researchers baulk at an overly voluntaristic view of human nature. Alternatively Sparkes (1992) notes:

while critical researcher can agree with interpretivists that organizations and institutions are the product of shared meanings that are actively created . . . they emphasise that the results of negotiations over meanings by individuals or groups take place, and are determined within, a social and organizational context that is permeated by unequal power relations that are related to such issues as social class, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, disability etc (Sparkes, 1992: p.39).

Hence, critical researchers emphasise the role of particular historical formations: relations, structures and conditions in shaping 'negotiations' in social relations. In this manner, the critical-interpretive approach centres on the power relationships within which people operate in the construction and reconstruction of their own 'realities'.

With reference to cultural studies, Jenks (1993) notes the “loose methods and strategies for research” (p.155). Indeed, formalised guidelines of cultural studies methods or prescribed empirical techniques are not apparent. As Johnson (1996) notes, the “codification of methods runs against some main features of cultural studies as a tradition” (p.75). Subsequently the methods adopted by those ‘doing’ cultural studies have been characteristic of the dynamic and context-oriented nature of cultural studies research, in being eclectic and diverse. Certain methods however have emerged as prominent. For example, Johnson (1996) notes that the methodological stress of the culturalist strand, in seeking to reveal the “complex, concrete descriptions, which grasps, particularly, the unity . . . of cultural forms and material life” (p.86) has favoured ethnography.
As Denzin and Lincoln (1994) note "the open-ended nature of the cultural studies project leads to a perpetual resistance against attempts to impose a single paradigm over the entire project" (p.103). Indeed, the blurring of rigid paradigmatic parameters in recent times with the influences of post-modernism has been accelerated. Nevertheless, the characteristics of the cultural studies project broadly sit within the characteristics of the 'critical' paradigm. Ontologically, a position of 'historical realism' is occupied, which assumes "an apprehendable reality [on behalf of human actors] consisting of historically situated structures that are, in the absence of insight, as limiting and confining as if they were real" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: p.111). These structures are perceived by social actors as natural and immutable, (in people's lives, that is, they are very 'real'). The epistemological stance taken within the critical paradigm is transactional. That is to say, the investigator and investigated are seen as interactively linked. Consequently, the investigators values inevitably influence the enquiry. Research findings subsequently are 'value mediated'. In terms of methodology a dialogic/dialectical position is adopted. The transactional nature of enquiry requires a dialogue between the investigator and the subjects of the enquiry that "must be dialectical in nature to transform ignorance and misapprehensions into more informed consciousness" (Guba and Lincoln, 1998: p.110).

3.2 Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Data

As Silverman (1993) notes, it is perhaps unfortunate that the 'schools' most commonly associated with quantitative and qualitative data within the social sciences have been largely defined as polar opposites, arguing that the two are not in fact necessarily incommensurable. As outlined above, it is a misnomer that the terms 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' have predominated within paradigm debates. These terms have served the illusion of paradigms constituting methods alone. Additionally the myth of quantitative research being associated only with the natural sciences and qualitative being only associated with the social sciences is incorrect.

An alternative school of thought, has questioned the apparently inherent link
between paradigm and method and the dichotomous debate that has emerged. These ‘pragmatists’ (Firestone, 1987) see a more instrumental relationship, and have gone on to suggest a combination of methods in practice. The polarised nature of the debate, Reichardt and Cook suggest, “is unnecessarily creating schisms between the two method-types, when it should be building bridges and clarifying the genuine disagreements that deserve attention” (1979: p.9). Similarly, Bryman (1988) questions the tendency to view the two traditions as reflecting different epistemological positions. Similarly, Reichardt and Cook argue that “the paradigmatic perspective which promotes this incompatibility between the method-types is in error” (1979: p.11). In support of this stance, they question the assumption that, methodological type is irrevocably linked to paradigm, and that the two are necessarily rigid and fixed. Investigating a number of the alleged paradigmatic attributes, they demonstrate that many of the points “are not inherently linked to either qualitative or quantitative methods” (1979: p.16). Alternatively they suggest that the characteristics of the research situation are important in method selection.

The result of the compromise situation between the two they propose, is that the researcher “can freely choose a mix of attributes from both paradigms so as to best fit the demands of the research problem at hand” (p.19). The potential benefits of such a technique when applied to ‘evaluation problems’ they note are three-fold. First, the ‘multiple purposes’ of a research question can be elucidated for a more complete understanding. Second, each method type can build upon the other in a complimentary way, informing new avenues of enquiry for the other. Third, the possibility for triangulation exists. As Jick (1979) expands, when focused toward the same research problem the use of quantitative and qualitative data can triangulate, in that way gauging the stability of findings. This debate in fact shows that there is considerable scope for greater integration of the two forms of data that may yield more informed research than the utilisation of one set of techniques alone. It may in fact be “advantageous to the researcher to combine qualitative and quantitative forms of data to better understand a concept being explored” (Cresswell, 1994: p.177).

Highlighting some of the practical issues in combining methods in a single
study, Cresswell (1994) advances five purposes for combining qualitative and qualitative data in a single study: triangulation; complementarity, development, initiation and expansion. Cresswell proposes three models of combined designs. First, the two-phase design, in which the researcher conducts separate quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. Second the dominant-less dominant design, in which a dominant format of research is complimented by one small component of the overall study from a differing format. The third model is the mixed-methodology design, within which the researcher freely mixes aspects of alternative approaches at all or at appropriate steps of the design.

Although a critical interpretive framework has been adopted for the basis of this research, as outlined above, this project makes use of both qualitative and quantitative forms of data. I do not see this, however, as involving paradigmatic contradictions. The largely qualitative data used in this study is complemented by quantitative data that emerged from the questionnaire used. In this sense, the research most closely conforms to Cresswell's (1994) dominant-less dominant design with quantitative data acting as a small component of the broader study. I am conscious however to avoid the trap that Cresswell falls into of referring to qualitative and quantitative as 'methods', when it is more appropriate to view them as forms of data. Indeed, this misnomer is partly what has resulted in the fractious 'paradigm debate' which has incorrectly viewed the two forms of data as incommensurable.

3.3 Evaluating Interpretive Research

A vigorous element of interpretive paradigm debates is the issue of criteria for evaluating qualitative research. Because of difficulties in transferring terms or concepts across paradigms, Bruce and Greendorfer note “there is no one unified position on criteria within alternative paradigms” (1994, emphasis in original: p262). Within conceptions of reality as socially constructed the traditional criteria of reliability, validity and generalisability associated with positivism, “become impossible aims from an ontological and epistemological standpoint” (Bruce and
Greendorfer, 1994: p.262). Alternatively, interpretive approaches have developed their own criteria in response to this debate, although these vary in their level of explicitness.

The most explicit criteria, Bruce and Greendorfer note, are found within post-positivist approaches. Alternative perspectives however have been less specific, taking the form of general guidelines rather than specific criteria. Christians and Carey (1981) for example have offered four criteria upon which to judge “competent qualitative studies” (p.347). These constitute: first, ‘naturalistic observation’, for example, the type of ‘thick description’ as advocated by Geertz (1973). Second, contextualisation, including the situation of research within historical and cultural contexts. Third, maximised comparisons, observations of several different groups or incorporating the researchers experience into the research process. The final criterion is of sensitised concepts (taken from Blumer, 1972), signalling a reflexive and ‘fluid’ guiding format to research. Although lacking specificity, such guidelines offer some parameters by which gauge the adequacy of interpretive research.

Further examples of criteria for the evaluation of qualitative research are those offered by Denzin (1989) who poses a series of questions upon which to gauge interpretive materials: Do they illuminate the phenomenon as lived experience? Are they based on thickly contextualised materials? Are they historically and relationally grounded? Are they processual and interactional? Do they engulf what is known about the phenomena? Do they incorporate prior understandings of the phenomena? Do they cohere and produce understanding? Are they unfinished or inconclusive? Consideration of these questions, then, should begin to assure the ‘quality’ of research.

The criteria relevant to this study and its evaluation, relate to the that appropriate for assessing the quality of critical enquiry offered by Guba and Lincoln (1994). First, historical situatedness is necessary. This requires the location of the research context within the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender antecedents that are relevant. Second, it can be judged on “the extent to which it acts to erode ignorance and misapprehensions” (p.114). The third criterion relates to the
potential for the research to provide a stimulus for action, bringing about the transformation of existing structures of domination.

3.4 Research Design

As the introductory chapter has noted, the aim of this research is to shed light on the local-global sports nexus. The opening steps of the research process were to identify a clearly formulated set of research questions toward which the research was oriented (see appendix 1). One element of this formulation was a comprehensive review of literature undertaken to assess the extent of existing knowledge. Considering the wider globalisation research and the sport related literature, this review was able to highlight the existing knowledge base alongside gaps, and areas awaiting further inquiry.

Subsequently the present study adopts the spirit of a grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This methodology is a qualitative research technique that uses a "systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: p. 24). Although grounded theory offers researchers a clear set of guidelines from which to build 'conceptually dense' explanatory frameworks, some have acknowledged (e.g., Bryman, 1988) that these guidelines are often over-technical and impractical to follow. Others have questioned its paradigmatic allegiances (e.g., Coffey, Holbrook & Atkinson, 1996), arguing that the rigid and prescriptive procedures reflect a naively realist epistemology which is more consistent with the quantitative orthodoxy it seeks to overthrow. Acknowledging these critiques, this study adopts the 'spirit' of generating grounded theory without adhering to the rigid rule-bound procedures outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). While many now acknowledge that grounded theory may be used to approximate the creativity involved in theory generation, caution must be exercised that it does not, "degenerate into a fairly empty building of categories or into a mere smokescreen to legitimise purely empiricist research" (Silverman, 1993: p.47). This concern was apparent within this project.
To overcome this pitfall, research questions were mapped out within a set of sensitising concepts that were used to guide the specific research techniques. Although devised at the outset, the sensitising concepts remained fluid throughout the project. In this way, the emergence of new, previously unanticipated lines of empirical enquiry could be accommodated. Alternatively, themes and issues anticipated as being important, but not proving so, could be shifted to the periphery of the project. These sensitising concepts subsequently informed the specific research techniques utilised.

The research strategies devised are split into three empirical strands. First, an overview of the global political economy of basketball, which contextualises further work. Second, a textual analysis of television programming content of the NBA and British television broadcasts in Britain was undertaken. Third, these local-global themes were situated in a two-season ethnographic project with fans of an East Midlands basketball team. The intent was to establish the nature of local consumption to British basketball. A series of guided discussions throughout participant observations, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used to record fans attitudes and opinions. A questionnaire was used to compliment this work and provide demographic information of those attending.

In summary, the research undertaken within the project was primarily qualitative in nature, underpinned by a critical interpretive paradigm. The combination of research techniques was designed to afford 'data source' triangulation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) with the intent of elucidating the topics identified from differing methods, in this way providing a more comprehensively grounded understanding. The following sections consider the specific techniques used within this project. I proceed by outlining some of the conceptual and methodological considerations of the various methods. I then specify their application within this project, noting some of the practical issues associated with their use.
3.5 Ethnography

Ethnography draws upon a wide range of sources of information in attempting to gain an understanding of the group being studied. As Hammersley and Atkinson outline:

The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned. (1983: p.2).

“Participant observation has always been the central method of ethnographers” (McNeill, 1990: p.68), but is often complimented by other techniques, such as survey data collection and most frequently interviewing. In an oft-cited passage, Becker (1958) summarises the role of the participant observer as:

gather(ing) data by participating in the daily life of the group or organization he [sic] studies. He [sic] watches the people he [sic] is studying to see what situations they ordinarily meet and how they behave in them. He [sic] then enters into conversation with some or all of the participants in these situations and discovers their interpretations of the events he [sic] has observed (1958: p.652).

A number of investigations using this method characterise “sport ethnography” (Klein, 1986: p.115). Such work has considered a wide variety of contexts. Indeed, Klein (1986) speculates that the “totality, insight and understanding” (p.114), that comes from the perspective of ethnography, is critical in the legitimation of the sub-discipline of the sociology of sport. It is in accordance with this, to which can be added a need to examine ‘local’ sports audiences with a sensitivity to global frames of reference, that the ethnographic element of this study is addressed.

3.5.1 Research Setting and Access

In conjunction with the refinement of the research problems and sensitising concepts, consideration of the potential research setting was made. Upon
consideration of potential settings one was selected upon the basis of an ‘insider link’ with the owner of a men’s National Basketball League franchise - The Leicester Riders. On this pretext an approach was made to the owner with an outline of the proposed research. An initial meeting detailed my intentions in the project, as well as highlighting the potential benefits for the club, with whom I would share the results of the study, most notably demographic information gleaned from a questionnaire. This was used as a ‘bargaining tool’ to try and ensure access. Indeed, this “research bargain” (Berg, 1998: p.131) was sufficient to sustain formal access for the duration of the two year project.

The agreement with the Riders ensured access to all home games throughout the season. In the course of the two years during which I undertook participant observation with basketball fans, I attended home games, travelled with fans and the team to away fixtures, attended Leicester Riders supporters club meetings, and spoke to fans on the telephone, enabling me to share their ‘basketball worlds’.

3.5.2 Field Strategy

Based upon an outline of participant observations offered by McNeill (1990) a broad three-phase model was adopted to guide fieldwork. These constitute a passive, interactive and active phase. Whilst not ‘hard’ or discrete in nature, this model was used more generally to guide my activities within the research setting. The transition from one phase to the next was not pre-determined by a time-scale, but based upon the progression of the relationships and rapport I was able to build with supporters. Additionally, the shift, for example, to a more interactive stance, did not mean an end to more inconspicuous observations. Thus two phases could overlap, and consistently did so (see appendix 2).

At the outset a series of considerations regarding “impression management (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: p79) within the ‘field’ were apparent. Subsequently, I introduced myself simply as “a researcher from Loughborough University interested in fans views and opinions about British basketball”. In this way I intended my presence was not unduly threatening, which may facilitate fans
willingness to talk to me. This initial 'presentation' of myself, in most cases, was successful, and used throughout the project. As more supporters became aware of my presence I found it less necessary to employ my 'cover story'. In fact my presence in some instances evoked interest as fans approached me keen to 'volunteer' information, a response of which I was cautious, yet broadly welcoming.

As Burgess (1984) notes “developing trust and establishing relationships are a crucial part of a researchers involvement in the social scene. The participant observer must blend into the situation” (p.92). I employed several strategies to 'blend in'. One salient consideration when entering the field, Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) note is personal appearance. Because of the nature of the Riders fans social environment, a loosely connected group of which membership was fluid, not all of whom were known to one another, I was not sharply constrained in terms of demeanour and dress. My early trips to watch the Riders and their fans revealed the casual nature of 'dress codes'. Subsequently I adopted a casual style to reduce perceived differences between fans and myself. Of note however is that I did not strive to be exactly like them. For example whilst a number of fans would wear the clubs colours in the form of caps, vests and scarves, I did not do this. My intention here was to maintain a degree of marginal distinction. One strategy I did employ was consistency of appearance, such that I may become recognisable to those fans I came to know.

A further aspect of 'blending in' with fans and developing rapport involved "learning their language" (Burgess, 1984: p.93). In the case of Riders fans this largely constituted the technical and slang lexicon of basketball. Despite possessing a casual acquaintance with the game, I was by no means 'fluent' to the level of some of the fans I encountered. This was subsequently something I had to develop. My weekly 'immersion' in basketball, watching games and the fans around me, meant that I was able to develop this rapidly, such that it did not present a problem in research terms.

As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) note, “people in the field will also seek to place or locate the ethnographer within their experience” (p.77). This was apparent in many of my opening interactions with fans. In several initial meetings fans questioned me after my initial introduction as a university researcher "interested in
British basketball fans”. Several fans probed for more information about the project. A further recurrent line of questioning centred on my knowledge of ‘their game’. To recurrent questions of “do you play basketball?” and “are you a fan?” my reply of “no” was not an ideal response in establishing my ‘credibility’ in their eyes. As I was to discover, an intimate knowledge of the game in playing terms carried with it a certain ‘kudos’ to some of the more ‘hard-core’ Riders fans. Over time however, as outlined above, I was able to gain that knowledge and ‘learn the language’ to overcome potential barriers this may have presented.

3.5.3 Recording and Organising Data

The collection of data from ‘the field’ can consist of fieldnotes, tape recordings, pictures, artefacts and anything else that documents the social situation under study (Spradley, 1980). As the traditional means in ethnography, I recorded fieldnotes of all my interactions with fans. During supporters club meetings, I was able to make notes simultaneous to actual participant observations. Additionally in the early fieldwork phase, during which my role was most closely aligned with that of a participant as observer, I was able to take notes inconspicuously whilst watching games without it being perceived as threatening or inappropriate to fans.

Initially being descriptive in nature, as I developed field relations, notes began to take on a more analytic and interpretive form, which mirrored the phases of field strategy identified above. In combining field observations with analysis I was able to attune future observations toward emerging patterns and the new questions and research ‘hunches’ I was able to generate through analysis. Additional to participant observations I recorded the noises at Riders games, took photographs, sketched diagrams and monitored the basketball, and local and national press for articles relevant to the fan experiences at Riders games. Within this ethnographic project participant observation was only one of the multiple methods used for collecting data. It was complimented by additional empirical methods each used to shed light on a specific ‘angle’ of the research environment. Some of the conceptual and practical issues of the way these methods were utilised are outlined below.
3.6 Questionnaires

As Frankenberg (1982) observes, one of the limitations of participant observations is that it is possible only to participate in relatively small groups. Hence, gathering certain types of information on relatively large and disparate groups, such as basketball fans, is difficult if limited to participant observations alone. By means of a solution to this problem it is possible to compliment participant observations with a larger-scale survey. Accordingly, I employed a self-completion questionnaire as a means of building up a more comprehensive 'ethnographic picture' of basketball fans. Primarily this was aimed at gathering the demographic and attitudinal information of a broader range of fans than was possible during participant observations alone.

The integration of fieldwork and survey methods, Sieber (1982) suggests, can confer benefits on both techniques in terms of design, data collection and analysis. This 'interplay' between the two methods is symptomatic of the triangulation afforded by multi-method research designs, highlighted at the outset of this chapter. Clearly the question of time-ordering in which the methods are applied are of importance in this case. Within this project the questionnaire was administered at the end of the first season of participant observations - half way through the ethnographic project. In this way, early participant observations were used to inform the design and subsequent analysis of the questionnaire. The results, in turn, were of value in informing new research directions and questions for ongoing participant observations, interviews and focus groups during the latter half of the project.

A further rationale for including a questionnaire was the desire to gain broad demographic and attitudinal information about basketball fans, regarding which very little data is available. Indeed, the emergence of 'arena-based' sports - most notably basketball and ice hockey, raises a number of sociological questions regarding the nature of audiences attending. Casual observations of such crowds seem to indicate a differing audience composition and behaviour from traditional spectator sports in Britain. Crawford (1998) who undertook research regarding the audience attending
Manchester Storm ice-hockey games has investigated the case of such audiences in Britain. No such comparable data is available for basketball audiences in Britain. In this sense, as well as complimenting participant-observations in the field it was felt that a questionnaire could shed light on this area.

3.6.1 Questionnaire Design and Construction

The questionnaire (see Appendix 3) was devised upon the basis of one season of participant observations and the sensitising concepts of the project. Although the principal goal of the questionnaire was gaining demographic information (covered in section A), the opportunity that the questionnaire afforded was taken to explore some of the attitudes of fans relating to the projects key research themes (sections B and C). Demographic information and patterns of consumption were gauged in closed-choice response categories (specifying a particular age-range, for example) in which fans ‘checked’ the relevant box. Attitudinal information meanwhile, relating to a variety of aspects of consumption of basketball was measured on five-point Likert scales. Such scales were chosen to facilitate a range of responses whilst also allowing a middle ‘neutral’ category, to prevent fans being forced to adopt an opinion one way or the other (which a four-point scale would have done). Additionally, an open-ended ‘additional comments’ section allowed fans the opportunity to express views and opinions not covered by the questions, thus highlighting potential new ‘research angles’.

3.6.2 Administering the Questionnaire

As a means of testing the suitability of the design of the questionnaire, pilot work was undertaken prior to the night of sampling. A total of thirteen questionnaires were distributed on an opportune basis to fans prior to two different games; one home game (v Greater London Leopards, 13th Feb, 1999), and an away game (v Derby Storm, 10th Feb, 1999), and collected upon completion, at the same games. A brief explanation of the purposes of the pilot work was given to respondents upon distribution. Upon collection from pilot respondents, I checked for issues relating to
the coherence and ease of use of the questionnaire. Several changes to the design were made upon this basis, to improve the clarity of the questionnaire.

Subsequently, questionnaires were distributed on an 'opportunist' basis to adult fans as they entered the arena for a regular season game. A questionnaire was offered to all adult fans (classified as over 15 years old)\(^9\), and given to all those that accepted one. In total 269 questionnaires were distributed. Questionnaires were collected upon completion on the night of distribution and at future home games (Saturday 20th March, v Sheffield Sharks; and, Saturday 27th March, v Edinburgh Rocks) in ‘ballot’ boxes distributed around the arena. Some unsolicited postal returns were also received. As a consequence of this method of administration, it should be pointed out that no claims to the representativeness of the sample to the broader Riders fandom could be made. This was not however the intent. Alternatively the desire was to solicit as broad a range of opinions as possible, as well as gaining demographic information as a general guide to the background of fans, rather than a definitively representative sample.

3.6.3 Questionnaire Analysis

In total 177 useable questionnaires were collected and subject to analyses. Quantifiable data from the individual questionnaires, such as demographic information and Likert scaled attitudinal information was summarised using the Excel spreadsheet and graphing package, as a means of representing the data. Qualitative information gleaned from the questionnaire, such as that relating to cultural identification, was coded and indexed by being categorised into groupings of familiar response.

3.7 Interviews

Alongside asking questions informally within the field, it is also common for ethnographers to more formally interview participants. Such a strategy was used within this project. As May (1997) notes, “interviews yield rich insights into peoples
experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings” (p.109). The long tradition of interviewing within qualitative research has broadly considered them as “conversations with a purpose” (Burgess, 1982; Mason, 1996; Berg, 1998). During the ethnographic component of this project I interviewed a total of 29 Riders fans. Initially eight fans were interviewed individually, and the remaining twenty-one in three separate group interview - ‘focus group’ situations. Upon the basis of the transcriptions of the opening interviews, I was able to make modifications to the interview schedule upon the basis of informants introducing new topics of relevance (see appendix 4). Additionally I was able to develop my own interviewing technique, addressing those areas that ran less smoothly or did not elicit the desired level of information from informants, or where I had made mistakes in the wording or style of questions.

All of the fans who I interviewed were volunteers who responded to a letter (see appendix 5) requesting interviewees, with a brief description of the intent of the project. I had obtained the contact details of fans from the questionnaire employed at the end of the first season of participant observations, which also questioned whether they would be willing to be interviewed. The ‘data base’ of fans that I was able to build-up from questionnaire responses, totalled forty-nine. All of these fans were sent a letter with a tear-off reply-slip, and stamped addressed envelope to encourage their participation in the project. A total of 29 fans responded, all of whom were interviewed with two exceptions due to logistical difficulties in arranging a meeting time, or fitting in with the scheduled times for group interviews (see appendix 6 for interview dates and locations).

I conducted interviews with fans at a variety of locations. I travelled to the home of two of the fans that I interviewed individually, at a time of their convenience. The opening individual interview I conducted prior to a Riders home game on the ‘bleachers’ of the arena. Due to the levels of background noise, which caused difficulty in transcription of that interview however, I conducted all the subsequent interviews in a quiet backroom of Granby Halls – the Riders playing venue. This room proved ideal for the purpose, composing of comfortable seating, which could be
arranged to accommodate group interviews in a circle. These interviews were conducted prior to four home games at the end of the 1999-2000 season. Individual interviews typically lasted half an hour and group interviews approximately fifty minutes.

I adopted audiotaping as the most appropriate form of recording interview data. Issues relating to the general non-audible ‘mood’ and ‘feel’ of interviews I was able to record in notes taken after the conclusion of each interview. Aided by my assurances of confidentiality at the outset of each interview, potential problems of fans being reticent to be recorded were not apparent. Finally, as a novice interviewer, tape recording allowed me to concentrate more fully on eliciting the desired depth of information rather then being distracted by note-taking during the interview. In the final outcome all interviews both individual and group were recorded on a dictaphone with the use of a fitted ‘flat’ microphone to enhance sound quality.

During the course of research I also carried out three ‘key personnel’ interviews. One with the Media Officer of the NBA (London); the Chief executive of the then Basketball League BBL; and, the executive producer of Mach 1 television responsible for production of the NBA 99 programming which appeared on ITV (analysed in Chapter five). The intent was to obtain information relating to the operations and strategies of these organisations.

All of these interviews were conducted under a semi-structured format, for two reasons. First, my own inexperience as an interviewer meant that a completely unstructured format might not have yielded the depth of desired information. Second, a degree of consistency in the topics covered would allow a level of comparison between interviews. The initial individual fan interviews were used to hone my technique and help direct later interviews. Transcribed immediately after completion, I was able to use earlier interviews to identify areas of my interview technique that needed improving, for example, probing specific issues and clarifying meanings of some responses. By the stage of the later group interviews in the project, having developed my own skills as an interviewer/moderator I was able to diverge more effectively to explore fans meanings and experiences. This was achieved with an
opening task of fans offering their own words, which captured their own experience of watching the Riders, around which subsequent discussions were based.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim, with as much of the intonation as possible included in the transcript (see appendix 7 for a sample transcript). Additionally, I took notes following each interview situation regarding how they had progressed, and how successful I thought they had been, whether the respondent looked ‘at ease’, and whether I was able to elicit the depth of information that I was seeking.

3.7.1 Analysing Qualitative Interviews

Because of the context specificity of interview data it is impossible to establish a complete step-by-step operational process by which to undertake qualitative analysis. Alternatively, Berg notes “the analysis of the data is primarily determined by the nature of the project and the various contingencies built in during the design stages” (1998: p.91). This should not however be taken for a lack of precision. Alternatively qualitative research “is based on calculated strategies and methodological rigour” (Berg, 1998: p.91).

Interviews, having been recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim, require methods of making analytic sense. In undertaking this, Berg notes: “you simply seek naturally occurring classes of things, persons, and events, and other important characteristics of these items. In other words, you look for similarities and dissimilarities in the data” (1998: p.92). Subsequently, a systematic indexing process can be established. Initially noting the major topics of interest listed, beneath which a number of sub-themes to each topic are normally apparent. Noted, under each major topic then are all the instances of reference to a theme with an identifying code to denote the transcript and page number, with a brief verbatim extract. For example: #4, p.6; would refer to an example of transcript number four from page six. In instances of more than one sub-theme being mentioned, it is shown and cross-referenced under each sub-theme. A typical index sheet used in this project is shown in appendix 8.
Cross-referencing in this way permits much easier location of particular items during later stages of analysis, and in ‘writing-up’ research. Additionally the index sheets provide a method of evaluating the frequency of certain topics of response that emerge. The patterns that subsequently emerge, Berg (1998) notes, are frequently the most interesting and important results obtained, emerging directly from the data themselves.

3.8 Media Analysis

This section outlines how the comparative textual analysis presented in Chapter five was undertaken. A conceptual framework of televisual communication is more fully developed in that chapter. The broadcast samples were taken during 1998 and 1999. In the case of British basketball, coverage of all 1998/99 season Budweiser League games broadcast on SKY Sports broadcast throughout that regular season (September -April), the leagues 'all-star' game and the Championships (May) was recorded for analysis. In the case of the NBA, ITV's NBA '99 coverage was utilised, this series running from February to May 1999, with coverage of both the (strike shortened) regular season and the play-offs.

Initially, pilot work was undertaken to identify categories by which to guide the textual analysis. This involved viewing three Budweiser league games from the season 1997-98, and two NBA programmes from the 1999 season coverage\textsuperscript{11}, to identify themes linked to the sensitising concepts outlined at the start of the project. Seven prevalent themes emerged within the programming that specifically informed the issues of local-global identity politics. These themes were then operationalised to provide consistency in the subsequent analysis of programming. The themes are listed below, along with the operationalisation for the purposes of the textual analysis.

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Fig 3.1. Themes of analysis and how they were operationalised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Theme</th>
<th>Operationalisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Migrant/Indigenous</td>
<td>Comparative portrayal of migrant/indigenous personnel - players, coaches, playing styles, structures, facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) National Identities</td>
<td>Reference to the national origins of personnel - comparisons with others, ‘national’ characteristics/ stereotypes. Use of collective pronouns - I/we, us/they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Localities</td>
<td>How is the local context of the game portrayed? Is it celebrated/negated? Is it situated within a global frame of reference? Is it portrayed as ‘better’ than others/not as good?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Americanisation</td>
<td>Process by which American cultural elements are transmitted and become evident in a local culture, such that the US becomes a fundamental cultural reference point. Evidenced by American references in commentary, terminology, ‘celebration’ of American culture, American culture ‘writ large’ in coverage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) NBA-isation</td>
<td>Promotion of /familiarisation with the NBA brand. Positioning of the NBA as ‘the’ league in comparison to others - Educational elements in relation to the history, teams, structure, players’ issues. Appearance of the leagues logos, merchandise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Global Commodity Capitalism</td>
<td>Ways in which programming is linked to globally recognised product lines: Sponsorship of events, courtside advertising, programme sponsorship, mentions of global brands. Reinforcement of logos/names/brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Consumption</td>
<td>Extent to which and in what forms programming situates the viewer as consumer. In what ways, what products, how is the viewer placed? - As a ‘free choosing’ /sovereign consumer or a fan/local person with ‘emotional/cultural ties’ to teams? In what ways does coverage reinforce this positioning?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Systematic observations were recorded on a data recording template that arose from pilot work (see appendix 8). This template allowed for the recording of information relating to each example identified. This included: context of the example within the programme: relevant technical conventions, such as camera angles, and shots, use of slow-motion; audio information, including commentary from studio or game commentators, player/coach interviews and comments; visual information - including all that was visible on the screen including pictures and graphics.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has attempted to outline the issues associated with the methodological approach adopted in this project. Specifically, I have outlined the basis for the critical stance that I have adopted. Constituent to this is an ontological position of "historical realism", and an epistemological stance which is transactional, acknowledging the 'value mediated' status of research findings. As outlined, this project is anchored in a cultural-studies approach. This standpoint seeks a critical investigation into the politics of contemporary popular culture and existence (Andrews and Loy, 1993: p59). Specifically, culture is taken as one of the principal sites where the inequalities of capitalist industrial societies are established and contested.

The project, broadly conceived, constitutes a number of interlocking components that have been used to investigate the local-global sports nexus. This is undertaken with reference to a case study of basketball in Britain, the components of which are fourfold. First, a contextualising chapter (Chapter 4) outlines the political economy of global basketball with particular reference to Britain documents the interdependencies surrounding NBA expansion. Highlighting the dynamics of the local-global nexus, the commercial development of the British 'indigenous' game is also examined. Second, an analysis of the television coverage of basketball, in terms of textual output is undertaken in Chapter Five. This chapter considers the potential role of media texts at the local-global sports nexus by evaluating the dominant
messages in relation to local-global issues. Third, a two season ethnographic project was undertaken to shed light upon the consumption of ‘local’ basketball in Leicester. Specifically, the intent was to understand the cultural interpretations and consumption within basketball fandom with reference to the broader global framework of the sport. Fourth, a discussion of the preceding empirical material is undertaken in a concluding chapter (Chapter 8). This analysis considers the local-global nexus in the light of the projects findings, and attempts to ‘draw together’ its various strands. It also considers its limitations and speculates upon future areas of enquiry.

The multi-method design adopted for this project incorporated a number of specific methods for gathering empirical information. These constituted: key personnel interviews in relation to the strategies of commercial organisations associated with basketball in Britain; a textual analysis of media output; participant observations; semi-structured interviews; a questionnaire, and ‘focus group’ discussions with Leicester Riders fans. The use of multiple-methods was designed to ‘triangulate’ the project findings. In this way the combination of research techniques was intended to inform a ‘tightly woven’ understanding of the local-global nexus in relation to British basketball. Such a design, intended to piece together the complexity of the social environment, is aligned with Denzin’s (1998) notion of a *bricolage*. The resultant research is intended to be a contribution to the burgeoning debate regarding the local-global sports nexus.

Notes

1 For a more detailed discussion, the reader is referred to Flick (1999), who provides an excellent introduction to issues in qualitative research. For a more substantive discussion of contemporary issues in qualitative research, the reader is referred to Denzin and Lincoln (2000).

2 Denzin and Lincoln (1998) in fact note, the field of qualitative research “is a less-than-unified arena” (p1i).  

3 The five phases they identify are: the traditional period (1900-1950) associated with the positivist paradigm, the modernist phase (1950-1970) linked to the appearance of post-positivist arguments, blurred genres (1970-1986) during which the qualitative project was broadly conceived, a crisis of representation (1986-1990) characterised by researchers struggling to locate themselves and their subjects in reflexive texts, and, a Post-modern/present moment (1990-present) which represents a new sensibility doubting “that any discourse has a privileged place” (p.12)
Denzin and Lincoln (1994) note that some applications of qualitative forms of data actually work within the positivist model.

See note four.

Subsequent revisions to the methodology have offered a more ‘constructivist’ approach, reminding the researcher that: “The power of grounded theory lies in its tools for understanding empirical worlds. We can reclaim these tools from their positivist underpinnings to form a revised more open-ended practice of grounded theory that stresses its emergent constructivist elements. We can use grounded theory methods as flexible, heuristic strategies rather than as formulaic procedures”. (Charmaz, 2000, p. 510).

In fact, Glaser (1992) himself criticised Strauss and Corbin’s later reformulations of the method, arguing for the centrality of principles over the technical explications.

Although the BBL do offer some ‘demographics’ within promotional media material (in relation to age and gender only), the methods used render them distinctly problematic. Little by means of reliable conclusions could be drawn from them.

Below this age it was felt that a substantially different questionnaire design would be required.

The interview was carried out on 18/8/98. The Basketball League (BBL) as it existed then has since been rebranded’ prior to the 1999-2000 season as the Basketball League Limited (BLL).

I acknowledge the non-independence of the NBA component of the pilot work. This was the only option in the absence of alternative NBA coverage from the previous season, which was unavailable.
CHAPTER FOUR

BASKETBALL AND THE LOCAL-GLOBAL NEXUS

As Chapter one has detailed, within globalisation of sport debates attention has increasingly swung to the relationship between global and local processes (Jackson and Andrews, 1999). Central to questions surrounding the local-global nexus is the juncture between processes that are global in scope and local cultural identities and experiences. Primary concerns in this regards are "[i]ssues of power, control, and the ability of indigenous people to interpret, understand, and/or resist cultural manipulation and domination" (Maguire, 1993a: p.30). Subsequently, the need for a focus on the local conditions that contour responses, including reception, resistance and interpretation is apparent. Investigating the local-global nexus, this thesis takes the local context of British basketball as a 'critical case'. This chapter establishes the wider context in which the substantive base of this thesis will be mapped out.

First, attention is given to discussion of the 'cultural economy' of sport (Rowe, 1999) and the influential role of Transnational Corporations (TNCs) within global change. This discussion provides the conceptual basis to understand the global expansion of the NBA, which is then outlined. Second, I address the league’s presence in Britain. The local cultural responses to NBA global expansion, within both academic and popular accounts are then addressed. I then return to the specific case of Britain, considering those factors that mediate local reception, and also academic commentaries, that have investigated these dynamics. Finally, I consider the case of British basketball by which the local-global sporting nexus is examined in future chapters. In doing so, I detail the hierarchy of global basketball, as well as commercial basketball development within Britain.
4.1 Transnational Practices and Global Sport

In his theory of transnational practices (TNPs), Leslie Sklair (1995) provides a framework for the comprehension of global interconnectedness above and beyond nation state interactions. Within a globally integrated system, Sklair (1995) identifies the pillars of economic activity as transnational corporations (TNCs). These TNCs, Robins argues, have emerged as the "key shapers and shakers of the international economy" (1991: p.26). The operations of TNCs provide the impetus for activities at the level that transcends nation-state boundaries. Their world activities are largely beyond the control of any one single nation-state, such that there may be diminished formal regulation of their accumulation activities, and, in their internal operations and dealings with other TNCs, they facilitate economic activity on a global scale. Despite the actions of TNCs being increasingly divorced from any one country, but diversified among several, nation-states are still influential within the global system. As Sklair (1995) notes, with most transnational practices (TNPs) intersecting at some stage in countries who exercise a degree of jurisdiction, nation-states act as the spatial reference point for the TNPs which structure the global system.

Sklair (1995) identifies the principal facilitators of TNPs as the transnational capitalist class (TCC), whose interests align with those of the TNCs. This stratum of ‘managerial bourgeoisie’ views their own interests, and/or those of their nation/locale as concurrent with those of the global capitalist system, and consequently aligns their locality with a consumerist culture. The actions of the TCC, that are aligned with the operations of TNCs, result in globalised outlooks becoming reflected in the localised settings within which their actions are influential. In effect the TCC act as the agent of TNCs and their actions.

Notably, this global economic system is marked by a very great asymmetry, with ownership and control in the domain of specific groups in a limited number of countries (Sklair, 1995). The increasingly extensive and intensive integration of TNCs activities, indicative of the quest to achieve "world-scale advantages" (Robins,
1991: p.26), are influential in heightened global processes. In the context of the local-global nexus the cultural implications of global economic integration are considerable. As Robins notes “the organisation of production and control of markets on a world scale has had profound political and cultural consequences” (1991: p.25).

At the cultural-ideological level, Sklair (1995) argues, transnational practices (TNPs) are evident in the global spread of the culture/ideology of consumerism, which has supplemented many localised cultures. The marketing activities of TNCs along with the developments in mass media communications technology have been pivotal in global capitalist enterprise. Through advertising on a global scale they help to speed up the circulation of material goods, thus reducing the time between production and consumption. Transnational media outlets are largely controlled by TNCs themselves. Hence, following the development, in the early 1980s, of satellite technology, the increased scope and scale for the distribution of messages on a global scale has facilitated the conveyance of the philosophies of TNCs. What is clear is that how these are ‘played out’, and to what extent, at the local global nexus requires careful interrogation.

4.2 The Cultural Economy of Global Sport

Commenting on the consequences of the quest for ‘world-scale advantages’, Coakley (1998) suggests, sports “are now corporate enterprises, integrally tied to marketing concerns and processes of global capitalist expansion. The names of TNCs have become synonymous with the athletes, events, and sports that provide pleasure in people’s lives.” (p.326). Transnational practices (TNPs) have become integrally entwined with sport, exerting an influence at a global level. The impetus for the globalisation of commercial sport, Coakley (1998) suggests, results from the TNPs of two main groupings whose actions have expanded sports ‘brands’ on a worldwide scale.
First, those who govern, administer and promote sports have sought to expand their operations to the widest possible market. The creation of global markets, Coakley (1998) notes, is dependent on the creation of demand outside the original national or regional boundaries of the sport. In this quest, the effective use of the media in creating interest, by 'educating' consumers to familiarise them with the game and building identification with the relevant players and athletes, is central. Illustrating the influential role of the media, Rowe has observed "it is the media that have not only created the capacity for sport to reach its staggering global audience but also 'service' that audience, that reproduce and transform sports culture through an endless and pervasive process . . . of representing sport in myriad ways" (1999: p.22). In this way, "sport organisations become exporters of culture as well as products to be consumed" (Coakley, 1998: p.330). The logic of global capitalist expansion has gained pace throughout the 1990s, such that global sport is now characterised by a myriad and complex set of multi-directional flows as various competitions and leagues compete at a transnational level for global consumers.

Second, the representatives of TNCs who wish to expand their markets to increase profit have identified sport as an effective means to introduce their products and services on a worldwide scale. Prominent examples of such organisations include The Disney Corporation, Coca-Cola and McDonalds. The capability of sport to attract widespread popular interest often transcending national, ethnic, cultural and language barriers, has seen it emerge as an ideal means to infilrate global markets. Furthermore the positive associations frequently linked to sport have placed it as a prime associate for TNCs seeking a positive image upon which to base global expansion. Since the 1980s "corporate names and logos became synonymous with athletes, teams, events and sports facilities" (Coakley, 1998: p.331) such that TNCs and sport have become inextricably intertwined.

The vast sums of money paid by corporations such as Nike, Coca-Cola and McDonalds to align themselves with sports has had a powerful influence on the characteristics of global sport, such that it is compelled to align itself with the
demands and interests of corporate accumulation. Consequently the events, structure, orientation, competition formats and rules have become influenced by the involvement of TNCs in global sport, the ideologies of which push sports organisations to seek ever further expansion. The consequences of this, Young (1986) summarises, are that “the social, psychological, physical, and cultural uses of sport are assimilated to the commercial needs of advanced monopoly capital” (p.12).

The dimensions of these shifts have been noted by Whitson (1998), who suggests they have signaled the incorporation of sports into a global “promotional culture” (p.59) characterised by media sports synergies and corporate involvement to promote sport and associated products on a global basis. Characteristic of this global economy of professional sport, Whitson outlines some of the ‘new revenue streams’ that have become a central feature of global sport. These include: first, merchandising which has become a key commodity base. Specifically, the appearance of team and competition logos on caps, T-shirts and related paraphernalia has heightened the visibility of the professional sports product, initially at a national, and subsequently a global level. The coordinated promotion of licensed merchandise has helped establish such products in the adolescent and young adult market. Such commodities, as well as an important revenue source have also acted to reinforce the visibility of sports competitions and teams. Significantly the culture/ideology of consumerism is the dominant ethos surrounding the commodification of sport in this way.

Second, the marketing of ‘stars’ has become central to the visibility and ‘brand imaging’ of transnational sports events and competitions. Pivotal to the promotion of these marketable ‘personas’ is the television exposure by which they attain their status as popular cultural icons. This is also the medium by which the associated commercial messages, which result from the alignment of corporate interests with such figures, are relayed. When successful the construction of imaged celebrities, Whitson (1998) notes, confers benefits on all partners in the exercise. The ‘circuit of promotion' created with their mutually reinforcing messages and imagery
generate visibility and business for all those involved. The most prominent example of such a celebrity, is NBA player Michael Jordan, whose numerous advertising endorsements led to the creation of a recognisable persona which reached unprecedented levels of global recognition in the consumer marketplace (Goldman and Papson, 1998).

The third element of the 'global promotional culture', identified by Whitson (1998), concerns the 'vertical integration' in the communication and 'infotainment' industries which have opened up new possibilities for revenue generation surrounding sport. Notably the growth of subscription television technology has heightened the market worth of sports events such that cross-ownership of sports competitions, teams and leagues by media distribution outlets can afford significant competitive advantages. Such cross ownership of sports competitions and media outlets creates further opportunities for promotional synergies.

The emergence of these new revenue streams, Whitson (1998) suggests, represents a new stage in the commodification of global sport, such that professional sports may be gradually detached from meanings based on place attachments and loyalties. In the place of, and supplemental to geographical loyalties come the discourses of personal and consumer choice. As Rowe (1999) notes these processes extend beyond the exchange of money. There is, he notes "a cultural economy of sport, where information, images, ideas and rhetorics [sic] are exchanged, where symbolic value is added, where metaphorical (and sometimes literal) stocks rise and fall" (p.23: emphasis in original). The central issue of interest, in the context of this thesis, is the impact of this 'cultural economy' of sport on local contexts, which are subject to the increasing market, and cultural penetration of global sports competitions.

Symptomatic of the quest for world-scale advantages, the 1990s saw concerted attempts made by the major professional sports league in North America: the National Football League (NFL), the National Basketball Association (NBA), National Hockey League (NHL), and Major League Baseball (MLB), to expand their
markets on a global level. The quest to extend operations by these organisations was
been led by the NFL. Maguire has documented the characteristics of the growth of
the NFL with case studies of England (1990) and Western Europe (1991). Central to
the expansion of the NFL to England throughout the 1980s were the interdependent
roles played by the marketing strategies of the NFL, American beer manufacturer
Anheuser Busch, and the television company Channel 4. Maguire's (1990)
investigation demonstrates that the creation of markets by the meshing of the interests
of these 'key players' extended beyond merely the game of American football; to
include merchandising, sponsorship and endorsement operations. Such multi-faceted
associations made with the game, and the NFL specifically, have been central to
heightening the visibility of the league to global markets. Significantly, Maguire
(1990) noted some of the actual and potential cultural impacts of NFL expansion in
England. These included the creation of a niche, which began to impact upon the
dominant sporting culture in England, and the potential marginalisation of indigenous
sports.

The NBA has also been involved in concerted attempts to expand to global
markets. Notably the impacts of NBA expansion differ in one sense from that of the
NFL, due to the extensive network of existing 'indigenous' basketball competitions,
largely absent for historical reasons, in the case of American football. As such, NBA
strategies provide fertile terrain to gauge aspects of local-global interactions. To
consider the case of basketball it is first necessary to outline the context of league
growth in America, the characteristics of NBA strategies in Britain and 'local'
responses to this market expansion.

4.3 The Rise of the NBA and Global Expansion

The meteoric growth and sustained commercial successes of the NBA within
America are well documented (see Swift, 1991; Connor & Russell, 1995; Andrews,
1997). A thorough analysis of the emergence of the league is beyond this thesis.
Consideration of the factors facilitating the league's domestic development, however, is relevant to subsequent global expansion, and involvement in Britain. Following a malaise during the 1970s, the "stunning metamorphosis" during the 1980s and 1990s saw the league transformed from "an archaic professional sports industry focusing solely on the league's properties and administration, to a multifaceted marketing and entertainment conglomerate" (Andrews, 1997: p.75). Indeed, diversification from the core product of basketball games alone saw the league incorporating more than twenty divisions, including NBA Properties, NBA Entertainment, NBA International and NBA Ventures. Structurally, Andrews notes, an accusatory anti-drug policy, the establishment of a collective bargaining agreement between owners and players, and the subsequent enforcement of a salary cap began to address the image problems that the league had faced. The re-articulation of the NBA, perhaps more significantly, he argues, "was ensured by the astute harnessing of the promotional media to revitalise the games image and popularity" (Andrews, 1997: p.75).

Specifically, it was television exposure that was pivotal in popularising and promoting the league. Basketball was well positioned to benefit from increased TV exposure. The, so called, 'telegenic' quality of basketball is highlighted by Connor and Russell (1995). They also note the sufficiently short playing time (in comparison to rival sports), the visibility of the players - unobscured by helmets or face masks, and the intimacy of the relatively small basketball court, which all make for 'good TV'. Additionally the 'stop-start' nature of the game, which can be halted at appropriate intervals to accommodate TV advertising demands, is appealing to television executives. Furthermore, the fast pace of the game, as relayed on TV was attractive to young people, which Andrews (1997) notes, attracted advertising dollars from many corporate sponsors attempting to entice that particular market segment.

The emergence of identifiable 'personas' was also influential in heightening the NBA profile within the American market. The formation of strategic alliances surrounding such celebrities, was a further factor in the commercial success of the league. Most notably, corporations such as Nike, Coca-Cola and McDonalds, utilised
the imagery and personas of the league for their own purposes. Of particular note was
the promotion by Nike of Michael Jordan which helped attain media prominence
hitherto unseen, incorporating both Nike and Jordan themselves, and by implication
the NBA (see Katz, 1994). The promotion of these playing personnel by commercial
partners on the basis of endorsement contracts, via advertising campaigns, acted to
symbiotically enhance the visibility and image of the league. The NBA itself also
entered into a series of mutually beneficial strategic alliances, joint ventures and
partnerships with major corporations. The dense promotional network of
interdependencies that surrounds the NBA, Montville (1996) describes as “a grand
circular synergy. The games sell the shoes that sell the game that sells the shoes that
sell the game.” (p.144). These linkages for sports leagues, Cousens and Slack (1996)
ote note, allow them to enhance their legitimacy, increase the economic efficiency of their
transactions and sell licensed merchandise. Such interdependencies were pivotal in
the rise to prominence of the NBA.

Such was the effect of the multi-faceted nature of the NBA and its mutually
reinforcing corporate alliances that it progressed far beyond the traditional primary
product market of professional sports: ticket sales and the sale of broadcasting rights.
A wide array of merchandise and paraphernalia, home videos, replica clothing, and
the promotion of ‘personas’, reinforced by various promotional media, saw the league
transcend mere basketball. In so doing Andrews argues, the league was more closely
aligned with the major entertainment corporations; Disney and Time Warner, than
other professional sports leagues. Subsequently, Andrews (1997) suggests, the NBA
has become “first and foremost an entertainment company that manufacture a
phantasmagorical world of commodity-signed narratives and identities: triumphs and
tragedies, successes and failures, heroes and villains”(p.78). On this basis the league
connotes a series of cultural messages and themes.

A particular focus of the NBA’s marketing operations was the often-elusive
youth market. As David Stern, the charismatic commissioner who presided over the
leagues’ rise has affirmed, “kids 11 and 12 years old are more interested in basketball
than ever before, and we're going to try to convert them into lifelong fans" (cited in Swift, 1991: p79). A number of initiatives such as the NBA *Inside Stuff* TV show aired in America on Saturday mornings, a time slot traditionally associated with children's viewing. Alongside this the 'stay in school' programme, launched in 1990, was designed to target young people. While the latter may have appeared to have a virtuous goal, Conner and Russell (1995) note that, underlying the league's ultimate orientation, "its primary target, is creating a future market for what the league is selling" (p.39).

Central to the commercial success of the NBA was sustained and favourable televisual exposure, the forging of mutually reinforcing corporate alliances that helped boost the league's visibility, and the emergence and careful positioning of highly visible 'personas' which attained a resonance with the youth market. Upon this basis the league achieved unprecedented commercial growth within the North American market. The transformation of the league, in this sense was reflected, Andrews (1997) notes, "by the stupendous rate of growth in the league's gross revenue as derived from ticket sales, television contracts, corporate sponsorship and the retailing of licensed merchandise" (p.78). Between 1980 and 1990 the NBA's gross non-retail revenues (including ticket sales and TV fees) rose from $110 million to $700 million. Gross retail revenues (sales of backboards, logo T-shirts etc), meanwhile, leapt from $44 million to $1 billion over the same period (Swift, 1991). The voracious growth by the early 1990s, however, had saturated the US market (Andrews 1997), such that the league began to look toward overseas expansion to sustain its growth.

Despite the precedent set by the NFL and MLB, Andrews (1997) argues, the NBA was more symptomatic of attunement to the corporations who dominate the entertainment marketplace: Time Warner and Disney, to which a transnational orientation is central. Outlining the need for the NBA to engage global markets, and forecasting its inevitability, David Stern suggested, "We think global development is happening... Our growth at home didn't happen overnight and it's going to happen
even more slowly around the world. But happen it will” (cited in Heisler, 1991). The drive toward global expansion was based upon the perceived necessity to sustain the league's annual growth rate. Hinting at the opportunities offered by worldwide expansion and potential NBA’s strategies toward global markets, Stern noted simply “everything we do here (in the US), we can do there” (cited in Eskanazi, 1989: p8).

The international orientation of the NBA was manifest as early as 1987 with the establishment of the inaugural ‘McDonalds Championship’, a pre-season tournament featuring one NBA and two European teams. Following this, the themes central to the rise of the league within the US have been evident at a global level. Televisual coverage of the game, acted as the principal means of penetration of foreign markets, the extent of which is considerable. By the 1998-99 season, television coverage of the league extended to 199 countries on 104 telecasters in 40 languages, reaching over 600 million households worldwide. (http: www.NBA.Com). The majority of this broadcasting takes the form of pre-packaged highlight shows designed to promote the league to new consumers (see Emerson, 1994). The revenue potential of the sale of such broadcasting rights on a global scale is considerable. Illustrating the league awareness of this, Commissioner Stern noted “there are enormous possibilities for exploitation of our product overseas. Eighty-five percent of the world’s television viewers do not reside in the US” (cited in Swift, 1991).

Crucially, Andrews (1997) suggests, such coverage “builds familiarity with the major stars of the game, and generates a base of knowledgeable and interested consumers” (p.83). Thus televisual promotion has been a pivotal component of the league's strategies of global expansion.

Added to the far-reaching televisual penetration, exhibition games and events have also been used to enhance NBA visibility in specific markets. The McDonalds Championship tournament has been taken to various locations targeted for NBA marketing: Madrid (1988), Rome (1989), Barcelona (1990), Paris (1991), and Munich (1993). Expanded to include more teams and becoming a biennial competition re-titled the ‘McDonalds Open’ the tournament was taken to London in 1995. Paris in
1997, and Milan in 1999. The involvement of McDonalds in this venture, once again, demonstrates the integral role of the NBA’s strategic alliances - in this instance on a global scale. Significantly, with McDonalds retaining title sponsorship, the tournament has since been opened up to other sponsors. Illustrating the priorities which underpin such events, David Schreff, group general manager for NBA Properties, suggested that this “would make the McDonalds Open an even more important part of the global sports calendar and a more powerful marketing platform for companies to launch multination media tie-ins and promotions” (cited in Jensen, 1994: p12). Hence the alliance of the NBA with corporate partners, pivotal to expansion within the US, has also been central element of global strategies. As well as the McDonalds Open, the NBA has also staged pre and regular season games in Mexico and Japan, both identified as potentially lucrative markets. Commenting on the games held in Tokyo to open the 1990/91 season, McCallum noted that they served as “a giant marketing test for the NBA” (p.43). Similarly the NBA’s Japanese business partner C.Itoh and Co Ltd. described the games as “a kick-off event” to future NBA involvement (cited in McCallum, 1990).

