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**Globalization and the Construction of Local Particularities:
A Case Study of the Winnipeg Jets**

by

Jay Christopher Scherer

A Thesis

**Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research
through the School of Human Kinetics
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
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Abstract

The processes of globalization exhibit the countertendency to foster local particularities (Harvey et al., 1996). This study sought to examine how local particularities and global identities were constructed and manipulated by specific power blocs in terms of the value of the Winnipeg Jets from 1972-1996. This question was divided into three sub-problems to assist the research process. The three sub-problems were:

- 1) What are the constructions of global identities and local particularities surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets from 1972 to 1996?
- 2) What individuals/groups promoted or discouraged the various constructions of global images and local particularities surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets?
- 3) How did those individuals/groups promote or discourage such constructions?

A qualitative methodology was developed to investigate these sub-problems. A comprehensive newspaper analysis of the Winnipeg Free Press from 1972 to 1996 was initially undertaken. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals involved with the Save the Jets campaign from 1994-1995.

A variety of local particularities and global identities were constructed by individuals/groups surrounding the value of the Jets. The promotion of a 'world class' urban identity and 'world class' cultural products in Winnipeg points to the legitimization of a global logic of capital accumulation. Team and civic boosters promoted the importance of the Jets to Winnipeg's local and global identity, and the importance of the Jets and NHL hockey to

Canadian 'national identity'. Opponents to the use of public funds for the construction a new arena in Winnipeg challenged the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets and a new arena to Winnipeg's local identity, as well as the importance of NHL hockey to Canadian 'national identity'. Opponents, however, only indirectly challenged the logic of global capital accumulation through their construction of alternative images of local and national identity independent of a global frame of reference.

Opponents challenged the constructions in a number of ways: they held meetings, produced propaganda and acts of political theatre, organized with other activist groups and made presentations at city hall. Boosters utilized a variety of methods to promote the various constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets. The local business elite mobilized and organized the Save the Jets campaign; the media covered the events and donated free advertising space; all three levels of government supported efforts to save the team; and Jets' fans rallied and donated money to the campaign. The process of constructing urban identity, from the local to the global, including a Canadian 'national identity' emerged as a site of ideological struggle.

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Thank you Vic. Your support and encouragement with this thesis has been constant. Your impact on this thesis, however, does not compare to the affect you have had on the way I look at life.

And lastly to my Mom, Kathleen Hartford, for the seemingly endless opportunities and support she has given me during my lifetime.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my Grandfather, Jerry Hartford, who taught me much more than how to enjoy watching a good game of baseball--how were you always one step ahead of those commentators?

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	v
Dedication	vi
Table of Contents	vii
 Chapter 1: Introduction	 1
Reflections on Methodology	10
 Chapter 2: Globalization, Global Identities, and Local Particularities	 15
Globalization	15
Globalization Within the Sociology of Sport	18
Globalization and Hockey: The Changing NHL	25
Globalization and the Construction of Local Particularities	31
Local Particularities Within a Global Culture	31
National Identities Within a Global Culture	35
Canadian 'National Identity' Within a Global Culture	36
The Discourse of 'World Class' Urban Global Identity	42
 Chapter 3: History of the Jets	 54
Life in the WHA	54
The Turbulence of Small Markets	61
The Changing 1990's	65
MEC's Arena Controversy and Business Plan	77
The Involvement of Gerry Gray	81
MEC, the NHL and Barry Shenkarow	82
Izzy Asper	88
Personal Differences and the Private Ownership Structure	92
Spirit's Business Plan	95
 Chapter 4: Constructing the Importance of the Winnipeg Jets:	 99
From the Global to the Local	99
Local Particularities	101
Constructions of Entertainment Value and Personal Identity	101
The Construction of Community and Urban Identity	105
Manufacturing Consent: The Construction of Unanimity	110
The Future of Winnipeg	113
Canadian Identity	122

Global Identity	126
The Construction of Global Similarity	131
Constructing the Importance of Global Identity	133
The Layering of Identity	134
 Chapter 5: The Actors and Their Actions	137
Local Activists	138
Jets' Fans	151
Business Elite	153
Role of the Media	169
Provincial Government	181
Federal Government	185
City Council	186
 Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations	195
Summary	195
Conclusions	196
Recommendations	200
 Appendix A: Sample Interview Guide	202
Appendix B: List of Interviews	204
Appendix C: Participant Consent Form	205
Appendix D: City Council Minutes Examined	206
 References	207
Academic Books	207
Academic Articles	213
Government Reports	219
Newspaper References	220
 Vita Auctoris	229

Chapter 1

Introduction

One of the main objectives of this study was to analyze the relationship between local particularities¹ and globalization in sport. Much of the recent literature on globalization and sport has dealt with the establishment and description of globalization theory. Specific case studies analyzing the processes of globalization and the constructions² of local particularities, however, have been minimal. With this study, I sought to build on globalization theory through the examination of a specific case study involving a professional hockey team. I sought to build on the literature by analyzing the specific groups involved in promoting and challenging the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets and the means by which they were able to do so. I also wanted to discover whether certain groups promoted or challenged specific constructions more so than others. To achieve this objective, it was critical that an appropriate research methodology be developed to allow for a rich analysis of the relationship between the global and the local. A case study method was developed to analyze the specific case of the Winnipeg Jets of the NHL and the city of Winnipeg. The case study method allows the researcher to generate rich and detailed qualitative information about a specific intervention (Tebes & Kramer, 1991). Case studies can also be studied retrospectively as well as concurrently. To

¹Local particularities represent specific constructions emphasizing the value of local, regional, and national cultural distinctiveness. Local particularities include the construction of specific, localized identities.

²Social construction refers to the process by which ways of meaning or knowing are produced within society.

guide this process, three sub-problems were identified:

- 1) What are the constructions of global identities and local particularities surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets from 1972 to 1996?
- 2) What individuals/groups promoted or discouraged the various constructions of global images and local particularities surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets?
- 3) How did those individuals/groups promote or discourage such constructions?

A second objective of this study was to give voice to the experiences of those involved with the negotiations and debates surrounding the Winnipeg Jets. Many individuals devoted a significant amount of their personal and professional time to the political process surrounding the negotiations to save the team. Their experiences thus played a major role in the development of this research. A third objective was to generate rich and detailed data surrounding the complex and dynamic negotiations to save the team in the mid-1990's. To achieve these objectives, it was imperative that an appropriate methodology be developed to generate rich, yet detailed data stemming from the three sub-problems.

Firstly, I decided that the most appropriate and convenient method of data collection and analysis would be based on a qualitative research foundation. A strength of qualitative data is that it emphasizes a specific and focused case grounded in a local context, while allowing for flexibility and rich descriptions. Patton (1990) describes qualitative methodology as a people-oriented inquiry able to bring order from chaos while identifying patterns in the noise of human complexity. Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994) note that qualitative data "...are well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives" (p.10).

The qualitative research methodology consisted of two parts. Firstly, I decided that rich and detailed data could be generated through an extensive and systematic newspaper review. Newspapers remain a popular medium for the dissemination of information and public knowledge; newspapers are extensive sources of information that are relatively convenient and inexpensive to locate (Dooley, 1995). The Winnipeg Free Press (WFP) was selected for the newspaper review. The paper was selected because of its relatively broad circulation in Winnipeg, and because the WFP covered the issues surrounding the Jets from 1972 to 1996. The WFP was also chosen because of the availability of the paper on micro-film at the University of Windsor's Leddy Library.

Jim Silver's book, Thin ice: Money, politics, and the demise of an NHL franchise, was used as a guide to identify important time periods surrounding the debates over the Winnipeg Jets. Silver (1996) does a commendable and comprehensive job of analyzing the history and the issues surrounding the efforts to save the Jets. Rather than aimlessly searching through thousands of newspapers I identified several critical events in the history of the team through Silver's (1996) book. I then analyzed the newspapers according to the identified time periods. Important time periods that were selected included: 1) The entrance of the Jets in the WHA in 1972, 2) The signing of Bobby Hull in 1972, 3) The first "Save the Jets" campaign of 1974, 4) The debates surrounding the proposal to expand the Winnipeg Arena in 1975, 5) The purchase of the Jets by 8 Hockey Ventures Inc. in 1977, 6) The 1979 merger of the WHA and the NHL, 7) The arena lease negotiations of 1984, and 8) the IOA of 1991. Given the detailed coverage of the events surrounding the negotiations to save the team from 1994 to 1995, a detailed analysis was conducted of the events of that entire time period. Using this time frame guide enabled me to

generate important and comprehensive data. While minor issues and events may have been omitted by analyzing selected time periods, the time frame guide allowed for a detailed inquiry into the major events surrounding the history of the team.

The newspapers were analyzed at the University of Windsor using the Leddy Library's microfilm system. The analysis was conducted from May to July 1998. Using the time frames identified through Silver's book, I identified important articles and editorials containing constructions and descriptions of the events surrounding the team's history. The articles were not identified solely from a particular section of the newspaper. Rather, all sections of the newspaper were analyzed for data. Important articles and editorials were then printed out using the library's microfilm system and highlighted.

The second part of the methodology was based upon semi-structured interviews. A major objective of this research study was to give voice to those involved with the negotiations and debates surrounding the efforts to save the team in order to understand how and why specific constructions were developed from the perspectives of the individuals involved. In-depth, yet semi-structured, interviews were constructed for the purpose of data collection. The interviewing process consisted of several stages, including: selection of interview format, generation of interview guide, sample selection, interview conduction, data transcription, and data analysis.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews using an interview guide. See Appendix A for Sample Interview Guide. The interview guide was created to aid the researcher in conducting the interviews while ensuring a degree of consistency across all interviews. While providing the researcher with 'freedom to move', the interview guide also ensured that similar information was obtained from all subjects. The interview guide was developed to outline

questions and specific issues which would be explored with each respondent. The issues and questions were developed following the completion of the newspaper analysis. The researcher therefore had a solid background on the events surrounding the history of the team. The interviews were designed to be a participative process with a high level of interaction between the subject and researcher. Both the interviewer and the participant could then together define the interview and contribute to the process (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). The interview technique also permitted the subjects to ask questions regarding specific questions or issues. Such feedback was important to ensure that subjects correctly understood questions.

The interview technique allowed the researcher to access rich and detailed information while establishing a rapport with subjects. The interviews were intended to be informal yet professional. The informal atmosphere allowed for a friendly rapport to be developed with each subject. The interviews, however, were not so informal as to negate an atmosphere of professionalism during each interview. The interviews were structured around several controversial and sometimes confidential issues that required sensitive and professional conduct.

The next important step in the data collection was determining the sample of subjects to be interviewed. All interviews took place in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I enjoyed several advantages in this area. Firstly, I lived in Winnipeg for sixteen years. I was aware of many of the events surrounding the debates over the Jets, and had attended several games while I lived in Winnipeg. I also conducted the interviews following the newspaper analysis. I was therefore cognizant of the history of the team and the process involved in trying to save the team. Such knowledge was important in establishing a rapport with subjects while providing me with a solid background for the construction of the interview guide. I had connections through family and friends to a number

of individuals who were personally involved with the negotiations to save the Jets. For example, I was able to secure an interview with former Jets' president Barry Shenkarow through a close friend from high school. I was also able to secure interviews with John Loewen and Ross Robinson through family friends. These connections were also important in establishing a rapport with subjects. See Appendix B for a list of all interviews.

The practice of purposeful sampling was employed to diversify the perspectives and experiences of subjects. As Patton (1990) notes, "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth" (p.169). I selected subjects who were actively involved in the process and debates surrounding the efforts to save the Jets. These individuals were discovered in the newspaper analysis and through Jim Silver's (1996) book. Following my arrival in Winnipeg, I looked up the phone numbers of individuals in the local phone book, and began calling potential participants. A risk of qualitative research is that participants who are contacted often decline an invitation to participate in the study. There were a number of individuals who declined to participate in this study. Also, several individuals simply did not return introductory phone calls. In response to this possible threat, I used a snowballing technique to locate additional subjects. Snowball sampling allows the researcher to identify cases of interest from participants who know people with potentially valuable information (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interviews with Doug Smith, Donald Benham, and Nick Martin were secured in this manner. I was also able to interview two individuals over the phone³.

³Scott Taylor, and Bruce Robinson were interviewed over the phone. Comments from the phone interviews coincided with the responses of the taped interviews. I therefore focused on the taped transcripts comments during the analysis.

Confidentiality and anonymity were not guaranteed for this research study. A purpose of this research process was to generate a holistic and detailed analysis of the events that took place in Winnipeg including an analysis of the participants. Also, the media coverage of the events in Winnipeg was quite detailed. Even if anonymity were guaranteed, I believe that it would have been readily apparent which individuals were making specific statements. All participants signed a Consent to be Interviewed Form in which they were made aware that they would not be guaranteed anonymity or confidentiality. The Consent to be Interviewed Form, which was signed by each participant, is enclosed as Appendix C.

With the participant's consent each interview was also recorded on audio tape for transcription purposes. The tape recorder eliminates the necessity for writing, which may be a distraction for both the researcher and participant (Clarke & Harrison, 1984). Extensive note taking procedures were derived from Kirby & McKenna (1989). A lap-top computer was used to detail field notes and post-interview thoughts and comments prior to transcription. The tape recorder allowed the interviewer to be more attentive to each subject; this was important given the complexity and detailed information that was generated during the interviews. In order not to distract the participant, the tape recorder was placed to the side of the researcher. The only distraction occurred when the researcher had to switch tapes upon the completion of a blank tape. It was important to make sure that the tape did not stop recording during the interview. Important and detailed information could be potentially lost if I failed to notice that the machine had stopped recording. Researchers are also at the mercy of the technologies they choose to utilize. For example, during a lengthy interview with Carl Ridd, the tape recorder began to 'eat' the tape and I subsequently lost the majority of the interview. Fortunately, I had taken detailed

notes during the interview and was able to salvage a significant amount of information. The tape recorder also proved to be quite sensitive to background noise. During an interview with Brian Cole at a coffee shop/restaurant, the tape recorder picked up more lounge music than conversation.

Once an interview had been completed, I asked the subjects for feedback on the interview and the questions asked. Most participants had few comments, although some summarized their thoughts and previous comments while others added further emphasis and elaborated on previous statements. All participants were extremely passionate and focused during the interviews, illustrating the depth of their personal involvement and commitment to the process. I was somewhat surprised at the depth and detail of information that participants were able to provide; it had been over two years since the majority of the events transpired. Several individuals also asked for comments to be made 'off the record'. As soon as a participant asked for a statement to be made off the record I paused the tape and put my pen and paper down. I respected the wishes of participants to make confidential statements. This proved to be an important method of securing controversial, yet important, information. Comments made off the record were not used in this thesis. Following the completion of the interviews I asked participants if there were other individuals that I should be in contact with for the purpose of this study. Several individuals made important suggestions. Each interview was concluded by thanking participants for their time and information. All participants stated they enjoyed the interview experience and made themselves available if further questions arose. Shortly after completing an interview, I noted my impressions and comments about the respective interview, and what I thought could be changed or altered for the following interviews.

The final step of the data collection process consisted of transcribing the interviews. Transcription of ten interviews ranging in duration from 50 minutes to 2 hours took approximately a month to complete. The tedious process of transcription took place upon my return to Windsor in September, 1998. Upon the completion of an interview transcription, a hard copy was immediately made, and placed into a singular file. The file also contained the individual interview guides and the notes I had taken during the course of the interview. Interview transcriptions were stored on floppy disks, and on my computer's hard drive. Ever aware of the risks of having documents lost or corrupted, I saved each document at regular intervals and made two copies of each interview. Fortunately, I avoided the unpleasant experience of losing data.

Following the completion of data collection, data analysis was initiated. For the newspaper analysis important sections of articles were highlighted and marked. Newspapers were analyzed and I noted where there was a perceived link to any of the hypotheses. Constructions of identity were noted in particular. Constructions were then transferred into specific files with the title, date, and author of the newspaper article or editorial attached to the file. Files for constructions of global, local, and national identities were created and coded, allowing for easy retrieval of information. From the newspaper articles, a pattern of the events surrounding the Winnipeg Jets' franchise began to emerge. I developed a time frame to record data of important events and specific individuals involved in the efforts to save the team. The time frame recorded specific events, from the emergence of the team in 1972 to the demise of the franchise in 1996. The time frame was an effective way of organizing the complex and dynamic history of the team while allowing for the easy retrieval of detailed information.

The interview transcripts were read entirely following their transcription. I highlighted and made note of particular links to the hypotheses. Detailed quotes were marked and transferred into their appropriate files. Specific data was also transferred to the emerging time frame of the history of the team. The interviews proved to be an invaluable source for detailed information and personal accounts of the negotiations to save the team. Much of the data generated during the interview process was not apparent in the newspaper analysis. A cross-case analysis compared the subjects on similar questions and responses. The cross-case analysis involved constructing a case study for each participant and grouping together answers from different people to similar questions while analyzing different perspectives on central issues (Patton, 1990).

Credibility of qualitative analysis is a major issue in qualitative research. While qualitative inquiry allows the researcher to achieve a high level of creativity, the researcher has an obligation to be methodologically rigorous. Data from newspapers and interviews was triangulated during the analysis to increase the study's reliability and validity. Multiple and independent measures, if they reach the same conclusion, provide a more accurate portrayal of the phenomenon in question (Jick, 1979). The combination of multiple methods of data collection allows the researcher to overcome the deficiencies that flow from single methods. The merging of data from interviews and newspapers into individualized files provided an effective way of organizing the data for the analysis.

Methodological Reflections

Kirby and McKenna (1989) advise the researcher to 'live with the data' and reflect on the analysis. I therefore intend to offer my impressions on the adequacy and appropriateness of the

methodology adopted during the thesis. The interview portion of the methodology proved to be an important source of information surrounding the personal experiences of those involved with the debates surrounding the Winnipeg Jets. Many individuals were exceedingly generous with the amount of time they designated for the interview. I am grateful to those individuals who found the time to fit a graduate student into their busy schedules. For example, I spent over an hour with Alan Sweatman, a Winnipeg lawyer, and I can only imagine what he would have charged me if the interview was actually a legal meeting! Several participants were also extremely generous with their extensive sources of information on the events surrounding the demise of the Jets. Carl Ridd, for example, lent me several large files containing newspaper clippings, arena proposals, and press releases that I was fortunately able to photocopy. Donald Benham also gave me his files on the debates surrounding the Jets. Doug Smith lent me three articles on the history of Winnipeg and boosterism in emerging prairie cities. Such information proved to be of critical importance in the development of this thesis.

I believe that my impartiality as a researcher contributed to the willingness of individuals to participate in this study. The process of trying to save the team was intensely political, and personal differences and controversies were highly visible. My status as a neutral 'outsider' and observer to the process allowed me to secure additional interviews. For example, two of the individuals I interviewed declined to be interviewed by Jim Silver for his book. Silver was actively involved in the debates surrounding the Jets in the 1990's. His local activist group, Thin Ice, was visible throughout the controversial and political process of trying to save the team; the group publicly and passionately opposed the individuals who were trying to secure public funds for the construction of a new arena. I believe that because I was not involved personally in

process, I was able to secure additional interviews. In addition, there had been a two year time span since the majority of the events transpired. I believe that this length of time allowed participants to reflect on their involvement in the process, contributing to the depth of data I was able to generate. It also allowed several of the controversies associated with the process to 'cool down'. I believe the time difference was therefore to my advantage.

I was able to secure a number of interviews through family friends. The personal connections certainly allowed me to develop a rapport with participants. Without these personal connections I might not have been able to secure a number of interviews, and the data generated through the interview process would not have been as detailed as it was. The personal introductions granted by a number of individuals also contributed to establishing my credentials and credibility with participants. These personal connections allowed me to establish a rapport of trust with participants. When dealing with controversial and personal issues, it is imperative that participants feel they can trust the researcher with personal and confidential information. My role as an impartial observer allowed me to dialogue openly and freely with participants.

Several of the interviews appeared to take the form of an open conversation with little structure. After I asked the first question on the interview guide, several participants immediately began detailing their involvement without prompting. A certain amount of structure was able to be retained and some participants actually answered a majority of the questions without questions even being asked. The depth of detail participants were able to recall was surprising since it had been over two years since the Jets had departed Winnipeg. Nevertheless, the participants were able to recount detailed information with seemingly great ease, illustrating the depth and passion of their participation in both the debates surrounding the viability of the franchise and the actual

interviews. An important skill I learned in this process revolved around note taking and maintaining a conscious awareness of the participant's train of thought. The balance between paying complete attention and jotting down excessive amounts of notes was a difficult one to achieve. Thus the importance of the tape recording.

The debates surrounding the Jets were extremely controversial in Winnipeg. A tremendous amount of animosity emerged between different factions of individuals involved in the process. Surprisingly, participants did not hesitate to disclose sensitive information, while identifying a number of personal conflicts that emerged in the negotiations to save the team. While some individuals asked for certain statements to be made off the record, others discussed controversial and personal statements openly. One of the biggest concerns was trying to decide what information should be expressed in this thesis. In particular, some of the personal issues and disagreements surrounding key participants emerged as sensitive information. Also, certain individuals publicly 'took some heat' for their involvement in the process. Given the fact that anonymity and confidentiality were not guaranteed, I struggled over what to include in the thesis and what to omit. As one participant noted, Winnipeg is a small town through which words travel fast. Ultimately I decided not to censor or omit any statements made by participants 'on the record'. I made this decision based upon two reasons. The first is that even if participants were guaranteed anonymity, I am confident that those involved in the process, and the majority of the public that followed the debates, would have been able to recognize the sources of personal differences and controversies. Secondly, those controversies played a major role in the events surrounding the attempts to save the franchise. Choosing to ignore them would undermine the research process. Statements made 'off the record' were not used in this thesis.

While I am grateful for the connections that enabled me to interview a number of individuals, a concern also arose surrounding such connections. That concern is structured around any potential disagreements with the analysis and conclusions of this research. Given the sensitive nature of the process of attempting to save the team, some individuals might disagree with the analysis of this thesis. With that said, the conclusions and thoughts in this thesis are the researcher's alone. The conclusions of this thesis are open to both criticism and discussion, and I welcome both.

Chapter 2

Globalization, Global Identities and Local Particularities

The worldwide move towards a 'global village' has challenged our conceptions of identities--both locational and personal. Global products in the form of Nike shoes, McDonalds' hamburgers and professional sports leagues have emerged as a visible frame of reference for individuals and groups within local cultures. The global marketing reach of transnational firms is easily visible in the promotion of localized products within a global frame of reference. Globally standardized products like the popular Hard Rock Cafes are marketed to distinct locations to capitalize on local identities. Yet the ultimate goal of such strategies can be found in the logic of global capital accumulation, not cultural representation or understanding; a global market needs distinctiveness and diversity to prosper. The emergence of such a frame of reference, and global ways of knowing, does not however extinguish the ability of individuals and groups within local cultures to define their own values and identities. Individuals within cultures can resist the commodification of their identities for the purpose of capital accumulation. It is to a discussion of these issues that I now turn.

Globalization

A number of significant social, economic, cultural, and political changes have occurred globally since the 1970's. Globalization theories have emerged as plausible explanations for the recent socio-cultural global changes. Academics have generated significant debate over a variety

of perspectives surrounding the theoretical concept of globalization. The multifaceted and increasing rate of global interconnectedness is not without variation and distinctiveness (Maguire, 1998).

Globalization refers to the “crystallization of the entire world as a single place” (Robertson, 1987, p.38). New technologies and communication methods have resulted in the redefinition of space and time. Computer transactions can be completed in increasingly minuscule periods of time, and technological innovations have reduced the cost and time of communication and transportation. There has been a global shrinking of space and time (Harvey, 1989). The world literally seems smaller and much more interdependent.

The processes of globalization involve the establishment by dominant power blocs⁴ of a homogeneous frame of reference in which local particularities, as heterogeneous characteristics, are constructed by local populations and/or transnational elites (Houlihan, 1994). This homogeneous frame of reference is best described as global capitalist hegemony⁵; a global economy characterized by international capital and a global labour market has emerged on a supranational level which supersedes individual nation states. Even communist countries like China are choosing to participate in the global capitalist economy (Hong, 1997). Other countries like Malaysia and Indonesia are being forced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to join the global capitalist economy. As more nations continue to join the global capitalist system, a global logic of accumulation is naturalized. Globally recognizable products have emerged as

⁴Dominant power blocs consist of blocs/groups of individuals with similar values and beliefs, and the power to reinforce and naturalize systems which benefit their interests and beliefs.

⁵ Hegemony refers to the range of processes whereby dominant social groups extend their influence in such a way as to sustain their dominance over other social groups (Gruneau, 1988).

legitimate and 'natural' reinforcers of the processes of globalization (Harvey, 1989).

Nevertheless, despite the diminished role of the nation state, national, regional, and local particularities continue to thrive and exist within a global, homogeneous frame of reference defined by "powerful outsider groups" (Maguire, 1998, p.71).

A number of authors have examined the processes of globalization from multiple perspectives. Appadurai (1990) developed a framework for exploring the disjunctures of the global cultural economy based on five dimensions of global cultural flows⁶. Appadurai's (1990) five 'scapes' illustrate the disjunctive complexity of the global cultural economy, international capital, and global interaction. Sklair (1991) proposed that transnational practices⁷ can be examined from three levels: 1) economic, 2) political, and 3) cultural/ideological. Sklair (1991) acknowledges the significance of the global capitalist system as the focal point of an emerging global culture and economy. Featherstone (1990) also elaborates on the emergence of a globally commodified consumer culture and the emergence of a transnational capitalist class as part of the processes of globalization. The development of a transnational capitalist class is the primary facilitator of Appadurai's 'scapes'; the transnational capitalists view the establishment of the global capitalist system as a necessity for the expansion of their interests. Yet the development of a transnational culture is contradictory and complex; the transnational elite are neither

⁶The five flows include: ethnoscapas, which refer to the global flow of people; mediascapas, consisting of the complex images and metaphors displayed by the media; technoscapas, which refer to the fluid, dynamic, and high speed movement of technology; finanscapas, which refer to rapid and dynamic flow of global capital; and ideoscapas, which, while being related to the products of mediascapas, consist of state ideology and counter-state movements.

⁷The establishment of transnational practices and global ways of knowing by dominant power blocs must be viewed as a function of the processes of globalization.

homogeneous nor unified (Sklair, 1991). Similarly, the emergence of a transnational culture does not extinguish local particularities in the form of national and regional identities. These contradictions and paradoxes have been further identified in the literature on globalization and sport.

Globalization Within the Sociology of Sport

Globalization theories have received a significant amount of debate within the field of sociology of sport (Andrews et al., 1996; Guttman, 1991; Harvey & Houle, 1994; Houlihan, 1994; Kidd, 1991; Klein, 1991; Jackson, 1994; Maguire, 1990; Maguire 1994; McKay & Miller, 1991; Stoddart, 1990; Wagner, 1990; Whitson & Macintosh, 1993; Williams, 1994). In addition, an entire issue of the *Journal of the Sociology of Sport* was devoted to the topic of globalization⁸. The existence and emergence of a global culture in which sport plays a major role continues to be a contested and complex topic fraught with numerous paradoxes and difficulties. The globalization of sport, and in particular American sport, has been repeatedly described by academics using a vast amount of sociological jargon including such terms as: Americanization, commodification, cultural hegemony, cultural imperialism, modernization, mundialization, cultural homogenization, and globalization. This sociological jargon has, however, increased the difficulty of generating a common and accepted definition of globalization. Nevertheless, a cosmopolitan culture grounded in American capitalist hegemony continues to emerge on a transnational level in conjunction with a global economy and a global labour supply. Yet this global culture also

⁸Sociology of Sport Journal, 11 (4), 1994.

exhibits the “countertendency to foster the affirmation of particularities” (Harvey et al., 1996, p.267). The establishment of a homogeneous frame of reference within which local particularities are constructed by both dominant power blocs and local cultures is evident in the cultural dimension of the globalization of sport.

Several theories have been generated by sport sociologists that attempt to analyze and explain the processes contributing to the global diffusion of sport. The first debates in sociology of sport concerning globalization were expressed as either cultural imperialism, in the form of Americanization, or globalization (Donnelly, 1996). Americanization represents the economic and cultural domination of the United States over submissive nations. Americanization theses are considerably attractive to political economists in analyzing cultural processes. This attractiveness is based upon the global presence of ‘American’ cultural products and the establishment of global capitalism. McDonalds’ hamburgers and Levi jeans can be purchased anywhere in the world, and ‘American’ cultural events like the Superbowl attract millions of viewers worldwide. This one-way process of Americanization, as explained theoretically, imposes and transplants American culture at the expense of native cultures and values. Americanization theses also suggest that local cultures are minimally involved with the cultural interplay of American values, and unable or unwilling to resist American imperialism.

An analysis based upon the cultural imperialistic framework of Americanization, however, tends to be oversimplistic, and reduces local cultures to the role of passive recipient. At worst this leads to the development of global conspiracy theories and to the notion of cultural dupes (Maguire, 1994). Such analyses also ignore the multiple cultural processes and social determinants that are evident in societies. While processes of Americanization are visible,

processes of 'Japanization' and 'Germanization' are also visible throughout the world. The hegemonic capacity of the United States has also been diminished as well, challenging Americanization theses (Harvey, 1989). The failure of the Vietnam war and the collapse of the Bretton Woods⁹ agreements, for example, have signaled a disruption in the political, economic, and cultural hegemonic capacity of the United States (Harvey, 1989; Teeple, 1995).

In a Canadian context, Americanization theories tend to oversimplify a multitude of complex processes including resistance to American imperialism (Kidd, 1991). Claims of Canadian cultural dependence on the United States overlook the variety of cultural processes evident in a dynamic, multi-cultural society. Also, the association of Americanization with an ongoing struggle between Canadian and American national elites ignores differential societal power relations. As Jackson (1994) notes, a consequence of viewing Americanization as solely a struggle between national bourgeoisies is that "the various contradictions, conflicts, and forms of resistance that exist within Canadian class, gender, ethnic/race, and regional-based interests are often ignored or overlooked" (p.429).

Other authors suggest that modernization¹⁰ is a more appropriate term than Americanization or cultural imperialism to describe the processes of global sport diffusion (Guttmann, 1991; Wagner, 1990). Wagner (1990) suggests that there is a long-term trend toward greater homogenization in world sport's culture based upon his study of sport in Africa and Asia. Modernization and homogenization theses, however, understate the complexity associated with

⁹The 1944 Bretton Woods agreement, guided by American interests, established an exchange-rate system in which foreign currencies were 'set' against the American dollar.

¹⁰Modernization refers to the rationalistic evolution of global sports in which sports are becoming increasingly modern through quantifiable records and rankings (Guttmann, 1991).

global sports processes and diminish the role of local cultures and particularities in the processes of globalization. Modernization theses also ignore the significance of the capitalist structure which underlies the particular structure which we call 'modern sport'.

A framework based on Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony offers a more insightful interpretation of the existence of multiple global forces involved in sports diffusion. Gramsci (1971) argues that cultural hegemony is critical for comprehending the maintenance of capitalism and the naturalization of ideas and beliefs that benefit the interests of dominant classes. While cultural imperialism in the form of Americanization and the establishment of American cultural products is evident in many cultures, several counterforces are also visible. For example, the emergence of American football in England does not solely represent the establishment of American culture, but points to the presence of a number of global processes including, most importantly, the establishment of capitalism on a global level (Maguire, 1994).

The processes of Americanization are neither monolithic, nor completely deterministic. Klein (1991) in a study of Americanization and Dominican baseball concluded that sport was an effective site for promoting cultural hegemony. Klein (1991) noted the tension between hegemonic (i.e., Americanization) and counterhegemononic (i.e., Dominican resistance to Americanization) processes¹¹, and determined that baseball in the Caribbean exists as contested

¹¹Williams (1977) notes that hegemony is a "lived process...which has to be continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not all its own. We then have to add to the concept of hegemony the concepts of counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony (counterhegemony), which are real and persistent elements of practice" (p.112).

terrain in which Dominicans actively choose to resist American culture through expressions of individual agency.

Several sports sociologists, and in particular the political economists, have identified the processes of globalization as paralleling the interests of global capitalism (Cantelon & Murray, 1993; Kidd, 1991; McKay & Miller; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Stoddart, 1990; Whitson & Macintosh, 1993). The internationalization of capital and the commodification of sport and space are intimately related to the processes of globalization, capitalism and the establishment of a global economy. While capital might appear to be dictated by the interests of 'American' transnational companies, the establishment of a global capitalist economy ultimately transcends the boundaries of the United States. McKay and Miller (1991), for example, highlight the importance of the concepts of post-Fordism and the globalization of consumerism in their study of the political economy of Australian sport. Similarly, Harvey (1989) suggests that capitalism has emerged as a system of flexible accumulation¹², a system which is inherently different from its Fordist predecessor which was premised upon stable and rational production and consumption. A global market, characterized by a system of flexible and mobile international capital accumulation, and dominated by transnational corporations without national allegiances, has emerged since the abandonment of Fordist modes of production (Harvey, 1989).

The processes of globalization have significantly altered national structures and national capital; in the eyes of transnational corporations national structures are of minimal consequence.

¹²Harvey (1989) notes that flexible accumulation is characterized by "the emergence of entirely new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets, and above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological, and organizational innovation" (p.147).

As Harvey and Houle (1994) note, “in a globalized system, national interest becomes not only modified, but indistinguishable from the interests of the global system” (p.341). Therefore, while a number of transnational organizations are linked to American capital, they operate according to a global agenda. For example, Nike, a company with American roots, responds to a global, transnational agenda; Nike products are marketed internationally and are globally recognizable. Like many other transnational corporations, Nike has repeatedly moved its production centres to countries with cheap labor and low employment standards. Nike also supports a complex network of suppliers around the world to maintain its production capacity (Harvey et. al., 1996). Flexible accumulation and mobile capital have therefore replaced rational and stable capital accumulation. Flexible production systems and just-in-time inventory systems dictate the flow of international capital rather than the rational flow and structure of Fordist production systems.

Under the political economic structure of Fordism, national corporations competed with national capital against other nationally-based corporations. There are several important distinctions that have signaled the emergence of capital on an international level. Teeple (1995) suggests international capital: 1) requires ‘freedom’ from national controls or intervention; 2) has ultimately no national allegiance, 3) has interests that span the world and far exceeds national jurisdictions; and 4) operates within a world economy and possesses a ‘global perspective’ rather than only a national or domestic agenda. National barriers have been systematically removed through free economic zones and free trade agreements for the purpose of attracting capital. The processes of globalization are therefore structured around the ultimate level of accumulation—a global, transnational level of accumulation.

In response to flexible accumulation and the internationalization of national capital, the welfare state has also assumed a diminished role in the global economic system. This is a relatively recent phenomenon: “Since the 1970s, corporations have been more able than ever to play off nation against nation and have taxes reduced while maintaining or increasing concessions” (Teeple, 1995, p.72). The mobility and flexibility of capital has transformed the relationship between businesses and various levels of government. Nations, and in particular newly industrialized nations, are frequently choosing to lower environmental and labour standards as concessions to attract international capital and generate jobs and investment for their local economies. Newly industrialized countries, for example, are more likely to specialize in low-priced and labour-intensive products such as Nike shoes (Harvey & St. Germain, 1998). Nations have emerged as supplicants to the demands of international capital. The emergence of a global market and labour supply has ultimately undermined wages and trade union power and has led to other extreme effects such as the growth of child labour and coerced labour around the world (Teeple, 1995). The drive for continuous accumulation has also wreaked havoc on the world’s environment; reduced environmental standards have ravaged the global environment.

The processes of globalization are not monolithic. Globalization has a distinct hegemonic capitalist capacity; the processes of globalization are simultaneously defended and challenged. For example, while transnational corporations actively promote and defend their global economic interests, global social movements have emerged that actively resist the values of transnational corporations. Although no sport-specific example of new social movements exist, sport has been influenced by global social movements such as feminism, pacifism, and ecologism (Harvey & Houle, 1994). An example of a global social movement that has exhibited global agency is Green

Peace; through the use of dynamic communication networks, Green Peace has been able to challenge the internal and external values of transnational organizations (Harvey & Houle, 1994). The establishment of a transnational culture, economy, and labour market can be actively resisted by individuals and activist groups on global, national, and local levels.

Globalization and Hockey: The Changing NHL

The processes of globalization are evident in the professional game of hockey. As Gruneau and Whitson (1993) note, “the changing logic of capital accumulation in international capitalism has influenced the development of hockey” (p.242). The NHL currently has a \$600 million television contract with Walt Disney Co., the owner of ABC and ESPN. The NHL’s merchandising sales have also doubled since 1992 to \$1 billion annually (Deacon, 1995a). Due to American presence in the NHL, it is convenient to label such changes as American capitalist hegemony. Nevertheless, we must also consider that there might be a larger and more complex process influencing professional hockey and the NHL. The NHL, through global marketing strategies so successfully pioneered by the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the National Football League (NFL), has sought to compete on a global level with other ‘world class’ products--not just ‘American standard products’.

In recent years the NHL has emerged as a global entertainment product. The NHL is a relatively recent edition to the global capitalist market. For years the NHL has operated primarily as an American league with little global marketing ambition. The NHL, anxious for a global level of accumulation, has recently globalized its image as being ‘world class’. NHL teams play exhibition games in Europe and Japan, and NHL players have been globally visible through such

high profile tournaments as the World Cup of Hockey and the 1998 Nagano Olympics. Such tournaments and international exposure have helped the NHL to construct and naturalize the league and its athletes as global entertainment commodities. The international content of the NHL is also visible through the increasing number of 'foreign' players employed by NHL clubs. The increase in the number of foreign players has provided the NHL with further opportunities for international exposure; perhaps more so than any other league. The NHL, for example, is not solely marketing American or Canadian hockey players. International players like Teemu Selanne of Finland, and Mats Sundin of Sweden, are glamourized in their homelands and in North America as celebrities. The NHL has established itself as a global product in search of global accumulation in a global market.