Despite prior involvement in international markets, it was the 1992 Barcelona Olympic games, which provided the NBA with the impetus for widespread global expansion. The vast amount of media attention afforded the American, so called ‘dream team’, projected the NBA’s carefully cultivated star players to a global audience. The significance for the NBA, Rick Welts, President of NBA properties suggested, was to “move our international effort ahead 10 years” (cited in Desens, 1994). Indeed, the sales of NBA merchandise in Europe jumped from $56 million in 1990 to $259 million after the Barcelona Olympics (Connor and Russell, 1995). From this springboard which had significantly raised the international profile and awareness of the league, the NBA established an overseas division, NBA International, to co-ordinate operations within on global markets. Regional satellite offices were established to co-ordinate NBA operations in various parts of the world, including Paris, London, Barcelona, Germany, Japan, Australia, Taiwan, and Mexico.
Despite speculation (see McCallum, 1988) the NBA has resisted suggestions that it may establish franchises abroad or even a foreign league along the lines of the NFL’s short lived World League of American Football, since re-branded as the ‘NFL Europe’. One such global market targeted was that of Great Britain. I now turn to a critical evaluation of the league’s operations in this case, outlining the strategies they have employed.

4.4 NBA Expansion to Britain

Despite the prior appearance of NBA imagery in Britain, in the form of merchandising, a pre-season game in 1993; television advertising featuring NBA players and occasional print media exposure, the starting point of concerted involvement in the British market was the McDonalds Championship, in London, in October 1995. The establishment of a ‘satellite’ office in London to coordinate the NBA’s operations followed this event. This direct ‘on the ground’ presence had been preceded by the appearance of NBA games on the satellite broadcast channel BSKYB, during the 1994-95 season. Subsequent coverage secured by the NBA signaled increasing penetration of mainstream British television. The following season, satellite coverage was complemented by terrestrial programming on Channel 4. Crucially such free-to-air exposure was open to a much larger audience than the subscription dependent satellite broadcaster. The 1999, 2000 and 2001 season was subsequently aired on ITV and its digital channel ITV2. The appearance of the NBA on ITV, the main commercial rival to the BBC is indicative of increasing penetration of the mainstream. Alongside scheduled game and highlights coverage, NBA players visiting the UK have also appeared on programmes such as BBC 1’s Record Breakers, Channel 4’s The Big Breakfast, Nickelodeon, SKY News and SKY Sportscentre.

An element of the NBA strategy in the UK has been to target the youth market. Alongside television programming, which is noticeably aimed at the younger
audience. They have embarked upon several 'grassroots' initiatives to establish their brand, primarily amongst British youth. These strategies have had three main dimensions. First, the 'Jam Session'; a traveling road-show of NBA related items, trivia and participatory exhibits which visit major outdoors events and travels to major towns and cities in its own right. Second, the 'Mad Skillz tour'; a series of one day coaching and participation sessions which travels to major towns and cities. The first year of this initiative - 1997, featured 15 dates. This was subsequently increased to 30 dates for 1998. Third, a school-based initiative known as 'NBA-2-ball', has been used to target children in schools. A two-person shooting game, the '2-ball' initiative was initially established in 500 schools in 1996, through the distribution of teaching resources and inducements in the form of NBA paraphernalia. Following the initial uptake, the program was subsequently expanded to include 1,200 schools by 1997. In addition to these initiatives, an NBA 'showtime tour' toured shopping centres throughout Britain from April-June 1997, displaying NBA related clothing.

The targeting of British youth has also been apparent in NBA TV programming being oriented specifically toward the adolescent market segment. For example, the NBA programming NBA Raw and NBA 24/7 'magazine' style shows appearing on Channel 4, and NBA '99 aired on ITV represented a marked departure from traditional British sports programming. Spectacular game action interspersed with personality interviews and features, and team histories, presented against a backdrop of rap music, youth oriented terminology and vivid images of urban America are significantly different from the traditional British 'journalistic' style. Programming features including explanation of the rules, nomenclature and conventions of basketball were indicative of an 'educational' function of coverage, in the quest to attract new consumers. Finally, the youth focus of the NBA was reinforced by the timing of programming appearing in weekend daytime slots, normally associated with youth oriented television.

Indicative of the growing penetration achieved was the appearance of NBA related magazines: XXL Basketball, Hoop and Slam Dunk on the shelves of Britain's
newsagents. Further media penetration was evident in the appearance of a weekly basketball column in *The Sun* newspaper. NBA features also occasionally appeared in national dailies such as *The Times* and *The Daily Express*. Features on the league and its players also began to appear in general sports titles such as *Total Sport* and *Inside Sport* magazines, alongside articles within various lifestyle, youth and fashion publications.

The formation, and extension of existing strategic alliances has also accompanied expansion to the British market. The NBA’s ‘global partners’ such as Nike, Coca-Cola and McDonalds, perhaps inevitably, have been involved. Nike, for example, acted as title sponsor to the ‘Mad Skillz’ tour of 1998 - the promotional material featuring the imagery of ‘their athletes’ and the ‘swoosh’ logo. Additionally, Nike advertising, aired extensively on the ITV channel throughout 1999, featured NBA player Gary Payton. Similarly, Coca-Cola, involved their ‘Sprite’ brand in promotions with packaging featuring the NBA logo and players imagery. Burger chain McDonalds also utilised NBA logos, imagery and paraphernalia in a prize draw promotion. Additional to the collusion of these ‘global partners’, UK specific partnerships have been forged. For example, KP Foods utilised NBA logos on packaging of their ‘Hula Hoop’ brand during February 1997, involving over 80 million packs of product, supported by advertising and promotion fronted by well known television comedians Harry Enfield and Paul Whitehouse. NBA player cards were also distributed within ‘Hula Hoop’ multi-packs. Further reinforcement resulted from promotional campaigns, such as that undertaken by Adidas which featured NBA player, Kobe Bryant, in both television and magazine advertisements throughout Britain during 1999. Similarly the breakfast cereal manufacturer, Kellogg’s utilised players imagery on its ‘Frosties’ and ‘Start’ brands, the latter of which included give-away badges featuring NBA team logos. Kellogg’s also acted as title sponsor of the 1999 NBA-2-ball initiative, its logos featuring prominently on promotional material. These mutually beneficial strategic alliances served to reinforce the NBA presence in Britain.
The final element of the integrated strategy adopted by the NBA was the sale and promotion of officially licensed merchandise in British shops. Utilising a technique widely employed in North America, the NBA granted licenses for the production and distribution of goods to a select number of ‘official licensees’. Licenses were granted for goods in six identifiable areas: school supplies, sports equipment, apparel, cards and stickers, novelties, home videos and computer games. In total 23 different licensees were involved, notably some of which extended to a pan-European level, although several were confined to Britain alone. Bearing the logos of both the teams and the league itself, this merchandise became widely available, most notably in ‘high street’ sports stores, reinforcing the NBA presence.

During the late 1990s the TV exposure secured by the NBA, alongside ‘grassroots’ initiatives established the NBA, to some degree, within the British marketplace. The presence of the league was further augmented by the use of the leagues logos and imagery by corporate accomplices in the form of product promotions and television advertising. Additionally the appearance of merchandise in British ‘high-street’ stores has also contributed to the level of visibility attained by the league. The various strands of the coordinated approach adopted by the NBA are illustrated in Figure 4.1 (see overleaf).

Gauging the relative impact and success of these strategies is complex. Small amounts of sports print media coverage, mainly confined to the play-offs, reflect the lack of widespread infiltration of the NBA into mainstream British sporting culture. Furthermore, although NBA television coverage gradually attained greater penetration of the mainstream outlets, it remained at the periphery of sports programming dominated by football, rugby, cricket and horse racing. This ‘corralling’ of the league highlights aspects of the local reaction to the marketing strategies employed. Given this, it is to the dynamics mediating local reception of the NBA that this chapter now turns.
4.5 Local Responses to NBA Expansion

There has been a great deal of 'hyperbole' surrounding the success with which NBA expansion to global markets has met. Desens (1994) for example, suggests that "from Rotterdam to Jakarta, fans crave American hoops" (p.58). Similarly, Harding (1995) speculates that the popularity of the NBA "is spreading like wildfire across . . . the planet", symptomatic of a "global hoop fever" (p.51). This thesis however aims to avoid such speculation and strives for a critical appraisal of these issues. Within the academic literature, Andrews (1997) and Jackson and Andrews (1999) have considered the global impacts of the NBA. Additionally, Andrews et al (1996) have considered the reception of the NBA with particular reference to Michael Jordan.

Considering New Zealand, Poland and Britain, Andrews et al (1996) note the differences in response to the NBA. Central to comprehending the impacts and responses of the NBA, Andrews et al suggest, are the differing cultural and historical contexts of the local culture, notably the relationship with the United States. For example, receptivity to the NBA within Poland, they argue, is contoured by a historical legacy of receptivity to the ideology associated with the 'American Dream'. In the context of the birth of a post-Communist consumer culture, Andrews et al note, American commodities have been particularly prized. The emergence of popular magazines dedicated to the NBA, alongside widespread media coverage and interest in Poland are viewed as symptomatic of this. In particular, the carefully fashioned 'personas' of the NBA, such as Michael Jordan are identified as especially alluring to Polish youth. Despite prohibitive prices, NBA popularity has been manifest in the consumption of a "basketball style" evident in youth fashion, such that "a baseball cap with an NBA logo, T-shirt, shorts and basketball sneakers - is a norm rather than an exception in the casual wear of young Poles" (Andrews et al, 1996: p.445). In this way the imagery of the NBA is viewed to have contributed "to the development of lifestyles imitative of the "American way of life" (Andrews et al, 1996: p.445).
Similarly, consideration of the NBA in New Zealand is situated within a post-colonial context characterised by global and economic changes, which have forced a redefinition of local identities. The increasing pervasiveness of American iconography within New Zealand is demonstrated by examples of the popularity of Michael Jordan amongst teenagers and university students, such that ‘local’ Rugby Union hero, Jonah Lomu, was ranked well behind Jordan. The presence of American professional sports leagues, Andrews et al note, has led to a reexamination of not only New Zealand’s position within the ‘New-World order’, “but also of reevaluating the impact and consequences of . . American cultural forces and its local culture and national identity” (p. 434). The NBA is viewed as a component of this. The result, Andrews et al argue, is “co-existing nationalist resistance to and embracement of, global, predominantly American, culture and commodities” (p. 435). In both the case-studies of New Zealand and Poland evidence of sources of resistance alongside receptivity, particularly amongst youth are documented.

Resistance in the case of New Zealand is documented in the condemnation of the influx of American commodities, particularly televisual content. One example of this was the ban placed upon a Reebok advertisement featuring NBA player Shawn Kemp, as it was deemed unnecessarily violent. Such actions, particularly when contrasted with adverts of similar content featuring the ‘local’ Jonah Lomu, Andrews et al argue, may be “interpreted as a form of resistance against threatening images of America” (1996: p. 437). Similarly, resistant elements within Poland were evident within sections of the media, with expressions of anxiety toward the flood of American culture. Symbols associated with America, such as the NBA, consequently were associated with “the vulgarization and degradation of native cultural values and the propagation of unrestrained consumption, hedonism and immorality” (Andrews et al, 1996: p.442). Indigenous response can thus be seen as active and heterogeneous, with the potential to force shifts and changes in the NBA and corporate accomplices strategies, as in the New Zealand case.
With respect to questions of cultural homogenisation, in the case of New Zealand Andrews et al note, it could be argued the circulation of American ‘commodity signs’, such as the NBA, has resulted in the “accelerated reexamination and reworking of New Zealand’s cultural practices and identities” (p.440). A subsequent retrenchment of local identities in the face of American influences such as the NBA, Andrews argue has the result of “energizing multiple popular and local cultures” (p.440); rather than having a homogenising effect. Such speculation awaits further investigation. In the case of Poland, the impact on youth culture and fashion, Andrews et al consider illustrative of the manner in which the NBA has been appropriated and rearticulated in local terms. Upon these case studies, they conclude:

when products, images, and services are exported to other societies from some simulated American homeland, to some extent they become indigenized according to the conjunctural specificities of the local culture in which consumption takes place (Andrews et al, 1996: p.453).

This speculation regarding such ‘localisation'/indigenisation processes, however, awaits sustained corroboration.

Further considering the impact of the NBA on New Zealand culture, Jackson and Andrews (1999) illustrate co-existing examples of active solicitation and resistance. Notably, this highlights the complexity of the local-global nexus. Specifically, the reception of cultural symbols such as the NBA, they note, “are often desired because they express a notion of difference, they can also be challenged and resisted because they embody a difference which is deemed threatening and unacceptable” (p.39, emphasis in original). Hence the same factor can simultaneously be a source of resistance and acceptance. Upon these grounds it is evident that central to a comprehension of the impacts of NBA are an understanding of the intricacies of the recipient local culture to which it has expanded.

Several accounts also provide piecemeal evidence of some of the potential impacts and responses to the leagues expansion. In reference to the NBA ‘Europe Tour’ to Paris, in 1994, Emerson’s (1994) popular account illustrates the potential variation in response within local cultures. For example the spokesman for the
French amateur federation, Jean Pierre Dusseaulx derided the “shtick” of the exhibition game in Paris as a “basket show” and complained of the “rude and overbearing” American formats (Emerson, 1994). In contrast to this, was the “approval of Paris teenagers, most of whom “renounce French basketball completely. They say it stinks. French players lack ‘the little things on the side’ that give the NBA style: buzz cuts, baggy shorts, high tops without socks, the street cool” (p.77). This example points to generational differences in local response to the NBA presence, and highlights the capacity for tensions associated with the NBA presence in global markets.

Further evidence of the popularity of NBA players with the foreign youth market was demonstrated by the need for riot police in Athens to control a crowd of 18,000 teenagers who had turned-out to see a Shaquille O’Neill training session (Emerson, 1994). Similarly Guttmann (1994) has noted the ‘lionisation’ of NBA stars by youth in Italy. Such reactions, and the careful positioning of the NBA as the worlds elite professional basketball league, holds the possibility of presenting a challenge to the position of indigenous basketball as evidenced by the French example.

The potentially domineering influence of the NBA has been noted in the Caribbean by Mandle and Mandle (1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1994). Where televsual broadcasting of the game has been a central factor in popularising the league. Such is the interest generated in the NBA, Mandle and Mandle (1990b) noted that “during the (NBA) playoffs West Indian Leagues typically cancel their own games” because, as one league organizer they cite suggested “[n]o one will show up at the courts when we’re competing with the NBA” (p.67). The level of identification with the American league is illustrated, by West Indian teams “naming their own teams after those in the National Basketball Association (NBA), and frequently using the nicknames of black basketball super-stars as their own” (Mandle and Mandle, 1990a, p.70). Of note, Mandle and Mandle (1990a) also suggest is the dominance of black players in the NBA, with whom Caribbean peoples identify with as role models.
It is not only indigenous basketball that is impacted, established sports may be subject to pressures resulting from the intrusive presence of the NBA. Commenting on the Caribbean, Peters (1995) speculates, that the growing pervasiveness of the NBA, has emerged to provide a challenge to the dominance of cricket. He proposes that whilst cricket was in the past the dominant game, "today you are more likely to see young Barbadians bouncing a basketball or kicking a football around. Their idols are Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson rather than Garfield Sobers and Vivian Richards". Accepting the tenuous comparison of role models he makes, the potential marginalisation of indigenous sports resulting from NBA expansion is evident. There is also speculation that this threat to cricket's popularity has evoked a retrenchment. In this context Peters notes 'stirrings of a counter-reaction' focused around the West Indies player Brian Lara to provide a focal point for cricket by which to challenge NBA images.

Australia has also been identified as a country subject to American influences in basketball. The commercialisation of the National Basketball League (NBL) and its emergence as a popular spectator sport, McKay and Miller (1991) suggest, has been facilitated by the strong American presence in the game. Suggestions of underdevelopment of the 'indigenous' game in this context are complicated by the raising of standards of Australian players and the benefits to the national team. Cockerill (1989) for example highlights the potential opportunities for the Australian men's basketball team - 'The Boomers', to capitalise on the rise of the American dominated NBL. Similarly Collins (1994), noting the American inspired escalation in the popularity of basketball, documents the restructuring of 'Basketball Australia' and the subsequent success of Australian national teams along with increased participation opportunities. Despite this, Emerson (1994) documents the fact that in Australia, NBA merchandise outsells the NBL's three to one.

There is also speculation of an impact on, and subsequent retrenchment of more traditional Australian sports. In particular Stickels (1994) proposes, "cricket and the football codes have lost much of their dominance as basketball has captured the
imagination of Australia’s youth and consequently, lucrative sponsorship and marketing deals”. Clearly, attributing such an effect to basketball alone can only be speculative. Illustrating the source of the appeal of basketball to Australian youth, Stickels notes “basketball with its associated culture of music, merchandise and clothing, is more than just a sport” (p.75). The trend away from established sports however, is demonstrated to have evoked a response from those governing the traditional games. Cricket for example, Stickels (1994) says, has responded by adopting strategies to attract the youth market, such as modified games promoted through schools. Similarly Australian rules football’s governing body, the Australian Football League (AFL), having witnessed declining participation rates, have also implemented programmes to attract young people. The impact of NBA expansion upon indigenous sports awaits systematic attention.

4.6 Conceptualising the Local Impacts of the NBA

The evidence reviewed demonstrates the potential for a variety of impacts and responses to NBA expansion. Although largely speculative, several common themes emerge from the local responses viewed. The resonance of the NBA with the youth market, for example, is apparent in several cases. Resistance linked to a wider suspicion of ‘Americanisation’ has also been evident in various locations. Finally, examples of local cultural retrenchment in the face of NBA expansion highlight reactionary responses to NBA expansion. Further examples demonstrate the potential for co-existing resistance, retrenchment and active solicitation. The case of Poland for example, revealed the active solicitation of the NBA, particularly among youth, alongside resistance within the popular media. This potential further illustrates the need for research to be attuned to the diversity within particular localities in accounting for impacts and responses. In several cases generational lines have emerged as potentially important in contouring interpretations and engagement with
the NBA. Investigations need to also attend to ethnic, class, regional and gender dimensions when considering the impact and response.

Maguire (1993a) and Houlihan (1994) have explored the penetration of globalisation processes and the response of recipient cultures, in the context of sport. Notably, Houlihan utilising Hannerz (1990) notions of ‘cultural flows’ raises questions surrounding the relative significance of various core and peripheral cultural elements in local-global interactions. Using this core-periphery model he highlights the complexity of evaluating the impacts of globalisation with case-studies of Australian and Irish sport. His examples reinforce the need to consider both the spread of specific sports forms themselves, alongside the organisational processes and values which underpin them. Regarding the impacts of globalisation, Houlihan highlights, the usefulness of the notions of reach’ - the depth of penetration by the global culture on the local, and ‘response’ - the reaction of the recipient culture, to help conceptualise the varieties of globalisation which may be evident.

Considering the consumption of global media sports, the dominant medium by which ‘locals’ consume the NBA, Maguire (1993a) cautions against the dangers in overstating the knowlegability of individuals in consuming media sport products. In particular, the need to comprehend the factors that structure consumption is apparent. In this context Maguire highlights the need for ethnographic research to explore local audience experience.

4.7 The Impacts of the NBA in Britain

Both Andrews et al (1996) and Andrews (1997) have offered commentaries on the impact of the NBA in Britain. Andrews et al (1996) however, largely confine their analysis to the way in which black sports stars, particularly Michael Jordan, are viewed by Black British male audiences. Situated within the notion of the “sporting Black Atlantic”, Andrews et al, drawing on Gilroy (1993), demonstrate the ‘outer national’ identities of British Blacks resulting from the diasporic orientation of their
cultural identifications. An awareness of the “dispersed yet connected Black populations” (1996: p.448), they suggest, “enables us to understand the popularity of a figure like Michael Jordan in [the] lives of British youth regardless of his American ‘origins’” (p.448). Within the ‘Black British imaginary’, Andrews et al postulate, Michael Jordan “symbolizes and assertive and empowered Black masculinity for many Black British youth” (p.451). The “transnational racial kinship” (p.451) that is seen to facilitate Jordan’s popularity among young Black Britons, it is argued, has a resonance for British youth culture per se resulting from the disproportionate role of Black youth culture in shaping the styles of White British youth.

Absent in Andrews et al’s (1996) analysis is empirical evidence to corroborate these claims, relating to the actual lived reception and cultural interpretation of the NBA, notably the ‘persona’ of Michael Jordan in Britain. This reception is analysed by Andrews et al solely in racial discourse terms. This racial (and ethnic) component of the reception of the NBA is undoubtedly an important element in the light of the insular nationalism and racist paranoia which lingers in 1990s Britain, in the aftermath of an imploded Empire (Robins, 1991). Nevertheless, there are alternative factors which have been important in contouring the impact and reception of the NBA in the UK which stand beyond the speculative analysis provided by Andrews et al.

Further commentary has been offered by Andrews (1997) who, commenting on NBA expansion to the UK, notes the increased visibility during the 1990s, resulting from both the initiatives of the NBA and the collusion of ‘corporate accomplices’. The result, Andrews suggests, has been a groundswell of popular interest in the NBA. Based upon popular media accounts, he argues that the NBA “is especially popular amongst inner-city black youth” (p.93) amongst whom a ‘hoop fever’ has arisen. The reason for this situation, differing markedly from the US, Andrews (1997) suggests, is the differential projection of the NBA in Britain, which “has been promoted as a celebration of American blackness which has in its various manifestations provided a significant touchstone for British youth culture over the past forty years, through solemn adoption, ironic appropriation, or outright rejection”
Notably, Andrews (1997) speculates that the concurrent threads of rap music and the spate of Hollywood basketball-themed movies have contributed to the reception of the NBA among British youth, and the cultural messages associated with it. Several question marks however surround Andrews account.

Substantively, Andrews (1997) can be criticised for the uncritical use of popular sources, a lack of evidence for his assertions and the absence of empirical findings to corroborate his conclusions. Suggestions of a UK 'hoop fever', based upon popular magazine articles for example, are not grounded in any systematic observations, and remain speculative. As Chapter two has observed, at the theoretical level the tension between Baudrillardian 'cultural dupe' explanations and notions of knowledgeable consumers also remains unresolved. Whilst providing many useful and insightful observations, Andrews et al (1996) and Andrews (1997) accounts of NBA impacts and responses in the UK contain several lacunae which await further attention.

4.8 The Political Economy of Global Basketball

As the previous sections of this chapter have noted, one aspect of NBA expansion concerns the consequences for local indigenous sports, not least 'local' basketball itself. In comprehending NBA expansion in this regard, an awareness of the contours of social political and economic power arrangements within global basketball are pertinent. Specifically, an interdependent global structure characterises basketball. Notably, however, this is characterised by a dominant core within North America, centred upon the NBA, and a series of peripheral areas. The Munich based International Basketball Federation (FIBA) governs the game at a global level. Globally FIBA is split into five conferences, Pan-American, Asian, African, Oceanic and Europe, with over two hundred national governing bodies affiliated. The United States acts as the hub of basketball's global political economy. Notably it is the US from which the games rules and often ideologies have diffused around the globe,
typified by the NBA. Indeed, the NBA’s global market expansion has brought them into conflict with both FIBA and a series of national leagues.

Despite speculation of expansion to Europe and Asia (see McCallum, 1988), Rick Welts, President of NBA properties has asserted “we don’t believe that the NBA has in its future a league that’s operating franchises in far-flung continents around the globe (cited in Rosenberg, 1994). Such reassurances are received skeptically, however, in the light of intrusive NBA merchandising operations and television coverage, which is potentially threatening to indigenous leagues, and bodies. Indeed, in 2000, NBA commissioner, David Stern cryptically raised the prospects of an NBA-run feeder league based in Europe itself, outlining:

we might be the first league that decides to have a minor league in one season and move it lock, stock and barrel to a different continent for another ... in some cases there may be entire leagues which seek affiliation, and in some cases there might be some proposals that the NBA operates an entire league. We see nothing but opportunity and the market place is talking” (http://www.britball.com/, 27/7/00)

Highlighting underlying tensions, these proposals provoked negative responses from within the existing infrastructures of European basketball. FIBA chairman, Boris Stankovic, for example, with a hint of sarcasm, defensively noted, “The NBA is a member of FIBA and I can’t imagine that even the NBA would violate the rules. We now have two big basketball organisations in the world. Both have to work together” (http://www.britball.com/, 27/7/00).

After North America, Europe is the strongest basketball theatre, with over fifty European nations playing at international level. Within Europe the traditionally strong basketball nations of Italy, Spain, Greece, Germany and Israel feature international programmes and national competitions with relatively high levels of associated commercial activity. A series of pan-European leagues have also been established. Beneath these a series of lower status leagues operate with varying levels of associated commercial activity, such as Britain, Australia and numerous Asian competitions. Finally, the game features myriad ‘grassroots’ involvement at amateur levels such as that documented by Mandle and Mandle (1994) in the Caribbean

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A distinctive component of global basketball's interdependent global network is a complex network of labour migration, characterised by multi-directional, if imbalanced 'talent pipelines'. In this sense the US functions as a 'core' area of talent production 'exporting' players around the globe, as well as enjoying global recruitment to the NBA. The American collegiate system is involved in producing players who 'feed' the NBA labour market. The scale of 'overproduction', however, sees those not securing NBA contracts seeking employment opportunities in the worldwide network of leagues. Indeed, examples of this migration of Americans into foreign leagues has been documented in the case of Finland (Olin, 1984) and England (Maguire, 1988). Meanwhile the NBA itself enjoys in-migration of the world's best players, with increasing numbers of international players in the league. Consequently, the NBA acts as the apex of the hierarchy of global men's basketball leagues, overwhelmingly recruiting from the American college system, but also taking talent from 'donor' countries. Other national competitions meanwhile are recipient to the 'overflow' of players from that collegiate system as well as suffering 'deskilling' as their own best players gravitate to the NBA.

Internal to Europe the so-called Bosman-ruling in 1996 (see Maguire and Stead, 1998; Moorhouse, 1999), granting the same freedom of movement of labour to athletes enjoyed by other workers, had a dramatic effect on basketball. Notably, the collapse of internal barriers – in the form of foreign nationality quotas - has seen players able to play in any European country as a European national (rather than a 'foreign' player). Hence a British player, competing with Americans for previous limited 'foreign' places on an Italian or Spanish team, for example, is no longer subject to restrictions and hence able to find employment in such leagues more readily. The consequence has been accelerated basketball migration within Europe, with potentially damaging effects on certain national teams and leagues. Specifically, this has been characterised by the movement of the better players to the commercially dominant leagues. Taking the Bosman ruling one stage further, in December 1998, FIBA agreed in principle to the free movement of players worldwide. Despite, in
theory, permitting ten Americans per team, the ruling allows individual national leagues to establish their own quotas. In the case of Britain this was set at five, whilst mainland European leagues generally stuck with two. The outcome of this ‘free market;’ however was to increase the concentration of the best players in the economically dominant leagues.

Countries subject to a deskilling of basketball labour have subsequently experienced difficulties. In the English case, the consequence of the Bosman ruling has been the migration of English players to the higher status leagues of southern Europe. The outcome “has meant a virtual stop in in-season training sessions for the men’s senior squad as players are not released by clubs for anything other than official European Championship matches” (EBBA Competitions Handbook, 1997). Indeed, the national team to play the European Championship game against Israel in February 1999, comprised nine players from continental clubs with only one from the domestic competition (The Independent, 6th, March, 1999: p.25). In smaller European countries, attempts have been made to place all remaining national squad members with one club, to play and train together, although adverse effects on the national domestic competition have been the outcome.

The low status of the British game within the global hierarchy is of significance in understanding the internal dynamics of the indigenous game. Furthermore, the reception of the NBA, however, must necessarily be situated within the context of on-going tension within the British game and the wider ‘sporting landscape’ during the 1990s, characterised by increased commodification. Indeed, the status of ‘indigenous’ basketball requires consideration in comprehending the impacts and reception of the NBA, and raises questions surrounding the relationship between those sports which are expanding as a result of powerful political-economic factors, and existing ‘local’ sports and organisations. The following section establishes the context of British basketball.
4.9 The Context of British Basketball

Despite the ongoing process of commercialisation of basketball, within a rapidly shifting commercial sports hierarchy, the sport remains marginal. This peripheral status is of relevance as perceptions of the sport of basketball per se, go some way to contouring subsequent reception of the NBA. Notably the British game's development throughout the 1990s is contoured by the on-going commercial dynamics of the elite men's game and the conflict this has engendered with the 'welfare' of the wider indigenous game, and the changing dynamics of the British sports market place throughout that decade. In turn, the British game continues to be contoured by its status within the global hierarchy.

Globalisation processes have exerted powerful influences upon the political economy of British sport throughout the 1990s. This upheaval is characterised by the influence of Rupert Murdoch's BSKYB satellite TV network, the emergence of moneyed entrepreneurs and organisations investing in sport and increasing levels of corporate investment. Subsequently, British sport has undergone rapid and marked changes. Notably the resurgence of football has been based upon the embracement of these new commercial forces (see King, 1997) which have consolidated the game as the domineering force in the British sports hierarchy. Similarly, the 1990s saw the formal professionalisation and increasing commercialisation of Rugby Union, concurrent commodification processes in Rugby League (see Falcous, 1998), alongside the continued prominence of golf, cricket, horse racing and athletics. Within this increasingly competitive sports marketplace indigenous basketball, itself subject to ongoing commercialisation has remained peripheral to British sporting culture. This marginal status is of relevance in comprehending the impacts and reception of the NBA in Britain.

The historical context of this present day status is informed by a specific series of contested changes during the last thirty years. Introduced as early as 1892 (EBBA, 1997) basketball was not subject to widespread adoption in Britain. Indeed, despite
the Great Britain winning the 1924 Paris Olympics basketball competition, interest remained minimal. The limited diffusion of basketball was demonstrated by the existence of only 34 clubs in England and Wales by 1936 (Bale, 1982). This date marked the inception of the first governing body, the Amateur Basketball Association (ABA), which became the English Basketball Association (EBBA) in 1974. The post-World War II period saw the proliferation of amateur teams and continued marginal status on the British 'sporting landscape'. Up to the late 1960s, Maguire (1988) notes, "the game remained amateur, tied to voluntary organizations and university teams, and was supported by only a small band of devotees." (p.310). By 1965, the number of clubs had increased to 539 (Bale, 1982). At this stage the game remained participation oriented, with only small pockets of interest around the country.

It was the foundation of the National Basketball League in 1972, which was germinal in the onset of the commercial transformation of British basketball. Maguire (1988, 1994) has documented the processes surrounding this transition. Maguire highlights; the recruitment of American players and coaches, the adoption of American marketing strategies and the shift toward American styles and forms of presentation, affecting a qualitative shift in the orientation of the game. These processes created conflicts between entrepreneurial club owners seeking profit maximisation, and the wishes of the officials of the EBBA for the long-term playing success and development of the British game. During this period, Maguire (1994c) notes, "the game became subject to market pressures" (p.468), characterised by the recruitment of foreign players, who subsequently dominated the 'English' league. These processes resulted in the marginalisation of English players, raising issues of 'development' and 'underdevelopment' (Maguire, 1994), and continue to be a source of conflict.

Increasing levels of sponsorship in the English game in the early 1970s, "proved catalytic in the commercialization of basketball" (Maguire, 1988: p. 310). Small scale localised sponsors of the game were eventually superseded, by larger
national and international companies in the mid-1980s. The influx of money from such sources facilitated the further recruitment of American players in attempts to increase the commercial appeal of the game. Americanisation however, Maguire (1988) notes "was not confined to player imports" (p. 314). Alternatively, the adoption of group marketing strategies by the elite teams, also constituted an element of this process. Characteristic of the shifting priorities of the commercialisation process, Maguire (1988) noted the changing composition of teams in the league, frequent name changes of teams connected to sponsorship, and geographical re-location of teams searching for more lucrative markets.

The early 1980s saw the emergence of British basketball as a TV spectacle, a move that placed further pressure on the need to provide the 'entertainment package'. Initial coverage of basketball, Barnett (1990) notes, started with a half-hour 'fringe' slot on Grandstand, the BBC's flagship sports magazine programme, and culminated in a four year exclusive contract in 1982 with Channel 4. British basketball subsequently came under increasing pressure "not simply to perform in front of the cameras but also to entertain" (Maguire, 1988: p.316). To this purpose, Whannel (1992) notes,

the staging was noticeably aimed at the camera - with individual introductions and microphones to catch the coaches' briefings. This period of live coverage coincided with the highest attendance figures, even to the point of spectators being turned away from a full stadium" (p.112).

Here, Whannel uses the term 'stadium' in the widest possible sense. More accurately, this era saw the game, having moved away from the school and university gym environment of the amateur era, basing itself in local authority owned sports centres.

The effect of heightened gate revenue, alongside increased levels of sponsorship and endorsement deals raised the commercial profile of British basketball. Despite this, Maguire (1988) notes that there was dissatisfaction amongst the elite clubs owners regarding the organisation of the game. After initial promise, Whannel (1992) notes, audiences drifted away resulting in the withdrawal of
sponsors. The consequence was the withdrawal of Channel 4. As Barnett (1990) notes,

> Despite money, ingenuity, effort and a peak-time evening slot, basketball never really captured the British imagination. Whether because audiences were too uncomfortable with a sport involving consistently heavy scoring (and therefore too 'easy'), or for lack of appreciation of the skills involved, the audience drifted away (p. 71).

The result of the abrupt halt to regular TV slots, Barnett suggests, was a fall in both live attendance and sponsorship income.

These processes then, whilst marking the rise of basketball as a commercial spectator sport was also characterised by mixed success in selling the game to a wider audience. Despite making strides into the TV market during the 1980s, basketball, it should be emphasised, remained marginal to the popular British sporting consciousness⁴. With the exception of the specialist basketball press, the game commanded only small scale print media coverage, mainly confined to the broadsheet newspapers. Such coverage largely constituted game reports and results confined to the periphery of the sports pages, reaffirming, and in turn reproducing the games marginal profile. This minority status was further reinforced as the TV contract following the Channel 4 agreement was with the fledgling, British Satellite Broadcasting (BSB) network; a peripheral network in an unproven satellite broadcasting market. Despite initial advances, in commercial terms the game had stalled such that in April 1986 dissatisfied owners of the elite clubs formed a breakaway league under their own control.

Throughout the 1990s the elite breakaway clubs adopted all the characteristics of commercial sport models, as pioneered in North America. Initially administered and promoted as equal shareholders, the clubs, under the umbrella title BLL (Basketball League Limited), the leagues administration was 're-branded' prior to the 1999-00 season as the BBL (Basketball League). The league currently comprises 13 teams operating collectively as a cartel on a 'franchise' basis, such that teams move around in search of the most lucrative markets, a concept largely alien to British sport.
Indeed, the Worthing team moved to Brighton for the 1999-2000 season, whilst the Watford franchise relocated to Milton Keynes for 1998-99. Additionally, team mergers have occurred as owners seek to maximise efficiency. The long established Crystal Palace club, for example, merged with the London Towers prior to the 1998-99 season. Introduced in 1992, an all-star game is played annually to promote the leagues' star players, along the lines of the NBA. Additionally, following the previous home-and-away league format, since the 1999-2000 season the competition has operated under a north and south conference format, culminating in a play-off championship system. Between the 1992-93 and 1998-99, the competition was sponsored by American beer manufacturer Anheuser Busch - operating under the brand title of the 'Budweiser League'. As part of a three year contract, title sponsorship was taken over by the dairy produce manufacturer, Dairylea, operating as the 'Dairylea Dunkers Championship'.

The overwhelming dominance of American players and coaches continues, with teams currently permitted up to five foreign players. As an example of the levels of American dominance within the British game, the 1999 all-star game featured no British players or coaches. Indeed, the high levels of foreign players, initially documented by Maguire during the late 70s and 80s, has continued throughout the 1990s (see Table 4.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
<th>US (%)</th>
<th>Other Foreign (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996/97</td>
<td>52.6 (n=92)</td>
<td>36.6 (n=64)</td>
<td>10.9 (n=19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997/98</td>
<td>47 (n=70)</td>
<td>43 (n=64)</td>
<td>10.1 (n=15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998/99</td>
<td>47.4 (n=72)</td>
<td>42.1 (n=64)</td>
<td>10.5 (n=16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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These figures actually, obscure the scale of the domination of American players, who monopolise playing time, scoring, rebounding and assisting statistics. Americans constitute the 'starting five' of most teams, whilst their UK counterparts continue to
act as ‘benchwarmers’, a process identified by Maguire (1988). Further to this, coaching roles continue to be dominated by ‘imports’. For example, during the 2000/01 season of the thirteen teams in the league, nine were coached by Americans. The presence of American coaches predisposes them toward further recruitment of Americans, with their British counterparts stereotyped as the ‘back-up’ players. This tendency was reflected by American coach Billy Mims, who commenting on his US recruitment noted “Most championships are actually won in the off-season by quality recruiting. In horse racing terms, you can’t win the Grand National riding on a mule, you need a thoroughbred. I’m here in the USA looking for a few thoroughbreds trying to convince them to join me in Leicester for the coming season” (hoopmail, http://www.bbl.org.uk, 12/06/00). The clear message reinforced here, is the secondary role of British players (mules) compared to Americans (thoroughbreds).

A salary cap alongside a foreign player quota, currently allowing each team up to five non-EU players, operates to control labour. The reliance on migrant labour is characterised by the rapid turnover of players from season to season, as players seek the most favourable working conditions and clubs rapidly dispense with players not considered ‘up to scratch’. It is not unusual to see players represent a series of teams during a career in the British game. In numerous cases returning on multiple occasions to represent a team having played for rivals. An extreme example of this ‘player-circus’, Canadian, Chris Webber, represented the Newcastle, Leicester and Birmingham teams all within the 1999-00 season. Similarly, American coaches in the British game often work with a series of teams during a career. Symptomatic of the broader global labour hierarchy noted above, the best of British players themselves migrate to the higher professional leagues in Europe, with the elite appearing in the NBA. Notably, Jon Amaechi and Michael Olowokandi have recently appeared in the NBA.

Consequential to the Bosman-ruling, greater numbers of British players have moved to mainland European leagues since 1996. A further noticeable trend is the movement of American players, having played in Britain for the requisite number of
years, to higher profile leagues in Europe. Having qualified for an EU passport these players are not subject to labour restrictions as US nationals. The example of American Tony Dorsey, one of the British leagues highest profile players moving to the league, who qualified for an EU passport following four years in Britain at the Birmingham and Manchester clubs demonstrates this trend.

The continued aping of American styles of presentation throughout the 1990s saw a shift from local authority owned sports centres toward purpose built, multi-usage arenas. For example the Manchester Giants franchise moved to the 18,000 seat capacity ‘Manchester Evening News’ Arena. Similarly, the Birmingham franchise utilised the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) Arena, whilst the Newcastle franchise operate from the ‘Newcastle Telewest Arena’. The facilities available at such venues were seen as central to the promotion of games as entertainment ‘events’. To this end, the use of four-sided ‘jumbotron’ highlights screens, cheerleaders and a ‘master of ceremonies’ characterized the orchestrated format of presentation. Furthermore, the provision for concession and merchandise sales at such facilities represented greater potential revenues. Approximately half the leagues teams relocated to such multi-purpose arenas, with the remainder still based in sports centres.

Optimistic forecasts of the commercial potential of basketball attracted a number of corporations and individual entrepreneurs seeking to invest in the League. The London Leopards franchise which entered the league in 1994, for example, is partly owned by the entertainment entrepreneur Harvey Goldsmith alongside the president of the Planet Hollywood restaurant chain, Robert Earl. Additionally, the prominent multi-media company Chrysalis, invested to become majority owner of the Sheffield Sharks franchise. Similarly, Marshall, a concert promotion company backed the London Towers franchise. Teams in some cases have been included in the ambitious creation of multi-faceted sports organisations, most notably that associated with Sir John Hall’s plans for Newcastle, which included the Newcastle Eagles basketball franchise. Similar moves in Sheffield (see Kuper, 1997), alongside
speculation of plans in Leeds headed by the Caspian media and sports group have also been evident (see Harverson, 1996).

Alongside corporate and entrepreneurial ownership, the game has sought to align itself with corporate sponsors. The national supermarket chain Sainsbury’s involved its ‘Classic Cola’ brand in title sponsorship of the national cup, followed in turn by telecommunications organisation NTL by the 2000-01 season. The Mitsubishi Pencil Company has sponsored a further season-long competition under the brand title ‘Uniball trophy’. Commencing in the 1997/98 season this ‘Uniball’ sponsorship constituted a five-year agreement worth over £1.2 million. Similarly, Dairylea took on the role of title sponsor of the all-star game. Further corporate investment is evident in the kit-sponsorship of teams by organisations such as Adidas, Lego, Peugeot, Renault, Haribo and Exide Batteries. This influence has extended to teams incorporating brand titles into club names, such as Pertemps Birmingham Bullets, Westfield Sharks Sheffield, Exide London Towers and Renault Leicester Riders.

In terms of television exposure, British basketball was included in the Rupert Murdoch-driven ‘buy-up’ of British sport which commenced in the early 1990s. The BLL\(^5\) signed a three year deal with BSKYB in 1995, for weekly game coverage on a two hour weekend slot on SKY Sports. This deal was extended in 1998, with an extension worth £1m in exclusive rights fees over a further three year duration. League games appear on a SKY Sports live programme every weekend, as well as a ten minute ‘on the bench’ magazine slot. Terrestrial exposure of domestic basketball meanwhile has been limited to BBC Grandstand coverage of the National Cup semi-finals and final. Viewership of between 40,000 and 150,000 (The Independent, 08/09/98) for BSKYB satellite coverage represents a modest audience. Viewing figures of 1,598,000 (Basketball League Limited) for the 1998 National Cup final on the BBC reflects the ease of access of terrestrial coverage to a greater proportion of the population.
The EBBA meanwhile has retained control of the structures below this elite competition, incorporating the semi-professional and amateur level. Outside of the elite commercialised development of the men’s game, there have been persistent concerns regarding the underfunding of junior development programmes and indeed the England National team. For example, prominent England players John Amaechi and Steve Bucknall voiced their concerns at the minimal expenses budget of £15 a day on a trip to Belarus for a European Championship qualifying game, on which the team could not afford to take a qualified doctor (The Independent, 08/03/00, p.11).

The EBBA currently operates on a £300,000 annual grant, alongside assorted sponsorship and membership fees with which it administers amateur competitions and attempts to promote the game. Despite their efforts Jimmy Rogers, established Brixton coach, described England as “a third world country in basketball terms” (http://www.britball.com/features/governing0006.html, 27/02/00).

Clashes with the BBL surrounding British player development and the impacts on the England national team have been recurrent. England coach, Lazlo Nemeth has been outspoken in his criticisms of the marginalisation of indigenous talent, resulting from the dominance of foreign players, and problems of availability for the national team due to commercial strictures. Specifically there have been clashes of interest over clubs releasing players for national team duties. Indeed, the BBL’s failure to rearrange fixtures saw the national team absent of three leading players for an international tournament in Portugal in 1999. Similar difficulties, which saw the national squad depleted, prior to European Championship games in February 1999 saw Nemeth despairing at the difficulties, noting: “I never see my players to prepare for games” (cited in The Independent, 6th March, 1999: p.25). Summarising the situation, Nemeth argued:

Entrepreneurs want quick returns on their money, but it takes time to nurture talent. English basketball has to decide what the goal is: having family entertainment [in the form of the BBL] or top-level [international] competition. (cited in Independent on Sunday, 19th March, 2000: p.18).

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Responding to such criticism, Kevin Routledge, BBL Chairman, claimed that “the domestic product is actually in a healthy state” (cited in The Independent, 10th March, 1999, p.20) pointing to several sell-out crowds for domestic games. What Routledge overlooks are that such sold-out events included the all-star game, featured 24 Americans, with no domestic players earning selection. Similarly, responding to Nemeth’s criticisms, Jay Goldberg, American general manager of the Manchester franchise argued, “I can see that a strong national team will benefit the game, but why should we shoot ourselves in the foot and not put out our strongest teams?” (cited in The Independent, 15th November, 1999, p.11). Goldberg’s comment highlights the commercial priorities of entrepreneurial club administrators, which in several cases have come to supersede the interests of the national team.

Despite the accelerated commodification, and speculation of the impending commercial ‘take-off’ of basketball, the game has continued throughout the 1990s with little evidence of widespread popular interest. In contrast basketball remains confined to small pockets of interest. Despite optimistic forecasts of the sport as “the fastest growing in Britain” basketball has not broken into the mainstream British sporting hierarchy, receiving minimal national daily newspaper attention and limited national terrestrial television exposure.

The optimistic projections for the British game have proven vacuous, with a degree of retrenchment occurring at the turn of the Millennium. The failure to fill large arenas, has resulted in several clubs returning to smaller venues. For example, the Birmingham franchise has returned to the Aston Villa leisure centre following a spell at the NEC. Similarly the Manchester Giants recently announced their mid-season departure from the 17,500 capacity MEN arena in favour of the 3,500 seat Manchester velodrome, whilst the London Leopards returned to the Brentwood leisure centre following a spell at the London Arena. Such moves represent a reversal of the trend away from local authority owned facilities toward the ‘facility led’ direction, much heralded by the commercial elements of the game. In a related move, the BBL, introduced multiple game events at central arena venues for prominent cup
games. This move however, designed to fill large arenas and provide a television spectacle has met with limited success.

The loss of Budweiser as title sponsor of the league, followed by the withdrawal of Dairylea after only one season of a three year title-sponsorship agreement, was a further blow, which saw the league lack a title sponsor throughout the 2000-01 season. Additionally, financial problems have threatened several teams, with the league taking administration of the Birmingham franchise midway through the 98-99 season following the withdrawal of the clubs foreign backer (The Independent, 19/12/98, p.37). Similarly, speculation surrounded the viability of the Derby and Edinburgh franchises prior to the 00-01 season. Notably the prominent Manchester franchise also lost the backing of their American owners, the Cook Group, who sold their stake in the Giants following the 1999-00 season.

Further pressures have emerged in the form of Pan-European leagues which offer potentially lucrative involvement for select British teams, but which may threaten the precarious stability and viability of the British league itself. Indeed, the London Towers franchise opted to compete in the European wide Northern European Basketball League (NEBL) and ULEB Euroleague during the 00-01 season, as well as the domestic competition. In so doing the club put themselves in conflict with BBL authorities (Daily Telegraph, 15/11/99, p.42). Commenting on the significance of this move, Towers managing director, Rick Taylor noted “I think its the biggest thing that’s ever happened in British basketball” (cited in Woods, 2000). The significance of these moves was signaled by the Birmingham franchise announcing similar intent for the 01-02 season. Such moves may be a foretaste of future withdrawal from domestic competition should pan-European alternatives prove more lucrative.

Finally the presence of the NBA in Britain has presented uncertainty for the British game. Welcomed in some quarters, the NBA has been heralded in the hope that it would raise the profile of basketball per se, with knock-on effects for the commercial development of the British league. Alternatively the domineering
presence of the NBA may also be threatening as a market rival, enjoying greater resources, higher status and a more pervasive network of corporate alliances upon which to gain a foothold in the UK market. As the weaker 'brand', in the face of the dominant global competitor, however, the commercial future of the British game appears uncertain. Similarly, the affiliation of the NBA itself with the NEBL and its role in providing 'creative support' for that particular Pan-European initiative raises the specter of involvement in future pan-European developments, with the attendant issues this raises for the autonomy and viability of the British game.

4.10 Summary

In outlining a series of dimensions of the local-global basketball nexus, this chapter has documented the global expansion of the NBA, itself indicative of the drive by TNCs for global markets. The broad reach of the NBA has propelled its brand to a variety of local cultural contexts, raising questions regarding the influence and impacts of the league. The strategies adopted to expand the NBA to consumer markets beyond the United States have included securing media exposure, particularly television; the promotion of identifiable 'personas'; the use of exhibition games and events; and the sale of licensed merchandise. Targeting of the global youth market has been prominent. Several 'corporate accomplices', in conjunction with the NBA, have utilised the imagery of the league, its teams and players to enhance their own global expansion. Hence, TNCs such as Nike, McDonalds, and Coca-Cola have reinforced the visibility and image of the league on a worldwide scale. The specific case of NBA expansion to Britain between 1993 and 2001 was then traced to demonstrate the strategies utilised to target a particular local market (see figure 4.1, p.153).

The local impacts of, and response to NBA expansion, point to a variety of local scenarios. Examples of both active receptivity, most notable among the youth market, and resistance to the NBA were evident. In some cases co-existing, yet
disparate responses are present in specific national contexts, such as those outlined in the case of France (Emerson, 1996), and Poland (Andrews et al, 1996). The limited number of academic accounts (Andrews et al., 1996; Andrews, 1997; Jackson & Andrews, 1999) considering NBA expansion, whilst offering valuable insights, leave questions in relation to global-local interactions unanswered. Theoretical tensions also prevail in existing accounts that conceptualise local consumption of the NBA. Notably work apparently oscillates between conceptions of knowledgeable local consumers who have the capability to reinterpret ‘global’ cultural products, such as that offered by the NBA, and an overly deterministic cultural dupe thesis. Specifically, Andrews (1997) account, in deterministic fashion sees consumers as ‘seduced’ by mediated NBA flows. Alternatively, Jackson and Andrews (1999) note that “rather than causing the dissolution of local identities . . . the NBA may actually play a part in energizing multiple popular and local cultures” (p.40). This theoretical tension in particular requires greater investigation through grounded research.

One source of questions surrounding the local-global sporting nexus concerns the impact of the globalisation of sports competitions, such as the NBA, on existing parallel local sports forms - in this case ‘local’ British basketball. The status of the ‘indigenous’ British game within the global hierarchy of the sport has been documented to highlight the context of the investigation of the interplay between local-global consumption of sport, to be further probed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Itself entwined within globalisation and commercialisation processes, the elite British men’s game represents a media-dependent commodified model of sport. Significantly, despite initial strides toward greater recognition and popularity, basketball has retained a marginal status, and despite optimistic forecasts, remains peripheral to the British sporting culture. This context will provide a basis for further analysis of local-global interplay, most notably in Chapter seven.

In the case of NBA expansion to the UK and British basketball outlined, a range of media synergies, most notably associated with television, were highlighted as important factors in their status, ‘presence’ and development. Given this context, it is
appropriate to address the mediation of basketball in the UK. In so doing I will examine the media representation of both indigenous basketball and the NBA shown on British television within the context of local-global issues.

Notes
1 I use the word ‘pipelines’ here in the context of that outlined by Stead and Maguire (1998) who invoke the term to denote “the structures and processes through which athletes are identified and nurtured.” (p.70).

2 Specifically these accounts concern themselves with the implications for football. No academic commentary has yet concerned itself with the implications for basketball, yet it has had a significant impact upon the labour patterns within the sport

3 Birkenhead YMCA represented Great Britain.

4 The very appearance of the game on Channel 4 is illustrative of the ‘alternative’ perception of basketball. The Broadcasting Act 1990 requires that Channel 4 programming conform to certain ‘alternative’ requirements. Specifically it requires the channel to: appeal to tastes and interests not generally catered for by ITV; encourage innovation and experiment; be distinctive; maintain a high general standard and a wide range. (source: Channel 4 Television Corporation Report and Financial Statements, 1996).

5 The league at this point operated under the title Basketball League Limited (BLL).

6 The Euroleague is a competition formed for the 00-01 season, established by ULEB, an umbrella organisation of Europe’s leading leagues and clubs, which aimed to maximise television income. Driven by the leading Greek, Spanish and Italian clubs, this ‘rebel’ competition represented a breakaway from the continents official governing body FIBA whose Pan-European Suproleague (encompassing twenty clubs in 14 different countries), underpinned for the dominant clubs desire to market their own fixtures to television directly, rather than through the governing body.
CHAPTER FIVE

A COMPARATIVE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF TELEVISED BASKETBALL

Approaching the globalisation of sport, it is necessary to consider the presence and power of the media. As O’Sullivan et al (1994) observe, within contemporary society:

in many ways we are reliant and dependent upon regular contact with the mass media for information, opinion, entertainment, ideas and a range of other resources, which are deeply bound up with our continuing attempts to maintain a coherent sense of ‘who’ and ‘where’ we think we are (1994, p.3).

The nature of cultural experience in modern societies is profoundly affected by the development of mass communications, which have resulted in the levels of media ‘saturation’ which are apparent. It is upon this basis that the study of the media as a ‘key terrain’ (Curran et al, 1982: p.27) in cultural interpretation and meaning has become an important research strand in understanding cultural experiences.

Investigation of the role of the media is particularly relevant in considering the local-global sport nexus. As Chapter Four has illustrated, the potency of the sport-media axis has been heightened in recent times with the incorporation of corporate interests seeking global expansion. In this light, Rowe (1996) notes the “aggressively globalizing and seductively consumerist union of commerce, sport and television” (p.566). In the absence of selling the ‘core’ live sports product - by organisations such as the NBA, the role of media penetration is pivotal in the global diffusion and consumption of sports. Consideration of the role of the media at the local-global sports nexus is thus important in evaluating the impacts of globalisation processes on local and national cultural formations associated with sport.

5.1 The Media Sports Complex and Globalisation

The emergence of a symbiosis between sport and the media has been well documented. Numerous commentaries have highlighted the transformative effect
of media intervention on sport in both economic and cultural terms. (Clarke and Clarke, 1982; Whannel, 1986, 1992; Barnett, 1990; Wenner, 1989, 1998; Rowe, 1996, 1999, Boyle and Haynes, 2000). So entwined have sport and the media become, at various junctures, that conceptualising a distinction has become increasingly problematic. Indeed, the ‘vertical integration’ noted in Chapter two highlights the emergence of a seamless media-sport nexus. Symptomatic of this, Wenner (1998) has coined the term ‘mediasport’ to describe the fusion of sport with the media industries and corporate landscape, functioning at the primary level as media spectacles.

Sport in this guise, as well as spanning geographical barriers, is well placed to transcend ethnic, cultural and linguistic boundaries. As Rowe (1996) notes “the TV sport phenomenon is clearly caught up in massive global processes that are energetically eroding the boundaries of the nation state and of national cultural boundaries” (1996: p.567). It is the nature of this reconfiguration he proposes, which is the concern of this thesis. A series of questions subsequently arise. What formats and styles are adopted when ‘selling’ a global sport in a local context? What representations are made of the global game, and the local context? In what way is the mediated text tailored to appeal to local nuances? Additionally, how do these images compare with the local parallel; are they similar or different, and if so in what ways? Finally, what are the cultural implications of the local transmission of ‘global’ sport.

This chapter explores such questions, by examining televised basketball in the local-global sports process. An empirical investigation of the televisual representations is presented by means of a textual analysis of coverage of British ‘indigenous’ basketball and the NBA shown on British television. The precise method employed in this analysis is detailed in Chapter three. First, I outline some conceptual issues associated with mediasport research, before detailing the conceptual underpinnings to the media analysis employed. Second, I detail the wider cultural context of basketball on British television screens. Third, I introduce the contextual features of the modes of presentation of the coverage analysed. Fourth, I present the empirical findings that centres on four themes,
surrounding which local-global representations were evident. Last, I summarise the chapter and attempt to draw together these differing sections to inform the wider analysis.

5.2 Mediasport Research

Establishing a research agenda for mediaport, Kinkema and Harris (1998) identify three key levels of investigation: production, messages or codes and content, and audience reception. An analysis of all three areas is required to attain a holistic understanding of the sport-media nexus. Notwithstanding this, it is also important to acknowledge the lack of clear demarcation between these areas of analysis, as considerable overlap exists, rendering it somewhat artificial to discuss them separately (Kinkema and Harris, 1998). The necessity for a holistic understanding requires analyses to comprehend the three interdependently linked levels of mediasport which work to produce meaning. Practical and pragmatic considerations, however, do not always render this possible. For the purposes of this study, the issue of media production at the macro-level is relevant with reference to the political and economic context of broadcasting of sports within global markets. The manner in which media-sport texts may operate to reflect and reinforce local-global relations render them a potentially fruitful area of enquiry. Textual analysis holds the potential to highlight the manner in which both the local variety and global ‘brands’ are represented comparatively. The case of audience research also holds the potential to consider the comparative reception of local and global sports broadcasts. The considerable logistical and practical considerations of such research however mitigated against such a comprehensive undertaking within this project. Alternatively, I focus on the textual level. I was able however, to some small degree, gain insights into local consumption of mediasport during the course of the ethnographic project, which provides some evidence toward understanding local audience reactions to globally mediated sports texts and in that way compliment the overview of texts provided in this chapter.
5.3 Critical Media Analysis: Conceptual Considerations

The critical paradigm of media studies, McKay and Rowe note, "attempt(s) to understand the relationship of media and society by working on the broad assumption that media operate in some way to reproduce and legitimate relations of dominance in patriarchal capitalist societies" (1987: p259). Within this framework there are three broad strands of theory which have emerged: structuralism, political economy and cultural studies (see Curran et al, 1982; Lodziak, 1986; McKay and Rowe, 1987). Whilst political economy and cultural studies are explicitly neo-Marxist in underpinnings, structuralism, Curran et al (1982) note "is more indebted to semiotics and Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory" (p.23).

Structuralist accounts of the media have been centrally concerned with the systems and processes of signification and representation. Specifically, they "have been concerned with how discourses produce meanings within texts, including television programmes as text" (Lodziak, 1986: p27). The ideological effects, in this context referring to the meaning(s) produced, are normally analysed semiotically. This entails seeing a distinction, yet fairly direct relationship between ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’ – the association between which represents a sign. This position Lodziak (1986) cautions "tends to leave us with a view of the individual as being ideologically thoroughly duped by television" (p.28). Hence, such approaches have been criticised as overly deterministic.

Critical of structuralist accounts for an over concentration on ideological elements, political economy approaches take as a primary focus the underlying power structure within society and its impact on the mass media. As Curran et al note

The role of the media here is that of legitimisation through the production of false consciousness, in the interests of a class which owns and controls the media. The main concern of this form of media research is, therefore, the increasing monopolization of the culture industry, through concentration and diversification ((1982: p.26).
Thus, the ownership and control of media outlets are a central concern. As Murdock and Golding (1977) expand, “the production of ideology cannot be separated from or adequately understood without grasping the general economic dynamics of media production and the determination they exert” (p.210). In response to criticisms of crude economic reductionism, Lodzic (1986) notes, political economists stress the need to recognise the media’s degree of independence in reproducing ideologies.

The cultural studies approach “is focussed on an examination of media messages”, analysing how “the media become part and parcel of that dialectical process of the ‘production of consent’ - shaping the consensus while reflecting it” (Hall, 1982: p.87). This perspective, McKay and Rowe (1987) note, whilst not underestimating the power and extent of the capitalist structure, acknowledges that it contains oppositional factions and that culture itself is a site of contestation rather then a site of simple appropriation and incorporation by dominant ideologies. Subsequently media messages are viewed as a site of struggle over meanings.

Grounded in the cultural studies approach, Hall’s (1980) encoding-decoding model offers a conceptual template of televisual communication. Significantly, the model marks a departure from linear sender/message/receiver models of mass communication to one which conceives of a process “in terms of a structure produced and sustained through the articulation of linked but distinctive moments - production, circulation, distribution/consumption, reproduction” (Hall, 1980: p128). Within the encoding-decoding model the ‘circulation of meaning’ in televisual discourse is seen as passing through three distinctive, yet linked, moments, each of which “retains its distinctiveness and has its own specific modality, its own forms and conditions of existence” (Hall, 1980: p.128). This model is shown in figure 5.1:
Within the first ‘moment’ the institutional structures of broadcasting are engaged in the production of a programme, which is subsequently inscribed within meaningful discourse. At this moment, a range of ideologies, Storey (1996) notes, are ‘in dominance’. Despite, in one sense, the circuit being conceptualised as beginning here:

The production process is not without its ‘discursive’ aspect . . . though the production structures of television originate the television discourse, they do not constitute a closed system. They draw topics, treatments, agendas, events, personnel, images of the audience, ‘definitions of the situation’ from other sources and other discursive formations within the wider socio-cultural and political structures of which they are a differentiated part. (Hall, 1980: p.129).

Thus the activities of media production professionals can determine how, in the case of a newscast for example, a ‘raw’ historical event is framed - with meanings and messages situated within meaningful discourse.

Once the meanings and messages are in meaningful televisual discourse – this signifies the second moment. At this point, Storey notes, “the formal rules of language and discourse are ‘in dominance’” (1996b: p.11). As Hall elaborates:

Reality . . . is constantly mediated by and through language: and what we can know and say has to be produced in and through discourse. Discursive ‘knowledge’ is the product not of the transparent representation of the ‘real’ in language but of the articulation of language on real relations and
conditions. Thus there is no intelligible discourse without the operation of a code (1980: p.131).

Hence, the message is now open to polysemic readings. That is, there are multiple interpretations open to audiences.

Finally, in the third moment - that of audience decoding, a further range of ideologies are evident. Confronted, not by a raw event but a discursive translation, the audience must decode and make sense of the discourse for it to become meaningful. If an audience then acts upon its decoding, this itself becomes a social practice, a 'raw' social event, available to be encoded in another discourse. Thus through the circulation of discourse, 'production' becomes 'reproduction' to become 'production' again. Meanings and messages then are not simply transmitted, they are always produced "first by the encoder from the 'raw' material of everyday life; second, by the audience in relation to its location in other discourses" (Storey, 1996: p.11).

As Hall points out, the codes of "encoding and decoding may not be perfectly symmetrical" (1980: p.131). That is, the degree of understanding or misunderstanding in the exchange is dependent upon the degree of asymmetry between the codes of 'source' and 'receiver', as well as the structural differences of relation and position between broadcaster and audience. Hall (1980) goes on to suggests three hypothetical positions from which decoding of televisual discourse may operate.

The first position, he terms the dominant-hegemonic position. In this scenario "the viewer takes the connoted meaning from . . . (the) programme full and straight, and decodes the message in terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded. In this position the viewer is operating inside the dominant code" (p.136, emphasis in original). A viewer decoding a programme in this way, is seen to be in harmony with the 'professional codes' of broadcasters, themselves "relatively independent" (p.136) of the dominant code. This code:

serves to reproduce the dominant definitions precisely by bracketing their hegemonic quality and operating instead with displaced professional codings which foreground such apparently neutral-technical questions as visual quality, news and presentational values, 'professionalism' and so on. (1980: p.136).
The dominant code, Storey (1996) notes, “is always articulated through the professional code” (p.13).

The second decoding position that Hall identifies is the negotiated one. In this position the audience are seen to understand the dominant definitions within programmes and what has been professionally signified. These dominant hegemonic definitions, however are subject to “particular or situated logics” (p.137), dependent upon the differential and unequal relations to the discourses and logics of power. Worth quoting at length, Hall notes:

Decoding within the negotiated version contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand signification (abstract), while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules - it operates with exceptions to the rule. It accords the privileged position to the dominant definitions of events while reserving the right to make a more negotiated application to ‘local conditions’ to its own more corporate positions. (1980: p.137).

An example of the negotiated position, Storey (1996) suggests, might be a worker who agrees in general terms with a news report claim that increased wages cause inflation, yet remains committed to his or her right to strike for better pay and conditions.

The third decoding position identified is the ‘oppositional code’. Within this position the viewer recognises the dominant code of the televisual discourse, but “detotalizes the message in the preferred code in order to retotalize the message within some alternative framework of reference” (1980: p.138). For example, a viewer may listen to a debate on the need to limit football players’ wages, but ‘reads’ every mention of ‘the good of the game’ as ‘corporate owners interest’. In this way, the viewer adopts a position of opposition to the dominant code.

These three hypothetical positions, Hall notes, “need to be empirically tested and refined” (1980: p.136). One such project aimed at this was Morley’s (1980) investigation of how interpretations of televisual texts relate to sociocultural background. In his findings, he notes that decodings were dependent on
“social position and particular discourse positions (which) produce specific readings; readings which are structured because the structure of access to different discourses is determined by social position (p.134, emphasis in original).

For the purposes of this chapter, Hall’s (1980) encoding-decoding model provides a useful means of contextualising television representation as implicated in a ‘circulation of meaning’. Specifically, it is concerned with basketball coverage as meaningful discourse – that is the second moment within Hall’s model of televisual communication.

5.4 Contextualising Televised Basketball in Britain

As Chapter Four has outlined, television coverage was integral to the commercialisation of English elite men’s basketball commencing in the mid 1970s. Specifically, television exposure played an important function in attracting investment and sponsorship to the game. Initial coverage took the form of a ‘fringe’ slot on BBC 1’s flagship Saturday afternoon sports programme Grandstand, which featured sporadic and infrequent game coverage. The subsequent appearance of televised basketball on a more regular basis was largely the result of the expanded television airtime available during the 1980s, which resulted from the presence of an additional channel - Channel 4; alongside 24 hour transmissions from existing broadcasters. This increased airtime, “provided an opportunity for increased coverage of minority sports which traditionally had little exposure” (Barnett, 1990: p51). Basketball was one such sport. Initial BBC exposure, alongside on-going commercialisation culminated in a four-year contract with Channel 4, commencing in 1982, which featured live matches throughout the season, aired during peak-time on a Monday evening.

Following initial success, however, small audiences saw Channel 4 reduce its commitment by the 1984/5 season. As Adrian Metcalf, Channel 4 Commissioning Editor for Sport, noted “(w)e cut back on our basketball coverage for the reason that if people weren’t watching it then we should be spending our money on other sports” (cited in Barnett, 1990: p.71). The withdrawal of Channel
left the sport with only sporadic appearances on BBC television. The loss of regular coverage depressed live attendance figures and sponsorship income (Maguire, 1988). Subsequently, the British game, negotiated a contract with the fledgling satellite broadcaster British Satellite Broadcasting (BSB), to ensure more regular exposure. Confined to the embryonic satellite TV market, this agreement in turn, however, reinforced the marginal status of the British game as a television sport.

Following this fleeting success and subsequent failure of basketball to hold a regular terrestrial television timeslot during the 1980s, coverage throughout the 1990s has occurred against a backdrop of a British TV market “transformed more in the early part of the decade, more than any other period in its history” (European TV Sports Databook, 1995, p.135). Specifically, the 1990 Broadcasting Act was the catalyst for much of the upheaval. This transformation held major implications for sports coverage. In the terrestrial private sector, changes were manifest in Independent Television (ITV) franchise awards, including revisions to allow mergers between franchises to form large conglomerates able to compete globally. The restructuring of Channel 4 and the tendering of the licence for a new terrestrial outlet, Channel 5 further increased competition.

Public sector broadcasting also underwent significant change during the 1990s. Notably, government capping of the licence fee forced the BBC to engage more efficient working practices, to compete at a worldwide level (European TV Sports Databook, 1995). Finally, satellite and cable subscription based television, in particular the Rupert Murdoch owned BSkyB network, emerged to compete fiercely for programme rights. The securing of major ‘marquee’ sports events has been a strategy of satellite distributors seeking to break into the British market, notably BSkyB. The relatively cheap cost of broadcasting sport, in comparison to other programming, and its wide popular appeal, make it ideal for subscription based channels seeking to establish themselves in the market. The prominent role of sport in satellite broadcasters strategies saw a BSkyB dominated ‘stampede’ to secure live and exclusive rights to major sporting events during the mid-1990s (The Guardian, 7th April, 1995, p.22). Due to the greater revenue potential of
subscription based networks, satellite distributors were at an advantage. The aggressive strategies adopted by BSkyB served to dissolve the long standing ITV-BBC 'duopoly' on British sporting events by securing the bulk of the lucrative broadcast rights, with the exception of those events 'listed' to ensure terrestrial access to viewers.

Alongside other peripheral television sports, basketball benefited from this revolution in British broadcasting as it became a desirable commodity in the scramble to obtain exclusive sports broadcast rights. Subsequently, the sport was once again able to secure regular TV exposure as part of this satellite-driven 'buy-up' of British sport. A comprehensive three-year deal with BSkyB was signed in 1995, which incorporated a live 2-hour programme on the SKY Sports channel to broadcast a weekly game. The BBC meanwhile retained broadcast rights for the National Cup competition, the finals of which it broadcasts annually on Grandstand.

In contrast to the BBC, BSkyB's basketball coverage was notable for its development of personalities, with the appearance of 'lifestyle' features on players, and the use of prominent players and coaches as commentators. Also included were 'courtside' comments from former Great Britain gymnast Suzanne Dando. Coverage was also notable for its upbeat nature, use of slang, and team monikers such as the Tigers, Riders, Sharks, and Rocks. This format is symptomatic of BSkyB's entertainment-driven style, characterised by fast cutting editing reminiscent of the 'staccato' style of American TV (Blain et al, 1993; Boyle and Haynes, 2000). At the textual level this represented a departure from traditional British terrestrial television, notably the BBC's more systematically punctuated, journalistic style of game coverage.

It is significant to note the exclusivity of this satellite broadcast coverage which is limited to those who had purchased a receiver dish and paid channel subscription fees. Thus whilst rights fees available to the British game were considerably higher than those they could previously demand, viewing figures of between 40,000 and 150,000 (The Independent, 8th September, 1998: p.18) represent modest audiences. By comparison, the infrequent yet widely accessible
terrestrial exposure on the BBC could attract far more viewers. For example, Coverage of the 1998 National Cup Final on Grandstand (18/01/98) was able to attract viewing figures of 1,598,000, a ten-fold increase on even BSkyB’s highest ratings. The agreement with BSkyB was extended in 1998, in a new deal worth £1 million over a further three years for coverage of live games.

Coverage of the NBA in Britain, meanwhile, first appeared on BSkyB’s SKY Sports channel during the 1994/95 season. Anchored with minimal input from a British studio, coverage consisted of a delayed game feed direct from American broadcasters, complete with American commentary. Terrestrial coverage of the NBA commenced during 1995 on Channel 4, with airing of the McDonalds Championship held in London. This was followed up with coverage of the regular season, following the all-star game in February onwards, until the finals in May. The following 1995/96 season saw NBA coverage split between the satellite distributor and terrestrial distribution on Channel 4. The Channel 4 coverage consisted of three programme strands a week, generated entirely in the USA. First, NBA RAW, featuring highlights of selected games of the week, broadcast on Saturday mornings. Second, NBA 24/7, a 30 minute magazine programme with a lifestyle flavour, broadcast around Sunday lunchtimes. Third, NBA XXL, which featured extended highlights of a selected NBA game, broadcast in a Wednesday late-night timeslot.

Channel 4’s programming was commissioned from the independent production company Chrysalis television, who had also been responsible for Channel 4’s NFL programming of the 1980s. This coverage of the NFL had been marked by an innovative and upbeat format previously unseen on British television (see Maguire, 1990). This format was extended to the NBA coverage subsequently provided for the same channel. Programming was fronted by Englishman Mark Webster, with support from Americans Dave Lewis and Robert ‘Scoop’ Jackson of the New York based Slam Magazine, a publication noted for its distinctive ‘streetball’ focus, linking the urban roots and rhythms of basketball with the professional levels of the NBA.
Programming subsequently reflected this ‘slant’ with upbeat presentation styles, spectacular game action, vivid images of urban America, film features, handheld 16mm camera work to lend ‘authenticity’, slang terminology and lifestyle features set to a backdrop of rap and hip-hop music. Additionally, explanations of the rules, strategies and terminology of the game were designed to educate the British audience, assumed to be largely ignorant of basketball. Channel 4 owned the copyright of the 24/7, Raw and XXL programming, giving them sole editorial control of programme content. By the 1997/98 season, alongside regular season coverage, live coverage of the NBA finals was also shown.

For the strike shortened 1999 season, ITV - the mainstream commercial terrestrial channel - acquired NBA broadcast rights. Mach 1, an organisation resulting from a partnership between United Broadcasting, owners of two ITV licenses - Meridian and Anglia, and Chrysalis produced programming for ITV. Broadcast under the programme title NBA ‘99, it aired in a Saturday lunchtime slot, following the association football magazine show ‘On the Ball’. Additional to ITV’s terrestrial coverage, a weekly live game was also aired on ITV2 and S2, the networks fledgling digital subscription channel and its Scottish counterpart. Notably, the copyright that governed this ITV coverage was co-owned with the NBA.

NBA ‘99 was anchored from a British studio and fronted by former Olympian Derek Redmond (a former elite 400m metre runner, who represented Great Britain at Olympic and World Championship level) and model, turned TV presenter, Beverly Turner. The series ran from February until May. The half-hour long magazine format programmes, represented a marked departure from the previous Channel 4 NBA programming, being oriented toward a more ‘mainstream’ audience. This was evidenced by the more openly educational format, aimed at attracting new consumers to the coverage. This was in contrast to the ‘trendy’ streetball themes which had characterised Channel 4s coverage, itself potentially more attractive to existing basketball ‘aficionados’ and a youth market than more general sports fan.
In summary, the short history of NBA coverage in Britain is characterised by a shift from the more peripheral outlets toward the mainstream. Initial BSkyB satellite coverage during the mid 1990s offered only a marginal profile to the NBA. The subsequent coverage on Channel 4 substantially increased the accessibility and prominence of the league, whilst maintaining a 'niche' format oriented toward the youth audience. Finally, exposure on the dominant terrestrial commercial channel, ITV, arguably situated the NBA within the mainstream sports media in Britain for the first time.

Meanwhile, the history of the British game coverage is characterised by a marginal status in the hierarchy of media sports. The 'indigenous' game has subsequently found itself fighting for television exposure. Following the failure to maintain terrestrial interest, and the withdrawal of Channel 4 in the mid 1980s, commercial basketball benefited from the emergence of the satellite era. This was first characterised by the agreement with the BSB network and later the one with BSkyB. The rise of satellite broadcasting saw basketball executives profit from the newly competitive market, along with similarly placed, marginal TV-sports. Of note however is the continued peripheral status of British basketball on the 'sporting landscape' and the implications of the co-presence of the NBA within the British market.

5.5 Local-Global Representations

Prior to representing the observations made of British and NBA coverage within the textual analysis it is necessary to outline the differences in the formats of the British and NBA coverage to which this analysis is applied. An awareness of these parameters is important in considering local-global representations. That is to say, to some extent the capacity for specific framing and representation of issues is governed by the structural limitations of programme format.
4.5.1 Modes of Representation

There were differences in the presentation formats of the British and NBA programming at several levels. ITV’s NBA ‘99 coverage was presented in a half-hour time-slot in a ‘magazine’ format. Hosts Turner and Redmond presented the show in a UK studio, with a white backdrop with minimalist setting arrangements. A basketball hoop and blocked seats featuring an NBA ‘99 logo (that of the ITV programme, rather than the official NBA logo), alongside a large map of the United States were the only props. Studio based dialogue between Turner and Redmond was used to link the various features of the programme and to introduce ‘educational’ features regarding the rules and strategies of basketball, often including practical demonstrations using a ball and the hoop.

The structure of NBA ‘99 consisted of highlights of two featured games with American commentary, which was overlaid with Redmond’s explanatory comments. Additional weekly features were; NBA High Flyers, featuring a ‘star’ player of the league; Destination NBA, focusing upon an American city; NBA Shorts, featuring a weekly ‘round-up’ of news; and, ‘plays of the week’ which closed the show with spectacular game action. The exception to this format occurred when the show went ‘on location’ with Turner and Redmond presenting from the US, during the play-offs. The NBA ‘99 format, along with the informal dress and presentation style, characterised the programme’s departure from the more journalistic and formal style of sports presentation which had traditionally been associated with British terrestrial television, most notably the BBC.

SKY Sports coverage of British basketball differed considerably in that it centred upon a live game, broadcast in full in a two-hour time slot. The framework of the show subsequently differed considerably from the NBA ‘highlights’ format. Each game featured a coach of a Budweiser League team as the studio guest of programme anchor, Kevin Cadle, an American with an extended involvement in the British game. Throughout the season a total of six guest coaches appeared as studio guests. Five of the coaches to feature were American: Nick Nurse (Manchester), Jim Brandon (Edinburgh), Billy Mims (Greater London), Chris Finch (Sheffield), and Bob Donewald Jnr (Derby), with
the remaining one, Andre Alleyne (Milton Keynes), being English-born. Following a studio-based discussion of the forthcoming game between Cadle and his guest, a pre-recorded feature identified the narrative themes of the programme, such as the key players, oppositions or history of games between the two competing teams or coaches. Suzanne Dando, who also acted as a courtside interviewer, narrated this section. For the duration of the game the guest coach would join chief game commentator Daniel Routledge as co-commentator, rejoining Cadle at half time and for post-game discussion. Courtside interviews with the victorious players and coaches were also a feature. Cadle’s game summary concluded broadcasts alongside his closing mantra of “Remember, if it’s style in basketball you want . . . it’s the British game”. I will later return to the significance of this within the local-global context.

Differences in the formats of coverage requires sensitivity in attempting comparisons. Nevertheless, in terms of local-global representations it is possible to identify distinctive representation of the British and NBA games. A recurrent theme within the NBA coverage was the celebratory positioning of the league and its setting, North America, as culturally distinct from Britain. Coverage consistently positioned the NBA as the league, conferring ‘worlds best’ status upon it. By comparison, the British Budweiser league coverage was characterised by avoidance of both the local (and national) contexts of the league, and the status of the British game within a global hierarchy. What is clear is that there is a high degree of transference within programming between differing local-global themes. That is to say, particular sequences of programming often featured elements of several themes of interest and relevance. Comparative portrayals of migrant and indigenous players, for example, were often entwined with issues of national identity. For the purposes of presenting the themes to emerge, the initial categories of observation were refined to four, which are outlined below.
5.6 Migrant/Indigenous Players and National Identities

Representations of the national identities and contexts centred around migrant players, who featured in both NBA and British coverage. Differing representations of the locality of the leagues emerged from these portrayals. Within coverage of the British game, reference to the large numbers and domineering influence of American’s in the Budweiser League (as outlined in Chapter 4) was minimalised. This was apparent in the avoidance of overt reference to migrant player nationalities. Alternatively, the national origins of foreign players was transmitted largely incidentally, at the implicit level, with mention of their birthplace or collegiate careers. The examples below highlight this implicit rather than explicit presentation in two game commentary situations:

Cadle: “... these are young guys, you know Conlon - first year out of college, Terrel Myers - second year out of College; I think, you know, mentally Chris has landed a goldmine with these guys”

Alleyne: “... when you look at Travis Conlon, the history of where he played at, Michigan, which is one of the top schools in America as far as college basketball is concerned ...”

Mims: “I’m very excited about seeing this guy tonight, I understand that John Gaines is one of the league’s finest offensive players, he’s supposed to be a very good shooter, from Cal-State Bakersfield, a couple of years ago NCAA Division champions.”

In these examples, reference to the American players in question included mention of their collegiate background in America. Despite these references, however, the issue of their nationality is avoided, and in each case is not made explicit.

In contrast to the way in which reference to the national origins of these Americans in the British game is diminished, the origins of British players are made explicit. The examples below demonstrate how the origins of indigenous players are presented in an overt manner within game commentary. In each case American coaches in the British game - Nick Nurse, Billy Mims and Jim Brandon, acting as ‘expert summarisers’, alongside American presenter Kevin Cadle, chose to make this explicit. This was also apparent however when English commentator Daniel Routledge referred to the English origins of a player among the examples:

Nurse: “It's good to see Martin Gottfried back on the floor ...”
Routledge: “He certainly was the best young English guard prior to that knee injury...”
Cadle: “For the Derby Storm, Yorrick Williams is averaging 20 points a game, which makes him the leading English scorer in the league”

Routledge: “. . . Bryan Balser lines up that three, Bryan Balser knocks it out “
Mims: “He is one of the finest English shooters, and he’s got a great reputation for shooting the three . . . “

Brandon: “Garnet Gayle’s with the quick hands, something he’s very famous for, one of the best defensive players . . . errr, English defensive players the country’s ever seen”

(emphasis added in all cases)

The final quotation, in which the American commentator modified his commentary to add an ‘English’ context to his evaluation of ‘the best defensive players’ is illustrative of the way in which indigenous players national origins are emphasised. Notably, the achievements of English players are highlighted with the implicit caveat that the (unspoken) American benchmark is higher.

The representation of British players in this way contrasted with commentary regarding the notable playing exploits of American players that avoided reference to their national origins. Two examples illustrate this point. First, in one pre-game analysis, referring to one of the leagues most prominent American players, John White of the Manchester Giants, Cadle commented:

“If I’m bringing the ball down the court for Manchester I’m always going to be looking for John White running off screens . . . he has shown that when he gets hot there is no better long distance shooter in the country”

Second, in reference to American, and league all-star, Billy Singleton, American coach Billy Mims noted:

“. . . he has a big body, he’s a warrior, he’s a physical player . . . if he gets the ball down in the paint I’m telling you, he’s one of the toughest guys in British basketball history to stop - career wise, I think Billy’s a 20 plus points per game scorer”

In these examples the absence of reference to the national origins of the American players is notable on two counts. First, it is apparent in contrast to similar references to English players, noted above, in which nationality is made explicit. Second, both comments were contextualised by reference to the players status within ‘the country’ and ‘British basketball’ respectively, which seemingly ‘invites’ reference to the national origins of players.

The fact that the achievements of British players, and their nationality should be notable is indicative of the secondary roles that they have come to occupy within the game (see Chapter 4). The marginalisation of indigenous
players was captured in one post-game studio discussion between Cadle and Mims:

Cadle: “John McCord?” (how was his game)
Mims: “McCord had a great game tonight, he scored 29 points tonight . . . but everyone likes to talk about the Americans in this league, tonight, I think tonight, Thames Valley won the game with two excellent contributions from English players . . . we’ve got Stewart Clark, who’s one of the foreign players, a new young kid, but a non-permitted player . . . and Bryan Balser, one of the best young English shooters in the country, 19 points from Bryan Balser, those two guys every bit as important as John McCord”
Cadle: “I think for Thames Valley, that comes big . . . you look at Thames Valleys’ big wins . . . that’s something you want from your English players”

This exert encapsulates a number of relevant points, and highlights the complexity of the discourse surrounding migrant players in the British game. First, Mims in noting the importance of having ‘excellent contributions’ from English players identifies one player (Clarke) who is a foreign, yet ‘non-permitted’ player (therefore not counting on the quota). Consequently, whether a player qualifies as ‘non-foreign’ on the quota is used as the criteria for ‘English’, rather than nationality. Second, he reinforces the supporting role of indigenous players contributions by noting the importance of an English players contribution of 19 points (Balser) in comparison to the American (McCord) who scored 29 points. Third, Cadle implicitly reinforces the secondary roles occupied by English players, avoiding reference to American players in his summation, despite them being the obvious reference point to indigenous player achievements. Hence the domination of Americans is obscured, only being apparent at the implicit level. In this manner, coverage implicitly reinforces the labour hierarchy within the British game. Furthermore, it masks the level of American domination whilst simultaneously making explicit (therefore emphasising) English involvement, presenting a distorted picture of the labour hierarchy within the game.

Representations of migrant and indigenous players were less frequent within NBA coverage. The principal source of reference to the national origins of players surrounded features on the sole ‘British’ player in the league during the 1999 season - Michael Olowakandi of the Los Angeles Clippers. Following a feature on the recently retired Michael Jordan, Olowakandi’s presence in the NBA was introduced in the following way during the first episode of the series,
Turner: “so the search for the next Michael Jordan is on”
Redmond: “funny you should say that name Michael, because there is a Michael in this years NBA - and this one’s from Hendon, yes, I said Hendon, North London -Michael Olowokandi moved from his school to a college in California where he learnt his basketball skills, and earlier this year, unbelievably, he became the top pick of newcomers to this years NBA”
Turner: “The ‘Kandi man’ made his debut with the Los Angeles Clippers last weekend with a respectable twelve points, watch out for more Michael on the show” [dialogue interspersed with game action shots]

Thus, the presence of a British player in the NBA is framed as notable in itself, whilst his promising playing potential, signalled by his first choice draft pick, is presented to the viewer as surprising, novel and ‘unbelievable’. This representation reinforces the NBA as being ordinarily beyond the bounds of British sporting experience. Olowakandi was subsequently a regular feature within the ‘NBA Shorts’ feature. In this way, he was the only player to receive such treatment upon the basis of his ‘connection’ to British viewers (although he is largely unknown in the UK)7.

The attention paid to Olowakandi culminated in an interview with Redmond during one of the on-location shows. Set within luxurious surroundings, the interview reinforced the NBA and American culture as distinctive from Britain. The interview, which was interspersed with clips of Olowakandi in game action, and pictures from the draft selection, proceeded as follows:

Redmond: “We caught up with the Kandi man to see how he’s living life large here in LA, why don’t we check this out?”
Redmond: “First of all Michael . . . as a present we bought you some tea from England, because you’ve got to be missing that sort of thing?”
Olowakandi: “Tea from Harrods - there’s my favourite right there . . . I was actually born in Nigeria, moved over to England when I was about three and lived there ever since . . . [draft pick sequence] . . . The money’s definitely made life a whole lot more comfortable”
Redmond: “Can I be rude and ask the sort of figures that it involves?”
Olowakandi: “Well, a lot of zeros”
Redmond: “a lot of zeros?”
Olowakandi: “A Whole lot of zeros, more zeros than I’ve ever seen in my life” [game sequences/discussion of Clippers]
Redmond: “What do you miss about home?”
Olowakandi: “I miss all my friends, all those early memories, life is good here, I’m doing something I enjoy doing, I’m doing something I love doing, I miss the simplicity, the simple lifestyle, the less in your face attitude, I miss that a lot and I try to go home every summer”
Redmond: “well thanks for . . . talking to us”

Within this interview several themes are apparent, highlighting the representation of cultural differences, decadence, money and national stereotypes. For example,
the somewhat sardonic presentation of some Harrods tea reinforces perceived cultural difference between Britain (conflated as England in this case) and America, on the basis of a crude, caricatured national stereotype. Additionally, the discussion of money links a particular decadent image with the NBA/American culture, a theme reinforced by the luxurious surroundings of the interview. Finally, cultural differences are emphasised in the final section of the interview in which Olowokandi contrasts the ‘simplicity and simple lifestyles’ of ‘home’ with the ‘in your face attitude’ of America. This comparison directly points to differences in the ‘ways of life’ associated with Britain and America. Notably these issues are not engaged by Redmond who concludes the interview abruptly. This example is in fact indicative of the celebratory, non-critical presentation of the league adopted in series coverage. The presentation of Olowokandi as a ‘remarkable’ migrant player also reinforces the distinctiveness of the NBA from British culture. Additionally, British populist discourses of American decadence and opulence are ‘in dominance’.

5.7 Localities

Differences between the representation of the local geographical and cultural contexts of the NBA and British basketball were also apparent. A variety of features of NBA coverage emphasised the ‘local’ context of the league making explicit linkages between ‘Americaness’ and the league. Alternatively, coverage of the British game rarely made explicit connections between basketball and the local cultural context. The foremost manner within which this was presented was the Destination NBA feature, which depicted a series of images associated with American cities. Notably, these sequences were presented in a celebratory, fast-cutting style with upbeat music. The discourse within the features were centred upon ‘insights’ into urban America and the explicit location of the NBA within that cultural context.

An example of the explicit link between NBA games, locality and local culture was evident during the feature focussing on Minneapolis and the
Minnesota Timberwolves. Backed by music, the sequence opened with the graphic MINNEAPOLIS, MN. This was followed by a montage of shots of busy freeways entering the city, downtown skyline shots, urban vistas, snow and ice, the Mall of America, the Target Center, in-stadium shots of a carnavalesque crowd, and cheerleaders. The narrative of Turner anchored these opening visual images as follows:

Welcome to the mid-west - Minnesota, the land of 10,000 lakes, the weather here is cold, very cold, so if you want to keep warm, do as the locals do - go shopping. Minnesota has the nation's biggest shopping Mall, the Mall of America, and you can shop yourself sick in its five hundred stores. Life here is tranquil and calm in that wholesome middle-America kind of way. One thing that does make the locals flip their lids a bit is the Minnesota Timberwolves. Nicknamed the T-Wolves, because Timber-Wolves are found in Minnesota, these young pups just ooze talent and may one day be the future of the NBA...

The sequence continued to outline a brief history of the franchise, its key players and triumphs, before featuring interview clips with the team's current 'stars' (Kevin Garnett and Stephon Marbury), interspersed with spectacular game action and slam-dunks. In this manner the feature presents a select series of images of Minnesota (and America more broadly) to the audience. In this particular case, representations associated with a consumer culture, certain values and ways of life, and the importance of basketball in evoking emotions for local people, are presented to inform a certain 'reading' of America and the NBA. Specifically, the NBA is presented as an important component of American culture and of relevance to local lives in Minnesota.

Throughout the series, several cities were covered in this way, making explicit links between the location of featured games, the characteristics of American culture, and the NBA. Subsequently, images of the locality associated with NBA teams and local people were presented to the viewer in an overt manner. Figure 5.1 outlines the cities featured throughout the NBA '99 series, alongside the image and caricatures of the local culture conferred upon them.
Figure 5.2. Destination NBA - Local Images Presented

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Images and stereotypes</th>
<th>Local cultural representations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>10,000 Lakes, butter, pop-stars formerly know as Prince, cold weather, shopping - Mall of America</td>
<td>Conspicuous consumption, tranquillity, 'wholesome' values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>Cheese, Birthplace of American Revolution, home of American independence, Will Smith</td>
<td>City of 'Brotherly Love'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>The Windy City, Al Capone, Sears Tower, 'massive corporate business'</td>
<td>celebrity interest, coolness, big hearted fans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, NY</td>
<td>'kickin' and in yer face', Urban Jungle, mecca of street style, city that never sleeps,</td>
<td>vibrancy, loyalty and pride, celebrity interest, diehard celebrity fans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>Oil rich, US Space Programme 'nerve centre'</td>
<td>decadence, wealth, high technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando, FL</td>
<td>Sunshine State, 'holiday hotspot', amusement parks, fun</td>
<td>amenable climate, highly desirable destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
<td>Boston tea-party, Harvard University, Cheers, strange accents</td>
<td>faithful fans, proud heritage, historic roots, loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
<td>Hip, Happening, rain by the bucketload, grunge: Nirvana and Pearl Jam</td>
<td>trendsetting, fans love of basketball, demand for tickets, eager consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antonio, TX</td>
<td>Bucking Broncos and Stetson hats. hot and dry, laid back</td>
<td>local excitement about basketball, fervent support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cultural terrain of the NBA is thus presented to the British audience through constructed images and stereotypes. Hence, San Antonio is linked to 'bucking broncos and stetson hats', Philadelphia with 'brotherly love', Boston with the TV programme Cheers, and Orlando with a desirable climate. Notably the stereotypes of peoples, culture and history call upon a distinctively British populist reading of the United States, through which a British audience are 'invited' to make sense of the NBA. For example, Orlando is presented as a desirable holiday destination for Britons.

The explicit link between local context and culture, and the NBA was also reinforced by the use of a large United States map in studio based sequences. This
functioned as a literal geography lesson to viewers. For example, the link-sequence leading into the Minneapolis feature, discussed above, involved the two presenters in front of the map, with the following dialogue:

Redmond: “Western conference, mid-west division, home to NBA finalists of the last two years - the Utah Jazz”

Turner: “As difficult to beat as Arsenal, many people fancy Utah to win it all this year, but first they’ll have to fight off some tough local competition in the mid-west division”

Redmond: “Look out for . . . the manic and unpredictable Minnesota Timberwolves”

Turner: “But where is Minnesota? well, stick a pin in the middle of the US, travel north, and you won’t be too far away”

Within the sequence, Turner gestures with a large pin featuring the Minnesota Timber-Wolves logo, and moving it across the map sticks it in at the location of Minneapolis. This example, highlights several points relating to the representation of local cultural context within the programming. First, the presence of the map reinforces the geographical context of the NBA to the viewer, as distinct from Britain. Second, there is an implicit assumption that the viewer is unaware of the location of US cities, illustrated by the ‘education’ of the audience. Third, the reference to Arsenal, an English Premier League football team, illustrates the manner in which local (English) cultural reference points are used to situate the acknowledged differences with the NBA. The presence of the map throughout the series provided a powerful reinforcement of the national context of the NBA, emphasising its location in comparison to that of the viewer. Thus it is presented as foreign, different, and culturally distinct from the context of the viewer.

In contrast to NBA ’99, coverage of British basketball rarely functioned to link teams and players to the local or national context within which they play. Largely, coverage situated within the arena of the featured game did not venture outside of that environment serving to obfuscate the link. That is to say, the local cultural context of British basketball was not explicitly stated or ‘encoded’ within game coverage.

On the rare occasions that links between the locality and teams were made explicit, the avoidance of reference to players national origins and team affiliations to local communities served to obscure the link between host locality and team. For example, the pre-game feature prior to the London Towers v Edinburgh Rocks game emphasised this point. Dubbed by Kevin Cadle as “the
battle of the United Kingdom’s capital cities - Edinburgh and London", the game was previewed in a sequence which drew upon national and regional symbols as an attempt to ‘situate’ the Edinburgh team in particular.

The feature opened with the graphic ‘Tartan Extra’, backed by bagpipe music; Dando’s commentary questioned: “Have the Scots got what it takes to be real contenders?” The visual then transformed to a St Andrews Cross flag fluttering evocatively in the breeze, followed by shots of four of the teams players against the backdrop of Edinburgh’s distinctive castle. The two white players are dressed in kilt, sporran and shirts, whilst the two black players are dressed in loose fitting tartan trousers and shirts. One of them is wearing a traditional tam-o-shanter hat with feather and brooch, and brandishing a sword. Dando’s commentary of “The Scottish flag is flying at half-mast . . .” and a series of interview vignettes with both Black players follow this, in which their American accents are apparent. Dando continues, “Off the court Scottish international Ian McLean is introducing the team to the Scottish way of life”, and interspersed with further interview clips “the boys are soaking in the culture of the Highlands”. This is followed by shots of players in their ‘traditional’ dress inside a tartan-weaving workshop. In reference to a recently acquired player, Dando continues “tonight the (Edinburgh) Rocks have the additional size of Scottish descendant Brendan Graves - which they hope will make the team rock solid”. Throughout the feature the strains of bagpipe music are heard.

Within this sequence several national and regional cultural symbols are used to evoke images associated with the team and what, and whom, it represents. This ostensible link between team and local culture, however, is complicated at several levels by the implicit acknowledgement of the diverse national origins of players as being outsiders to the local culture. This is evident in the obvious incongruence between the sport of basketball, American personnel and historically caricatured Scottish culture. This is reinforced (although left unstated) by the suggestion that it is necessary for an ‘indigenous’ player (McLean) to introduce the players to the ‘Scottish way of life” as well as the need for the players to ‘soak up the culture of the Highlands’. Additionally, the interview vignettes betray
differences between the players featured, evidenced by the local players Scottish accent standing out markedly against the two American accents. Also of note is the tenuous link between Edinburgh's new player (Graves), described as a 'Scottish descendant', who is in fact Canadian-born and spent his American Collegiate career at University of California-Berkley (BBL Media guide 1999/2000). Furthermore, in contrast to NBA coverage, no explicit link is made between the role of basketball and the local culture. This absence further renders ambiguous the link between team, location and local culture.

This example of one of the rare links made between local culture, and British basketball, is notable for the lack of reference to the importance of the team/basketball to that culture, despite the flagrant use of a number of national and local caricatures and images to link the two. Indeed, the lack of 'fit' between these local stereotypes and the team, serves to highlight that the game is largely alien to the local culture. This example demonstrates the manner in which, even when explicit connections are made between teams and locality, they can become complicated and apparently incongruent as a result of the playing personnel of teams evident 'Americanness' and the absence of local 'connections' to basketball. Largely, the link between locality/local context and teams, within British basketball was downplayed in coverage, diminishing potential audience readings that would link place and team.

5.8 Americanisation/NBA-isation: Sustaining Hierarchy

Despite the differing national contexts of NBA and British basketball coverage, the process by which American cultural elements are transmitted, such that the US becomes a fundamental cultural reference point, were apparent in coverage of both leagues. Significantly, Americanisation was manifest in differing ways. Clearly, coverage of the NBA in Britain is itself indicative of the relay of an American cultural form to British audiences. However, there are several themes within this portrayal which point to a preferred reading of the
league, pointing to certain hierarchical representations of local-global basketball identity politics.

The celebratory positioning of American culture that characterised NBA '99 was manifest in several ways. The Destination NBA feature, for example, constituted overt presentation of the geographical and cultural backdrop to the league. Further aspects of programming promoted the league as the 'world's best' in comparison to British sports. The opening sequence of the series was instructive in this context. It instantly positioned the league as the 'world's best', a theme repeated throughout the series. Commentary proceeded as follows:

Turner: “Welcome to the NBA on ITV”
Redmond: “Right through until the NBA finals in June, you can follow all the excitement, the passion, the skill and the glamour of the best basketball league in the world, here on NBA 99”
Turner: “And, if you’re new to basketball, don’t worry, it’s easy to understand and it’s brilliant to watch”
Redmond: “In fact, I’m so into this sport I would have swapped all experiences like this, [sequence - World Athletics Championships, Men’s 4x 400m relay, 1991] and all my medals, just to play one week in the NBA”

Also notable from this sequence, alongside the positioning of the NBA as the pinnacle of a global sporting hierarchy, is the diminution of local alternatives by comparison. In this particular case, the achievements of presenter, Redmond, (reinforced by a clip of him in competition during the 1991 World Athletics Championships), are subsumed in his assertion that he would have ‘swapped’ representing his country at the pinnacle of his own sport, in favour of ‘just one week’ in the NBA. Examples of the subordination of local sports, and the consequent elevation of the NBA to ‘world’s best’ status were apparent throughout the series. In the introduction to one show, Redmond and Turner opened:

Turner: “What a wicked weekend for sports fans, there’s the speed of formula one from Australia”
Redmond: “Or the power of international rugby in the Five-nations”
Turner: “Or there’s the glamour of the quarter finals of the FA Cup - how big is that?”
Redmond: “but there’s one sport that has got it all - speed, power and glamour”
Turner: “it’s the NBA, here on ITV”

Alongside the synergetic promotion of ITV’s sports programming for that particular weekend, the NBA here is presented as the only variety to ‘have it all’, in comparison to Formula 1 motor racing, international rugby union and English association football. The ‘American outsider’ in this case, is presented as the
superior variety compared to potential competitors within a global sports market place.

The importance of conferring worldclass status on the NBA was perhaps central to the attempts at ‘selling’ the league to what was perceived as a British audience lacking knowledge of both the NBA and basketball more broadly. One feature of programmes designed to overcome this was the use of ‘educational’ elements within the coverage. These ‘lessons’ took several forms. Several sequences, for example, functioned to educate British viewers in the rules, positions and strategies of basketball. Two illustrative examples are given below:

Turner: “In basketball there are traditional positions that players adopt, just like in football, there are two that are easy to spot, the point guard and the centre - the smallest and the tallest in the team” . . .
Redmond: “This is Utah’s point guard John Stockton [cuts to sequence], he is the creator of the team, like a mid-field general in football - Beckham or Redknapp - the point-guard brings the ball up court . . .”

Turner: “There’s five men in each team on the court at any time”
The game is divided into four, twelve minute quarters
Turner: “There’s three ways to score - three points for a long shot from outside the 22 foot mark”
Redmond: “two points for any shot inside”
Turner: “and there’s one point for every free-throw scored after a foul is awarded”
Redmond ”and another thing, it’s a non-contact sport”

Hence, in these sequences, positional specialisations within the game are introduced, and some basic parameters of the sport (the number of players on each team, points scoring) are outlined. Also apparent is the provision and use of ‘local’ reference points, as noted above, which act as a ‘familiar’ template for British viewers through which to interpret the NBA. In this case, the role of Utah Jazz point-guard John Stockton is compared with that of English footballers David Beckham and Jamie Redknapp. Throughout the NBA ‘99 series these comparisons were provided exclusively through reference to English Premiership football teams and players. Further examples of the way these were incorporated into programming are given below:

Redmond: “Our next game features a team, surprise, surprise, who has the best record in the NBA - The Portland Trailblazers are on a roll, but will it last, or will they do an Aston Villa?”

Redmond: “Each team has two forwards, you can easily spot them because they will either weave their way through the crowd or drive to the basket”
Turner: “But, what’s the difference, well, there’s a small forward and a power forward - small forwards are like Michael Owen, power forwards are like Dion Dublin”

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Redmond: “From the Western conference, the Utah Jazz are a smart veteran team, who play a very methodical and simple brand of basketball, they shoot well they pass well, and they play very tough defence - think Arsenal, but they haven’t won a title yet” “The Los Angeles Lakers have huge potential, their style is pure flash and total excitement, at any moment they can have you leaping out of your seat - these Hollywood heroes are the Chelsea of basketball”

Turner: “Its a hard knock life for the New York Knicks, they’re an aggressive group of players who are desperate to win a title, defense is the name of the Knicks game - the Wimbledon of the basketball world are led by the ultimate NBA warrior Patrick Ewing”

The use of indigenous reference points was recurrently used to highlight players roles within teams, team status, and playing styles. These examples, in turn, reinforce the cultural difference of the NBA in comparison to indigenous ‘varieties’/alternatives.

The provision of local frames of reference informs British audiences readings of the NBA, which is a spatial and cultural context (apparently) outside their experience. Hence, guidance and education is seen as necessary in making sense of the NBA in a series of ‘preferred’ of dominant ways to capture the ‘alien’ audience. One example of the perceived lack of accessibility of the NBA to British viewers was evident in the programmes strategy used to compliment games commentary which came direct from the American ‘feed’ of games. Throughout game coverage, American commentary was complimented by Redmond’s explanatory comments to ‘interpret’ American terminology for the British audience. An example, taken from a heavily cut Sacramento Kings v Los Angeles Lakers game, illustrates how Redmond’s interspersed comments worked to explain the game, which with recourse to the American commentary alone would have been largely impenetrable to British audiences:

**Redmond:** “Early on the power of Shaquille gave LA the lead, but Sacramento quickly hit back”

US Commentator: “Jason Williams, pulls up at the left elbow - he fires - heeeeee hits the bucket, and the Kings take the lead”

US Commentator 2: “Webber having himself a very good start to this basketball game, and there’s two more - double figures for C. Webber

US Commentator: “Webber, outside the paint, isolated for the Kings, hurls the pass to the corner - three point attempt - GOOD, for Peja Stojakovic”

US Commentator: “Kings break out now - they’ve got a five on two transition, cross-court feed - Jason to Stojakovic - he rocks, he fires for three - He’s got the triple”

US Commentator: “To Jason Williams - rainbow for three - it draws rain, and the Arco crowd explodes to its feet”

**Redmond:** “In the second quarter Jason Williams continued to show off his versatile game, by first making the long range pass that led to an easy basket, and then, keeping with the long range theme, he hit a shot from deep behind the three-point line”
Several strategies were used within NBA '99 to render the NBA 'readable' to the British audience. Such techniques included the reinterpretation of American commentaries, educational features, and the use of indigenous reference points noted above. These sequences reinforce the cultural distinctiveness of both the NBA and basketball from British culture more broadly. Additionally, the positioning of the league as the 'world's best', at the pinnacle of a global basketball hierarchy, reinforces the legitimacy of the league within a global market.

Coverage of the British game is also replete with American reference points that saturate the 'indigenous' game. Significantly, however, in comparison to the NBA, these occur within the context of the British game itself. At a fundamental level, virtually everyone appearing prominently on the show is American, with the exception of the crowd and referees, who are largely incidental to the focus of coverage. First, an American, Kevin Cadle anchors the show. Second, five of the six guest commentators throughout the season were American. Third, the overwhelming majority of the players to feature are American. The predominance of Americans renders the US as a reference point that is subsequently transmitted and reinforced in several ways. The accents evident throughout coverage, for example, both in studio discussions, coaches' time-out team-talks which cameras focus upon, and player and coach interviews, reinforce the notion of 'Americanness' within British basketball.

As well as accents, the terminology, and appearance of, what in Britain would be considered 'Americanisms' from these individuals reinforce this. Coverage is replete with examples, some of which are listed below:

Nurse "... good de-fense by Yorrick, but Guittar picks up the garbage and puts it in"

Routledge "Casey Arena said it came off Robinson..."

Mims "no I believe you've got to give that to the Bullets - Casey Arena with his hands in the cookie jar there"

Routledge "Another offensive rebound - good play"

Nurse "Clive and Fab both on the glass... and there was Kirk to clean up the garbage"

Routledge "Burks running it back,... Eric Burks coast-to-coast, lays it in"
Nurse "There he is, the little dipsy-do for two, I tell you what, that's the former MVP of the league just getting on the board right before the half ends"

Nurse "Hey this is awesome, got a pretty good first half here . . . I think we're in for a doozy"

In this way a number of phrases and terms such as 'doozy', 'cookie jar', 'garbage', 'coast-to-coast', 'MVP', 'Dee-fence' and 'dipsy-do' permeate the media presentation of British basketball. Subsequently, interpretations of the British game are framed within these American parameters. The use of this basketball specific nomenclature however, is not unique to American commentators, but is in fact symptomatic of an American dominated lexicon that has emerged to surround British basketball. This was evident in the comments of English commentator, Routledge, who uses similar slang terms and words in his game descriptions. These included examples such as, "John White knocks it out again from Downtown" and "Burns going baseline, oooh, didn't get the roll". Hence, American oriented terminology is used and perpetuated by British commentators as well as Americans themselves.