NHL franchises, like many other organizations, exist with links to American capital. The NHL has historically been dominated and organized by Americans (Kidd, 1972); the majority of team owners are American, and both the NHL commissioner, Gary Bettman, and National Hockey League Player's Association (NHLPA) President, Bob Goodenow, are American. While league interests may be defined primarily through links with American capital, the NHL, through its global marketing strategies, operates with an agenda of global accumulation. Like many other American dominated industries, global, not just continental, profits are sought. The presence of 'American' products within a system of global capitalism must not be solely viewed as Americanization. While Americans have played a major role in the development and reinforcement of global capitalism (Teeple, 1995), corporations with links to American capital "...participate in and respond to global, not regional, logics" (Harvey & Houle, 1994, p.347).

The new era of NHL capital accumulation was symbolized by the arrival of Gary Bettman and Bruce McNall. McNall, the former owner of the Los Angeles Kings, was primarily responsible for bringing Wayne Gretzky to Los Angeles in 1988 for an extraordinary \$15 million in cash and an eight year contract at \$2 million per year. The hiring of Gary Bettman, formerly the third in command of the NBA, and Steve Soloman, former ABC vice-president of sports planning and administration, signaled the NHL's desire to increase profits through increased American and global visibility (Gorman & Calhoun, 1994). Bettman had personally experienced the NBA's successful global marketing strategies and was hired to increase profits for league owners. Under David Stern, the NBA's revenues had risen four hundred percent; the NBA was the first of the major professional sports in which licensed merchandise revenues exceeded ticket sales (Macgregor, 1993). The manufactured star system of the NBA glamourized the NBA product through huge national television contracts, and constructed athletes like Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson as global, mythical figures. The NHL sought to emulate the marketing strategy of the NBA and create its own global culture of celebrity.

During the 1970's and 1980's the NHL, in comparison to the other major-league professional sports, was not faring well. In the late 1980's and the early 1990's, the league was a regional league operating in Canada and in the North-Eastern United States, with few franchises and little exposure in the southern United States. Also, the NHL had lost its national American television contract in the mid-seventies. Under the guidance of John Ziegler and Bill Wirtz, the league's growth had stagnated. The NHL was the only league in which local television contracts accounted for greater revenues than the league's national television contract. The revenues from

regional television contracts continue to be highly skewed; larger cosmopolitan centres therefore receive significantly greater revenues than smaller urban centres.

By 1992, however, McNall had replaced Wirtz as Chairman of the NHL's board of governors, and Bettman had taken Ziegler's place as commissioner of the NHL. The NHL owners, under Bruce McNall's leadership, realized the key to increased revenues and the establishment of the NHL as a global, 'world class' product, was through increased marketing and through a new national television contract to increase visibility in the United States. McNall's re-imaging of the NHL began with his acquisition of Wayne Gretzky in 1988. McNall and Gretzky increased league visibility in California, and transformed Kings' games into a highly popular celebrity-filled activity. The arrival of Gretzky in Los Angeles also significantly increased endorsement opportunities for NHL players. Other players quickly learnt from Gretzky's celebrity good fortune. Eric Lindros, for example, refused to sign with the Quebec Nordiques, opting to play in a larger American city with greater opportunities for endorsements.

In 1993, at the annual NHL winter meetings, McNall and the rest of the league owners who were anxious to establish an NHL presence in the Sunbelt of the United States, announced the awarding of two franchises. One was awarded to Wayne Huizinga of Blockbuster Video which would operate out of Florida, and the second to Michael Eisner and Walt Disney World which would operate out of Anaheim, California. The addition of these two franchises would bring national television contracts and pay-per-view deals within reach of the NHL; the deal also brought the magic and global marketing abilities of Disney to the NHL. Bruce McNall would be rewarded half of Disney's franchise fee for his efforts (Macgregor, 1993). Ted Turner is also set to join the NHL with his expansion team, the Atlanta Thrashers. The addition of Huizinga, Eisner

and the future addition of Turner point to the emergence of a new breed of owners with very deep pockets and symbolizes the arrival of huge global entertainment conglomerates as part of the ownership of the NHL. The new breed of wealthy owners further established the NHL's credibility as a 'world class' product with the capacity for global accumulation. Ironically, however, the pioneer of the new-age NHL, Bruce McNall, was a criminal. In 1994 McNall was found guilty of bank fraud, wire fraud and conspiracy and he admitted to tricking investors out of almost \$250 million (Silver, 1996).

Bettmans's arrival as commissioner of the NHL signaled another change in direction for the NHL--the construction of new 'world class' facilities to house NHL franchises. Fischler (1995) contends that Bettman's 'plan' consisted of having every NHL arena upgraded to whatever was deemed big-league standards through the next century. New arenas have historically been built primarily for the purpose of increasing spectator attendance. New facilities, however, with corporate luxury boxes, have emerged as critical revenue generating sources for NHL franchises. For example, a luxury box at the SkyDome in Toronto costs \$250,000 per year. New arenas with such corporate facilities have recently been opened in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Chicago, and Boston. These luxury boxes and club seats have emerged as an important component of business culture, and the revenues from boxes and club seats do not have to be shared with other league teams. Similar to the disparities in local television revenues between large urban centres and smaller centres, large corporate centres like New York will benefit much more from luxury boxes than smaller centres like Calgary and Edmonton. The lack of a revenue sharing plan and a league salary cap have placed smaller market Canadian franchises in jeopardy. As well, the weak state of the Canadian dollar has reduced purchasing power for

Canadian franchises as compared to their American counterparts. Differential revenues have long been a part of NHL history and capitalistic commercialized sport; American expansion has historically undermined the ability of Canadian franchises to remain competitive both on and off the ice (Kidd, 1996).

The emergence of such 'world class' facilities is indicative of an expanding global culture and market with globally defined products, images, and criteria. The logic of 'world class' products and images naturalizes the existence of a global market, and ultimately the processes of globalization. Yet, not all citizens have the ability to enjoy such global products. As more luxury boxes and club seats are built to accommodate local corporate entertainment wishes and the transnational elite, ticket prices are pushed out of reach for many fans. Ironically, while the costs of business entertaining remains tax deductible, it is the public that is subsidizing luxury box patrons and their guests. Implicit in this marketing strategy is the assumption that consumers will feel membership and find meaning in a global consumer culture predicated on 'world class' images and products. Yet as Gruneau and Whitson (1993) argue, "the problem with this discourse is that the taste for world class entertainment is essentially the taste for big-budget, high-cost entertainment that excludes a great many people" (p.244). While professional and business elites, the transnational business class, celebrate the pleasure of global consumer choice, what is less appreciated is "the loss of identity, the almost no person status of those not able to make meaningful market choices or present themselves as market buyers" (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993, p.244). The legitimization of 'world class' cultural products does not, however, eliminate the ability of individuals/groups within local cultures to resist such products. Alternative identities, in the form of local and national particularities which are independent of the logic of 'world class'

cultural products, can be constructed by individuals/groups within local cultures. It is to a discussion of these theoretical issues that I now turn.

Globalization and the Construction of Local Particularities

Local Particularities Within a Global Culture

The interaction between global cultural forces and local cultures must not be viewed as a uni-directional, short-term process. While a global, transnational culture and economy are emerging, complete uni-directional cultural homogeneity is not occurring. As Appadurai (1990) notes: "The central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between the cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization" (p.295). While it appears to academics that local cultures are being threatened by the processes of globalization, a relationship exists between the global and the local. Layers of identity and layers of culture¹³ exist within a global frame of reference. Personal, locational and cultural identities can include global, national, regional and local layers of identities illustrating the unstable nature of identities (Whannel, 1998). Local identities and national identities can therefore exist in a global culture because identities are reflexive of place locations and constructions; identities are not independent of the societies in which they exist. A global culture and frame of reference must also be viewed from a distinctly local context (Maguire, 1998). Local and indigenous peoples are active in interpreting global forces and local particularities and are not simply being dominated by 'outside cultural forces'.

¹³Houlihan (1994) defines culture as "an integrated set of values, practices, and attitudes that give each community its distinctiveness" (p.357).

The processes of globalization are reflective of global power relations. Many local cultures are actively choosing to participate in global capitalist relations that have been defined by 'outsiders'. Maguire (1998) suggests that issues of homogeneity and heterogeneity of global sports culture can be further analyzed with reference to the figurational concepts of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties. As Maguire (1998) notes:

These concepts arguably enable the analysis to steer a path between the excesses of aspects of the homogeneity thesis and the simplicities of the voluntarist assumption that individuals freely choose and cultures freely contribute in equal measures to global cultural diversity (p.73).

These concepts suggest that the contrasts between cultures are diminishing while at the same time there has also been an increase in the variety of cultural identities available (Maguire, 1993; 1998). While the establishment of a homogeneous frame of reference in the form of global capitalism diminishes contrasts between cultures, local particularities continue to be constructed by both dominant power blocs and local cultures to produce distinctiveness.

A global homogeneous culture and global frame of reference cannot exist on its own. Identities can only exist within the awareness of other competing discourses of identity; there must be a conscious awareness of 'the other' for identities to exist (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1998; Whannel, 1998). Local particularities, for example, are actively constructed by dominant power blocs, including transnational and local elites, within a global frame of reference for the purpose of accumulation. While there has been an increase in globally standardized cultural goods and products, there has also been an increase by transnational capitalists in the variety of ways that such products can be consumed and interpreted. Local particularities and local cultures can be constructed and commodified by local and transnational elites on a global level to capitalize on

local marketing strategies. Local distinctiveness, for example, can be constructed by global event producers to "...attach a temporary uniqueness to the local places, usually the cities, in which the event is staged" (Arundel & Roche, 1998).

Consider the recent growth in the global tourism industry. As tourism and cultural consumption assume a greater role in the global economy, cities, regions and entire cultures become commodities that can be bought or sold as attractive destinations for global tourists and cultural capital (Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). Local cultures are being commodified and sold in the global market place to attract tourists and flexible capital by local and transnational elites (Hall & Hodges, 1998). The re-imaging of cities and entire cultures as 'world-class' international financial, shopping, tourist and consumer centres, and ultimately the process of 'place marketing', has resulted in the commodification of urban centres as potential locations for corporate investment and global tourism.

Yet, are the particularities constructed by these corporations and local elites truly reflective of the entire local culture being marketed and commodified? Only a specific affluent and 'glamorous' aspect of Vancouver, for example, has been constructed as a tourist destination by elites and government agencies (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). Within a global frame of reference, local particularities can therefore be marketed by transnational corporations, including media conglomerates, for the purpose of capital accumulation and specifically for the enjoyment of the transnational elite. Such particularities, however, are rarely authentic of local cultures. As Arundel and Roche (1998) note:

However, as with the tourism industry, the media sport industry, in general--in so far as it sees a value in it--tends to promote local identities in a way which transforms them from

the unreflected 'ways of life' and traditions of local people, into reflexive and organised cultural productions and stagings for outsiders, whether tourists or TV viewers (p.84).

The acceptance and promotion of such particularities within a global framework of capitalism reinforces the logic of global accumulation and the processes of globalization.

Local cultures are also actively involved in the construction of local particularities in light of the processes of globalization. The ways in which local cultures interpret products are inherently different; local cultures can interact and alter globally defined products. At the same time, many local cultures are actively choosing to participate in global capitalist relations that have been defined by 'outsiders'. Local cultures are not powerless to communicate and interact with other cultural forms. While American cultural products, like the image of Michael Jordan, are globally diffused, we must remember that there exists a "built-in particularity related to the ways in which American artifacts are consumed" (Andrews et al., 1996, p.432).

Local cultures are also able to actively resist the processes of globalization and the establishment of a global culture. Individuals and groups can choose to maintain and promote their own distinct cultural particularities and resist the processes of globalization and the commodification of their cultures. For example, the Irish community has been able to maintain a degree of autonomy from a global sport culture. The success of Irish resistance: "...was largely based on the strong emotional appeal to nationalism and the strict enforcement of rules that restricted members to playing Irish/Gaelic sports and also prohibited clubs subscribing to English sports" (Houlihan, 1994, p.367). Yet soccer is also becoming increasingly popular in Ireland; a potential indicator of global penetration of Irish culture. Resistance and acceptance of global

culture are both simultaneously present in Irish culture, indicating the complex and often contradictory layering of identities within the processes of globalization.

National Identities Within a Global Culture

Local particularities, in the form of national identities, can also exist within a global frame of reference. The construction of a common, national identity involves the creation of supposedly similar values and characteristics that are inherently different from the identity and way of life of others. Opponents in sport, for example, serve as 'the other', and are commonly referred to as 'not one of us'. The 1972 hockey series pitted a 'united nation' of Canada against a distinctly different nation, the Soviet Union. The 1972 series also pitted multiple identities against each other--capitalism versus communism; Russian versus Canadian; Canadian hockey versus Russian hockey; their way of life versus ours.

Sport plays a significant role in the construction of particularities within a global culture. While the processes of globalization appear to be threatening the autonomy of nation states, national identities continue to exist in a global culture. Yet, it is important to critically analyze what individuals/groups are constructing local particularities in the form of national identities, and their motivations for the maintenance of such constructions. As Maguire (1998) notes, "...different sports represent individuals, communities, regions, and nations, and a key feature of the sports process is that it is used by different groups...to maintain, and/or challenge identities" (p.410). The national identities fostered through such intensely nationalistic marketing campaigns of the World Cup in hockey and soccer, for example, supposedly represent different nations and national identities. Often, such identities are constructed and promoted by local and transnational

elites for the purpose of highlighting distinctiveness within a global frame of reference. Yet, these constructions are rarely authentic or indicative of actual cultures and collective nations (Arundel & Roche, 1998); they represent merely the commodification of national cultures for the purpose of global capital accumulation. National identities, however, can also be constructed by local individuals and groups to resist the establishment of a global culture.

Canadian 'National Identity' and Globalization: The Game of Hockey

The nation state, like national identity, is a historical construction. Nation states emerged in combination with the advent of industrial capitalism and the search for wider markets and sources of raw materials (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). National boundaries, however, sometimes appear arbitrarily drawn, and can encompass a variety of geographic terrains; national boundaries often contain multiple peoples with different ethnic backgrounds. Canada is a prime example of a nation with ethnic diversity. Often, it can appear that Canadians have little or nothing in common with other Canadians. A national identity serves to reinforce a sense of connectedness for people who would otherwise have little in common. The citizens of Canada, from Newfoundland to British Columbia, are connected to each other through a socially constructed, yet highly symbolic, national identity.

The promotion of common values in the form of a national identity is nothing new and remains visible despite the presence of the processes of globalization. National identities continue to be constructed upon similarity and difference. Canadians have a similar identity with other Canadians; yet being Canadian has also been constructed by local and transnational elites as being inherently different from other national identities. 'Our common identity' is different from 'their

common identity' (Whannel, 1998). Flags and anthems, for example, have long served as focal indicators of national distinctiveness and cultural representativeness, and can provide a sense of stability and connectedness for citizens that are geographically isolated. Yet national identities are nonetheless social constructions; nations themselves are nothing more than 'imagined communities' and are not completely homogeneous (Anderson, 1983). A Canadian 'national identity', for example, is not as homogeneous as it sounds. Canadian society is particularly complex and fraught with differential power relations based on regional, class, gender, and racial differences. The promotion of national myths and the popularization and 'invention of tradition', is therefore of particular importance in glossing over differential power relations and maintaining the status quo (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983).

Anderson (1983) notes that the media and the mass communication systems played an integral role in the development of a national consciousness and in the invention of national 'traditions'. This is evident in the promotion of sport as a central ingredient in national identity. The media continues to play an important role in the construction of national sporting myths, which allow people to feel a sense of connectedness with certain events that receive national attention. In Canada, the establishment of Hockey Night in Canada as a distinctly Canadian tradition created a regular experience of routine and belonging for millions of Canadians. The emergence of Hockey Night in Canada also simultaneously served to establish the National Hockey League as a Canadian institution while obscuring the NHL's significant American content; hockey and the NHL were quickly elevated to the status of national mythology with which thousands of Canadians could identify (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Whitson, 1994). As Dryden and MacGregor (1989) note:

And it was a way of extending the web of community outward to regions, to the province, to the country itself, even if that web often burned with rivalry. Through Gordie Howe, the Bentley brothers, and countless more, perhaps more than any other through Foster Hewitt, hockey was a connection to the rest of Canada more vivid and far more acceptable than banks and federal bureaucrats (p.21).

The familiar marketing of Canadian hockey as a distinct facet of Canadian national identity continues to be ever-present in Canadian culture. Hockey serves as an important Canadian cultural indicator that bonds millions of Canadians, and provides a distinct sense of national community. For Hobsbawm (1983) sport serves as an ideal characteristic of national culture:

What has made sport so uniquely effective a medium for inculcating national feelings, at all events for males, is the ease with which even the least political or public individuals can identify with the nation as symbolized by young persons excelling at what practically every man wants...to be good at. The imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people (p.143).

The hegemonic capacity of national identities needs to be carefully scrutinized. Dominant power blocs can construct national identities to manufacture the nation as a consensual whole despite the presence of societal inequality and political divisiveness. As Houlihan (1994) notes, “developing, maintaining, and refining national identities are key responsibilities for any state and a process in which the role of sport is widely acknowledged” (p.358). Sport, for example, has played an active role in the foreign policy of Canada (Macintosh & Hawes, 1994). The Canadian government has also used sport as a vehicle for the promotion of national unity (Macintosh et al., 1987). National identities, however, are not natural occurrences, but are historically and socially constructed by national elites; identities are sites of ideological struggle. As Jackson (1994) notes: “Discourses that articulate notions of shared values and promote the singularity of culture mask and depoliticizes the contested nature of identity itself with respect to class, gender, race/ethnicity, and other sources of social inequality” (p.431). A common Canadian national

identity marginalizes other existing cultural identities and glosses over differential power relations. The use of words like 'we' and 'ours' naturalizes the nation as a whole, and overlooks the structural inequality that has been so much a part of Canada's history. By masking competing identities and forms of inequality, dominant power blocs are able to maintain power and positions of privilege.

The use of inventive tradition and nostalgia¹⁴ by dominant power blocs continues to be a powerful force in the social construction of national identities. Williams (1977) defines tradition as "...an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural identification" (p.115). The hegemonic capacity of nostalgia as a selective version of the past is visible in Canadian society and in the construction of a Canadian national identity. The promotion of a past without conflict and adversity, through the use of nostalgia, romanticizes the past and de-legitimizes social conflict (Nauright & White, 1996). Canadians, for example, will often draw upon constructed memories of a time when hockey was supposedly purely Canadian, despite the fact that hockey has been played and organized internationally for many years. As Gruneau and Whitson (1993) note:

In the case of hockey the knowledge that has come from accumulated experiences of playing and watching the game at different levels has settled so deeply in the Canadian social memory that the very act of consuming a game has had a tendency to make people feel "Canadian" (p.214).

As the game of hockey continues to emerge on a global level in conjunction with American expansion and the loss of Canadian professional franchises, traditional Canadian hockey

¹⁴ Nostalgia represents the construction of social memory in which the past and historical events are reinvented by dominant power blocs to conceal social division and to legitimize illusions of solidarity (Nauright & White, 1996).

fans feel increasingly threatened and sense they are losing control of 'their game' and their 'national identity'. In response to a potentially threatening loss of identity, fans of the game and team owners invoke nostalgic responses to reaffirm social and national identities. Through the construction of a select past without controversy and inequality, present positions of power and global ambitions of accumulation are never fully exposed. The nostalgic, and naive, image of professional hockey as a natural Canadian cultural product, devoid of controversy and conflict, also ignores and downplays the historical tensions that have always been present in the game of hockey. The professional game of hockey, for example, has long been dominated by American capitalist interests (Kidd, 1972;1996), and labour relations between players and owners have been fraught with tension and hostility (Cruise & Griffiths, 1991; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). Yet the game of hockey continues to be constructed as 'Canadian' by fans of the game, Canadian media personalities, and team owners (Gretzky, 1998; Joyce, 1998a; Joyce, 1998b; Kay, 1999 Loyie, 1999; Taylor, 1999a; Taylor, 1999b; Watson, 1998).

The hegemonic capacity of Canadian national identity becomes increasingly important when Canadian culture and identity is constructed by dominant elites as being threatened. Due to its proximity to the United States, Canada has been frequently labeled by cultural commentators as culturally and economically dependent on the United States. More recently, the processes of globalization, on the surface at least, appear to be threatening the existence of national identities and national cultures including a Canadian 'national identity' based upon hockey. Global sports information networks and communication systems have globalized the game of hockey. NHL hockey, like other high profile professional sports, has emerged as a contemporary global cultural product. Also, Canada's position as world hockey leader has recently been jeopardized following

the loss of the World Cup and the 1998 Olympics to the Czechs and the Americans respectively. The trade of Wayne Gretzky to Los Angeles in 1988 was perhaps the most tragic of all events for the identity of Canadian hockey fans. Gretzky was literally sold to Bruce McNall for millions of dollars and confirmed the fears of many fans that the Canadian game had gone south and out of their control (Jackson, 1994).

In addition, the number of Canadian hockey players has been decreasing in recent years, and an increasing number of European players are having a tremendous impact on the way the game is being played in the NHL and in the Canadian junior hockey league. The flow of people, and in particular professional athletes, also represents a global pluralization process. As Maguire (1996) notes, "...this labour process is interwoven with the commodification of sports within the capitalist world economy" (p.336). Ironically, while media personalities like Don Cherry preach against the use of Europeans in the NHL (currently, Cherry's Canadian Junior A hockey team refuses to draft or play any European hockey players), hundreds of Canadians each year migrate to Europe to take the jobs of professional European hockey players. Add to this the loss of the Winnipeg and Quebec NHL franchises and the tenuous position of the Calgary, Edmonton and Ottawa franchises, and many Canadians feel their identity is being threatened by outside forces. To many Canadians, and in particular to working class males, the Canadian game of hockey has been taken over by others, including 'New York' lawyers and Europeans (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993).

There is a danger for Canadians who assume that the game of hockey rightfully belongs to Canada. Various power blocs, including business elites and politicians, frequently use a cloak of nationalism and nostalgia to mask global processes and initiatives. For example, many smaller

Canadian urban centres have recently been faced with losing their professional 'world class' hockey franchises to larger American cities. Team owners, local business elites, local media and politicians will frequently construct the game of hockey as Canada's game to secure public funding to save professional hockey teams and/or to build new facilities so professional teams can remain competitive. The Report on Sport in Canada (1998), for example, has recently recommended the use of public funds to help maintain tax breaks for Canadian professional teams. Is the subsidization of privately owned professional sports teams consistent with social provision? While hockey may have originated in Canada, the professional game is responding to a logic of global capital accumulation. Nostalgia and nationalism mask this process, which secures public monies to maintain privately owned professional teams. The construction of a 'national identity' which includes 'world class' franchises legitimizes the logic of global capital accumulation.

The Discourse of 'World Class' Urban Global Identity

The game of hockey is central to the identities of many communities in Canada; hundreds of towns across Canada are known for their hockey teams. The arena in many Canadian communities has been a site where a distinctive sense of belonging is fostered for many Canadians. The local arena has been a primarily male site; men have long dominated hockey in terms of both its play and organization (Dryden & MacGregor, 1989; Kidd, 1990). Nevertheless, local arenas have emerged as community symbols, and have provided a rhythm to life and a sense of routine for many Canadians in small towns.

Rural areas and communities, however, continue to face somewhat disheartening economic changes and challenges that have substantially affected rural life. With increased

urbanization and the restructuring of the Canadian economy, the existence and identity of many Canadian small towns has been threatened. In response to such changes, local arenas have emerged as symbols of hope and prosperity for communities. If an old arena could be renovated, or if a new arena could be built, the local community might be able to survive and residents might be attracted to remain. As Dryden and MacGregor (1989) note: "The arena that was a symbol of community development is becoming a symbol of community transformation and dissolution" (p.23).

At the same time, many larger Canadian urban centres are facing similar crises of global economic restructuring and identity. The broad economic forces that facilitated professional hockey teams in many Canadian urban centres are now threatening to remove them. Throughout the twentieth century there has been a restructuring of the Canadian economy from a general East-West flow to a North-South flow (Silver, 1996). This restructuring of the Canadian economy and the political economic changes associated with urban politics and identity must be understood within the framework of the broader economic changes associated with flexible accumulation that have been occurring since the early 1970's (Whitson & Macintosh, 1993). In combination with a general change in economic flow, the economy has gradually shifted from an emphasis on industry to a flexible service orientation; cities that once thrived on 'stable' industries such as transportation, distribution and retail industries, have become stagnant in terms of economic growth and development. Urban centres like Winnipeg, Edmonton, Kansas City, and Milwaukee are no longer large, prosperous markets with booming economies. Flexible capital and globalization have intensified intra-urban competition. While intra-urban competition formerly consisted of competition between regions for economic activity, the processes of

globalization have created a global level of urban competition. These processes have marked a critical point in the “integration of the political-economic move towards flexible accumulation...” (Harvey, 1987, p.263). The mobility of capital and the logic of capital accumulation have ultimately created significant economic disparities between cities and regions (Schimmel et al., 1993). Cities like Winnipeg and Edmonton are no longer competing against each other to attract mobile capital, but are now also competing against other international cities as destinations for flexible capital. Included in flexible capital are ‘world class’ professional sport franchises and mega-events.

In addition to the increasing mobility of capital, the economic shift away from industry to a service orientation has also affected the identity of cities. Urban centres on a global level have recently sought to re-define their regional and global identity as ‘world class’ financial-service centres, cosmopolitan centres, and attractive tourist destinations rather than industrial cities. Selling places and place marketing have emerged as a key feature of the discourse of contemporary global capitalism and this has resulted in an intensification of the commodification of space (Bale, 1993). Cities have literally emerged as products. Yet the global commodification of space has been non-linear and vulnerable to fluctuations; some urban centres have emerged as more prosperous than others. As Robbins (1991) astutely observes:

Whether it is to attract a new car factory or the Olympic Games, they go as supplicants. And, even as supplicants, they go in competition with each other: cities and localities are now fiercely struggling against each other to attract footloose and predatory investors to their particular patch. Of course, some localities are able successfully to ‘switch’ themselves in to the global networks, but others will remain ‘unswitched’ or even ‘plugged’. And, in a world characterized by the increasing mobility of and the rapid recycling of space, even those that manage to become connected to the global system are always vulnerable to the abrupt withdrawal of investment and to (partial) disconnection from the global system (As cited in Hall & Hodges, 1998, p.95).

The global economic value of places therefore fluctuates over time. Previously, markets like Winnipeg and Edmonton were once able to maintain high profile professional sports teams. Such urban centres are now faced with the threat of losing 'their teams' to more prosperous urban centres in the South.

The re-imaging of cities as 'world class' international financial, shopping, tourist and consumer centres, and ultimately the process of 'place marketing', has resulted in the commodification of urban centres as potential locations for corporate investment and economic growth. As Whitson and Macintosh (1996) note: "The entire discourse of world-class products and cities, indeed, speaks directly to this sort of aspiration, encouraging us to think of the city on the model of a shopping mall while encouraging us to equate excellence with fame" (p.293). The relatively recent boom in the construction of convention centres across Canada and the United States also points to the re-imaging of cities as 'world-class' destinations for flexible capital. Hundreds of urban centres have invested millions of public dollars in re-imaging strategies despite massive losses, all in the name of civic boosterism and international capital attraction (Tabak, 1994). Rather than constructing cities as places to live and grow, urban elites and politicians continue to transform urban centres into high-scale entertainment centres for the purpose of attracting investment. The emergence of cities as 'world class' commodities and the social constructions surrounding the discourse of global products and a global culture further naturalizes the processes of globalization.

Central to urban re-imaging strategies for many former industrial cities is the notion of urban renewal and re-development. State-of-the-art arenas and sport centres have emerged as symbolic capital that supposedly elevates urban centres to an international level in terms of

visibility for economic investment and tourism. Professional sports teams and 'world class' entertainment centres have emerged as symbols of global vibrancy and prosperity, used by local elites to attract flexible capital. The development and maintenance of cultural capital is also a key urban renewal strategy for attracting mobile professionals and white collar workers who will utilize such amenities (Harvey, 1987; Harvey, 1989). The hosting of mega-events and the presence of a professional sporting franchise in a major professional league have therefore become integral components in many urban renewal strategies for several urban centres (Roche, 1992; Roche, 1993; Whitson & Macintosh, 1993; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). Urban boosters and local elites fear that the loss of a professional sports team or a mega-event will diminish a city's 'world class' image and reputation as a destination for flexible capital. The perceived image of a city has thus emerged as an important indicator of an urban centre's business climate.

Ironically, while urban elites anxiously construct facilities to promote a 'distinct' business climate and cosmopolitan culture, many other urban centres eagerly replicate 'world class' facilities to the point where cities lose their distinct characteristics and contribute to a 'serial monotony' (Harvey, 1987). Bale (1994) describes this phenomenon as contributing to a sense of placelessness, the ultimate form of urban modernity, in which stadiums all over the world look similar.

Increasingly, cities are having to construct 'world class' facilities to maintain their privately owned professional sports franchises--often with the use of massive amounts of public funds. Almost every city in North America that is home to a professional sports team has been held ransom by a team owner (Euchner, 1993). Cities around the world have repeatedly been

‘sportmailed’¹⁵ by franchise owners into building new ‘world class’ facilities to house privately owned professional sports teams. Team owners recognize the vulnerability of a city’s image that comes from the loss of a sports team as well as the intense emotional and boosterish attachments that professional franchises can generate; fan loyalty can be easily exploited by owners of professional teams. The notion of ‘stadium socialism’¹⁶ has emerged as a viable function of the local, regional and national governments, particularly in the United States, where stadiums and arenas are frequently built with the use of public funds for the purpose of attracting and maintaining professional sports teams.

Given the substantial increase in players’ salaries in the major leagues of professional sports, owners are requiring additional sources of revenues to offset the rising costs of player salaries. A ‘world-class’ stadium/arena “is now considered to have so much revenue-generating potential that the value of a franchise enjoying a new stadium increases about 25%” (Coakley, 1998, p.346). Owners are also demanding greater control of arenas and stadiums, including the addition of luxury boxes and club seats, control over parking revenues, concessions, and cheaper lease agreements to reduce their expenses and increase their revenues. If the demands of owners are not met, they simply threaten to sell or relocate the team. Franchises are, after all, mobile capital. Also, major professional leagues are purposely structured so that the demand for franchises exceeds the supply of franchises (Euchner, 1993; Schimmel et al., 1993). The monopolistic and cartel structure of professional leagues dictates that team owners have the

¹⁵Coakley (1998) defines sportmail as “a form of blackmail used by sport team owners to coerce public support from cities” (p.346).

¹⁶‘Stadium socialism’ refers to the public funding of stadiums and arenas for the primary use of privately owned professional sports team.

geographic 'rights' for a specific area. Competition by other franchises is virtually eliminated. Team owners are therefore able to entertain multiple offers and play cities against each other in bidding wars for their franchises; artificial scarcity is a powerful negotiating tool. Peter Pocklington, for example, was able to make demands on the governments of Edmonton and Alberta by threatening to move the Oilers to another location. It was rumoured that Pocklington had options to relocate the team to six other competing cities.

The urban decision-making process surrounding the use of public funds for the construction of new 'world class' stadiums/arenas is complex (Euchner, 1993). Urban political debates over sport franchises began in the 1950's and were spurred by the economic and population growth of the South and West of the United States. The political economy surrounding professional sport was also transformed by the growth of television. Larger markets dictated larger television and advertising revenues, and franchise owners were quick to recognize the potential profits to be made in larger urban centres. The major professional leagues were therefore eager to place franchises in the biggest and most visibly important cities that were emerging in the Sunbelt of the United States. The move of the Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles in 1957 initiated the intra-urban competition for mobile professional sport franchises in the South-West United States. The future of major league commercialized sports has always rested in larger urban centres, and the movement of sport franchises to the South-West United States was reflective of the growth of those urban markets (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993).

Typically, 'world class' professional sports teams and mega-events are actively promoted by urban boosters and local business elites for the purpose of attracting capital and stimulating the economy (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Silver, 1996; Whitson & Macintosh, 1993). France and

Roche (1998) note that urban elites have to address two main problems associated with urban regeneration schemes: 1) the problem of elite coordination and coherence, and 2) the problem of citizen support and mobilization. The first problem can be addressed through a number of neo-corporatist alliances and arrangements between the business elite. The second must be resolved through urban boosterism. Business interests are easily constructed as synonymous with community interests by urban boosters, local business elites, and local media. Urban boosters and local media typically construct professional sports teams as boosting a city's image and representing a city's collective identity and future; professional sports teams are constructed by such boosterish rhetoric as putting urban centres 'on the map' and increasing a city's national and international visibility. Urban boosters also frequently claim that professional sports franchises contribute to a city's psyche and to the overall level of civic pride experienced by citizens. The city's image and future are therefore constructed by urban boosters as being contingent on the presence of a 'big league' professional sports team.

The infusion of public money into the construction of professional sports facilities is also promoted by local media, business elites, and politicians as benefitting the entire community and leaving a legacy of facilities for the community. Clearly, however, there is only a distinct segment of the population that can enjoy the use of such world-class facilities despite being subsidized by the entire population. Expensive ticket prices and expensive amenities have severely limited the ability of non-wealthy Canadians to take part in world-class entertainment. As Gruneau and Whitson (1993) note, "...the very developments that contribute to the international status of cities often have negative effects on the quality of everyday life for citizens of modest and lower incomes" (p.241). Urban centres have a diversity of citizens with multiple class, ethnic, gender,

and age backgrounds. Urban development plans that claim to appeal to all members of the urban community ignore the complexity and structural inequality present in urban life which prevents segments of the population from enjoying world-class entertainment .

Similarly, 'world class' facilities are constructed for the use of elite professional athletes and it remains doubtful that such facilities actually leave a legacy of sporting structures for the general population. The size and specifics of such facilities prevent their general use by the community and amateur sport teams. There is also a danger that current residents will be displaced following the construction of new facilities. New arenas and stadium developments regularly increase rental and housing prices in the surrounding areas, potentially displacing poorer area residents. Due to a lack of resources, these residents are often unable to form community groups to protect their interests and are forced to relocate to other urban areas (Hall & Hodges, 1998). The transformation of urban space must therefore be viewed as a site of ideological struggle in which the rhetoric of civic harmony and boosterism disguises the divisive character of urban capitalism (Harvey, 1987). The ultimate irony in the public subsidization of facilities and mega-events occurs when the general public, despite paying for such events, cannot afford to attend, or are actually displaced by such events.

Urban boosters and local elites often claim that professional sports teams and mega-events contribute significantly to local economies. Yet the economic benefits claimed by local elites are often inflated and calculated with incorrect economic multipliers. Also, it is highly probable that the local money spent on professional sports teams would be re-invested in a different form in the economy if a professional sports team departed from the city (Baade, 1990). Local business elites claim that new stadiums and professional sports teams infuse hundred of jobs

into the local economy, yet those jobs are often seasonal and low-paying 'Mcjobs' that contribute minimally to the local economy. The transfer of public funds towards urban re-imaging strategies also diverts public monies away from much needed social welfare programs and those individuals dependent on such programs (Hall & Hodges, 1998).

Local elites and the media industry frequently benefit from the presence of professional sports teams and the construction of new 'world class' facilities. Local business elites benefit from the intensification of land values in the areas surrounding the stadium, and the opportunity for future land development (Baade, 1990). The business elite are more likely to attend and make use of the presence of sport franchises and luxury boxes for entertainment and business purposes. The local media are regularly uncritical of arena and stadium development plans because of their symbiotic relationship with professional sport and the local business elite (Silver, 1996). Local media benefit from the presence of professional sports teams because sports sells newspapers which in turn sells advertising, a major revenue source for newspapers and television stations.

The political processes surrounding decisions on professional sports franchises and mega-events are precarious; local elites have a significant amount of influence over politicians seeking re-election and frequently lobby politicians for support (Euchner, 1993). Politicians are therefore typically placed in a difficult situation during such political debates and are susceptible to boosterish rhetoric constructed by urban boosters and local elites. The fear of not being re-elected as a result of the loss of a professional franchise can influence the political process. Also, public consultation is frequently kept to a minimum during such processes minimizing the democratic contribution of community input (Roche, 1994). The formation of powerful business

corporatist interests can overwhelm the democratic processes surrounding such highly divisive political issues as the allocation of millions of dollars of public funds.

Nevertheless, community opposition groups continue to emerge and oppose the use of public funds to subsidize professional sports teams, the construction of facilities, and the hosting of other mega-events (Kidd, 1992). Activist groups have formed to protest increased traffic, pollution and hooliganism that would result from the construction of facilities in their local area (Bale, 1993). Political debate in such a climate is however difficult to achieve, and local opposition to such projects is often met with political hostility. As Gruneau and Whitson (1993) note:

Any opposition has seldom received the same kind of coverage in the local media as do the supporting views of local business leaders, politicians, and sport figures. Opponents of such projects have been repeatedly cast as carpers and naysayers, or as members of special interest groups who don't have the overall "community's needs" in mind. As a result their arguments have seldom received serious coverage (p.213).

Typically, opponents to subsidizing professional sports teams and the construction of 'world class' facilities are cast by media as opponents of the region and of the city in which they live. Local activist groups often have minimal access to resources required for political campaigns or legal proceedings. The threat of legal reprisal by urban elites can also intimidate political activism. On the other hand the local business elites frequently have access to significant resources and networks of resources to mount successful political and legal campaigns in support of privately owned sport franchises. Nevertheless, local groups have emerged to construct their own local particularities and challenge those constructed by local and transnational power blocs.