Post-game interviews of players and coaches invariably featured North American players in which further American reference points surfaced, in terms of accents, the use of slang and mention of 'home'. The two examples below, taken from separate interviews, illustrate these themes:

Myers "... They'd better start believing now, because Sheffield's for real"
Dando "are you celebrating halloween now?"
Conlon "oh yeah, I've gotta go out and get some Candy now - trick-or-treat?"

Dando "... was it worth the sore knee?"
McCord "Yeah it was, because now I'm going home to New York tomorrow, so I'll reap the rest, it was worth it"
Dando "what is the trip for?"
McCord "We've just got two weeks off, Paul [the team's coach] gave us a week off for the two big wins . . . "

Specifically, these extracts reinforce the players American origins. In the first, with the use of American slang, and the second with an explicit reference to McCord's 'American home'.

A further source of Americanisation is reference to the NBA within British coverage, which situates it as a superior benchmark upon which to judge the British game. Such references also indirectly reinforce the NBA brand as the
global pinnacle, to which the British game is necessarily subordinate. In this way the lower status of the British game in the global hierarchy is reinforced. For example, player achievements within the British game were on occasion judged upon NBA criteria:

Routledge “...there’s the slam”
Brandon “He’s trying to impersonate Shaquille O’Neill there”
Routledge “Yes, it was very Shaq-like that dunk”
Brandon “Yes, very Shaqesq!!”

Routledge “John White from way out, he had some distance on that shot”
Finch “If you’re gonna break a shooting slump, what a way to break it - NBA range and 1”
Routledge “NBA range, and more on that 3 point shot for John White . . . “

Routledge “... the turnaround, big play from TC, and he’s the first man into double figures”
Brandon “Oh, that was beautiful . . . that was a Jordan-like turn-around fadeaway”

Routledge “Myers for threeee . . .”
Mims (watching replay) “Look how deep, that was an NBA three-point shot by Myers”

These examples illustrate how NBA players Shaquille O’Neill and Michael Jordan provide reference points within which the British game is gauged. Similarly, long-range 3-point shooting is contextualised and subordinated to the NBA ‘benchmark’.

Additional to situating playing standards and achievements against the NBA referent, other aspects of the administration and rulings within games were judged with reference to the NBA. Of the two examples outlined below, the latter is particularly instructive in that it infers that the British game ‘lags’ behind the NBA in terms of the sophistication of its rules:

Finch “You know 0.6 seconds is a long time to catch the ball, cut, dunk and draw the foul - I think the NBA has a rule that if it’s not more than 0.8, then its nothing but a tip that matters”

Nurse “. . . he was awful deep under the basket, and you notice in the NBA they’ve got that little dotted line that you can’t take charges inside that deep, it hasn’t quite made its way to England yet”
Routledge “. . . you can’t take a charge under the basket, that is in this country a rule”

In these ways the fundamental reference point for British basketball of the NBA is reinforced, thus situating it in as subordinate within the global hierarchy. These themes are reinforced by American benchmarks in the form of reference points, and language relayed to British audiences. In turn, coverage reinforces the ‘worlds’ best status of the NBA in reference to both indigenous basketball
(implicitly) and also other sporting alternatives, including Rugby Union and Association football.

5.8 Consumerism and Branding

The extent to which the two forms of programming situated the viewer as a consumer differed considerably. Additionally the manner in which this was achieved was divergent. Specifically, NBA '99 oriented the viewer as a consumer in several ways. In comparison, the coverage of British basketball featured a less direct positioning of viewers as consumers. In general terms, NBA coverage worked to situate the viewer as a consumer; educating viewers, positioning the league as the world's best, and celebrating American culture, thus locating the league as a desirable commodity for British viewers. Specifically, a more direct consumerist ethic was evident at several points. For example, sponsorship of the NBA '99 series by Budweiser linked coverage with the American beer brand. Prior to the opening titles, surrounding the commercial break, and immediately following the closing 'plays of the day'; a sequence featured the Budweiser logo. This 'framing' served to link British coverage of the NBA with a global product line and its consumption.

Further aspects of NBA coverage reinforced brand consumption. For example, The league logo was used throughout the series to introduce the various features of the show. Similarly, team logos and names appeared with regularity, reinforcing those brand images. Opportunities for consumption of the NBA was also reinforced by presenter, Redmond, wearing the league's licensed merchandise whilst presenting the shows, thus augmenting the visibility of brands associated with the league. Furthermore, the way in which celebrity fans were identified within coverage, such as Jack Nicholson, Will Smith, Woody Allen and Spike Lee served to glamourise and legitimate consumption of the league. Similarly, the Destination NBA feature situated British viewers as potential consumers and attendees at NBA games. An example of the way this was evident during the feature on Minneapolis previously highlighted, is illustrated below:
The Target Center is where you can see the Timberwolves, it was built in 1988 and seats over 19,000. $10 will buy you a cheap seat, and if you’re feeling flush the top seats cost $225. There’s always a good buzz at T-Wolves games, the fans lap up the high-energy style of basketball . . .”

Thus commentary explicitly locates viewers as consumers, noting ticket prices and promoting the atmosphere and experience of games.

By comparison, British basketball coverage did not feature a programme sponsor (a salient point in the context of the British league being previously sponsored by Budweiser, who sponsored the NBA ‘99 series, but not coverage of the British game itself). Compared to the NBA, coverage was notably less oriented toward promoting the active consumption of the British basketball ‘brand’. Alternatively, the orientation of coverage of the British game was chiefly technical, with an emphasis upon team performances and game outcome. This is not to say that the use of familiar narrative themes, such as spectacularisation and personalisation (Whannel, 1992) were not apparent. Significantly, these processes, were constructed within a broader framework which worked to situate the viewer as a fan or aficionado of basketball. In this context, the lack of ‘education’ of viewers or technical explanations was apparent. Alongside this, the use of the American influenced terminology and phrases in coverage, highlighted above, functioned to cordon-off coverage to existing fans, who possess the specific knowledge and lexicon to interpret the coverage.

5.10 Summary

In this chapter I have sought to consider the role of televised sport within the local-global sports process. Specifically, televised basketball in Britain was used to investigate the textual representation of the British ‘indigenous’ league, and the American NBA. What is clear is that differences existed in the representation along a range of local-global themes. Notably, the cultural context and geographical setting of the two varieties received differing treatment in a variety of ways. Explicit links were made between the NBA, world’s best status, and its role within caricatured visions of American culture. Alternatively, the local context of the British game was largely left implicit. Those occasions when
it was framed in an explicit manner, the evident American domination (at a series of levels) obscured and complicated these linkages. Such representations reflect and reinforce the global basketball hierarchy of which the NBA represents the apex.

Implicit American domination of British basketball within media representations, alongside the ‘global predominance’ of the NBA reflected in programmes such as NBA ‘99, reinforce its dominant global status. Coverage of the British game, meanwhile, tacitly reinforces the subordinate role of British ‘indigenous’ basketball both within that hierarchy, as well as to the American dominated interpretations which pervade its ‘British’ form. This is evident despite the apparent diminution of the levels of American domination within the ‘indigenous’ game in coverage. Specifically, American reference points and benchmarks in the form of the NBA, slang lexicon and the domination of Americans permeate coverage. Notably, this American domination is largely unspoken.

These observations are not to suggest that the portrayal of local-global themes in televised basketball are without complexity. As noted at the outset, this analysis, drawing upon Hall’s (1980) model concerns itself with the ‘encoded’ text of coverage. Yet this is only one ‘moment’ of the circulation of meaning through televisual communication. Basketball coverage as a ‘meaningful discourse’ is subsequently subject to audience decoding. Whilst I have highlighted the ‘dominant’ connoted meanings, representations can be complex and at times contradictory in nature. An example of the potential for contradictory and multi-layered representations within coverage, noted above, was apparent in the commentary of Kevin Cadle, who concluded each British basketball broadcast with the comment: “Remember, if it’s style in basketball you want . . . it’s the British game”. At one level this phrase appears to endorse British basketball in comparison to alternatives, presumably the NBA. This message is also highly contradictory given the themes within the show implicitly undermine any such message. The fact that it comes from a migrant ‘settler’ basketball coach, in a strong American accent further provides paradox and incongruence with the
ostensibly nationalistic content of the message. Such an example highlights the complexity of local-global sports media representation.

Similarly, the largely celebratory NBA '99 coverage that promoted and lauded the league, featured elements that, as well as highlighting difference reflect an observation of American sport that opens the potential for oppositional 'readings'. For example, following an NBA High-Flyers feature on Alan Iverson of the Philadelphia 76ers, the presenters noted:

Turner: "Philly's defensive performance would even have made George Graham proud, but I think he'd freak at Alan Iverson's wages!"
Redmond: "Alan Iverson is a rebellious player to look out for . . . he's easily spotable by his flashy funky hairstyle and his BA - bad attitude"

These comments, the first of which draws reference to George Graham, a Scottish football coach renowned for his defensive strategies, are notable on two counts. First, reference to the scale of Iverson's wages as outrageous by comparison to their English equivalents is evident. Second, Iverson's 'flashy funky' hairstyle, alongside his 'rebellious' nature and 'bad attitude' leave open the potential for an oppositional reading associated with pretentious and non-conforming (Black) American athletes. This example of the use of comparison between US and British context, as well as highlighting difference, is left open to potentially unfavourable cultural readings which draw upon the broader British populist cultural critique of America. Furthermore, it is worth emphasising, as noted above, that the differing formats of coverage (NBA '99 being a 'magazine' format, the British a live game format) to some extent establish the parameters of production protocols which provide scope for certain formats of styles of presentation. Nevertheless, it seems clear that local-global hierarchies are largely reproduced within the representations observed.

This research can offer limited insight into local-global media representations, restricted as it is to television output. Alternative media outlets compliment televisual output, alongside representation of the league in the appearance of merchandising, advertising and promotional events which 'situate' the NBA within British popular culture. As noted, this analysis must be accompanied by an acknowledgement of the polysemy of potential readings. There is potential for complex and potentially contradictory decoding. In this
respect audience research is necessary to ascertain some of the 'readings' of coverage open to British audiences. Indeed, Morley (1989) has called for such detailed studies of media consumption to analyse the dynamics of globalisation and localisation. Whilst beyond the remit of this thesis it is to be hoped that further work will address this area.

Furthermore, an awareness of the first moment of Hall's (1980) model is also required. Specifically, the relations of production and technical infrastructure of media production, in the context of globalisation require 'charting'. The representation of both the NBA and British basketball on television, is the result of a complex series of interdependencies. Within the broader political economy of media-sport underpinning British NBA coverage, various groups adopted strategies coherent with their own specific needs, not all of which are directly commercial. No one organisation is solely responsible for the presentation of the league to British audiences. Rather, the presentation of the NBA is the result of both the NBA's marketing strategies, reflecting the way they wish to be represented, alongside the activities and role of the broadcaster - ITV. That is to say, its status and role within ITV's commercial strategies also mediate the presentation of the NBA on British television – evident for example in time-slot allocation and promotional levels in terms of 'trailers'. Finally, the production company responsible for the programming, Mach 1, also mediates representation of the league in this case. For this particular organisation consideration of the professional craft and artistic elements of television production, as well as their own commercial restraints shape the output.

Similarly, representation of the British game is a reflection of both the desires of the basketball officials, sponsors, and the specific demands of SKY TV executives. Furthermore, the commercial presentation of British clubs is reflected in the coverage. Additional to this, the formats and time slots adopted by SKY TV reflect the role of British basketball within its overall broadcasting strategy. Finally, the live nature of coverage allows key personnel such as commentators and studio based guests to frame coverage in certain ways which reflect their own interpretations of British basketball through their un-edited comments.
To conclude, it is clear that these findings are suggestive of dominant readings presented to British audience situating the NBA as preeminent to British basketball. The location of the NBA as the premier global basketball brand, allied to the aggressive marketing strategies of the league evidenced by print media penetration, promotional initiatives, and corporate alliances within the British market (as outlined in Chapter Four) raise several questions surrounding local-global identity politics at the local level of basketball. The following chapter aims to address some of these issues by looking at the local culture of British basketball in the context of how it is 'played out' in the lives of local people within wider global structures.

Notes

1 The original Rupert Murdoch controlled, direct to home (DTH) SKY satellite network merged, in 1990, with the direct broadcast satellite (DBS) British Satellite Broadcasting (BSB) competitor. As Williams (1994) points out, this was effectively a 'mergeover' by the more powerful Murdoch network. The subsequent title of the company was British Sky Broadcasting (BSkyB), with sports channels still operating as SKY Sports.

2 Those 'listed' events are designed to ensure terrestrial access for viewers.

3 Part of the British Sky Broadcasting (BSkyB) network, SKY Sports consists of three channels: SKY Sports 1, 2 and 3. Budweiser League broadcasts were rotated through these channels, as are all sports, to ensure subscribers must subscribe to the whole SKY Sports package to ensure they can view their chosen sports.

4 I am aware that identifying 'the' mainstream is in fact a difficult task, resulting from the state of flux within sports broadcasting throughout the 1990s, which has considerably blurred the boundaries of what may be considered the central broadcasting outlets. Notably the rise of BSkyB which has come to dominate sports broadcasting, during the 1990s, largely at the expense of terrestrial broadcasters, has challenged the long-standing ITV-BBC duopoly. Nevertheless, the level of access to SKY dishes in private homes is still dwarfed by access to the terrestrial channels.

5 Clubs are allowed a maximum of five permits for foreign non-national players. Provision of a UK passport, or other such documentary evidence can negate the need for a permit.

6 Olowokandi was born in Lagos, Nigeria, and attended Newlands Manor School in east Sussex, England, and Brunel University in Uxbridge, Middlesex, England before going to the University of the Pacific, CA, from whom he was drafted in 1998, as first pick into the NBA.

7 Despite Olowokandi being born in Nigeria, it is his British background which is focused upon within coverage. The coverage thus utilises this indigenous connection to seek resonance with global markets.

8 The interview takes place in a large room filled with upholstered comfortable chairs, classic looking coffee tables and wall-mounted lamps. It is not clear whether the setting is Olowokandi's home or perhaps a hotel lounge.
9 Harrods of Knightsbridge, London, is a renowned up-market department store.

10 Explicit reference to the geographical locality of teams, in the form of features on local culture and location, was apparent on only two occasions during the season reviewed.

11 Of course, Cardiff and Belfast are excluded from Cadle’s naïve summation

12 Within the NBA, the 3-point shooting line is 30 feet away from the basket, in Britain it is 24 feet.

13 Although George Graham is Scottish he has chiefly been associated with English teams Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur.
CHAPTER SIX
LOCAL CONSUMPTION OF BASKETBALL: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC SKETCH OF LEICESTER RIDERS FANS

The following two chapters present the synthesis of a two year ethnographic project which investigated consumption of British basketball. A case study examining the Leicester Riders fandom was undertaken to shed light on aspects of the local-global sports nexus. The intention was to consider the juncture of global processes and local cultural identities associated with British basketball. This involved considering how affiliations to basketball are ‘played out’ in the lives of Leicester fans, and how consumption of ‘local’ basketball is contoured by the low status of the indigenous game within the global hierarchy of men’s professional basketball alongside the presence of the NBA in Britain.

The case-study is divided into two sections. The current chapter acts to ‘set the scene’ by documenting the social composition and patterns of consumption of basketball fandom in Leicester. Subsequently, it outlines the sociological questions that emerge regarding the debate surrounding the local-global nexus. Chapter 7 in turn addresses these questions. It does so by examining the interplay between local ‘basketball identities’ and global processes which contour the British game. Both chapters incorporate the empirical findings from the multi-method ethnographic approach employed: participant observations, individual interviews, group interview ‘focus groups’, and a self-completion questionnaire (as detailed in Chapter 3).

As Chapter 1 has detailed, the intent of this thesis is to provide a critical appraisal of the local-global sports nexus. A range of global processes contour the ‘indigenous’ British game. Notably, the high levels of foreign players and ‘Americanised’ presentation of the game (Maguire, 1988) raise issues regarding regional and national identities and affiliations. Subsequently, the exploring the local consumption of the British game provides a useful line of enquiry. Several questions are apparent: how does the low status of the British game in a global hierarchy affect
fans affiliations?; what happens to local basketball when the NBA 'moves in' to local markets?; how are local fans attachments impacted upon - are they strengthened/weakened and/or pluralised?; how are local fans attachments to British basketball contoured by the high levels of foreign players, or the staged presentation of games? The substantive investigation of these questions is the intent of this case-study.

This chapter contextualises the local 'conditions' of the Leicester Riders fandom. Initially, I provide an outline of the characteristics of the ethnographic setting - Leicester. Subsequently, I present a narrative entitled 'At the Game'. In recounting the experience of attending a Leicester Riders game, I attempt to capture the various dimensions of the local consumption of British basketball. This narrative aims to contextualise the findings, by evoking the 'lived experiences' of local basketball.

The following sections details the findings of a self-completion questionnaire which was intended to answer the following questions: who attends Riders basketball games?, what is the social composition of the basketball audience? and, what are their patterns of consumption? Finally, I summarise these findings with reference to the broader demographics of Leicester and comment upon the social composition of the Leicester Riders audience. I also make reference to the significance of the sociological phenomena associated with what Crawford (1998) has termed 'arena-based sporting events' such as ice-hockey and basketball and the type of audiences they attract. In outlining the local 'conditions', I establish the context of British basketball as it is contoured by local-global junctures. A series of sociological questions which arise from this data are then highlighted.

6.1 Basketball at the Local-Global Nexus

In the debate concerning the juncture between global processes and local identities, some attention, albeit limited, has been paid to basketball. Chapter 4 documented both the academic attention and 'popular accounts' which demonstrated
the potential for a varied local responses to NBA expansion. These responses demonstrate the propensity for co-existing, yet differing local impacts associated with the presence of the NBA. These include patterns of resonance and adoption among youth markets in a number of cases. Such examples stand in contrast to examples of resistance, which in several instances are linked to a wider suspicion of 'Americanisation' (Mandle and Mandle, 1998, 1994, 1998; Andrews et al, 1996; Andrews, 1997; Jackson and Andrews, 1999). Additionally, speculation of local cultural retrenchment and a redefinition of local identities in the face of NBA expansion has also been noted. In the case of New Zealand for example, Andrews et al (1996), have suggested an “accelerated re-examination and reworking of New Zealand’s cultural practices and identities” (p.440) in the face of the circulation of 'American commodity signs', such as the NBA. These suggestions await further empirical investigation. Within this work, the reliance on popular accounts and media speculation requires a critical analysis. Suggestions of a “hoop fever” as a result of the NBA presence in Britain (Andrews, 1997), for example, remain unsubstantiated and await critical consideration.

Where the present research departs from Andrews et al (1996) and Andrews, (1997) is in grounding the analysis in the substantive lived reception and cultural experience of local consumers of British basketball. In doing so it is significant to note this study focuses upon a specific, ‘basketball nexus’ by considering the juncture of global basketball processes and British fandom. This contrasts with Andrews consideration of the impacts of the NBA on British youth culture per se. Clearly however there are linkages with this work in considering differing strands of the same local-global sports context.

6.2 Leicester: The Research Setting

Leicester is a city with a population of 270,493 (1991 Census). A regional centre, the city acts as a commercial, industrial and transport hub to its immediate
hinterland. Originally based around the hosiery industry up to the mid 19th Century, subsequent diversification saw the industrial base of Leicester centred around the footwear industry and light engineering. Symptomatic of the national recession of the 1970s and early 1980s a shift in employment structure from manufacturing into service industries was evident. Subsequently, the city acts as a regional retail centre. One of Leicester’s distinguishing features is the size of its Asian population. Widespread immigration during the late 1960s and 1970s substantially altered the city’s cultural diversity. Over one quarter (28.5%) of the population are of Asian or West Indian origin (1991 Census).

The sporting landscape of Leicester is dominated by three male sports: football, rugby union and cricket. The city’s football club, founded in 1884 is an established Premier League team which has achieved relative success during the 1990s, and enjoys predominance within the sports pages of the city’s newspaper ‘The Leicester Mercury’. Regularly playing to a ‘full house’ the clubs prominent profile within the city is reinforced by the city centre location of its stadium, a visual reminder of the long-established tradition of ‘football’ in the city. Despite a blurring of the boundaries in recent times (see Malcolm, 2000) the club has largely continued to draw its support from a working-class base within the city. Also enjoying a prominent central location in the city is Leicester’s rugby union team, one of the premier clubs in England, which has enjoyed a high degree of success during the late 1990s. Support for the rugby union team is more traditionally associated with an upper middle class base. The city also hosts the county’s cricket team which plays in the top tier of the national league. Although enjoying success during the late 1990s, the cricket club does not enjoy as high a profile or levels of attendance as its football code counterparts.

The success enjoyed by these three sports at a national level during the late 1990s led the town to be optimistically dubbed by The Mercury as ‘sporting capital of England’. This media driven ‘civic boosterism’, by The Mercury, was bolstered by a perception of the ‘underdog’ status of Leicester in national sporting terms,
traditionally marginalised by larger and more prominent sporting cities. Consequently, following appeals led by The Mercury for donations, a statue was constructed in the city’s central shopping district featuring a male football, rugby and cricket player. This visual reminder is symptomatic of, as well as acting to reinforce, the predominance of these sports in Leicester. It also highlights that those sports not included stand on the periphery.

Despite the Riders enjoying a twenty-seven year history\(^2\), basketball within Leicester stands outside the dominant three sports. Despite this, the Riders do receive exposure within The Mercury’s sports pages which includes match reports, comment and team analysis. Not possessing an arena of their own, the Riders, in the period of this case-study, played in a former leisure centre - Granby Halls, centrally located within the city, in the shadow of the rugby union ground. Following its closure to the public in 1998, the local authority owned site was retained to solve the problem of the lack of a more suitable home for the Riders. Subsequently the decrepit facility has been used solely for Riders games. Despite tentative plans for the team to be relocated to a new multi-purpose arena within the city, as yet unbuilt, the Riders continue to search for a suitable home\(^3\).

Within British basketball the Riders, despite being one of the longest established clubs, have perennially struggled. Founder members of the National Basketball League in 1972 (as the Loughborough All-Stars), the club was at its strongest during the late 1980s and early 1990s consistently qualifying for the championship play-offs, and attracting crowds of up to 3,000 to Granby Halls. Subsequently, the club has declined as a playing force within the British game. As well as the senior men’s team which acts as a focus, the club has representative teams competing nationally at senior women’s and junior men and women’s levels.

During the two years in which I attended, the Riders senior men’s team endured their worst ever performances, finishing near the bottom of league standings during both seasons. Missing out on the play-offs on both occasions, the Riders finished twelfth within a thirteen team league during the first season, and
subsequently, bottom of their six team conference in the second\textsuperscript{4}. The decline of the playing prowess has been matched by falling attendances. During my time at the Riders crowds fluctuated, on rare occasions nearing the 2,500 capacity, but more regularly being around the 1,000 mark\textsuperscript{5}.

The experience of attending a Riders game is documented in the ethnographic narrative which follows. It represents a composite description of observations and experiences over the two season project, which attempt to capture the lived experience of basketball fans in Leicester.

6.3 At the Game: An Ethnographic Narrative

With time before the game begins I enter a self styled sports-pub, directly across the road from the arena. The pub is virtually empty, though the walls are filled with sports paraphernalia and pictures, conferring a sense of sporting history. Many sports are represented - cricket, rugby, tennis, snooker, boxing, croquet and football. Cases exhibit equipment and the walls display pictures of the city’s ‘favourite sons’. A number of these, feature male football or rugby teams gathered around trophies; representing memories of celebrated victories and triumphs. Basketball however is not included in this collective anthology of Leicester sporting history, yet that is what I have come to watch. The entrance to the court is merely 50 yards from the pub, yet there is no indication of any basketball game: no imposing structures, no stream of fans, and no place in the collective memory of Leicester offered by the sports-pub.

Leaving the pub and crossing the busy three-lane carriageway, I see my first indication of a basketball game - Leicester Riders v Birmingham Bullets - a small sign by the entrance announces. The building is tatty and unkempt with faded and peeling paintwork. Large lettering ‘Leicester City Council’ is the only indication of ownership. As I push open the heavy glass door I notice a man bent over, taping a cracked window - a makeshift repair. The door leads into a small dimly lit lobby - it is deserted appearing unused and dirty, with rubbish and leaves in one corner. On one
side is a small unoccupied ticket booth next to a turnstile and corridor entrance. Walking down the corridor the dinginess is interrupted by a small well lit room with a glass door. Passing I see bright colours - blue and white with orange trim in the form of T-shirts, caps, scarves and vests which announce 'Renault Leicester Riders' across the chest. The shop is sparse inside - with two assistants awaiting custom. Beyond the shop, the corridor bears left, and I see a double door with bright lights beyond them. Before reaching the doorway a table selling tickets and programmes, spans half the corridor. Buying my ticket more early arrivals form an orderly queue behind me. Continuing toward the doors I pass a large open-plan bar, with a scattering of people inside. The smell of cigarette smoke hangs in the air of the corridor, at the end of which I encounter two friendly looking men collecting tickets. Here the building opens out into a large, hangar type hall with a corrugated metal roof, supported by a lattice of red girders.

Entering, I am struck by the contrast of the bright lights with the drab exterior of the building and its dark entrance way. Loud music with a heavy beat bombards the scene, with the bright uniforms of the players who are on the court adding to the colourful montage. Sponsors hoardings and banners shout their commercial message from the court side and walls above the seating which surrounds the court - virtually every vantage point is occupied: Budweiser, Foxhound, the Jarvis Grand Hotel, Renault, Midland Fox, Sainsbury's Classic Cola, Nickleby's, Everards, Stakis Hotel, New Leicester sound 103.2 fm, Premier Accommodation services, Bridge Interiors, A-Dec, Uniball, Ciro Citterio all clamour for attention.

I veer around the end of the court to find a vantage spot on the seating, and find myself within touching distance of the players who cluster around the basket, separated only by the sponsors' hoardings. The constant rattle of the balls they shoot hitting the rim accompanies the heavy beat of the music which dominates the hall. Taking my place on the wooden seating which rises steeply from courtside, I survey the scene with forty minutes before tip-off. As a trickle of fans slowly filter into the
hall, a sense of growing expectation, and a low-key atmosphere of anticipation is palpable.

At each end of the court are large banks of wooden ‘bleacher’ seating, reminiscent of American gymnasias. They are sparsely populated at this stage with small groups of fans who sitting toward the front and centre. In one corner of the hall, angled to face the court, sits a yellow and white ice-cream van - ‘Mr Whippy 99’. Adjacent to this is a stall selling basketball cards from a temporary wooden table, arranged in glass presentation boxes to entice the young children who begin to gather around it.

Running along the length of one side of the court are similar wooden bleachers to those at either end. This prime vantage point is divided into three equal areas. The central section is reserved for season ticket holders, a further privilege of which is the makeshift red seating cushions which fill this section. The two ends are open to general admission and are the first to begin to fill as fans vie for the best view of the game. At the front of these bleachers is a narrow walkway. A small bank of seating featuring individual red seats runs the final side of the court, a relative luxury in the spartan surroundings. In front of this seating are a row of chairs, running the full length of the court. The central third are fronted by tables from where the scorers and officials will oversee the game. The chairs to either end of the court will be occupied by the two teams. At this stage they stand unoccupied, although the home teams have a small towel neatly folded over each individual chair. In two corners of the hall, high above the court, sit small electronic scoreboards; the red figures of which count down towards tip-off time.

On court the two teams occupy opposite ends. The balls they dribble and pass repeatedly rattle the hoop, some drop in, others bounce wildly away leaving the net swaying as if in time to the loud dance music which pumps from the four large speakers in the corners of the court. The lyrics fill the arena:

“I’m horny, horny-horny-horny, so horny, horny-horny-horny-tonight
I’m horny, horny-horny-horny, so horny, I’m horny-horny-horny”
The players seem relaxed yet focused, metronomically shooting with the nonchalance of having done so a thousand times before. They appear to be 'going through the motions', the only interaction being a regular hand-slap, knowing glances and nods of the head. With 25 minutes remaining to tip-off they leave the court, returning to the changing rooms.

Meanwhile the crowd continues to build and the bleachers gradually fill with groups of friends and families who sit together in small groups, chattering eagerly. Many of the younger children in the crowd have brought a basketball with them, they eagerly leave their seats to shoot at the hoops and backboards which stand in the space to the rear of the bleachers. The constant thud of the balls being bounced permeates the hall, adding to the cacophony of sound. Anxious parents attempt to keep a watchful eye on children who disappear behind the stands to play, all competing for the same few hoops. As increasing numbers of people enter the arena they scour the bleachers for familiar faces, exchanging greetings with friends and acquaintances, whom they have not seen since the last game. On the very back row, I spot, a mother who cradles her baby, whilst her husband intently talks to a friend. Across the court another mother, is reading a book amidst the growing crowd whilst her husband and son excitedly scour the statistics in the game programme, comparing this or that player, and speculating on the forthcoming game. Others meanwhile chat avidly amongst themselves, the game seemingly a distraction.

The group of away fans who have travelled to the game are instantly visible. They sit tightly packed on the bleachers - as if for solidarity. The team colours they sport betrays their allegiances - a smattering of yellow and black caps, scarves and jerseys do enough to stand them out from the, blue and white of the home team fans. With twenty minutes remaining to tip-off the space occupied by fans now outnumbers the gaps on the bleachers, and for the first time the tannoy interrupts the heavy beat of the music. "Welcome to the Sainsbury's Classic Cola Basketball Centre for tonight's game." The grandiose title seems out of keeping with the, intimate, yet spartan and dilapidated surroundings. "Tonight's visitors are the Birmingham Bullets". the
announcer continues. Further messages referring to the sponsors of the game are largely ignored by the crowd which continues to swell amidst an air growing of expectation.

Next, carefully orchestrated, the home team makes an entrance. "And now, ladies and gentlemen would you make some noise for your Renault Leicester Riders!" the announcer bellows. Several fans stand and clap enthusiastically as the Riders enter in their shiny blue and white shirts, and long baggy shorts. Others meanwhile continue their conversations, glancing up only momentarily. Most of the players are tall, imposing yet unseemingly lanky. There is a grace apparent that complements their size, evident as they seem to linger softly in the air after releasing a jump shot in which a whip-like snap of the wrist sends the ball spinning toward the hoop. Both teams diligently run through their pre-game warm up drills, repeatedly shooting, collecting the rebound and passing on. The pounding of bass and drums continues to fill the air, the explosive screech of guitar echoing from the speakers:

thud thud "walk this way, talk this way"; thud thud "walk this way, talk this"

As the scoreboards count down to tip-off, the hall fills with fans, who occupy the remaining seats to fill the bleachers. Despite the increasing numbers, the tight confines of the bleachers lends an intimate feel to the scene.

There are several discernible groups who inhabit the bleachers. In the main, the crowd is made up of family groups. Casually dressed, parents accompany their young children, a number of whom are wearing the bright blue and white of the Riders. The youngest of these children scurry around the hall, clutching their basketballs shuttling between their parents, the refreshment stall and the basketball card stand. Such family groups seem to favour the vantage point of the bleachers which run the length of the court. Additionally, there are groups of teenagers. Predominantly they are all male teenage groups - 13, 14, 15 year olds, who sit in twos and threes on the end bleachers. Various others are present, mainly in groups but a small scattering sit alone. There are also middle aged men, young mothers with their children and couples ranging from retirees to youngsters who make up the gathering.
Unlike some densely packed crowds, there is no sense of being lost anonymously amongst the numbers. The brightness of the lights and close confines of the hall mean that each individual is distinctly visible to others even from the opposite end of the hall. The players, likewise, are so close to the fans you see the sweat glistening on their arms and legs and hear them talk – their accents are not local. A noticeable air of excitement and anticipation is now apparent, some fans, breaking away from conversation focus more intently on the court as the excitement builds.

Next the cheerleaders appear, entering the court in two well drilled lines, in their bright red and white uniforms of short skirt and mid-rift revealing top. The young teenage girls which make up the troupe, with their heavily made-up faces appear anxious, and self conscious, yet clearly enjoying being the centre of attention. They form a tunnel near the home team who are now huddled by the bench.

The away team is announced first, their traveling fans cheering every player as they peel away from the group and move across the court. Alongside their name the crowd are told their height and American college, as if to establish their credentials. ‘Cal State’, ‘Columbus State’, ‘University of Alberta’, ‘Tennessee State’ - far away places unfamiliar to most in the crowd. The first player moves away and stands alone to be joined by his teammates. As each players comes over the pre-ordained ‘high-five’, ‘low-five’ or clenched fist is offered. The player moves down the line in a carefully observed ritual, joining the end to await the rest of his team mates. The Bullets fans cheering and clapping increases until finally the whole team is announced.

“And now your Renault Leicester Riders” the announcer bellows. Sections of the home crowd at this point appear to come to life, several season ticket holders rising to their feet. As each Riders player is announced he peels away from the bench area and makes his way through the cheerleader tunnel, who’s silver pompoms rustle and glisten in the light. One by one each player makes his way down the short tunnel. Carefully orchestrated, the team’s star players and crowds favourites are left until last.
The crowd’s applause and cheers gradually get louder until finally the star player is greeted with loud cheers, stamping and enthusiastic applause.

The teenage cheerleaders self consciously leave the court and the players take the last few opportunities to shoot baskets. Finally each team retreats toward their respective bench into a tight huddle, for a final few words. The clock counts down - one minute to tip-off.

‘Thud thud boom, Thud thud boom, Thud thud boom’ “Singing we will, we will rock you… . . . . . . . rock you; Singing we will, we will rock you . . . . . . . rock you”

With music filling the arena, the scene appears set. Down to twenty seconds, and the season ticket holders in the central bleachers are on their feet, clapping and cheering. The noise reaches a crescendo as the umpire tosses the ball aloft and it is tipped back. The Riders gain possession. The player with the ball slowly walks down the court signaling to his team mates who jockey for position around the basket. As if deflated the season ticket holders sit down.

“Riders!” thud thud; “Riders!” thud thud. “Riders!” thud thud. “Riders!” thud thud

The chants of the home fans, slow and deliberate, exentuated by the low corrugated metal roof reverberate around the hall. Each “Riders” followed by the rhythmical thud of boots and shoes on the hollow bleachers which echo throughout the hall. The first basket is met with a loud expectant cheer, several fans are on their feet. Possession changes hands, and the ball moves to the other end of the court.


The game settles into a familiar rhythm characterised by a methodical movement of the ball down court followed by a burst of frenetic action as the ball is driven to the hoop. Some baskets are hard fought, a melee of players fighting under the basket for a rebound. Others are made with seeming ease, the ball neatly sinking into the hoop after a gentle kiss off the back board. Each basket is met with enthusiastic cheering, clapping and stamping from some fans. Aiding this regular barrage of sound the tannoy announcer commentates throughout. Occasionally he is
pre-emptive as a ball arches toward the basket, “it’s Boone for two . . .”. His commentary falls flat as the ball rattles off the hoop and out, to a collective groan from the fans. He knows the crowds favourites (and seems to have his own): “Geeeene Waldron . . .”, “It’s Geno for two . . .”. The first lull in the yo-yo like rhythm of the game is a substitution. The pace though soon lifts. There is a breakaway for the Riders, the season ticket holders rise, as does the player who gracelessly slams the ball into the hoop, turning provocatively to the crowd who cheer their approval. Called by the Bullets coach, a horn signals the first time-out. The players huddle around their respective benches.

‘Thud thud boom. Thud thud boom. Thud thud boom’. “Singing we will, we will rock you . . . . . . rock you. Singing we will, we will rock you . . . . . . rock you”

Before the atmosphere is allowed to wane, the beat from the speakers, once again fills the hall. It is apparent that not one empty moment is allowed, no lull in this deliberately orchestrated event. The game restarts, the Riders retaining the lead, and the crowd fall momentarily quiet, leaving the sharp squeak of the players shoes to become the dominant sound. The Bullets rally. The tannoy announcer urges on the home fans: “Make some noise for the dee-fence”. They respond dutifully,


Late in the first quarter the scores draw to within one point. At any lull in the noise made by the crowd the tannoy announcer is quick to prompt: “it’s a four point ball game, let’s hear it . . . .”


Not one moment prevails when the crowd’s attention is not held. The Bullets coach calls a second time out. Before the players reach the benches, the cheerleaders rush to take their positions on court, waiting for their musical cue. It is slow in coming, an embarrassing delay, only a few seconds, but it seems like longer - they are now the central focus of attention. The teenage girls hold their starting poses and cosmetic smiles. Finally the music blares from the speakers and they perform, with one or two
of the troupe out of time. The crowd watches, yet seems ambivalent, unconvinced by the show. A ripple of applause follows as they leave the court.

The game restarts, soon regaining its pendulum-like rhythm. Each Riders score is greeted by a cheer, the loudest reserved for a successful three point shot which has some fans rising as the ball leaves the hand, on their feet as it arcs through the air and celebrating wildly as the net swishes from the cleanly sunk ball. The close proximity to the court means that fans see every player’s facial expressions and hear the players shouting and calling. This closeness also betrays the physical nature of the game, as players jostle for dominance.

The frenetic back and forth of the game is broken occasionally by a shrill blast of the referees whistle, who awards free throw attempts. During this the fans ritually whistle, cheer, boo, stamp and clap, trying to distract the opposition player from his focus. As the shooting players steps up to the free throw line, beneath the basket the other players crowd for position, ready to pounce should the shot be missed. Meanwhile the player, having edged his toes up to the line, focuses intently on the rim fifteen feet away. Each successful attempt is met with a groan from the Riders fans, a miss is met with delight and jeers. The Bullets fans reciprocate. Each missed free throw in this ritual is greeted as a ‘victory’ which urges them on to even louder clapping, booing, stamping and cheering for the next.

The game goes on, each score cheered. The Bullets draw close and then finally level. Their fans sense a fight back,


To each chant, not to be outdone, the home fans respond, as if in competition:


The atmosphere intensifies. The noise made by the crowd belies their small size. The competition between the two sets of fans urges them on into even louder chants, as if trying to actively participate in the game. The two teams coaches, prowl the court side, their animated gesticulations and outbursts fueling the sense of drama. These coaches are flanked by the ‘bench’ players who rotate in and out of the game. When
on the bench they focus intently on the game, watching every move. These ‘benchwarmers’ add to the drama with their animated show of emotions - a controversial decision sees them on their feet, gesturing vigorously; they cheer every basket, shout encouragement and congratulate every players who returns to the bench on their efforts. During each possession the crowd eagerly keeps one eye on the shot clock located on the courtside - 30 seconds for each team to shoot. At ten seconds they countdown, each count gets progressively louder as more and more fans join in before a hurried shot in made.

The first quarter ends with the rapturous applause centred on the season ticket holders area, some of whom are on their feet. During the short break fans hurriedly make their way to the toilets, the Mr Whippy van or the makeshift table near the entrance selling soft drinks, cola and crisps, which is instantly swarmed by the young children who weave in and out of the crowd excitedly. The walkways around the hall are briefly a hive of activity. Meanwhile the cheerleaders have quickly taken their place on court. This time their cue is quicker in coming, and their performance a little more polished. Parts of the previously sceptical crowd seems to have warmed to them and a ripple of cheers and whistles now accompanies the applause as they make their way from the court.

Fans are still returning to their seats as the 2nd quarter commences. “C’mon lets have every Riders fan on their feet” the announcer exhorts. Centred on the season ticket holders section of the bleachers fans are standing and clapping vigorously. The tip-off is lost and the game again settles into its familiar end-to-end pattern.

Suddenly a steal for the Riders has sections of the crowd on its feet. The player races away down court, pursued vainly toward the basket. He leaps and seems to soar through the air, the crowd’s expectation rises in unison, he slams the ball forcefully down... it rattles off the rim and out, to be recovered by the Bullets. The player skulks back down court meekly, not looking at the crowd. Some fans have their head in their hands, a collective sigh sweeps them. “stupid” one man behind me says in frustration.
Rival fans continue to compete,


The intent focus on the game clearly centres on the season ticket holders - the hardcore who attend every game. The passion amongst this groups seems to pass through the differing elements among them: the young and old, male and female, urge on their team enthusiastically. Some fans seem to feed off the physical confrontation between the players, whilst others are more controlled. The tensions on court rise, suddenly an altercation between two players breaks out - a push, an elbow - it is not clear in the melee of players. Several fans are on their feet. Some remonstrate loudly with the referees, gesticulating wildly with their arms as if to express outrage. They are fully involved. Others meanwhile remain seated, looking on more passively.

“Boooooooooooooooooo” their collective displeasure fills the hall, lending a sense of pantomime. It is evident that there are clearly defined ‘goodies’ and ‘baddies’ with whom one is compelled to side - there appears little room for a neutral stance.

The altercation takes several minutes for the referees to resolve. The outcome is received by both sets of fans as an injustice. A number of ‘hardcore’ Riders fans deride the referees for ruling in favour of the opponents. The Bullets fans howl for the alleged offender to be punished. The ensuing foul throws are met with a louder than usual cacophony of cheers, whistles and stamping.

The game goes on, each team steadily building their score, scrapping for every rebound and loose ball. Some of the Riders players during breaks in the game - after a basket, or a sideline ball - urge on the crowds chants. This encourages the Riders fans,


The half-time buzzer is pre-empted by a countdown from fans, followed by enthusiastic applause as the players leave the court. They pass within a few feet of fans on their way to the changing rooms, escorted by their small entourage of coach, towel boy, statistician clutching his clip board, and team manager.
As the players leave they are passed, in the opposite direction, by the cheerleaders who once again take their place on court. Simultaneously the walk-ways surrounding the court again become alive with activity. The scoreboard, once again counts down, signalling that it will be 15 minutes until the game restarts. The buzz of activity and chatter now competes with the heavy beat of the music which booms out, to which the cheerleaders, attempting to capture the crowds attention, perform their carefully choreographed routine of high-kicks and gyrations. The bleachers and seats by now though are half empty as fans busily seek refreshments and the toilets. The fans who remain look on passively. Completing their routine with a human pyramid in which one girl, hoisted high, wobbles precariously, the cheerleaders are applauded as they leave the court giggling amongst themselves. As I make my way to the toilets, I hear two middle-aged men at the crowded urinals berating a Riders player: “Useless!” one says, “Don’t know why we bought him?, can’t shoot to save his life!” quips the other in agreement. “We need some ‘bench’ badly” a younger man chimes in, and the three shuffle away in a moment of temporary solidarity.

Next on to the empty court, come many of the young children who have been playing behind the bleachers during breaks in the game. The eager young children, mostly boys, form a loose line towards one end of the court. In turn they try their chance, clearly enjoying their moment as the centre of attention on the same court which only a few minutes earlier had featured the real thing. Those fans in the bleachers, enjoy this spectacle, cheering those who successfully make a basket. The winners gleefully return to parents in the bleachers eagerly clutching their ball or T-shirt as evidence of their success.

As this shoot out continues the players gradually return to the court in ones and twos as the scoreboard clock displays five minutes of the break remaining. This signals the end of the shoot-out that has held the crowds attention, which now turns back to the players - the main attraction of this cabaret-like event. Once again the players shoot baskets and ready themselves for the forthcoming confrontation, each team occupying one end of the court nearest their own bench. The heavy beat of the
music continues to thud from the speakers, accompanying the sound of balls raining down on the baskets at either end of the court. The crowd are by now returning to their seats as the clock signals two minutes until tip-off. The scores are close, and there is an air of anticipation for the second half. Once again the tannoy directs the fans onto their feet: "C'mon, lets have every Riders fan on their feet"

The season ticket holders oblige; their clapping reaching a crescendo until one team secures possession to deflate the expectation, slowly walking the ball down court.


The home fans once again urge on their team, as the game picks up its pendulum-like rhythm, interrupted only by the shrill blast of the referee's whistles and the sharp blast of the air-horn which signals a time-out. Accompanying throughout, the tannoy announcer offers his commentary, acting both to explain elements of the game, scorers, substitutions, and to prompt the crowd should their chants fall quiet or the atmosphere wane: "Let's hear it for the Riders dee-fence, let's make some noise now!"

Each time they respond with the familiar mantra. Any gaps in this familiar game rhythm are filled by the pounding beat of the dance music or the carefully choreographed cheerleaders - their presence designed to distract the senses long enough for the game to regain its tempo, and once again feature as the main attraction in this carefully packaged cabaret-like performance.

The third quarter sees the Riders fall behind. The home crowd becomes quieter, as if subdued. Conversely, the traveling Bullets fans grow louder as their team dominates. The announcer senses the muted mood, attempting to intervene and 'lift' the home fans, to regain the atmosphere of the earlier part of the game: "Riders trail by 5..." he exhorts. The game though, continues to go against the Riders. The Bullets fans become more exuberant, their chants, unprompted, grow more frequent and louder.


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“Riders trail by 8... let’s hear it for the dee-fence” the tannoy urges the home fans. They respond, but in smaller numbers and with less volume and enthusiasm. Despite their relentless efforts it is difficult to see how the Riders players can change the current pattern of the game - they seem outclassed. The commentary continues: “It’s Brown for two...” Suddenly a steal for the Riders sees the ball whisked down court, driven to the basket and neatly slotted into the basket. This has elements of the home crowd on their feet again - their expectation lifts. Quickly followed by another home basket, the break-away has the effect of shifting the momentum both on the court and significantly, on the bleachers. Each basket drawing the Riders closer is met with increasingly enthusiastic cheers. “It’s a 2 point ball game!” the tannoy urges. Parts of the home crowd seem re-activated - they are back in the game.


The fourth quarter begins with the by now routine call of the tannoy: “Lets have every Riders fan on their feet”. The season-ticket holders dutifully oblige, their clapping reaching a crescendo for the tip-off, followed by a moment of deflation once the ball has been won and they retake their seats.

With the scores close the crowds attention is directed more intently on the court, following each movement closely, responding loudly and voraciously to each score, refereeing decision or swing of momentum on the court - a steal or loose pass.


As the scores remain close, the two rival sets of fans compete to be heard, as if trying to exert an influence on the outcome of the game, which itself seems to be reaching a fitting finale to match its carefully staged presentation.

It is not to be however. After the scores see-saw for a little while, a series of free throws and a carefully judged three-point baskets sees the Bullets again extend their lead. The clock which counts down, regularly interrupted by the referees whistle, now signals that a home victory will be beyond the Riders. The home fans
once again becomes subdued as the remaining minutes on the court run-down. The persistent home-team fouling, in a forlorn attempt to rescue the game, renders the familiar rhythm disjointed. For the traveling fans this merely extends the celebrations. The Birmingham players, both on the bench and on the court urge on their chants and gesticulate applause as if in mutual appreciation.

As the game peters out, Riders fans begin to make their way out of the hall; gaps begin to appear in the bleachers as the walkways once again become busy. Some fans shuffle away, hunched up ready to brace the cold autumn air outside - their disappointment is evident. Others debate the “what ifs?” and the “could haves?” of the game reliving the key moments and decisions. The horn which signals the end of the match is greeted by loud chanting, cheering and clapping from the wedge of tightly packed Bullets fans. The court is instantly invaded by the young children who have been shooting baskets behind the bleachers, their enthusiasm undiluted by the home defeat. Onto the court they pour, some enveloping the players to ask for autographs, pushing game programmes in their direction. Others simply bypass the players and head directly for the baskets, eagerly shooting - an activity they seemingly never tire of. The Riders players make their way from the court through the throng, applauded by those who remain in the bleachers. The victorious Birmingham players linger a little longer, saluting their fans once more in a show of solidarity. They have come to a ‘foreign’ town and taken the spoils.

As the bleachers empty, the exit doorways become crowded as people filter from the hall. Despite the apparent passions of the preceding hour and three-quarters, many of the leaving home fans seem undeflated by the defeat. Meanwhile others remain in small groups on the bleachers, talking and exchanging accounts of the game, re-living its pivotal moments and incidents.

Having waited a little while after the game, I too make my way out of the hall through the dull corridor. Passing the bar as I leave, I notice it is now full of fans, a busy chatter filling the air. Small groups cluster in the corridor bidding their
farewells until the next home game. Once again passing the small shop which now has customers inside, I pass through to the dim lobby and out of the door.

Once again I am alone, and left to reflect on the game. The game clearly sits on the periphery of the sporting landscape of Leicester, with little indication of its occurrence beyond of the hall. The event itself follows a carefully engineered cabaret-like script integrating players, cheerleaders and half-time ‘shoot-out’ backed by the heavy beat of dance music, and carefully ‘narrated’ by the tannoy announcer. The constant prompting and cues work to generate an event which at times feels contrived. The thin veneer of ‘glitz’ which surrounds the game: the bright lights and loud music in an attempt to ape ‘big league’ sport falls short. The dilapidated, run-down building reinforces this. The crowd, does not seem convinced by the amateurish cheerleaders. Various elements betray the American reference points of the game. For example, at the bequest of the announcer, the fans urging on the ‘dee’-fence, the presence of cheerleaders, or the American players who represent both teams.

The fans however seem unconcerned by this apparent kitsch and the ‘staged’ nature of events. The intimate surroundings lend a palpable, vibrant atmosphere: rivals fans chanting and loud cheers as a basket is sunk which echo around the hall. The event seems a melange of experiences for its attendees. For some the events and outcome of the game itself appear deemphasised. Some parents watching the game, their children playing behind the bleachers, seem less concerned with the outcome than family entertainment. For the season ticket holders, the desire for entertainment is added to a desire for a home town win. As they urge on the Riders, - they are deeply involved, vociferous, cheering, clapping, their faces betraying the emotions they feel throughout the game. This group are deeply involved. Their disappointment at this weeks defeat is evident, yet only serving to add to the hopes for next weeks game, in this serialised attachment. Others however are more passive, - still watching intently, yet their responses are more controlled, cheering with less gusto or applauding the efforts of both teams. The presence of such fans lends a friendly, non-
threatening atmosphere despite the games excitement, and the vocal too-and-fro between rival fans.

As I leave into the cold night air, the dark, damp street outside gives no indication of the game, the cars which speed by unaware of the evenings events - the noise, bright lights, enthusiasm, colour and cheerleaders remain confined to the decaying hall and its temporary occupants.

6.4 The Social Composition of Leicester Riders Fans

Having attempted to capture the 'lived' experience of attending Riders games in the narrative above, I now turn to a concern with detailing who, in demographic terms is attending games. To ascertain the social composition of those attending Leicester Riders games, a self-completion questionnaire was employed. Despite limitations to the conclusions that may be drawn regarding the wider Riders fandom, and indeed the representativeness to British basketball fans per se, the broad indications it provides are of value in 'mapping' the characteristics of the consumption of basketball in Leicester\. Questionnaire results relating to demographic information, with a brief description of the salient characteristics in the data are now presented. At various points I refer to the available data regarding football crowds, as a comparative measure of the social characteristics of the basketball audience. I subsequently summarise these findings in relation to the demographics of the city of Leicester, and make linkages and comparisons with data presented by Crawford (1998) regarding the social composition of ice-hockey crowds. I also outline the patterns of consumption of the Leicester Riders audience regarding live basketball, viewing of the televised game and purchasing of basketball related merchandise.

The social demographics of the basketball audience to emerge from the questionnaire are outlined below:
Table 6.1. Demographic Profile of Leicester Riders Fans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48% (n84)</td>
<td>52% (n90)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range(^7)</th>
<th>15-20</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>51-60</th>
<th>61&amp; over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15% (n26)</td>
<td>17% (n31)</td>
<td>25% (n44)</td>
<td>32% (n56)</td>
<td>8% (n14)</td>
<td>3% (n5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity(^8)</th>
<th>Black-Caribbean</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4% (n7)</td>
<td>94% (n165)</td>
<td>2% (n4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Classification</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Self-employed</th>
<th>Lower Supervisory</th>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43% (n75)</td>
<td>14% (n26)</td>
<td>6% (n10)</td>
<td>9% (n15)</td>
<td>3% (n5)</td>
<td>25% (n26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Achievement</th>
<th>University/ Post Graduate degree</th>
<th>Professional qualifications</th>
<th>16-18 qualifications(^9)</th>
<th>Secondary school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27% (n44)</td>
<td>19% (n30)</td>
<td>25% (n40)</td>
<td>29% (n47)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th>&lt; £7000</th>
<th>£8000-£15000</th>
<th>£16000-£25000</th>
<th>£26000-£35000</th>
<th>£36000-£45000</th>
<th>&gt; £46000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5% (n7)</td>
<td>16% (n22)</td>
<td>23% (n32)</td>
<td>23% (n32)</td>
<td>22% (n30)</td>
<td>11% (n7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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As table 6.1 demonstrates, the gender structure of the basketball crowd was roughly equally divided between male and female. Such a characteristic contrasts with the male domination traditionally associated with mass spectator sport in Britain. Comparisons with football data are instructive on this point. For example, Waddington et al (1996) documenting figures relating to the football crowds at two English clubs: Arsenal and Aston Villa, note female composition of 9.8% and 12.8% respectively. In specific relation to Leicester, Malcolm (2000), quotes figures relating to female attendance at Leicester City as outlined in Table 2.

Table 6.2 Percentage of Females Spectators at Leicester City Football Club (adapted from Malcolm, 2000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Females Spectators at Leicester City FC (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995/96</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/97</td>
<td>16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>20*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * Figures apply to season ticket holders only.

Even allowing for methodological limitations in the data available for football crowds in Leicester, it is clear that such figures illustrate the proportionately high numbers of females attending basketball in comparison to football in Leicester. A high proportion of females, Malcolm (2000) speculates, is indicative of a family-based audience.

A further indicator of family attendance at basketball is the age profile of the crowd. In terms of age structure, as Table 1 demonstrates, the sample shows a clustering around the two middle age cohorts, a total of 57% of the sample being aged between 31 and 50 years old. Outside of these middle age bands, greater numbers were evident in the younger age ranges (15-20 and 21-30 - a total of 33%) than in the older brackets (51-60 and 61 & over - a total of 11%) Such findings reveal a middle-age dominated crowd,
with the remainder skewed toward younger aged attendees. An age structure such as this, as with the observed gender structure, further points toward an audience characterised by family groupings.

The ethnicity of the sample demonstrated a largely homogenous crowd. Fans were overwhelmingly White (94%). The exception was the 4% Black-Caribbean, alongside the 2% classified as 'other'. Comparisons with the available data relating to the attendance of ethnic minorities at football is not possible due to the differing categories utilised. Comparisons with the broader demographics relating to ethnicity in Leicester, however, are instructive. The ethnic minority profile of the basketball audience (6%) shows an under-representation of the city's ethnic population which stands at 28.5% (1991 Census). Of possible significance however, within the spectator sample the Black Caribbean population is over-represented, constituting some 4% of attendees, yet only 1.5% within the City as a whole. Such a finding is perhaps explainable given the statistical overrepresentation of Black players within British basketball (see Maguire, 1998; Chappel et al, 1996), which may come to be reflected in spectating levels. The broad under-representation of ethnic minorities within the crowd is in fact symptomatic of the absence of the Asian population of the city; absent from the sample, yet representing 23.7% (1991 Census) of the City's total population.

In terms of occupational classification (based upon the National Statistics Socio-economic Classifications [NS SEC], 1998), the sample was dominated by the professional occupations (1, 1.1, 1.2, 2), which constituted the largest grouping, a total of (43%)\(^4\). A broadly linear relationship was evident, with high numbers of fans in the professional occupations, progressing down the classification scale, with the least represented categories being manual occupations (3%). The second largest category of occupations was an 'other' category created to accommodate those outside the standard classification system. This grouping, including students, houseworkers and retirees represented 25% of the total sample. The high proportion of students within this category - projected entrants into professional occupations and high future earners, lends further credence to the sample being dominated by the professional occupations and higher income brackets as previously observed.
Comparisons with the available football data regarding occupational structure confirms the distinctive nature of the Leicester basketball audience. Malcolm (2000), for example, documents the following figures for manual and non-manual workers within English football audiences:

**Table 6.3 Percentage of Manual and Non-manual Workers Attending Football (adapted from Malcolm, 2000)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Non Manual (%)</th>
<th>Manual (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993/94</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995/96</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/7</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly Waddington et al (1996) have documented the figures of 33.2% (Arsenal) and 48.2% (Aston Villa) for football fans engaged in manual work. The combined total of 3% of the basketball audience in manual work is indicative of a distinctively different occupational structure to that seen at football. Notably, the basketball audience is characterised by far fewer attendees engaged in manual employment by comparison. Such a characteristic is representative of an audience more clearly identified with the middle classes. The middle class characteristics of the crowd are also reinforced by the educational levels of the sample, as shown in Table 1, which illustrates a grouping who have high levels of educational opportunity and attainment. A total of 46% of the sample possessed a university degree, higher degree or professional qualifications. This indicates a basketball audience with a relatively high level of social status.

In terms of the annual total family/household income, results were illustrative of an audience of significantly higher than average incomes. A total of 56% of respondents earned over £26,000 per annum, with 33% of the sample being above the £36,000 figure. This figure compares with an average gross household earnings of £18,288 for the Leicestershire locality (Office of National Statistics, 1999). Hence, the basketball
audience is one of above average affluence in Leicester. Such a characteristic reinforces the middle and upper middle class credentials of the Leicester Riders audience.

In summary, the sample represented a basketball audience which was, in terms of demographic composition: dominated by the middle and younger age cohorts, divided roughly equally by gender, overwhelmingly white in ethnicity, and dominated by the professional occupations with high incomes and educational achievement. These characteristics are suggestive of an audience dominated by middle class consumers attending in family groupings. Such audience characteristics are distinct from that of football as evidenced by comparisons with the available data. Subsequent to establishing the demographic characteristics of those attending Leicester Riders games, a series of questions were included to establish the patterns of consumption of these fans, the results of which are presented and discussed below.

6.5 Patterns of Consumption

Included in the questionnaire were components relating to the patterns of consumption of fans: with whom they usually attend games?, how frequently they attend?, how long they have been attending? and the reasons for starting to watch Leicester Riders games? Further to probing fans patterns of consumption of live basketball, questions regarding television viewing of basketball, both British and NBA and purchasing of basketball related merchandise were included. Initially I turn attention to the consumption characteristics relating to live basketball.

Table 6.4 Patterns of Live Consumption Of Leicester Riders Fans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumption Characteristic</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>With Whom Fans Attend</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Friends</td>
<td>37 (66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>22 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse/Partner</td>
<td>19 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>16 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>6 (11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Frequency of Attendance**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Attendance</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; once/month</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>once/month</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twice/month</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>(15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>every game</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>(132)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Duration of Attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of Attendance</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This season only</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>(34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>(49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years or more</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>(53)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reasons for Starting to Attend**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>(41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse/partner</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Played self</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (explain)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total number of responses may differ due to varying numbers completing particular components of the questionnaire.

As Table 4 illustrates, family (including spouse or partner and children categories) and friendship groupings are the most common ‘attendance grouping’. Such findings support the demographic information presented above regarding the relatively high proportion of females and the age structure of the audience, which is suggestive of an audience dominated by family groupings. With regard to the frequency of attendance, a high proportion - over three-quarters of fans chose to attend every game. This characteristic indicates a high degree of loyalty on behalf of attendees. There was little differentiation between the numbers attending less than once a month (7%), once a month (7.5%) or twice a month (8.5%). Seemingly for the majority of fans it was habitual to attend every game, with small numbers attending on a less frequent basis.

The greatest proportion of fans, were long-standing Riders attendees, whose involvement in watching the club extended more than six years. Such a figure suggests these fans were attracted to the club during the preceding, more successful era. The similar proportion attracted in the season prior to the questionnaire, on these grounds, may have been the result of the relative success of the club in reaching a major national cup final during that year. Such a factor would also account for the smaller number
attracted to the club in the season of the questionnaire due to the Riders poor playing record.

As Table 4 illustrates, the categories of children, spouse/partner and friends accounted for a total of 62% of fans reasons for starting to watch the Riders. This compares with 9% attracted by publicity and 15% who’s interest was generated by their own involvement in playing the game. The 14% accounted for in the ‘other’ category cited several factors. These included schools visits in which free tickets were distributed; being attracted having seen NBA basketball on television; a desire to see live sport; and coincidental linkages such as working for a sponsor of the club. These characteristics of how attendance is stimulated demonstrate that the majority of attendance was generated through family relationship and friendship ties.

In terms of the broader consumption patterns, attendees of live basketball in Leicester were found to also overwhelmingly ‘consume’ the televised game. A total of 86% reported watching at least one form of the television coverage available to them. Of these viewers, 74% reported watching terrestrial NBA coverage on either ITV or Channel 4. Notably, fewer were found to watch British basketball. 61% reported viewing the weekly British game coverage on the satellite channel BSKYB, with 63% watching the infrequent, yet more freely accessible, terrestrial coverage on the BBC. These figures demonstrate that for the overwhelming majority of basketball fans, live attendance is complimented by viewing the televised game. Such a characteristic also highlights the dual experiences, in that a large percentage consumes both British and American basketball. Drawing conclusions on the basis of these figures requires caution, in that disparities may in fact be as much an artefact of availability and access, as of preference. Such issues are explored in the following chapter.

Expenditure on basketball related merchandise mirrored the duality of television viewing patterns. Of those purchasing merchandise, 67% reported buying British basketball related products whilst a total of 51% reported expenditure on the NBA equivalents. What such figures demonstrate is that whilst greater proportions buy merchandise associated with the indigenous game, a number of those buying British basketball goods also consume NBA equivalent. Such a characteristic reinforces the
duality of exposure and consumption regarding merchandise and confirms the pattern of findings noted above regarding television consumption.

6.6 Summary

The results of the questionnaire provide some distinctive findings in terms of the social composition of the Leicester Riders audience. The age and gender structure are suggestive of an audience based primarily around family units. This is confirmed by a total of 60% reporting that they attend in family oriented groups and with friends or children. Findings in relation to household income, educational levels and socio-economic groupings are suggestive of an audience dominated by those of at least middle-class status. Finally, the data demonstrate that the audience are largely regular and 'loyal' fans, the majority of whom attend every game and have done so for a sustained period of several years. This characteristic suggests that a proportion of the basketball audience is one which harbours a serialised attachment to watching the game, and a loyalty which sees attendance continued season after season.

The demographics of the basketball crowd are atypical of the broader Leicester population. As noted above, this is particularly marked with reference to the ethnic composition of the city, which is not reflected in the profile of the basketball audience. Comparisons with additional characteristics of Leicester further illustrate the distinctive composition of those attracted to basketball. No respondents within the sample, for example were unemployed. This compares with a rate of 6.8% across the city (Economic Research, January, 1998). Similarly, the occupational structure of the basketball crowd is distinct from that of Leicester more broadly. Those engaged in semi-routine and routine manual occupations within the basketball audience stood at 3%, compared with a total of 19.1% across the city more broadly (Leicester City Council: Key facts about Leicester - the Economy). Such characteristics reinforce the impression that the basketball audience is predominantly middle class. Finally, comparisons with the broader age structure of the city confirm that those attracted to watch basketball, far from being representative, are dominated by the middle and younger age cohorts.
Comparisons with the data regarding football crowds, both more broadly, and to
attendance at Leicester City FC, further demonstrate the distinctive social composition of
the basketball audience. Particularly marked are the high levels of family attendance and
the domination of the middle and upper middle classes attending basketball not
associated with football crowds. Such findings concur with the small amount of data
available regarding audiences attending sports such as ice-hockey, which indicates
differing patterns from traditional mass spectators sports in Britain such as football.
Research undertaken by Crawford (1998), for example, has detailed the Manchester
Storm ice hockey crowd's distinctive social character. Crawford outlined the
predominantly middle-class nature of the ice-hockey audience, relatively high proportion
of females (41.7%), ethnic homogeneity - predominantly white, attendance largely in
family units and high levels of merchandise consumption. The results of this
questionnaire indicate that a similar crowd is attracted to watch basketball in Leicester.

The distinctive demographic patterns of such basketball and ice-hockey audiences
raises a series of sociological questions. Notably, what is it that attracts white, family
based, middle class audiences to such events? Speculating on some of the potential
reasons for the distinctive characteristics of 'arena-sports' audiences, Crawford (1998)
raises the question: could it be that certain members of the middle classes are attempting,
culturally and spatially, to separate themselves in terms of the sports they consume from
more traditional working class leisure pursuits such as football? Additionally he posits:
does the safe, controlled environment at arena-sports appeal to certain aspects of the
middle classes, in a way that other sports, such as the predominantly masculine, working
class audience of football does not? Such speculation remains unconfirmed, but may
provide useful lines of enquiry.

In relation to the Leicester basketball audience several questions emerge.
Notably, these regard the role and location of attendance at Leicester Riders games in the
everyday lives and patterns of consumption of fans. Specifically; what are the attractions
of Leicester Riders games to fans?; what are fan experiences of games?; what is the sense
of affiliation and attachment to Leicester Riders on behalf of fans?; how does attendance
at basketball fit into the broader consumption and aspirations of attendees? The answers
to such questions are important in determining the ‘local conditions’ which contour subsequent local-global interactions in the context of basketball.

With specific reference to the local-global basketball nexus, further issues arise. Crawford (1998), for example, notes that there are questions concerning “the adoption - or reinterpretation - of globalised sports practices” (p.3, emphasis in original). Such issues are pertinent for the case of basketball in Leicester. There are questions, for example, surrounding the dynamics between the ‘local’ experiences of basketball and the globally interdependent networks within which the British game is ‘played out’.

Specifically, how might Leicester ‘basketball identities’ contour responses to global basketball processes? Notably, this nexus raises questions of regional, national and civic identity. For example: how is basketball attendance implicated in fans sense of affiliation to the city of Leicester, the national basketball team, or ‘British basketball’ more broadly? An example of the lived ‘reality’ of this nexus, is how fans in Leicester may relate to the predominance of foreign players in the British game, notably those representing ‘their’ town; or the ‘Americanised’ forms of game presentation, as a culturally distinctive practice.

Further questions regarding how affiliations to the Leicester Riders contour ‘negotiations’ with the presence of the NBA in Britain are also evident. With reference to televised basketball, the data reveals that a large number of fans watch both the British and American NBA coverage. This characteristic is mirrored in the purchasing of basketball merchandise, with a proportion reporting expenditure on both the indigenous and NBA varieties. In both cases, however, the British game is ‘consumed’ to a greater degree. Such findings present several questions regarding the juncture between local ‘basketball identities’ and NBA strategies of expansion. These questions surround comparisons and preferences between the two forms of basketball ‘product’ available to Leicester Riders fans.

It is to such issues, and some of the questions highlighted above, that the following chapter now turns. Specifically it addresses the questions: how is the consumption of Riders basketball located in the everyday lives of supporters; how is Riders basketball consumed, and utilised by its audience? What is the audiences
relationship to the spectacle with which they are presented at Riders games? How does basketball fit into the leisure and consumption patterns of attendees? What is its role in the construction of identity of its supporters? I then turn to the interconnections between local ‘basketball identities’ and global processes. Specifically, I consider the various local-global junctures which punctuate British basketball and the experiences of the Leicester Riders fandom in this context.

Notes

1 The term employed by Crawford (1998) is somewhat misleading in the case of basketball, as outlined in Chapter 4, basketball is within a transitional phase between local authority owned leisure centres and multi-purpose private arenas. Hence, grouping basketball under the term ‘arena sports’ is not entirely accurate. The Leicester Riders for the duration of this project were housed in a former Local Authority leisure centre and ultimately returned to a ‘school gym’ with their temporary housing at Loughborough University during the 2000-2001 season. Despite this caveat, there are clearly similarities between ice-hockey and basketball in Britain. These relate primarily to the indoor nature of the sport, the reliance on foreign labour, commercial structures and cartelised operating models and the presentation and packaging.

2 The club started as the Loughborough All-Stars located at Loughborough University, some 13 miles north of Leicester. Concurrent with commercial shifts within the game (see Maguire, 1988), the club moved to Leicester in 1977, and was a founder member of the National Basketball League in 1986.

3 Toward the conclusion of this project the local authorities announced the closure of Granby Halls, leaving the Riders without a home. This sparked a public debate about local authority provision for the club, including a public protest organised by Riders fans. They were, however, subsequently evicted.

4 For my second season of participant-observations the league was re-organised along a conference structure as part of attempts by the league to make ‘the product’ more attractive. During the first season a straight league format had been used.

5 The club and league do not release crowd figures for specific games. The league generated figures for the Riders for the 1997-98 season were given as an average of 2,500. The accuracy of these is difficult to ascertain, but certainly in question. Within the stated aim of the League (BLL chairman, Mike Smith, interview, 18/08/98) to “create the image that we’re really bigger than what we are” in an effort to increase the media profile of the sport, it is not unreasonable to consider the attendance figures released to be inflated rather than accurate.

6 The methodological constraints associated with the representatives of the sample have been detailed in Chapter three.

7 It should be noted that children under 15 also make up a significant proportion of the crowd. For logistical and practical reasons, most notably relating to ‘informed consent’ it was not possible to include minors in the questionnaire.

8 Alternative categories of Black-African, Chinese, and Asian were included in the questionnaire, receiving no responses. Such classifications were used based upon consultation with the ‘Equal opportunities’ practice at Loughborough University. I also acknowledge the difficulties associated with the inclusion of the category - White - a ‘racial’ category, amongst ethnic ‘denominations’. This was included in the absence of a viable alternative, and how it was felt that such respondents would identify themselves.
16-18 qualifications were classified as A-Levels, BTEC/General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) and Higher National Diplomas/Certificates (HND/C).

As noted by Waddington et al (1996) “the methodological problems posed by surveying sports crowds are legion and difficult to overcome” (p.209). The available data on football crowds is necessarily tentative due to the difficulties in ascertaining ‘sound’ data. For comment on some of the conceptual and methodological problems of crowd surveys see Waddington et al (1996); and Malcolm (2000). Despite these issue the ‘broad picture’ painted by the available information is of use in making comparisons with the basketball crowd sample in broad terms.

This data is taken from the Premier League wide annual ‘Carling’ Survey, which itself has been subject to strong criticisms, see note number 11.

Such a sampling procedure, Waddington et al (1996) note is most likely to inflate estimations of the levels of female attendance.

The variety of definitions of ethnicity used by football researchers raises problems here (see Waddington et al 1996). Notably, the categories used in the available football data render comparisons highly problematic. Waddington et al, for example cite football statistics where distinction between Whites, Jews, Afro-Caribbeans and Asians were made, although clearly, these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

The new classification system released in December 1999 subdivides professional occupations under four different classification levels on the basis of employment conditions and relations, which distinguish higher and lower level professional occupations. In this case the sample is equally divided between the higher professional occupations (1, 1.1) - 21%, and the lower professional occupations (1.2, 2) - 22%.

It is pertinent to acknowledge that this characteristic may be exacerbated by the sampling procedures employed. The questionnaire, for example, was administered during the latter part of the season by which time the Riders were already eliminated from the play-offs. This factor, alongside the generally poor playing record throughout the season, may have deterred more ‘marginal’ Riders fans by this stage.
Chapter six outlined the distinctive social composition and patterns of consumption of the Leicester basketball crowd. By means of an ethnographic narrative it also evoked the 'lived' experiences of attending Riders games for fans. Building upon this, the current chapter probes the questions surrounding the consumption of the Riders audience in the context of the local-global junctures which characterise British basketball. Specifically, it considers the interplay of Riders fans and the global processes which permeate their consumption experiences. This includes, interpretations of the Americanised presentation of games, the presence of American players on the Riders team, and reflections on the presence of the NBA in Britain. In doing so, this chapter, explores the juncture between the global processes associated with basketball and local lives and identities - the local-global basketball nexus.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, I outline some of the structural characteristics of the Riders audience. Specifically, this involves introducing the structure of fans experiences and the concept of 'fandom'. Second, I present data regarding fans reactions to the manifestations of global processes they encounter at Riders games. This constitutes describing the patterns of fans attitudes towards Americanised game presentation, migrant players and the co-presence of the NBA. Notably, fans responses are characterised by a complex range of 'readings' which are contoured by differing, and at times competing affiliations to the game and senses of civic identities. Also apparent are several 'alternative voices' which represent engagement with global flows that differ from the dominant interpretations. Third, in seeking to explain the variations in response, I explore the attractions, meanings and pleasures associated with watching Leicester Riders.

I address such questions as: what are the appeals of Leicester Riders basketball? What is the fans relationship to the 'spectacle' with which they are
presented at games? How is Riders basketball consumed, and utilised by its audience? How does basketball fit into the leisure and consumption of attendees? What is its role in the construction of fans identities? Fourth, I summarise these findings, noting the patterns observed in comprehending the junctures between Leicester Riders fandom and globalisation processes.

7.1 The Riders Fandom

In seeking to comprehend the consumption of Leicester Riders games, it is crucial to consider the social and cultural environment of fans - the fandom (Harris, 1998). Attendees at Riders games are constituted of a loosely affiliated group of which there is no formal membership. As a consequence, the boundaries between fan and non-fan are fluid and unregulated. During the season, which runs from September to April, the Riders play around 25 home games which act as the primary focus for the fandom. The bulk of Riders games are played within a season-long league structure, the remainder being made up of knock-out competitions. With the exception of several mid-week games, home games were held on Saturday evenings, with tip-off at 7.30pm, the game finishing around 9.30pm. Consequently, Riders games occupied a relatively ‘prime-time’ leisure slot, competing with a series of alternative options associated with Saturday evenings. Although the composition of the audience is subject to change, with fans ‘coming and going’, many return season after season. Riders fandom is consequently characterised by an episodic pattern with respect to the weekly attendance at games, and serialised return, season after season.

The sole distinction between fans at games is the segregation of the small, yet prominently located seating section, reserved for season ticket holders. With the exception of this area there is little formal distinction between fans. Despite the lack of any formal ‘membership’ structure, the ‘Leicester Riders Supporters Club’ acts as a focal point of the fandom. Primarily constituted of the season ticket holders, supporters club activities, organised by volunteer members, included organising
social events, running a ballot for the supporters player of the year, and using funds to hire a face-painter for games. The season-ticket holders, in the main, represent the most ‘loyal’ Riders fans, attending every home game, and displaying the most animated, vociferous support of the team. They are also knowledgeable about, and experienced in watching basketball. This knowledge is apparent in their detailed awareness of the players, coaches and officials within the league, a consequence of many of them having attended Riders games for several seasons.

Amongst season-ticket holders there is an identifiable ‘hard core’ who attend both home and away games. Largely season ticket holders³, the hard core constitute no more twenty to thirty fans in total, out of regular audience figures of between 600 and 1,500. This group are passionate followers with a strong sense of attachment to the club. For hard core fans, their fandom extends to running the supporters club, or involvement with the Riders more broadly. Alan⁴, who emerged as a key informant, for example, wrote a weekly column in the Riders game programme. Other attendees are less strongly affiliated with the club, and may be less centrally concerned with the team winning. As a consequence they may be more passive at games, and seek differing attractions to the ‘hardcore’.

The following section considers the juncture of the Riders fandom with Americanised forms of game presentation, and the pre-eminence of foreign migrant labour. Specifically, I present data from the range of methods employed: participant observations, interviews and focus groups. As detailed in Chapter four, the global hierarchy of basketball leagues sees the British game subordinate to the dominant American NBA version, which since 1995 has been present in the UK market. Hence, the British basketball fandom-NBA juncture is also considered below.
7.2. Basketball Fandom and the Local-Global Nexus

7.2.1 The Staging of Emotions: Let’s hear it for the Dee-Fence!

As the ethnographic narrative in the previous chapter has outlined, the orchestration of the crowd is an integral part of the ‘staging of emotions’ (Maguire et al, in press, Zurcher, 1982) at games, and contours, in significant ways, fans experiences. This elaborate game presentation includes: dance music played throughout the game build-up, during time-outs and intervals, staged team entrances, the presence of Disney-style mascots, cheerleaders and ‘narration’ of the event by an announcer. All of these features were present at Riders games. In the case of basketball, game orchestration is particularly symptomatic of the American ‘reference points’ which permeate British basketball (as outlined in Chapter 3).

Perspectives on the legitimacy of the Americanised game presentation reflected the presence of its various features since the early 1980s, which pre-dates most fans attendance at Riders games (Maguire, 1988). As a consequence, ‘razzmatazz’ was seen as indivisible from the game itself, and its presence largely unquestioned by fans. A general acceptance of ‘glitz’ and ‘hype’ in game presentation was consequently evident within the Riders fandom. Reactions to the varying aspects of game presentation were notable for the pragmatic nature of responses, characterised by a series of nuanced variations in the ‘readings’ of Riders fans. Characteristic of this, fans displayed a selective and instrumental interpretation of razzmatazz and game presentation.

Highlighting the pragmatic ‘reading’ of the varying elements of game presentation, numerous fans were favourable to those aspects they associated with urging on the team. Specifically, this included orchestrated team entrances and tannoy announcements which were ‘pro-Riders’. For example, Dot explained the appeal of ‘orchestration’ in that it contributed to the crowd urging on the players. She argued “yes, I think that’s a good idea . . . it spurs everybody on, it sort of gets everybody into the mood of cheering the team on” (interview, 03/03/00). In this way
she felt it encouraged fans to vocally support the team, thus helping them achieve success. Her interpretation then, was contextualised by her desire for the team to succeed. Further examples of this interpretation of game orchestration was apparent at games as fans, most notably the season-ticket holders, responded to the tannoy announcers urgings of: "lets hear it for the dee-fence . . ." or "it's the Riders by two . . .", with chants of "Rid-ers, Rid-ers" or "dee-fence, dee-fence". In this way the heavily pro-Leicester exhortations of the tannoy announcer in his 'game narration', conformed to fans sense of parochial support for the team. Hence, for some fans, the primary linkage with game orchestration was in vocal support of the team.

Fans making such interpretations were largely constituted of the season ticket holders - the most dedicated and passionate followers of the Riders. Illustration of the way in which responses to orchestration were contoured by their parochial association with the team was apparent at away games which 'offended' these attachments to the team. For example, when faced with the 'biased' game narration at Manchester (i.e. announcements which urged the crowd to 'back' the Manchester team), one fan protested: "there's another team!"). Similarly, Jim reacted angrily to music played during the game: "turn that bloody music off" (field observations, 14/10/98). Hence, the more parochially involved fans were accepting of game commentary, and crowd orchestration, when it urged on the Riders, yet rejected it when it did the same for the opposition. Such interpretations and 'acceptance' of game orchestration are premised on it conforming to their desires for the team to succeed, based upon the strength of their affiliation to the Riders.

Further reinforcing the varying interpretations of fans, the presence of mascots, cheerleaders and dance music, appealed in differing ways. Specifically, these aspects of razzmatazz complimented the broader desire for family entertainment of several fans, less centrally concerned with game outcomes. Phil for example, emphasised that the orchestration of the event made it 'family friendly' and added to the excitement of games for him. He noted: "the music . . . my daughter was greatly impressed by, she's a big hip-hop fan and all this sort of stuff which goes along with
the basketball image. . . Yeah, the music’s great, I enjoy watching the cheerleaders and the kids do as well. . . . it all adds to the excitement” (interview, 04/03/00). Thus, Phil’s interpretation was contextualised by his desire for his families enjoyment. In a similarly positive vein, Marjorie noted “the cheerleaders are great . . . you need a bit of razzle-dazzle” (interview 26/02/00). She further highlighted the importance of ‘game narration’, by explaining “if you don’t know a great deal about basketball, you need those oral clues, to know what’s going on” (interview, 26/02/00). In this case Marjorie’s lack of knowledge of the game benefited from the guidance of game commentary, hence she was receptive. This selection of responses emphasises interpretations of razzmatazz underpinned by desires for family entertainment, and ‘education’ to the uninitiated. Notably, these interpretations differ from those fans noted above, that centred upon the way it could help the crowd urge on the team.

Also demonstrating the patterns of pragmatic engagement, teenage girls, Jenny and Davina, exercised a selective acceptance toward razzmatazz and game presentation. Specifically, whilst being accepting of dance music, they disliked the cheerleaders. Jenny’s attitude is illustrated in the extract below:

MF: . . . What do we think about those kinds of things like the music and the cheerleaders? Becky, perhaps do you want to start us off?
J: It does add atmosphere to it, and it does, like, if there was no music at the beginning it might be a bit more flat, and people wouldn’t get as in to it and things, and erm, the cheerleaders, it’s like a break and people just sit there and watch
MF: Do you like them?
J: What the cheerleaders?
MF: Yeah
J (reticent): I don’t, but other people might
(focus group, 24/03/00)

This extract highlights that whilst Jenny was receptive toward the music which contributed to the atmosphere of games, the cheerleaders presented little attraction for her. Additionally, Davina, explained the lack of appeal of cheerleaders to her. She said: “No, the cheerleaders don’t really appeal to me either, but I think the music does sort of, it sort of hypes you up a bit more, puts you in the mood . . . I think it just adds to the atmosphere as well” (focus group, 24/03/00). In this way, whilst dismissive of cheerleaders, she liked music and the atmosphere at games. This sentiment was
further echoed by Susan, a middle-aged mother, who expressed: “Erm, I like the music, yeah, I’m not bothered about the cheerleaders [laughs], the girls, no, but the music ... yes, the music’s good”. In this way, Susan’s comments reinforce the potential for differential engagement with the elements of game orchestration.

The responses, outlined above, demonstrate heterogeneous interpretations of razzmatazz being contextualised by fans particular sense of their own consumption. Such findings also provide a salutary warning to assumptions of a uniform response to Americanisation. Alternative to the pragmatic ‘acceptance’ of game presentation voiced by most fans, highlighting the room for ‘alternative voices’, Graham, offered an overtly critical perspective of razzmatazz. He explained “...they’ve got guys running on in a spotlight, and it just doesn’t do anything for me ... there is a point to which razzmatazz can get in the way, and I think sometimes we’re too ‘hung up’ on razzmatazz, the Americans do it much better”. (interview, 26/02/00). This quotation shows that game presentation did not appeal to Graham’s enjoyment of the game. Alternatively, he felt that orchestration can ‘get in the way’ of his appreciation of the sport itself. Also notable is his conviction that whilst it may be appropriate in ‘America’, in Chicago, for example, it is less so in Leicester! He confirmed: “I’m more a purist than some people, you know, I’m more concerned with good basketball than with some of these little irrelevant distractions. I would much rather see a devotion to what the game is all about” (interview, 26/02/00). Graham’s perspective is notable for it’s distinction from the views of other fans, noted above, who were pragmatically receptive to razzmatazz. Alternatively, Graham was dismissive, describing it as an “irrelevant distraction” which he viewed as detracting from what “the game is all about”. Specifically, this is grounded in his personal appreciation of the sport of basketball itself. This example shows the potential for ‘alternative voices’ within the fandom which, in this case shows how differing conceptions of the game contour engagement with Americanised game presentation.

The data regarding fans responses to razzmatazz and game orchestration show elements of both similarity and subtle variation across the Riders fandom. As noted
above, fans interpretations were largely accepting of razzmatazz. Alternatively, interpretations were contoured by pragmatic considerations of how game presentation conformed to their enjoyment and sense of consumption of the game. Several fans, for example, saw razzmatazz as significant based upon its role in urging the crowd to ‘get behind the team’. Other interpretations emphasised its role in contributing to the ‘family’ entertainment of Riders games. Significantly, such interpretations may not be mutually exclusive. Alternatively, differential ‘readings’ may be shared by fans with varying senses of fandom, but subject to differing levels of emphasis according to their specific self-understandings. That is to say, it may be possible for fans to simultaneously associate razzmatazz with both urging the team on, and their own sense of enjoyment. Their ‘reading’ therefore will ultimately depend on the emphasis of their own consumption. Demonstrating the capacity for differing perspectives, ‘alternative voices’ were also apparent. Most notably, Graham offered a critical view of game presentation, and was dismissive of razzmatazz, as it did not conform to his ‘purist’ sense of basketball. These variations of response, demonstrate the potential for differing interpretive frameworks resulting in nuanced readings of the Americanised presentation of basketball.

7.2.2 American Players: Effort, Commitment, Local Pride and the Desire for Entertainment

As Chapter four has noted, the issues surrounding foreign, largely American, players has been a recurrent source of debate in British basketball since the mid 1970s. Specifically, concerns regarding the marginalisation and development of British players and the welfare of the national team, have been countered by entrepreneurs advocacy of American ‘star’ players to ensure the commercial viability of the game. Riders fans perspectives on American players reflected both the broader concerns regarding the welfare of the ‘indigenous’ British game and pragmatic desires for Riders success, and desires to see entertaining, skilful players. Perspectives on
American players, as a consequence, were characterised by complex and at times competing concerns. The result is intricate, and at times contradictory 'readings'.

Among numerous fans there was a widespread acknowledgement of the superior playing abilities of American players compared to their indigenous counterparts. As Christian reinforced: “the Americans are obviously a lot superior to home players” (focus group, 01/04/00). Similarly capturing this sentiment, Jim responded unequivocally to my question of whether a player was British or not? “Yes, that’s why he’s crap” (field observations, 14/10/98). This comment captures several fans comparative perceptions of American and British players. As a consequence, many fans acknowledged American players as instrumental in the success of the team. Capturing this, David suggested: “... it’s the only way you’re gonna win, or do well at all in this league, if you’ve got a coach who’s got contacts in America and he can get good players from colleges over to play for you” (focus group, 15/03/00).

Consequently, he saw the recruitment of Americans as pivotal to club success, indeed, as ‘the only way’. In this light, numerous fans perceptions of foreign players were contoured by the desire for the team to succeed, to which the presence of Americans was seen as essential.

Despite this acknowledgement of the playing prowess of Americans and their importance to team success, several fans made specific linkages between players levels of commitment and their national origins. Specifically, they questioned Americans sense of loyalty to the city of Leicester, and consequently the Riders. The following extract captures how some fans perceived American players as less able to identify with the city:

Alan: ... a lot of import players, they don’t associate with the local community
Denise: There’s no pride in wearing that shirt is there . . .
Alan: Yeah, because they don’t identify with Leicester, they’ve probably never heard of Leicester before.
Denise: Which, Hilroy (Thomas) always had pride to wear that shirt, he always wanted to wear a Leicester Riders shirt, has done since he was twelve years old.
(interview, 19/09/00)

In this extract Alan and Denise contrast the efforts of ‘import’ players who, they speculate, ‘don’t associate with the local community’, with a Leicester-born player
(Hilroy Thomas) who Denise suggests: ‘always had pride to wear a Leicester Riders shirt’. Hence they perceive a problem with import players, with whom they associate ‘no pride’ in representing the Riders, compared to locally-born players. Denise continued: “I have a tendency to think the English players actually have a greater pride in wearing the Leicester jersey than the imports” (interview, 19/09/00). In this way some fans questioned migrant players sense of identification with the city and loyalty to the team. The issue of imported players effort and commitment to the club was similarly questioned by Leslie, whose scepticism was apparent: “They’re just here for the basketball aren’t they, they’re not here for the club” (focus group, 15/03/00). In a similar manner, Christian proposed: “British lads, they tend to work harder, maybe it’s just a cultural thing” (focus group, 01/04/00). This comment reinforces the perceived level of identification with club and city as a consequence of the differing cultural background of the players.

Similar sentiments were offered by David who questioned American players level of commitment to the club:

D: ... the Americans, you just never get the feeling ... that they really care, and they really want the team to win and they want to play for the Riders, I just always get the impression that they must be a bit depressed having to come over here to this sort of arena after playing in their universities, and you know, you just feel sorry for them, like, ‘oh you're just all the rejects that didn’t quite make the NBA, or get good contracts in Europe, and you've had to come to this’ (focus group, 15/03/00).

As this quotation demonstrates, David possessed an awareness of the broader political-economy of basketball labour migration, and linked this to the problem of American players’ lack of affiliation to the Riders. Specifically, he suggests the low status of the British league on the global labour hierarchy renders the Riders an inferior option for those American players not able to secure contracts in the NBA or higher profile professional leagues in Europe. Hence, he viewed Americans players in Britain as: “the rejects that didn’t quite make the NBA”. The consequence of this, he felt, is that they have little commitment to the club, noting: “you just never get the feeling, with a lot of them, that they really care”, as the British league is, in basketball terms, a ‘last chance alley’ relative to more desirable career routes. Of
note is David’s knowledge of the global labour hierarchy, and the way in which this contextualises Americans playing for the Riders. His comment also reinforces his (and others) scepticism regarding the commitment of American imports.

Echoing fans concerns regarding the commitment of American players, Neil explained how he resented the wage burden of Americans on the club, who he viewed as of inferior quality to earlier imports (specifically Gene Waldron⁵).

when I first came twelve years ago ... American players were of better quality, and wanted less money, now they want, you know, ‘Mr Mediocre from NCAA College Wherever’ turns up here, wants to sign a contract for X-thousand pounds, and he’s no better than, Gene Waldron - couldn’t wipe the floor with Gene Waldron’s shirt half of them, and they expect mega-bucks for doing it! (Neil, focus group, 15/03/00).

Specifically, Neil’s criticisms of “Mr Mediocre from NCAA College wherever” i.e. American players of average ability, illustrates how he resents American players, with little commitment, ‘exploiting’ the club, and also demonstrates his awareness of the migrant ‘talent pipelines’ which feed the British game. In this way, the comments of Neil, David, and others, highlight a potential disjuncture between the labour hierarchy and global movement of players of professional basketball, and local fans sense of loyalty and commitment to the Riders.

Further insights into the perceptions of the difficulties of American players relating to the club came when fans bemoaned the dominance of American players. In this light, both Steve and Terry (referring to the import quota having increased from two foreign players to five) lamented the marginalisation of less skilled, but more committed ‘English lads’. As Steve noted:

there used to be only two foreign players allowed in each team, . . . and we used to get a lot of good young English lads come up, who we’re giving everything . . . and now we’ve got five overseas players allowed, and there’s very little scope for the British players. . . I think it would be far better if we developed the youth we’ve got and bringing in a couple of quality Americans. (Steve, focus group, 15/03/00)

In this quotation, Steve shows how he appreciated and identified with the level of effort he associated with “young English lads . . . who were giving everything”. On this basis he bemoans the dominance of Americans and expresses a desire to invest in
indigenous youth development with more minimal American migration. This sentiment was also reflected in the comments of Terry, who argued:

you might as well just have two American players, like we used to have in the 'good old days', and then have the rest of the squad built up from basic English lads who might not be the best of basketball players, but I used to enjoy them going on, because there was a good rapport with those players, you felt that they were really playing for the club (Terry, focus group, 15/03/00)

Notable in both Terry and Steve's desire to see more English players is the perceived level of commitment of indigenous personnel to the club (as reflected in fans perspectives given above), and a sense of identification with fans. As Terry noted:

"there was a good rapport with those players, you felt that they were really playing for the club". That is to say, he preferred to see the high levels of commitment and effort from English players, than American 'mercenaries' who despite being better players, he argued lack loyalty.

What these extracts demonstrate, alongside the views highlighted above, is that underpinning the desire of these fans for more indigenous players is the levels of commitment to the club which fans associate with them, relative to American imports. Significantly, these perspectives demonstrate the way in which some fans resistance and cynicism toward American players may be contextualised by their own desire for players to demonstrate commitment, rather than concerns regarding the broader political-economy of the game and the marginalisation of British players.

Viewing fans, on the basis of the evidence above, as simply 'anti-American', however, is overly simplistic. To do so obscures the complexity of how pragmatic concerns contour engagement with the local-global basketball nexus. As noted above, Americans were acknowledged as pivotal to team success. This factor, alongside the experience of specific 'committed' Americans, served to 'complicate' fans interpretations. For example, highlighting some fans primary orientation toward the team winning, and questioning the distinction between Americans who don't identify with the club, and 'committed' English players, Terry (who had expressed how he favoured "English lads") noted: "I think it depends on the personality, that's the critical thing, because we've had American's who give everything" (focus group,
15/03/00). Similarly, Alan responded: “it doesn’t matter whether you’re English, you know, you can have English quitters, as well as you can have American quitters, erm its about individual mettle”. (interview, 29/09/00). Alan expanded, outlining the qualities he valued as “integrity, work ethic and intensity” (interview, 19/09/00).

Regarding the qualities he wished to see in players, Neil explained: “just a grafter, you know, somebody who’s going to, every night, want to play basketball” (focus group, 15/03/00). In this way, it seems that despite a general preference toward English players on the basis that they are more likely to demonstrate commitment to the ‘cause’ of the club, fans acknowledged that Americans were also capable of that commitment and effort they sought, and could thus be viewed favourably. Perspectives on Americans, despite the predisposition for scepticism, were subsequently contextualised dependent on individual cases.

On this basis, several fans emphasised the effort and commitment of players, rather than national origins, as the key to how they viewed them. Capturing this, Christine explained: “it doesn’t matter where they come from, if it’s America fine, let’s have American quality, but equally if we’ve got a Brit that can do the job, let’s have him” (focus group, 15/03/00). Further demonstrating an emphasis on effort and commitment, irrespective of national origins, George questioned the commitment of one of the teams locally-born players. He explained, “I sometimes question the commitment of Karl Brown . . . I know he’s a Leicester lad, but sometimes you just get the feelings that he’s just there for the money sort of thing, you know, he doesn’t really seem to be ‘with’ the club” (interview, 03/03/00). Thus, a locally-born British players commitment was questioned in the same way Americans were on the basis of the effort he displayed. This evidence suggests that amongst supporters, a simplistic pro-British, anti-American stance is not necessarily apparent. Alternatively, perceptions of American players are contextualised by the levels of commitment individual players demonstrate, despite the pre-disposition of several fans to favour English players on the basis of cultural stereotypes regarding ‘work ethic’. The result is complex, and multi-layered perspectives on Americans representing Leicester.
These views are further complicated by a series of perspectives on American players, considering them to provide more excitement than their English counterparts. Phil, for example emphasised the ‘better spectacle’ they offered:

_I think they can only do good for British basketball_, because they improve the players that are already here, okay it probably reduces the chances of a local guy getting in your team - we’ve got two or three here, but not outstanding talent - but I think _it makes the game a better spectacle_ if you’ve got better players (interview, 04/03/00).

Hence, Phil’s opinion was linked to his desire that games should provide ‘spectacle’, which he associated with the ‘better’ American players. Specifically, he viewed this as an acceptable trade-off, despite the fact it “reduces the chances of a local guy getting in your team”. Similar perspectives emphasised American players contributions to their enjoyment of Riders games: “... I think its great that you’ve got the Americans for the flair and skill” (Harry, focus group, 01/04/00). Similarly, Delia emphasised: “I think watching the Americans play is exciting” (focus group, 24/03/00). In this way, several fans opinions captured the presence of American players as positive, premised on the entertainment and spectacle they associated with them.

Allied to the entertainment appeal of American players, perspectives were also contoured by the sense of them contributing, in a wider sense, to the indigenous game. For example, several fans expressed the view that the presence of Americans acts to ‘develop’ indigenous players. Davina, for example, suggested: “because it’s an American based game, I think they can bring that knowledge to Britain, and educate, like, local based players as well” (Davina, focus group, 24/03/00). Likewise, Sherry noted: “... I think they’ve had a strong influence on, erm, the Riders and basketball in the UK, particularly in schools. ... I think they’ve inspired a lot of youngster into basketball most definitely” (focus group, 24/03/00). Similarly, Leslie suggested: “... the game’s not big in England ... if children see American players then it might give them an interest.”( focus group, 15/03/00). These comments illustrate how fans perceived Americans to have a positive impact on the indigenous game - whatever the ‘real’ consequences of such recruitment. These impacts were
seen in terms of generating interest, inspiring youngsters and 'educating' British players. Such arguments have been expressed since the 1970s (see Maguire, 1988).

This data shows that fans perspectives are constituted of a complex range of perspectives on American players. They draw upon several considerations including: concerns regarding the welfare of the British game, commitment and loyalty to the club and city, the development of indigenous players, and the desire for entertainment. The consequences are complex, and at times, contradictory perspectives. For example, several fans who acknowledged the entertainment value of Americans, also expressed a simultaneous desire for more indigenous personnel. Notably, they did not link the presence of Americans with the marginalisation of British players. Katie, for example, suggested: "I think (Americans) bring a lot more of the skills into the game, and I think it can help the British players to feel, sort of, part of that basketball tradition of America... it's just a shame that they're aren't more British players who are as good. (focus group, 01/04/00). In this way, Katie simultaneously lamented the lack of English players, considered Americans to assist British player development, and valued the skills Americans brought to the game. The co-existing desire for the recruitment of Americans and the development of more indigenous players, however, is contradictory. This example shows how views on Americans can be characterised by potentially competing priorities within fans identities and consumption.

Outside of the dominant interpretations which featured 'negotiated' engagement with American players presence an 'alternative' interpretation was again apparent. Graham, for example, viewed the issue of foreign players with reference to a direct concern for the health of the broader British game. He explained, "one of the biggest problems in British basketball is that we've got too many Americans... until you get young kids brought in... you're always going to be reliant on superior imports, and I think it's to the shame of British basketball that there is not more investment in young players" (interview, 26/02/00). In this way he demonstrates a concern for the broader welfare of the British game, and specifically bemoans the lack
of junior development which he linked to the presence of Americans. This alternative ‘resistant’ voice has been a persistent, yet marginalised feature of British basketball over the past twenty years. By means of a solution he advocates: “a 10% reduction next year, a 10% reduction the next year, so there’s a gradual reduction. At the same time [there needs to be] an improvement in the amount of investment into young people” (interview, 26/02/00). Hence, Graham’s reaction, was centred around the desire for the development of indigenous players, seeing the domination of imports as harmful to the indigenous game.

On the issue of migrant players, a range of perspectives reinforce the view that there exists a complex and subtle variation within the Riders fandom. What these perspectives largely share in common is pragmatic engagement with the issue of American players. In particular, fans opinions were contextualised by the desire for players, irrespective of origins, to demonstrate commitment and loyalty to the club with their on-court performances. On these grounds, several favoured indigenous ‘lads’, who they associated with such qualities yet were receptive to Americans who also demonstrated ‘commitment’ and ‘work ethic’. This ‘conditional acceptance’ of Americans was underpinned by the acknowledgement of their pivotal role in the team being successful in the British game. Further interpretations meanwhile, emphasised the superior skills and entertainment which fans perceived Americans brought to the game. Notably, such perspectives were counterpoised with a general, although paradoxical, desire for more British players. The complex engagement with the presence of American players demonstrates the nuanced nature of the local-global interplay. Specifically, responses are contoured by a series of pragmatic dimensions of local fans identities and consumption of basketball. They are also contextualised by a general pre-disposition to favour ‘local’ players, underpinned by local pride issues and cultural stereotypes. Finally, broader concerns regarding the welfare of the indigenous game and considerations of the broader political-economic status of the British game are ‘at play’.
7.2.3 Local-Global Comparisons: The NBA and British Basketball

As the previous chapter has noted, fans experiences of live basketball are marked by the co-presence of the NBA in Britain. Contact with the NBA, for Riders fans, took the form of either viewing television coverage or purchasing merchandise. The most visible evidence of this co-presence was the appearance of NBA merchandise amongst the crowd at Riders games. Primarily, this constituted teenage boys wearing NBA 'vests' or 'baseball' caps. However, this was limited compared to those fans wearing Riders merchandise. Whilst not worn in significant numbers itself, Riders caps, vests and scarves were in far greater evidence than NBA equivalents. As a means of asserting membership and identification, Riders merchandise was principally worn by the most dedicated fans.

The co-existence of the British game and the NBA was probed in the questionnaire. The subsequent comparisons and preferences of Riders fans were revealing in the light of NBA marketing in Britain, which is characterised by the rhetoric of the league as the 'worlds best' (as outlined in Chapter 4). As Chapter 5 revealed, this positioning is reinforced in NBA television coverage, alongside the implicit subordination of the British game within a global hierarchy.

In the case of TV coverage, a greater number of questionnaire respondents expressed a preference for viewing British basketball (55%) compared to the NBA (45%). Hence, a small preference for watching the British game was evident, although clearly the presence of the NBA commanded the preference of a substantial proportion of fans. Such findings point to a complex interplay between attachments to the British game and perceptions of the NBA. Caution is necessary, however, in interpreting TV preferences, due to the mediating factors of accessibility and broadcast times of coverage. As Chapter 5 outlined, the British game appears primarily on the satellite, subscription-based BSKYB network, whilst the NBA is more freely accessible on the terrestrial channel ITV. Withstanding this, it is significant that the figures point to marginal preferences for the British game, despite
its subordinate status and greater difficulty of access, and warrants further exploration.

Expenditure on merchandise also reflected a preference for the British game. Of those purchasing merchandise (a total of 46% of the questionnaire sample), 67% reported buying the indigenous equivalent, compared to 51% purchasing NBA merchandise. Hence, as with TV coverage, a small preference for the British game was apparent. Such a finding points to a further disparity between local fans' identification of the 'better' American game and their preferences for consumption. That is to say, they prefer to consume that which is associated with the lower status brand (in terms of the global hierarchy). Also significant to note is that goods associated with the British game are not as readily accessible in contrast to the NBA brand which does appear in high status, 'High-Street' shops and outlets.

These figures are also suggestive of a degree of 'overlap' between British and NBA 'brands'. This latter finding may be suggestive of a process of pluralisation, in that some fans come to identify with and consume the merchandise of both forms of basketball. The key questions, in this light, surround the lines of distinction that local consumers draw between them. Although limited, these questionnaire findings present interesting leads in the context of local-global identity politics. Despite attempts by the NBA to 'locate' the NBA as 'worlds best', in terms of merchandising and television coverage there is an overall preference amongst fans for the indigenous game. This highlights issues of relevancy and identity which mediate the discourse of NBA marketing in Britain among Riders fans.

Utilising a technique based upon the work of Klein (1988, 1989), I explored the co-presence of NBA and British basketball amongst Riders fans. To do so I posed a hypothetical question, designed to explore fans sense of cultural identification. Fans were asked if, all things being equal, i.e., price, quality, they would rather wear the cap or clothing of the Riders, or an NBA cap or clothing. They were also questioned regarding the reason for their choice. Results were revealing, pointing to a greater propensity for identification with the British game. 67% of fans said they
would rather wear a Riders cap or clothing, the remaining 33% expressing a preference for the NBA equivalent. The reasons given for these selections highlighted several dimensions of fans identification with the Riders.

A series of responses which explained a preference for the Riders cap or clothing were related to an identification with, and sense of emotional attachment to the team, on the basis of relevance to fans own lives. Several quotations reflecting this can be cited. Take the following examples:

"I identify more with the Riders and don't particularly care about "street cred" of branded clothing"
"It's our team"
"Want to support my team - feel more 'in touch' with them"
"Riders are the team we support - no emotional interest in NBA teams"
"You need to support your own team. God help us!!!"

The opening quotation illustrates that, for some fans, the sense of identification they feel for the Riders overrides considerations of 'street cred'. That is to say, identification with the Riders outweighed the fashionable status associated with the NBA. The final quotation (in reference to recent poor team performances) powerfully illustrates the sense of emotional obligation inherent in the preference for the Riders, irrespective of the presumed or prescribed quality of the 'brand'. Specifically, it highlights this particular fans affiliation to the Riders despite the apparent unattractiveness of that identification due to the losing team.

Further responses explaining a preference for identification with the Riders emphasised the strength of local affiliations and identities. This affiliation with the Riders, in preference to the NBA, provides evidence of the resonance of the club with local identities and civic pride. The strength of such affiliations, for these fans, supersede the 'street cred' and image associated with the NBA. Examples of this are illustrated in the following quotations, drawn from questionnaire findings:

"Local team and spirit of pride"
"Home town club"
"Riders has more significance for me living in Leicester"
"Local pride"
"Loyalty to our side"
"Local pride and loyalty to team"
"I'm a Riders fan and would rather be associated with my local team than any other team"
What these quotations reinforce is the association of the Riders with the city of Leicester and with the club as a source of local pride. Significantly, these provide an 'anchor' for identification with the Riders in preference to the NBA which is not associated with such characteristics.

Finally, a series of fans responses illustrate national identities and pride, as paramount to some preferences for identification with the Riders. Linked to this, anti-American sentiment was also evident. Questionnaire responses demonstrating these themes included:

"Patriotic"
"I like British basketball, not the NBA"
"Loyalty to the home game"
"I support British basketball"
"Who wants Yankee crap"
"why wear something that's nothing to do with you"

As these quotations demonstrate, forms of identification with the Riders were also based upon affiliation to both the country more generally: 'patriotic'; and the indigenous game specifically: "I support British basketball". Also evident was anti-American feeling from a fan: "Who wants Yankee crap", and a lack of resonance, in the suggestion that the NBA is "nothing to do with you". On the basis of these examples, it is clear that links with national identities and loyalty to British basketball are also entwined with affiliations to the Riders. This is in preference to identification with NBA. Those who claim that the NBA dominates the local may be over-stating their case. Yet, we do need to account for why the NBA brand had some appeal.

Those responses that opted for the NBA product were largely characterised by reference to the greater recognition of the league, and the fashion 'kudos', or 'street cred', of NBA brands. Similarly, the higher status of the league, relative to the British game, was noted as a factor. Typical statements explaining preferences for the NBA reflecting these reasons are given below:

"Better known name - more street cred"
"Because they are famous teams known around the world"
"Because the NBA has the image of being the best basketball league"
"Because NBA is better"
"More people recognise NBA than any other merchandise"

These responses demonstrate that the NBA was associated with a particular, fashionable image. This was explained by fans as based on the higher status and global ‘presence’ of the American league in comparison to the British game.

Preliminary observations such as these findings, highlight a series of dimensions of the lines of distinction between the two ‘brands’ drawn by fans. Those fans opting to identify with the British game draw upon the emotional attachment, local identities and pride, and identification with British basketball more broadly. Fans also pointed to a lack of relevance or identification with the NBA or anti-Americanism, as a reason for identifying with the British game. Alternatively, those with a preference for the NBA drew upon the status and world wide recognition of the league, relative to the British game.