The theoretical developments associated with globalization point to the establishment of a global culture and economy within which local particularities are constructed. Complete cultural

homogeneity is not occurring. Local particularities can be constructed for the purpose of resisting a global culture and the logic of global capital accumulation, or for the purpose of naturalizing and thus masking such a logic. The logic of 'world class' commodities, including cities and professional sports franchises, can be marketed by local and transnational elites for the purpose of capital accumulation rather than as a reflective source of local identity. Canadian urban centres have not been immune to the logic of global capital accumulation. NHL franchises, and the league itself, have been constructed by business elites, politicians, team owners, media personalities and fans of the game as valuable 'world class' commodities. These groups argue that NHL franchises project an urban centres' global identity as 'world class'. Such constructions were visible surrounding the efforts to save the Winnipeg Jets of the NHL.

Chapter 3

History of the Winnipeg Jets

The Jets had a tumultuous history in Winnipeg beginning in 1972 and ending in 1996. The team's survival was threatened throughout its entire existence; Winnipeg's market and corporate community size simply could not sustain an NHL franchise. The events leading up to and surrounding the demise of the franchise were intensely emotional and controversial. For twenty five years Winnipeg was the site of a seemingly tragic soap opera with scenes of betrayal, franchise death, franchise resurrection, and greed. Here are some of the major scenes from this two and a half decade script.

Life in the WHA

The Winnipeg Jets were founded in 1972 by two local Winnipeg businessmen, Ben Hatskin and Saul Simkin. The team operated within the newly formed World Hockey Association (WHA); a league designed to compete specifically against the National Hockey League (NHL). The formation of the WHA in 1972 ended the NHL's monopoly on professional hockey and marked the genesis of competition between both leagues for the services of professional players. The WHA was eager to challenge the NHL's reserve clause which bound a player to a contract until he obtained his release from that team. Ultimately the bidding for players would drive up hockey salaries to a minimally respectable level in professional sport; NHL salaries were notoriously low compared to other professional leagues. The WHA, in its brief existence, spanned the continent, and many of its players were icons of the game of hockey; Howe, Hull,

Mahovlich, Cheevers, Henderson, Keon, Parent, Plante, Gretzky, and Messier all graced the ice of the league.

On June 22, 1972 the Winnipeg Jets signed Bobby Hull away from the Chicago Blackhawks for a one million dollar bonus, with more than one million dollars in salary and benefits; the bonus was paid for by the league and other WHA teams. Hatskin's signing of Hull would be remembered as one of the most creative moves in Winnipeg 'business' history. Hatskin had secured Hull for the Jets, but had negotiated with all the other WHA teams to contribute to Hull's contract, arguing that Hull's presence was fundamental to the league's future existence. For a decade Hull had been the most flamboyant and marketable superstar in the NHL. The 'Golden Jet' was Chicago's most talented player, and was regarded throughout the NHL as having the hardest slap shot in the league. Hull had been annoyed with the negotiating tactics utilized by Blackhawk management, and signed with the Jets as a bargaining tool directed against Chicago management (Abel, 1998). The signing of Hull was greeted with much fanfare in Winnipeg. For civic boosters and hockey fans alike, Hull's presence in Winnipeg signalled the emergence of the city into the 'big-leagues' of urban status (Davis, 1972c, p. 53).

Prior to the signing of Hull, NHL owners considered the WHA a minor league--"an impudent rival" (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993, p.263). The signing of Hull, however, altered any false impressions NHL owners had of the WHA, and the two leagues immediately entered into a bidding war for players' contracts. By signing Bobby Hull at an extraordinarily high salary, the Winnipeg Jets served as the catalyst for the rapid growth of NHL players' salaries. Ironically, despite initiating the growth of NHL salaries, the future owners of the Jets would soon claim that they were unable to compete for players without a salary cap; the disparaging differences in

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market size between Winnipeg and major American cities resulted in significant differences in revenues. Nevertheless, as Gruneau and Whitson (1993) note, the formation of the WHA significantly altered the NHL experience:

Competition with the fledgling World Hockey Association led to a dramatic increase in salaries and to subsequent expansions - expansions designed in part to protect future television markets from the possibilities of WHA growth and to continue the NHL's strategy of moving from the margins to the mainstream of major-league professional sport in the United States (p.231).

The Jets lost money in the first two years of their existence, and by 1974 were rumoured to be sold to a Milwaukee businessman (Nauright & White, 1996). In 1974, a community ownership group under the leadership of Lieutenant-Governor Jack McKeag, Inter-City Gas president Bob Graham, and Great West vice-president Jim Burns was developed to save the team (Silver, 1996). The new community owners agreed to purchase the team from Hatskin and Simkin for \$2.3 million with a \$500,000 down payment; the deal also required an extra \$400,000 from the community owners to cover operating expenses at the start of the 1974-75 season (Silver, 1996). A task force recommended that the city and the province be asked for loans of \$300,000, and while the city of Winnipeg agreed to lend \$300,000 to the community owners, the province of Manitoba refused to do the same. In response, the "task force recommended making a pitch to the public" (Silver, 1996, p.44), and a Save the Jets campaign was launched to publicly raise the remaining money. As a result, over \$600,000 was raised through phone-in pledges by members of the Winnipeg community (Silver, 1996)--a sign that a portion of the community had already developed a bond with this professional team. Jim Silver (1996) argues that the community ownership scheme was initiated by the new owners "because of a reluctance by Winnipeg's business elites to risk money on professional sports franchises" (p.43). This reluctance

of Winnipeg's business elite to risk private capital on the Jets would re-emerge in future arena proposals and future attempts to save the Jets in the 1990's.

By 1975, with the Jets continually losing money, a campaign was initiated by the Jets' community owners and several politicians to expand the Winnipeg Arena by 5000 seats. Several city councillors, including the Mayor, Steven Juba, and the business elite of Winnipeg argued that the symbolic importance of a professional sports team and a state-of-the-art arena would put Winnipeg 'on the map' as a 'big-league' city. After numerous detailed proposals Winnipeg's City Council narrowly voted to commit in principle to a state-of-the-art arena as long as "Winnipeg was guaranteed a franchise in a sound major hockey league" (Silver, 1996, p.46).

In February, 1978, after a refinancing scheme put forward by the Jets' community owners failed, eight Winnipeg businessmen took over ownership of the team. The group, named 8 Hockey Ventures, was lead by Marvin Gobuty and Barry Shenkarow, along with six other influential Winnipeg businessmen. On the surface it appeared that Shenkarow and his partners had taken a significant risk in purchasing the Jets; the team was a proven money loser in a financially unstable league on the verge of collapse. But had they actually taken any risk at all? The involvement of Shenkarow and his partners followed a meeting of community business leaders in the basement of the Winnipeg Arena who were targeted by the community owners of the Jets as potential investors (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998). Rather than investing money so the team could simply finish the year, Shenkarow and Gobuty decided to make an offer for the team. According to Barry Shenkarow¹⁷:

¹⁷All interview quotes will be bolded for emphasis and identification.

If we could get five or six people together, and it is going to cost us each ten or fifteen thousand dollars, which we would be able to write off for tax purposes, it would make more sense to take control of it and see if we could get it in the NHL. And that's exactly what we did. We went to the community owners and said what we'll do is make sure that the team has enough money to finish the year, and we'll try really hard to get in the NHL, but we don't want to put up the \$80,000, we want to buy the team for a dollar. And they said fine. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

Shenkarow and his partners had purchased the team for minimal risk, with direct aspirations of securing a franchise in the NHL.

In March 1979, in a move largely to hold down players' salaries, the NHL reluctantly merged with the WHA (Abel, 1998); the NHL would eventually absorb teams from Hartford, Quebec, Winnipeg, and Edmonton. The merger between the two leagues had been an ongoing rumour during the 1970's. Ben Hatskin, for example, was rumoured to have discussed a merger with NHL representatives as early as 1973, at the end of the Jets' first season. Hatskin had carefully developed a franchise in a rival league--a tactical move that could serve as a bargaining position to gain entrance into the NHL. According to Jim Silver (1996) Hatskin had always had a goal of establishing a franchise in the NHL. Shenkarow and his partners seemed to have impeccable timing. Within a year of purchasing the team for a dollar, the new owners had secured their franchise in the NHL.

The NHL, however, did not want to establish franchises in relatively small market Canadian cities such as Winnipeg. For example, in the mid-1980's, the NHL refused to approve the transfer of the St. Louis Blues to Saskatoon, arguing that it was not in the league's best interest to have franchises located in the sparsely populated Canadian mid-west. As Gruneau and Whitson (1993) note, "the return of professional teams to smaller Canadian cities was a setback

for the NHL's expansion agenda of the 1960's and 1970's" (p.231). Clearly the potential market revenues were far greater in the densely populated American sunbelt as compared to the sparsely populated Canadian mid-west. Winnipeg was also not an ideal location for national and international television contracts that the NHL urgently required to establish their position as a major sport league in the United States.

When the merger between the WHA and the NHL was announced in March, 1979, the NHL originally refused to include Edmonton, Quebec City, and Winnipeg. Fans in Winnipeg and the other Canadian cities reacted angrily to the NHL's decision. For example, a boycott was launched by Canadian hockey fans against Molson, the owners of the Montreal Canadians, who had voted against the Canadian expansion during NHL meetings. Bullet holes were found in the doors of the Molson's brewery in Winnipeg, and a bomb threat was issued in Quebec city (Gorman & Calhoun, 1994). The NHL finally relented, and for an entrance fee of \$6 million, the three Canadian cities had major-league professional hockey franchises. The merger ended a seven year war between the WHA and the NHL that saw the rise and fall of 30 WHA teams and millions of dollars spent on franchise fees, player salaries, and legal bills. The rivalry was over. Nevertheless, the NHL's reluctance to include small market franchises in 1979 would foreshadow later events in the 1990's.

The Jets were arguably the most successful team in the WHA. The team endured all seven WHA seasons (several teams folded more than once), won the AVCO cup (the league championship) three times, and were the only WHA team to beat a team of Soviet nationals. The Jets' roster was impressive; Bobby Hull, for example, would score 77 goals in one season. The Jets would import several talented European players who would eventually play in the NHL; few

teams in the WHA and the NHL had any European players on their rosters. Swedish born Anders Hedberg became the first player in the history of major-league hockey to score fifty goals in fewer than fifty games; Hedberg would score fifty one goals in forty nine games in the 1976-77 season (Macfarlane, 1989). The Jets therefore played a significant role in establishing the NHL's global presence. Swedish hockey fans, for example, followed the Jets because of the number of Swedish hockey players on the team's roster. In addition to the 1972 Canada-Soviet hockey series, the increasing presence of European players, typified by the roster of the Winnipeg Jets, would ultimately construct the NHL as the premier professional hockey league in the world. Ironically, however, as Alan Abel (1998) notes, the most memorable moment in the league's history had nothing to do with hockey, but occurred when a brawler yanked the toupee off Bobby Hull's head.

The Turbulence of Small Markets

For Shenkarow and his partners, the difficulties associated with operating a small market team in a large professional league became visible almost immediately following their purchase of the Winnipeg Jets. In August 1978 Winnipeg City Council narrowly voted to add 5000 seats to the Winnipeg Arena at the cost of \$3.5 million, while the Jets agreed to an eight-year lease (Silver, 1996). The arena expansion was a contentious issue; Shenkarow and Gobuty had to expend considerable energy to secure the arena expansion through City Council. Yet the burden of interacting with City Council would emerge as the least of their problems. Shenkarow and his partners, while owning the Jets, did not own the Winnipeg Arena. The Arena was owned by

Winnipeg Enterprises, a civic corporation responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Arena. The Jets were merely tenants.

The relationship between the Jets and Enterprises was dismal from the moment that Shenkarow and his partners purchased the team. Shenkarow explained the incompatibility between the privately owned Jets and the publicly owned Winnipeg Enterprises in this way:

It was horrible from day one. When we bought the team, Saul Simkin said to me that we shouldn't buy the team until we have a new lease on the building, but of course there was a payroll due the next day so we had no choice. The Winnipeg Enterprises, as such, were an entity that were living in a different world, and I'm not knocking them for this I'm just stating from where hockey was going and the need for teams to control the buildings and the revenues were a desire on the part of the hockey team for its survival, and it was seen on the part of Enterprises as an attempt to put them out of business. We were in constant conflict with them, you know, it wasn't our house...we had no control over things. So it was a bad relationship from day one and it didn't get any better. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

On the one hand, Winnipeg Enterprises was primarily concerned with covering costs and debts associated with the construction and expansion of the Arena. On the other hand, Shenkarow and his partners were desperate to secure extra revenue sources from Enterprises to cover growing expenses. The Jets, for example, were unable to receive compensation for most arena generated revenues. The team received no revenue from concessions and parking, and television and radio revenues were reduced by a limited market size. For example, in 1982-83 while the Jets received \$600,000 in television revenue, the Montreal Canadians received \$3 million (Silver, 1996). In the eyes of the Jets' owners, arena-generated revenues were not a luxury, but a necessity. The tenuous relationship between public corporations that own athletic/entertainment facilities and privately owned professional sports teams has a long history in professional sport. The infamous relationships between Peter Pocklington, the owner of the Edmonton Oilers, and the Northlands

Coliseum, and Al Davis, owner of the Oakland/Los Angeles Raiders, and the city of Oakland are two of the many examples that illustrate the acrimonious yet symbiotic relationship between publicly owned athletic complexes and privately owned sports teams.

In 1982 Shenkarow replaced Michael Gobuty as president of the club and assumed primary responsibility for the club's operations. The difficulties with Winnipeg Enterprises persisted for the Jets. Rumours abounded that the relationship between Shenkarow and individual Enterprise board members was less than amicable (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998). The philosophical differences between the Jets and Winnipeg Enterprises resulted in a tenuous relationship between the two. Shenkarow was also unwilling to release information concerning the Jets financial situation, despite claiming massive losses, and demanding greater control over revenue sources from Enterprises (Silver, 1996). Professional sports teams have rarely been willing to release financial information, and the alteration of financial statements to make it appear that franchises are losing money is commonplace in professional sport (Euchner, 1993). By 1983 Shenkarow began threatening to sell the team if the Jets did not receive a new lease agreement to further reduce expenses for the team. Such threats would continue to remain a major part of Shenkarow's bargaining tactics in future negotiations concerning the Winnipeg Jets.

By 1984 Shenkarow had placed new demands on Winnipeg Enterprises to give the Jets an additional \$1.2 million annually in revenues. In response to Shenkarow's threats to sell the team, an agreement was reached in 1984 which gave the Jets rent-free use of the arena, plus a share of concession revenue for ten years. As well, the city and the province agreed to absorb the remaining \$3.7 million debt from the 1979 expansion (Silver, 1996). Due to confusion

surrounding the Jets' financial statements, some city councillors suspected that the Jets were actually making a profit and the owners were charging excessive personal expenses to the club. The Jets and Winnipeg Enterprises would eventually agree to a different lease agreement in which the club would pay an annual rent of \$300,000, half of Enterprises' original \$600,000 rent charge (Silver, 1996).

In 1985, amidst the flow of constant sale and relocation rumours, the city of Winnipeg agreed to purchase 36% of the team for \$2.8 million while settling with Shenkarow on a new lease agreement for the Jets (Deacon, 1995b). The new lease agreement consisted of an annual \$200,000 rent fee, and an exemption from the original 10% amusement tax for the Jets. The agreement also gave Enterprises the right to veto any potential move of the franchise. Yet this option came at a cost. In return for the veto, Enterprises agreed to cover all of the Jets losses over \$400,000 for a two year period; if Enterprises did not cover the losses, they would lose their option to veto any potential relocation of the Jets (Silver, 1996). The public now owned over a third of the Winnipeg Jets, and the Jets' majority owners made significant gains in their lease agreement while further reducing private risk for excessive losses.

On the ice, the Jets were at best an average team. In the early 1980's, the Jets finished in the middle of the NHL's Smythe division, and were regularly defeated in the NHL playoffs by the championship teams of the Edmonton Oilers. After losing to the Oilers in 1987, Jets' General Manager John Ferguson exclaimed that he thought his team was good enough to win the Stanley Cup (McFarlane, 1989). The Jets exhibited decent play in the mid-eighties and could boast of talented players like 1982 NHL rookie of the year, Dale Hawerchuk, and Swedish star Thomas Steen. The team, however, never made it out of the second round of the NHL playoffs.

The Changing 1990's

Off the ice, the arena controversy in Winnipeg intensified despite the seemingly generous 1985 lease agreement. By 1991 Shenkarow was making demands for a new publicly funded arena with luxury boxes and club seats. Luxury boxes and club seats had emerged as critical revenue sources for professional sports teams that were facing rising player salaries. Many of the new arenas and stadiums were being constructed primarily with the use of public funds. In the United States in particular, the majority of arenas and stadiums continue to be constructed primarily with public funds (Euchner, 1993). Professional leagues were also quick to realize the revenue potential and the business climate that was conducive through luxury boxes. The NHL, for example, had recently required evidence of income potential from luxury boxes before awarding franchises to cities (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). Shenkarow was anxious to inject new revenue into the club.

By 1991, Shenkarow was rumoured to have multiple options to sell the team and began exerting pressure for the construction of a new arena for the Jets. In response to the pressure exhibited by Shenkarow an interim agreement was reached between the city, the province, and the Jets. In November 1991, 'The Preservation of NHL Hockey in Winnipeg', otherwise known as the 1991 Interim Operating Agreement (IOA), was released at an invitation-only ceremony (Silver, 1996). The lack of public involvement would foreshadow the events surrounding the negotiations to save the team in later years. The IOA was a legal agreement in which the province of Manitoba assumed half of the city of Winnipeg's 36% shares of the Jets and subsequently half of the risk of owning a professional team in a small market (Deacon, 1995b). The IOA stipulated that both the province of Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg would cover all

of the Jets' losses from July 1, 1991 to June 30, 1997, with Shenkarow committing the Jets to remain in Winnipeg until June 30, 1997. While the city and the province owned only 36% of the team, they would commit to cover 100% of the team's losses for seven years while having no say in the daily operation of the team! The public sector was left to bear the financial risk of a privately owned sport team. The socially constructed importance of the Winnipeg Jets to the city became so overwhelming that local politicians and business elites were 'blind' to the enormous costs of operating a small market team in an expanding professional league.

Along with committing the Jets to remain in Winnipeg, the IOA also offered the city and the province an option to purchase the 64% of the Jets' shares that were privately owned for \$32 million up to June 30, 1994. The IOA therefore represented a potential purchasing agreement between the private and public sector. According to Shenkarow:

One of the questions the government had was that what happens if we go through two or three years, and we pay the losses, then we come to you and we have a proposal for you on the table, you can just say no, and we're out all the money and we look like fools. So what we said to them was, here is what we'll do. We will agree to sell the team to anybody else for \$32 million Canadian. If the deal doesn't work for us at \$32 million, and it works for somebody else, let them do the deal. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

The city and the province's option to purchase the Jets would eventually lapse, leaving only the private sector with an option to purchase the remaining sixty four percent of the Jets' privately held shares at \$32 million. The IOA also established an Interim Steering Committee (ISC) to monitor the agreement while developing a privately raised capital fund. The private sector would raise \$7.8 million to be used to provide quarterly management fees to the Jets' majority owners and to underwrite the costs of operating the ISC. As Silver (1996) noted: "For Shenkarow and his partners, the Jets were now a risk-free, profit-making undertaking" (p.68).

The IOA agreement was not without controversy. The agreement was basically a manoeuvre to buy time. Jets' president Barry Shenkarow noted that the emergence of the deal was a response to the Jets' desire to secure a new building during a time period where projected losses for the team were increasing significantly:

Well, what happened was we went in 1990 to a couple of prominent business people, Derek Riley in particular, and said look, Derek, we don't want to cry wolf, but all through the eighties we talked about the need and the desire to have a new building. We put together a whole development package for the north of Portage and we ended up with a shopping centre. And we showed him, here's our projections, and we showed him where we think the losses are going to go. I said we can't afford to pay for these losses, but even if we could afford to pay for them we'd be out of our minds...so we are telling you that we are going to have no choice, we are going to have to sell this hockey team. So Derek went to John Greene who was the president of Great-West Life and said look, Barry and his partners aren't doing this publicly, they aren't trying to create a hysteria, here are the numbers. So we got into discussions with them and they said you know, what we needed was essentially time, and they brought in people, they went to the province and said look, same thing, these guys aren't going public, there's the numbers. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

In hindsight, the IOA turned out to be an atrocious agreement, particularly for Manitoban taxpayers. Between 1991 and 1995 it was estimated that the Jets' losses cost local taxpayers \$20 million (Roberts, 1995a), and by 1997 the Jets' losses would exceed \$40 million. Silver (1996) contends that the conservative provincial government knew about the Jets' projected losses through a document prepared by the provincial auditor, and that the provincial government withheld that document from city council and the public. Shenkarow also agreed that the deal was less than satisfactory:

The deal was a bad deal because you are not making a deal with the government, you are making a deal with the public, and the government can always paint you as the bad guy. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

Shenkarow indicated that he and his partners made a huge mistake in setting the team's price at \$32 million:

Our mistake was we made the offer to sell the team too cheap, because as soon as we offered to sell the team for \$32 million Canadian, everyone wanted to buy it. That was our mistake. But we did it in good faith saying, look, just give us a deal that makes sense at a million, forget that the team is worth \$60 million. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

There were, however, questions as to whether the team was actually worth \$32 million at the time. During our interview, John Loewen, chairman of the Manitoba Entertainment Complex Inc. (MEC), noted:

When MEC started, there was great question about whether the value of the hockey team was even going to be worth \$50 million, which was the option price because Edmonton was in trouble, Quebec was in trouble, and the labour agreement wasn't in place and teams were losing money all over the place, and so there was probably three or four teams that people felt were going to be on the block. (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998)

The deal, however, removed any risk for Shenkarow and his partners and set a dangerous precedent of public subsidization of a privately owned team. Besides buying time and committing the public sector to cover all of the Jets losses, the IOA did little to resolve the arena dilemma in Winnipeg.

A number of arena proposals did, however, emerge in the early 1990's. The potential arena proposal locations revolved primarily around two sites: a downtown Convention Centre site, and a site at The Forks, also in downtown Winnipeg. Arena development plans regularly involve massive transformations of the urban landscape and significant public expenditure for the purpose of private property development (Bale, 1993). The arena proposals in Winnipeg were

suspected of cloaking land development projects that would benefit the private sector (Silver, 1996).

A number of arena proposals were developed, yet not all received adequate or serious attention from both the private and public sector. One proposal, a multiplex facility, was put forward by Paul Sveinson, who had the backing of several people associated with the investment dealer Wood Gundy. In our interview, Winnipeg Free Press reporter Nick Martin commented on the level of commitment displayed by the proponents of specific proposals:

There were a couple of people who wanted to build the mega-complexes, Paul Sveinson and Rick Koswin, and these people were driven, they were not somebody who just showed up for a couple of weeks, they spent years working on this. I think both Koswin and Sveinson gave up their jobs and I think they put an enormous amount of their own money into it. (Nick Martin, interview with author, August 19, 1998).

Sveinson's Snowcap proposal represented a \$235 million soft-topped facility to be constructed at the edge of The Forks. Silver (1996) suggests that the Snowcap proposal was never given serious consideration because of MEC's desire to develop a new arena because of MEC's connections with Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC), which owns Wood Gundy. MEC was a group of prominent local businessmen who emerged in 1994 to organize an ownership group for the team and develop a new arena at The Forks. Silver (1996) contends that the Snowcap proposal was 'shut down' through MEC members' connections with CIBC and through CIBC's connections with Wood Gundy to eliminate competition. The Richardson family has long-standing ties with CIBC, and Hartley Richardson served on MEC's executive. CIBC also owns Comcheq, a company whose Chief Executive Officer (CEO), John Loewen, was MEC's main spokesperson. Silver (1996) contends that through these corporate connections

MEC eliminated all competition for arena development projects including Sveinson's Snowcap project.

Other arena proposals emerged in the 1990's. Perhaps the most interesting proposal was developed by the Four Winds Group, headed by David H. Brant. Brant wanted to establish an 'International Destination Resort Complex' at an urban Native reserve. The complex, known as the 'Meg-A-Plex', was to include an arena, a stadium, a new convention centre, a world-class resort hotel, and the Four Winds Casino and Bingo. Brant's proposal seemed abnormal as compared to others put forward by the Winnipeg establishment. As Winnipeg Free Press reporter Nick Martin noted:

Dave claimed he had \$400 million US to build an enormous arena and casino complex, and I actually believe he had the money, but I gather there were a number of Dave Brants in the major cities in Canada and the US. I had this vision of a group of orthodontists in Long Island who put their money together to invest in a tax shelter, and whichever community would agree to a native-run casino that's where their tax shelter would be. It would be an urban reserve and I think he was talking about a light rapid rail line that he was going to build in downtown Winnipeg and out to the airport and to the casino.... I mean this thing was enormous and you know Filmon was never going to share any of the casino revenue and that's what it came down to...and again the province wouldn't share the revenue with the lottery revenue being so much a component of health care they weren't going to put any towards the Jets. (Nick Martin, interview with author, August 19, 1998)

Another proposal named 'The Ice Hanger' was developed by Top Gun Sport Inc. and like Brant's proposal, The Ice Hanger included a casino component. Support for both proposals, however, was minimal, especially in light of the importance of casino revenue for the Manitoba provincial government.

Other arena options were not even considered. For example, a proposal to renovate the existing arena was not considered until it appeared that a new arena could not be constructed

around the summer of 1995. The existing arena could have been renovated to include luxury boxes and additional corporate amenities at minimal expense to the public sector. City councillor Glen Murray was a proponent of renovating the existing arena, but the idea nevertheless received minimal attention.

The early 1990's also saw a string of reports and recommendations surrounding the viability of the Winnipeg Jets and the construction of a new arena in Winnipeg. A Coopers & Lybrand report was released in 1990 by Eric Stefanson, the provincial finance minister, immediately prior to City Council's vote on the 1991 IOA. The report, commissioned by the Winnipeg Jets, indicated that the presence of the Jets contributed \$48 million of economic activity per year and created between 960 and 1,440 full-time jobs in the Winnipeg community. The timely release of the report could have swayed councillors to vote in favour of passing the IOA, and the reports' numbers were frequently touted by local media and civic boosters as a vital indicator of the economic importance of the presence of the Winnipeg Jets. The economic benefits of the presence of the Jets claimed by the Coopers & Lybrand Report emerged as unquestionable proof of the importance of the Jets, despite any type of media analysis of the report's claims. Thin Ice, a community activist group that would emerge to oppose the use of public funds for the construction of a new arena, would later challenge the accuracy of the Coopers & Lybrand report. This shall be further discussed in the following chapters.

In July 1993, 'The Report of the Preservation of NHL Hockey in Winnipeg' was released. The report was produced by the Interim Steering Committee (ISC) which was established as a condition of the 1991 IOA. The ISC was chaired by local businessman Art Mauro; the report was subsequently referred to as 'The Mauro Report'. The Winnipeg Free Press gave the report front

page coverage under the title: “Jets can survive—for a price” (Thampi, 1993, p. A1). Ironically, below the front page story about the report, another much smaller yet seemingly more important story read: “Thompson declares city disaster area” (Lett, 1993, p. A1)! The role of the Free Press in promoting the constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets will be discussed in the following chapters.

The Mauro Report confirmed the economic analysis of the 1990 Coopers & Lybrand report while reiterating that the franchise could only survive in Winnipeg through heavy public support. As sports reporter Scott Taylor extolled: “What the report does, however, is tell Manitoba’s politicians that the Jets are important, they matter to the community, they create jobs and they fire up the economy and they must be preserved” (Taylor, 1993, p. C1). The report also expressed concern over the lack of an NHL salary cap and NHL revenue sharing plan that could help sustain small market franchises. The report recommended that a new arena be built at the Convention Centre site in downtown Winnipeg. Yet the most important recommendation identified by the Mauro report was that the public sector increase its shares in the Jets. The Mauro Report recommended that both the Jets and the new arena be owned 51% by the public sector and 49% by the private sector, and that the three levels of government share equally a \$30 million investment of public funds. In other words, the Mauro Report recommended that the public sector exercise its option to purchase the team from Shenkarow and his partners; an extraordinary recommendation for the public sector. The constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets had seemingly compromised rational sense.

The Mauro Report’s recommendations were extremely unnerving for Shenkarow. Shenkarow had no desire to sell the team if a new building was going to be built in Winnipeg.

Shenkarow had always wanted the public sector to construct a new arena while he and his partners maintained majority ownership of the team and control of the club's operations. To Shenkarow, the notion of the public sector exercising their option to purchase the team was illogical. As Shenkarow explained:

When the Mauro report came down, and I'll never forget this because somebody from the government came and said this is going to come out tomorrow and one of the recommendations is going to be that the sub-committee or somebody else is going to buy the team. So instead of doing a deal with us they made the decision that the team had to be bought, so they took a problem, which was a building problem, and added to it an ownership problem. That's bad business. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

Later in the interview:

Then the Mauro report came out and said they should buy the team. And I said to this guy who was a senior government civic servant, I said, that is a mistake because you have to understand that you are compounding your problem and you are not going to be able to raise the money. We should have built an arena on the North of Portage ten years ago, now you have to build a building and you are compounding your problem. From that day on, everybody's focus was on buying the team. They lost their focus. The focus had to be building a building and keeping the team in Winnipeg. We never said we were going to sell it if they built a building and it made any sense, we would have kept it. So they added \$32 million to their problem and we became the bad guys. At that point in time my partners and I knew the deal was dead. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

Following the release on the Mauro report an Implementation Committee (IC) was appointed by the premier of Manitoba and the mayor of Winnipeg on December 15, 1993, as a sub-committee of the ISC. The IC was formed to follow up on recommendations of the Mauro Report with a mandate to assess private sector lending and investment interest in the development of a new arena and ownership of Winnipeg's NHL franchise. As premier Filmon stated in the press release: "A firm indication of the level of private sector financial support for a new arena is required to ensure government involvement is kept to an absolute minimum". The committee's

mandate was to raise private capital as part of a joint public-private sector partnership which would own the team and the arena. The committee was chaired by Jim Burns, chairman of the board and director of Great-West Life, deputy chairman and director of the Power Corporation, and former vice-president of the Winnipeg Jets. The Burns (IC) committee consisted of prominent Winnipeg citizens: Hartley Richardson, Mal Anderson, Richard Archer, Robert Chipman, Del Crewson, Richard Kroft, William Watchorn, and Helen Hayes. If corporate funding was to be found, these business leaders knew where to look for it.

Prior to the release of the IC report, the Ogden Report was released on April 7, 1994. Ogden Entertainment Services (OES) had been retained by the IC to review the Mauro Report and to further validate the report's conclusions. The Ogden report initially noted that the viability of the Jets' franchise and a new arena was contingent upon resolving the lack of both an NHL salary cap and revenue sharing plan prior to the commitment of major public capital. Once those issues were resolved the report recommended the creation of a new company, capitalized with private funds, that would own and manage the new arena and the Jets. The new company would acquire the 36% public shares of the Jets and an additional twenty percent from the Jets majority owners, giving the company 56% ownership of the franchise. The public sector would be required to contribute \$30 million towards the construction of a new arena plus land and utilities valued at \$5.5 million and guaranteed loans of \$45 million. The report, like the Mauro Report, also recommended the construction of the new arena at the downtown Convention Centre site. Ironically, the Ogden report recommended that Ogden Entertainment Services manage the new arena and the existing convention centre.

The Burns Committee made several recommendations on June 24, 1994. The recommendations were almost identical to the recommendations of both the Mauro and Ogden Reports. The Burns committee, for example, recommended that a new arena should be constructed adjacent to and connecting to the Convention Centre in downtown Winnipeg which would be managed by a management company. The Committee also stressed that there must be “resolve or material progress on the issues of NHL/NHLPA collective bargaining agreement and revenue sharing”. More importantly, however, the committee did not find any private sector funding to purchase the team: “To date, no firm commitment of private sector investment has been forthcoming” (Burns, 1994, p.6). Later in the report it was noted: “No private sector investors have expressed interest in purchasing the hockey club because of the existence of excessive losses and the potential for continued losses in the future” (Burns, 1994, p.10). The Burns Committee had failed to find even a minimal standard of private sector funding.

Following the release of the Burns Report, a significant amount of confusion overwhelmed the city of Winnipeg surrounding the survival of the Winnipeg Jets. The public sector was already paying for all of the Jets losses, and was hesitant to put forward further public funding for the construction of a new arena, or towards the purchase of the Jets. By 1993, Thin Ice, a local activist group, had also formed to challenge the expenditure of massive amounts of public dollars on a new arena at a time of significant cuts to social services. The demographics of the group and their specific actions will be discussed in later chapters. The public sector’s option to purchase the remaining 64% of the privately owned shares of the Jets lapsed on June 30, 1994. Publicly the team’s losses were mounting and it seemed that Jets were going to be sold and relocated. Privately, however, negotiations were taking place to secure an extension for a private

sector option to purchase the team. An extension was granted by the Jets' majority owners, despite the fact that the Burns Committee had indicated that the private sector had little desire to contribute financially to a team that was losing a significant amount of money. As Shenkarow noted surrounding the emergence of private sector interest in purchasing the team:

In June of 1993 they hadn't put the deal together, so they came to us and said, you can't sell the team, you can't sell the team, we're going to put a team together, ok. I said, look, maybe that was 1994, whatever it was, we said you haven't done anything since the Mauro Report, we've now got the Burns Report, ok, and Jim Burns understood that you don't have to buy the team, you've got to get a building, we've got to get the revenue into the hockey team to give it a chance to stay. Well, Hartley Richardson called me up and said to me, you know, can't we get some more time? So I said, we don't have a problem, we are not rushing to sell the team. The problem is that everybody is just looking at this and I can see the losses are mounting, and as the losses mount, I know who the bad are going to be, because the public is paying the losses and we own the team. Anyway, we shook hands, Sandy Riley, John Loewen, Hartley Richardson and I, and that's when MEC came about. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

Shenkarow and his partners had given the newly formed private sector group an extension until May 1, 1995. The agreement with Shenkarow, however, was not a legal agreement. This legal subtlety would later cause a significant controversy surrounding MEC's and Spirit's attempts to purchase the Jets. Despite the lack of a revenue sharing plan and a salary cap, the two conditions identified in numerous reports as requiring resolution for the franchise to be viable in Winnipeg, individuals within the private sector sought to purchase the team.

The Manitoba Entertainment Complex Inc. (MEC) was a group of young local Winnipeg business people with a mandate to secure an ownership group for the Jets. The demographics of the group, and the group's specific actions will be discussed later in the thesis. MEC immediately began its search for an ownership group for the team in 1994 through an extensive marketing

campaign. The negotiations to purchase the team and to construct a new arena were extremely complex and detailed. Here are some of the important characteristics of those negotiations.

MEC's Arena Controversy and Business Plans

MEC experienced a significant controversy over their selection for the location of the new arena. Originally, the preferred location was a site across from the Winnipeg convention centre in downtown Winnipeg. The 'Convention Centre site' was previously recommended in the Mauro, Burns, and Ogden Reports as the preferred site for a new arena. However, MEC's preference for an arena was a North Forks location, despite the recommendations of those reports. The sudden change in location generated a major controversy for MEC. Some city councillors and members of the media became suspicious that the arena location had become a struggle between business factions with property near the convention centre and those with land holdings near the North Forks site. Hartley Richardson, for example, served on the MEC executive. The Richardsons, Winnipeg's wealthiest and most powerful family, also owned land surrounding the North Forks site. The Richardsons would have benefitted tremendously from an arena development near their land holdings; their property would have increased in value significantly following the construction of a new arena. As Donald Benham noted:

There is no question that the Forks location benefits large, rich Winnipeg families, and you and I know who they are, that own property right on Portage and Main. There's no question that that influenced the whole discussion behind the scenes. Hartley Richardson was out front and took some heat as a business leader. But it's well known that the Richardsons backed Mayor Thompson's candidacy both times. It's well known that she listened to their advice, it's well known that they favoured the location, and she flip-flopped. In one week she went from "no, it can't be The Forks", and somebody ring a ding dinged, and by the end of the week it was "The Forks is the only possible location". Well, when that happens to a politician there is

one word for it--somebody got to her. And I would suspect it was somebody who would gain from changing the location to the Forks. But I have no evidence of that (Laughter)! (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 11, 1998)

Similarly, Winnipeg Free Press city council reporter, Nick Martin, stated:

And we had councillors running around saying the whole thing about the site is not that it was an attractive site, but who owns property adjacent to it, and which business people are part of which faction, and who benefits from public land.... Now nobody would say that publicly, they were too afraid of getting sued, there were too many powerful people involved. (Nick Martin, interview with author, August 19, 1998)

Mayor Thompson had also promised during her election campaign that no arena would be built on the recently acquired public lands at The Forks (Murray, 1995, p. A5). Her promise proved to be hollow.

MEC members, however, denied any type of controversial motivation for the change in sites. Ross Robinson indicated that he did not think there should have been that degree of controversy surrounding the site's selection:

I think it was a natural site. Take GM place in BC, right adjacent to that whole False Creek area, and it was a far a better location than across from the convention centre which would have required the building to be three stories underground and little or no parking. (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998)

Similarly, John Loewen indicated:

It's a red herring. We had to choose a site, and we looked at sites and we did that early in the process, and architects and designers, we had three top firms in North America come in and give us their opinion and unanimously we settled on the Forks.... The convention centre, which had for long been touted as a good site, the real problem that we had there was the construction schedule and the size of the property. It was a very tight site, and we were going to close down roads, and build straight up from the sidewalk, and we felt it was just too big a structure to go on that site, and that kind of rejuvenating business down there, it was such a big structure that it would be like the convention centre where it would simply create this empty wall. (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998)

Silver (1996) also acknowledges that MEC leaders could have been swayed by the architectural designs and plans for the North Forks site.

Nevertheless, the arena location was subject to protest. Besides Thin Ice, a number of other groups opposed the North Forks location for a new arena. Both the Sierra Club and the local activist group Greening the Forks opposed the construction of a new arena at The Forks. The Forks is a historic and archaeological site at the convergence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. In 'Future Directions for the Forks', a civic report produced through public consultations, the public also indicated their preference for the site to remain 'green'. As well, the Manitoba Metis Federation and other Native leaders had expressed concern at City Council meetings because The Forks' site was sacred and historic ground¹⁸. Similarly, concerns expressed by local residents about traffic increases, parking, and increased noise seem to have gone unanswered (Paul, 1995, p. B3). Winnipeg Free Press reporter Nick Martin also noted concern surrounding the site's proximity to the rivers and the potential for flooding (Nick Martin, interview with author, August 19, 1998). These numerous concerns and criticisms appeared to be overlooked by MEC's leaders.

MEC's business plans also generated significant controversy. In fact, for a significant amount of time MEC did not even have a business plan; a business plan was not developed until the end of April, 1995! This fact is surprising given the business credentials of the people involved in MEC. Once MEC produced a business plan, it was targeted by opponents and members of the media as inadequate and unrealistic. As Nick Martin noted:

¹⁸I did not come across any sources that indicated that Native leaders had been consulted surrounding this issue.

They claimed continuously that they could do this for \$110 million Canadian. They all swore up and down that this was the cost and they would not go over it...we went through the open house at the Air Canada Centre last weekend, and it was \$260 million, and yes it is more grandiose than what they were planning here, but not that much more grandiose, and they were going to do this for \$110 million. That was the budget! So I think there was quite serious concerns that the arena could be built for that amount and then it was who was on the hook for the cost overruns. (Nick Martin, interview with author, August 19, 1998)

MEC's business plans were calculated on the thinnest of margins, and were criticized for not being representative of the actual level of private funding MEC had secured. As Nick Martin explained:

As the business plans started coming out I remember saying, well where do all these numbers come from? Everything was balanced on the thinnest edge.... The actual money that was in hand when they started scrambling to save the Jets, the businesses had committed about fifty or sixty million, but it was like where is all the money? Nobody was actually writing the cheques. (Nick Martin, interview with author, August 19, 1998)

John Loewen acknowledged:

I think the business plan was still very reasonable, but you had to manage the team very very closely...but yeah, it was tight, it was always going to be tight. And if there is any justification of it, it was clear that if the team didn't make any money, the people who put up the money were going to pay the difference, not the public. (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998)

Thin Ice also disagreed with MEC's business plan. At a news conference on May 1, 1995, Thin Ice publicly dismantled the plan claiming the public contribution to be \$131 million rather than MEC's estimation of \$88 million, and questioning MEC's accounting methods and assumptions about NHL salary projections (Silver, 1996).

Meanwhile, MEC's marketing campaign was not faring well. Their minimal levels of club seats and luxury boxes had not been met (Cheater, 1994, p 4). The private sector was hesitant to invest in the Winnipeg Jets; the financial risks were too high and the corporate community's

pockets were not deep enough to absorb the team's potential losses. The older, 'monied' Winnipeg elite wanted little to do with the project.

The Involvement of Gerry Gray

MEC's failure to secure financial commitments from the Winnipeg business community was partly obscured by the donation of \$10 million from Winnipeg millionaire Gerry Gray. Gray was the former owner of Blackwoods Beverages, a Pepsi franchise which Gray built up after dropping out of high school. Gray would later sell his franchise back to Pepsi for an enormous sum of money. Alan Sweatman described Gray in this regard:

If there is a near perfection attitude toward philanthropy from a man of means, he personifies it. He doesn't want any publicity, in fact he shies from publicity, he likes to support things, and if you want something that is sort of enduring, he does it. (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998)

Alan Sweatman is Gray's longtime lawyer. In December of 1994, Sweatman was contacted by Chuck Winegrad, of Richardson Securities, and Sandy Riley about the possibility of securing a financial commitment from Gray. MEC members Osler, Riley, and Loewen, along with Sweatman then flew down to Florida, where Gray winters in a Palm Beach condominium, to meet with Gray (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998). Gray agreed to invest \$10 million and had Sweatman create a separate legal entity: MEC Management Ltd. At that meeting, Gray informed the other MEC members that Alan Sweatman would act as his advisor and directed them to channel all information through Sweatman. While Sweatman had been asked to serve on the MEC board, he chose to act as an observer and advisor to Gray (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998).

The involvement of Sweatman and Gray was a contentious issue, particularly for Jets's president Barry Shenkarow. Shenkarow had been a lawyer for Sweatman's law firm, Thompson, Dorfman, & Sweatman, in the early 1980's. Sweatman had been asked by his partners to fire Shenkarow sometime after Shenkarow and his partners purchased the Jets. Alan Sweatman described Shenkarow's departure in this way:

The problem with Barry was he couldn't tell which side of the table he was on as a lawyer. This happens to lawyers, and when they are in my firm I like them to go away because if you are the client and I'm the lawyer and you bring me a deal and I become part of that deal, who is the lawyer? And things he did, he was involved with them so he left, and I had something to do with him leaving, not me alone, but he made everyone nervous.... I was just the guy who the other partners asked to deal with Barry, and it had to do with Bobby Hull and Bobby Hull's divorce and whether Barry was going to surface a document or not, and he didn't surface it, and suddenly the court was being misled and he couldn't see that you can't do that (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998).

Later in the negotiations between MEC and Spirit and Shenkarow and his partners, the acrimonious relationship between Sweatman and Shenkarow would severely hamper the private sector's efforts to save the Jets.

MEC, the NHL and Barry Shenkarow

MEC's relationship with the NHL was tenuous. The NHL did not want a group of community owners in Winnipeg. The NHL wanted a single owner with the financial means to absorb the significant losses that the Jets were projecting. The NHL also wanted a long-term commitment that the new owners in Winnipeg would keep the team in Winnipeg, rather than simply flipping the team in a few years for a profit. MEC could not guarantee any of these conditions.

On April 27, 1995, the day that MEC was supposed to publicly unveil their business plan, MEC announced that they could no longer continue in the negotiations to purchase the Jets. According to MEC chairman John Loewen, the NHL had instituted last-minute demands on MEC that were impossible to fulfill. Others, however, suspected that MEC had received no such letter and that their public resignation was nothing more than a tactical move to increase pressure on Gary Bettman and the NHL (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998). Barry Shenkarow, for example, accused MEC of 'playing poker' with the NHL while maintaining that MEC had known about the NHL's conditions from the outset. Jim Silver suggests that the announcement was nothing more than a scam that allowed MEC to follow through with the public consultation guidelines passed by City Council on February 1, 1995. Following the announcement at the Convention Centre that the deal was dead, a hearing was conducted which allowed individuals to address the business plan; this was done following the departure of the media and the public. Silver (1996) noted Rick Frost's sentiments. Frost is the Chief Commissioner of the city of Winnipeg:

Without hesitation Frost revealed the plot. If NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman "should happen" to come to Winnipeg on the weekend, and if a deal should happen to be struck, we want to be able to say that the city has complied with the requirement for public consultation (p.119).

Similarly, Silver noted in our interview:

I think that whole atmosphere at the convention centre with Loewen crying and Susan Thompson crying, I think that was a scam. I think the fact that after all the media and the fans left they carried on, and I confronted Rick Frost and he basically acknowledged that this was a scam. I think the whole thing was a scam to try and up the ante, which was very very clever. (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998).

More revealing was the fact that Loewen had not called Shenkarow to indicate that MEC would not exercise its option on the Jets' privately held shares. If the deal was dead, why hadn't Shenkarow been informed that MEC would not be exercising its option?

Following MEC's public blaming of the NHL for their failure, Bettman arrived in Winnipeg to conduct meetings with MEC and Barry Shenkarow. MEC members and local media suspected that Bettman did not want the franchise to remain in Winnipeg. According to Ross Robinson: **"My statement would be that Gary Bettman did nothing to assist the city of Winnipeg or at least the absolute minimum in us retaining the team"** (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998). This is a plausible theory given the NHL's desire to secure franchises in larger American markets for the purpose of generating a national American television contract and international exposure. MEC also had difficulty in confirming the specific number of box seats and luxury boxes that the NHL wanted before it granted approval for the franchise. Bettman was vague in his expectations. Barry Shenkarow, however, maintains that the NHL did not want the Jets to move:

The NHL tried to get this deal done. The NHL said ok, you've got no owner, we've never had a team without an owner. You've got nobody to give us a commitment that the team is going to stay in Winnipeg. The NHL would have done almost anything, almost anything. You've got to understand something. The fact that the NHL, Winnipeg was an unimportant market to them, it's still better to have a team in Winnipeg then have them move to Phoenix because they lost Phoenix as an expansion city Phoenix was worth \$80 million as an expansion city, so by moving Winnipeg to Phoenix, the owners of the NHL lost \$80 million. Do they want to have a team in Edmonton? They couldn't care if there is a team in Edmonton. But do they want to see teams moving? No. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

More importantly, the NHL had a comfortable relationship with Barry Shenkarow. Shenkarow had served on the NHL's board of governors and numerous NHL committees for years. He had

substantial knowledge of league operations, and what the league would require in terms of allowing the franchise to remain in Winnipeg. As Shenkarow noted:

I used to say that we went to school for fifteen years. We may have only been a 'C' student, or we may have been an 'A' student, but we were the only ones who went to school. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

MEC members had no experience in dealing with the NHL and had no first-hand knowledge of the economics of the NHL. Shenkarow was their 'in' with the NHL and Gary Bettman. Yet according to Shenkarow, MEC failed to involve the Jets' private owners during the start of their negotiations:

When we shook hands and said we'll give you another year and we were going to be a part of the process, for the first ten meetings that happened, we weren't invited. There were some other people that were there, like Bobby Silver who is a friend of mine, and he was saying where is Barry? Well, we forgot to invite him. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

Robert Silver would acknowledge in a Free Press article: "Barry was excluded in error," Silver said. "It's our fault." (Douglas, 1995a, p. A1). Ross Robinson, however, claims that MEC's relationship with Shenkarow was excellent:

Barry was extremely accommodating to MEC and their goals, you know to the point of providing information on important up-coming salary contracts and key negotiations that would effect the team. (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998)

MEC members knew that Shenkarow was important for establishing a cordial relationship with Gary Bettman and the NHL. As Robinson noted:

Barry is well-connected in the NHL and he knew the whole business operation, and just like when you buy a corporation you want to have the senior management involved, otherwise it's a questionable investment. (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998)

Yet by the time Bettman came to Winnipeg in the beginning of May, 1995, Shenkarow had been excluded from MEC's operation. One of the conditions Bettman stipulated upon his arrival in Winnipeg was that MEC needed to include Shenkarow:

Gary Bettman called me and said I'm coming to Winnipeg and there was a meeting with Lloyd Axworthy, the mayor, the premier, John Loewen, and all these people, and they actually apologized for blaming the NHL, and Bettman got up and said, look, the NHL is doing everything they can to keep the team in Winnipeg and don't blame us, you haven't got your deal together. And he made a speech at the Westin Hotel and one of the things he said loud and clear was you better keep Barry and his partners involved because they know how to get this done. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

MEC's relationship with Shenkarow would continue to be tenuous. Shenkarow claimed that even after Bettman's speech MEC failed to include him in their negotiations. MEC members, however, claimed that Shenkarow would never commit to anything and continuously altered negotiations when a deal was close. As John Loewen noted:

Barry...would never really commit to anything in writing and we had lots of conversations about what he'd be willing to do, but we could never get a commitment out of him, and two weeks later it would change a bit. So I guess part of the process and the press described it as moving the goal line, and I would agree with that, the goal line kept moving. (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998)

MEC members also accused Shenkarow of influencing the NHL's position regarding the viability of the franchise in Winnipeg. According to Loewen this was particularly evident following the sale of the Quebec franchise when the value of the Jets's franchise increased significantly due to the high price of the sale. The Jets were now worth much more than the \$32 million specified in the 1991 IOA. The significant change in the value of the Jets altered negotiations to purchase the team:

So that changed the dynamics a lot and I think that sort of changed the behaviour of the ownership. They weren't going to be happy selling their portion of the team for thirty two million. There was always another obstacle, and when you solved that obstacle there were three more. And I think he influenced the league's position. (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998)

One of the main obstacles Shenkarow constructed involved the alteration of MEC's August 18, 1994 option to purchase the team. In their agreement, and in the 1991 IOA, the option price was articulated as being \$32 million. By 1995 Shenkarow was claiming that option price was actually \$32 million net of tax, or close to \$55 million. Shenkarow was also claiming that the \$10 million refundable deposit, as specified in the option, was actually non-refundable. According to Loewen, the 1994 verbal agreement between Shenkarow and MEC had been altered substantially:

As a business person, if I give you an option to buy this building sometime in the next four years, if this building is worth \$1 million, four years from now, if the building is worth \$2 million, we signed an agreement four years ago for \$1 million, so write me a cheque for \$1 million and this is your building. What happened was, their view of it was, that really wasn't the nature of the agreement, that they hadn't agreed to sell the team for \$32 million, they agreed that's what it was worth. Now all of the sudden it's worth \$100 million, so you've got to pay me a \$100 million. (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998)

The option price also concerned Shenkarow and the NHL. Shenkarow and the NHL were concerned that MEC would purchase the franchise for \$32 million, and in two or three years 'flip' the franchise for a huge capital gain. MEC members repeatedly denied that a capital gain served as their motivation for trying to organize an ownership group. If there was going to be a capital gain to be made on the sale of this franchise, it was going to be for Shenkarow and his partners. Given Shenkarow's amicable relationship with the NHL it is plausible that Shenkarow played a role in the NHL's demands on MEC. Shenkarow's concern about the possibility of the franchise

being 'flipped' would re-emerge with the involvement of Spirit¹⁹. Nevertheless, MEC was unable to secure an ownership group to purchase the team, and on May 3, 1995, MEC announced that its efforts had collapsed.

Izzy Asper

The involvement of Israel (Izzy) Asper in the Save the Jets campaign reignited MEC's efforts. Asper's involvement in the process significantly altered the dynamics of MEC and MEC's negotiations with Shenkarow; Asper is a visible public figure who assumed a major leadership role in the process. Asper is the founder and owner of the Winnipeg-based CanWest Global Communications. He has a personal fortune of close to one billion dollars and has created four international television markets that reach 42 million viewers (Newman, 1998). Recently, Asper has turned Global into Canada's third national television network. Asper was born in Minnedosa, Manitoba, and has a genuine community spirit combined with a large personal ego (Silver, 1996). He became involved in the Save the Jets campaign on Friday, May 5, 1995 at a meeting that included Gary Filmon, the premier of Manitoba, Albert Cohen, James Cohen, Barry Shenkarow, Ross Robinson, Mark Chipman, Bob Chipman, and Eric Stephanson, the provincial finance minister (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998).

Asper's involvement in the process was a contentious issue. Asper was never a hockey fan, and had publicly indicated that he had little interest in the Jets. The connection between Asper's television networks and his involvement in attempting to secure the Jets must therefore not be lightly disregarded. The combined ownership of professional sports teams and media

¹⁹Spirit was the second group of businesspeople that would attempt to purchase the team.

networks has emerged as a popular and profitable business venture. Consider the recent involvement of media moguls Rupert Murdoch, Ted Turner, and Michael Eisner in professional sport. Professional sport can provide a vast amount of programming for a television network, and a significant amount of advertising revenue. At the time of the Save the Jets campaign in 1995, Asper was, amongst other things, attempting to develop a third national television network in Canada. Given the fact that Asper owns stations in Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg, the addition of the Jets franchise could have secured a Western Canadian network 'triangle' revolving around the coverage of the NHL teams in Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Calgary. The potential advertising and pay-per-view revenues within the triangle could have been comparable to those available in major American urban centres.

Asper became involved following the May 3, 1995 announcement that MEC's effort to purchase the Jets had been restricted by the NHL's placement of last minute demands, resulting in the collapse of MEC's efforts. For many Winnipeggers the disappointment surrounding the demise of the franchise was overwhelming. Fans blamed the NHL, MEC, and local politicians. The reporters of the Winnipeg Free Press were particularly hostile, placing blame on the shoulders of local politicians and MEC. Yet the deal to Save the Jets was not completely dead. On Sunday, May 14, 1995, after a week of speculation, the Free Press announced that a rescue effort to save the Jets had been initiated, spurred on by the involvement of Izzy Asper. Asper is known throughout Winnipeg as having a genuine community spirit and interest in promoting Winnipeg. Asper was immediately constructed by the media and Jets' fans as the saviour of both the Jets and the city of Winnipeg. The announcement of Asper's leadership sparked an enormous outpouring of public support known as Operation Grassroots. Thousands of people rallied in downtown

Winnipeg, and millions of dollars poured in to save the team. The campaign was lead by CJOB radio station and raised \$13.5 million in a matter of days--an incredible sum donated by the citizens of Winnipeg. Jets's fans and civic boosters were not ready to let the franchise go.

Asper committed to act as the main fundraiser for the private sector. Securing private capital would prove to be a difficult role, even for Asper, whose business accomplishments speak for themselves. As Jim Burns discovered in 1994, and as MEC had recently discovered, there was minimal interest within the private sector to invest in the franchise. The more established 'money' of Winnipeg did not want to commit to purchasing the Jets. According to Ross Robinson, Asper:

Provided the clarity of the vision of the government entertaining to spend \$110 million on the facilities, if the community of Winnipeg and Manitoba would entertain to put together another \$110 million, some of which would be in the form of a trust to support the team with their on-goings. He provided a unique vision. (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998)

The new plan to Save the Jets involved the city, province and the federal government each contributing \$37 million towards the \$111 million cost of a new arena, with the private sector contributing an equal amount to purchase the Jets and establish a trust to cover future losses. Yet questions surrounding Asper's sincerity to secure private capital began to emerge. Alan Sweatman's explained:

Well, the story that was put out...was that we are going to raise all this dough, a hundred million dollars, and Asper, as he always is, was running all over the world, and somebody allegedly told Izzy that the premier wanted to see him, and the premier was told that Asper wanted to see him, so Izzy comes to town and hears this hooray, here is Izzy the saviour. Well, Izzy, if there is a parade, and he is asked to lead it he will, and when he gets in the lead he is going to say to somebody, tell me where the hell are we going? (Laughter). Now if the premier said I'm good for two hundred, Izzy would say I'm good for a hundred...it was sheer machismo bravado bull shit, but at the time it was terrific. (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998).

Asper is a busy man. Despite being the 'leader' of the efforts to Save the Jets, Asper was rarely in Winnipeg and a significant controversy ensued surrounding whether Asper fulfilled his commitment to raise private sector funds. John Loewen, the chair of MEC, noted that:

Izzy stood up and showed some leadership, he did what he could do in terms of working with the levels of government and he had a good plan for it. At the end of the day I think he had other things on his plate, you know, at the time they were trying to get the television station developed in the United Kingdom. (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998)

Similarly, Barry Shenkarow explained:

Well, Izzy was well-intentioned. You know, I think Izzy's problem with this deal was that conceptually he liked the idea, and he didn't realize, he had no idea what the numbers were and who he was dealing with, and he wasn't here, he was in Australia, he was in England, he wasn't here to do the deal, or to see if he could do the deal. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

Yet had Asper actually raised the necessary funds to purchase the team? According to Alan Sweatman, Asper hadn't raised anything. Following a personal meeting with Barry Shenkarow on May 18, 1995, Asper disappeared from the scene. It was never known what actually was discussed at that meeting, but following the meeting, Asper met with MEC, and later with Premier Filmon, and without explanation indicated that the necessary funds hadn't been raised (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998).

By May 19, the MEC deadline had lapsed, and Shenkarow was claiming to have a deal with two Minneapolis businessmen. MEC attempted to put a deal together at the last minute that made several concessions to Shenkarow and his partners, including allowing Shenkarow to maintain a significant role in the club's operation (Silver, 1996). Asper, who was not part of the negotiations, did not want Shenkarow in charge of his investment, and quickly faded from the scene. By the end of May mass confusion existed surrounding the status of the Jets, and the

public that had so generously extended millions of dollars during Operation Grassroots was growing frustrated. No one knew whether the team had been sold, or if MEC would be able to salvage a deal. Everything was transpiring behind closed doors. By the end of May, 1995, MEC's efforts to secure an ownership group had collapsed. Nevertheless, a new group of business elite, with an extension granted from Shenkarow until August, would emerge to attempt to save the team. The Spirit of Manitoba (Spirit) was formed in the summer of 1994 and included MEC and some of the older members of the Winnipeg business community. John Loewen had resigned, and Cam Osler assumed a more prominent role in the negotiations. The negotiations between Spirit and Barry Shenkarow, however, proved to be much more hostile than the prior negotiations with MEC.

Personal Differences and the Private Ownership Structure

Personal differences between Jets' president Barry Shenkarow and both MEC and Spirit group members significantly hampered negotiations between the groups to purchase the team. Shenkarow clearly wanted to be involved in the club's operation and ownership following the sale of the Jets. As John Loewen noted: **"If the team was going to be here, Barry was going to run the show"** (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998). Similarly, Alan Sweatman explained: **"And of course this was Barry's objective, to control the operation"** (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998). Many Spirit members, however, did not want Shenkarow involved with the Jets following the sale of the team. In particular, Gray and Sweatman wanted a professional business person in charge of the club's daily operation. Concern was also expressed by Gray and Sweatman as to Shenkarow's ability to

adequately manage the team. As John Loewen noted:

Spirit was, they were the people that were going to put up the money, so if you are the financial group that buys the team, you decide who is going to be the president, and I think that Barry's reputation in Winnipeg was never that strong in terms of his ability to run a business, he'd had a number of businesses that had gone under, or had financial difficulties that he was involved in. This group was going to buy the team and they just said that it was time for a new president in terms of a day-to-day operator, and I don't think they would have forced Barry to resign or anything, I think they would have been happy to have him as Chairman or one of the Board of Governors, but they wanted a professional business person to run the day-to-day operation of the business. And there's that history there (Laughter), Barry used to be a lawyer for Alan... (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998).

Shenkarow's and Sweatman's relationship was less than amicable. This relationship clearly affected the negotiations to purchase the team. As Shenkarow noted:

Alan Sweatman represented Gerry Gray, and Gerry Gray put in \$10 million. The day that happened I went to Hartley Richardson and Sandy Riley and John Loewen and said I've got to tell you something. Alan Sweatman doesn't like me, and this goes back to when I practiced law, and this is going to be a problem. So, now the question was, what kind of leverage can you get out of your \$10 million. Well, it turned out that the leverage Sweatman could get out of the \$10 million was incredible...so they let Sweatman do whatever he wanted, and one of the things that Sweatman wanted was me out, gone. Well, obviously, somebody, this was a personal vendetta, this is not about keeping the team in Winnipeg.... (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

Sweatman had assumed the role of chair for Spirit by default. None of the other prominent business people in Winnipeg were willing to take over as chair. Sweatman, besides acting as an advisor for Gray, assumed a major role in the negotiations to purchase the team. A battle quickly developed between private sector factions surrounding the ownership structure of the team. The Winnipeg Free Press, on July 20, 1995, explained the controversy to the public in an article titled, "A vicious battle for the Jets", subtitled, "Egos, agendas collide in bitter struggle for control":

"I think we're at the falling apart stage," lawyer Alan Sweatman, a key negotiator and the chairman of Spirit of Manitoba, said later that same afternoon. "What we're fighting over-

-and believe me we've been fighting--is the fundamental question of who is going to run the show. That's always been the problem, but now it is finally being recognized (that) that is the problem." (Samyn & Douglas, 1995, p. A1)

Later on Samyn and Douglas quoted Jets' President Barry Shenkarow:

"They're playing games. I'm not talking about people...trying to do the deal but this group we call SOS (Sweatman, consultant Cam Osler, and lawyer Michael Sinclair) have other agendas. What these guys want to do is steal my dream away from me." (Samyn & Douglas, 1995, p. A1).

Shenkarow claimed that the negotiations had turned into a hostile takeover by individuals who wanted to own the team. Shenkarow was also worried that certain individuals were only interested in owning the team, and that those individuals would 'flip' the franchise in a couple of years for a profit. Specifically, Shenkarow was concerned that the SOS group simply wanted control of the team:

People wanted to own the team. You had a group of people at MEC, and I'm not talking about the business people, but the people they hired, the staff, the lawyers, the people that could see all of a sudden how they were going to run the Winnipeg Jets.... But there were other people who saw this as an ability to control the hockey team, and you lost the unity of purpose, and they thought, well, if it doesn't work in two years and if we had to sell the team, at least we'd have a new building. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

Shenkarow was also concerned with the use of his equity for the purpose of constructing a new arena rather than trying to maintain the team in Winnipeg on a long-term basis. As Shenkarow explained:

If they own a team that is worth \$60 million and you can buy it for \$32 million, you've got \$28 million in free equity. So the focus became how could you use the free equity to build the building, and at that point we weren't interested in putting \$28 million into a building if the team wasn't going to stay here. Well, Alan Sweatman said we have an option to buy it, it's up to us to determine what long-term is. Well, no, I'm not selling this team for \$32 million so in two years you can sell it for \$60 million and my \$28 million goes into the building and there's no team here. So, the play became ok, we are going to keep the team here, and that was in

the paper, but you know, if it doesn't work out at least we'll have a brand new building. As soon as their definition of long-term became two years we said we are not interested. You can't use my equity to build a building, that wasn't the deal. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

The personal agendas of those involved in this process clearly influenced the outcome and ultimate sale of the team. According to Ross Robinson, Gray and Sweatman: **"Effectively alienated any support from Barry Shenkarow and as a result thereof, Gary Bettman, to facilitate retaining the franchise"** (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998). Because Shenkarow was well-connected in the NHL, any alienation of Shenkarow resulted in the alienation of the NHL. MEC's and Spirit's relationship with the NHL suffered accordingly.

Spirit's Business Plan

Spirit released its business plan on August 8, 1995. Like MEC's previous business plan, Spirit's was not void of controversy. Thin Ice challenged both Spirit's revenue projections and salary projections, and the Free Press began to question Spirit's plans. Spirit was projecting that salaries would remain close to flat for five years and increase by 20% over the next nine years. According to Shenkarow, Spirit had been given financial information on the NHL's players' salaries, but had failed to accurately project salary costs. Shenkarow disapproved of the business plan passionately:

Well, we called the underwriters and said we want a disclaimer, not that we disagree with that, but we strongly disagree. To go to the public and say here are the numbers that are going to make this thing work based on the fact that players' salaries are not going to go up for five years, or whatever the exact thing was, was in my opinion as close to something as fraudulent as you can be, in my opinion. I knew the league wasn't going to approve this because the numbers were phoney. In fact, I

remember Hartley Richardson calling me up and saying I just got this, can you come over to my house? So I went over to his house and I looked at it with him and we marked it up...it was just preposterous, it was just preposterous. I'll never forget how we marked up that business plan.... You know, just nonsense. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

The NHL's finance department also called Shenkarow and expressed concern over Spirit's business plan (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998). In an August 3, 1995, letter from NHL commissioner Gary Bettman to Alan Sweatman, Bettman also expressed reservations surrounding Spirit's business plan: "We continue to be quite concerned that the projections regarding player costs are unrealistic and do not accurately reflect the operation of the club". The NHL also demanded that at least \$111 million for an endowment fund be in place to absorb the projected losses before the NHL would consider the proposal. Spirit did not have the necessary funds in place. Alan Sweatman, however, stood by Spirit's business plan and Spirit's projections:

We attended to the NHL and Bettman, and a group of us went down and made our case, and he and his side kick, they weren't kidding, they said this is the best plan we've seen and we checked out things, salaries, we weren't flying by the seat of our pants, we did some good research, we used Calgary Flames data.... (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998)

According to Sweatman:

People like to think, oh well, salaries would have sunk you. Well, they might now, but on the other hand, guess what, we'd have the facility, we'd have had the team, and if we couldn't hold the team, you sell the team. (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998)

This is, of course, exactly what Shenkarow and the NHL did not want. Spirit was convinced that Shenkarow would not sell the team if Shenkarow was not left in charge of the club's operation. Spirit had launched a lawsuit against Shenkarow claiming that while Shenkarow had publicly

claimed he would sell the team, privately he was taking steps to ensure that the team would not be sold to Spirit.

The lack of private capital left Spirit scrambling for additional ways to secure funding. According to Shenkarow, Spirit eventually asked him to sell the team for a dollar. After the lengthy hostile negotiations, this was unacceptable to Shenkarow and his partners:

And they actually said to Bill Davis and I that what they wanted us to do was sell the team to Spirit for a dollar and in exchange for that we would get back X percentage of the team. But if they didn't have to pay us the thirty two million they had enough money to do the deal. So I said to them before Bill could answer, you know, three years ago if you would have come to us we probably would have done something like this because we are stupid. But what you've done is you want me to sell you the team for a dollar so that you can go out in the public and fire me and call me an asshole. So what you are telling me is that you want me to make you a gift of thirty two million dollars so you can humiliate me in public. The answer is no. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

With that, Spirit's efforts to purchase the team collapsed. Shortly after, the Jets were officially sold to BG Hockey Ventures Ltd., and Shenkarow utilized the 'Quebec Shuffle', a tax avoidance scheme, that saved the Jets' majority owners roughly \$3 million in taxes (Silver, 1996). Ironically after having the team's losses completely paid for by the public sector, the Jets' majority owners made use of the legal loophole, further adding to the expense of the public sector.

The Jets had a tremendous impact on many members of the city of Winnipeg, and had a definitive impact on the city's culture. The Jets represented a source of social identification for many people. The professional team also represented Winnipeg's cultural claim to fame in terms of national and global identity. As Ken Dryden and Roy MacGregor (1989) note: "Cities learned to sell themselves through sports. A major-league team, a new cathedral-like arena, a unique sporting event can gain a city priceless attention and sell the city to a national and international

audience” (p.188). The Jets allowed specific members of the Winnipeg community to feel a part of an ‘elite’ national and international culture. The loss of the Jets also served as a bitter reminder of the economic and cultural decline of the city of Winnipeg. For many, the symbolic importance of the Jets was worth fighting for.

Despite numerous attempts to save the team, mass rallies at Portage and Main, and over \$13 million raised by the general public through Operation Grassroots (Verburg, 1995), the Jets could not be saved. Due to the changing economic nature of the NHL and the exponential growth rate of salaries, the owners and potential future owners of the Jets found themselves unable, or unwilling, to risk private capital on a small market professional team. As Ken Dryden (1993) notes:

“Sports” had become “Sport Inc.” With big money now to be made in sports, big money would be made, and the attitude changed. “Cities” became “markets”, “games” became “products”, “sports” part of the “entertainment business,” fighting for “entertainment dollars.” Owners sold civic pride, appealed to civic vanity, got civic concessions, moved into civic monuments, blamed civic pride, left (p.155).

The Jets played their last home game in the Winnipeg Arena to a sell-out crowd on May 5, 1996, and were relocated to Phoenix, Arizona soon after.

Chapter 4

Constructing the Importance of the Winnipeg Jets: From the Local to the Global

The following chapters will reflect on this study's sub-problems in light of information gathered and the recent literature on globalization. This exploratory study sought to investigate the relationship between the local particularities and global identities that were constructed and manipulated by specific power blocs from 1972 to 1996 surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets. The first section examines the various constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets from 1972-1996. The second section merges the final two sub-problems together in an analysis of the participants who promoted or discouraged the various constructions and the means by which they were able to do so. The separation of these sections should not confuse the reader into believing that the sub-problems are independent and unrelated. The constructions of local particularities and global identities will be discussed in light of the individuals/groups constructing them, and the means by which they were constructed.

The views and opinions of all subjects influenced and challenged my views about the issues and constructions surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets. As a researcher, I acknowledge that my perceptions, beliefs, and values have also influenced the research process. I grew up in Winnipeg as an avid Jets' fan and I personally identified with the Jets and enjoyed attending the Jets' games. Yet as a part of my educational development over the past three years, my views surrounding the political economy of professional sport have also manifested

themselves as a part of my values. The incorporation of my values and beliefs into the research process and this study was therefore unavoidable.

What are the constructions of global identities and local particularities surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets that were generated for the citizens of Winnipeg from 1972 to 1996?

The analysis of newspaper and city council minutes was designed to identify the various constructions of global identities and local particularities that were generated from 1972 until 1996. In addition, the first section of all interviews was designed to explore the various constructions of global and local particularities with individuals involved in the debates surrounding the proposals to save the Jets and build a new arena. It was hypothesized that:

The constructions of global identities will include the belief that a professional sports team and a modern arena classifies a city as part of an elite, global/world-class culture and that a city as a whole benefits from such a construction. The constructions of local particularities will include appeals to nationalism, regionalism, and civic pride based on the maintenance of professional hockey as part of Winnipeg's, Manitoba's, and Canada's cultural identity.

This hypothesis arose from research on globalization and sport, and the construction of urban identity in reference to an emerging global culture (Arundel & Roche, 1998; Hall & Hodges, 1998; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Harvey, 1987; Harvey, 1989; Roche, 1992; Roche, 1993; Silver, 1996; Whitson & Macintosh, 1993; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). Support for this hypothesis was provided by the subjects of this study and by the newspaper and city council minutes analysis. In addition, the diversity of the constructions of local particularities was greater than what was originally suspected. The following section will analyze the various

constructions of local particularities surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets that were generated from 1972-1996.

Local Particularities

Constructions of Entertainment Value and Personal Identity

“It would be hell being in Winnipeg through the winter without hockey.” (Turner & Kuxhaus, 1995, p. C1.)

Winnipeg is extremely isolated from other urban centres and from other high profile sport and cultural entertainment amenities. The closest major urban centre to Winnipeg is Minneapolis which is an eight hour drive. Regina is a ten hour drive. In light of Winnipeg’s geographic isolation, many Winnipeggers regarded the loss of the Jets as a permanent loss of an enjoyable entertainment commodity. The Jets were repeatedly constructed by the media and Jets’ boosters as part of Winnipeg’s general cultural fabric and psyche. Hockey fans in particular recognized the Jets as representing the NHL, the highest level of professional hockey entertainment in the world, and constructed the team as part of their identity. Thousands of people routinely enjoyed seeing internationally recognized sport heroes such as Wayne Gretzky, Bobby Hull, and Mario Lemieux play at the Winnipeg Arena. Although the Jets were rarely successful in the NHL, hockey fans could consistently enjoy seeing the ‘stars’ of the NHL. Jim Silver noted this psychological importance of the Jets to the city of Winnipeg and to Jets’ fans during the initial stages of our interview:

Well, this is a city in the middle of the prairie, it’s as cold as it can be in the winter, and it’s a long way away from anybody else. Minneapolis is probably the closest

city with major entertainment. So the city is a better place when there are a greater number of interesting things to do, and many people followed the Jets. So, I think that the particularities of Winnipeg as a city are part of the reason that the Jets are important. And in addition to that, I think there's this whole sort of psychological thing that I tried to deal with to some extent in the book, that people somehow value the notion that we here in Winnipeg are part of the big-leagues, that we are part of the NHL and somehow, that makes many of us feel good, and particularly if you are a hockey fan, it feels good to go and see Wayne Gretzky come here to Winnipeg, and not just on television, but live. And everyone who is a hockey fan knows that there is a huge difference watching on tv and actually physically attending the game. I mean the excitement, the drama, the speed, the power of it is so much more evident if you are physically there. So there were a lot of psychological reasons why having the Jets in the city was really important to a lot of people. (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998)

Brain Cole, the city editor for the Free Press at the time of the 1995 'Save the Jets' campaign, echoed a similar sentiment surrounding Winnipeg's isolation from other major centres and cultural activities during our interview:

Now to get back to your question, it's because of the reasons that I mentioned, the importance of the team, I don't know what you call it, a symbol of importance, but also a cultural symbol, and a recreational kind of vehicle. As you know now that you've moved East, when you grow up in Winnipeg, and any time somebody suggests to you that you are going to another city, in your mind you think, well, it's eight hours to Minneapolis, it's ten hours to Regina, or you get on a plane and fly somewhere, you don't think in terms of living in a city like Montreal. I lived in Ottawa in the mid-eighties and I remember thinking wow, this is really close to Montreal, I mean we could go to Montreal for the day. The idea of going from one large population centre to another, and not spending a day to do it or not getting on an airplane was quite different to me. I think that in terms of it you understand that, and you understand that there has to be a wide range of recreational activities and cultural opportunities to give Winnipeg a kind of comfort level that will help people stay here and make life comfortable. It's that simple. (Brian Cole, interview with author, August 15, 1998)

To many, the Jets were a part of Winnipeg's overall cultural fabric that 'made life comfortable' in the face of geographical isolation and extremes of temperature.

For many Winnipeggers, the Jets were of particular importance in dulling the harshness of the Winnipeg winters. Having lived in Winnipeg for sixteen years, I have experienced the annual frigidity of Winnipeg's nine months of winter. The winters in Winnipeg are long and often unbearable with temperatures consistently below -30 C (And that's without the windchill factor). Unforgiving blizzards and failing car batteries are common occurrences that reduce social and entertainment activities to a minimum. Mark Kingwell (1996), in his book Dreams of Millennium, describes Winnipeg as 'Plague City', where nature routinely tries to kill its inhabitants (p.331). For many Jets' fans, attending Jets' games at the Winnipeg Arena was a way to escape nature's onslaught and the monotony of the long Winnipeg winter. To these people the loss of the Jets represented not just a loss of a major source of entertainment, but a loss of their personal winter routine of getting out of the house and cheering and following the local team.