Exploring this co-presence with reference to interview data demonstrates how engagement with the NBA, whilst contoured by the senses of identity and consumption noted above, is also shaped by a series of subtle variations, associated with fans own self-understandings and consumption of basketball. Amongst several fans the experience of live Riders games, with often little ‘wider’ interest in the sport of basketball, was reflected in a lack of interest in the NBA. Specifically, this was a consequence of television coverage failing to fulfil the form of entertainment they found at Riders games. That is to say, it was specifically the live, local experience which appealed in their consumption of basketball. The wider concerns of the sport were not their affair! Reflecting this, Delia explained: “we don’t make an effort [to watch the NBA], if it was on the right time of day, on a day and we weren’t doing anything else, but I wouldn’t make an effort, I like the live game” (focus group, 24/03/00). Similarly, Dot, expressed no interest in the NBA, and reinforced that the attraction of basketball to her was the live experience of Riders games: “Err, No, its very hard to watch basketball on television I think, trying to follow it, it’s not like being in the flesh, I’d rather be in the flesh” (interview, 03/03/00). Hence, Dot’s affiliation to the Riders was neither accompanied by or stimulated interest in NBA
television coverage. Alternatively, she drew a distinction between the opportunity to watch live Riders games and viewing the NBA on television.

In a similar manner, others expressed a lack of interest in NBA coverage. For example, Teddy noted “I think its the difference between seeing something on television and seeing something in the flesh. The advantage here is that you are very close to the action” (interview, 04/03/00). Similarly, Jenny noted, “I don’t really go out of my way to watch it, because I don’t really get the same feeling watching it on TV as I do here . . . I don’t really keep up with the NBA, I just like doing, like England and the matches round here and things, so I don’t really watch it on TV” (Jenny, focus group, 24/03/00). Likewise, Davina explained: “I don’t think its quite the same either, just watching it on TV . . . I think because of the involvement between you and the players and the other people in the crowd, I think its one of those things that you have to go and watch live” (Davina, focus group, 24/03/00).

Specifically, in this quotation, Davina highlighted that the attraction of basketball for her was related to the experience of the atmosphere and identification with players at live games.

These fans views demonstrate that the specific attraction of basketball and the Riders is linked to the experience of live spectatorship. Significantly, these opinions do not mean that fans necessarily favoured the British game on television, because likewise, it did not fulfil the specific form of entertainment these fans sought from the live game. Notably though, as televised coverage of the NBA is the only source of access to the American league (i.e. British fans cannot watch it live), these fans expressed little interest. Again, we may have to reconsider how we conceptualise the impact of mediated NBA global images and local meanings and experiences in this context.

When pressed on comparisons, fans largely expressed a greater identification with the televised British game as a consequence of ‘relating’ more closely with that version, due to their identification with live Riders game. As Katie explained: “I like the British, because with playing a lot of the teams, you know the faces, and then you
can relate to it a bit more” (focus group, 04/04/00). Particularly, Katie captured the sense of relevance in suggesting: “you can relate to it a bit more”. This contrasted with her view of the NBA: “its exciting to watch the NBA games, but you don’t tend to know who people are” (focus group, 01/04/00) Hence, despite acknowledging the potential excitement of the NBA, she favoured the ‘British’ game on the basis of relevance to her engagement with basketball, in that she knew and could identify with the teams and players. Of course, as previously observed, there is a degree of irony evident in this preference. After all, given the domination of the game by Americans, the ‘Britishness’ of the local version can be called into question.

Reflecting identification with the indigenous game in preference to the NBA, a discussion between Denise and Alan illustrated the greater personal relevance of the British game (BBL) to fans:

MF: Which do you get more ‘worked up’ about, the BBL or the NBA?
A: I think the BBL, because if Bob Donewald’s on the telly being thrown out of a game or whatever, I can go “yeah Bob and . . .” cos I know Bob a bit or whatever.
D: It’s more personal is the BBL
A: It’s a bit more personal
D: You know, you know the players, the arena’s are small, you’ve got your friends down there.

This discussion illustrates how their own knowledge of the players, coaches and personnel of the British game renders it more ‘personal’ than the NBA. These extracts demonstrate fans stronger sense of identification with the British game, resulting in a preference for watching it on television, rather than the NBA version. They did so on the basis that it is more relevant to their own lives, and experiences, of supporting the Riders, their ‘local’ team.

In keeping with the broader attempt to capture the complexity of fandom and the heterogeneity of responses, it should be noted that a small number of fans did express an appreciation of, and interest in watching the NBA due to knowledge and interest in the sport of basketball more broadly. Thus, Alan explained that when it came to TV coverage “I can engage with BBL [the British game] and get excited and shout at the television, erm and the odd time when NBA games are on . . . I can get screaming and shouting the same” (interview, 19/09/00). In a similar manner Graham
acknowledged the playing superiority of the NBA, and expressed a keen interest: "I follow it with interest, it's one of the best sources of basketball in the world". In this way his appreciation of basketball contoured his interest of the NBA, as the highest standard of basketball available. Notably, such views appear to be premised on a broader engagement with the sport of basketball rather than an emphasis on the experience of live attendance at Riders games. Yet, such responses were infrequent.

This data points to differing sense of engagement with the British game and NBA by fans. The relevancy of the British game is associated with local identities, civic pride and national identities, whilst the NBA was alternatively linked to 'fashionable', images and status and a high standard of basketball. Fans perspectives are, once again, complex and highly contextualised. Simplistic notions of resistance, or acceptance, fail to capture the nuanced nature of engagement with the presence of the NBA. Specifically, fans ‘readings’ are contextualised by their own sense of engagement with Riders games. Subsequently, perspectives on the NBA are contoured by fans understandings of their own consumption, broader affiliations and identification with the sport of basketball, as well as the strength of local identities. This data is consistent with that presented above on fans engagement with razzmatazz and migrant players. Specifically, fans engagement with these ‘global flows’, draws upon the context of a series of dimensions of their own sense of fandom. The following section explores the multifaceted nature of fandom in greater depth.

7.3 Local-Global Engagement: Fandom, Identity and Consumption

The social location of Riders fandom lies primarily in the upper middle class families who dominate the basketball audience (as reflected in the questionnaire findings, presented in Chapter six). In demographic terms then, it is largely homogenous. The data presented in the previous section, however, demonstrates fans engagement with a series of global flows to be complex and multifaceted - characterised by elements of heterogeneity. The data reveals fans interpretations to be
constituted of a series of 'dominant', yet nuanced, interpretations, with potential for 'alternative' voices. The consequence is variable interpretations of global flows, which were illustrated with reference to game presentation and razzmatazz, foreign players and the NBA. Explanations of these patterns of local-global interchange are situated within an understanding of the heterogeneous nature of Riders fandom - the social and cultural environment of fans. This section makes explicit the linkages between the interpretive frameworks of fans consumption and the patterns of local-global interplay observed above.

Fans understandings of their consumption of basketball and their relationship to the club differ in a variety of ways. These nuances surround a series of thematics, which are illustrated in figure 7.1 below. These include the influences of local and civic identity; considerations of national identity; fans variable understandings of their own consumption, the specific pleasures and meanings associated with attendance; the emphasis on the team winning relative to the desire for entertainment; differing senses of identification with the players; and, exciting significance and heightened emotions of spectating. This section explores these thematics and their nuanced variation in greater depth.
7.3.1 Commonality and Nuanced Interpretation Within Riders Fandom:

Riders fandom was characterised by aspects of both commonality and nuanced interpretation surrounding the thematics shown in figure 1. Attendance at Riders games, for example, showed variable sources of attraction to fans. A series of differing emphases were evident in attendees’ motivations to attend basketball, and were consequently reflected in further dimensions of fandom. This is not to suggest, however, that fans can be delineated into distinct groupings in any rigid sense. Alternatively, whilst Riders fandom is constituted of a series of differing interpretive frameworks, there are also areas of commonality. Prior to highlighting the way in which the thematics are ‘played out’ in fans consumption in nuanced ways, it is initially appropriate to illustrate the ways in which the fandom is contoured by commonality.
A common theme across the fandom, for example, was the distinction of basketball games from alternative leisure options, most notably football. This was frequently cited as an attraction of basketball. Symptomatic of this, Marjorie suggested: "I wouldn’t like the atmosphere at a football match, it’s not geared up for families, you couldn’t take a six month old along, and yet here, some of the players wives are sitting there with their babies... and they’re having a lovely time" (interview, 26/02/00). The distinction from football was also captured, in direct terms by David, who noted: "... There is a much friendlier/relaxing atmosphere at (Riders) games than LCFC, and the whole game ‘experience’ is more comfortable and enjoyable (i.e. no worries about violence)". (Questionnaire comment, 07/03/99). In this case, David highlights that it is in fact the distinction from the masculine rivalries and status seeking (which can result in violence) of the football environment (see King, 1998) which appeals to him. Specifically, he notes the friendlier sense of rivalry and comfort of watching basketball games. Indeed, whilst rivalries and passions at times could become intense within the basketball environment, fans of both teams would frequently interact, as distinct from the rigid segregation of rival fans seen at football.

A further distinction from football is the role of basketball in fans broader lives. Specifically, King (1998) notes that amongst ‘the lads’ football fandom "the pride they attain from the success of their club and their support brings them recognition in their everyday lives" (p.153). In contrast, even the most passionate Riders fans distinguished between viewing the game and their broader lives. The way in which the emotional ‘investment’ in Riders games were rationalised in the context of supporters lives was captured by Alan, who described his feelings after a defeat:

... emotionally it can depress you... yeah it does affect you mood wise, for a period - quite brief, because we live in the real world, it’s only a game, but for half an hour I can be quite upset and quite angry and frustrated, but, you know, thirty minutes and life carries on doesn’t it. (interview, 19/09/00).

Here, Alan, one of the Riders most passionate fans, rationalises his emotional investment in the team within the context of his own life. Specifically, he situates the
disappointment and 'depressing' experience of a defeat in his 'real world'. Whilst he places importance on the team winning, it is not seen as the 'be all and end all'. In this manner, distinctions from 'real life' were characteristic of basketball fandom.

Interestingly, there are areas of overlap with the interpretive framework of football fandom (see King, 1998). Basketball fans, for example, share elements of the practices and experiences surrounding the activation of heightened emotions, and solidarity with the team, characteristic of football 'support'. This is linked to the pride and reflected glory from success on the court felt by fans. For example, discussing the rivalry with Derby, Alan made the explicit link between football fandom and the way rivalries are reflected in basketball fandom: "some people who watch basketball watch Leicester City, and some of it's tied up in that - Leicester City fans and Derby County, there's that East Midlands rivalry again" (interview, 19/09/00). This quotation demonstrates how some fans orientation toward basketball may be influenced by the 'overlap' with the expressive forms of support associated with football. Crucially, in the case of basketball fandom, however, this is not centrally underpinned by masculine affirmation. This is evident in the 'softening' of rivalries and diminished emphasis on game outcome. Alternatively, dominated by families and married couples, basketball fandom diverges from the masculine form of football fandom in significant ways.

A further commonality across the fandom surrounded the intersection of attending Riders games and local identities and civic pride. The consumption of Riders basketball was entwined with local identities and place pride in a series of ways. Illustrating this, Marjorie, explaining her feelings of attachment to the Riders noted: "its loyalty, its Leicester loyalty." (interview 26/02/00). Similarly, Phil, reflecting on his affiliation to the Riders invoked: "that loyalty you feel to your hometown club" (interview, 04/03/00). Hence, Phil’s attachment to basketball was contoured by 'hometown' ties. Numerous quotations demonstrate the strong connection, between the Riders and local identities: "You feel elated and you think 'great, our team won', and yeah . . . you take pride in your city don't you" (Katie,
Loyalty to the Riders as a sense of obligation, was expressed by Dot in the following terms: “it’s our local team, so we support them you see; whether they’re winning or not . . . they’ve had a bad year this year, but we shall be back next year, hoping it will be a good year” (interview, 03/03/00). Significant here is Dot’s acknowledgement of the way local ties contour attendance, despite the poor playing record of the team. Also apparent is the serialised nature of fandom in that Dot will ‘be back next year’ irrespective of the teams’ performance. These examples demonstrate how consumption of basketball is entwined with civic affiliations. As a consequence, identification with the Riders is linked to loyalty toward the city of Leicester.

Loyalty to the Riders as a consequence of broader identification with the city was also reflected in a sense of affiliation to Leicester teams across several sports. This was reflected in a desire to see the city’s teams being successful irrespective of the sport. As Phil explained: “you love to see Leicester doing well at anything, you know, whether its football, basketball, rugby or cricket or whatever . . . you take a lot of pride in that” (interview, 04/03/00). Similarly, Christian explained, “For me personally its Leicester, I mean that’s it, I mean its Leicester whether its City, Tigers, County whatever, I mean, I’m Leicester, so I support any county team” (Christian, focus group, 24/03/00). What these quotes reinforces is that affiliation to the Riders was contextualised by some fans broader affiliation to the city of Leicester. This was reflected in their desire to see the football, cricket and rugby teams being successful. In this way attendance at Riders games fitted into a broader framework of civic affiliation.

Concurrent with the potential for ‘alternative voices’ within the fandom, intersections with local identities could also be marked by absences. Affiliation to the city’s teams on the basis of ‘Leicester loyalty’ were not shared by all those I encountered. For example, Teddy’s involvement in watching the Riders was not contingent to a wider affiliation to Leicester teams. He noted: “it’s the Riders because its convenient, it’s on the doorstep . . . we don’t follow rugby, football or
anything" (interview, 04/03/00). For Teddy, 'convenience' appears to be the primary factor in affiliation to the Riders, with little sense of a broader 'Leicester loyalty'. Also reflecting this, Graham noted that if he were personally to move location he would watch an alternative team. he explained "if I was living in Worthing, I'd watch them. It's the game rather than Leicester Riders." (interview, 26/02/00). The attitudes of Teddy and Graham stand in contrast to the fans, for whom affiliation to the Riders was component to 'Leicester loyalty'. These perspectives are demonstrative of the potential for consumption of basketball to be unconnected to senses of civic identity. Notably, however, these were marginalised 'alternative voices', relative to dominant interpretations within the fandom.

As the interpretations of the NBA previously outlined demonstrated, local identities and civic pride were a central source of identification with the Riders in preference to the American game. Notably, local identities were implicated in several fans preference for identifying more closely with the British game over the NBA. These attachments then, act as an important factor in the resilience of local basketball ties and affiliations, to the presence of the NBA. As outlined above, aside from the common factors of the distinction from football and local identities, the fandom was characterised by variance in the central interpretations of consumption and the attractions of basketball. These are explored below.

7.3.2 The Attractions of Riders Games: Loyalty and/or Entertainment

Despite the fandom sharing areas of similarity, the appeals of Riders games were marked by nuanced interpretations. One source of variation surrounded the specific attractions of attending games. Variations particularly surrounded the relative balance between team loyalties and entertainment priorities. Linked to the distinction from football, noted above, the appeals of Riders games, reflected in the quotes below, illustrate a significant emphasis central to several fans understandings:

... it was the family friendly atmosphere, I suppose again with images of football, there was no suggestion of violence or arguments or disputes, you know, a lot of children, a lot of variety of ages, a
variety of people and everybody seemed to get on very well even when there’s away support like Derby, you know, there’s no suggestion of trouble or difficulties - you know, it’s a family friendly atmosphere.” (Teddy, interview, 04/03/00)

it’s a family game, you feel safe, it’s a great sport and you can bring the kids, and then at the end even if they haven’t won . . . you can still all get together, you can get onto the pitch . . . and the kids can play, and the Riders are there with them, and they can get their autographs, they talk to them and they muck about with them, it’s a really great family atmosphere (Katie, focus group, 01/04/00).

Specifically, these quotations capture the importance of the suitability of the basketball environment for families - the ‘family friendly’ environment of games.

This appeal was significant for numerous fans. As Marjorie, reflecting on her first experiences of attending, recalled: “the one thing that struck me the most was the fact that it was very family oriented and it was for everybody from six months old to ninety” (interview, 26/02/00). The ‘family oriented’ basketball environment, as an attraction, was reinforced in several comments: “it’s very much a family affair . . .” (Dot, interview, 03/03/00); “(we) were instantly struck by the great atmosphere for the kids . . . we’ve been to 99% of the home games ever since . . . almost every home game we’ve been as a family. (Phil, interview, 04/03/00). Closer examination revealed specific dimensions associated with making basketball ‘family friendly’.

First, the suitability for children was central. Indeed, the environment of Granby Halls, in allowing children to roam whilst parents looked on was important to fans attending with young families. The numbers of children ‘shooting hoops’ behind the seating, in preference to watching the game, was testament to the ‘alternative’ appeals of Riders games to some of the youngest attendees. As Austin explained: “one of the best things is that your kids can have a good time . . . and play with their own ball in a quiet part of the stadium while the match is on” (focus group, 24/03/00). The importance of suitability for children was also evident in several fans explanations that they would not attend games on ‘school nights’ (those evening games followed by school attendance for children the next day): “with Adrian (his son) having school the following day, it’s not the ideal night on a Sunday night” (Teddy, interview, 04/03/00); “we only come when it’s the night when there’s no school the next day” (Delia, focus group, 24/03/00). This reinforces the interpretive
framework of certain fans as oriented toward family entertainment, predicated on the fact that it did not impinge other family priorities.

Second, the perception of the environment as being more receptive to middle-aged females is an appeal to certain fans. An exchange with Susan which captures this is worth quoting at length:

Susan: I find it's something you can do with teenagers, more than a lot of other sports, I think basketball accepts women, middle-aged women, older people, far more...

MF: Than...?

Susan: Than football and other sports, you don't feel daft being a women going to a basketball game, there's far more women, you know.

MF: Right, and that's different...?

Susan: Yes, well as I say, I've done football as well, but it's no comparison, no comparison. Its much more family...you know, especially if you've got boys, its nice to be able to do something with boys that they don't mind taking their mothers to. (focus group, 24/03/00)

As Susan notes “you don’t feel daft being a woman and going to a basketball game”. For her, this was important in that it provided an avenue in which she could bond with her teenage son. Significantly, she noted this was not offered by alternative sports such as football. The propensity for basketball to appeal to middle-aged female fans is consistent with Malcolm’s (2000) suggestion that this is a prerequisite to attracting a family based audience to sports events.

Third, the relative cost of attending games was important in making basketball ‘family friendly’. For example, Teddy, reflecting on the expense for a family attending, explained: “it’s an affordable price...you do look at it as coming out as a family, yeah, the cost of four tickets suddenly becomes relevant...if you’re supporting Leicester City every week it’s a big chunk of money” (interview, 04/03/00). Thus, for Teddy, the cost of attending basketball, relative to football, was an appeal of Riders games. Similarly, others mentioned the relative cost as an attraction: “compared to other sports, to watch, it is far, far cheaper, especially if you’ve got a family. Football tickets are twenty-something pounds per person, you know, juniors - three pounds here, season tickets are affordable...Cost is great”. (Susan, focus group, 24/03/00); “I know what a season ticket at Filbert Street (football ground) is, and we know how much a season ticket for a family of four is here - its ridiculously value for money in terms of entertainment” (Christian, focus
In these quotations it is notable that the cost of attending Riders games is favourably contrasted with either rugby or football in the city. Basketball, being the cheaper alternative by comparison, is thus rendered an attractive proposition as a family entertainment option.

A fourth element of Riders games ‘family friendly’ appeal, was the perceived safeness in which the game is watched. The perception of basketball games differing from football, which many fans associated with potential violence, was attractive to family audiences who sought to avoid such an environment. This is demonstrated in the comments of fans recollecting what attracted them to basketball: “there’s no roughness or anything, that goes on, err, just sort of a nice atmosphere”. (Dot, interview, 03/03/00); “it was something you could take the whole family to, you could take little kids, you could be sitting next to the opposition and chatting to them, and at the time football . . . was in real crowd turmoil, and it was such a contrast to that”. (George, interview, 03/03/00); “its somewhere I can go and feel safe as a fan” (Katie, focus group, 01/04/00). These quotations demonstrate the attraction of basketball perceived as safer than football by fans concerned about the welfare and safety of children.

The environment at games, perceived as receptive to children, female fans, comparatively cheap and safe, and consequently “family friendly” was an attraction, both in generating and sustaining attendance for numerous fans. As Katie summarised: “it’s safe, it’s cheap and the children enjoy it” (focus group, 01/04/00). This appeal suggests that attendance at basketball is contoured by considerations of ‘rational’ consumption choice, selected in preference to alternatives, as it fits the lifestyle and aspirations of the middle-class, family groupings, who dominate the basketball audience. The attractions of attendance, however, was not characterised solely by this ‘rational’ consumption. Alternatively, there are additional underpinnings of fans consumption. Indeed, those specifically attracted by the ‘family friendly’ environment can also attend with dedication, display loyalty toward
the Riders, identify strongly with the teams players, and enjoy the atmosphere created at games.

Centred upon the season ticket holders, some fans orientation toward the game were more centrally characterised by collective identification, and ‘support’ for the team. This form of fandom was reflected in fans vocal encouragement of the team, which illustrated the sense of ‘investment’ in games for some fans. The centrality of these expressive displays of support, to certain fans, was reinforced in Alan’s response to a magazine article which criticised fans for jeering opposing players and officials (Shooting Hoops, Christmas Ed, 1998). His Riders game programme column appealed to fans: “keep laying it on players and officials, keep it loud (keep it clean) but most of all keep it raw, after all, it’s partly the passion that makes it so entertaining . . . let’s enjoy the passion, the banter and the craic” (Sidelines, match programme, 30th Dec., 1998). Hence, Alan illustrates how the vocal, passionate form of support is central to his sense of fandom. Interestingly his proviso: ‘keep it clean’, indicates parameters on expressive support for the team. Capturing this sense of limitations, George noted: “yes, the passions get roused during a game, but they’re under control” (interview, 03/03/00). This may be symptomatic of both the family dominated audience, and the distinction from football noted above. It also signals that even the most passionate Riders fans advocate a less aggressive sense of rivalry compared to football.

A contingent dimension of the solidarity and collective ‘support’ of some Riders fans is the embodied activation of emotions. As Alan explained, the nature of basketball itself contributed to the heightened emotions experienced by supporters. He commented: “I think because it’s a 24 second shot clock, so every 24 seconds you’re either up there ‘yeah’ or down there ‘what were that?’; I think emotionally you’re being ‘ping-ponged’ up and down for 40 minutes” (interview, 19/09/00). The intensification of shared emotions is linked to the ‘investment’ in the team winning. As Ann described her feelings following a victory: “some times I go home and I think, well, I’m on a high, and I can’t believe I’m like that” (focus group, 24/03/00).
Capturing this emotional investment, and the link with the emphasis on winning.

David described a team loss as: "like a dagger to the heart" (focus group, 15/03/00).

In intensifying emotions together, fans affirm the feelings of solidarity, collective identity and loyalty toward the Riders. This level of emotional investment in the team was reinforced when the Riders future was threatened with the closure of Granby Halls. Following this, fans (dominated by the hard-core season ticket holders) swiftly organised a petition, a public demonstration and a letter-writing campaign to protest. This reflects the manner in which emotional investment in the team was not merely reflected in a desire for the team to succeed, but was manifest in the value placed upon the solidarity with the club that supporters felt.

These underpinnings subsequently contour a number of dimensions of fans interpretations, including their expressive behaviour at games and sense of relationships with the team's players. The most loyal fans sense of association with the Riders is also complimented by broader engagement with British basketball. This involves an appreciation, knowledge and sense of affiliation to the sport, as well as following the fortunes of the British league, the national team and viewing televised games.

The variations in the attraction and emphasis of consumption, highlighted above, demonstrate the potential for differing interpretations within the fandom. Whilst some fans emphasised the 'family friendly' qualities of basketball consumption, others placed team loyalties and parochial attachments to the team more centrally. The way in which these variations in attendees sense of fandom contour subsequent engagements with local-global issues are manifold. The patterns of engagement with razzmatazz, for example, are linked to fans motivations for attendance and sense of consumption. Interpretations of razzmatazz, as linked with urging on the team, for instance, reflect that orientation toward the Riders which emphasises loyalty and 'support'. In this sense, interpretations and engagement with tannoy announcements or orchestrated team entrances was grounded in local affiliations and a sense of parochial, expressive 'support' of the team. Alternatively,
those for whom the 'family friendly' appeal was more central, were predisposed to make interpretations of razzmatazz linked with the desire for entertainment and spectacle. Such an interpretive framework thus pre-disposed fans to be more receptive toward cheerleaders or mascots which they associated with 'family-friendly' enjoyment and atmosphere.

It is worth noting that the emphasis on differing dimensions of fandom are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Alternatively, it is a case of balances between multifaceted identification and consumption of Riders games. That is to say, no one fan was solely concerned with 'family friendly' entertainment to the exclusion of affiliation to the team. Alternatively, fandom was marked by variations in the relative emphasis on the differing thematics noted. The heterogeneous interpretations of fandom which underpinned fans differing sense of consumption, were also reflected in the level of emphasis placed on team success. This dimension of fandom is explored below.

7.3.3 The Relative Importance of Winning and Entertainment

The variable interpretations of fandom were evident in fans attitudes toward the importance of the team winning. Specifically, variance in the attractions and priorities of consumption were reflected in the level of importance fans placed on the desire for entertainment compared to a team victory. For example, the greater emphasis placed by some fans on rivalry with other teams, and their fans, was manifest in an emphasis on the Riders winning. Reflecting the importance of a team victory to some fans, Alan noted: "it always matters to me if they win or lose, why do you play if you're not concerned about winning or losing" (interview, 19/09/00). Likewise, Denise reinforced: "at the end of the day if we win games, that's all I'm interested in" (Denise, interview, 19/09/00). Contingent to some fans emphasis on the team winning was the sense of rivalry with other teams. This was particularly heightened when playing local teams or 'Derby matches'. Specifically, contests with
the Derby Storm evoked the strongest rivalry and desire to win. This was reinforced in the discussion between Alan and Denise:

Denise: ... you always want to beat Derby don’t you?
Alan: I want to beat everybody
Denise: Yeah, you do, but there’s always that extra edge I think with Derby, you want to beat Derby, cos it’s the local rivalry isn’t it. I suppose its like a tribe - we’re the tribe from Leicester. (interview, 19/09/00)

Thus, the emphasis on winning was heightened against the closest geographical rival. This extract also illustrates how the emphasis on winning and rivalry is linked to a sense of collective identity and civic pride; evident in Denise’s suggestion: “We’re the tribe from Leicester”.

The role of rivalry and winning were important to fans who identify strongly with the club, meaning that they can ‘bask’ in the reflected glory of team success. As several noted: “if the team’s successful, the supporters are walking ten feet tall” (George, interview, 03/03/00); “you want to feel that you can hold your head high and whatever, and feel good about the result” (Alan, interview, 19/09/00); “you can be on a high for the next day if it was a really good win” (Katie, focus group, 01/04/00). These comments reinforce the importance of winning, as a consequence of the emotional identification with the Riders for these fans.

Significantly, an emphasis on winning and rivalry, was not exclusive to the desire for entertainment. This was reflected in fans caveats that winning, whilst important, is also compromised by the desire for entertainment. Illustrating this, hard-core fans noted: “(it) isn’t everything, if you’ve had a good game, and it’s been neck and neck, well somebody has to lose in basketball, it’s not so bad” (Christine, focus group, 15/03/00); “For about 40 minutes it ain’t about real life, it’s about escapism” (Alan, Sidelines, match programme, 30/12/98). Similarly, Denise, one of the club’s most passionate supporters, explained: “it is entertainment for us at the end of the day, isn’t it, I mean, it’s our release, you know, you go to work, stressful jobs, whatever ... at the end of the day it is entertainment” (interview, 19/09/00). Hence, the emphasis on winning is situated within, even the most passionate fans broader lives, which ‘contextualise’ the desire for a team victory.
Contrary to the perspectives which placed emphasis on winning, some fans de-emphasised the importance of a Riders victory, relative to the entertainment value of games. For example, Dot explained: “it [winning] doesn’t matter - it’s a game” (interview, 03/03/00). This perspective was reinforced in several fans comments: “it’s nice to win, but I think . . . you want entertainment during the game, you want to see a good fast game, each week something happening”. (Teddy, interview, 04/03/00); “if they lose it doesn’t really bother me” (Jenny, focus group, 24/03/00); “I don’t think it matters if they win or they lose” (Davina, focus group, 24/03/00); “even if we’re losing, at least you think, that was a good night” (Teddy, interview, 04/03/00); “Erm, yes, it doesn’t matter to me whether they win or lose though, I don’t worry, if they win, it’s nice - if they lose, there’s always the next game,” (Susan, focus group, 24/03/00). In a similar vein, George, expressed an appreciation of ‘the game’ over the importance of winning: “having played the game I can appreciate a good game of basketball, so the winning and losing, from that point of view doesn’t bother me quite as much so as long as I’ve seen a real good game of basketball.” (interview, 03/03/00). This series of quotations show how, in contrast to those views highlighted above, a Riders victory was not seen as central to numerous fans experience.

These interpretations differ markedly from those views noted above, which emphasise the importance of a Riders victory. Significantly, this variation is linked to the heterogeneous interpretation of fandom. For example, ‘readings’ of razzmatazz were contoured by the varying degrees of importance fans placed on the team winning. Those emphasising team victory made interpretations based on the role of razzmatazz helping the team achieve success. As a consequence aspects of game presentation, such as cheerleaders, were interpreted on the basis of their role in this. The emphasis on entertainment, alternatively, facilitated interpretations through a differing ‘lens’ - that which viewed it as contributing to the ‘family-friendly’ enjoyment and spectacle. Further to these themes of attraction to Riders games and the relative emphasis on winning, the pivotal role of the team itself means that frameworks of fandom were also entwined with perspectives on players. Notably.

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these are significant in subsequent views regarding foreign players. The issue of fans perspectives on players is dealt with in the following section.

7.3.4 Perspectives on the Players

As the clubs ‘on-court’ representatives, the players are a central focus of the fandom. Consequently, many fans expressed feelings of solidarity with the players. Capturing this link, Ann suggested: “it’s a club, supposed to be together, supporters-players” (focus group, 24/03/00). The most loyal and passionate fans, who emphasised team success, reinforced the responsibility of players for high levels of commitment and effort. For these fans, it was important that their own ‘efforts’ (for example, in chanting and supporting the team) were reciprocated by players. This was captured by Neil, who discussed his feelings following a defeat: “... I feel better walking out into the cold night air when they’ve won, erm, I have to say I’ve found the latter stages of this season possibly the most depressing, cause I feel like some of the players don’t look like they’re trying”. (focus group, 15/03/00). Here, Neil reinforces the emphasis on the Riders winning, noted above, and significantly how this is reflected in his expectations on players commitment to the club. In this case, he felt his own desires to see the team win had not been matched by ‘some of the players’. Thus, contingent to his sense of loyalty and commitment to the club, was the expectation that players efforts should be maximal. Denise reinforced this feeling, noting: “It annoys me if I think they’re not trying” (interview, 19/09/00). She subsequently explained how her expectations on the players was grounded in a responsibility toward the club and fans:

I go to work and work hard to earn my money to pay their wages to play basketball, and there was one particular game last year when ... none of the team attempted to play, and I find that really annoying, I did feel upset ... if you’re paid to do a job I think you should at least do it to the best of your ability, and there are times when they haven’t done that and I find that very annoying. (interview, 19/09/00)

This quotation reveals how Denise viewed her expenditure as a fan to impose a level of obligation on players. Significantly, she felt that this had not always been fulfilled.

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Those fans who placed greater emphasis on the entertainment values of basketball, offered subtly differing views of players. Rather than emphasise the responsibility and need for ‘work ethic’, their perspectives reflected feelings of affinity toward Riders players on the basis of their enjoyment of identifying with individuals. Specifically, these fans emphasised a sense of relationship between the crowd and team. As Davina explained:

I think its nice because, erm, you’re so near to the court and to the players, you can feel what they’re feeling, see how they’re feeling, and it just like when you’ve just won, and you run onto the court it’s so nice to be close and personal, and I think its like having a good relationship with the players as well (focus group, 24/03/00).

In this quotation, Davina links the intimacy of Granby Halls with her feelings of ‘close and personal’ affiliation to the players. Also capturing the role of this in his sense of affiliation, Phil mentioned: “you know, (a player) he’d give you the thumbs up when you came in and took your seat, which is great, you feel appreciated really” (interview, 04/03/00).

Several fans reflected similar sentiments regarding affinity with the players. Quotations capturing this included: “the bonding between players and supporters” (interview, 26/02/00); “we feed off how they are reacting ... you feel what they’re feeling” (Sherry, focus group, 24/03/00); “I think sometimes the crowd and the players work with each other ... the players are losing heart, and I think sometimes the crowd lose heart as well, so maybe they are dependent on each other?” (Delia, focus group, 24/03/00); “...you start to get to know their [the players] personality because they go through the whole full range of emotion while they’re playing, I find I can nearly sort of get on their level and relate to them and ... I feel I can get to know them quite quickly” (Katie, focus group, 01/04/00). As the latter comment demonstrates, identifying with individuals was linked to empathetic affiliation of some fans with players. The sense of interdependence between the crowd and players was further illustrated in a discussion, between Katie and Harry, which captured their feeling of identification with one specific player:

H: Well I think about a personality, I mean, like Malcolm Leak, I think he’s brilliant
K: He is ...
H: I mean his facial expressions . . .
K: Excellent, yes . . .
H: His rapport with the crowd’s great
K: Yeah, and a lot of them look to you, and you sort of look back and you think “Oh they want us to egg them on”, so you make more noise
H: That’s right, yeah
K: And you can feel that they need you as much as we need them, and I like that rapport
(focus group, 01/04/00)

This dialogue reinforces how some fans related to, and felt a sense of affinity toward players, as they empathise with their emotions and identify with personalities.

These fans perspectives are distinguishable from those emphasising team loyalty and the importance of victory, in that they stress the interdependent relationship between crowd and fans and emotional identification with players. This contrasts with perspectives which emphasised the need for ‘commitment’ from players, as a responsibility to the club, predicated on the strength of fans own ‘commitment’. Other fans, alternatively, identified with players as entertainers, which was in turn rooted in the emphasis on ‘entertainment value’ rather than the team winning. The consequence was attitudes which ‘held’ players to less accountability toward the fans, in terms of ‘work ethic’ and effort.

This pattern of engagement, with players per se, has consequences for fans perspectives on foreign players noted previously. Significantly, opinions on players which emphasised commitment and work ethic were linked to cultural stereotypes which were sceptical of the efforts of Americans representing Leicester due to a perceived inability to ‘relate’ to the city, or feel the same sense of civic pride held by fans. Those viewing players as ‘entertainers’ were less sceptical and more pre-disposed to view Americans positively. Alternatively, they valued ‘imports’ role in providing entertainment and spectacle. These perspectives of foreign players were also contoured, in significant ways, by local identities and the civic affiliations noted above.
7.4 Summary

The findings presented in this chapter demonstrate that Leicester Riders fans' responses and 'readings' of global flows in British basketball are heterogeneous. The latter section of this chapter has shown how these are linked to the consumption of basketball in Leicester, which is characterised by nuanced interpretive frameworks of fandom. Variance in interpretations surrounded the central attractions, meanings and pleasures of attendance. Some attendees sense of fandom centred on loyalty and 'support' of the Riders. For others meanwhile, the 'family friendly' entertainment values and sense of affinity and identification with players was emphasised. Important to note here, is the manner in which these broad distinctions of fandom are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Alternatively, as illustrated in the data above, there is room for overlap, caveats, nuances and contradictions within individual interpretations.

A common source of attraction, recurrently drawn upon within the Riders fandom, was the distinction with football. Such an emphasis has resonance with Crawford's (1998) speculation of the attraction of 'arena sports', such as basketball. He questions: "does the safe controlled environment at [arena sports] appeal to certain aspects of the middle class?" (p47). In a provisional way, the data I have presented support this speculation. Indeed, the controlled environment is important in numerous fans attendance and sense of fandom. Importantly, this work advances Crawford's speculation, illustrating that consumption of 'arena sports', in the case of the Riders fandom, is not reducible to this dimension alone. Alternatively, consumption is multifaceted, contoured by multiple dimensions.

The multifaceted nature of Riders fandom includes a participatory involvement, incorporating the activation of emotions, solidarity with other fans and the team through loyalty and expressive support. These affiliations to the club, and the experiences of watching basketball are also bound up in issues of local identity and civic pride in Leicester. Notably, these loyalties are 'situated' within fans broader
lives. This results in the passions and ‘investment’ being premised by the friendlier sense of rivalry. The context of this is the caveat that winning, whilst desirable, is not the ‘be all and end all’. The evidence also shows fans sense of affiliation to be contoured by a sense of identification with the players, and affiliation toward the sport of basketball. Significantly I have illustrated that these varying thematics of fandom, contribute to differing interpretations of Riders fandom.

These interpretive orientations subsequently contour engagement with the global processes which permeate British basketball. Within the broader Leicester Riders fandom, I discovered heterogeneous responses and engagement with the local-global nexus. Significantly, the responses and attitudes toward the manifestations of global processes, were informed by the interpretive variations outlined above. These have been illustrated in perspectives surrounding Americanised razzmatazz and game presentation, American players representing the Riders and the presence of the NBA in Britain.

Reactions and responses to the Americanised presentation of Riders games, mirrored the heterogeneous interpretations of the game. Specifically, responses to: cheerleaders, player introductions and entrances, music and game narration; were contoured by how they conformed or conflicted varying fans understandings of their consumption of basketball. Fans who emphasised a team victory, for example, responded to those elements of game presentation which helped urge on the team. For instance, they reacted to the tannoy announcer urging vocal support of the team. They were not resistant, but were largely apathetic, to those elements not directly related to ‘support’ of the team, such as cheerleaders or mascots. Alternative interpretations meanwhile, contoured by fans desires for entertainment and enjoyment, were receptive to the presence of razzmatazz. As a consequence, views regarding game orchestration were framed in terms of their contribution to spectacle and excitement. Distinct from these dominant interpretations, alternative voices were critical of razzmatazz, viewing it as obscuring the ‘real’ game. In this way, responses
and interpretations were contextualised by the frameworks of understanding which informed the fandom.

Significant to note, as a consequence of fans variable interpretations, perspectives on Americanised game presentation were at times characterised by disjuncture. In particular the orchestration of games, predicated on a pacified audience, was counterpoised with some fans expressive, parochial and vociferous sense of fandom. As a consequence despite game presentation remaining consistent, the atmosphere at Riders games varied a great deal. These fluctuations were largely dependent upon the importance of the game in playing terms and the opponents. The presence of away fans altered the crowd dynamic and atmosphere considerably. This was most notable when playing local rivals Derby or Birmingham, who would bring their own fans. At times, the atmosphere at these 'local derbies' was more akin to that traditionally associated with football in Britain, with rival fans trading self-generated chants. The effect of this was to disrupt the 'sanitised' presentation of games. For example, rival fans mocked each other with chants of "you're not singing any more" or "bye-bye, bye-bye" as opposition fans left early following a defeat. Hence, varying 'localised' interpretations of fandom result in disjunctures with global processes, such as the Americanised presentation of games.

On the issue of American players, as noted above, dividing fans along dichotomous lines, such as pro or anti-American is overly simplistic. Alternatively, reactions and opinions were contoured by the diverse nature of fans interpretive framework. On one hand, engagement with American players was contoured by the desire for a team victory, which was predicated on the need for the best players. The acknowledgement of the superiority of American players, resulted in a de-emphasis on the importance of players origins and a consequent acceptance of American's playing for the Riders. Notwithstanding this however, numerous fans viewed British players most favourably, as they associated them with 'commitment', 'work ethic' and a sense of rapport and identification with the city of Leicester, compared to their American counterparts. Thus, desires for a team victory, requiring the best players
irrespective of origins, were counterpoised with local loyalties and cultural stereotypes. The result is highly contextualised perspective on American players representing the Riders. What is significant, in the context of broader debates in British basketball, is that perspectives were contoured largely by fans pragmatic affiliations to the game rather than concerns for the marginalisation of British players. These concerns, emerged largely as 'alternative' voices.

Reactions and orientations toward the NBA were similarly contoured by the interpretive orientations of fans. The responses highlighted in the questionnaire revealed varying senses of fandom to be reflected in differing engagement with the NBA. Some fans, for example, emphasised their preference for watching live Riders games, as opposed to the televised American coverage. Significantly this distinction may not merely be reflected in a lack of interest in televised NBA games, but also the televised British game itself. This, I would suggest, is the result of the presence of the NBA being outside the 'immediate' experience of live Riders basketball, which was the focus of fans who emphasised 'entertainment' rather than a focus on the sport of basketball per se. Thus for some fans there is no necessary linkage between watching the Riders and interest or consumption of the NBA.

Alternatively some fans expressed knowledge and interest in the NBA. This in turn was reflective of their broader interest in basketball, beyond attending Riders games. Responses to the NBA from such fans demonstrated an interest in the American league, through watching it on television. Despite this, fans preferences revealed a greater sense of identification with the British game compared to the NBA. Notably, these indigenous preferences were premised on the sense of personal involvement and relevance of the British game contingent to affiliation to the Riders. Hence, local identities and civic pride played an important mediating role in engagement with the NBA.

Despite their important and influential role, I am not suggesting the varying interpretive orientations that characterise the Riders fandom are deterministic in the case of reactions and responses at the local-global nexus. Alternatively, I see them as
providing a framework which predisposes consumers toward certain 'readings' of the
global processes they encounter in consuming basketball. Indeed, fans responses to
local-global nexus issues are also contoured, and differentiated along lines of gender,
social class, ethnicity, and personal biography. Hence, interpretive frameworks of
fandom provide a series of parameters within which distinctions may be apparent.
The mediating factors of these alternative dimensions of stratification require greater
investigation. Despite this, the data presented in this chapter is suggestive of patterns
of fans response at the local-global nexus, being contoured by the interpretive
framework of Riders fans. That is to say, attendees sense of fandom is an influential
source of delineation in engagement with global processes.

Notes

1 The exact number of home games is subject to variation dependent on progress in knock-out cup
competitions and whether the team qualifies for the play-offs.

2 A season ticket is one purchased at the beginning of the season giving access to all home games
throughout that season. It represents a saving on paying individually for all those games.

3 I met one fan, Jim, who fell into this dedicated group but opted not to purchase a season ticket on the
grounds that "the club needs the money". Upon this philanthropic basis, he paid each week to enter
games. A self-employed builder by trade, Jim also carried out maintenance work for the club at
Granby Halls free of charge. Such an orientation demonstrates the strength of loyalty and affiliation to
the club and desire to see it succeed from this group.

4 All names used are pseudonyms.

5 Gene Waldron, an American, represented the Riders between 1984 - 1999, spending the 1985-86
season with Falkirk. Persistently a 'star' player for the Riders during this time, he ultimately settled in
the city, and would most closely be identified as a 'settler' labour migrant (see Maguire, 1999).

6 I take this term from Maguire and Stead (1997). It refers to those migrants who are motivated more
by short term gain, with little or no attachment to the locality within which they 'ply their trade'.

7 This is not to suggest that football is characterised by a monolithic fandom. Alternatively, there have
traditionally been dominant associations of football fandom with masculine rivalries linked to
expressive and parochial 'support' of the team (see King, 1998).

8 Notably by airing his views in the game programme, Alan, may have played a role in regulating
Riders fandom by defining 'appropriate' behaviour at games.
CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS

This research has attempted to shed light on the local-global sport nexus. The project is a response to the call of researchers for greater work to explore the dialectic between local cultures, identities and global processes manifest in sport. As the introduction has noted, several scholars (Maguire, 1993; Horne, 1996) have called for research to investigate the local-global sports nexus. This thesis, incorporating a case study of the sport of basketball, is intended to address these calls. It also addresses, in a grounded manner, the broader theoretical debate regarding the interplay between global and local processes.

The project has constituted several interlocking components to explore the local-global 'problematic'. Following introductory comments and a review of literature, Chapter four detailed the political-economic context of global basketball, NBA strategies of global expansion, and, the current status and development of 'indigenous' basketball in Britain. Chapter five considered the comparative media representation of the NBA and indigenous game on British television. Chapters six and seven, meanwhile, presented a two season ethnographic project with fans of the Leicester Riders basketball club, which explored the consumption of 'local' basketball. Specifically, Chapter six detailed the demographic structure of the basketball audience and the experience of attendance at games. Chapter seven, in turn, explored the consumption of Riders games. The intention of this approach was to consider the multi-faceted nature of the local-global basketball nexus, thereby extending existing accounts. This, concluding chapter draws together the various facets to provide a summary and evaluation of the project findings.

In this chapter, first, I address the NBA presence in Britain, attempting to gauge the impact and wider conjunctural dynamics that contour the league's presence. Drawing upon the concept of sports space (Markovits, 1990), I consider the case of the NBA with reference to the capacity for specific sports to become embedded
within British culture and identities. In doing so, I make preliminary comparisons with NFL activities during the 1980s, as documented by Maguire (1990). I also consider the manner in which existing cultural space associated with basketball is implicated in contouring the reception of the NBA. This cultural positioning is contingent upon the specifically American, and 'racial' associations of the sport, which I also discuss.

Second, I consider the development of British basketball within the global basketball structure, the core of which is the NBA. Crucially, this involves making connections between the role and status of the British game within this global network. Third, I note the way in which the findings of this project shed light on the phenomenon of sports consumption with reference to the concept of fandom and the emergence of so-called 'arena sports' within Britain. Fourth, I discuss some limitations and caveats regarding the wider application of the findings of the case study of basketball in Leicester in comprehending globalisation more generally. Fifth, I offer comments, in light of the findings of this work, regarding the role of TNCs, such as the NBA, within global sport. Specifically, I address their capacity to shape the development of sport and consider the scope for alternative futures and resistance. Sixth, I return to the broader theoretical debate regarding both global processes and specifically, the local-global sports nexus.

8.1 Sports Space, Basketball and the NBA in Britain

Gauging the impact of the NBA in Britain is complex. Specifically, difficulties underpin the indices around which 'penetration' may be evaluated. Level of media coverage, television viewing figures or percentage share, and merchandise sales are all indicative of a certain form of presence. Alternatively, more nebulous concepts regarding the level of cultural acceptance, adoption, or resistance, reveal differing aspects of impact and reception. Despite this complexity, some assessment of the impact and reception of the NBA in Britain are appropriate. This is necessary
in light of unsubstantiated speculation of a ‘hoop fever’ (Andrews, 1997) accompanying the NBA presence in Britain. Furthermore, marketing rhetoric of basketball as ‘the worlds fastest growing sport’, and hyperbolic projections regarding the sports’ future in Britain have been recurrent since the mid-1980s. I would, however, urge a great deal more caution regarding the level of penetration of the NBA, and subsequent ramifications for ‘indigenous’ basketball. This caution relates to the work undertaken, within this project, which leads me toward more grounded theorising. Let me address these issues in more detail.

Drawing upon the notion of sports space (Markovits, 1990) an insightful conceptualisation of the factors underpinning the relative prominence and success of sports within British society can be provided. It is also of value in comprehending the challenges faced by culturally ‘alien’ forms of specific sports, such as the NBA, the representatives of which seek global markets. The concept refers to the cultural meanings of a sport and to the capacity of a society to value a particular kind of sport and render it meaningful, and of social significance. Sports space, Sugden and Tomlinson (1996) caution, is not simply a spatiophysical concept, but should be seen in “[the] context of culture and power relations in particular societies” (p.244). That is to say, there is no theoretical limit to the number of dominant sports in any particular society. Crucially, the occupation of sports space is disputed cultural terrain “contested by social groups and actors with particular sets of interests” (Sugden and Tomlinson, 1996, p.244). Hence, it is possible for sports to emerge to occupy prominent sports space, but also for them to recede from that status - to become more residual, in a dynamic manner.

In considering the success of the NBA, systematic parallels with the activities of the NFL in Britain are instructive. The ‘making’ of American football in Britain during the 1980s, documented by Maguire (1990), was linked to strategic alliances between the NFL, media groups and corporate partners. The NFL achieved considerable, albeit fleeting success in penetrating the UK sports market. This was manifest in considerable merchandising sales - rising from £125,000 in 1983-84 to
over £25 million in 1987; television viewing figures which superseded prominent indigenous sports, such as rugby union and motor racing; considerable brand recognition within British households; and extensive sales of Super Bowl XXI programmes - over 150,000 in three days (Maguire, 1990).

Upon comparison, the strategies and activities adopted by the NBA during the late 1990s bear close similarity with those of the NFL, during the 1980s. These similarities are demonstrated in Figure 8.1, which shows that the interdependent pillars of NFL and NBA strategy: media groups, the leagues themselves, and corporate sponsors, are almost identical. Furthermore, the strategies employed are markedly similar, constituting a series of events and promotions underpinned by mutually reinforcing corporate alliances. Notably, these have included both the promotion of the ‘core product’, with the direct staging of NBA and NFL games in London, as well as ‘grassroots’ involvement.

In the case of the NBA, grassroots programmes have consisted of three strands: the Mad Skillz Tour, NBA-2-Ball schools initiatives and ‘Jam’ sessions. Alternatively, NFL grassroots involvement centred upon the establishment, support and ownership of an English-based American football league. For both leagues, these initiatives were entwined with synergetic corporate alliances. The Mad Skillz Tour, for example, was sponsored by Nike, and the 2-ball initiative, by Kellogg’s. In the case of American football, the indigenous league was underpinned by the involvement of Anheuser Busch, operating under the brand title - Budweiser League. These alliances were further manifest in TV coverage and advertising, player appearances, and the sale and promotion of licensed merchandise in the case of both leagues.

The key distinction between the two lies in NFL attempts to establish their core product within the British market, with the establishment of a World League of American Football that included the ‘Monarchs’ franchise in London. Later re-branded as the NFL Europe, the competition featured British based franchises in London and Edinburgh (see Bellamy, 1993; Guttmann, 1994; and Wilcox, 1994).
Despite speculation surrounding pan-European initiatives, direct NBA activity in Britain has been, as yet, absent.
Figure 8.1. Comparison of the Presence of the NFL and NBA in Britain

1982-1990

NFL
Events and Promotions
American Bowl
'Grassroots' - Budweiser League

Media
Channel 4, Daily Telegraph

Corporate Partners
Anheuser Busch, TWA American Express

Game Coverage
Ch 4: American Football Live

1995-2001

NBA
Events and Promotions
McDonalds Championship 'Grassroots' - Mad Skillz Tour NBA-2-Ball Jam session

Media
SKY TV, ITV Channel 4

Corporate Partners
Coca-Cola, Nike, McDonalds

Game Coverage

Product Promotions
Coca Cola: Sprite, Hula Hoops, Kelloggs: Frosties & Start

Licensed Merchandise

Licensed Merchandise

Licensed Merchandise

Note. NFL diagram adapted from Maguire (1990).
Despite parallels in the strategies of the two leagues, several indicators tentatively suggest that the NBA has been less successful in establishing itself within the sports market in Britain. Cursory observations of national print media coverage or the low visibility of merchandising, for example, are anecdotally suggestive of a less significant impact than the NFL. As noted above, there are a series of indices around which NBA success might be gauged. The most readily available of these are television audience figures. Comparisons with NFL audience figures suggest that what Maguire termed metaphorically, the 'sporting touchdown' in the case of the NFL, does not appear to have been matched by a 'slam dunk' in the case of the NBA (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1. Comparison of NFL (1982-90) and NBA (1996-01) Viewing Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NFL Year</th>
<th>Viewing Figures (average audience)</th>
<th>NBA Year</th>
<th>Viewing Figures (average audience)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>1.1 million</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>507,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>1.5 million</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>263,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>2.3 million</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>521,000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>3.1 million</td>
<td>1999*</td>
<td>720,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>2.9 million</td>
<td>2000*</td>
<td>659,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>3.7 million</td>
<td>2001*</td>
<td>766,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>3.32 million</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>2.39 million</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * ITV took over coverage of these seasons from Channel 4. ** Figures only available for February of 1998. NFL figures taken from Maguire (1990).

The figures shown in Table 8.1 demonstrate that the NBA has attracted smaller television audiences during the 1990s than the NFL in the 1980s. It is notable, nevertheless, that the latter trend of NBA figures, following it’s switch from Channel 4 to ITV in 1999, appears to be one of marginal increase. Despite this, viewing figures are considerably short of the peak attained by the NFL, of an average audience close to four million viewers in the late 1980s. This disparity in success is perhaps made more significant given the long history of basketball
within Britain, relative to American football. Taken as an indicator of the ability of the two leagues to secure sports space, this data shows the NBA to have been markedly less successful.

Explanations of this disparity in the success of the two leagues, that employed remarkably similar strategies is multi-faceted. First, consideration of the shifting conjunctural dynamics within Britain is necessary. Notably, the wider political and cultural context of Britain during the 1990s represents a significantly differing ‘local’ market and conditions of cultural reception from that encountered by the NFL during the 1980s. Second, the rapid commercialisation of British mainstream sport during the last decade has presented a more competitive sports marketplace than the NFL faced. Third, the pre-existing cultural location of the sport of basketball is a potential factor in the failure of the NBA to achieve penetration on the scale of that achieved by the NFL. Specifically, this cultural positioning is entwined with a series of American and racial associations of the game. I will address these factors in turn.