The Jets emerged as a major part of the identity of Jets' fans. Many fans were constantly attuned to injury reports and carefully speculated on potential player trades; some fans even followed the Jets' minor league farm team. Local radio call-in shows were also popular for Jets' fans as a way of publicly voicing their opinion on the Jets' play of late, or on specific management decisions. Thousands of people routinely enjoyed the feeling of being part of a collective group cheering for the 'local team'; donning the white Jets' home jersey to attend the 'white outs' of the Winnipeg Arena was an important and enjoyable part of the lives of many Jets' fans. City hall reporter Nick Martin commented during our interview:

It was nice to have the team while they were here, and it was nice to go to the games and know you could get tickets, and go see the Leafs and take my son to see Paul Coffey and Yzerman and Roy, and he saw almost all of the best hockey players of

his generation, and that was nice to see for ten bucks each to sit in the upper deck. (Nick Martin, interview with author, August 19, 1998)

Families also shared season tickets and alternated attending home games. Jets' games could be attended, but also watched on local television, on the CBC's Hockey Night in Canada (that is, whenever the CBC gave Canadians a much needed break from the constant barrage of Leaf games!) or the games could be listened to on the radio. Game summaries and statistics were readily available in both of the city's newspapers, and highlights could be watched on local and national television. Following the Jets became a major part of the lives and family lives of many Jets' fans.

As professional sport assumes a more prominent role in global popular culture, millions of people continue to structure their personal identity in ways that include their local professional sports teams. In Winnipeg, many people identified themselves as Jets' fans. They wore Jets' jerseys and hats that symbolized and promoted their difference from Oiler or Leaf fans. The Jets therefore served as a major source of social identification for many Jets' fans. Throughout the newspaper analysis, the construction of individual identity to include the Jets was highly visible. The potential loss of the Jets therefore emerged as a direct threat to the personal identity of Jets' fans. As one fan noted after making a financial contribution during the save the Jets campaign in 1995: "We wanted to put our money where our mouth is," he said. "If we lose the team we lose our identity. You can't get it back" (Owen & Campbell, 1995, p. B1). Such sentiments sparked enormous outpourings of emotions during rallies to save the team. One fan remarked during the same campaign: "I'm glad we're putting up a fight," said Rogasky, 26. "It's about time somebody did something. If we lose the team, we'll lose our identity" (Owen & Campbell, 1995,

p. B1). To many Winnipeggers, the fate of the Jets became intertwined with the fate of their personal identity. The eventual loss of the Jets, and the lengthy and emotional efforts to save the team and build a new arena, were extremely traumatic for such fans. A local professor remarked on the emotional effect of the loss of the Jets by commenting: "It's like losing a loved one, or confronting the terminally ill", Cal Boterill, professor of sports psychology and physical education at the University of Winnipeg explained (McDonald, 1995, p. C3). Another woman, noting the sense of despair in Winnipeg following one announcement (there were several) that the Jets were being sold, remarked: "When we were told the Jets would be sold I couldn't believe the state of mourning in the city and I couldn't believe how sick I felt," Gray said. I've never seen that kind of suicidal feelings people had" (Staff, 1995, p. C1). While it is easy to stigmatize the feelings and responses of Jets' fans as overly dramatic and emotional, it is important to respect that the Jets represented a major part of the lives and identity of thousands of Manitobans for a number of years. The constant threat of having the team sold and relocated played havoc with the identity of thousands of Winnipeggers. A winter without the Jets was unthinkable in the eyes of many Jets's fans.

The Construction of Community and Urban Identity

"We're not saving this for an elite crowd," she said. "We're building a facility for the entire community." (Douglas, Taylor, & Sinclair Jr., 1995, p. D3)

Professional sport provides a rare environment where thousands of people can collectively gather and experience a common, and often emotional, event. In addition, sport has the ability to construct and symbolize specific communities; in Canada that sport has been hockey. As one fan

remarked about Winnipeg's identity: "We're a hockey town. Always have been. Always will be" (Owen, Bray, et. al, 1995, p. B1). MEC member Ross Robinson similarly noted during our interview: **"This is the heartland of hockey, the hot-bed of hockey, whatever you want to call it"** (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998). From rural towns known for their junior hockey team, to cosmopolitan urban centres known for their professional teams, hockey teams continue to be constructed as symbolizing and representing the entire community. Winnipeg had been constructed by hockey fans and the local media as a 'hockey town'. The city has a long history of professional and amateur hockey and the Jets represented the highest level of Winnipeg's 'hockey' identity. The loss of the Jets was therefore seen as not just a loss of a professional team, but a loss of Winnipeg's overall hockey identity.

Sport provides thousands of people with exhilarating and emotional experiences that serve to 'unite' and 'bond' people in densely populated urban centres. This is particularly evident at live sporting events. As one fan passionately noted in an editorial in the Winnipeg Free Press regarding the importance of the Jets to the Winnipeg community:

It wasn't just about hockey, it was about experiencing something that made us feel exhilarated as a community or down as a community. We live in a time where society is becoming fragmented and we're prone to feeling a little awkward at the simple task of saying hello to our neighbors, or making contact with a stranger passing us by. Yet we have no problem high-fiving someone at a hockey game, or weeping with them in the last moments of an era we couldn't believe was really ending. (Shewaga, 1995, p. A7).

Sport can provide an 'imagined community' for many people who would otherwise have little in common, and little reason to gather in a collective social environment.

To many Jets' fans, however, the Jets were not just an 'imagined community', but a fundamental and 'natural' part of the Winnipeg community and the city's urban identity. As one

fan noted regarding one of the many proposals to save the Jets: “I think it’s a great deal. The Jets are an important part of the community. They help get us through the winter and they give the kids something to look up to” (Verhaeghe, 1995, p. D19). The Jets had emerged as a civic resource. Fans believed that they were a part of the Winnipeg community. The intensity of the response of Jets’ fans to save the team is therefore not as surprising as one would think. Despite years of underachievement and instability, many people developed a sense of routine associated with following the Jets and a feeling that they belonged to a distinct community of Jets’ fans. As people developed a regular routine of attending or listening to games, they incorporated their routines and feelings of belonging into their personal identity and their perception of the community’s identity. Jets’ owner Barry Shenkarow explained the importance of the Jets to the identity of Winnipeg in this way:

Hockey is very important to all Canadians and the NHL of course is the premier league, so we were playing in the big-leagues, not that we don’t with the ballet or the symphony or other things, but sport is something that everybody relates to, including kids, and so I think nobody wants to lose something they have, and it was perceived to be a big part of the identity of the city. (Barry Shenkarow, interview with author, September 3, 1998)

The key word in that quote is ‘perceived’. The Jets’ were perceived by fans as part of the Winnipeg community and part of their identity. People claim ownership of such enjoyable experiences; people claim ownership of their identity. Jets’ fans ultimately extended the stability that came from the ownership of their pleasurable routines and experiences to include the perception that a professional sport team, like their routines and identities, was something they owned personally--something that was a permanent civic and provincial resource.

Discourses that constructed the Jets as a permanent community resource inferred that all citizens of Winnipeg had equal access to Jets' games and benefitted from the presence of the Jets. Clearly, however, many Winnipeggers could not afford to attend Jets' games, nor did many Winnipeggers even follow the Jets. In the above quote, Shenkarow suggests that sport permeates all aspects of society without discrepancies based on class and gender. Yet the Jets provided only a portion of the Winnipeg community with entertainment and pleasure. Clearly, the elite of Winnipeg were far better positioned to take advantage of the presence of the Jets in the city than other classes. Also, the majority of the people who followed the Jets were male. At the rallies to save the team, the majority of participants were young males who specifically identified with the team (Silver, 1996). Similarly, the proposed construction of a new facility was promoted as serving the entire community: "At the same time, many folks who don't much care for major-league hockey came to the realization that in a cold, northern Canadian city, a functional hockey arena is the community's most important recreational facility" (Taylor, 1995a, p. D1). Once again, the presence of a 'functional' arena was constructed as benefitting the entire community despite the fact that numerous families in Winnipeg could not afford to attend Jets' games. Such stories also constructed the Winnipeg Arena, or Winnipeg's future world class arena, as a 'recreational facility'. Yet the current arena was used primarily for elite professional sport; the arena was not a recreation facility for the average citizen of Winnipeg despite being constructed as a civic resource! Nor would any future 'world class' arena serve as a recreation facility for the citizens of Winnipeg. Sport, like many other aspects of society, remains fraught with discrepancies based upon class and gender despite the many constructions that continue to suggest otherwise.

Nevertheless, thousands of people regarded the Jets as ‘their’ team and as part of the Winnipeg community, despite the constant threat of relocation by the Jets’s majority owners. Given that the public had paid for all of the Jets’s losses from 1991 to 1996, as stipulated in the 1991 Interim Operating Agreement, and given that the public owned thirty six percent of the team, such confusion is not surprising. The construction of the Jets as a local fixture and community resource was further reinforced by false and misleading slogans, promotions and newspaper articles. At all home games, the team was introduced as ‘Your Winnipeg Jets’, and the multiple campaigns to save the team and to build a new arena were promoted by the slogan ‘Save Our Jets’ as if the fans and the city owned and controlled the fate of the team. An ad placed by MEC during the 1995 campaign to save the team extolled: “The feeling that, at last, the fate of our team was in our hands” (MEC ad, 1995a, p. A5). In reality, however, Jets’ fans and boosters had little say in the fate of ‘their’ team; the majority owners of the team were Barry Shenkarow and his partners, not Jets’ fans. Ken Dryden (1993) eloquently describes this phenomenon of false ownership and disbelief that continues to be visible in Canadian cities with NHL franchises:

This is no public enterprise. Why should we think of hockey as a national possession? Why should we think of the Montreal Canadians as *ours*? If we buy a car, we don’t think of General Motors as ours. So why is it that hockey is different? But it does seem different, The Canadians do seem ours. We cheer them as if they are ours, and boo them the same way. Before every game- “*Accueillons. Let’s welcome. Nos Canadiens! Our Canadians!*” And we want to believe it. And we do believe it until something happens that reminds us that they aren’t, that they really belong to Molson’s (p.231).

Ken Dryden describes the construction of the Montreal Canadians as a personal possession; similarly, the Jets were constructed as a fundamental and permanent part of the Winnipeg

community and of the city's urban identity by the local media and Jets' boosters. Jets' fans ultimately confused a privately owned business with a local public enterprise.

Manufacturing Consent: The Construction of Unanimity

Still the strong community spirit convinced everyone that it was worthwhile to move to the next step. "What we've seen is the miracle of Main Street," Asper said. "Never before in the history of this province or in the country has a community responded like this." (Douglas & Samyn, 1995, p. A1)

Throughout the entire 1995 Save the Jets campaign, the Jets and the potential new 'world class' arena were constructed by local media, hockey fans and urban boosters as a vital community resource--an indicator of Winnipeg's local identity that was supported by all citizens. The word 'community' projects a sense of stability and permanence, a sense of wholeness that encompasses the entire city of Winnipeg. The media repeatedly inferred that the whole community of Winnipeg supported the Jets and the use of public funds for the construction of a new, state-of-the-art arena. The constructions of unanimity were particularly disturbing because the issues surrounding the Save the Jets campaign and the potential new arena were extremely political and divisive. Clearly thousands of people supported the efforts to save the Jets. Numerous rallies and socials were held to raise money for the Jets, and \$13.5 million was raised by Winnipeggers to support the team during 'Operation Grassroots'. Yet, a number of people had little interest in professional hockey, and many did not want public money used to build a new arena at a time of massive cuts to vital social services. My Mom, for example, was adamantly opposed to the use of public funds for the construction of a new arena for the Winnipeg Jets because of the significant decline in social services that had been evident in Winnipeg over the

previous years. Public polls also consistently indicated that the public was against the use of public funds for a new arena (Silver, 1996). The constructions of unanimity marginalized voices of discontent and opposition, and eliminated public debate on highly charged political issues.

The Winnipeg Free Press was particularly boosterish in its construction of community support for the Jets. The frenzied weeks of May 1995 provide multiple examples illustrating the paper's willingness to construct unanimous public support for the efforts to save the Jets. A vivid example is given by a local reporter describing Operation Grassroots:

The image of young children scouring the house for pennies, rolling them up and taking them to the bank to hand over to fundraisers is a perfect symbol for how deep and far-reaching the save-the-Jets effort became. It crossed all lines--gender, age, and economic status. It brought the people of Winnipeg and Manitoba together in a common cause in a way that most can never recall happening before (Staff, 1995, p. C1).

The impression given to readers by such stories is that the entire population of the city, and the province of Manitoba, supported the efforts to save the Jets. Not just Jets' fans, local business people, or the owners of the Jets wanted to save the team, but the entire city--men, women and children of all ages and economic status--wanted to save the Jets. Stories that articulated the misleading notion of unanimous community support depoliticized a highly controversial issue and ignored the complexity of Winnipeg's socio-economic environment. Another story read:

However, the incredible outpouring of donations yesterday made three things absolutely clear; this community wants an NHL franchise, is ready to put its money where its heart is and any politician who votes against the arena deal do so at their political peril. (Taylor, 1995b, p. D1)

Once again, the 'entire community' was constructed as supporting the efforts to build a new arena despite evidence to the contrary and despite indicators of political division. Another boosterish

article described a rally held at The Forks in support of the Save the Jets campaign:

“They came in strollers. They came in Jets jerseys. They came in white. They came in painted faces. They came hand-in-hand. They came from work. They came from school. They came”

(Campbell & Owen, 1995, p. A1). An ad placed by MEC in the Winnipeg Free Press a day later, in advertising space that was donated by the paper, extolled:

The world is learning a lesson today from the people of Manitoba--a lesson in how to pull together as a community. From young children donating the contents of their piggy banks to small business people donating part of their sales, to individuals, big business and corporations digging deep into their very heart and soul, this is a moment of magic we will never forget. This is the spirit that raises a community from just a place to live and work, to a higher plateau, a place we're proud to call home. Last night's rally at The Forks was a moving and emotional demonstration of commitment by the organizers, the performers and the thousands and thousands of Manitobans in attendance. The electricity in the air. The passion of a community united. The feeling that, at last, the fate of our team was in our own hands. (MEC ad, 1995b, p. C1).

All of these examples, and there were many more, are extremely misleading. Each suggested that the entire community of Winnipeg supported the efforts to save the Jets and build a new, 'world class' arena using scarce public funds. Readers were left with the impression that the reader personally controlled the fate of 'their' team, as if they were the majority owners or the potential majority owners of the team. Another major difference that was not adequately represented in such blatantly boosterish advertisements and stories was that the corporations and wealthy individuals who 'donated' money to save/buy the team were going to receive equity in a commodity worth millions, while average Winnipeggers who donated money were only going to receive a tax receipt for their donation.

The flip side to the construction of a unanimous community in support of the Jets and a new arena was that any opponents to the process were cast as villains, and naysayers. As a

result, political debate was ground to a screeching halt. Thin Ice members were repeatedly castigated as lacking in civic vision and were ridiculed by the local media and Jets' fans. Jim Silver had his office at the University of Winnipeg vandalized and received death threats for his opposition to the use of public funds for the construction of a new arena. City councillor Rick Boychuk, who was consistently outspoken against the arena deal at city hall, received death threats as well. Boychuk also had his house surrounded by Jets fans who were prompted and encouraged by local CJOB radio personality Peter Warren; Warren also gave out Boychuk's address over the air! The constructions of unanimous community support placed a great deal of pressure on civic, provincial, and national politicians to provide accommodations for those individuals who sought to save the team, and to support all efforts to build a new arena. More importantly, however, such constructions helped to eliminate public debate on the potential use of millions of dollars of public money.

The Future of Winnipeg

One was the manifestation of pride in the city. To many it wasn't a matter of professional sport, but a symbol of faith in the community. (Werier, 1995, p. A6)

The grass roots effort to build a new entertainment complex and keep the Jets in Winnipeg is not just about keeping the game we love in Manitoba. It's about the future. It's about moving forward into the twenty-first century with the vision of making our city & province places we will be proud to leave our children. (MEC ad, 1995c, p. B16)

The presence of the Jets was continuously constructed by the media and Jets' boosters as an indicator of Winnipeg's standard of living and as representing the future of the city. In the eyes of many Jets' fans and boosters, the Jets made Winnipeg a better place to live and improved

the quality of life for all citizens of Winnipeg. During the save the Jets campaign, one individual remarked: "This is about the community coming together and doing something to make this a better place to live" (Owen & Campbell, 1995, p. B1). Beyond simple entertainment value, the Jets became a symbol for the plight of the city. Many Jets' boosters believed that without the Jets, the city's standard of living would be diminished. As one editorial read:

When will the naysayers realize that the Winnipeg Jets are not a threat to our standard of living, but rather an enhancement of it.... There is no doubt that we are better keeping the Jets. If the Jets leave, our quality of life will suffer. Our young, productive and upper income people may leave the city.... It's time for the Choices and Thin Ice to put up or shut up. (Corey, 1995, p. A7)

There is little doubt that the Jets, as an entertainment commodity, enhanced the quality of living for Jets' fans. Those individuals who attended the games and followed the Jets potentially enjoyed a higher quality of living when they had the opportunity to regularly attend games. To extend the notion that the Jets benefitted the city as a whole, or enhanced the overall standard of living in Winnipeg is, however, misleading. Certainly not every citizen of Winnipeg regularly attended the Jets games, nor did every citizen believe that saving the Jets and constructing a new arena was a priority for the city. Beyond the standard of living for Jets' fans, it is difficult to say whether or not the Jets' departure was detrimental to the city's standard of living. Certainly the individuals who derived their income from Jets' games (i.e., vendors, Jets' employees, and service industry employees), would have suffered as a result of the Jets leaving Winnipeg. Beyond the direct income of people associated with the Jets, it is difficult to speculate on how much of an impact the Jets had on both the overall standard of living in Winnipeg and the local economy.

There continues to be much debate surrounding the economic impact of professional sports teams on the standard of living in metropolitan areas. Financial reports were issued

claiming that the Jets contributed million of dollars and jobs to Winnipeg's local economy. For example, the 1991 Coopers and Lybrand report, commissioned by the Winnipeg Jets, reported that the presence of the Jets generated \$48 million per year of local economic activity and created between 960 and 1,440 full-time jobs. These numbers were repeatedly touted by local media and Jets' boosters as indicators of the importance of the Jets to Winnipeg's local economy, and hence to Winnipeg's standard of living. However, these financial claims were challenged by local activist groups. Thin Ice was notably outspoken on this issue, claiming that the Coopers and Lybrand report used a 'gross benefits' form of analysis instead of a 'net benefits' analysis that over-estimated the overall economic impact of the Jets. Thin Ice also argued that the report had used an inflated multiplier of 2.5 to enlarge the indirect economic benefits that accrue from the presence of the Jets, despite research suggesting that a smaller multiplier provides a more accurate measurement (Baade, 1987; Baade, 1988; Baade & Dye, 1990). It is also probable that following the departure of the Jets the expenditure of local money previously spent on the Jets was re-invested in other areas of entertainment in Winnipeg's local economy. Chairman of the Spirit of Manitoba group, Alan Sweatman, admitted that he was embarrassed by both Spirit's and MEC's promotion and reliance on such unrealistic financial figures (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998).

The Jets were also repeatedly constructed as representing the future of the city. Professional sports teams have emerged as symbols of vibrancy and prosperity for urban centres. The media and local boosters repeatedly constructed the Jets as an integral civic resource whose presence was indicative of the city's future; a future without the Jets was not worth living. As local sports reporter Scott Taylor wrote:

The Winnipeg Jets might have been sold to Americans Richard Burke and Stephen Gluckstern, but there was still a chance, remote as it may be that the city's international identity and symbol of its future could be saved. Whether Izzy Asper and his merry band of businessmen can muster the government support to get a new arena built is still a question that won't be answered until mid-week.... The point is, a community has to have a vision of its future, it has to have a history and symbols that make it proud and give it a sense of self-worth, it must be recognized and respected and it must be seen as vibrant and forward thinking.... As we've seen by the outpouring of emotion during the past two weeks, this community's young people have, on their own, linked future prosperity to a hockey team and a new arena. (Taylor, 1995c, p. C1)

An editorial a week later in the newspaper ironically commented on Taylor's boosterish description of the 'merry band of businessmen' noting that: "The merry band I remember--Robin Hood and his friends--took from the rich and gave to the poor" (Robine, 1995, p. A7).

Taylor had also insinuated that the community's youth had linked future prosperity with a new arena and a hockey team 'on their own'. The media and local Jets' boosters, however, played a major role in the dissemination and construction of the Jets as vital to the future of the city. The youth of Winnipeg did not link 'on their own' prosperity with the status of a professional hockey team. Ironically, a week before claiming the youth of Winnipeg had 'on their own' linked prosperity with a hockey team, Taylor had written an article entitled "Bleak future lies ahead":

However, yesterday, leaders of our business community formally announced that they had failed the city's young people and had decided Winnipeg's motto should be: "The coldest retirement community in the world." Yesterday, it wasn't so much that a hockey team left Winnipeg as it was that hope for the future of our young people was given a giant kiss-off. The message wasn't so much that their beloved hockey team was leaving as it was, "There is no real future for you here." (Taylor, 1995d, p. C1)

An article by Taylor on the tenth of May entitled "Vision lost for the future of Manitoba" had ended: "Our problem here is not so much the loss of the Jets, but the loss of our vision for Manitoba's future" (Taylor, 1995e, p. C3). Clearly, the media played a major role in constructing

the perception that the Jets and a new arena were crucial to the future of the city, and to the future of the youth of the city, despite claims to the contrary.

The loss of the Jets was constructed as the loss of a vision for the future of Winnipeg. It is highly probable that such constructions were a significant force in motivating people to donate money to the Save the Jets campaign. It is also highly probable that such constructions intimidated a number of people from speaking out against the use of public funds for a new arena. After all, people who publicly disagreed with saving the Jets and building a new arena were not just speaking out against the use of public funds, they were speaking out against the future of Winnipeg.

Such constructions also played a major role in motivating people to lobby politicians to allocate funds for a new arena. Premier Filmon identified the connection of the future of Winnipeg with the Jets and a new arena and recalled the pressure he faced by remarking:

“It wasn’t just the loss of a hockey team. The issue was the sense of loss of confidence in the future of our community by the leaders of the community,” Filmon recalled. “It was probably the most difficult issue I have faced in my political life--including Meech Lake.” (Douglas, 1995a, p. A1).

One city councillor noted a similar tone: “This is not about the Winnipeg Jets. This is about Winnipeg. It’s about having confidence in our community”(Quotable, 1995, p. B3). Another councillor extolled: “I guess like Councillor Hyman, I’m flipping as well. I’m not prepared to accept a mediocre future. I want a bright future for our children”(Quotable, 1995, p. B3). The belief that the Jets were integral to the future of the city caused several councillors to vote in favour of supporting multiple proposals that made enormous accommodations for MEC and Spirit (Silver, 1996).

Constructions were also generated that hinted that without the Jets, the youth of the city would leave to live and work in cities with major-league franchises. Specifically, concern was expressed by the local media and Jets' boosters that white collar individuals and 'upper income' citizens would move out of Winnipeg without the Jets as a source of entertainment and civic prestige. As one individual noted regarding the loss of the Jets: "Our young, productive and upper income people may leave the city" (Corey, 1995, p. A7). Journalism professor Donald Benham noted a similar sentiment during our interview:

Now, in between those two arguments...there's some senior executives in the Winnipeg business community, and this is why it was lead by the Winnipeg business community, who say with some reason, "look, if I have to attract, if I want to build my business, and I'm in Investor's Group and Great-West Life, and Can-West Global, and I want to build my business, I need the very best people in Canada, and I've got enough of a disadvantage with all the action being in Toronto, and Vancouver and Calgary, if I don't have a hockey team, that's going to make it that much more difficult. They are going to say this is a rinky-dink town." (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998)

Other individuals noted the importance of the Jets in reversing Winnipeg's slide down the hierarchy of important Canadian urban centers. The loss of the Jets was perceived by Winnipeg boosters as another indicator of Winnipeg's reduction in urban status. Brian Cole, city editor of the Free Press at the time of the save the Jets campaign, explained:

The other thing is that you can't talk about this without talking about history, and as you know, at the turn of the century Winnipeg was the second or third most important city in Canada, and you still got the sense that Winnipeg was still a very important city in Canada next to Toronto, and Edmonton and Calgary were not that important. But in my lifetime, that has changed dramatically. All of the sudden Edmonton and Calgary are larger than Winnipeg by a long shot, not by a little bit, but by a long shot. When I was a kid, Winnipeg was bigger than Calgary and Edmonton, so you get the sense that the Jets also represented Winnipeg's effort to remain an important city and not just for the sake of it, but because being an important city means being able to have things that allow a community to grow and helps kids like yourself to grow, and all those things are wrapped in, and I know

that some people don't understand this, but in some small way the Winnipeg Jets represented that effort to try and become a top ranked, first-ranked city in the country and indeed in North America. (Brian Cole, interview with author, August 15, 1998)

For many Jets' boosters, the presence of the Jets and a new 'world-class' arena symbolized Winnipeg's longing for the status and prestige of the city's former years. Two of the leading figures of MEC noted similar sentiments:

It's always just a matter of what the direction is the city taking, and are we going forwards or backwards, and I think we just felt that we didn't think it would be the end of the world for Winnipeg, we just thought it would be a big step backwards. (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998)

Well, I guess the huge loss of our, Winnipeg's, cultural and sports fabric, and what appeared to be a future loss of momentum for the city, and our ability to retain young people here for community reasons. (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998)

The Jets were repeatedly constructed as an indicator of Winnipeg's vibrancy and civic prestige.

The presence of a professional sport franchise also identified Winnipeg as a distinct city from other urban centres without professional franchises. This distinction of local identity generated intense feelings of civic pride for many Winnipeggers and Manitobans and projected Winnipeg as a vibrant community. Numerous boosterish constructions were generated surrounding Winnipeg's local identity when the Jets signed Bobby Hull in 1972. To city boosters, the presence of the Jets and Bobby Hull in 1972 validated Winnipeg as a vibrant community.

Amidst the anti-American sentiments of the early 1970's, one article read:

It's front-page news in Rochester, N.Y., this morning, where the citizens still think Winnipeg is a hick town of "about 200,000" somewhere on the bald Canadian flatlands. But Winnipeg will be spelt "Winnipeg", not "Winnnepeg" as so many Americans presume it is spelt. (Davis, 1972a, p. 46).

Similarly, another article expressed anger towards the National Hockey League, which had passed over Winnipeg as a location for a NHL franchise:

Hatskin echoes the sentiments of many Winnipeggers in one respect. He too, has cringed over the smug innuendos of the National Hockey League, suggesting that Winnipeg is a one-horse hick town, full of low-salaried workers and the odd old rich man too busy counting his money to know the difference between a hockey stick and a bar stool. (Davis, 1972b, p. 49).

Such boosterish articles would foreshadow the ones to be written during the 1995 Save the Jets campaign.

The Jets supposedly made Winnipeg distinct from 'the other', which in this case consisted of other Canadian cities without professional hockey teams in the National Hockey League. As one fan exclaimed: "Having the Jets makes Winnipeg a city instead of a town" (Owen, 1995a, p. B12). Another fan commenting on the potential loss of the Jets: "If they go, Winnipeg will become a Mickey Mouse town" (Turner & Kuxhaus, 1995, p. C1). Another Jets' booster indicated: "I think the Jets are important to this community," he said. "And I don't want Winnipeg to be a has-been community" (Staff, 1995, p. C1). To many fans and Jets' boosters, the loss of the Jets symbolized a further decline in Winnipeg's image and reputation. Civic boosters and the media promoted the construction that without the Jets, Winnipeg would become another Regina; an 'obvious' sign of decline in terms of economic importance and prestige. As one fan solemnly predicted: "We're going to be the next Regina. We're nowhere without the Jets," said Joe 22. "Now we don't have anything setting us apart from cities like that. The Jets made Winnipeg big-time" (Prest, 1995, p. C3).

The construction of difference is an important part in the construction of identity (Whannel, 1998). The Jets were constructed as important to Winnipeg's local identity because

they symbolized the city's difference from other smaller Canadian urban centres. The Jets were repeatedly constructed as putting Winnipeg 'on the map', and to civic boosters this was a matter of great pride and importance. Without the Jets there would be nothing in Winnipeg that could adequately symbolize Winnipeg as being different from smaller Canadian urban centres. To many media personalities and Jets' fans, the reduction in Winnipeg's urban stature as a result of the loss of the Jets was unbearable. At one point during the campaign to save the Jets, local radio anchor Peter Warren said he would rather live in Plum Coulee (a small Manitoba town) than in Winnipeg if the Jets weren't in Winnipeg.

Local particularities were constructed to challenge the importance of the Jets and a new arena. Such constructions were typically expressed as opposition to the use of public funds for the construction of a new arena. For example, articles and editorials appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press that challenged the use of massive amounts of public funds for constructing a new arena and maintaining the hockey team. Other constructions emerged suggesting that Winnipeg's identity consisted of more than just a professional hockey team. As one editorial noted:

It's not the end of the universe or even the end of Winnipeg. This is a great city and we will survive the loss of the Jets. Winnipeg has a lot to offer, but an NHL team is not part of it. The real bottom line is the bottom line. A city of 600,000 simply cannot afford to maintain a professional sports franchise in today's leagues. (Matthews, G., 1995, p. B1)

Such constructions promoted an alternative local urban identity that excluded a new arena and a professional hockey team and challenged the constructions promoting the value of the Jets to Winnipeg's identity.

Canadian Identity

“We feel that hockey is Canada’s game, just as baseball is America’s game. We think that it’s sad to see small-market Canadian teams moving south of the border.” (Santin, 1995, p. D3)

Hockey has typically been constructed by hockey fans, the media, and team owners as being an inseparable part of a Canadian ‘national’ identity. Many Canadians have fond recollections of playing hockey or watching exciting and emotional hockey games. For millions of Canadians, hockey has come to define Canada and Canadian identity. In this thesis I have considered the constructions of local particularities to include the constructions of Canadian national identity. The constructions of national identity represent a further layering of urban and personal identity within the constructions of local particularities. The newspaper and city council minutes analyses identified numerous constructions of Canadian identity generated within the constructions of the local particularities surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets. The interviews also contained a section designed to explore constructions of Canadian ‘national identity’ with reference to hockey and the Winnipeg Jets.

The newspaper analysis revealed multiple constructions surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets and the game of hockey to Canadian identity. Many people firmly believed that the Jets and hockey were a distinct facet of Canadian identity. Hockey fans in particular were especially vocal about the importance of hockey and the Jets to Canadian ‘national identity’. As one fan emotionally stated following the loss of the Jets:

A piece of my heart was ripped out today. It was only a small part of my heart, but it was an extremely important one. It was the part of my heart set aside for Canadian culture. To Shenkarow and to many other Canadians, losing the Jets to an American city is more than just an economic blow for Winnipeg, to Manitoba, and for Canada. It is a blow to

our cultural fabric. We grow up with the game. We live it, we breathe it, we love it.
(Pineau, 1995, p.B1)

To many Jets' fans, the loss of the Jets represented a loss of a further layer of identity. To urban boosters and Jets' fans, the loss of the Jets symbolized a loss of Canadian culture and identity as well as a reduction in Winnipeg's local identity. As three other fans noted regarding hockey and Canadian identity: "It's about Canadian pride" (Campbell & Owen, 1995, p. A1). Another fan noted: "Hockey is such a part of Canada. It's not a right to have a team, you have to keep it, support it and nourish it" (Davis, 1995d, p. C1). Similarly another fan exclaimed:

This is about Canada. I'm looking at what's happening in Quebec and Winnipeg and I can't believe. We're going down and down more and more. It has to stop and I'll do whatever it takes to stop it. (Staff, 1995, p. C1)

One fan even threatened to initiate a court action to prevent the team from being sold, arguing the loss of the Jets jeopardized Canada's cultural heritage. To many fans, a professional and privately owned sports team had emerged as inseparable from Canada's cultural heritage and Canadian national identity.

During the interviews, several subjects also explained the importance of the Jets and the game of hockey to a Canadian national identity. Freelance reporter Doug Smith explained the importance of the Jets in this way: **"In Canada, hockey is something which young people, well it's definitely part of the culture"** (Doug Smith, interview with author, August 20, 1998).

Brian Cole similarly noted the importance of the Jets to Canadian culture:

Well, first and foremost they were a professional hockey team and in a very simple way, as you know, if you live in this community as in most Canadian communities, hockey is a part of growing up. So to that extent, the Jets were the most important manifestation of that. They were a team in the NHL and because hockey is a part of the culture here—they represented what Canada is all about.... I would say that the way in which you could measure the city in terms of its statue, well we're diminished

slightly by the fact that we don't have a team playing at the highest level in a sport which, I don't think this is an overstatement at all, a sport which has come to define what Canada is about. (Brian Cole, interview with author, August, 15, 1998)

For many Jets' fans a 'natural' connection emerged between hockey and Canadian identity. The game of hockey had been constructed by fans and local media to seem as natural as the cold Canadian winters in the prairies. Many fans had also naturalized the connection between NHL hockey and Canadian national identity. That is, fans were not just associating a Canadian national identity with hockey, but with NHL-brand hockey. Canadian franchises have therefore emerged as part of Canadian identity and Canadian culture; the Montreal Canadians and the Toronto Maple Leafs are regarded by Canadian hockey fans as natural and important aspects of Canadian culture. The loss of the Jets was therefore constructed as a loss of Canadian national identity.

Many hockey fans blamed Americans for the loss of the Jets; given that the Jets were purchased by Americans and were being moved to Phoenix this reaction is perhaps not that surprising. Jets's fans recognized the loss of the Jets as further evidence of the Americanization of Canadian culture. Many Jets fans voiced their displeasure at rallies and at Jets' games by chanting anti-American slogans. Several articles and editorials articulated the feelings of many fans about the Americanization of 'Canada's game'. One fan noted: "It's a Canadian game being taken over by the Americans, just like the CFL" (Turner & Kuxhaus, 1995, p. C1). Winnipeg Free Press Sports reporter Scott Taylor noted a similar sentiment in two articles:

People weren't thrilled about saying goodbye and it was easy to understand why Winnipeg hockey fans booed the American national anthem. Big American money and big American business had a lot to do with the demise of major league hockey in this city. (Taylor, 1996f, p. C3).

And again:

Friends in Minneapolis called to extend their condolences, many saying it was almost criminal to steal away a team that was loved and supported the way the Winnipeg Jets were loved and supported. Toronto radio and television stations haven't been able to get enough of the Jets' plight, but surprisingly, some of the commentators are angry that the nasty "New York lawyers" who run the NHL are stealing away part of Canada's cultural heritage. (Taylor, 1995g, C1).

Similarly, local politicians and business leaders expressed their outrage at the NHL and the 'Americanization' of 'Canada's game'. Gary Bettman, the commissioner of the NHL, was specifically targeted as Americanizing hockey. One article noted:

Later, a group marched to the Manitoba legislature, where Filmon said he would do anything possible to keep the team in Winnipeg. "NHL hockey was born, raised and developed in Canada," he said. "Gary Bettman and his little group of wealthy owners have no right to take Canada out of the game." (Douglas, 1995a, p. A1)

The Mayor of Winnipeg, Susan Thompson, was quoted as saying:

"It is time for the NHL to stop this and stand and look at what this sport means to Winnipeg, what it means to Canada. The message we get is that the NHL does not care if hockey survives in Winnipeg and we wonder if it even wants it to survive in Canada." (Martin & Douglas, 1995, p. A1)

The local particularities that were constructed clearly exhibit the construction of a Canadian identity to include the game of hockey and the NHL and its Canadian franchises. The data also illustrates the perceived domination of Canadian culture by the United States. The loss of the Jets to Phoenix reinforced the notion that Canadians were losing control of their game. While it is easy to stigmatize the loss of the Jets as further evidence of the Americanization of hockey, we must also recognize the role played by the processes of globalization. 'World class' products, including NHL franchises, have emerged as valuable commodities in constructing a local urban identity within a global frame of reference.

Other constructions of 'national identity' emerged challenging the importance of NHL hockey to a Canadian collective identity. The articles and editorials in the Winnipeg Free Press opposed to the use of public funds indirectly challenged the importance of NHL hockey in a Canadian 'national identity'. In addition, during the personal interviews I conducted a number of individuals directly challenged the importance of NHL hockey to Canadian identity. Donald Benham, for example, noted the difference between the game of hockey and the business of hockey and Canadian identity:

I think the game of hockey is very Canadian. It's about little kids across the prairies lacing up their skates and going out and practicing when it's still dark. Then there's the business of hockey. The business of hockey got bought out a long time ago by the Americans. (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998)

Such constructions challenged the importance of NHL hockey to Canadian identity, and created an alternative 'national identity' independent from NHL hockey.

Global Identity

Hatskin, [who] put Winnipeg in capitals on the world hockey map with the announcement he intends to sign Bobby Hull to a \$3 million contract with his World Hockey Association team.... (Davis, 1972c, p. 53)

"Every night we'd watch CNN, Sport Late-night, Headline News, and there would be Winnipeg, right up there beside New York and Chicago," said Stewart Murray, president of Domo Petroleum and one of the Winnipeggers at the front of the failed efforts to keep the Jets in town. "There's no putting a value besides keeping a city in the national and international spotlight." (Joyce, 1998c, p.55)

The newspaper analysis was also designed to discover the constructions of global identities surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets. In addition, interviews were structured to identify the constructions of global identities that specific individuals promoted or discouraged.

To many Jets' fans, civic boosters and members of the media, the Jets symbolized Winnipeg's entrance in the global 'big-leagues' of 'world class' entertainment. The Jets were repeatedly constructed by Jets' fans and city boosters as transforming Winnipeg into a major-league, big-league, and 'world class' city, propelling Winnipeg into the 'big-time' of global urban identity. As one reporter noted: "The Jets silence our critics. They tell the world we're 'major-league'. They say we can leave the porch and run with the big dogs any time" (Sigurdson, 1995a, p. D3). The belief that the presence of a major-league sports team adds to the prestige and reputation of a city is nothing new. However, professional sports teams are no longer just associated with local or national urban identity, but are also associated with a city's global and international identity.

Several individuals expressed their sentiments to me surrounding the connection between the Jets and Winnipeg's international identity during our interviews. Many individuals noted personal anecdotes about their experiences and beliefs surrounding the Winnipeg Jets and Winnipeg's international urban identity. Ross Robinson explained:

Yes, I think the Jets gave Winnipeg international recognition. I remember I was on a cruise in the Carribean and they flashed the Winnipeg Jets' highlights or scores, so you know, that's a big part of it for sure. (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998)

I can similarly recall being in Florida and England and having the Jets' highlights appear on the television and feeling intense pride that the Jets and Winnipeg were being broadcast around the world. Nick Martin also acknowledged:

I think, well, how many people used the expression that if we lose the Jets we will become another Regina. I think there was a sense of identity...I think there was a sense that it put Winnipeg on the international map, people knew Winnipeg because of the Jets. (Nick Martin, personal interview, August 19, 1998)

Brian Cole vividly described several personal anecdotes surrounding the Jets' and Winnipeg's international identity:

My brother in-law traveled around in Europe and everywhere he went when people found out he was from Winnipeg, all they wanted to do was to talk about hockey, and he's not a hockey fan, and this was astounding to him, this was a shock to him because he's not a sports fan, and yet he is out there and when he got out there he found, much to his chagrin that it was the sports team that was putting the city on the map. I'd go down to journalism conferences in the States and they'd find out I'm from Winnipeg and everyone would want to talk about the Jets and I met one guy who did a profile of a book on Bobby Clarke, so there was this Winnipeg connection. So, you know, people kind of laugh at the idea that a hockey team can give a city a profile but I think Winnipeg did get a profile which at least allowed people to think about the place and to understand what it was, and in the world of business, where the current is the swing based on perception as opposed to reality on a lot of cases, the perception of Winnipeg as being a first-ranked city is not worthless, there is value to that. (Brian Cole, interview with author, August 15, 1998)

Many civic boosters and Jets' fans saw value in the global image that the Jets supposedly projected upon Winnipeg. As Brian Cole had explained during our interview, civic boosters and local business people in particular believed that the presence of the Jets indicated Winnipeg's status as a 'first-rank' city and promoted Winnipeg as an attractive place for business opportunities and as an attractive destination for flexible capital. The perception of Winnipeg's image as 'major-league' was of significance for local business people. Jim Silver proposed an interesting theory surrounding the role of the Jets in constructing an appropriate image for Winnipeg for the purpose of attracting capital during our interview:

Another notion that has occurred to me is that this city was originally built as the hub of an East-West economy with the railway, and in the last ten years in particular, the East-West character of the economy has been rapidly replaced by a North/South orientation. And Winnipeg as the hub of the East-West sort of lost its place in the political economy of Canada and had to find a new role. And the new role that is being carved out even now is far from being the gateway of the West; business leaders now see Winnipeg as being potentially the gateway to the south.

So, for example, the Windport initiative is designed to be a cargo centre, an air cargo centre, so stuff would come from Asia to Winnipeg and there might be some slight manufacturing of a free trade zone around the airport and all this cargo would go straight south. Now my theory, and again this is just a theory, my theory is that if Winnipeg wants to re-position itself at the North end of this the continental trade corridor, and the whole notion of a continental trade corridor is very big, they needed an identity, they needed to be known, I mean who the hell is Winnipeg? And one of the ways you get known, one of the terms that the business community always used was that the Jets put us on the map, and if you wanted to play this key role in a new North-South corridor, you needed an identity, and the Jets had that identity. The Jets make us a city of note, we are worthy enough as a city, we are big enough and vibrant enough as a city to warrant there being an NHL franchise here. (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998)

Similarly, the presence of the Jets indicated Winnipeg as a cosmopolitan centre with all the necessary amenities needed for business and entertaining business clientele. The luxury boxes and club seats that were proposed for the new arena have emerged as valuable venues for conducting business relations and are significant revenue generators for many professional sports teams (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). Several business executives also believed that the Jets served to attract and retain younger executives and affluent tourists to Winnipeg; many Winnipeg executives believed that the Jets were culturally symbolic of Winnipeg's entrance to the 'big-leagues' and that this was valued by executive white collar workers in considering whether to relocate to Winnipeg. As Donald Benham noted:

Sandy Riley, the head of Investor's Group, and we don't have very many truly national business leaders, but Sandy is one of them, I have heard second hand that he has said to other people that "look, it's really tough for me to go looking to recruit executives in Toronto, or Vancouver, or Calgary, or Edmonton, because they say what do we do in the winters?". So, I accept that, I mean Sandy Riley knows more about recruiting business executives than I ever will, so I accept that it has made it more difficult for people at Great-West Life to find national people to come here, and also if they have clients from out of town to entertain them, I mean taking people to a hockey game is valid business entertainment as well. (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998)

To many executives and civic boosters, Winnipeg's image as being a 'world class' city would be severely diminished with the departure of the Jets. Business in Winnipeg would potentially decline and talented executives might not be attracted to relocate in Winnipeg as a result of Winnipeg's lack of a 'world class' image. As Silver noted during our interview:

And the flipside to that coin is that if you lose the Jets, you are going down into the United States and you are trying to sell Winnipeg in various kinds of ways in this new continental trade corridor and you mention the name Winnipeg and it's like oh, Winnipeg is the city that is so in decline that it couldn't hold an NHL franchise, and this is bad. (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998)

Perhaps the most visible campaign to construct the Jets and a potential new 'world class' arena as indicators of Winnipeg's importance as a cosmopolitan global centre emerged during the 1995 Save the Jets campaign. During this campaign, and particularly throughout 'Operation Grassroots', multiple articles and editorials were published in the Winnipeg Free Press that constructed Winnipeg's international reputation as being maintained through the presence of the Jets. According to one reporter: "With a massive display of emotion, cash, and caring, Winnipeg and the entire province of Manitoba has sent a message to the whole gold-plated, spin-dried hockey universe. It reads: 'you'd better believe we're major league'" (Sigurdson, 1995b, p. D3). One individual noted the importance of the Jets to Winnipeg's international identity and reputation while donating money to the Save the Jets campaign: "The donation is also an investment in keeping Winnipeg's international reputation" (Owen, 1995a, p. B12). To many civic boosters the international reputation and urban image that supposedly came with having a professional sports team had to be maintained. As one fan noted: "If we want to be a major-league city then we have to be major-league fans. If we want to play in the big-leagues then we have to pay the price. It's time for everyone to pay that price" (Douglas, 1995b, p. A4). While

'everyone' would have to pay the price in terms of paying for a new arena, not everyone in Winnipeg would benefit from the presence of the Jets and a new 'world class' arena. As Whitson and Macintosh (1993) have noted, certain individuals and power blocs are better positioned than others to take advantage of the presence of professional sports teams and other 'world class' amenities. The specific individuals and groups that would have benefitted from the construction of a new arena and the retention of the Winnipeg Jets, including the business elite, the Jets' majority owners, and affluent hockey fans, will be discussed in the following chapters.

The Construction of Global Similarity

The construction of Winnipeg as an international 'world class' city was a matter of great pride for many Winnipeggers. The presence of the Jets and the potential presence of a new 'world class' arena hailed Winnipeg as a global city. Jets' boosters routinely claimed that the Jets put Winnipeg on the same level as other 'world class' cities with NHL franchises like New York and Los Angeles. Local civic pride had been extended to an international level. The hosting of mega-events and the status associated with a big-league professional sports team is commonly believed to put cities 'on the map' as exclusive international urban centres with 'world class' entertainment amenities. The re-imaging of cities as an attractive destination for flexible capital and wealthy tourists eager to consume world-class entertainment and shopping centres has also become an increasingly important phenomenon in the re-imaging of urban centres that were formally regarded as manufacturing or industrial centres (Whitson & Macintosh 1996). One article in the Winnipeg Free Press noted the importance of the new arena in re-imaging Winnipeg's identity as a global entertainment centre:

Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy understands the need for a new facility. He recently said that a new state-of-the-art multi-purpose facility is all that is standing in the way of Winnipeg joining the big-leagues of entertainment. (Douglas, 1995c, p. A16).

The Jets were constructed by civic boosters as symbolizing Winnipeg's equality with other big-league cities; cities that played on a 'world class', international entertainment level. The presence of a major-league franchise identified Winnipeg as being a member of an elite group of cities that claimed membership in an exclusive club of global entertainment centres. Unlike Winnipeg's local identity, which was constructed upon difference from other cities without NHL franchises, Winnipeg's global identity was based on the construction of similarity. The Jets constructed Winnipeg's identity as similar to other 'world class' urban centres with professional sport franchises; the Jets constructed Winnipeg as similar to New York and Los Angeles. Sentiments such as urban prestige were a matter of great pride for local urban boosters.

This process of global urban standardization has become increasingly evident in cities anxious to be considered as a 'world class', urban centre. As urban centres construct 'world class' facilities and other global cultural amenities such as Hard Rock Cafes and Planet Hollywoods, many of their distinctive features are standardized. While local urban features are never fully extinguished, replicated cultural centres like arenas and convention centres become the focus of urban global identities resulting in the global replication of similar 'world class' urban amenities. The potential new arena at The Forks symbolized the desire of local boosters to become standardized like 'the other'. The other in this case included other cities with 'world class' facilities and 'major-league' professional sports franchises.

Constructing the Importance of Global Identity

The loss of the Jets was repeatedly constructed as a loss in global urban status and civic prestige by civic boosters and local media. In particular, Winnipeg's international sporting reputation was constructed as being threatened with the loss of the Jets. An article in the Free Press stipulated after an announcement that the Jets could not be saved:

At this point, Winnipeg needs a lot of things because the city will take an international beating for the next ten months...However, a minor-league pro basketball team is no replacement for the best hockey league in the world. A lot of people might not want to believe it, but as an important international sporting community, Winnipeg died yesterday. (Taylor, 1995h, p. D1).

Similarly, Winnipeg's international identity and reputation was constructed as having been damaged with the loss of the Jets. As one city councillor noted: "Without the Jets, Winnipeg would become as internationally ignored as Quebec is doomed to be now that the Nordiques have moved to Denver" (Martin, 1995, p. B3). A city's international image and reputation have emerged as important cultural indicators. 'World class' facilities and professional sports teams have come to symbolize a city as progressive and future-oriented. Without the Jets, urban boosters feared there was nothing which demonstrated Winnipeg's similarity to other 'world class' cities, and nothing to indicate Winnipeg as being different from smaller urban-centres without professional sports teams. Without the Jets, the city's international reputation and distinctiveness from smaller urban centers could be all but forgotten²⁰.

²⁰I did not come across any constructions challenging the promotion of the Jets and a new arena as indicative of Winnipeg's global identity.

The Layering of Identity

The variety of constructions that were generated surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets is indicative of the layering nature of identities. Identities are composed of multiple layers which can fluctuate over time. The layers of identity that were constructed surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets exhibited multiple tensions and contradictions; global, national, and local identities were generated and intertwined illustrating the dynamics and complexity of urban and personal identity. For many Jets' fans and urban boosters the Jets identified Winnipeg as an urban centre that was different from smaller urban centres without professional hockey franchises. The Jets symbolized Winnipeg's importance in terms of local identity. In the eyes of urban boosters, the Jets made Winnipeg different from and 'better' than Regina. The Jets were constructed by urban boosters and Jets fans as an important urban entertainment amenity; many fans enjoyed attending Jets' games and following the Jets during the team's existence in Winnipeg. The Jets were also constructed as symbolizing the future of Winnipeg. To many boosters, the departure of the Jets symbolized Winnipeg's continued economic decline and the loss of future opportunities for the citizens, and in particular the youth of Winnipeg. An exodus of young and talented workers was feared following the loss of the Jets. The promotion of these constructions allowed urban boosters and local media to create a misleading atmosphere of unanimous community support for the efforts to save the team and build a new arena.

A variety of constructions of local particularities were generated surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets. These included: the construction of the Jets and a new arena as valuable entertainment commodities and sources of personal identity; the construction of community and urban identity; the construction of unanimous community support; and the construction of the Jets

and a new arena as indicative of the 'future' of the city. A specific 'national identity' with reference to the game of hockey was also promoted. Alternative constructions of local and national identities independent of the NHL and a new arena were also present indicating the contested nature of urban identity (Harvey, 1987). In addition, constructions of the Jets and a new arena emerged as representing Winnipeg's global identity and international reputation. The constructions of both local and global identities point towards the naturalization and legitimization of a global culture.

These results support recent research on globalization that theorizes the construction of local particularities and cultural heterogeneity within a global frame of reference (Appadurai, 1990; Arundel & Roche, 1998; Houlihan, 1994; Maguire 1993; 1994; 1998; Whannel, 1998). The presence of local particularities must be viewed as what Appadurai (1990) has termed 'disjunctures' within the processes of globalization. These 'disjunctures' allow for the manipulation of local cultures for the purpose of global capital accumulation. I agree with Houlihan's (1994) assumption that "the driving forces of globalization are exploitation and ideological manipulation of communities as markets, consumers, and workers" (p. 364). Other researchers have also noted the dependency of a global economy on the construction of local particularities with respect to a global frame of reference (Arundel & Roche, 1998; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Harvey et al., 1996; Hall & Hodges, 1998). In particular, Whitson and Macintosh (1993) have theorized the emergence of 'world class' urban identity as indicative of a global culture in which difference is made "...safe and familiar" (p.236). Results of this study support the emergence of a global level of 'world class' urban identity and extend the research by placing this theory in a local context.

Embedded between the local and global constructions surrounding the Winnipeg Jets was the construction of a particular Canadian 'national' identity based upon NHL hockey. Throughout the Jets' existence, the NHL hockey team was constructed as representing Canada and a Canadian 'national' identity. These results support the research that highlights the construction of national identities within a global frame of reference despite the diminished role of the nation-state within a global culture and economy (Houlihan, 1994; Maguire, 1993; Whannel, 1998). These findings extend the literature by indicating that national identities can challenge or reinforce the establishment of a global culture. The construction of a Canadian 'national' identity including NHL franchises reinforces the emergence of 'world class' products and global ways of knowing. The construction of an alternative Canadian 'national' identity independent of NHL hockey, however, resists the establishment of 'world class' products and a global culture.

It is imperative to examine who is promoting and ultimately benefitting from promotion and acceptance of such boosterish constructions. Who benefits from the construction of the Jets and a potential new 'world class' arena as an indicator of Winnipeg's local and international identity? Who benefits from the establishment of a discourse of 'world class' commodities and the processes of globalization? Who benefits from the construction of the Jets and a new arena as indicative of the future of Winnipeg and the city's overall standard of living? Who benefits from the construction of hockey as a distinct facet of a Canadian national identity? And perhaps more importantly, who suffers as a result of the acceptance of such constructions? Such issues need to be critically addressed particularly when public funds are proposed to subsidize professional sports teams, and the construction of new 'world class' facilities for the primary use of elite commercial sport.

Chapter 5

The Actors and Their Actions

What individuals/groups promoted or discouraged the various constructions of global images and local particularities surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets?

How did those individuals/groups promote or discourage such constructions?

The newspaper analysis was designed to discover the specific individuals and groups that were involved in promoting or discouraging the various constructions surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets. Also, interviews were conducted with individuals who were actively involved in either promoting or discouraging the various constructions. It was hypothesized that:

The business elite of Winnipeg along with civic, provincial, and national politicians, media personalities and hockey fans promoted the constructions of the value of the Winnipeg Jets to the city of Winnipeg, while local activist groups and non-hockey fans will discourage the constructions of the value of the Winnipeg Jets to the city of Winnipeg.

This hypothesis was supported by the subjects of this study and by the newspaper analysis.

The aforementioned analysis also sought to discover how those individuals/groups promoted or discouraged the constructions of local particularities and global identities. It was hypothesized that:

Individuals promoted and discouraged such constructions through local media outlets, marketing campaigns, government reports, and provincial and civic meetings.

This hypothesis was also supported. In addition, a number of additional methods were discovered surrounding the ways in which specific constructions were promoted or discouraged. The purpose of this chapter is therefore twofold. The specific groups and individuals who actively promoted the various constructions will be identified followed by an analysis of their promotional methods.

Local Activists

The primary local activists involved in dispelling the various constructions of global images and local particularities surrounding the Winnipeg Jets belonged to the community-based activist group Thin Ice. Thin Ice was not the only activist group opposed to the construction of a new arena in Winnipeg. Other community groups had formed, particularly throughout the 1990's Save the Jets Campaign. A group called 'Save Our Pride', formed by Winnipegger Janice Kaminsky, engaged in a number of activist activities including running press ads, making presentations to city hall, hosting steering committee meetings, and placing telephone calls and letters to Members of Parliament and the NHL. Save our Pride consisted of up to sixteen volunteers with a core group of seven members. Other smaller groups emerged throughout the city; a number of local citizens personally constructed petitions and went door-to-door collecting signatures to generate opposition to the proposed arena. Thin Ice, however, was the most publicly active group opposed to the use of public funds to construct a new arena.

Thin Ice was a loosely structured group that formed out of a larger Winnipeg social activist group called "Cho!ces". Cho!ces was formed in 1991 by a group of community activists concerned that decisions regarding the allocation of public funds were being made as a result of

the ideological disposition of those in power and not out of economic necessity (Silver, 1996).

Cho!ces had been involved in the early 1990's civic debates surrounding the construction of a new arena in Winnipeg, and had made several resolutions at City Council regarding the proposed allocation of public funds for a new arena. A committee had formed within Cho!ces and had begun to spend considerable time on the arena issue. The Cho!ces committee examining the arena issue was primarily concerned with the use of scarce public funds to build a new arena at a time of major provincial and civic cutbacks to health care, education, and other social services. Ironically, while millions of dollars of public money were being proposed to be invested in a new arena, local recreation and community sporting facilities, including local hockey rinks, were being closed due to government cuts. Thin Ice emerged out of the Cho!ces arena committee because of the particular interest of Cho!ces group members in addressing the arena debates on a more frequent and public basis. Thin Ice's first meeting was on October 5, 1993. Jim Silver, the co-chair of Cho!ces and Thin Ice group member, described Thin Ice's emergence in this way:

Anyway, I got involved because I was co-chair, and I had to keep an eye on various projects that Cho!ces was doing, and the Jets' project was one of the many that we were doing. And I just kind of got drawn more into it and ultimately what happened was the committee in effect that was working on the Jets decided to create a name for itself, simply because the Free Press had stopped covering Cho!ces so we came up with the name Thin Ice, and that for a while did give us a little more coverage because it made us look like a new group on the scene and you always want something fresh. (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998).

Thin Ice was a loosely structured group that was never incorporated. The number of group members was unstable, ranging between six and twelve members at a time. The primary core members included a community health organizer, two professors, a retired teacher, a full-time student, an unemployed city planner, a community health organizer, and a part-time sales

clerk (Silver, 1996). The group, however, also had access to other Cho!ces group members, and the broad community network that supported Cho!ces. The access to such group members would prove to be beneficial to Thin Ice in terms of analyzing business proposals and public reports surrounding the viability of the Winnipeg Jets and a new arena in Winnipeg.

Thin Ice members Jim Silver and Carl Ridd were the most visible critics of the arena deals and the Save the Jets campaign during the 1990's. At the time of the arena debates in the 1990's both Silver and Ridd were professors at the University of Winnipeg. Ridd is a basketball legend in Manitoba. He is in the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame and has supported local sports for years. Jim Silver had played junior hockey and was offered hockey scholarships to play at Cornell University. Both members of Thin Ice were neither 'anti-sport' nor 'anti-Jets', despite attempts by the local media to construct them that way. Carl Ridd, in particular, had a long history opposing the construction of a new arena in Winnipeg for the Jets. When a campaign to expand the Winnipeg Arena by five thousand seats was launched by the team's community owners in 1974-75, Ridd and city councillor Bob Bockstael emerged as opponents to the expenditure of public funds for the purpose of arena expansion. Both Ridd and Bockstael were concerned with the lack of public debate and consultation over an emotional issue involving public funds. Ridd was particularly opposed to the use of public funds to expand the arena as long as the Jets remained a franchise in the economically unstable WHA. Ridd, however, was never completely opposed to the use of moderate public funds for the expansion of the arena; Ridd wanted to stimulate public debate and consultation surrounding the arena issue. Ridd's tolerance for the use of moderate public funds and willingness to consider other options would eventually lead to a significant controversy in the 1990's surrounding Thin Ice and the Winnipeg Free Press.

Thin Ice's public position throughout the attempts to save the Jets and to build an arena in the 1990's was that no public funds ought to be used for the construction of a new arena during a time of massive cuts to social services. On one occasion, however, Thin Ice did not appear to be unanimous in its public position that absolutely no public funds should be used for the construction of a new arena. On April 1, 1995, a massive, front page story in the Winnipeg Free Press declared: "A 'No-Lose' Arena Deal", with the sub-heading "Leading Sceptic Ridd Gives Qualified Support for MEC Proposal" (Douglas & Taylor, 1995, p.A1). On the previous day, Free Press reporter John Douglas had telephoned Thin Ice member Carl Ridd with a hypothetical scenario involving a one-time public payment of \$30-40 million for the construction of a new arena. The hypothetical scenario was posed by Douglas amidst a lengthy telephone interview. Ridd repeatedly stated that he did not wish to be quoted and that he wanted the conversation to be 'off the record' to show solidarity with his colleagues. Ridd then responded that under such hypothetical circumstances he could support a one-time public payout (Ridd, interview with author, August 18, 1998).

Douglas, a leading booster for the construction of a new arena and at the time the business reporter for the Free Press, jumped on the opportunity, and published the story claiming that Ridd had given his support for a concrete proposal, when in fact Ridd believed he was responding to a hypothetical situation off the record. According to Ridd:

He stitched it into the enthusiastic front-page story he had ready, claiming my argument with a "proposal" I had never even heard about. He went fishing and caught one remark he could use in the story he wanted to create (Ridd, 1995, p. A9).

Clearly, the story was misleading. Carl Ridd had given his support for a hypothetical proposal.

Douglas, however, had put a spin on the story to frame Ridd as supporting a MEC proposal that

actually did not exist. For Douglas and Winnipeg Free Press city editor Brian Cole, publishing the story was a matter of exposing the contradictory sentiments of Thin Ice group members. Cole believed that exposing Thin Ice's lack of unanimity overrode Ridd's request for his statements to remain off the record (Brian Cole, interview with author, August 14, 1998).

For Thin Ice, the article was a disaster in the making. Carl Ridd was able to respond to the article in a letter to the editor in which he repeated Thin Ice's public position of no public funds. On April 3, 1995, Thin Ice held a press conference to respond to Douglas' article and to confront Douglas' questionable journalistic tactics, while reiterating the group's 'no-public' funds position. Ironically, the Free Press sent Douglas to cover a press conference that was partially aimed at leveling "charges of journalistic impropriety against him" (Silver, 1996, p.113). Yet at the press conference Ridd once again admitted that there could be certain circumstances in which he personally would support the use of public funds for a new arena. Clearly, the article by Douglas had challenged Thin Ice's solidarity, and Ridd's comments at the press conference further jeopardized Thin Ice's image as a united group. A Winnipeg Free Press article on April 4, 1995, by Douglas, printed a transcription of the press conference, and quoted Ridd as again saying that under hypothetical circumstances he could support the use of moderate public funds for a new arena. Douglas and the Winnipeg Free Press thus significantly damaged Thin Ice's public image and reputation as a unanimous activist group. Silver (1996) suggests that the Ridd-Douglas affair was the result of a last-ditch effort by MEC to secure public opinion with only a month to go before the MEC option to purchase the Jets expired.

Ridd, however, believed that there needed to be debate surrounding the proposed arena and the use of public funds both within and outside of Thin Ice. Ridd had also previously told

John Loewen, former Chair of MEC and basketball player at the University of Manitoba, that he could support the use of moderate public funds for a new arena (John Loewen, interview with author, September 19, 1998). To the dismay of other Thin Ice members, Ridd maintained his belief that dissenting opinions and debate both within and outside of Thin Ice was necessary for there to be an open and constructive debate on the arena issue. The negative publicity surrounding the controversy clearly affected Ridd and afterwards he began to step away from the public role that he had previously enjoyed with Thin Ice. Ridd would later reveal in our interview that the whole episode was quite painful and saddening to him; Ridd had trusted Douglas to keep their conversation 'off the record'. That disclosure would have been the only thing Ridd would have changed surrounding his role and efforts in Thin Ice (Carl Ridd, interview with author, August 18, 1998).

Thin Ice members used a variety of innovative tactics to publicly promote their beliefs and to challenge MEC's and Spirit's propaganda. The group received scant publicity in the local media, and radio talk-show hosts frequently berated the group on the airwaves. Thin Ice members were personally attacked in print articles and over the radio airwaves. Vic Grant and Peter Warren of CJOB radio were particularly virulent in casting Thin Ice members as anti-sport and anti-Winnipeg naysayers, while calling for Jim Silver and Carl Ridd to be fired from the University of Winnipeg (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998). In response to their difficulty in maintaining any type of consistent publicity in the newspapers and over the radio, Thin Ice promoted themselves in numerous creative ways. The group met every Tuesday morning at 8:00 to discuss weekly events and political strategy. Thin Ice members first educated themselves on the political economy surrounding professional sport and the changing economics

of the NHL. The group held public information conferences in which Professors Bruce Kidd and David Whitson came to Winnipeg to discuss the political economy of the NHL and professional sport. A local community television station videotaped the keynote address at one of the conferences and televised it on a repeated loop. Jim Silver believed that the publicity generated by the community network on which the conference was repeatedly broadcast was the one instance where Thin Ice received the greatest coverage and publicity (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998).

Thin Ice frequently published a tabloid style newspaper called 'The Arena Chronicles' that publicly challenged the establishment's position. The group also did a variety of acts of political theatre. On one occasion group members staged a 'Let Them Eat Pucks' luncheon in front of John Loewen's office, with one member wearing a mask depicting Winnipeg Mayor Susan Thompson. In another instance, group members held a news conference in front of a boarded-up house in the inner city. Thin Ice, however, did not have the marketing resources and media coverage enjoyed by MEC and Spirit. Nevertheless, despite often being marginalized by and castigated by the local media, Thin Ice was able to generate valuable name recognition throughout the city. In one instance, the group held a Town Hall meeting at the Winnipeg Museum of Man and Nature and filled the 220-seat auditorium. The Free Press had been notified of the event, but the staff member who received the information chose not to cover the event and did not inform other staff members of its occurrence (Nick Martin, interview with author, August 19, 1998).

Thin Ice also engaged in a number of 'bridge actions' in which group members hung huge signs from major bridges and entrance ways to the city during morning rush hour depicting short slogans such as 'No Public Funds For Arena' (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1,

1998). In addition to the instances of political theatre, Thin Ice also made several presentations at City Hall, to what was often a hostile crowd. The Winnipeg City Hall was frequently filled with Jets' fans during civic debates on both arena and Jets issues. When Thin Ice members presented their arguments at City Hall, Jets' fans booed and screamed throughout the dialogue. Certain city councillors were particularly offensive to Thin Ice group members. During one City Council meeting, Jim Silver was cut off at the ten minute limit and was denied the customary extension to conclude his remark. In response to the Council debate on granting the extension, City Councillor Mike O'Shaughnessey, while gesturing with a choking motion, exclaimed: "...if I listen to much more of this, I might have a heart attack" (Quotable, 1995, p. B3). Despite such a hostile environment, Thin Ice group members made frequent presentations to City Hall and withstood the public and personal attacks generated in a heated and emotional debate.

Thin Ice also commissioned a professional polling firm to poll 600 Winnipeggers about their support for public funding of a new arena and continued subsidization of the Jets. The poll indicated that 74% of Winnipeggers were opposed to both public subsidization of the Jets and a new arena (Silver, 1996). Thin Ice frequently maintained that it believed the majority of Winnipeggers were against the construction of a new arena. Journalism instructor Donald Benham also believed that a silent majority of Winnipeggers were opposed to the public subsidy of a new arena. Benham was a columnist for the four community newspapers in Winnipeg, which had a combined circulation of approximately 180,000. In those columns, Benham frequently denounced the proposals to construct a new arena. In one newspaper he ran a coupon asking citizens if they wanted a referendum on the issue and received 1700 responses from concerned

citizens (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998). Winnipeg Mayor, Susan Thompson, refused to accept the petitions when Benham attempted to deliver them to City Hall.

Thin Ice's contacts and connections with other Choices group members and local activists proved invaluable for generating sophisticated analyses and critiques of MEC and Spirit's business plans and financial projections. In 1994, economics professors Errol Black and Joe Dolecki of Brandon University prepared an analysis and critique of the 1990 Coopers and Lybrand Report and the 1994 Ogden Entertainment Services Report. The Coopers and Lybrand Report, prepared for the Winnipeg Jets hockey club, claimed that the professional team generated \$47.2 million for the local economy and created between 960 and 1440 full-time jobs. The Ogden Entertainment Services Report was commissioned to study the viability of an NHL franchise and a new arena in Winnipeg.

The 1994 Black and Dolecki report effectively dismantled the Coopers and Lybrand Report's claims of the economic and employment benefit surrounding the presence of the Jets in Winnipeg. The 1994 Black and Dolecki Report, for example, challenged the Coopers and Lybrand Report's use of a gross benefit analysis instead of a net benefit analysis. Also, Black and Dolecki questioned the multiplier used by Coopers and Lybrand, claiming that it was almost twice the one recommended by the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics. The Black and Dolecki report also noted that if the Jets left Winnipeg, fans would divert their spending to other entertainment amenities. Black and Dolecki, in addition, questioned the 'qualitative benefits' surrounding the presence of the Jets cited by the Coopers and Lybrand report, which were based upon three categories: 1) Exceptional media exposure, 2) Builder of community confidence, and 3) Quality of life in Manitoba.

The Black and Dolecki report reinforced the assumptions and findings contained within the Ogden Report which had not been adequately publicized in the local media and were seemingly ignored by MEC and Spirit. In particular, the 1994 Ogden report acknowledged that the viability of the Jets was contingent upon the NHL imposing a league salary cap and/or a revenue sharing plan that would transfer resources to small-market NHL teams. The NHL, of course, has neither a salary cap nor a revenue sharing plan! Also, the Ogden Report projected that the Jets would continue to lose money over the next five years. MEC and Spirit seemed to have ignored the reports' recommendations. According to Silver, the Black and Dolecki report received scant media attention--only Francis Russell of the Winnipeg Free Press covered the report in the local media and despite numerous conversations with Gary Joyce regarding the report, the Globe and Mail never published its findings (Silver, 1996).

Thin Ice also maintained contact with local Winnipeg environmental groups, including the Coalition to Preserve the Forks, who were opposed to the construction of a new arena on 'green' land at the Forks site. Thin Ice engaged in a number of legal actions, beginning in April 1995, which dealt with environmental issues surrounding the construction of a new arena at the Forks. According to Silver (1996), Thin Ice turned to a small Winnipeg law firm for legal guidance after being informed that larger Winnipeg law firms, with connections to the corporations that made up MEC, would refuse to take their case. For local community activist groups with minimal access to financial resources, the cost of legal challenges are often too great to incur. Similarly, the length of time required for significant and detailed legal challenges are also large obstacles for prolonged activism. While Thin Ice raised its own funds to cover legal costs, MEC was represented by lawyers and consultants paid out of the public purse. Nevertheless, Thin Ice did

initiate a number of legal challenges dealing with zoning by-laws aimed at MEC, the city of Winnipeg, and a subcontractor on the arena project. Thin Ice raised funds by selling t-shirts, and received a significant amount of money through donations from the public (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998).

Whether Thin Ice was primarily responsible for the demise of the Jets and the attempts to build a new arena is debatable. Jim Silver believes his group played a significant role in generating public debate and ultimately halting the efforts to save the Jets and to build a new arena. Silver's 1996 book accords Thin Ice a great deal of praise and self-justifying credit for the departure of the Jets. But did the activist group play a significant role in the demise of the Jets and the construction of a new arena? Thin Ice's opponents certainly did not think so. John Loewen described Thin Ice as:

Minor irritants pecking away at you...My view of Jim Silver and Carl Ridd, I think they took a very narrow view of it. A few years ago the public sector, through public funds, built a ten million dollar gymnasium that they didn't object to (Laughter) that Carl Ridd drives his car to every night. So I think they accused us, and Jim Silver was pretty damning, he accused us of being the business elite, and I guess my comeback to that is they are the intellectual elite, which is really more self-serving than anything else. (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998)

Alan Sweatman described Thin Ice in this regard:

Jim, though, and it shows somewhat in his book, he really wanted his group to get a lot of the credit for killing us, and I never said it to him, I didn't want to hurt his feelings, but they didn't count for a tinker's damn with anybody, with the City Hall, with the province, you know, they were kind of like people walking around with placards saying the world is coming to an end. Someday they'd be right, but you know, they were that kind of excessive virtue and really not counting for much, and they had all these half-ass court things they kept trying (Alan Sweatman, September 8, 1998).

Ross Robinson, after noting the insignificance of the group on the political process surrounding the Jets, described the group as:

Well, obviously they were negative naysayers and quite obviously they were unable to understand the cultural impact of hockey and professional hockey in Manitoba. And they were over-zealous negative types. (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998)

The departure of the Jets, and the disruption of the construction of a new arena, ultimately signaled Thin Ice's victory. Thin Ice's analysis of the situation in Winnipeg proved to be correct. Their struggle, however, was not an easy one. Both Jim Silver and Carl Ridd received death threats, and Jim Silver had his office vandalized at the University of Winnipeg. There were also numerous calls placed by donors and Jets' fans to the University of Winnipeg encouraging both Silver and Ridd to be fired. If it wasn't for the university tenure system, both men possibly could have been out of a job. As Jim Silver noted during our interview:

Those of us who became the main spokespersons, I mean, we were very grateful for university tenure because this place was inundated with the demand that both Carl and I be fired--we received such calls, the president of the university received such calls, so if you're working as a clerk in some trucking company, and all the sudden your employer gets calls, it's your job. (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998)

Thin Ice was never incorporated, and group members were financially limited in their ability to engage in legal challenges. The threat of being counter-sued and the personal liability for the legal fees of all parties involved in a trial was an intimidation factor that limited legal action and posed a considerable obstacle for individuals wanting to join Thin Ice. Thin Ice routinely claimed that a silent majority believed public funds should not be used for the construction of a new arena. Yet many citizens did not engage in political activism. Challenging the establishment's opinions and beliefs may have been an intimidating factor for citizens. Jim Silver also believed that the public

conception of democracy may have been a deterrent for political activism (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998). Democracy, for many individuals, means one vote for every adult--and nothing more. The failure to accord 'democracy' with public protest and the political process, combined with a fear of challenging the establishment's position and power as well as the lack of resources necessary for prolonged activism, could have significantly intimidated individuals from political activism.

Thin Ice primarily challenged the constructions of local particularities surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets and a new arena. Thin Ice argued that a new arena was not vital to the local identity and future of Winnipeg, and that scarce public funds should instead be spent addressing social issues such as child poverty. Thin Ice constructed an urban identity that included neither a new 'world class' arena nor a professional sports team. Through such constructions, Thin Ice displaced the discourse and logic of globalization; they challenged the construction of 'world class' urban identity. Thin Ice also challenged the constructions surrounding the importance of NHL hockey to 'Canadian identity'. The group actively maintained that NHL hockey is not indicative of Canadian culture, and that NHL franchises are simply beyond the financial grasp of small Canadian urban centres. They therefore exposed the layers of identity, from the global to the local, and made them a site of ideological struggle.

Thin Ice's failure to directly challenge the global logic of the NHL and urban 'world class' identity may have diminished their effectiveness during the negotiations to save the team--although Silver (1996) does somewhat expose the importance of international identity to the business elite. While Thin Ice members frequently addressed the American presence of the NHL (Carl Ridd liked to say that the NHL had gone up-market and down South), I did not come across

any information indicating that Thin Ice had publicly acknowledged the constructions surrounding the importance of Winnipeg's global identity. Perhaps if they had directly challenged and exposed the logic of global accumulation the group would have been more effective in promoting resistance to the process of saving the team. However, given the groups' lack of resources or ability to publicly promote their beliefs, challenging the logic of accumulation might have added complexity and confusion to their relatively simple, yet effective, position of 'no public funds'.

Jets' Fans

Jets' fans were active in promoting the various constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets in response to the impending demise of the franchise. The majority of fans were males, with a significant number being younger males. The presence of a younger generation of males was evident throughout the efforts to save the team. John Loewen suggested an interesting theory surrounding the visibility of 'younger' males:

But getting back to the generational side of it, there is sort of that older business community which spent most of their lives in Winnipeg without an NHL team so it wasn't a big deal to them. There was my generation that the team started to be here with the WHA, and we sort of got use to having them here, and then we've got your age group who grew up with it and it was really part of their fabric. (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998)

The fans promoted all of the constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets. As hockey fans they benefitted from the presence of the Jets; the Jets were part of their personal identity and routine, and the potential loss of the team was seen as a threat to their identity. The lack of female involvement, or interest, in this process is not surprising; women have rarely been welcome in a male dominated sporting environment (Kidd, 1990).

These fans promoted the constructions surrounding the importance of the team in a variety of ways. Numerous rallies were held to show support for the team and \$13.5 million was donated by Jets' boosters during Operation Grassroots in May 1995. Fans held socials (a Manitoba party) to raise money for the team and frequently wrote editorials in the local newspapers. Other fans voiced their opinions on local radio call-in talk shows. The team was clearly a matter of great pride for such individuals. Yet Jets' fans also displayed their loyalty in other less-acceptable methods. Jets' fans stormed city Councillor Rick Boychuk's house to intimidate him into voting in favour of Jets' proposals. Jim Silver, Carl Ridd, and Boychuk were also given death threats. While there is no proof that such threats were given by Jets' fans it is highly probable that some overzealous fans went over the legal boundary of acceptable behaviour. It is also probable that Jim Silver's office was vandalized by Jets' fans. Other Jets' boosters tried to intimidate the University of Winnipeg into firing both Ridd and Silver. Such displays of hostility point to both the power of a constructed crisis, and sport in general, to motivate individuals to act in seemingly non-rational and illegal fashions.

Jets' fans promoted all of the constructions surrounding the value of the Jets. To these fans the Jets represented a significant source of personal identity and local urban identity. Many fans also expressed in editorials that the Jets and NHL hockey typified 'Canadian identity'. Interestingly, several fans also acknowledged the importance of the Jets in promoting Winnipeg's global identity. While it is doubtful that Jets' fans would have benefitted economically from the promotion of the city and the Jets' as 'world class', these individuals would have enjoyed the opportunity and 'status' of being linked to such a logic.

The Business Elite

Prior to examining the involvement of the Winnipeg business community in the Save the Jets campaign some background information pertaining to the business elite of Winnipeg is required. The Winnipeg business elite are in transition. Adjusting to new technologies and innovations has not been easy for the established 'old money' elite of Winnipeg; Winnipeg has slipped in economic status and urban importance steadily since the post-war restructuring of the North American economy. Winnipeg was once the third largest city in Canada, and now ranks behind Calgary and Edmonton in terms of population and economic importance. Winnipeg was formerly a powerful economic centre and was once the gateway to the West through which all economic trade and commerce flowed. A thriving grain trade conducted through the Winnipeg Grain Exchange epitomized the capitalist spirit and Winnipeg's international status as an important urban centre; the city was nicknamed the 'Chicago of the North'. Vast family fortunes were made in the grain exchange, and the houses built by the grain millionaires are still present on Winnipeg's wealthy Wellington Crescent. Yet, following the Canadian Wheat Board takeover of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange in 1935, these vast fortunes vanished within a generation. The foundation of grain that had constructed Winnipeg as an important city had been all but removed. Slowly the mystique surrounding the 'Chicago of the North' began to dissipate, and the remainder of Winnipeg's 'old money' "...just sat there and worried about itself or was dissipated by the sons and daughters of its original families" (Newman, 1998, p.408).

In conjunction with the slow demise of the importance of the grain industry in Canada, the restructuring of the North American economy from an East-West flow to a North-South flow has significantly damaged Winnipeg's economy and prestige. The ultimate indicator of such a shift

was perpetrated by the Liberal government's abandonment of the Crow Rate²¹ in their 1995 budget. As Newman (1998) notes, the "...loss of the Crow shifted Canada's grain compass to a north-south direction, creating an entirely new delivery and distribution system" (p.408). The distribution system that formerly brought a significant amount of commerce and attention to Winnipeg has been altered to the point where minimal trade flows through the city that was once the centre of all Canadian trade. The flexibility of capital and the broad socio-economic forces that once constructed Winnipeg as an important city have now diminished the city's importance and triggered its economic decline.

Winnipeg's stagnant economic growth, however, was not completely the result of the impact of socio-economic forces. The important characteristics of the Winnipeg business elite and the interaction between the business elite and broad socio-economic forces needs to be addressed. Alan Sweatman, former Chair of the Spirit of Manitoba, described the particularities of the Winnipeg business community in this regard:

There's the traditional sort of old money, personified by the Richardsons and some of the old grain families that are still here, and people like Investors and Great-West Life, but they do not own their operation anymore, Investors is owned by Power Corp, and so on. And then there is a surprising number of young, semi-bootstrapped groups that have built up businesses, where the old guard doesn't know them, has no idea how they live.... The old guard are the ones who ring their hands and say, some of it is true, "oh dear, the young are leaving Winnipeg and there is no future here", because they don't know anybody else...they are extremely clannish people and Winnipeg's what, 650,000 people? And most of them have come up in their family's business, and I really don't think they know what the hell is going on in that sense. They don't lead, they are terrified of failure. (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998)

²¹The Crow Rate was the rate all railways on the prairies were required to charge by the federal government. It was designed to stimulate settlement and the production of exports for the benefit of the commercial interests of central Canada.

The older, established monied elite of Winnipeg has failed to assume a leadership role in defining Winnipeg's economy in the post-war years. In 1990 a Price Waterhouse report on the economic climate and development in Winnipeg explained: "We have observed a very low entrepreneurial culture throughout our interviews...the entrepreneurial climate is poor". Later on in the same report: "The absence of a focused and concerted effort on the part of Winnipeg's leaders has hampered the City's development" (As cited in Silver, 1996, p.83). The interaction between Winnipeg's business elite and broad socio-economic forces have combined to stagnate Winnipeg's economic growth. Yet how does a prosperous city become stagnant in terms of economic development and growth; a city that formerly had the most millionaires in the country, a city that could boast of epitomizing the capitalist spirit? Alan Sweatman offers an interesting explanation surrounding the transition from the risk-taking generation of business elite that founded the city to the following generations of business elites that have seemingly abandoned entrepreneurialism and risk:

Well, take guys who were the sons of grain people, and that goes back a number of years, but there used to be half a dozen very successful grain companies built in the grain exchange days, and a lot of homes on Wellington Crescent were built by these families, and they were gutsy, and they were gamblers, you know, they handled an enormous crop every fall, hedged it, and made money on it. But most of the men didn't trust their sons to do the same thing, and understandably because of the depression and the emergence of the Wheat Board, and they then became the sole agents buying grain or wheat. And they understandably said to their sons, having been seared by the whole thing, "Christ, thank God I didn't get killed, don't you dare get entrepreneurial, don't you dare do anything that might fail. Here is a pot of dough, it will last you, and if you look after it carefully it will last you and your children, and just live quietly". There were no prizes for being bold, and they weren't, and they aren't. (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998).

The fear of risk, and a leadership void in the 'older' Winnipeg business community that has been compounded by a generational leadership transition, has diminished Winnipeg's status as an economic centre. Yet Winnipeg's decline in economic importance and status has not gone unnoticed by the emerging younger generation of Winnipeg's business elite. The potential loss of the Jets was seen as a further indicator of Winnipeg's economic decline to the younger generation of business elite; the city's image and future 'world class' status were in jeopardy. As a result, the business community engaged in a boosterish campaign in attempts to save the team, and to preserve Winnipeg's status as a 'big-league' city.

Boosterism has a lengthy history in Winnipeg. Boosterism has historically been utilized by small town elites for the purpose of urban development (Smith, 1995a). As historian Alan Artibise (1981) noted, urban boosterism was highly evident in the development and growth of prairie centres from 1871-1913; progress was measured in material terms, and significant development and expansion literally meant putting a city 'on the map'. Boosterism is generally characterized by an unrelenting optimism and hope for the future; negativism is simply not an option. The Save the Jets campaign and the attempts to construct a new arena represented the 'modern' version of the boosterish rhetoric that Winnipeg was founded upon. Both the Jets and a new arena were constructed by urban boosters as putting Winnipeg 'on the map' at both a local and an international level. The Jets and the potential new arena literally emerged as representing the city's future. While the older elite had chosen to remain silent on the issues surrounding the Jets, the younger generation of business elite, fueled by boosterish ambition and a genuine interest in doing something for the community, quickly organized to try and save the team and to construct a new arena. The organization of an ownership group for the team would prove to be

difficult for the younger generation of the business elite; they would remain dependent on the private capital of the older generation who ultimately proved to be uninterested and unwilling to purchase the team.

Two major groups were formed by the Winnipeg business elite to attempt to purchase and 'save the Jets' in the 1990's. The first, the Manitoba Entertainment Complex (MEC), was formed in 1994 in response to the unwillingness of the city and the province to exercise their option to purchase the Jets. As stipulated by the Interim Operating Agreement of 1991, the purchasing price for 64% of the Jets privately owned shares was set at \$32 million dollars. Following the expiration of the public sector's option to purchase the team, the private sector sought to exercise their option. MEC, however, was not a potential new ownership group for the Jets. Rather, MEC was a community group of business people with a mandate to secure a new ownership group for the team. This is an important point; both the media and Thin Ice repeatedly constructed MEC as the potential ownership group for the Jets, while MEC was actually designed as a community group responsible for finding an ownership group in Winnipeg. As Loewen noted:

There were people in the group that were going to be a part of it, but if you look at the executive group of MEC which did all of the work...they weren't designed to be the group with the money, it was designed to be the group to do the work and eventually turn it over to the ownership. (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998).

MEC, representing the younger generation of the Winnipeg business community, emerged to try and organize and 'corral' the older generation into investing private capital into the team.

MEC emerged primarily due to the private sector's disdain for the lack of effort that was being put forward by the public sector in attempting to save the team, as well as the general

‘silence’ surrounding the expiration of the public sector’s option to purchase the team. MEC’s membership was unstable and fluctuated; MEC originally consisted of forty members, but would eventually grow to over seventy members. MEC’s membership consisted primarily of a younger generation of business people in Winnipeg, many of whom were the offspring of Winnipeg’s wealthy senior corporate elite. Peter Newman (1999), in his book Titans, described the younger generation of the Winnipeg business community as “the lucky sperm club” (p. 408).

The executive that ran MEC was chaired by John Loewen, nephew of Bill Loewen, the former owner and founder of Comcheq Services. Other executive members included Hartley Richardson, son of George Richardson, the chairman of James Richardson and Sons Limited, and the grandson of James A. Richardson who had amassed a spectacular fortune in the grain industry. The Richardsons are Winnipeg’s wealthiest and most powerful family with revenues from private companies totaling about \$1.5 billion. Sandy Riley is the current head of Investors Group, the company that operates the largest collection of mutual funds in the country valued at \$31 billion. Riley is the third generation of his family to run the business. Investors is a subsidiary of Power Corp., owned by Paul Desmarais. Other members of MEC’s executive included Stuart Murray, president of Domo Gasoline Corporation, Cam Osler, president of InterGroup Consultants, and Bob Silver, president of a clothing manufacturing company which he received from his father (Silver, 1996).

Silver (1996) contends that MEC represented a symbolic passing of the torch from the older generation of Winnipeg business leaders, and that the MEC executive “talked openly about their effort to save the Jets as a ‘passing of the torch’” (p.85). John Loewen, however, denied that the ‘passing of the business torch’ served as a motivating factor for the involvement of the

younger generation of business people, but added that the business community is going through a definite transition phase. Many of the older generation of business leaders in Winnipeg are stepping down, and a younger generation is assuming power and control of established family businesses. MEC was formed to fill a void in private sector leadership surrounding the potential sale and move of the Winnipeg Jets franchise. While the younger business leaders were doing the work to secure an ownership group, it would be the more established and older business people of Winnipeg who would have actually formed the ownership group (John Loewen, interview with author, September 10, 1998).

The Spirit of Manitoba Inc., the second group of Winnipeg's business elite that attempted to purchase the Jets, was formed in the summer of 1995 following the generous outpouring of public support during Operation Grassroots. While MEC consisted of the community group formed to organize the ownership group, Spirit represented the actual potential ownership group for the team. Spirit consisted of the MEC group as well as some of the older members of the Winnipeg business elite. The group included Izzy Asper, Gerry Grey, and Albert Cohen.

Both groups consisted of mostly businessmen. There were some women in MEC, but the vast majority of both group's membership were men. This demographic is not surprising; both sport and business are primarily male-dominated aspects of society (Silver, 1996). The development and use of these 'men's cultural centres' (MCC), is primarily intended for male sports and for mostly male audiences, further reinforcing a discriminating gender order (Kidd, 1990). As Kidd (1990) argues:

In the absence of comparable opportunities for female athletes, coaches, managers, and sports impresarios, the MCC will provide almost daily ideological justification for patriarchal power (p.32).

Also, the diversion of massive amounts of public funds for the construction of these facilities diverts public funds that could be used to improve social programs that address the needs and disadvantages of women. As more 'world class' facilities continue to be constructed around the world to accommodate mostly male athletes and spectators, the marginalization of women and of alternative definitions of masculinity becomes globally legitimized. The global emergence of facilities to house violent and aggressive sports like hockey and American football constructs and reinforces a specific type of masculinity which allows for the maintenance of masculine hegemony on an international level.

The main way in which MEC promoted the constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets was through their well-publicized efforts to organize an ownership group for the team and to secure a commitment from the three levels of government to construct a new arena. MEC members organized the Save the Jets campaign and were extremely vocal about the importance of the Jets to the city of Winnipeg. MEC also received an enormous amount of publicity courtesy of the local media which were equally boosterish in their support of the efforts to save the team. The extensive negotiations and exhausting efforts of MEC members, which were made public by the local media, signaled to citizens that the Jets were an integral component of Winnipeg's local, national, and global identity.

One of MEC's primary methods of promoting the numerous constructions of global identities and local particularities was through their marketing and fundraising campaigns. MEC began its marketing campaign for luxury and club seats in October 1994 using \$1.5 million from the capital fund that had been raised by Derek Riley as a condition of the 1991 IOA. MEC hired a marketing consultant from Florida, Karen Theobald, to lead their marketing campaign. The 'Be a

Builder' campaign was launched with much fanfare and media coverage at the Westin Hotel in Winnipeg. Advertisements were also donated by the Winnipeg Free Press, which publicly promoted MEC's campaign and the constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets. Local radio and televisions stations also frequently publicized MEC's promotions.

MEC immediately experienced difficulty raising private sector funds to purchase the team. The private sector had always been reluctant to risk investing private capital in the team. In this instance, the private sector was also unwilling to purchase a minimum number of club and box seats. MEC's 'Be a Builder' marketing campaign was unsuccessful. The campaign was structured around selling 1500 club seats by a November 30, 1994, deadline. Despite a boosterish ceremony in which MEC's members claimed to have achieved their goal, MEC had failed to reach its minimum standards by the expiration of their deadline. As Glen Cheater of the Winnipeg Sun noted:

Those who read the fine print in yesterday's press kit learned the 1600 'premium seats' are really 1,096 club seats combined with the 528 seats in those 40 luxury boxes. In fact, MEC only got three-quarters of the way to its 'minimum' goal on club seats. But the PR spin using the 1,600-figure raised a few eyebrows, especially among informed observers. Most give MEC top marks for enthusiasm and effort but note the group has a serious credibility problem when it comes to numbers--especially the ones with dollar signs in front. (Cheater, 1994, p.3).

MEC members, however, never acknowledged the campaign to be a failure; negativity was not an option.

Throughout MEC's existence, the group was never able to secure a sincere and significant commitment from the private sector to invest in the team and to purchase club seats and luxury boxes. Winnipeg's corporate base was not big enough to accommodate the revenue requirements of an NHL team, and the older generation of the business community was uninterested in

investing in the team. Nevertheless, the campaign and its resulting media publicity, characterized by unrelenting optimism, was an effective method in promoting the numerous constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets.

One of the major ways through which MEC and Spirit were able to promote the constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets was through the mobilization of the local business community. MEC advertisements and Free Press articles constructed an appearance of unanimity in the business community through vivid depictions and portrayals of local businesses donating money to the Save the Jets campaigns (Douglas, 1995e, p. B2; Samyn & Douglas, 1995, p.A1; MEC ad, 1995c, p. B16; Owen, 1995a, p.A1; Owen & Campbell, 1995, p. B1). For example, one article read: "It was a scenario played out several times in the largest mobilization of the Manitoba business community in modern history" (Douglas, 1995e, p. B2). These images constructed the entire business community as unanimously supporting, both financially and psychologically, the efforts to save the team, further reinforcing the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets.

Silver (1996) contends that MEC used strong-arm tactics to force local businesses to donate money to the campaign and to purchase luxury boxes and club seats. As Silver (1996) noted:

Its members exerted enormous pressure on small and medium-sized businesses to contribute to the campaign: at least some businesses purchased club seats for fear of losing accounts if they did not. Even those businesspeople who doubted the wisdom of MEC--and there were many--remained silent, never publicly expressing their concerns.... For them, class loyalty came before the public interest (p. 147).

In our interview, Silver also noted:

Well, a personal friend told me, he was a partner in a small accounting firm, and he

told me that they were reluctant to buy a seat or seasons tickets, or whatever they were selling. Before they were even building the arena MEC was selling the seats, they had a target, what he told me is that MEC simply made it apparent that they would lose business. (Jim Silver, interview with author, September, 1998)

Ross Robinson passionately denied any type of unprofessional conduct on MEC's part. I read the above quotation from Silver (1996) to Robinson in our interview, and this is how he responded:

My comment on that would be those are outrageous statements, that the business community gave everybody or every business or every individual an opportunity to give and each gave to their capacity. To my knowledge no threats were ever given, this was just the most incredible group of business gentlemen I've ever met and you know there were no motorcycle gang tactics whatsoever. (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998)

The significant mobilization of the business community to try and save the team, and the resulting media coverage of their mobilization, promoted the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets to the city of Winnipeg. Also, MEC was a group of volunteers who donated a significant amount of time and effort to the Save the Jets campaign. Many businesses were literally put on hold so that businesspeople could devote time to the Jets' negotiations. This effort and time commitment, made visible through the local media, illustrated the importance of the Jets to the business community and to the city of Winnipeg.

The constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets were also promoted by both MEC and Spirit through City Council presentations. MEC and Spirit group members made a number of presentations and lobbied City Council extensively. These presentations and lobbying techniques allowed MEC and Spirit to secure a number of civic concessions which ultimately allowed both groups to proceed with their attempts to purchase the Jets. The extensive lobbying and presentations reinforced to City Council and to those citizens in attendance the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets to the city of Winnipeg. Both MEC and

Spirit's relationship with City Council will be discussed in the section on Council's role in the negotiations to save the team.

There was minimal public consultation and minimal public debate during both MEC and Spirit's attempts to purchase the Jets. Given that the debates surrounding the proposals to purchase the Jets and to build a new arena were important political issues, the lack of public input into the process is surprising. The lack of debate and public consultation eliminated the opportunity for public participation and potential debates on the constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets. For example, the only major public discussion surrounding the site selection of the arena occurred in the form of a public open house on April 7-8, 1995. Silver (1996) contends that the event was more of a public relations exercise than a public consultation. The open house consisted primarily of architectural drawings, and lacked any type of financial information and public debate. The absence of public debate played a significant role in the elimination of criticism, and in the reinforcement of the constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets.

Ross Robinson noted that he would have liked to have seen more public consultation for such an important community event, but also added:

I think with the original deal, the MEC leadership was trying to find a way to privatize the team and most private corporations don't involve the public to try and do a deal. (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998)

Yet, the public owned 36% of the Winnipeg Jets. Clearly the public had an interest in this deal.

City Council had also passed a resolution in 1995 that included a requirement of public consultation. Silver (1996) contends that MEC tried to forge an appearance of public consultation by conducting a sham hearing prior to Gary Bettman's arrival in Winnipeg to 'satisfy'

the City Council guidelines. No public consultation ever took place, despite the City Council guidelines requiring public review and consultation.

Much of the deliberations surrounding the negotiations to purchase the team and build a new arena were done behind closed doors away from public scrutiny and consultation. As Donald Benham noted: **“The only public consultation was ‘give me your money’” (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998).** The deals also involved the use of public lands and massive amounts of public monies to build a new arena. Yet the public was excluded from these debates. For example, the Manitoba Metis Federation and other natives groups were not consulted over the selection of The Forks²² as the location for the new arena even though the First Nation leaders had demonstrated that they did not want the land at The Forks developed for a new arena. Their concerns went unaddressed. Frances Russell, of the Winnipeg Free Press, astutely observed the emergence of corporatism in her columns. According to Russell:

The corporate boardroom is taking over the role of the government in Canada, too. Major decisions about public policy and the expenditure of millions of tax dollars are being made behind closed doors with little or no public information or accountability. The elite is contemptuous of public interest. The decision by the provincial government to allow a private entity, the Manitoba Entertainment Complex, to decide, without tender, the location, construction manager and cost of a \$110 million, entirely publicly financed building is only one offensive aspect of the Jets/Arena fiasco. There are others. (Russell, 1995, p. A7)

Public criticism and the displacement of the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets were therefore not possible.

The debates between the business elites and Shenkarow, as it turned out, were primarily over who would maintain control of the team, and who would have the ability to profit from

²²The Forks is an important archaeological site which Natives inhabited for hundreds of years.

massive capital gain following the sale of the team. As John Ralston Saul (1995) notes:

“Corporatism is about interests and the division of those interests. Their fights are over who gets what” (p.103). The lack of public consultation in this process points to the increasing presence of corporatism in Canadian society. The individual citizen was reduced by those involved in the negotiations to the role of passive bystander, capable of nothing more than observation and boosterism. A vivid example was given by Dave Shoalts (1994) of *The Globe and Mail*:

Shenkarow, who thinks the three governments should finance the entire project, says the public just isn't educated enough to see this as a sound investment rather than a subsidy for millionaire owners and players. (Shoalts, 1994, p. A11)

The debates over the Jets and a potential new arena were an extremely divisive political issue that involved millions of public dollars. Yet, many private meetings and negotiations took place which the public was not allowed to attend; informal channels and backroom deals typified the negotiations to save the team.

Ironically, following the demise of the franchise, the precedence of secrecy was extended by the provincial government. The Conservative government proved unwilling to publicly release documents pertaining to the negotiations surrounding the efforts to save the team. By 1995 the Conservatives had not even released the 1991 IOA agreement! According to the *Free Press*: “The Filmon government has spent the past six months stonewalling, fumbling and ultimately withholding records dealing with the Winnipeg Jets despite the interventions of the provincial ombudsman” (Samyn, 1995a, pp. A1, A3). Later in the article, Jules Benson attempted to explain the lack of records and his ‘good memory’: “I have a reasonably good memory so I don't have to produce a lot of paper.... If you saw me in action you would know that I don't write a lot of memos” (Samyn, 1995a, pp. A1, A3). Benson, the provincial Treasury Board secretary, would

be punished by Filmon in 1998 for his involvement with funds used in an alleged vote rigging scandal (Nairne, 1998, p. A1). Benson was Filmon's main advisor during the Save the Jets campaign.

Ultimately, the government would release the Free Press' requested documents. Those documents indicated that companies owned and operated by MEC and Spirit members profited from the negotiations during the Save the Jets campaign. The provincial government had, however, approved these expenditures. The provincial government also failed to publicly document the money used to help Spirit make a \$10 million deposit for the Winnipeg Jets (Samyn, 1995b, p. A14). In addition, a controversy developed regarding the provincial advance of \$3 million to MEC without any formal written authority under the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program (Krueger, 1995, p. A4). The secret and informal channels used by the provincial government point to the absence of visible documentation of the expenditure of public funds in their efforts to save the Jets. The investigative reporting of the Free Press revealed many controversial documents. The Free Press' investigative and critical work, however, would be limited primarily to the events that occurred following the collapse of the efforts to save the team.

The local business community promoted all of the constructions, from the local to the global, surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets. The establishment of these constructions served to construct Winnipeg's identity as including the Jets and a new arena. These constructions served to manufacture consent for the efforts of the business community to save the team. While the majority of these individuals were attempting to save the team and build a new arena for the community, several of these individuals would have also benefitted from the presence of the team and a new arena. As Whitson and Macintosh (1993) have noted, local

business elites are better positioned to take advantage of the presence of these amenities than other members of society. Arena developments, for example, regularly lead to other profitable land developments for local entrepreneurs. Also, the future owners of the team would have potentially profited enormously by 'flipping' the franchise for a massive profit; the option price was \$32 million yet the franchise was worth considerably more. Without a salary cap and revenue sharing plan in the NHL without the presence of an owner willing to absorb the team's projected losses, the Jets would not have survived in Winnipeg for more than two additional years.

The promotion of the Jets and a new 'world class' arena as indicative of Winnipeg's global identity and global status by the local business elite represents the establishment of a global frame of reference. The emergence and promotion of 'world class' commodities, including franchises, cities and entertainment facilities, points to the acceptance and naturalization of the processes of globalization and the logic of global capital accumulation. The local elites are better positioned to take advantage of the establishment of the construction of Winnipeg as a 'world class' city and the Jets as a 'world class' franchise. The value of such a distinction is found in the international exposure of the city as an attractive destination for flexible international capital and white collar workers. The local elites would have also benefitted by the presence of 'world class' entertainment in the form of the Jets and a new arena. Besides potential profits stemming from land developments and the inevitable sale of the franchise, only a relatively affluent segment of the population would have been able to enjoy the costly presence of 'world class' entertainment. The business community's promotion and construction of Winnipeg as a united community in support

of the efforts to save the team masks the contested nature of identity and other forms of social inequality, maintaining current societal power relations.

The Role of the Media

The media play a major role in the construction and dissemination of messages, ideas, values and symbols. The social impact surrounding the dissemination of such information can not be underestimated. The privileged access the media are given to information and elites underscores the social and public responsibility of the media to report in accordance with objective and unbiased criteria--particularly reporting on the use of public funds. Such responsibility is of critical importance in all democratic societies. Throughout their history, the Jets received a significant amount of news coverage in Winnipeg from all forms of media. From local Winnipeg radio stations, to local newspapers and television stations, the symbiotic relationship of the mainstream media and the Winnipeg Jets hockey club was highly visible. In particular, the Save the Jets campaign from 1994-1995 was covered extensively.

Two daily newspapers exist in Winnipeg: The Winnipeg Free Press and The Winnipeg Sun. The Winnipeg Tribune also covered the Jets until the paper's demise in 1979. Both the Winnipeg Free Press and the Winnipeg Sun provided a vast amount of coverage surrounding the issues pertaining to the Save the Jets campaign. The newspaper analysis of this thesis consisted of only articles from the Winnipeg Free Press, therefore I will limit my analysis to that newspaper. The debates surrounding negotiations over the potential purchase of the team and the potential construction of a new arena dominated the Winnipeg Free Press' coverage from 1994-1995. Several individuals noted during interviews that the Jets were the story of the decade in Winnipeg.

The coverage provided by the Winnipeg Free Press on the issues surrounding the Jets supported such beliefs. During the Save the Jets campaign of 1994-1995, extensive coverage appeared in the form of articles, editorials, columns, and various forms of news reports in the Winnipeg Free Press. The Free Press also donated money and free advertising space to the campaign.

Several individuals were highly critical of the Free Press' coverage of the affairs surrounding the Save the Jets campaign. The majority of the articles that appeared in the Free Press were boosterish in their support of the efforts to save the Jets. The paper offered little critical discussion over the issues surrounding the Save the Jets campaign and the potential construction of a new arena. Globe and Mail reporter Dave Roberts, for example, described the media coverage in Winnipeg as "fatuous boosterism" (Roberts, 1995a, p. A14). Silver (1996) noted that from May 15-21, 1995, only 6 of the 68 stories the Free Press ran on the Jets could actually be considered journalistically balanced. The few critical pieces that did appear in the paper were 'buried' or appeared beside several pro-Jets stories. Journalism instructor Donald Benham was particularly damning of the Free Press' coverage:

I thought there was very little critical dimension at all. The Free Press became a cheerleader for anything that was pro-Jets and essentially a censor for anything that was anti-Jets. And nowhere was this clearer than the release of the business plan which had a hole you could drive a truck through. And Nick Martin, finally, three days after the plan was supposed to have been released, he finally got it, and it was buried. Here was something that should have been on the news pages quite legitimately because it dealt with public money, and instead it was buried on the sports pages way on the bottom. (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998).

The Free Press uncritically accepted MEC's business plans and projections, while ignoring or downplaying critical stories. The Free Press, for example, on October 16, 1994, 'buried' its coverage of the Black and Dolecki report released by Thin Ice on page sixteen. Thin Ice did

receive regular coverage by city hall reporter Nick Martin; Martin's critical stories, however, were regularly buried beneath several pro-Jets articles. The minimal coverage of Thin Ice's position was exactly the opposite of the coverage granted to the groups trying to purchase the team. Ironically, the one time that Thin Ice did receive front page coverage in the paper occurred when Carl Ridd was constructed as supporting a nonexistent MEC proposal.

The Free Press blatantly promoted the belief that the Jets were important to the city of Winnipeg, and unequivocally accepted the notion that a new arena had to be built at The Forks. The paper was also unyielding in its support of MEC's efforts to purchase the team. The Free Press failed to construct the issues surrounding the Save the Jets campaign as a matter of choice involving massive amounts of public funds. Debate was minimal and alternatives were not examined. Other options, including the numerous arena proposals and the alternative proposal to renovate the existing arena, simply were not explored. As Nick Martin noted: **"I don't think that people were doing enough questioning"** (Nick Martin, interview with author, August 19, 1998). Boosterism had replaced scrutiny and objective coverage of the use of public funds.

The financial claims of various reports like the Coopers & Lybrand report were accepted at face value. Similarly, financial aspects surrounding the negotiations were rarely explored; MEC's business plans and financial projections were minimally analyzed. The expenditure of millions of dollars of public money also went unanalyzed. As Benham noted:

The only reason the news media are there in my opinion, the fundamental, not the only reason of course, they have ancillary functions all the time, but the only reason to justify the tremendous privilege they get in terms of access and all the other things that they are given is because they report to the public about the spending of public money. And that was a function that completely and utterly broke down in the coverage of the Jets. The media did not report on the spending of public money

in the way that they should have. (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998)

While financial and critical stories are not the most 'exciting' pieces, the media have an obligation to scrutinize plans and documents involving public funds rather than uncritically accepting complicated proposals of 'industry experts'. The Free Press, for the most part, appeared unwilling to critically analyze the financial aspects. As Herman and Chomsky (1988) note, corporate sources are often recognized as reliable and credible by news organizations. They are used and claimed by the local media as 'expert proof'. Such was the case surrounding the media's uncritical promotion of the various reports of the local economic impact of the Winnipeg Jets. Corporate sources were heavily relied upon, while other sources were virtually ignored.

The Free Press adamantly supported and boosterishly promoted MEC's positions and claims without critical inquiry. As Benham noted, MEC dominated the pages of the Free Press:

I believe that they controlled the Free Press' news pages for a period of time. I guess essentially the Free Press was printing the things those people wanted to see in the paper and it wasn't printing the things they didn't want to see. (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998)

Doug Smith also made note of the coverage:

Well, it was largely uncritical, it never examined the economic, well, it accepted on prima facie case many of the economic arguments that were presented as to the economic benefits of the team. So you really got very little effort to analyze so it was boosterish in the extreme. MEC, the group that John Loewen headed, were beyond criticism and beyond reproach. (Doug Smith, interview with author, August 20, 1998)

Smith, a freelance journalist, also wrote a number of articles attacking the journalistic conduct of the Free Press and the process surrounding the negotiations to save the team (Smith, 1995a; 1995b; 1995c). Because the majority of the Free Press articles surrounding the Save the Jets

campaign were boosterish and highly uncritical, the odd critical story appeared without undermining the paper's overwhelming support for MEC's efforts. The odd critical piece by Frances Russell and Nick Martin questioning the events surrounding MEC and the Save the Jets campaign did little to offset the overwhelming support of the paper. This was particularly the case when critical pieces were buried or placed beside multiple pro-Jets stories. As Jim Silver noted on the coverage of the Free Press:

Well I thought it was terrible, and I think they ought to be ashamed of themselves. You know I think that was the case right throughout. Every once in a while there would be a column that may reflect a position we were more comfortable with, but you know it was sort of one and a hundred type thing. What is important about the media is the day to day hammering away on an issue, and when every single day you've got a particular point of view being expressed, then you can allow the occasional different point that just gets lost in the end; it gets buried. (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998)

The Free Press also donated advertising space to MEC and money to the Save the Jets campaign. Given that the debates surrounding the Jets were extremely divisive political issues, the Free Press' financial support of the campaign legitimized the pro-Jets side of the debate while castigating the other side.

The Free Press' overwhelming support of the corporate community should not be surprising. Major newspapers have close links with other major corporations, banks and governments (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The Winnipeg Free Press, like other privately owned newspapers, is part of the business community. As Smith noted:

The Free Press' position in all of this is that they are part of the business community and they are there to make money. And the leaders of the Free Press are part of the business community. They socialize with them, they meet together in a variety of settings, and I don't mean that conspiratorially at all...but the senior leadership already holds the views of the business community. (Doug Smith, interview with author, August 20, 1998)

Smith reinforces Chomsky's (1989) proposition:

Furthermore, those who occupy managerial positions in the media, or gain status within them as commentators, belong to the same privileged elites, and might be expected to share the perceptions, aspirations, and attitudes of their associates, reflecting their own class interests as well. Journalists entering the system are unlikely to make their way unless they conform to these ideological pressures (p. 8).

As a member of the corporate community, the Free Press could not be openly critical of the business community's efforts to save the team; they could not afford to jeopardize their important links with the business community. Brian Cole's and John Douglas' praise and boosterish articles in support of the business community's efforts to save the team are indicative of this claim.

The Canadian media, like many other industries, is highly concentrated in the hands of a few very wealthy individuals. For example, two corporations, Hollinger/Southam and the Thomson Corporation, control 68% of all Canadian daily newspapers (Winter, 1997). The Winnipeg Free Press is owned by Ken Thompson--one of the wealthiest individuals in Canada with assets of \$10 billion. Like its Canadian counterpart, the American news industry is also heavily concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy individuals (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). These individuals have a healthy interest in maintaining the status quo and are closely connected to other elites with similar interests and ideological beliefs. It would be naive to think that the media would openly question and criticize the business community of which they are a part.

Like other businesses, newspapers exist to accumulate capital. The Free Press exists to make money. A newspaper's profitability is directly related to the success of local businesses and local economies; 80% of newspapers' revenues stem from advertising placed by firms with a local presence (Winter, 1997). An advertiser's choices and preferences will influence mass media survival and profitability. The Winnipeg Free Press benefitted directly from the advertising of

many MEC members who remain an important part of the local Winnipeg economy. The Free Press simply could not afford to be at odds with the opinions and beliefs of the local business community.

Newspaper revenues are also based upon total sales. Sports sections sell newspapers. In particular, sports fans who attend games are more likely to purchase a newspaper the following day (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998). The Winnipeg Free Press therefore had an obvious economic self-interest in promoting the Save the Jets campaign. It was also clear that those involved in the paper had a genuine and emotional attachment to the issues surrounding the Jets and the city of Winnipeg. Cole, for example, genuinely believed that the Jets and a new arena were important to the city of Winnipeg. The same can be said of John Douglas. As Benham noted, there were two primary media motivations for mobilizing the efforts to save the team: **“Economic self-interest, and a sense of community—wanting to be seen as leading the community in something the community supports, and because they are people and they are Winnipeggers”** (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14).

The majority of the Free Press’ coverage was delegated to the sports reporter, Scott Taylor, and the business reporter John Douglas. A number of reporters covered the issues surrounding the Jets, and others wrote columns about the Save the Jets campaign. The majority of the coverage was, however, limited to Douglas and Taylor--two unabashed boosters of the efforts to save the Jets. There were rumours that the coverage of the Jets had been purposely limited to Douglas and Taylor given their open support for campaign. As Donald Benham noted during our interview:

I can say that I got the feeling back from my contacts in the Free Press news room that this story was being tightly managed in the news room as to which reporters could cover it, and vice versa from the other point of view, being managed very tightly from the MEC/Spirit side as to which reporters they would talk to. (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998)

At the time of the Save the Jets campaign, the city editor of the paper was Brian Cole. Cole delegated the primary role of covering the campaign to Douglas, noting that Douglas was the most competent and relentless reporter for the job (Brian Cole, interview with author, August 15, 1998). Cole was openly pro-Jets and genuinely believed that a new arena was needed in Winnipeg. He wrote several editorials applauding the efforts of the business community, and publicly indicated his support for the construction of the new arena. Following the collapse of their efforts, Cole praised the actions of those involved and castigated those who opposed the process (Cole, 1995, p. A7; Cole, 1996a, p. A9). Cole, for example, wrote a harsh book review of Silver's (1996) book in which he applauded the role of the business community, while defending the coverage of the Free Press and reporter John Douglas²³ (Cole, 1996b, p. A15).

Douglas was similarly supportive of the business community's efforts to save the team and the proposal to construct the new arena. Douglas genuinely believed that the loss of the Jets would be a blow to the emerging young business leaders of Winnipeg. In one instance, following the abandonment of MEC's efforts to save the team, Douglas (1995) wrote that: "...the failure of the Winnipeg Jets was a victory for Manitoba. The leadership torch has been passed into very capable hands" (As cited in Silver, 1996, p. 141). Despite the inability of the business elite to save the team, Douglas claimed that their efforts signaled the 'readiness' of the younger generation to assume a leadership role in the Winnipeg business community. In another instance Douglas

²³Silver (1996) was highly critical of Douglas' stories and journalistic conduct.

(1995f) commented: “Certainly this exercise has tested the mettle of the Manitoba Entertainment Complex, These are the leaders of the future, the people who will push the city forward to do things that need to be done” (p. B4). Douglas was supposedly nicknamed by other reporters as “Done deal Douglas” for his habitual boosterish reporting of MEC’s endeavors and frequent claims that a deal to purchase the team had been completed (Smith, 1995b, p.47). His selection by Brian Cole as the primary reporter may therefore not have been simply a matter of hard work and dedication. Ironically on August 15, 1995, the day the business community finally abandoned its efforts to purchase the team, Douglas was promoted to business editor of the Free Press.