8.1.1 Changing Conjunctural Dynamics: From Enterprise Culture to ‘Cool Britannia’

Central to the success of the NFL during the 1980s, Maguire (1990) outlines facilitators of ‘receptivity’ regarding both the English cultural ‘landscape’ and the wider political context of Anglo-American relations. Withstanding the capability for multi-directional influences, resistance and reinterpretation, Maguire notes the ‘relative dominance’ of the US within Anglo-American relations. During the 1980s, suspicion regarding the threat of Americanisation to British values and national identities was apparent from both sides of the political spectrum. At the cultural level however, the ‘enterprise culture’ prevalent within Thatcherite Britain “proved a highly favourable climate for the spread of American cultural forms” (Maguire, 1990: p.234). In terms of sport, however, cultural critique remained muted and ‘lagged’ behind wider criticism. Also notable was the marketing of the NFL around models of masculinity. In this case Maguire argues, American football, underpinned by a
‘cult of individualism’, found a particular cultural resonance with sections of English society - notably a “young, affluent, predominantly male group” (1990: p.221).

Additionally, the changing context of the national sporting landscape, Maguire suggests, may have rendered the English marketplace more receptive. In particular, the largely embryonic commercial orientation of sport during the 1980s, rendered weak competition to the skilfully packaged, televised American football. These conjunctural factors, alongside the role of the NFL, media groups and corporate partners, Maguire (1990) argues, facilitated the “fairly significant impact on English society” (p.233) of American football.

Alternatively, the NBA encountered a significantly differing ‘conjunctural moment’. With reference to Anglo-American relations, the end of the Cold War in 1989, alongside continued processes of European integration, it can be argued, were marked by a ‘cooling’ of Anglo-American relations at the political level. Culturally meanwhile, suspicion of Americanisation in broad terms, highlighted by Webster (1988) has continued and perhaps heightened. Simultaneously, ongoing devolution processes have precipitated a re-examination of the national cultures within England, alongside reinvigorated senses of Celtic identities particularly in Scotland and Wales. This perceived or imagined regeneration of plural ‘British’ national identities in a variety of guises has been most evocatively captured, ironically, by the notion of ‘Cool Britannia’. This cultural shift is most clearly associated with the incumbent Blairite New Labour government of the late 1990s, and is connected with one of the paradoxes of globalisation processes explained by Maguire (1993). That is, the ‘certainty’ underpinning national culture and identities, he argues, is threatened by the increased intensity of encounters contingent to globalisation. The consequence of the subsequent ‘dislocation’ is resistance from those who cling to more intense versions of identity.

This ‘retrenchment’ of local identities has featured sporting manifestations during the 1990s. Maguire (1993), for example, has observed “the Empire” metaphorically “striking back” within press coverage of the, so called, ‘Keating
affair' and the 1992 English cricket tour of Australia. This example, Maguire notes, is in line with the broader response to globalisation processes, reflecting strengthened or resistant movements as selective representations of cultural identities. In line with this 'sporting retrenchment' events such as the 1996 European football championships held in England, were implicated, in symbolic terms, with the renewed imagined sense of vibrancy of the English national sporting culture. Evidence of this, often manifest in jingoism and xenophobia within English press coverage, relating to 'Euro 96', has been provided by Maguire and Poulton (1999). Likewise, the opening ceremony of the 1999 Rugby Union world cup in Cardiff was replete with assertive Welsh national symbolism.

Finally, in this context, it is worth noting the virtual disappearance of the NFL from Britain during the 1990s. Drawing upon the observations presented above, this demise is linked to the same conjunctural dynamics, which have proved resilient to the activities of the NBA during the 1990s. In making these tentative comments, I would highlight the complexity of such issues; particularly the linkage between 'imagined' regeneration of cultural identities, and the role of the culture industries: including, media, advertising and film in shaping dominant, selective representations of 'nation' or culture. Clearly, these issues are worthy of further scholarship. These broader cultural and political shifts, which are implicated in a greater resilience to the infiltration of American cultural products, including the NBA, have also coincided with marked changes within the British commercial sporting landscape.

8.1.2 Contested 'Space' in the Commercial Sports Market

The second factor surrounding the lack of NBA success concerns the increased competitiveness of the commercial sports market in Britain during the 1990s. Specifically, this period witnessed on-going and accelerated commercialisation in several sports, rendering British sports space more contested. The consequence is that the British sports market place represents a more commercially competitive backdrop to 'outsiders'. The quest for sports space, resulting from the heightened commercial footing of indigenous sports has
subsequently been more difficult. Central to the accelerated commercialisation of British sport, has been men's association football which, entwined with Rupert Murdoch's SKY TV network, has undergone a substantive transformation (see King, 1997, 1998). The game subsequently dominates the commercial sporting landscape. Specifically, this domination is underpinned by extensive media exposure, aggressive and widescale merchandising operations, and mutually reinforcing corporate alliances.

Meanwhile, those sports, which during the 1980s remained largely embryonic in commercial terms: have undergone substantial commercial shifts during the 1990s. In particular, the male versions of rugby union, rugby league, athletics and cricket are examples of this. The familiar foundations of media exposure and finance, alongside corporate investment underpin these shifts. The domestic British sports market has thus been distinctly stronger, more competitive and resilient to a new competitor in the form of the NBA, compared to the 1980s. Consequently, potential consumers such as the aspirant young professionals - Yuppies\(^5\), a lucrative market, to whom the NFL was particularly attractive (Maguire, 1990), may be less receptive to the NBA. Alternatively, due to the cultivated attachments and consumer 'brand' loyalty, most notably toward football or rugby union, consumers may be less pre-disposed to consume the NBA, in the manner they had done so with the NFL. A further factor in the lack of receptivity encountered by the NBA the existing cultural space associated with basketball.

8.1.3 The Peripheral Sports Space of Basketball

A third, influential factor in the lack of success of the NBA is the peripheral location of basketball within British sports space. Specifically, the pre-existence of indigenous playing structures in Britain represents a key distinction of the NBA from the NFL. No such equivalent was evident in the case of the NFL, such that American football was largely unencumbered by existing cultural 'anchors'. The sport of basketball, meanwhile, has long occupied cultural space associated with the periphery of the British sporting culture. This marginal status is linked to the low level of visibility, in turn connected to the relatively late
commercial development of the sport during the late 1970s. This positioning, however, is also linked to the American origins, and associations of the sport, which have been implicated in hindering its acceptance within the British sporting mainstream. The game, crudely stereotyped, has been connoted as associated largely with, ‘tall, black, Americans’! In turn, perceptions of the peripheral cultural location of basketball may have hindered the subsequent impact of the NBA.

A series of articles appearing within the British broadsheet press, during the mid-1990s, give an indication of how this ‘cultural positioning’ of basketball and the NBA are linked. Notably, the articles build upon, and reinforce the location of basketball as a marginal sport, which is culturally alien to Britain. They also question the intrinsic qualities of the sport itself relative to indigenous alternatives. The NBA ‘brand’ meanwhile, is specifically linked to stereotypes of brash, overbearing and uncouth Americanism, drawing upon the broader critique of American influences in British culture.

Commenting on the McDonalds Championship, which launched NBA involvement in Britain, for example, Alison Kervin in The Times (23rd Oct, 1995, p.31) was sardonic in her assessment. The event, she observed “was an experience but, as a sporting occasion it lacked real depth”. Hinting at a lack of subtlety associated with the game, and its presentation, she continued “[c]omparing basketball with British team sports is almost like comparing an Oscar Wilde play, with all its subtleties, permutations and insinuations, with a Sylvester Stallone film - high drama and quick action”. Finally, Kervin reinforces the ‘alien’ nature of the formats of presentation, proposing sarcastically, that they would be entirely inappropriate in the context of English cricket. She noted:

It was as if the circus had come to town - and when the cheerleaders ran on for the umpteenth time, I started to wonder how this would translate in traditionally English sports. The image of Pan’s People running onto Lord’s dressed in sequin covered hotpants after every innings, and leap-frogging the wickets to the sounds of rock music did not rest easy. (The Times, 23rd Oct, 1995, p.31).

Hence, the article positions the NBA as a cultural outsider of inferior quality and lacking the sophistication of indigenous sports.
In a markedly similar manner, Lynne Truss (*The Times*, October 20th, 1997, p.22) commented on the McDonalds Championship held in Paris in 1997, critiquing the setting, jargon, and 'stop-start' nature of the sport. The event, she described as played within a “hideously overlit sports hall”, by “gigantic men whose shoe size is only one step short of luggage”. Also noting the fragmented rhythm of the sport, Truss disparagingly describes the game as:

the longest 48 minutes you will experience in your life . . . every time the play gets interesting in basketball, somebody calls time-out, the clock stops and you get precisely 90 seconds of acrobatics (why?), a pop music introduction (truncated), aerobic jazz dancing or mascot clowning. (*The Times*, October 20th, 1997, p.22).

This format, she observes is “sorely irritating”. She concludes: “if only they would play continuously it would be a pretty good game. But to watch it with all its interruptions is like watching a movie when the projector keeps breaking down and is too bloody tiring”. This article is indicative of the manner in which the NBA has been subject to media positioning as an ‘alien outsider’ on the basis of its ‘Americanness’. In this sense it is associated with crass razzmatazz and a crude, commercially oriented, stop-start format. Notably, it is presented as lacking the subtlety and ‘flow’ of its indigenous counterparts.

A further example of such positioning was evident in a critical piece by Andrew Longmore (*The Times*, October 19th, 1995, p.42). Commenting on the McDonalds Championship held in London, he suggests that for spectators “the most essential accessory will .. be a set of ear plugs” due to the loudness of the music. NBA games, he mockingly described as “a cross between a rock concert, a Baptist rally and children’s theatre”. That is to say, as a sporting event they are seen as lacking authenticity. Similarly, Derrick Whyte, demonstrated cynicism toward the NBA’s activities in Britain (*Independent on Sunday*, 22nd Oct 1995, p.31). For example, he described the McDonalds Championship as “part of the NBA’s grand scheme for global expansion”. He also highlighted the gargantuan salaries of NBA players, drawing upon stereotypes regarding the excesses associated with American sports, relative to British.
Of course, media coverage such as these may be subject to contestation. Nevertheless, locating basketball as essentially an ‘alien’ sport, these representations do provide an indication of the marginalisation of basketball from the British sporting mainstream. This is subsequently reflected in the disparaging comments regarding the NBA, reinforcing it as lacking the authenticity and subtlety of indigenous alternatives. Additionally, the presentation and razzmatazz of games are reinforced as culturally alien, evoking stereotypes of Americans as uncouth and lacking sophistication. Ultimately such ‘positioning’ of the NBA within marginal sports space may hinder both the acceptance of the league and the sport of basketball more generally within British sport culture. Whilst this series of examples are by no means definitive in demonstrating the cultural positioning of the NBA in Britain, they do provide a preliminary indication of the ‘situating’ of the league.

8.1.4 ‘Race’, Basketball and Local-Global Consumption

Associations of basketball with ‘Americaness’ in Britain are also laced with ethnic and ‘racial’ connotations. Alongside stereotypes regarding ‘tall Americans’ there is an association with ‘Blackness’, which is further implicated in the cultural positioning of basketball. As Gilroy (2001) argues, British national consciousness, and sporting consciousness likewise, is underpinned by the fusion of race with nation⁶. The result, he notes, is the artificially whitened . . . national community” (pxiii). That is to say, ‘race’ and nation (and sporting national consciousness in turn) cannot easily be disentangled. In this sense British ‘sport space’ is inherently racialised. The racial connotations of basketball consequently reinforce its peripheral location within British sports space.

As a corollary, the racialised associations of basketball have implications for the reception of the NBA in Britain. The NBA contains 77% Black players, and as such is the North American sports league with the highest proportion of Black players (Coakley, 2001). Commenting upon the case of Michael Jordan, Kellner (1996) notes “Jordan is a distinctively Black spectacle and his blackness is clearly a central feature of his image (p.461, emphasis in original). This
observation can, in turn be extended as a metaphor for the NBA as a whole.

Consequent to the high proportion of Black players, NBA marketing and ‘brand’
is centred on the promotion of black masculinity. Subsequently, the marketing of
the NBA, Wilson (1998) notes, is heavily contoured by ‘cool pose’. Invoked by
Majors (1986, 1990), the term cool pose captures the manner in which a
symbolically empowered masculinity of Black males has emerged, constructing
“unique, expressive, and conspicuous styles of demeanour, speech, gesture,
clothing, hairstyle, walk, stance and handshake” (1990, p.111). Evident across a
number of sites including sports, Wilson (1998) notes, cool pose is particularly
visible in basketball. Specifically it constitutes “a flamboyant on-court language,
(now popularly known as ‘trash talking’), and a repertoire of spectacular
‘playground’ moves and high-flying dunks” (p.232). Alongside NBA expansion,
this distinct form of masculinity has come to be asserted on a televised,
transnational stage.

Regarding the consumption of the NBA, Kevin Garnett, star player of the
Minnesota franchise, has speculated that there may be reactionary responses from
white consumers in America, to such displays, which are veiled in racism. He
noted, “[t]here is resentment because we’re rich young black men with our own
way of doing things” (Newsweek, February 19th, p.42-53). Reflecting this, the
recent downturn in NBA audiences (discussed later within this chapter), has been
linked to the fact that “many of the middle-aged, primarily white fans who can
afford choice seats in NBA arenas, are turned off by the hip-hop style of the new
generation, from its music to its baggy pants and tattoos” (p.43). The accuracy of
this speculation, however, remains difficult to assess. Clearly, however, the
‘racial’ dimension of the consumption of basketball, must be considered a factor
in contouring the ‘reception’ of the NBA and positioning of basketball more
broadly in Britain.

Attempting to gauge this, with reference to the cultural reception of the
NBA in Britain, is challenging. Specifically, obtaining ‘reliable’ information is
made difficult on the basis of the political sensitivity of enquiries, particularly
with overwhelmingly white audiences. This presents methodological difficulties
in obtaining ‘valid’ findings. Questioning white consumers regarding perceptions on the basis of the ethnic composition of players, for example, is likely to evoke ‘socially desirable’ responses, regarding their receptivity to the NBA. Indigenous basketball is similarly dominated by Black players - who constitute 60.2% of playing personnel (Chappell et al, 1996), yet, as this thesis has demonstrated, is consumed by overwhelmingly white audiences. On this basis, in exploring this issue within the ethnographic dimension of this project, I undertook not to ask questions directly of fans regarding this dimension of their consumption. Alternatively, I awaited it surfacing within basketball fandom during participant observations in the field. Within the first eighteen months of the project, it did not emerge as an expressed factor amongst Leicester fans. Subsequently, I raised the issue with a number of (white) fans during the final six months of the project. In all cases it was dismissed as a factor in contouring consumption. This topic is worthy of longer-term enquiry in its own right.

8.1.5 The NBA in Britain: Summary

As noted, the shifted political backdrop of Anglo-American relations, the limited re-invigoration of British national identities as a corollary of globalisation, and the greater competitiveness of the domestic sports market, provided a less porous culture and market to the activities of the NBA. Similarly, the cultural associations with America and Blackness are implicated in hindering American basketball. Consequently, the NBA has had greater difficulty in penetrating the mainstream sports market and British culture more broadly.

Despite these broader dynamics, which have hindered the NBA in Britain, it may be that the presence of the league has significance for a limited niche of consumers. For example, Andrews et al (1996) highlight that the transnational racial kinship felt with NBA ‘stars’, may be relevant to young Black Britons. NBA players, such as Michael Jordan, they suggest, symbolise “an assertive and empowered Black masculinity for many Black British youth” (1996, p.451). In turn, they propose, Black British youth “are able to reappropriate some of the dominant discourses that surround [the league] and adapt them to a set of practices
symbolizing empowered Black physicality” (1996, p.452). This speculation, however, awaits empirical investigation and further critical observation. Furthermore, as the ethnographic aspect of this thesis has shown, on the basis of affinity to the sport, some non-Black British fans of basketball can take relevance and meaning from the presence of the NBA on TV screens. The presence of the league then is not inconsequential. Alternatively, despite dominant interpretations that marginalise the NBA, it can be subject to varied readings. Further work is required to elucidate these multiple, yet acutely structured processes.

8.2 British Basketball: Dependent Development?

NBA operations encountered long established ‘indigenous’ basketball structures in Britain. As well as the elite commercial levels, the game has networks of national leagues and competitions at both senior and junior age-group levels and is played widely within schools. As noted in the introduction, the presence of ‘global’ competitors alongside local varieties raises questions regarding the potential homogenisation of the scope of global sport, and the room for parallel local and global ‘brands’ to co-exist. In documenting the early commercial development of British basketball, Maguire (1988) detailed the conflicts between commercial entrepreneurs and those concerned with the wider development of the British game - specifically regarding indigenous players, junior development and the national team. This thesis builds upon and extends that work by tracing the post-1988 developments, with reference to the local-global interplay of basketball, and its subsequent consumption. As Chapter four has noted, the speculative commercial optimism surrounding the British game during the mid-1990s, has not been realised. Alternatively, the British game has undergone a retrenchment during the late 1990s. The co-presence of the NBA raises a series of questions regarding the relationship between the two.

Speculating on this link, several commentators viewed the onset of NBA activities as a turning point for the British game. Commissioner David Stern’s comments, at the outset of NBA involvement, for example, forecast benefits for
the indigenous game. He noted "there is a need for continuity and consistency, working with the [indigenous] leagues, working with television and sponsors so that we can have a cumulative effect" (cited in Longmore, Oct 23rd, 1995, p.26). That 'cumulative effect', it is apparent would have consequences for the commercial success of the British game. Indicating that NBA interests extended to the development of the sport in the broadest possible sense, Stern continued "[we] have to work harder to make the sport work at the grass roots level. In the end, it's all about kids being drawn to the sport" (cited in Longmore, Oct 23rd, 1995, p.26). Suggestions that NBA interests in promoting the broader game are in any way philanthropic, however, require due scepticism. Similarly, speculation regarding the positive impacts of the NBA on the broader British game requires critical consideration.

The situation of the British game has parallels with baseball in the Dominican Republic, documented by Klein (1988, 1989). Klein locates the Dominican game within an analysis of dependency and a trajectory of neo-colonial enterprise, which centres upon the activities of American major league baseball academies which "locate resources (talent) and refine them (train) for consumption abroad" (p.103). Subsequently, he notes "a weakening of the entire Dominican system of baseball, removal of resources (players) on a massive scale for use in the metropolises of the U.S." (p110). Ultimately, he concludes, there is a "deleterious structural effect on the autonomy and quality of baseball in the Dominican Republic" (p95). Thus, the Dominican game is seen as locked within a cycle of underdevelopment, ultimately hindering its development, compared to the core area of the US.

British basketball has similar characteristics in that the game acts as a potential supplier of talent to 'core' regions - notably Europe and the NBA itself. For example, the best of British players migrate to the NBA. Most notably, two players, Michael Olowokandi (LA Clippers), and Jon Amaechi (Orlando Magic), are symptomatic of this flow. As Chapter four has noted, Olowakandi was a significant focus of 'indigenous' interest of the British NBA television coverage analysed. Indeed, such migrants to the NBA have become important in global
marketing strategies, as the league seeks ‘resonance’ with local markets. Other parallels have included Detlef Schrempf (Germany), Vladi Divac (Yugoslavia) and Dikembe Mutombo (Zaire). These examples confirm the centrality of ‘stars’ to the visibility and brand imaging of transnational sport, highlighted by Whitson (1998). The consequence is, similar to Klein’s observation in the case of Dominican baseball, a deleterious effect on the autonomy and quality of basketball within Britain (and other peripheral ‘basketball locales’).

To comprehend the status of the British game however, an overly crude dependency formulation, along the lines of neo-colonialism is ultimately inadequate. Alternatively, the global basketball system is more complex, characterised by multi-directional, yet imbalanced flows of labour, capital and ideologies (for example, those surrounding the appropriate ‘packaging’ of the game). Flows of labour are prominent within this system. This labour constitutes players, coaches and administrators who traverse the globe to pursue careers. Whilst the situation is more complex than that of Dominican baseball documented by Klein, it is clear that the global basketball system is characterised by political-economic imbalance. Notably, dependent peripheral areas ‘feed’ the core/hub areas of Southern Europe and ultimately the NBA. Alternatively, the development of the home game is linked to its peripheral location within the global basketball system, at the apex of which sits the NBA.

Simultaneously, on-going European integration processes further complicate basketball’s labour movement system. Specifically, within the European Union (EU) players are able to play domestic basketball in any other national league as an EU national, rather than a foreign player subject to quota restrictions. Subsequently, the British game has seen the top indigenous talent migrate within Europe to pursue alternative career paths to the indigenous league. The consequence is that the bulk of the English national team is playing in continental Europe. Subsequently, there has been a virtual stop to all in-season training sessions for the men’s senior squad, as a consequence of logistical difficulties as well as the reluctance of employers (European clubs) to release players for internationals, other than official European Championship games.
(Chappell, 2000). Subsequently, the national team is retarded by the ‘underdeveloped’ status of the home game within a global system. The British League, in turn, acts as a ‘staging post’ for American players awaiting qualification for a British passport. These players subsequently seek more lucrative opportunities in the more affluent leagues of continental Europe. A series of increasingly high profile departures, noted in Chapter four, have followed this ‘pipeline’ (Maguire, 1999) which, to some degree, circumvents protective labour restrictions, designed to safeguard local player development.

Within this asymmetrical global structure the British league, (alongside other peripheral areas), also provides a destination for surplus labour from the US collegiate system - the principal feeder system to the NBA. The consequent marginalisation of British playing and coaching personnel means that they are highly unlikely to reach their playing/coaching potential within the British structure. Furthermore, ownership of the elite British franchises is largely under North American ownership (as detailed in Chapter four). Ultimately the consequence is the retardation of the development of the British game. Somewhat removed, yet not divorced from the machinations of these flows within global basketball are the junior, women’s and wheelchair strata of the British game, which remain marginalised and under resourced. A similar ‘dependent development’ situation has been documented by Maguire (1996) in the case of British ice-hockey. Likewise, Maguire and Pearton (2000) document the impact of “restructuring and deregulation” (p.759) on European soccer. Specifically, they detail the existence of structured processes which impacts upon the viability of national teams and league structures peripheral to the core areas of the system. Basketball is characterised by similar global inequities.

The struggles between entrepreneurs and those with concerns for the development of British basketball are ongoing. Indeed, as this thesis approached completion, the same debates, initially outlined by Maguire (1988) re-surfaced. Mid-way through the 2000-2001 season, of the 130 listings for scoring, rebounding, assists, steals, three-point shooting, free throws and blocked shots, only 13 were for English qualified players (The Independent, 27/01/01, Nemeth
fears for England's future, p.23). These figures prompted long-standing England coach, Lazlo Nemeth\textsuperscript{10}, to be (once again) vocal in his fears regarding American domination, hindering the development of British players and the national team. Regarding the lack of resources and opportunities, he noted: "it's not enough just to have the raw talent, you need to teach it and I don't see that there will be the resources to do that" (www.electronic Telegraph, 29/01/01). Meanwhile, coaching and playing opportunities within the British game continue to be dominated by Americans. Subsequently, the British game, appears to be locked within a cycle of dependent development for the foreseeable future. The presence of the NBA and David Stern's forecast 'cumulative effect' of benefits for the British game, noted above, appears little more than rhetoric.


This thesis has also shed light on the dynamics of sports consumption with reference to the concept of fandom and 'arena sports' within Britain. Specifically, the ethnographic component demonstrated how consumption of basketball can hold varying meanings and significance within people's lives and identities. The variable interpretative frameworks of fandom subsequently contextualise responses to the global processes which contour British basketball. In turn, these were characterised by nuanced heterogeneity. More work is needed in comprehending the changing nature of sports consumption with recourse to global frames of reference. In particular, global processes in sport are exerting transformative effects on fandom. Over 25\% of all the 'hits' on the NBA.com web-site, for example, come from outside the United States (Miller et al, 2001). These forms of 'global fandom' in their dispersed and disparate forms require conceptualising with reference to new forms of social identity and social formation.

This project has further shed light on the phenomena of 'arena sports', within the British spectator sports market. Specifically, this term encapsulates ice-hockey and basketball, which as indoor sports with strong North American
ties, share similarities in the formats of presentation and attempts to attract a family based audience. The data presented in this thesis provides support for the findings of Crawford (1998, 2001) regarding the middle-class, family-based demographics of 'arena sports' audiences. Where this project advances Crawford's work is in presenting a detailed analysis of the interpretive dimensions of consumption. Specifically, it has revealed how the experience of local basketball is not monolithic. Alternatively, consumption is entwined with a series of interpretive dimensions These include interpretations of national, local and civic identities associated with team loyalties, which extend beyond the 'rational consumption' of this format of sports entertainment.

The previous chapter has detailed the complex patterns of local-global interplay in the case of British basketball consumption. Specifically, it outlined the scope for interpretive heterogeneity among fans. Notably, it revealed how engagement with global processes are grounded within the local contexts of consumption. The outcome is a range of pragmatic, yet structured responses. Of course, local, situated responses are located within the wider dynamics of the global sports infrastructure, which is characterised by elements of homogenisation. Yet this work suggests that local identities and issues remain pervasive in sport consumption. The findings also demonstrate the complexity of the local-global sports interplay, which is characterised by contradictions and paradoxes which blur any simplistic local versus global dichotomy.

For example, the American dominated British game is associated with expressions of local and national identities, and even a rallying point for the 'rejection' or lack of identification with the NBA. Similarly, Chapter five illustrated the contradiction within the apparent lionisation of the British game, by American commentator Kevin Cadle, during British television coverage. His closing mantra of "remember, if it's style in basketball you want ... it's the British game" is deeply contradictory in the context of American domination (and indeed Cadle's own presence). These examples demonstrate the complex interweave of local and global processes within global sport. Specifically, researchers cannot look for 'neat' or uniform data in attempting to understand this
complex mélange. In this regard, further ethnographic studies, akin to this one, are required in a range of locales, across a range of sporting contexts.

These findings contribute to the debates surrounding the local-global sports nexus. In particular, they further confound those arguments which have posited that the increased circulation of global sports texts and practices will lead inevitably to the creation of globally homogenous patterns of popular existence. In turn, they are broadly supportive of the work of Jackson and Andrews (1996) who have emphasised the 'cultural dialectic' between locally intrusive texts and their influence on identities and experiences. Specifically, they note that products images and services are consumed according to the conjunctural specificities of the national culture in which consumption is taking place. This project has demonstrated the complex manner in which consumption of local British basketball is indeed contoured by the 'conjunctural specificities' of the Leicester audience's social worlds.

Indeed, this work advances that of Jackson and Andrews (1996) in revealing the heterogeneity and complexity inherent to the local engagement with global processes, according to local conditions. Specifically, it has detailed the scope for varying and nuanced engagement with global (sporting) flows, amongst an ostensibly homogenous audience (that is in demographic terms) in the case of basketball fans. These findings reinforce the need to address the complexity and heterogeneity of the local in conceptualising the consequences of the globalising structure of sport and leisure and the consequences for consumer identities.

8.4 Studying the Local-Global Basketball Nexus: Limitations and Caveats

As the previous sections of this chapter have outlined, this project provides several observations regarding the broader dynamics of the local-global sports nexus. Nevertheless, it is important to note the context specificity of the case study of Leicester Riders fandom and its subsequent limitations. These limitations concern both the case study of Leicester, and its broader applicability to basketball in Britain, and the utility of an examination of basketball to gauge the local-global interplay, relative to other sporting contexts.
As Chapter six has noted, the case of Leicester represents a locale with quite specific demographic features, (particularly in terms of ethnic make-up), a particular historical ‘relationship’ of the city with basketball, and the dynamics of the wider sporting ‘landscape’ of the city. Subsequently, broader applications of the projects’ findings require sensitivity to this conjunctural specificity. That is to say, the findings are particular to the specific ‘historical formation’ that Leicester represents. Case studies of alternative locales within Britain, with differing demographic, geographical, ethnic and sporting configurations is necessary. Such work would allow confirmation of specific findings while also adding to the general picture provided here.

Differing ethnic demographics of consumers, for example within London (which houses two BBL teams), may yield significantly differing engagement with basketball. For example, attitudes towards American players (whether in the NBA or in local terms), on the basis of the “transnational racial kinship” which Andrews et al (1996) speculate about, is worthy of investigation. Similarly, study of the fandom surrounding the newer franchises within the league, such as Edinburgh or Milton Keynes, raise interesting questions on the basis of a lack of historical precedent, or associations of fandom with the ‘leisure centre’ era of commercial basketball in Britain.

Furthermore, there is a need to acknowledge that basketball represents a conjuncturally specific context by which to consider local-global issues within sport. As the previous chapters have reinforced, British basketball is an example of a sport replete with American influences. Cursory engagement with British basketball subculture reveals, for example, reveal the American ‘touchstones’ which contour the ‘indigenous’ game and the fandom which surrounds it. That is to say, as an example of ‘local’ sport, British basketball is heavily punctuated by American reference points. Evaluation of the ‘local’ responses to global flows in the context of basketball, consequently, is complex. This complexity draws upon the interweave of global and local processes.

As reinforced at the outset of this thesis - drawing upon Robertson (1995) - the local and the global are mutually constitutive. As Maguire (1999) has
cautioned in relation to sport, there is no, and never was, any sporting
"gemeinschaft" (p54). Alternatively, the formation of 'local' sport is a complex
mélange of local and wider cosmopolitan influences and flows. As I have noted.
basketball in Britain is a case in point. Consequently, British basketball, as a
'local' sport, it is plausible to consider, represents a relatively more porous context
for global flows than others more central to British mainstream sporting culture.
Football, cricket, rugby union, rugby league, in comparison for example, are all
more deeply entwined with national and local cultural identities (albeit in varying
ways) to differing degrees. On this basis they may potentially present differing
social formations regarding local identities and receptivity to global flows.
Further work exploring such contexts is necessary in providing an understanding
of the varied outcomes of the local-global interplay within sport.

8.5 Transnational Corporations and Global Sport

The role of transnational corporations (TNCs) within the economic
restructuring that is component to globalisation is considerable (Sklair, 1995).
The development of transnational industries has emerged as a "significant feature
of the global sport system" (Maguire, 1999: p.128). One consequence of the
economic 'logic of globalisation' has been the development of the 'global
product' (Robins, 1997), that is, consumer goods that are consistent across world
locations. Significantly, Robins (1997) notes, these products are entwined with an
ideology of global awareness - rendering the 'global consumer'. Examples of
global products and brands are myriad. They include: Coca-Cola, McDonalds,
Sony Walkmans, Mastercard, Calvin Klein, Motorola, Fuji and Nike amongst the
most prominent. These developments also have manifestations within global
sport.

The NBA is one such 'global product'. It is, however, merely one example
of increasing numbers of sporting 'brands' that compete within global market
places. Prominent are the American 'major leagues' - the NBA, NFL, NHL and
major league baseball all of which have engaged in global marketing initiatives
Trans continental sport, such as Southern Hemisphere 'Super-12' Rugby Union, spanning Australia, New Zealand and South Africa has also emerged. Pan-European competitions - most notably the association football Champions League, and in basketball FIBA's 'Suproleague', and the 'rebel' Euroleague, are further symptomatic of these shifts. World 'circuits' in tennis, golf, athletics, cycling, skiing and formula one motor racing also compete globally. Further to this a series of nationally based competitions, such as English football's Premiership, the Italian Serie A, and Australia's National Rugby League (NRL), amongst others, are prominent in vying for global appeal. The presence of these 'players' within global markets has resulted in homogenisation at the level of sports consumer choice.

Global sport then is dominated, by the same 'global brand' forms, products and images, competing for market share on a worldwide scale. Withstanding this however, Maguire (1999) highlights the needs to be aware of the "celebration by global marketing strategies of difference and individuality" (p213). Reflecting this concern, Silk and Andrews (2001) have recently shown how sport "as a de facto cultural shorthand – has been appropriated within . . . the advertising campaigns of transnational corporations as a means of contributing toward the constitution and experiencing of national cultures" (p180). In this manner, TNCs may be implicated in the re-imagining and reconstitution of local cultural identities.

This is precisely the elemental complexity of local-global interplay consequent to the actions of TNC's. They have the capability to embody simultaneously particularising and universalising trends – their homogenising presence across local cultures being obscured by the appropriation of, and association with specific local cultural meanings and identities. These commercially inspired representations, however, are liable to be little more than superficial and depthless caricatures of national cultural differences. Specifically, they largely constitute selected (sporting) traditions, pastimes and celebrities, often emphasising glamour and violence (Silk and Andrews, 2001). Such corporate reflections of nation or locality, however, pose several. as yet
unanswered, questions regarding the role and influence of TNC's within sporting and national cultures.

The future of TNC dominated global sport is one shaped strongly, although not solely, by the demands of capital accumulation. Central to this is a profitable corporate image. The marketing of global sporting brands is premised upon marketing idealised representations and carefully orchestrated images of brands and commodities including star players. These images are aggressively guarded. As a component of the world system, however, the operations of TNC's are implicated in perpetuating the division, inequality, and asymmetry of the global system (Sklair, 1995). Within the broadly conceived global sport system, TNC's appear to be the main winners (Maguire, 1999).

The deliberately cultivated images of transnational sports brands contain little room for diversity and egalitarianism in global sport. The NBA is a case in point, demonstrating priorities that deny self-expression or 'alternative voices' under the demands of a corporate image. The case of Mahoud Abdul-Rauf illustrated this in graphic terms. Abdul-Rauf (formerly Chris Jackson), star guard for the Denver franchise, was suspended for refusing to stand for the American national anthem which is played before games, arguing that the flag was "a symbol of oppression, of tyranny" (The Times, 14/03/96, p.17). The contradictory nature of this particular case is highlighted by the manner in which the NBA, amongst others, link their images with self-expression, freedom and social emancipation.

Similarly, the inability of some athletes to allow their image to be associated with political issues due to the priorities of ingratiating potential consumers of the goods they endorse is symptomatic of the potential for a 'politically neutered' era of transnational 'sporting' capitalism. The case of recently retired Michael Jordan, and his corporate loyalties is a case in point. LaFeber (1999), for example, documents Jordan's (and others) reluctance to taint their commercial appeal by criticising the inequities of the world system, from which their sponsors, endorsees and themselves profit.
Sage (1996) highlights a further paradox within the ‘cultural industry’ of TNC dominated global sport. This paradox surrounds the manner in which an idealised link is made between American professional team sport and American patriotism. The carefully managed image, enhanced by advertising to create and preserve a favoured public image, Sage demonstrates, is based upon contradiction, in that “licensed merchandise is largely manufactured in foreign countries by exploited labour” (p3). Within the global sports system the deliberately constructed, and carefully preserved images of transnational brands obscure the inequalities and imbalances of the global sports system. What room then exists for alternative futures?

Despite the pervasive reach of TNC’s such as the NBA, their future success within global markets is not assured. LaFeber (1999), for example, has demonstrated that the very same promotional technologies, which have enabled TNCs to achieve global presence, are also a source of potential weakness. Whilst a globally pervasive media can create “fame and fortune in world markets”, he notes, “so too could that media expose their [TNCs] errors, tragedies, and embarrassments globally” (p17). That is to say, the strength and power of TNCs to harness the media in targeting global markets, is, to some extent, a double-edged sword. For example, LaFeber points to the manner in which controversies surrounding the gambling of NBA figure-head, and prominent corporate endorser, Michael Jordan were exposed and broadcast. Similarly, the story of Nike’s subcontractors in Asia who exploited and sexually abused workers who made their goods, were beamed across the world’s television screens (LaFeber, 1999). In this way, the carefully manufactured and guarded images of TNCs can be vulnerable. These preliminary observations then, point to the folly of overstating the power of sports-related TNCs.

Similarly, the fragile market dynamics of the NBA, which resulted in the player strike that temporarily halted the 1998/99 season, demonstrates the potential vulnerability of the global sports industry. The NHL, MLB and NFL have faced similar impasses to their operations in recent years. Indeed, there are signs that even the domestic future of ‘major league’ sports in North American
may not be assured. A recent Newsweek article (February 19th, p.42-43.) for example, illustrated a 17% drop in television audiences on the NBC channel from the previous season. Simultaneously, some of the league’s key markets have seen declining live attendance: Boston (-11%), Charlotte (-15%), and Houston (-17%). This downturn is linked to several factors including a potential ‘image problem’ associated with pretentious and overpaid black players, who, with racist undertones, were said to be ‘putting-off’ predominantly white, middle-class American consumers (as discussed above). Whilst the shifting fortune of the NBA requires longer-term, critical consideration, it is apparent that domestic downturns have implications for the global marketing operations of such organisations.

The future success of the TNC’s that have come to dominate the global sports market is not assured. Alternatively, they are open to scrutiny, resistance and the viscitudes of the financial models and media visibility from which they leverage their influence and appeal. Indeed, Klein (2001) documents ‘anticorporate activism’ as a new and significant social movement. This “network of environmental, labour and human rights activists determined to expose the damage being done behind the slick veneer [of corporate brands]” (p.325). she notes, track and make public the ‘violations’ of TNCs. Within the global sports industry, Nike in particular has been subject to the criticism of activists regarding offshore relocation of production, the exploitation of African-American athletes and communities and labour practices in Southeast Asia. This international anti-Nike movement has included boycotts, critical web-sites, protests, and product returns (Klein, 2001). Whilst the critique of those TNCs selling the ‘core’ sports product of games and events, such as the NBA or English Premiership, has lagged behind, it may be a future ‘player’ in shaping global sport.

8.6. Theorising Globalisation

As the introductory chapter has detailed, this project set out to substantively explore the local-global sports nexus. Specifically, it has addressed
the dynamics of the local-global interplay within the context of basketball. The project also represents a contribution to the broader theoretical debate surrounding globalisation processes. The key questions, surrounding the conditions of social existence in the 'global age', noted in the introduction, include "who is being globalized (or de-globalized), to what extent and by whom? (Ferguson, 1992, p69). These questions require a sophisticated social scientific understanding of the new experiences and encounters of global transformation (Robins, 1997). As Ferguson (1992) continues, a central question is cui bono? (who wins?) within the new possibilities of globalisation. Specifically, this question attunes the analysis to lines of enquiry regarding the distribution of power, resources and influence within global development.

Substantively, this thesis lends weight to the arguments forwarded by Featherstone (1991) and Robertson (1995), that one must theorise globalisation as constituted of dual and mutually constitutive local and global processes. The political economic overview, both of British basketball and the NBA, presented in Chapter four, is indicative of processes of homogenisation at the level of consumer choice. NBA expansion, even allowing for polysemic interpretations within local cultures, represents a homogenising element in the scope of global sport. The pattern of development of the British 'local' game in turn is entwined within the global basketball system. As noted, the formats of league organisation, labour control and game presentation conform to an American model of managerialism. Models of televisualisation, outlined in Chapter five, also reflect dominant, and accepted production practices, formats and presentational styles (see Whannel, 1992). Maguire (1999) and Miller et al (2001) have highlighted such trends within global sport. In theoretical terms, these examples are suggestive of a series of homogenising 'templates' of cultural forms (sport in this case) - a universalising trend in terms of the scope of consumer choice and cultural forms across localities.

At the level of consumption, there is evidence of reception being subject to 'local interpretation'. As noted above, the ethnographic component of this thesis presented in chapters six and seven illustrate that engagement with global flows is
shaped by local identities and meanings. Consequently, this work is supportive of Robins (1997) assertion that globalisation is associated with the accumulation of phenomena as existing local cultural forms and identities 'mediate' global flows. In this sense, rather than destruction, it is possible to conceive of the interpretive reconstitution of the local, within the conditions of globalisation. This reformulation is characterised by the simultaneous strengthening and weakening of local cultures along varying indices. The 'template' for local cultures may become increasingly alike, but that very process is implicated in the manifestation of local cultural particularity, as responsive to heightened global interconnectedness. The relative lack of success of the NBA in Britain, despite the powerful network of media synergies and corporate alliances, for example, demonstrates the manner in which the local mediates, and 'constrains' global flows.

With reference to Hall's (1991) call to comprehend the new 'subject positions' within the 'unfolding dialectics' of global culture, this thesis suggests that such 'subject positions' are associated with challenges to local identities and cultural forms within a heightened sense of place within global networks. As noted, 'global networks' are characterised by a series of homogenising forces at the organisational and ideological level. The consequence is the co-existence of global flows with existing local forms. Nevertheless, there appears room for interpretive heterogeneity and particularity to be sustained and even potentially strengthened in the form of local identities and cultures. Yet, the local and global should not be formulated dichotomously. As the data in Chapter seven demonstrates, local consumers can (and do) consume both local and global versions of basketball. Thus, there is the potential for co-presence. In this manner, there is scope for the pluralisation of subject positions and the emergence of cosmopolitan outlooks.
8.7 Theorising Global Sport

The introduction to this thesis detailed some of the key sociological questions surrounding global sport. These included, how is 'global sport' consumed in local contexts? What happens to indigenous sport forms (and their cultural associations and attachments) in the face of global flows? What is the role of the media in transmitting sport across cultural boundaries? What propels global flows in sport, and what exactly are the power vectors associated with the diffusion of global sport? The answers to these questions require researchers to probe the role of sport within the structured global processes involved in the reconstitution of local culture. This thesis, has attempted to address such issues, as well as consider the adequacy of theoretical conceptualisations of global sport.

As noted in Chapter one, modernisation and early neo-Marxist approaches suffer from a series of conceptual weaknesses in theorising global sport. The disparate field of postmodernism has provided a more challenging critique to social theorists attempting to conceptualise globalisation. This movement, broadly speaking has been of value, particularly in paradigmatic terms. Its principal strengths have been in raising awareness of the methodological underpinnings of doing research and what constitutes data within the social world. As a critique of 'modernism' (broadly conceived) however, it has too often been based upon caricature, and at times has failed to acknowledge the rich heterogeneity of 'modernist' theorising – itself a disparate field. In terms of contributions to the globalisation of sport debate, Andrews' (1998) work, which incorporated Baudrillardian elements, is overly deterministic in conceiving local consumption of global sport. This pitfall is arguably avoided within alternative 'modernist' approaches. Furthermore, in the rejection of 'grand narratives' much of the postmodernist movement is open to the charge of philosophical relativism. That is to say, the lack of independent underpinnings, beliefs or theories, render postmodernists mute on the issue of alternative futures and values. For these reasons, I remain unconvinced of the promise of postmodernism in explaining global sport.
Within the globalisation of sport debate, the most sophisticated accounts have emerged from cultural studies and figurational theorists. As Chapter two has emphasised, these positions share considerable common ground. Specifically, both approaches reject static thinking and emphasise a concern with process – that is, the interactive aspects of power relations, rather than an emphasis solely on either structure or agency. Differences between the two centre principally on subtle distinctions in language and styles of thinking. Reflecting these differences, figurationalists conceptualise in terms of human figurations, whilst cultural studies conceives of interplay and dialectical social relations. These varying points of emphasis have at times obscured agreement over ‘concrete’ issues (Rojek, 1996). Furthermore, the gladiatorial nature of debates has masked these fundamental conceptual similarities noted above.

With reference to global sport, this conceptual convergence is apparent in the shared concern with the processual nature of human (sporting) relations, historical groundedness and a concern with power relations. The twin-concepts of diminishing contrasts, increasing varieties (Elias, 1939/1982) underpin Maguire’s (1999) figurational approach to global sport, and have provided a useful corrective to those views that have associated the globalisation of sport only with homogenising processes. Furthermore, they help demonstrate the scope for, and complexity of commingling between powerful/established and less powerful/outsider groupings. In turn, cultural studies scholars such as Donnelly (1996) and Miller et al (2000) acknowledge the two-way flows which characterise global sport, emphasising power, contestation and resistance.

One source of distinction between the two approaches surrounds the relative emphasis placed on intended and unintended actions and consequences. Within the figurational approach, Maguire (1999) emphasises the importance of the unintended long-term consequences of human action in patterning global sport. In the long-term, he argues, unintended processes may be of more importance in shaping the global sport figuration, than shorter term intended actions. Cultural studies alternatively, largely as a function of an a priori concern
with oppressive social relations, have emphasised intended actions, to the neglect of unintended processes and their consequences.

A further apparent distinction surrounds the relative weight afforded the importance of capital accumulation and the economic dimension in explaining the global patterning of sport. The frequent critique (see Rowe, 1995; Gruneau, 1999, Lawrence and Greer, 2001) of the figurational approach is that it arguably fails to afford due emphasis to the specific processes associated with global capitalism in social relations. Yet the figurational approach has accorded considerable attention to wider political economic issues of global sport (see Maguire, 1990, 1993a, 1999). It is clear that market structures and dynamics are a pivotal feature of the asymmetry of global sport. Indeed, this thesis has demonstrated this within the global infrastructure and hierarchy of basketball. In turn, the figurational counter-critique centres upon the desire to avoid ‘economism’ (see Dunning, 1999). The irony, Hargreaves and McDonald (2000) note, is that the field was developed precisely to avoid the economic reductionism of classical Marxism.

These differing points of conceptual emphasis in comprehending global sport are entwined with wider philosophical issues, on which the approaches diverge significantly. These differences centre on varying approaches to the balance between understanding and action within sociology. Specifically, the ideological alignment of cultural studies with political engagement and the interests of marginal social groups is distinct from the figurational commitment to a blend between ‘involvement and detachment’ (Elias, 1987; Maguire, 1988). The distinction, they argue, can guard against ‘ideological thinking’ obscuring understanding per se.

The approaches are characterised by internal diversity, thus adding further complexity. Cultural studies itself is founded upon the eclectic use of varied theory and methods, and is replete with internal variety, as reflected in the globalisation of sport research. For example, Donnelly (1996) emphasises ‘American cultural hegemony’, whilst McKay and Miller (1991) invoke the ‘logic of late capitalism’ as key processes in the globalisation of sport. The apparent reluctance to adopt figurational concepts is a consequence of cultural studies
adherents baulking at the distinction between understanding and action. Yet, the
figurational approach is itself subject to varied interpretations. For example,
contrary to Dunning's (1999) more rigid approach, Maguire (1999) emphasises
the responsibility of figurational sociologists "to disseminate in a critical manner"
(p.216) the knowledge they generate. Indeed, Maguire draws upon the notion of
"civilizational hegemony" (p.215) and also conceives sport as characterised by a
core, periphery and semi periphery, along the lines of neo-Marxist 'world systems'
conceptions. Thus there are varying interpretations and subtleties within each
'school'.

In this regard, selecting the 'best' theoretical perspective is far from easy.
In conceptual terms they offer considerable similarity. Distinctions centre on the
concern with intended and unintended actions. Yet it is not conceptually germane
to cultural studies to exclude unintended processes. Alternatively, the neglect is a
consequence of the methodological and empirical predisposition to consider
intended actions which are contingent to the asymmetry of the global system. Thus
the adoption of a theoretical stance is entwined with philosophical alignment
rather than a simplistic grounded approach to the data observed.

Based upon the scope for sport to challenge forms of oppression and
exploitation as integral to sociological endeavour, it is the cultural studies
perspective I would adopt. My conception of the approach to understanding
global cultural interchange, is of cultural flows as multi-directional with the
ideological messages contained in cultural products, images and texts as
structured, yet unfixed. Alternatively, they are open to a degree of interpretation
and reinterpretation. As Donnelly (1996) clarifies, however, "there are clear limits
to such freedom, given that individuals are not able to control or decisively
influence the source and making of these products . . . nor are they able to impose
any equity on the mutual exchange of cultural products." (p.243). The
increasingly globalised 'menu' of sports reflects a homogenised series of
templates within which local consumers make their 'choices'.

Indeed, the data within this thesis demonstrates that there are processes
implicated in organisational and infrastructural homogenisation within basketball.
Additionally, media representation appears to reflect and reinforce the hierarchy of global basketball, notably elevating the hegemonic NBA over the British 'local' version. Yet there is also scope for interpretive heterogeneity within consumption and alternative 'readings'. The concept of hegemony, Grossberg, (1993) argues, allows the analysis to "see history as actively produced by individuals and social groups as they struggle to make the best they can out of their lives under determinate conditions" (pp. 29-30). As a concept, it is of use in navigating the path between deterministic homogeneity explanations and tendencies toward overly romanticised notions of consumer freedoms within the conditions of globalisation.

Yet, cultural studies is not without difficulties and challenges. Grossberg (1997), for example, outlines the need to respond "to the new political terrain opened up by the contemporary globalisation of culture, and transform itself accordingly" (p. 9). Central to this, Grossberg argues, cultural studies must address the relationship between the economy and culture without reversion to economic determinism. Furthermore, the cultural studies approach needs to incorporate the unintended dimensions of global sport, as urged by Maguire (1999). Specifically, Maguire notes these as important in providing the very 'seedbed' for future intended actions. A greater sensitivity toward such issues is required within cultural studies. Furthermore, the folly of an overly ideological approach hindering the adequacy of analysis has recently been highlighted by Hargreaves (2002) in criticisms of Miller et al (2001). Thus, there is a necessity for cultural studies to avoid the simplistic allure of political rhetoric in favour of critical sociological investigation. Thus, methodological and empirical rigour must be a hallmark of the approach. Finally, the lack of clearly stated strategies for dealing with injustice needs addressing. Indeed, of all those purporting to 'do' cultural studies there is remarkably little written about the wider projects which are apparently central.

Regardless of which theoretical camp researchers adopt, it is clear that theorising requires a grounded approach. In the absence of this, work will be abstract and merely speculative. This thesis has attempted to avoid this pitfall. If
such an approach can be adopted, work can formulate the type of knowledge and understandings that will encourage people to interrogate their engagement with global sport in its various guises. It is this knowledge which is the basis for future change.

Notes

1 Although unacknowledged by Markovits (1988), it is worth noting the similarity with Bourdieu’s notion of ‘fields’ which constitutes ‘spaces’ in which struggles over resources and stakes, and access to them occurs (see Jarvie and Maguire, 1994).

2 Maguire’s comments were addressed specifically to the English context. The processes to which I refer however are not confined to England alone, but are extant on a British scale.

3 Widely criticised at the time (largely by the English dominated media), the ceremony featured Welsh celebrities including Shirley Bassey dressed in a Welsh dragon dress (based upon the national flag). It was also criticised for the unfortunate timing, given the context of the Falklands war, of the ‘red arrows’ (a Royal Airforce display team) fly past, mid-way through the Argentinian national anthem, which preceded the opening game.

4 NFL activity in Britain in fact culminated in the presence of two World League of American Football (WLAF) franchises: in Edinburgh (the Claymores) and London (The Monarchs) which was suspended following the 1992 season. Future variations of the league as the ‘NFL Europe’ excluded involvement in London. This is outlined more comprehensively in Guttmann (1994) and Wilcox (1994). Although the NFL is still currently shown on British television, it is confined to highlights shows on marginal time-slots on Channel 5 - a new terrestrial channel, which does not broadcast to all parts of Great Britain.

5 A pseudo-acronym, the term refers to Young Upwardly-mobile Professionals, who were associated with affluent lifestyles and conspicuous consumption.

6 Although not made explicit, it is my reading that this suggestion is most appropriate in the case of England. Gilroy (2001) does not distinguish the varied and heterogenous nature of ‘British national consciousness’.

7 The data of Chappell et al (1996) is taken from the 1993/94 season.

8 Of course, on this basis, it is those fans that may be ‘put off’ basketball, and consequently do not attend who are significant.

9 The freedom of movement is the consequence of the so-called ‘Bosman ruling’ in the case of football transfers. See Moorhouse (1999) and Maguire and Stead (1998) for discussion regarding the implications for football.

10 Ironically, Nemeth himself is a Hungarian national. His ‘championing’ of the British game demonstrates the contradictions and paradoxes within the global sport system, characterised by complex migratory patterns.

11 This clash is particularly poignant in light of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on Sept 11th, 2001.
Of course some athletes continue to make political gestures through their sports. The Liverpool football player Robbie Fowler's public support of the striking Liverpool dock workers during a goal celebration, is a case in point.
REFERENCES


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Montville, L. (1996). I Loved This Game! Superheroes, special effects, merchandise galore - is this great basketball or what? *Sports Illustrated*, November 11th, 54.