While Douglas and Taylor were the primary reporters on this issue, a number of other reporters and columnists wrote stories on the debates surrounding the Jets. Yet, as Nick Martin commented, the Free Press coverage was never coordinated:

I don’t recall at any point that we all met as a group and coordinated our coverage. I wasn’t in regular communication with anyone. Things were just moving so fast. Ideally we should have been sitting down once a week and saying here is what’s likely to happen this week, but even on a daily basis, I’d file stories and they would be lumped into four other stories, and you felt like you were covering City Council in isolation. (Nick Martin, interview with author, August 19, 1998)

Similarly, Brian Cole noted that when stories broke they were often uncoordinated (Brian Cole, interview with author, August 15, 1998). The unorganized and often chaotic ‘beat’²⁴ structure of the Free Press could therefore have greatly contributed to the paper’s lack of critical and systematic coverage of the events surrounding the Save the Jets campaign.

²⁴Beat coverage consists of assigning a reporter to a particular organization or level of government to generate consistent coverage for a newspaper.

Cole was also critical of the Free Press' coverage. In his opinion, the emotional nature of the stories overwhelmed participants to the extent that a reasonable discussion of the pros and cons of the debate became impossible. Cole also noted that the discussions surrounding the Jets and a new arena were tardy and that all options, including the renovation of the existing arena, were not adequately discussed. According to Cole, the media failed to generate public debate earlier in the 1990's. Prior to 1994, only Scott Taylor had predominantly written about the issue. Cole also commented that the articles on the editorial page (of which he is now editor) were lacking. As editorial page editor, Cole would have encouraged the section to have been pro-Jets, but not to the point of excluding the opposition's views. Cole genuinely believed that the arguments promoted by Thin Ice were weak, and that they could have been exposed in a public debate (Brian Cole, interview with author, August 15, 1998).

A number of rumours began to circulate in 1995 regarding the Free Press' coverage of the events surrounding the Winnipeg Jets. Besides rumours that the coverage was purposely limited to specific reporters, other rumours emerged that city editor Brian Cole was re-writing articles on a pro-Jets slant. As Benham noted:

... the stories I heard from the inside were that Brian Cole, who was the city editor at the time, took a major role in how these things were covered (Laughter). (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998)

Jim Silver noted:

Now the other thing on this is that several reporters told us on various occasions that their stories were being re-written, and that they were re-written primarily by Cole, and I can't prove that. (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998)

Later in the interview:

But I think that it must relate to the economics of the newspaper, and somebody in the hierarchy has got to ensure that the newspaper is consistent with their financial interests and it appears that it was Cole who could ensure that that was the case. Now what we've said earlier is that Cole really did believe the position he held, and I don't have a problem with him firmly believing that position as an argumentative case, my problem with Cole was that he was re-writing reporters' stories.... (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998)

None of these rumours were ever proven to be true but the post hoc editing of stories by management editors does occur in the Canadian media (Winter, 1997).

Scott Taylor, the sports reporter for the Free Press, was particularly boosterish in his support of the efforts to save the franchise. His columns frequently extolled support for the efforts to save the team, while at the same time demeaning the opposition to the process. It also became clear to media observers that Taylor had a direct pipeline to Gary Bettman. On one occasion Taylor received a copy of a letter from Bettman to Shenkarow before, or shortly after, Shenkarow had received it (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998). Taylor routinely used Barry Shenkarow as a source for his columns; Taylor frequently conveyed Shenkarow's position and beliefs, and he was known as the 'voice of' Barry Shenkarow. Silver (1996) notes that the two were in frequent contact and that Taylor benefitted from receiving first hand information from Shenkarow. Alan Sweatman noted in our interview that Bettman had leaked letters to Taylor regarding The Spirit of Manitoba (Inc.):

He gave it to Scott Taylor and the first thing we knew of that was the big story, "Spirit conceals information", and that was terribly damaging, and if anything nearly destroyed us, that did. Taylor, for some reason, was in Barry's pocket all the way, and I think literally he was in his pocket, and I don't think it took too much to put him there...but he had plainly sold himself to Shenkarow. (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998)

In a lawsuit against Barry Shenkarow and his partners, Spirit accused Shenkarow of encouraging "...Taylor to launch a campaign that 'denigrated the abilities and integrity' of Spirit officials as well as their business plan" (Silver, 1996, p.154).

Taylor clearly illustrated his lack of objectiveness when he claimed that viewers should vote Conservative to save the Jets while being interviewed on CBC's Hockey Night In Canada. Taylor's boosterism can be attributed to a combination of factors. Clearly Taylor is an avid sports fan with a genuine interest in sports at all levels. He also, however, had a personal and economic interest in the retention of the Winnipeg Jets. When the Jets were in Winnipeg he was covering the major leagues of professional sport, something that most sports reporters aspire to. Only the best reporters are assigned to high status beats of professional sport (Lowes, 1997). Clearly this was an ego boost for Taylor. Taylor's personal income was also directly related to the presence of the Jets. As Silver (1996) noted, Taylor "...was a frequent and well-paid commentator on radio and tv on matters related to the Jets and the NHL and therefore had a vested financial interest in the Save Our Jets campaign" (p. 140). When the attempts to save the team finally collapsed, Taylor lashed out at the efforts of MEC and Spirit, and wrote a scathing column criticizing both groups (Taylor, 1995i, p. D1).

Once Spirit took over the efforts to purchase the team, the Free Press began to write more critical stories about the Jets, concerning Spirit's financial projections and business plans. John Douglas, for example, wrote a number of stories questioning both Spirit's business plans and ability to raise private capital to purchase the team. Silver (1996) fails to acknowledge Douglas' more critical stories that appeared towards the end of the process. While Douglas was undoubtedly boosterish in his coverage of MEC's attempts to purchase the team, Douglas

eventually began to question Spirit's abilities to secure the team by August, 1995. MEC members noted the switch in the tone of the paper's coverage by the summer of 1995. Ross Robinson acknowledged that: **"The media went from a love-in to biting dogs"** (Ross Robinson, **interview with author, September 11, 1998**). The Free Press also examined in detail the expenditure of public funds in the process of attempting to save the Jets following the collapse of the efforts to purchase the team.

The media actively promoted all of the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets. The Free Press was filled with numerous examples of local, national, and global constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets. This fact is not surprising; the Free Press has an economic interest in the presence of the Jets. The paper also has a vested economic interest in promoting the efforts of the local business community and maintaining the status quo. Thus, the paper promoted all constructions, from the global to the local, surrounding the importance of the team and a new arena and constructed the city as a consensual whole in support of the efforts to save the team. The media's reinforcement of the discourse of 'world class' identities and 'world class' commodities also naturalized the processes of globalization and global accumulation; the very same processes that the select media conglomerate owners have a vested interest in promoting and maintaining.

The Provincial Government

The Conservative provincial government, led by premier Gary Filmon, was well aware of constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets to the city of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba. The Conservative government was actively involved in promoting the

various constructions in numerous ways. In 1991, as a condition of the IOA, the provincial government assumed half of the city's shares of the Jets. Filmon knew that the IOA was a controversial agreement, and he recognized that the involvement of the provincial government could result in controversy (Silver, 1996). The Conservatives actively promoted the belief that the Jets were important to the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba to downplay the potential controversy of public sector involvement in a privately owned team (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998). Their involvement in the ownership structure of the Jets publicly promoted that the Jets were important to the city and to the province.

In 1991, immediately prior to the release of the IOA, finance minister Eric Stefanson released a copy of the Coopers & Lybrand report that touted the economic and cultural benefits resulting from the presence of the Jets. When the Mauro Report reiterated the Coopers & Lybrand claims of economic benefit, both Filmon and Mayor Thompson indicated that they had no choice but to try and save the Jets because of the team's economic and cultural significance. According to Silver (1996), Filmon was also the catalyst in convincing the private sector to assume the leadership role in trying to save the team in 1994. Filmon recognized that the Jets were an important issue for many Manitobans; so important that he knew the debates surrounding the Jets could significantly affect the upcoming election. The provincial government's promotion of the Coopers & Lybrand report's, and the Mauro Report's conclusions further reinforced the constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets to the city of Winnipeg.

Debates surrounding the Save the Jets campaign and the proposal to construct a new arena proved to be key provincial election issues in 1995. The Conservatives were intensely supportive of the efforts to save the Jets, and promoted the constructions surrounding the

importance of the Jets in a number of ways. Yet the Filmon government publicly appeared to be cautious about using a significant amount of public money. The public was already paying for all of the Jets losses, and Filmon recognized that further involvement could be politically dangerous. Behind closed doors, however, the provincial government was intensely supportive of efforts to save the Jets. Prior to the election, Filmon publicly pledged that if elected his government would give no more than \$10 million to save the Jets, and on other occasions he had indicated his preference for minimizing public expense. Immediately prior to the election, the Save the Jets campaign was in full force and some public support for the efforts to save the team were visible to politicians. Filmon knew the Jets were a key election issue that could possibly seal a majority government for the Conservatives. The Liberals were also threatening the Conservatives in a number of ridings. According to Silver (1996), while publicly stating a ceiling of \$10 million of public money, privately, Filmon was letting it be known in the ridings where the Liberals were threatening the Conservatives that he was willing to spend much more. As Silver (1996) notes:

The south Winnipeg seats were crucial for a Conservative majority victory, and somehow during the course of the campaign the belief arose--whether it was deliberately promoted by Conservative Party campaign workers or not--that the only way to Save the Jets was to vote for Filmon (p.117).

Similarly, Donald Benham noted:

You'll remember we were going through a provincial election in the spring, and a civic election in the fall, so it was very crucial to all the politicians to be seen as doing something popular. Gary Filmon, and I stood this far away from him at one point when he made the declaration, said throughout the election campaign that \$10 million was the limit. Three days before the election, in four or five crucial ridings, particularly in the south end of the city where the Liberals were doing well, somebody started calling around, somebody, and who knows who (very sarcastically), saying, "you know, it's not going to be just \$10 million, Gary Filmon is really committed to this, and you can count on Gary to save the Jets". This edged

over those particular ridings and gave Filmon his majority. (Donald Benham, interview with author, August 14, 1998)

As Silver explained in our interview:

Here's my hypothesis. They ran this petition campaign, they took their petitions to the arena and they had huge numbers of people sign it saying Save our Jets. I think that those petitions were entered into a computer and blocked off by constituencies and that the Tories, the Tory supporters called those people and said the only way to save the Jets is to vote for Filmon, Filmon will spend whatever is needed, and again I cannot prove this, but boy do I have strong suspicions. Filmon was publicly saying that there was no way he would spend over \$10 million, and these particular people were being targeted individually, and this became very important in South-Eastern Winnipeg where the Liberals were really strong. And the Liberal candidates who I interviewed told me that on a particular day during the campaign they felt the bottom drop out, and it's my hypothesis that this is when the targeted campaign started. (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998)

Also, on national television, prior to the election, Scott Taylor encouraged voters to vote for Filmon to Save the Jets. According to Silver and Benham, Filmon's 'two-faced' election strategy gave the Conservatives a majority government. By the beginning of May, 1995, Filmon had broken his pre-election promise. He was all of the sudden willing to contribute \$37 million to the plans to Save the Jets and build a new arena.

Filmon was visible during the Save the Jets campaign. He attended a number of meetings with MEC and Spirit members and played a role in negotiations (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998). Filmon openly supported the efforts to save the team. Filmon's support of the efforts further reinforced constructions on the importance of the Winnipeg Jets to the province of Manitoba. Prior to the arrival of Gary Bettman in Winnipeg, Filmon exclaimed:

"We've reached a crucial point in terms of the future direction of the NHL which affects not only Winnipeg but many other centres in Canada," he said. "We may be the ones who have to deal with this issue but Quebec, Ottawa, Edmonton, Calgary and possibly Vancouver will face this same situation in the near future. This is about the future of hockey in Canada." (Martin & Douglas, 1995, p. A1)

In another instance, Filmon told a crowd gathered in front of the provincial legislature: “Gary Bettman and his little group of wealthy owners have no right to take Canada out of the game” (Douglas, 1995a, p. A1). The fact that Filmon supported the efforts of MEC and Spirit is not surprising. The Conservatives are a right-wing government with close ties to the individuals in MEC and Spirit and the local business community (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998). Despite Filmon’s initial public indication of fiscal prudence, the Conservatives were willing to do whatever MEC and Spirit asked of them. The informal and secret channels used to provide MEC and Spirit with undisclosed funding, as previously identified, further indicated the Conservatives ongoing support for the business community.

The Federal Government

The federal government also played a controversial role in the Save the Jets campaign. The federal government’s involvement was spearheaded by Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy (member for Winnipeg South Centre). Axworthy had been briefed early in the campaign by MEC officials who had filed an application for the Canada/Manitoba Infrastructure Program funding. Axworthy willingly expressed interest in the project and played a major role in securing the federal government’s involvement. The federal government’s involvement in the negotiations to save the Jets promoted the Jets and NHL hockey as important indicators of Canadian culture. Gary Bettman and representatives of Canadian franchises have recently appeared before the House of Commons ‘begging’ for tax relief since the current Canadian tax structure supposedly threatens the demise of the majority of Canadian NHL franchises (The NHL, 1998). The Liberal government is also currently pondering the recent recommendations of the

federally sponsored Sport in Canada Report (1998), which proposes to offer tax concessions to privately owned NHL teams.

The involvement of the federal government was not without controversy. At the same time as the Save the Jets campaign was operating, the Quebec Nordiques were suffering a similar financial fate. Yet the federal government had not offered Quebec any support. The Bloc Quebecois accused the federal government of discrimination against Quebec and embezzlement of the national infrastructure program (Dion, 1995, as cited in Harvey et al, 1996, p. 270). Axworthy and the Liberals were damaged by this controversy and following the scandal, Axworthy assumed a less visible role. As Silver noted:

The federal government, led by Axworthy, were more cautious, and Axworthy, I think, was smart and just distanced himself a little bit and played a balanced kind of role. I think that they made it clear to the business community that it could happen, but it got to the point when it was impossible, and they got off the sort of boosterish band wagon that the province was on. (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998)

The federal Liberals were damaged, in a manner comparable to the provincial Conservatives, for their involvement in this issue once efforts to save the team collapsed. Axworthy had utilized informal channels to provide an undisclosed \$533,000 toward the design of a new arena (Krueger, 1995, p. A1). The involvement of the federal government, through formal and informal channels, further reinforced the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets to the city and Winnipeg, and the importance of NHL hockey to a Canadian 'national identity'.

City Council

The main way City Council promoted the constructions surrounding the importance of the

Jets was through City Council votes in which they gave unequivocal support for MEC's and Spirit's efforts to save the team. Only three councillors regularly voted against proposals to support MEC and Spirit, and City Council minutes are deluged with comments from councillors promoting the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets (See Appendix C for City Council minutes analyzed). Council's support and efforts to Save the Jets reinforced the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets to the city of Winnipeg.

The mayor of Winnipeg during the Save the Jets campaign, Susan Thompson, was an unabashed booster of efforts to Save the Jets. When MEC announced that they could no longer continue in the negotiations, claiming that the NHL had instituted last minute demands, Thompson exclaimed:

"Enough is enough," Mayor Susan Thompson told a stunned crowd gathered to debate the merits of the new arena last night. "This city has gone way beyond the call. It is time for the NHL to stop this and stand up and look at what this sport means to Winnipeg, what it means to Canada. The message we get is that the NHL does not care if hockey survives in Winnipeg and we wonder if it even wants it to survive in Canada." (Martin & Douglas, 1995, p. A1)

During Operation Grassroots, Thompson extolled: "There's a little book I remember from my childhood. It's 'The Little Engine That Could'. That's how I look at our city. We keep chugging and chugging" (Owen, 1995b, p. A1). Jim Silver (1996) described Thompson as: "The city's chief booster, Mayor Thompson remained 'cheerily innocent of the details' of the complex Jets/arena conflict" (p.96). Mayor Thompson, like Gary Filmon, routinely touted the economic importance of the Winnipeg Jets to the local economy.

The business elite had a profound influence on city council. For example, prior to MEC's involvement, Mayor Thompson had promised that no new arena would be built at The Forks.

The involvement of MEC and its members who 'backed' Thompson's candidacy could have influenced her decision to break that promise. City council was ready and willing to give MEC whatever it wanted. The examples are numerous: on October 14, 1994, Council voted in favour of giving MEC \$1.5 million to begin its marketing campaign; on February 1, 1995, Council, without a business plan and public consultation, voted in favour of giving MEC approval to build a new arena at the Forks; on that same vote the Council passed a number of guidelines as well including public consultation--many of these guidelines including the requirement of public consultation would never be fulfilled; on May 17, 1995, amidst the Save the Jets campaign, Council voted in favour of spending \$67 million without a business plan and without public consultation; on August 9, 1995 the Council passed a seriously flawed Spirit business plan which Council had received only a day before the vote.

City Council had been successfully lobbied by both MEC and Spirit. This is not surprising given the historical domination of City Hall by Winnipeg's business elite (Artibise, 1975). Thin Ice's claims and speeches were simply ignored by the majority of councillors. MEC and Spirit had repeatedly threatened City Hall that if they failed to pass motions to support MEC and Spirit, then negotiations to save the team would collapse; MEC and Spirit also routinely threatened the loss of local economic activity if Council failed to pass motions (Silver, 1996). Councillors were routinely given complicated documents the morning of, or the day before, important votes and were pressured to vote in favour of granting support for MEC and Spirit (Nick Martin, interview with author, August 19, 1998). Councillors were also lobbied and intimidated by Jets' fans. City hall was regularly filled with Jets' fans who chanted and screamed during votes. Councillor Rick Boychuk had his house surrounded by Jets' fans; Boychuk's home address was given out over the

air by CJOB radio station. No matter what the cost to the city, Council did not want to be blamed for killing the deal to save the Jets. The political costs of being portrayed as the reason why the negotiations collapsed were too high.

MEC's and Spirit's relationship with Winnipeg's City Council was strenuous and controversial. Both MEC and Spirit had to lobby City Council to secure concessions for their business plans--even though on many occasions the groups did not even have a business plan. Yet most MEC and Spirit group members were inexperienced in dealing with City Council. Silver (1996) suspects that because business is no longer solely locally oriented, the business elite have had little need to interact with City Council. City Council was asked to play an important role in issues surrounding the Jets. In this instance, MEC and Spirit's inexperience in dealing with the Council would come to the forefront.

MEC and Spirit were under significant time constraints to meet option deadlines. Both groups also needed major concessions from City Council to meet those deadlines. This pressure was in turn transferred to City Hall. City Council was asked to make important decisions within a limited amount of time and with limited information. As Silver noted:

When the deals and the business plans started coming forward, these were very complicated documents, thick with numbers and on many occasions when important votes were cast, these piles of thick documents were placed on the desks of the councillors right before the vote. There was no earthly way these people were going to be able to adequately analyze the documents they were given, and then they were required to cast votes which kept the whole thing alive. (Jim Silver, September 1, 1998)

Winnipeg Free Press city hall reporter, Nick Martin agreed:

Everything was rushed...you know, if you wanted to do something to your property it could take you eight or nine months to go through all the stages and there were times where council was asked to make enormous decisions within the hour. I can

remember Loewen and his group coming forward and they were setting deadlines for council approval and telling them that they had to meet deadlines or else the whole project would collapse...and the Jets would leave and it would be all city council's fault. And it seems that everyone was pointing at city council and saying here are the road blocks, if you don't pass it, then you are the ones who have driven the Jets out of town. (Nick Martin, interview with author, August 19, 1998)

For example, on May 17, 1995, City Council was asked to approve a \$67 million expenditure to construct a new arena without a business plan from MEC and without public consultation.

Council had only been verbally briefed by Izzy Asper the day before on the issues surrounding the vote (Silver, 1996). Ironically, on February 1, 1995, City Council had voted to allow MEC to build a new arena at The Forks while instituting a number of guidelines including the presentation of a business plan and public consultation. By May 17, neither had been accomplished.

Council was placed under a lot of pressure to vote in favour of both MEC's and Spirit's motions through various lobbying techniques. As Silver noted:

I mean what happened...the business community came and twisted arms. We actually happened to be sitting in the gallery at city hall when a couple of MEC guys went behind the gallery but in an area that we could see, and they were just beating up on Terry Duguid. I mean they were just verbally insisting, demanding that he vote this way, and here's what will happen if you don't and so forth. The MEC people were very aggressive mobbing councillors. While at the same time behind the scenes the businessmen were twisting arms.... They could say, and did say, you know, if you don't do this we will withdraw our capital, and all these kinds of threats that were being said all the way through. (Jim Silver, interview with author, 1998)

Council was repeatedly faced by MEC and Spirit with the imposing threat of being constructed as the individuals that killed the Jets. For many councillors, this was enough to make them alter their vote. Also, the presence of Jets' fans in the City Hall gallery was an imposing sight for many councillors. The presence of such fans could have significantly influenced council votes. Silver suggests another possible influencing factor, based upon the appearance and credibility of

individuals making presentations at City Hall:

On the one hand you've got all the important members of the business community saying vote yes, and on the other hand you've got a rag-tag group of students and unemployed persons and egg-headed professors saying vote no. Well, who are you going to listen to? If you compare the two groups and you're a city councillor and you've gotten the documents at the last two minutes and you can't possibly go through them, who has the greater degree of credibility? Well, clearly they do, so, add to that the public pressure and the councillors ended up voting yes, with the exception of three. (Jim Silver, interview with author, September 1, 1998)

MEC and Spirit group members also expressed difficulties with their relationship with City Hall. The time frames imposed upon them by Barry Shenkarow affected their interaction with City Hall. John Loewen noted:

Well, I mean we were under tight time frames...we were always trying to deal with time frames and we had to lobby City Council one by one, we had to call together nine votes.... But Thin Ice certainly lobbied City Council, but they just lobbied differently, so as far as I'm concerned that was fair game, we just beat them at that game. (John Loewen, September 10, 1998)

Similarly, Ross Robinson noted:

Yeah, well, we had a critical time line with respect to Barry Shenkarow's extension of the agreement to August 15 and the city was asked to react accordingly. With respect to lobbying there isn't a City Councillor that isn't asked each week to take a stand on a particular issue. (Ross Robinson, interview with author, September 11, 1998)

Alan Sweatman noted the difficulties of dealing with City Council:

To appear before city council is a wild experience because they are all over the lot, each councillor has his own little fiefdom, and his own little idea of what his constituents want him to say about any given issue...and they fight amongst themselves endlessly, and the mayor has no casting vote or control over this.... (Alan Sweatman, interview with author, September 8, 1998)

All three levels of government were actively involved in promoting the constructions surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets from the global to the local. Politicians therefore

played a major role in constructing Winnipeg's urban identity as including the Jets and a potential new arena. The construction of Winnipeg as a 'world class' centre by politicians must be viewed in light of the emergence of flexible capital. National, provincial and civic levels of government have emerged as supplicants to the demands of flexible capital (Teeple, 1995). The presentation of a city and country as a 'world class' destination for capital has emerged as a mandate for all levels of government to secure capital investment and employment. The three levels of government also constructed a Canadian 'national' identity, based on the NHL hockey, as being threatened by the processes of Americanization with respect to the departure of 'Canadian' NHL franchises. The construction of a crisis in 'national identity' allows for the reproduction of the premise that a nation can be constructed as a consensual whole. Such a process reinforces current power relations and masks inequitable societal relations.

The results of sub-problem two indicate that the local business elite, local media, Jets' fans and politicians were active in promoting the constructions surrounding the value of the Jets. These results support the research indicating that urban boosters and local media typically construct professional sports teams as boosting a city's image and representing a city's collective identity and future (France & Roche, 1998; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Schimmel et al., 1990; Whitson & Macintosh, 1993). In addition, the constructions surrounding the value of the Jets were challenged by Thin Ice, a local activist group opposed to the use of public funds for the construction of a new arena. Thin Ice played a visible role in opposing the efforts to save the team; the political process surrounding the efforts to save the team was this highly controversial and complex.

The results of sub-problem two extend the literature on the construction of urban identity by examining the specific constructions promoted or challenged by specific groups surrounding the value of the Jets. Urban boosters, for example, constructed the Jets in terms of their value to Winnipeg's local and global urban identity, and Canada's 'national' identity. Thin Ice, however, did not directly address the constructions of global identity. The activist group primarily challenged the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets to Winnipeg's local identity and the importance of NHL hockey to a Canadian 'national identity'. Yet, it is embedded within such constructions that we find Thin Ice's discouragement of the logic of global accumulation. By contesting the constructed importance of such 'world class' products as NHL franchises and new entertainment facilities, the group was indirectly opposing the establishment of a global culture and the processes of globalization. Thin Ice was constructing a local and national identity that was independent of a global frame of reference. The group, however, did not acknowledge the role of the processes of globalization and the establishment of a global logic of capital accumulation. Nevertheless, these results indicate support for the research suggesting the existence of personal and urban identity as a site of ideological struggle (Harvey, 1987; 1989; Jackson, 1994).

The results of this case study illustrate the complexity associated with the urban decision-making process surrounding the presence of a professional sports team. This study has identified the specific methods used by different groups to promote or challenge the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets. In this respect these results extend the literature on globalization and sport, and in particular the research on the urban decision-making process surrounding the hosting of mega-events and subsidy of professional sports team. For example,

research has indicated that opposition to such projects rarely receives adequate coverage and are typically projected as opponents to the community (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). Thin Ice, in response to a lack of media attention, promoted their constructions through various independent publications and demonstrations, public meetings, City Council presentations and local alliances with other activist groups.

The business elite in Winnipeg mobilized together to promote the constructions surrounding the value of the Jets and received virtually unconditional support from the three levels of government for their efforts to save the team. These results support recent research indicating the emergence of corporatist interests in the urban decision-making process (France & Roche, 1998; Roche 1992) and the overall domination of business interests and lack of community input in the process (Roche, 1994). The local media, for the most part, promoted the value of the Jets and a new arena through donations of free advertising space and money to the Save the Jets campaign and by actively promoting the constructions surrounding the value of the Jets in articles and editorials. The media's boosterish coverage 'manufactured consent' (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) for the efforts to save the team, while at the same time marginalizing the opposition.

Chapter 6

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between local particularities and globalization in sport. This study sought to discover how local particularities and global identities have been constructed by specific groups/individuals surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets from 1972 to 1996. Three sub-problems were developed to aid this process:

- 1) What are the constructions of global identities and local particularities surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets that were generated for citizens from 1972-1996.
- 2) What individuals/groups promoted or discouraged the various constructions of global images and local particularities surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets?
- 3) How did those individuals/groups promote or discourage such constructions?

To facilitate this process a qualitative research methodology was employed. A detailed newspaper analysis of The Winnipeg Free Press from 1972-1996 was conducted to discover the various constructions surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets. In addition, data collection generated a rich history of the team. Data collection also consisted of semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in the efforts to save the team from 1994-1995. Participants included individuals from the local business community, local activists from Thin Ice, local reporters from the Winnipeg Free Press, and the former president and co-owner of the Winnipeg Jets.

The purpose of the interviews was to give voice to the individuals involved in the process and negotiations of trying to save the team. The interviews also provided a significant background to the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets to the city of Winnipeg. The variety of participants provided the researcher with an extensive foundation of data from which to draw. All individuals were exceedingly generous with the time they granted for the interviews, and all participants were equally passionate in describing their actions and motivations in their efforts to either promote or challenge the constructions surrounding the importance of the team.

Conclusions

The results of this study indicate a relationship between local particularities and globalization in sport. Specifically, a relationship exists between the local particularities and the global identities constructed by power blocs surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets. A variety of constructions of local particularities, including constructions of 'national identity' were promoted surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets. In addition, the Jets and a new arena were constructed as representing Winnipeg's global identity and reputation. These results support recent research on globalization that theorizes the construction of local particularities and the presence of cultural heterogeneity within a global frame of reference (Appadurai, 1990; Arundel & Roche, 1998; Hall & Hodges, 1998; Harvey et al., 1996; Houlihan, 1994; Maguire 1993; 1994; 1998; Whannel, 1998). As Harvey et al. (1996) note: "Globalization does not simply involve the development of a homogenized global metaculture based on a global economy in which all individuals consume the same product" (p. 267).

The presence of these local and global constructions points to the establishment of a global frame of reference in which local particularities are constructed according to the logic of global capital accumulation. The logic of global capital accumulation requires particularities to prosper. For example, the construction of Winnipeg's local identity as 'world class' promotes Winnipeg as a distinct location similar to other 'world class' urban centres. These results support the recent research indicating the emergence of a 'world class' layer of urban identity (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Whitson & Macintosh, 1993; Whitson and Macintosh, 1996). The promotion of 'world class' products, including cities and professional sports teams, naturalizes and masks a global logic of accumulation in which distinctiveness is marketed for the purpose of capital accumulation.

The results of sub-problem two indicate that the local business elite, local media, Jets' fans and politicians were active in promoting all of the constructions surrounding the value of the Jets. While Jets' fans did not benefit financially from the presence of the team they represent a distinct segment of the population that can afford to enjoy, or at least be linked to, 'world class' entertainment. These results support the research indicating that urban boosters and local media typically construct professional sports teams as boosting a city's image and representing a city's collective identity and future (France & Roche, 1998; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Schimmel et al., 1990; Whitson & Macintosh, 1993). In particular, these groups constructed Winnipeg's global identity according to the presence of the Jets and a new arena. The constructions surrounding the value of the Jets were challenged by Thin Ice, a local activist group opposed to the use of public funds for the construction of a new arena, supporting research theorizing the ideologically contested nature of identity (Harvey, 1987; Jackson, 1994). Thin Ice challenged the constructions

of local and national identities that promoted the value of the Jets. Thin Ice, however, did not directly challenge the constructions of global identities that were being promoted by other power blocs. Only through their promotion of an urban identity independent of 'world class' amenities were they able to indirectly challenge the logic of globalization. Nevertheless, the existence of such constructions indicates that local and national identities can be constructed to oppose or support the processes of globalization.

The construction of local particularities by business elites, politicians, Jets' fans and local media were rarely reflective of authentic particularities (Arundel & Roche, 1998). Clearly only a specific segment of Winnipeg's population would have enjoyed the presence of a 'world class' professional hockey team and new arena. The marketing of Winnipeg as a 'world class' cosmopolitan centre only applies to a distinct population of affluent individuals who are able to enjoy the comforts of 'world class' amenities. Such marketing strategies are not reflective of the 'reality' of urban life for many individuals. For example, the level of child poverty in Winnipeg is abnormally high and Winnipeg's Native community continues to be decimated by poverty.

The last sub-problem examined the ways in which the specific groups promoted the various constructions surrounding the value of the Jets. Thin Ice, for example, used a variety of a creative ways to challenge the constructions surrounding the importance of the Jets. The results of this study point to the emergence of corporatism in the decision-making process, and the exclusion of the general public from participating. Thin Ice and the general public were largely uninfluential and unwelcome during the negotiations to save the team. These results support recent research indicating the emergence of corporatist interests in the urban decision-making process surrounding the presence of professional sports teams and mega-events (France & Roche,

1998; Roche 1992; 1994). This fact is discouraging and unfortunately representative of the dominance of corporatist interests in Canadian society (Silver, 1996). Ironically, the primary factor which lead to the ultimate demise of the negotiations to save the team was intra-class conflict between the business elite and Shenkarow over who would ultimately control and profit from an asset worth millions of dollars.

I agree with Harvey's (1987) observation that the transformation of the urban landscape and the commodification of space must be viewed with respect to the accumulation of capital and the reproduction of class relations under capitalism. The negotiations to purchase the Jets and to construct a new arena were spearheaded by the local business elite with minimal public consultation. The use of significant amounts of public funds for the purpose of that transformation was also a choice indicative of the ideological disposition of those in power. At a time when the provincial and civic governments were engaging in massive social service cuts²⁵, politicians were somehow able to locate millions of dollars for the purpose of constructing a 'world class' entertainment facility to house elite, professional sport. The construction of a new arena was not a choice made out of social necessity.

A global market has emerged in which global products, including NHL franchises and 'world class' cities, have been constructed and commodified by team owners, local business elites, local media, and politicians as marketable products. The discourse of 'world class' cities and 'world class' professional leagues, and indeed global identity, naturalizes a global culture, economy and a logic of capital accumulation. The naturalization of a global culture, and global

²⁵ For example, during the Save the Jets Campaign a Winnipeg youth was unable to receive \$400 a month from the provincial government for life-saving Lorenzo's oil needed to treat his fatal disease.

cultural products, "...has nothing to do with cross-cultural understanding and everything to do with the larger profits to be gained by expansion into new and affluent markets" (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993, p. 246). The construction of global cultural products and identities as 'world class' or as more valuable than local products threatens the existence and autonomy of 'the local'. As the constructed superiority of global cultural products becomes more evident, local distinctiveness becomes less visible and less valued.

Recommendations

This study has extended the research on globalization and the construction of local particularities through an examination of the various groups involved in promoting and challenging the local, global and national constructions surrounding the value of the Jets. In addition, this study examined the ways by which those constructions were promoted and displaced. Future research could examine specific cases in which the processes of globalization are being challenged or reinforced. In particular, research could quantify the use of local, national and global constructions to determine if specific constructions are being utilized more so by some local groups than by others. Future research could also analyze the role of local media in promoting or challenging the constructions of the specific layers of identity.

The construction of a global frame of reference and local particularities are becoming more visible worldwide. As a global frame of reference continues to emerge and as the global visibility of 'world class' products becomes more pronounced and more 'sought after', opportunities for future research will increase. In particular, the incorporation of local particularities into the research process must be undertaken. Specific cases need to be analyzed in

which local cultures are resisting and challenging the global logic of accumulation. For example, how have local cultures been successful in constructing alternative images to 'world class' cities in order to challenge the processes of globalization?

A solid foundation to the complex processes of globalization has been developed by sports sociologists in recent years. This theoretical framework needs to be expanded. For example, research could be coordinated on a global level to analyze the establishment of a global frame of reference and the construction of local particularities. Given the growing popularity of the term 'globalization' and its frequent use/misuse, without a coordinated research effort we leave ourselves vulnerable to the establishment of what one radio host has termed 'globaloney'.

Appendix A

Sample Interview Guide

- 1) How were you involved with the Jets' ownership and arena debates and/or the Save the Jets campaign?
- 2) Why did you get involved and how did you see your role?
- 3) Why were the Jets important to the city of Winnipeg?
- 4) In your opinion, why were people, and in particular the business community, so committed to saving the team--especially since the Jets had been losing money for so many years?
- 5) What arguments were put forward surrounding the value of the Winnipeg Jets in terms of adding to local and regional cultural distinctiveness?
- 6) What arguments were made surrounding the importance of the Winnipeg Jets to Winnipeg's global identity?
- 7) How Canadian do you think hockey is? Is hockey a part of a Canadian national identity?
- 8) Do you believe that given the changing economic nature of the NHL that the Jets could have survived in Winnipeg given a lack of a revenue sharing plan and a salary cap in the NHL?
- 9) What do you think is going to happen to other small-market Canadian NHL hockey franchises?
- 10) How would you describe the NHL's and Gary Bettman's role throughout the Save the Jets campaign?
- 11) How would you describe MEC's and Spirit's relationship with Barry Shenkarow during the negotiations to purchase the team?
- 12) How comfortable were you with the media's coverage of the Save the Jets campaign--in particular, how comfortable were you with the Winnipeg Free Press' coverage?
- 13) How would you describe Thin Ice's involvement during the Save the Jets campaign?
- 14) How did Thin Ice promote their position?

- 15) What was your opinion of the public consultation process during the Save the Jets campaign?
- 16) How would you describe the relationship between the business community and the three levels of government?
- 17) How would you characterize the involvement of all three levels of government?
- 18) How would you describe the business community in Winnipeg?
- 19) In your opinion, why did Izzy Asper get involved?
- 20) How did the business community promote their beliefs surrounding the value of the Jets?
- 21) Looking back, would you have changed your role in this process in any way?

Appendix B

Interviews

Donald Benham, Red River College journalism instructor, personal interview, Friday, August 14, 1998.

Brian Cole, Editorial Page editor, Winnipeg Free Press, personal interview, Saturday, August 15, 1998.

Carl Ridd, Thin Ice member, personal interview, Tuesday, August 18, 1998.

Nick Martin, City Hall reporter, Winnipeg Free Press, personal interview, Wednesday, August 19, 1998.

Doug Smith, Free Lance reporter, Winnipeg Free Press, personal interview, Thursday, August 20, 1998.

Jim Silver, Thin Ice member, personal interview, Tuesday, September 1, 1998.

Barry Shenkarow, Former President of Winnipeg Jets, personal interview, Thursday, September 3, 1998.

Alan Sweatman, Former Spirit Chairman, personal interview, Tuesday, September 8, 1998.

John Loewen, Former MEC Chairman, personal interview, Thursday, September 10, 1998.

Ross Robinson, Former MEC member, personal interview, Friday, September 11, 1998.

Appendix C

CONSENT TO BE INTERVIEWED

I _____ (Please print name) agree to be interviewed on audio-tape by Jay Scherer for his Master's thesis entitled: Globalization and the construction of local particularities: A case study of the Winnipeg Jets.

I am aware of the purpose of this research and I understand that I will not be guaranteed anonymity. I understand that the audio tapes used in this research will be erased after three months time.

I am aware that my participation in this research is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the interview at any point without explanation or sanction.

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix D

City Hall Minutes Examined

January 31 & February 1, 1995

City Council votes in favour of a set of guidelines giving MEC approval to build at The Forks.

February 22, 1995

City Council motion for MEC to present business plan.

May 17, 1995

City Council votes in favour of approving an expenditure of \$37 million for construction of a new arena and \$30 million in infrastructure costs.

August 3

Council votes in favour of granting Spirit's tax deduction approval.

August 9 & 10, 1995

City Council votes in favour of accepting Spirit' business plan and Due Diligence reports

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