APPENDICES
### Appendix 1. Key Research Questions in the Investigation of Basketball and the Local-Global Nexus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Sources and Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the nature of global basketball interdependency?</strong></td>
<td>Documentary evidence, Key personnel interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In what ways is the ‘global basketball system interdependent?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are the power dynamics ‘at play’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are there hubs and cores?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the extent of the ‘presence’ of the NBA in Britain?</strong></td>
<td>Key personnel interviews. Documentary evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What have their strategies been?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What degree of success have they met with?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is the extent of the parallel presence of British basketball?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the role played by the media at the local-global sports nexus</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation of the macro-dynamics of television production. Textual content analysis of television coverage of NBA ‘99 and Budweiser league basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How do the media portray local and global themes within basketball coverage?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What constitutes the ‘text’ of basketball coverage in Britain?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How is basketball ‘played out’ at the local level?</strong></td>
<td>Ethnography: participant observations, interviews, focus groups, questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who is watching British basketball?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What does it mean to them?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How do these people construct meaning around the game with reference to its’ global structures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What are the interactions of local and global basketball?</strong></td>
<td>Combination of above methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Do we see dominant ‘cores’ of basketball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How is the NBA ‘received’ in a local context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 2. Ethnographic Research Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Phase</th>
<th>Intentions</th>
<th>Method/Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) The Passive Phase</td>
<td>Observing all the patterns that emerge, record every impression</td>
<td>Inconspicuous participant observations, non-directive questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) The Interactive Phase</td>
<td>build relationships with people, identify 'key informants', move onto topics wish to explore</td>
<td>unstructured - guided conversations, directed questioning, questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) The Active Phase</td>
<td>test ideas and identify patterns of behaviour, link early observations to generate new questions</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews, focus groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3. Leicester Riders Fan Questionnaire

LEICESTER RIDERS FAN QUESTIONNAIRE

Request for Cooperation

In association with the Loughborough University Sociology of Sport Research Group, the Leicester Riders are conducting a survey of fans. This is the first survey of its kind to be undertaken in Britain. The aim is to get opinions and attitudes relating to many aspects of basketball. In this way we can get a better understanding of what you like and dislike, and the experience of watching basketball can be improved for you, the fans. We appreciate your cooperation - Thank you.

Returning the questionnaire: It would be most helpful if you could complete this questionnaire at the game. Alternatively, if you wish to take it home and complete it, a box will be available for its return at forthcoming home games.

Section A - Aim: Who is watching?

You . . .

Please tick the relevant boxes

1) What is your age?
   - Under 10
   - 11-20
   - 21-30
   - 31-40
   - 41-50
   - 51-60
   - 61 & over

2) What is your gender?
   - female
   - male

3) What is your Ethnic origin?
   - Afro-Caribbean
   - Chinese
   - Indian
   - Pakistani
   - Bangladeshi
   - Asian other
   - White
   - Other(explain) . . .

4) What is your total family/household income?
   - less than £7,000
   - £8,000 - 15,000
   - £16,000 - £25,000
   - £26,000 - £35,000
   - £36,000 - £45,000
   - £46,000 - £55,000
   - more than £55,000

5) Education/qualifications(tick highest level attained).
   - compulsory secondary school
   - BTEC, GNVQ,
   - A-Levels
   - HND, HNC
   - professional qualifications e.g. accountancy
   - University degree
   - post-graduate degree (Masters, Ph.D.)

6) What is your occupation?
   - high managerial and professional, e.g. company director, newspaper editor
   - employer or manager in large organisation, e.g. doctor, solicitor, engineer, teacher
   - associate professional, e.g. journalist, nurse/midwife, fire officer
   - intermediate occupation, e.g. secretary, telephone operator, driving instructor
   - small employer, e.g. non-professional self-employed, publican, farm owner
   - lower supervisory, e.g. electrician, mechanic, foreman, train driver
   - semi-routine, e.g. caretaker, assembly line worker, shelf stacker
   - routine, e.g. cleaner, waiter, bar staff
   - student
   - housewife/househusband

7) If you are here with children, indicate their age(s) . . . . . . . . .

Section B - Aim: What are their patterns of consumption?

Watching live basketball

Tick one box only for each question (unless specified).

1) Usually, Who do you come to games with?
   - family
   - friends
   - both family and friends
   - alone

2) How often do you come to Leicester Riders home games?
   - every game
   - approximately twice a month
   - approximately once a month
   - rarely

3) How long have you been coming to Leicester Riders home games?
   - this season alone

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2 years
3 years
4 years
5 years
6 years or more

4) What was your major reason to start watching Leicester Riders?
   - friends
   - family
   - played yourself
   - publicity e.g. newspapers, television.
   - other (explain) 

5) Do you also attend away games?
   - yes
   - no  

   If yes. How often do you go to away games?
   - every game
   - approximately twice a month
   - approximately once a month
   - rarely

6) Do you watch any other live basketball?
   - yes
   - no  

   If yes, who do you watch?
   - England internationals
   - National league
   - Other Budweiser league teams
   - All-star game
   - Junior games
   - Other (explain) 

7) Do you attend other live sports events?
   - yes
   - no  

   If yes, which ones?
   - professional football
   - professional rugby
   - professional cricket
   - other (explain) 

In your opinion, how does live basketball compare to other sporting attractions on the following points? (circle the appropriate number for each element)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>much better/more</th>
<th>somewhat better/more</th>
<th>similar</th>
<th>somewhat worse/less</th>
<th>much worse/less</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>spectacle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excitement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>star players on show</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loyalty of players</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>value for money</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family appeal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general atmosphere</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spotlight/attention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family ties/history of watching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basketball in the media

8) Do you watch basketball on TV?
   - yes
   - no  

   If yes, which coverage do you watch? (you may tick more than one box).
   - British Budweiser League - SKY TV
   - American NBA - Channel 4
   - British National Cup - BBC

Which of these do you prefer to watch on TV?
   - NBA
   - British basketball

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How do you rate the relative qualities of the British (Budweiser League) and American (NBA) games you see on TV? (circle the appropriate number)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type of quality</th>
<th>country</th>
<th>excellent/very high</th>
<th>good/high</th>
<th>neutral</th>
<th>poor/low</th>
<th>very poor/very low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>excitement</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skills</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glitz/ razzmattaz</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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9) Do you buy basketball magazines? 
   yes ☐ no ☐ → Go to question 10.

   If yes, which ones?
   Shooting Hoops
   Zone Press
   XXL basketball
   Fiba basketball
   Slam Dunk

10) Do you read about the Leicester Riders in the
    Leicester Mercury Y N
    National Press Y N

Basketball merchandise

11) Do you buy basketball related merchandise? 
    yes ☐ no ☐ → Go to question 10.

   If yes, which types do you buy? (you may tick more than one box).
   Budweiser league (Leicester Riders)
   NBA
   American college
   European leagues
   Other . . . . . . . . . . .

12) How often do you purchase this merchandise?
    weekly
    monthly
    approximately every three months
    approximately one time a year
    other

   According to your above response, approximately how much would you spend on you purchases on a weekly/monthly/three monthly or yearly basis?
   Under £5
   £5 - £10
   £11 - £20
   £21 - £30
   £31 - £40
   £41 +

13) If you have children do they attend the basketball camps/training sessions associated with the Riders?
    Y ☐ N ☐

Section C: What are their attitudes, what do they think about the structural aspects of the game? 
[Based upon sensitising concepts]

(Theme A - Presentation of the Game)
Riders Games
1) What do you think of the following aspects of Riders games? (Circle the appropriate number)
1= like a great deal, 2= like somewhat, 3= neutral, 4= dislike somewhat, 5= dislike a great deal

cheerleaders 1 2 3 4 5
music during time-outs 1 2 3 4 5
half time shoot-out 1 2 3 4 5
commentary throughout the game 1 2 3 4 5
the loss of one side of the arena for televised games 1 2 3 4 5
changing tip-off times for televised games 1 2 3 4 5

2) Why do you come to Riders game?
1= contributes a great deal, 2= contributes somewhat, 3= neutral, 4= contributes little, 5= not at all

excitement 1 2 3 4
the players 1 2 3 4
atmosphere 1 2 3 4 5
general entertainment 1 2 3 4 5
family outing/fun 1 2 3 4 5
closeness of the stands to the court 1 2 3 4 5
facilities 1 2 3 4 5

(Theme B - Player/Coaches - Personnel)

1) Given your knowledge of the Leicester Riders, how many are (put number in all boxes)
British 5 North American 5 foreign 5 other

2) The evidence suggests that there are more foreign players currently playing in the Budweiser League than British players. What do you feel about this? (circle the appropriate number).

it is a very good thing it is somewhat good neutral it is somewhat bad it is a very bad thing
1 2 3 4 5

3) Current regulations allow five foreign players on each team, Do you think this number should be...
increased decreased remain the same don't care/no opinion

4) Are you interested with British player development and the English national team?
a great deal somewhat neutral very little not at all
1 2 3 4 5

5) In soccer, some clubs e.g. Chelsea have a large number of foreign players. Others, Aston Villa for example have mainly British players. In the case of basketball what would you prefer
more foreign more local keep at present levels doesn't matter

6) Would you be more likely or less likely to attend Riders games if the team was: (circle one choice for each)
Predominantly British- more likely less likely doesn't matter
Predominantly foreign - more likely less likely doesn't matter

6) Rank the following types of Riders game with regard to what you most like to see. Use number 1-5, with 1 being the most preferred and 5 the least preferred.

___ star players/best teams in the league e.g. Manchester, Sheffield
___ local rivals e.g. Derby, Birmingham
___ even match/close game e.g. Worthing, Leopards
___ 'sudden death' of the knock-out cup
___ Riders expect to win e.g. Edinburgh

7) Rank the following tournaments with regard to what you like most. Use number 1-4, with 1 being the most preferred and 4 the least preferred.

___ Budweiser League (regular season)
___ Budweiser League (play-offs)
___ National Cup
___ Uni-ball trophy

(Theme C - Commercial Orientation of the Game)

1) What do you think about teams in the Budweiser League changing on a regular basis? e.g. disappearance of Crystal Palace, Watford, emergence of Edinburgh?
2) Do you like the name "Sainsbury's Classic Cola Basketball Centre", instead of Granby Halls? (circle the appropriate number)

like a great deal like neutral dislike dislike a great deal
1 2 3 4 5

(Theme D - The NBA)

1) Do you follow an NBA team?
   yes
   no

2) Do you prefer them to the Riders?
   yes
   no

What do you feel about the 'attitude' associated with the NBA? - e.g., 'in your face' e.g. Dennis Rodman, razzmatazz., glamour.

like a great deal like neutral dislike dislike a great deal
1 2 3 4 5

All things being equal, e.g. price, quality; would you rather wear a Riders cap or clothing, or an NBA e.g. Chicago Bulls, cap or clothing?

Riders
NBA

What is the reason for your choice?

Reference Information: If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire contact: Mark Falcous, Sociology of Sport Research Group, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU. E-mail M.A.Falcous@lboro.ac.uk
Appendix 4. Interview schedule

Leicester Riders Fan Interviews

Outline of aims of project
Assurances of confidentiality

1. Leicester Riders - Local
Theme: What are the nature of connections with British basketball?
Refer to duration of attendance - genesis, frequency (build rapport)
Q: How did you start following the Riders?
Q: How important is following the Leicester Riders to you?

Theme: Riders (Leicester Specific) nature of affiliations, emotional attachments, local identities and place pride. How closely they identify with the Riders?
Q: Does it matter a great deal to you if they lose?
Q: would whether they win or lose effect if you come back to subsequent games or not?

Could you ever support any other British basketball team? Why is that?

2. British Basketball - National
Theme: Qualities associated with the British game
What type of qualities do you associate with British basketball? What do you like about it? What attracts you to it?

Theme: National Identities - English national team - matter a great deal?
"Do you follow the English national teams results and games?"
"Is it important to you how well the England team performs?"

Theme Explore US Players/local players playing for Riders - How does it interplay with local identities?
"how do you feel about US players representing Leicester?"
"all British teams, including Leicester, have foreign, mainly American players - how do you feel about that?"
"The British game is dominated by American players how do you feel about that?"

Theme: British game on TV
Sky Coverage (British game) - feelings, likes dislikes
"Do you watch the British game on television?"
"What do you think of the coverage?"

3. NBA - Global
Do you also watch the NBA (ref to questionnaire)
Theme: Nature of connection with NBA/How do they 'read/decode' the NBA; and, How do fans 'read' British NBA coverage in relation to their own experiences/local affiliations to British basketball

How do you feel it compares with the British game?
"What do you think of the NBA in comparison to the British game?"

Refer to identification with Riders/NBA (hypothetical question)
"In our questionnaire we asked a question about whether you would most like to identify, by wearing merchandise, you chose to identify with the Riders instead of the NBA - can you expand on why that was?"
Can you expand on what you mean/feel by that?
Appendix 5. Letter requesting Interviewees

Tel: (01509) 239534 (voice mail)  
e-mail: M.A.Falcous@lboro.ac.uk

A. Fan  
Granby Halls  
Leicester  


Dear Mr/Mrs Fan,

Thank you for completing the Leicester Riders fan questionnaire last March. We are very grateful for your cooperation.

As a further part of the Loughborough University project looking at Basketball, we are carrying out follow-up interviews with a small number of fans to further explore their views and opinions. These interviews will last approximately 20 minutes, and take the form of an informal question and answer session, which will be recorded on audio tape for our use. Any information used from the interview is confidential, no names will be used in any write-up of the research.

On the questionnaire you indicated you would be willing to be interviewed as part of this project. Interviews will be taking place prior to Leicester Riders home games during February and March. If you are still willing to be interviewed, please complete the reply slip below, stating which dates would be most convenient for you, and return it in the enclosed envelope. If you are not attending any of the home games, we would still like to hear your views and alternative arrangements can be made.

Yours sincerely

Mark Falcous  
Sociology of sport research group

---

Reply Slip: Please return in the enclosed envelope, by return post – Thank you

Name: ________________________________

Contact phone number: __________________________

Home Game Preferences
v Chester  
v Thames valley  
v London Towers  
v Sheffield  
Other alternatives

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<td>v Thames valley</td>
<td>Saturday, 4th March</td>
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<td>v London Towers</td>
<td>Wednesday, 15th March</td>
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<td>v Sheffield</td>
<td>Friday, 24th March</td>
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Appendix 6. Ethnographic Interview dates

| Interview 1 | Graham       | 26/02/00 | Granby Halls         |
| Interview 2 | Marjorie     | 26/02/00 | Granby Halls         |
| Interview 3 | George       | 03/03/00 | Interviewee's home   |
| Interview 4 | Dot          | 03/03/00 | Interviewee's home   |
| Interview 5 | Phil         | 04/03/00 | Granby Halls         |
| Interview 6 | Teddy        | 04/03/00 | Granby Halls         |
| Interview 7 | Alan and Denise | 19/09/00 | Interviewee's home   |
| Focus Group 1 | Neil, Andrew, Terry, Christine, Leslie, David, Steve. | 15/03/00 | Granby Halls         |
| Focus Group 2 | Delia, Jenny, Davina, Ann, Susan, Sherry, Austin. | 24/03/00 | Granby Halls         |
| Focus Group 3 | Harry, Katie, Christian | 01/04/00 | Granby Halls         |
Appendix 7. Sample transcript

Focus Group - Leicester Riders Fans 24/03/00

MF: My name’s Mark, and I’ve been coming down for two years. Sheila, do you want to . . .
SM: Okay, I’m Sheila, erm, I’m on my second season ticket, and we were coming for a bit of the season before that.
BC: Hi my name’s Becky and I’ve coming about two years
D: Hi I’m Davina, I’ve been coming about a year
PM: Hi, I’m Pat, and I’ve been coming fifteen years
SA: Sonia A, and I’ve been coming three years
SB: Sonia B, [laughter], and I’ve been coming around six or seven years
MF: Okay, great, that’s the ‘plastic’ bit out of the way, great, we’ll start off with a little task here. if you can just take one of these each, what I’d like you to do actually is to write down, in the top little box is five words that capture your experience of watching Leicester Riders, doesn’t have to be five, it can be six, two, three, whatever it is that comes to mind. Do this on your own and think what it is - your experiences when you come down here, and what it is that draws you back perhaps. . . . [minute wait] . . . okay, we’ll get a little bit of feedback and then what we’re going to do is discuss some of the topics. It helps in something like this is only one person talks at a time, but if somebody’s said something and you feel like responding or adding to, then absolutely just jump in. So let’s see, Pat, do you want to give us one of your words?
PM: Unpredictable.
MF: Unpredictable [laughter] can you expand on that a little, why did you choose that word?
PM: Erm, you don’t know what’s going to happen, they don’t have a run of wins or a run of loss . . . well they do have a run of loses, but you never know, it’s like they’re now winning you wouldn’t have expected it, not against the teams we’re now beating. That way
MF: Okay, unpredictable, did anybody get anything along those lines from their list, no? Sonia B?
SB: Erm, motivation.
MF: Motivation, what do you mean by that?
SB: Erm, regardless of, this is how I feel, how I perceive the Riders, when they come out of that hole in that corner, whatever the audience feel, they’re hyped-up, I mean that’s another word I’ve used here, they’re highly motived, and that spills out, I think we feed off that.
MF: How do you mean, feed off that?
SB: erm, I mean I’ve been in here some evenings thinking, ‘they’re gonna get slaughtered’, but they’re coming out as if they’re going to win - so they’re highly motivated. So something goes on out there.
MF: A relationship between the crowd and the players you think?
SB: err, yeah, I mean we feed off how they are reacting, yeah, because we all come in and think we know what’s going to happen, I think, and of late they’re unpredictable, and they’ve not been doing that well, but they always seem to come out thinking they’re fighters, so they’re highly motivated.
MF: Right, do you get that impression Sheila?
SM: I think they come out excited, erm, I’ve got my word which is exciting. I think the crowd is not a predictable crowd, I think sometime the crowd and the players work with each other, and then its good, and the motivation is good, but I think sometimes when the atmosphere is quite low, its because the games not going so well, the players are losing heart, and I think sometimes the crowd lose heart as well, so maybe they are dependent on each other, but I think sometimes I just wish the crowd could
be behind them more, when things aren’t going so well, because then they would come up as well. the
players would come up as well, so I don’t think its just the players that guide the crowd.
SB: We sit behind when, they you know, when they take time-out, so you can sort of hear what’s
going on, and also see the facial expressions and the anger, erm, so you feel what they’re feeling. but
they all sort of gel together and go back on there ‘right we’ve got to get on with it’ but yeah I
understand what you’re saying.
MF: ‘You feel what they’re feeling’ was a phrase you just used, yeah?
SB: Oh yes very much so
MF: Let me ask Becky, do you get heavily involved in what goes on on the court
BC: Yeah, quite, like, I think the atmosphere’s quiet important, and how like what Sheila said. what
the crowd are like reflects what the players are like as well, and if like, if they’re losing maybe the
crowd are not as excited and things as they are, and the same, when they’re winning, the crowd get
more excited and things, so yeah.
MF: Okay, and do you want to give us one of your words as well?
BC: Yeah, quite, like, I think the atmosphere’s quiet important, and how like what Sheila said. what
the crowd are like reflects what the players are like as well, and if like, if they’re losing maybe the
crowd are not as excited and things as they are, and the same, when they’re winning, the crowd get
more excited and things, so yeah.
MF: Can you describe that excitement perhaps, and what you meant by that?
SA: Erm, every games different, you can never tell, you know, what’s gonna happen. each different
visiting team I think is, different, you know, there’s a different atmosphere for each match and they’re
all exciting for different reasons whether its the players, the coach, whatever, they’re all just different.
MF: Ahem, so it’s what’s going on on the court, is there any particular part of the game that is the
most exciting shall we say?
SA: Erm, no not really
MF: Just the same throughout
SA: Erm, yes
SM: Can we just go back to my bit about excitement, because what I find exciting, I think its like in a
football ground, in the cold rain, watching a nil-nil game, and then coming here and you’re sat in the
warm, and that balls coming up and down, it doesn’t matter if it goes in the net or not, it goes up and
down and it is so exciting, so its doesn’t matter what the score is, but the score’s going up quickly.
SB: It’s never boring is it?
SM: I don’t find it ever boring
SA: And you can never tell who’s going to win because it can change in such a short period of time,
you know, ten seconds is enough to alter, you know, the score
SB: two or three seconds
SM: I’ve never found another game that’s as exciting that will get me going.
SB: I think as well that when the scores are so near to one another, when there’s only like two or three
points, I mean, you can see people jumping up and down in there seats and that, and actually going
down to the front, my husband goes down, you know, and I have to pull him back.
SM: Is that because, I mean, if you go to a football game it’s a huge arena. it takes alot more to build
up the excitement, but in a nice small arena with lots of people packed in. the excitement comes
quicker, it builds up quicker.
SB: I think it’s the number of like, exactly like you said [gestures to Sheila], you can have. like. a score of 100-99, at a football match 1-nil, so everybody goes whooooah, in like an hour an a half, and then we go whooooah, you know, a hundred times don’t we, you know.
SA: Having been to football matches, it’s a different atmosphere, because there’s so many more people and its a bigger stadium, and it’s a different kind of atmosphere, its a more intimate atmosphere here isn’t it, you know.
SB: More family oriented
SA: family, definitely
SB: I’ve written that down, and I know you have
SA: yeah
MF: So you come down in a family group do you?
SB: Yeah, and this all started from school, we were introduced to basketball through school, and its very much a fam .. you can see it here.
MF: Okay, let me ask Davina, do you come down in a family group, or is it a friendship group
D: No, I come with mostly my friends.
MF: Right and how did you first get into that, what was it that first got you down to watch the Riders?
D: My friend, she sort of does some work here, and she sort of, she had a free ticket, and she said ‘why don’t you come down?’ so I said ‘yeah, I’ll come down’, because I used to play basketball as well.
MF: Okay
D: So I thought ‘I play it, so I’ll go down and see a game, see how it is’ and I sort of started coming from then on.
MF: What was it about it that you liked that made you come back again?
D: I think it’s like, the intensity like, its a highly motivated game, its fast moving its never stopping, and I think that’s what makes you hyped up as well, and you’ve got a quite intimate relationship with the, sort of, players as well, you know. when you go down and shake their hands and everything, I think it makes it more better.
MF: Sure, okay, and nods around the group, you used the word hyped-up as well which was what Sonia used. Okay, Pat, you’ve obviously been coming down for the longest of anybody here, do you want to tell us how you get into it, and what it was that drew you back.
PM: Erm, got into it, because basically I left school, started work and I didn’t have anything to do at nights, and it was cheap, I mean to come in, when I first started coming it was something like three quid for a ticket, and it was so cheap for a Saturday night, you’ve gone out ,you come in the bar afterwards and you socialise, it was really good fun, and when you first start working you’re not earning an awful lot, you know, you’ve got your Saturday’s made.
MF: You said you socialised a lot, in that fifteen years have you made social networks down here, have you got a lot of friends
PM: Yes, I know a lot of people who have been here longer than I have
MF: So is that part of it for you when you come down
PM: Yeah, I don’t talk to those people in the off-season, but first game of the season its like ‘hi’ and all this, its like you’ve just had a long holiday and not seen each other.
MF: Right, Sonia, you were nodding at that, when Pat said you see people down here that you get to know.
SB: Well that’s right, and you see them in supermarkets, and you’ve never seen them before and its ‘Riders’, you know, a couple of years ago we went on holiday to, this is really strange this is to Florida in Orlando, and we were staying in a hotel, and this little lad ran and my son said ‘he’s got a Riders l-
shirt on’ and we belted across to the other side of the pool and they were Riders followers and we see them in here now.

MF: Erm, Becky, perhaps you could tell us about how you first came to watch the Riders
BC: Erm, my friend used to come down as a family, and so, I went round to her house one day, and they said they had a ticket, so I went down with her, and so I started going, erm, about a year before Davina, and then I stopped going, and we all started going, and when Davina went she said ‘it was really good’, and I said ‘yeah, I went last year’, so I started going again, and then we just come like, every week or so.

MF: Right, so you come to every game now
BC: Ermm .. More or less
MF: You like to come to every game if you can get here?
BC: Yeah.

MF: And have you got to know people down here, do you know a lot of people that come - friends
BC: Erm, yeah, we've made a few friends, and like if we see them, we associate them with basketball and things, so yeah, we've made a few friends down here

MF: Right, Sheila, how did you first get to come here?
SM: MY sisters lad was doing basketball at school, and there was some Riders going up to do it with them, and after the course they were invited to come down to a game, so my sister got hooked, and then Boxing day, it must have been three years ago I suppose now, she aid did we fancy going out for a family do to the basketball, and we've been coming ever since.

MF: Right
SM: So we came because she'd introduced us to it

MF: Okay, and the first time you came down, what was it that perhaps struck you about it?
SM: What struck me about it was that Billy Mims and Bob Donewald were the two coaches out there, and I'd never seen performances like it [laughter], I mean that was exciting as well, just the game, the atmosphere; it's in a nice warm place, the excitement, all that sort of stuff made us want to come again. And then we came quite regularly and we thought the next season we might as well get a season ticket then you don't have to think about the money every week, can you afford it, because you've paid for it already.

MF: Okay
SM: We only come when it's the night when there's no school the next day, so we're very limited, especially this season, because there's been a lot of Wednesday games, we can't do those, so we come down at weekends, and we don't usually go to away games.

MF: So it was the characters and some of the personalities which were an appeal when you came down, you mentioned the coaches?
SM: Yeah, and I realised at the beginning of this season when there were loads and loads of new players I'd never seen before, my interest in it wasn't as big as it had been when it was a team that I know, but now that I feel that I know this lot, that's come back.

MF: Sonia (A), I think you're the last one to tell us how you got into it and what it was that draws you back?
SA: Erm, my son plays for the cadets, the 16 year olds, so I came down with him when he was playing, and so we decided to go to a proper game, and been to everyone since

MF: Every single one?
SA: Every home game, yes
MF: So now you're dedicated
SA: Hooked, hooked [laughter]
MF: Right what is it that hooked you?
SA: First time it was the noise, I couldn’t get over how noisy it was, it was deafening [laughter], I thought football was noisy until I came here
MF: Okay
SA: erm, and it’s just the closeness, and I find it’s something you can do with teenagers, more than a lot of other sports, I think basketball accepts women, middle-aged women, older people far more . . .
MF: Than . . .?
SA: Than football and other sports, you don’t feel daft being a women going to a basketball game. there’s far more women, you know.
MF: Right, and that’s different, Sheila gave the example of football, for example.
SA: Yes, well as I say, I’ve done football as well, but it’s no comparison, no comparison. Its much more family . . ., you know, especially if you’ve got boys. its nice to be able to do something with boys that they don’t mind taking their mothers to.

[Andrew Ricket comes into room]
MF: Hi there, are you Andrew, I’m Mark, would you like to take a seat? We’re in the midst, so we’ll try and tie you into the conversation as we go along.

MF: Okay, that’s good, now we’ve got a picture of what it is that you’re getting of, and what it is that’s important about this kind of environment, these nights out that you get. Erm. lets have a few more of your words, Pat do you want to give us one of yours that we haven’t heard, if you have one
PM: Entertaining
MF: Entertaining, and what do you mean by entertaining?
PM: It’s just as good as going out to the cinema or anything like that
MF: Ahem
PM: You go back and, yeah, some time I go home and I think, well. I’m on a high, and I can’t believe I’m like that, you know, it’s great fun.
MF: You say you’re on a high when they win, what is it about the win that you like?
PM: Erm, I mean this is going back a few years, when there was Glasgow in the league, I mean, it was just great, Glasgow was a team that nobody could beat, and we beat them, and it was my birthday, it was so much fun, and I was on a high, and I don’t know why, I don’t know. it was so unpredictable that they’d beat this team of Glasgow which were like the London Towers of the day, it was loads of fun that night.
MF: Right, so it mattered to you that they won?
PM: Yeah
MF: Davina, Does it matter to you if they win?
D: I don’t think it matters if they win or they lose, I think it’s just watching them play that’s the whole . . . makes you feel good about it. I think because whenever they do win or if they lose, they include you in it, it’s like it doesn’t really matter as long as you’re supporting them, because they acknowledge that you’re supporting them, and that they include you in it as well.
MF: Okay, lets bring Andrew in here, can you just tell us how long you’ve been coming down to watch the Riders?
AR: Err, about three years now
MF: Okay, lets jump straight in there, does it matter to you if they win or lose when you come down
AR: Erm, well, as the season goes on, certainly
MF: You like to see the win then?
AR: err, yeah, it's about competition and place at the end of the season within the league for the supporters if you're following the team
MF: Sure Sonia (B)
SB: I think, this is quite sad, I think I get to the stage sometimes where I feel sorry for them, err, because, like you said, they're unpredictable, and you feel as if you know these guys personally, and you really feel for them if they lose, but when they win, you know, you're on a high, you know, and everybody goes out of here and everybody's talking about it, everybody's talking about different aspects of the game, but, yeah, I think there's an element of feeling sorry for them, you know. like I said earlier, we really feel what they're feeling, its a very personal thing, I think its because we feel that the Riders are ours, they're not like, Leicester City football players belong to Walker's crisps don't they, sort of, because its a money thing, I mean moneys important in all sports, but I think they belong to us and they know they do, and I think they feel as if they let us down.
MF: you do, so you feel quite strongly about that?
SB: yeah, yeah, I do, you can see it in their faces, when they, you know, head down, off they go . . . and it's sad.
MF: Do you feel a real affinity for the players Sonia (A), have you developed that over time?
SA: Erm, yes, it doesn't matter to me whether they win or lose though, I don't worry, if they win. it's nice, if they lose, there's always the next game, I don't worry where they are in the league because each game is entertaining for a different reason, but yes, I do feel an affinity with the players, you do feel . . . and especially with my son training on different nights you see the players in a different aspect and they're totally different to football stars, you know, they're human and they'll say 'hell' to you, and they'll pass the time of day whereas football players and things like that wouldn't ever, so yes, you do feel closer, as though you know them.
MF: Right, do you feel that way at all Becky?
BC: Ermm, yeah, if they were to lose over and over again it doesn't put you off, it doesn't make you think 'oh, they're losing, you still want to come back and watch them and cheer them on and things, so it doesn't put you off if they keep losing, erm, but if they win its really good and it keeps you on a high, but if they lose it doesn't really bother me.
MF: Right, that kind of moves us towards one of the issues which is about players who play for the Riders and players who play in British basketball who are foreign, alot of them are American, which is kind of an on-going issue in British basketball. A number of you have talked about your affinity for the players, and you feel they're representing you. would that be fair to say?
(unknown)Ahem, yes
MF: Right, alot of nods, erm, do you think its easy, we'll start with Sonia perhaps, for American players to come over and play for the Riders and still feel that affinity with the fans?
SB: Err, yes, erm, I know there was a lot of talk a little while back whether or not there should be so many Americans in the team, wasn't there, it was about five that kind of thing. Now just based on my experience, err, I wouldn't be sat here unless it was for the American influence err in the Riders, erm I have been writing to a girl in America in Ohio for thirty five years, a pen-friend, and she talks about basketball in every letter, I had one from here this morning talked about 'March Madness' you know the college games and things, so erm, I err, I know a little bit about it anyway, and err. because of her letters and what she writes, but I think they've had a strong influence on erm. the Riders and basketball in the UK, particularly in schools, you know, this is how we first got into it as a family.
because they came into my sons junior schools, and the Americans are so warm and friendly, these guys were, and all the kids liked them, and wanted to be like them, so it had a knock-on effect.

MF: Right

SB: So yeah, I think they've inspired a lot of youngster into basketball most definitely

MF: And do you like watching them when they play for the Riders?

SB: Yes, yeah

MF: Do you think they're the better players

SB: Er... I... in some way, but you can see the British players feeding off them, and like err ... what's his name ... Hilroy, no not Hilroy, Drew Barrett, he's been to the States hasn't he, so, and you can see him, err, actually operating and reacting like the Americans do, he actually plays like an American basketball players does now.

MF: Sure, Andrew perhaps lets bring you in here, American players playing for the Riders, do you have any opinions on that?

AR: erm, I don't have any strong opinions (lost) I think clearly basketball's an American based game - big money, erm ... and it popularity is like soccer over here basically, so they'll always have the better players

MF: And when the Riders are playing out there does it matter to you that they're American or English?

AR: I think its nice to have some local lads playing for your team, it nice to see them when they get into the team and they're apart of that, but I don't think they have to be English players particularly, or even local players

MF: Okay, Pat I know you're a long-time Riders fan so perhaps from your experience you can tell us a little about the impact of American players while you've been watching.

PM: It makes the game more exciting, because, yes they are slightly a class above the English players, I think it's because of there college background - it's in the college system. erm, but I don't agree with having five, it was just as good years ago when we only had two, the game was just as exciting and the English players still developed because they still has somebody to watch ... erm. I think it's started to affect the national team, we're picking up people for the national team that I've never heard of before, they've never played in this country but because they've got British parents and they're playing abroad we're grabbing them for our team, I think some of the team now is getting quite old, people like Steve Bucknall's been around years, I mean I remember him when he came back from the Lakers, erm they're coming towards the end of their careers and the next few years we could struggle to get a national team because there's nothing coming up through the ranks here in this country.

MF: So you think that's a problem then?

PM: I think it will be in a couple of years time

MF: Would you like to see more local guys playing for the Riders?

PM: Yeah, I would, I'd like to go back down to having three foreigners and that's it, we've done it before and it worked perfectly fine, I think they've brought them in to boost the sport up, again it has worked but I think it's got a cost

MF: Right, Davina, does it matter to you where the players come from?

D: I think it's nice to have a few local players like say the Leicester Riders team does have a few Leicester players in, but I don't think it really matters very much, I think the Americans. they do have more knowledge in the sport, because it is an American based game, and I think they can bring that knowledge to Britain, and educate like, local based players as well, so maybe they could have an influence over them, and maybe bring more English players into the game.
MF: Okay, Sheila?

SM: I like having local players as well, when I came, soon after that Karl Brown came back and he was called `The Leicester Lad' and I still feel really pleased for him when he has a good game. erm, and I think that's because he's got the local tag, erm, I don't have a strong opinion about how many Americans should be in the team, I think watching the American players we've got is exciting, but I think I'd also like to make some space so that local people can get a chance to play, I think if you had a team that was all American, and all of a standard that they come in at, local people, as you say, don't get a chance to develop, if you've got gaps, then they can be brought up, alongside the other players. so I'd like to see a balance, but I wouldn't be prescriptive about the balance.

MF: Okay, Sonia A, do you think that all the players put as much effort in all the time as much as you'd like

SA: No {emphatic - laughs} no, definitely not [group laughs]

MF: can you expand on that a bit?

SA: What do you want names [group laughs]

MF: Are there times in the game when you feel that the players aren't trying as hard as you'd like them to.

SA: Erm, starting five are usually fairly good, it must be hard for the ones that are on the bench most of the time erm, some of them could put in a bit more, but err, it must be difficult. but yes, there's some I think could put in a bit more.

SA: Is that frustrating for you as somebody who has an emotional investment in them doing well SA: yes, yes, especially the ones that come off the bench, you think, gosh, you've been given a chance, you know, why don't you put a bit more into it, but it's just difficult, but some certainly could do a bit more.

MF: Right, Sonia (B), your views on that one?

SB: Err, yeah I feel the same as Sonia A, and I don't think any of us want to name names, cause we all feel for all of them don't we, but yes, sometimes, I mean a few years ago, I remember there was two guys just having - Gene and John Tresvant - just having a game on their own, virtually everybody was running after them, I mean they're getting all the glory, and that but, it was weird wasn't it.

PM: Yeah, I mean there was a game up in Manchester a few years a go when Gene was playing and his mum was there, and it was like Gene Waldron, Gene Waldron and he scored Fifty points that night, no body else got a look-in. It was like the Gene waldron show because his Mum was in the crowd [group laughs], the rest of them got a rest.

MF: Becky, when you come down, do you think the players are putting in as much effort as they could all the time?

BC: sometimes it does get frustrating when like if they're losing and they know they're gonna lose sometimes they don't put as much effort in, and they kind of give up and, they don't try as hard, and the same, when they're winning really well they will try more, like kind of show off, but some times they're showing off and it like goes the wrong way [laughter] then they start losing a bit, things like that, so yeah, I think it depends on whether they're winning or losing.

MF: And do you like to see the players trying as hard as they can all the time

BC: Yes

MF: So is it a source of frustration for you if they're not perhaps?

BC: Ermmm, yeah, can be

MF: Right, This is a general question, do you think its more difficult for the American players that do come over to relate to club and try really hard for the club.
PM: I think it takes them a while to settle in
MF: Right
PM: I think that’s why we always seem to get a bad start, we don’t bring them in until a week before
the games, the season starts, other clubs have got them in three or four weeks before the season starts,
so then they come in, they’re jet-lagged, they haven’t trained, and of course, there’s always a settling
in period, they might not get on with the team, there might be a personality clash, I think it takes them
a while to settle in and then yeah they’re fine after that.
MF: One thing about the Americans, and Sheila mentioned this at the beginning, was about that at the
beginning of the season I think you mentioned, that she came along at it was all new faces, it was all
new people, erm, and you perhaps didn’t relate to them as much?
SM: I don’t feel, like, no, knowing characters keeps you hooked in I think.
MF: Okay, and that’s kind of symptomatic of way the game is with a lot of Americans come over on
one year contracts. Do you think the nature of that is a problem for them feeling a kind of relationship
to the club, and a strong bond that they want to go out to do it well for the club, as opposed to them
being home on a one year contract.
SM: I think it must be really hard to go somewhere and suddenly feel total commitment to that club, as
a club, you might be committed to the game, to that club and have an affinity to the crowd, especially
if the crowd is a bit picky, and just is going back slightly, if people are having an off day, or the teams
having an n off day, I don’t feel critical of the players because I don’t think you can be good all the
time, and when you get disappointed you are disappointed and sometimes I think they need the crowd
to lift them, but if you come into a club and your first few games are like that with people shouting at
people because they’ve not done hard enough, you’re gonna feel “what am I doing here” so I think
yeah, that’s hard to start with, and if you’re only here for a short while as well it would be difficult to
put down roots
MF: Right sure. Andrew?
AR: Yeah, I think it probably takes them a while to identify with the club and fans its difficult for
them to settle at first, it would be difficult for them to play for the club. I also think that the coaches
are very motivational, and I think players are quite temperamental and the coaches are very
motivational they need to be for there team, it seems to me that the coaches are very important part of
the team in basketball which is why I think we did duffer at the beginning of the season when the
coach was unfamiliar with British basketball
MF: So I guess the crux of it really comes if you feel there’s any difference between the Americans
that do come over and whether they feel they have an investment in the club or whether for the local
players its easier for them to feel that? Does anyone have strong feelings on that? Sonia (B)
SB: Err not really, I think that you can’t generalise, over the years, I mean you’ll have seen it more
than I will, there’s no true chemistry there, err, I feel I me an when I first started the key players were
Eugene and John Tresvant, and they were very much the team leaders there, and they either played the
show themselves or you know, they got the team on their side, so I don’t think you can generalise,
erm, I just think they inspire young players, because they’re weaned to be so motivational. and
enthusiastic about what they do, more so than we are, I mean right down to summer camps, my son
came to all the summer camps, and I bought a young lad here and left him here, and when I picked
him up a night he was hyper, you know because they made him believe he could be good, so I could
say nothing against them, but I do agree with everyone else we should have more English players
coming through the ranks, but I believe the Americans can inspire this - make them good.
MF: Sure, and you’ve mentioned the community work which is something we’ll hopefully come back to, erm, let’s just move onto another question which is: What’s the biggest problem with Riders basketball?
PM: With the team or the club as a whole?
MF: Your experience of coming down here
SB: This place, [group agreement]
SM: Oh the toilets [laughter]
SA: On a rainy day, the scoreboard
SB: Granby halls
PM: It’s behind the times
SB: If we had a nice Leicester Dome, or whatever they’re going to call it...
SM: But, if we had a nice Leicester Dome, I’d still like to be able to sit right behind the goalpost
SB: Oh yeah
SM: and close down, not like at the NEC
SA: If you go to the NEC
SM: Its like going to the theatre, a seat with arms
PM: The Nynex, that’s even worse
MF: So its the facility which is the problem, Becky how about you
BC: I think it needs a bit of doing up, but I think its really nice because it’s quite cosy and it is like friendly and things, and if we were to get a bigger one like any of the other ones it wouldn’t be as friendly, it would be more like a football match.
MF: Right so that closeness that you are to the court, the intimacy, and that lends itself to the, as Sonia was talking about, the relationship with the players.
SA: There’s a lot wrong with Granby halls, but there’s a lot right with it as well
MF: Right okay, Davina?
D: I think its nice because, erm, you’re so near to the court and to the players, you can feel what they’re feeling, see how they’re feeling, and it just like when you’ve just won, and you run onto the court it’s so nice to be close and personal, and I think its like having a good relationship with the players as well, its like they’ll recognise you time and time again, and I think that’s really good for like younger people as well, because it makes them want to come back, because they know they’re going to see there favourite players again as well; but I think Granby Halls could do with a bit of doing up.
MF: Okay, what’s the biggest problem for you Andrew . . . . The bit you don’t like the most perhaps?
AR: Well, I’ll go back and say one thing about the Granby Halls which is one of the best things is that your kids can have a good time as well as watching the basketball, and play with their own ball in a quite part of the stadium while the match is . . . so I think that’s quite important, which would be difficult in big stadium, erm, . . . I don’t know really, I think there’s a slightly frustrating lack of ambition, the sport could be more popular generally amongst the public, but then it would lose some of its, erm homeliness I guess
SB: I mean if you go to some of the other clubs, Derby’s not unlike this atmosphere, err. its a nicer more modern it looks a safer building than this, I’m always concerned about the safety of this place, err you know, because it just doesn’t look safe does it from the outside or in, erm, but then again I’ve been to see the Bullets playing and if you talk to their supporters there’s still a togetherness there, err. I think it’s what happens before and after the game, not the venue, I just think maybe we could get some better players perhaps, more sponsorship money in here if we had a better venue, I’m always surprised
that Renault keep sponsoring us, because they're a national company and, you know, they've just renewed their sponsorship for next year, and I think 'well, why?"
SA: Because it's the fastest growing sport in this country
SB: It is
SA: They're not stupid
SB: No. no, but they're names, yeah, they've got exposure on television etcetera but would they be better to associate their name with a successful team. . . . . I don't know it's open to debate. I just think this is all we know, this venue and the team. I'm happy with it because it's okay, but I'm sure, you know, in ten years time it'll be mighty different.
MF: Right, so one of the things which has come out, and I know Becky mentioned this was, you like the intimacy, obviously its a little bit dilapidated, erm, and you wouldn't really want to lose that intimacy by going to one of the big, multi-purpose arenas. Pat, you're shaking your head vigorously? PM: Well, yeah, I'd like to stay in something this size, I mean, I've been to Manchester, you go there, it's steep banked sides, and if you're at the top, you end up watching the cube of TVs in the middle, because you're drawn to that cube of TVs, you're not drawn to the game below you, it's not the same, it's absolutely not the same at all. Like Worthing's great, Worthing's, well it's Brighton now, they had a great little sports hall, slightly smaller than this, but the atmosphere was fantastic by the end of the game, and I'd hate to miss that.
MF: Yeah?
PM: That would spoil the whole game for me
MF: That would spoil it all for you?
PM: Yeah, I don't like going, I haven't been to Manchester for years now, I don't like going
MF: Right?
PM: You're just sitting watching a TV basically
MF: If the Riders were to move into a facility like that, and obviously there's been a lot of plans over the last few years or so, do you think that would dissuade you from going?
PM: I don't think it would dissuade me, but I don't think I'd get as much enjoyment out of it
MF: Right?
PM: I think I'd be, you know, it's supposed to be, it's a club, supposed to be together, supporters - players, and I think that will kind of stop, dissolve slightly.
MF: Right . . . Davina, you're nodding your head
D: Yeah, I mean its because it's such a social game as well, that if you, erm, lost the sort of smallness of the arena, and that, you'd lose all contact with the players and things, it's just not the same after that, because you know the players, you see them, they know your names as well, I think its nice that they know your names, and they can recognise you when you're in the street or whatever.
MF: Right, the big arenas Andrew, Have you ever been along to any of those?
AR: Err, I've been up to Sheffield.
MF: Ahem
AR: Not to the Forge, but to the Sheffield Arena
MF: Would you like to see the Riders playing in that kind of a place, or would it lose ..?
AR: I don't think the sports popular enough to fill it to have the atmosphere, week-in week-out here
MF: So you wouldn't like to see the Riders . . .
AR: Yes, I think they're not big enough for that type of arena . .
MF: Sure, Sheila?
SM: I like it like this, I don't think it would stop me going but I might get, I don't know, if I started to

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get fed up, or lose interest, that would help my enthusiasm to ebb, whereas you do feel like you belong here, and because you can go down on the court afterwards and say hello to people, and that bits really important - you can see their faces, and if you’re stuck miles away from them you can’t - it doesn’t feel like you belong

MF: Okay another thing is, when you come down here obviously the game is one thing which is predominantly what we’ve talked about - the players, what goes on in relationship to the game, there are also a whole series of other things in terms of the cheerleaders, the music and the whole build up which obviously adds to this notion of the atmosphere you’ve talked about. What do we think about those kinds of things like the music and the cheerleaders? Becky, perhaps do you want to start us off?

BC: It does add atmosphere to it, and it does, like if there was no music at the beginning it might be a bit more flat, and people wouldn’t get as in to it and things, and erm, the cheerleaders, it’s like a break and people just sit there and watch

MF: Do you like them

BC: What the cheerleaders?

MF: Yeah

BC: I don’t but other people might

MF: It’s okay not to

BC: Yeah

MF: What is it about them that you perhaps don’t like?

BC: I don’t mind them being there, but I just don’t want to sit there and watch them.

MF: Right, okay, so that’s not part of the appeal to you perhaps

BC: No it doesn’t

MF: Right, Davina?

D: NO the cheerleaders don’t really appeal to me either, but I think the music does sort of, it sort of hypes you up a bit more, puts you in the mood rather than just having silence while everyone’s coming in, I think it just adds to the atmosphere as well

MF: Okay, so you like the music

D: Yeah

MF: Right, Sonia A.

SA: Erin, I like the music, yeah, I’m not bothered about the cheerleaders [laughs] the girls no, but the music I think is nice, also having teenage boys its something that you can have in common, anything that keeps parents with, in particular boys, it’s another family thing, you know, because if I don’t know who it is, he’ll tell me and then next time you’re here you don’t feel quite so old and out of it [loud laughter from group] - it’s true; but, yes, no the music’s good.

MF: Yeah, Sonia (B)

SB: Yeah, I agree with everything that’s been said, but I, if you watch an NBA game on the television, all this happens their so maybe we’re pinching alot of the atmosphere and the cheerleaders err from what happens in America.

MF: Right, and do you watch the NBA on television?

SB: Yeah I do

MF: Sonia(A) you’re nodding

SA: Yes, I watch anything that’s on - basketball, we get to watch, but I do have to say that I don’t like the music and that they have during the games, all the stupid noises, that would drive me absolutely mad

PM: They’ve done it here
MF: So it that your involvement in the Riders that has lead you to watch the American game on television?
SA: Yes
MF: It has in Sonia’s (A) case
SB: No, the other way around
MF: The other way round for Sonia (B), Okay, Becky do you watch the NBA on television, or British basketball for that matter
SB: I’ve watched it before, but I don’t really go out on my way to watch it, because I don’t really get the same feeling watching it on TV as I do here
MF: Right?
SB: And cos I don’t really keep up with the NBA, I just like doing like England and the matches round here and things, so I don’t really watch it on TV
MF: Okay, Davina
D: No, I don’t think its quite the same either just watching it on TV, I think you have to be there to get into it, I think because of the involvement between you and the players and the other people in the crowd, I think its one of those things that you have to go and watch live.
MF: Right, so you’d rather be here watching the Riders than perhaps watching NBA on television
D: Yep
BC: Yep
MF: Right, sure, Andrew do you watch the game on television
AR: err, yeah I do, I think the clear problem with America is the time difference, the game if they were live would be one-o’clock in the morning, and personally, I lived in Toronto for six months, and I watched the Stanley Cup final on the ice-hockey if possible, but it’s hard work trying to follow American sport when it’s only on at one o’clock in the morning, and the sort of highlight programmes don’t really do it a lot of justice really, you only get a brief snap-shot
MF: SO you prefer coming down and watching the live local version
AR: Yeah and I watch the SKY games. the SKY games are okay
MF: Sure, Sonia, you watch it on SKT too
SA: Yes, every one
MF: Pretty dedicated are you?
SA: You have to . . at least you’re familiar with the teams so that’s what keeps the interest, if you know next week you might be playing one of them.
SB: And if your team are away, I don’t know about you, we get up on a Sunday morning it ‘s the first thing we do, look for the scores, what happened
MF: Okay, so being involved with the Riders for you has led to a following of the British game a bit more broadly perhaps
SB: Very much so, yeah.
MF: Right, is that the same for you Sheila?
MF: No, we don’t have SKY TV, erm we watched the final on BBC, I was in the gym and I got them to turn it over [laughter], so we could watch the basketball, and everyone else was *[tape flip]* it doesn’t mean anything to me, I think if it was on, I mean we watch Casualty every Saturday. if it happened to be on after casualty had finished, we’d probably watch it and then get into it, but we don’t make an effort, if it was on the right time of day, on a day we weren’t doing anything else. but I wouldn’t make an effort to do, I like the live game
MF: That's really interesting, you said 'it doesn't mean anything to me'. Obviously the Riders does for a whole variety of reasons that we've talked about tonight. Well thanks for the time, I'm just going to ask you to fill in the test 2 on the sheet, what we're interested to know is people's knowledge of where the players come from. Then really the only thing I want to do as a wrap up I ask, obviously we've discussed quite a number of issues, if there's anything that we didn't discuss which you felt was relevant to your experiences of coming down here?

SM: You were asking what we don't like about coming down here

MF: Ahem

SM: One of the things I go away with sometimes is feeling really annoyed with fair-weather supporters, and I take that away with me, if the players haven't been playing too enthusiastically and they've had people standing up and pointing at them all the time, and shouting and just being really down on them, I go away thinking “well, you know, what do they expect, if you're not going to be supporters” I think that's because I don't come from a competitive, I don't have a competitive edge to me, and I don't expect people to succeed all the time, and think those players go off that court sometimes feeling so disappointed with their own performance that they don't need it shoved down their throats by people being nasty to them, so I feel strongly about that.

MF: And that's really because of your loyalty to the team and the players

SM: Yeah, I think so, and I always feel like I need to go down and say, you know, sort of shake their hand or something if they've had a bad game, but you get annoyed with people who just get really snotty with them.

MF: Okay, anything else from anybody, by means of a wrap-up?

SA: Cost

MF: Cost?

SA: Yes, compared to other sports, to watch it is far, far cheaper, especially if you've got a family. Football tickets are twenty-something pounds per person, you know, juniors three pounds here, season tickets are affordable

SB: They're not a thousand pounds

PM: You actually save money on them

SA: Cost is great, you know.

MF: Okay, I can here them announcing the teams

D: I was just going to say, we get a discount at school as well, we get discounted prices, it make sit cheaper for us to come as well

MF: And that's an appeal for you?

D: Yeah

MF: Right, sure

SB: Just a quick thing, I think they do a wonderful job in schools, but I think that's where the growth-interest is, if err, basketball teams like the Riders could have a closer connection with the schools then little ones

SA: They do an amazing lot

SB: They do, but that's where it all started with my son, err, but that's the growth area, they're the audiences of the future

MF: And you like to see that

SB: Very much so

AR: But Leicester very much as a city is like that, because the football club are just as involved in schools.
SB: They are, but that's all taken for granted, this is a growth sport, and I just see there's so much mileage there, you know, and I think there's people in the community like us that would help aid that as well.
SM: We wouldn't be here if that hadn't happened.
SB: No definately no, no
MF: Okay, and thanks for the time, thank you very much indeed
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### 1) Experience of Games

#### Sub Themes

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<tr>
<td>(3, p1) “the atmosphere”</td>
<td>(5, p1) “great atmosphere for the kids”</td>
<td>(6, p3) “they were down there somewhere!”</td>
<td>(5, p2) “bigger venues don’t have the same atmosphere”</td>
<td>(3, p2) “I think that’s a good idea”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3, p4) “I’d rather be in the flesh” (as opposed to NBA on TV)</td>
<td>(6, p1) “family friendly atmosphere”</td>
<td>(6, p4) “Coming as a family . . . cost is relevant”</td>
<td>(6, p1) “its nice to win, but you want entertainment”</td>
<td>(4, p2) “it should be like a theatrical presentation really”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3, p5) “you don’t get the atmosphere like you do at Granby halls” - ref to arenas</td>
<td>(6, p1) “it’s very much a family affair”</td>
<td>(3, p1) “there’s no roughness”</td>
<td>(2, p1) “the audience hasn’t yet bonded fully with the team”</td>
<td>(1, p1) “I think it’s a bit of a joke”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. p1 = Participant 1
2. p2 = Participant 2
3. p3 = Participant 3
4. p4 = Participant 4
5. p5 = Participant 5
### Appendix 9. Textual analysis data recording sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tape Number</th>
<th>Example Number:</th>
<th>Counter:</th>
<th>NBA</th>
<th>British</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### THEMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migrant/Indigenous</th>
<th>National Identities</th>
<th>Localities</th>
<th>Americanisation/Globalisation</th>
<th>NBA-isation</th>
<th>Global Monopoly Capitalism</th>
<th>Consumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Context of Example:

- **Technical conventions (camera angles, camera shot, time [slow-mo], etc):**

- **Audio - Commentary - commentator, players/coaches, spectators, music:**

- **Visual - Graphics, Spectator behaviour, player/coach representations - in game/out game**

- **Contextual - Structural/economic/cultural [broader themes]**

#### Additional Notes:
- Links to other examples
- Links across themes:
- Link to place in thesis: