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Etribalization - The Impact of Mediated Experience on Identity: A Case Study of

University of Calgary Chinese Students and the Salt Lake 2002 Olympics.

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled " Etribalization - The Impact of Mediated Experience on Identity: A Case Study of University of Calgary Asian Students and the Salt Lake 2002 Olympics" submitted by Patrick M. McCurdy in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Arts.

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Abstract

This thesis uses a cultural studies framework to examine the impact of a nationalistic media event on the “collective imagination” in an age of cultural globalization. Combining literature on media events, sport, globalization and nationalism, the core of this study seeks to examine the concept of etribalization. Briefly, etribalization is conceptualized as the potential to bring individuals together, spark the collective imagination and make individuals feel a connection with a larger entity via a mediated experience. The concept is actualized by exploring the impact of a Canadian “media event” on first and second generation Chinese-Canadians. The media event selected for study is the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s broadcast of the men’s 2002 Salt Lake Olympic gold medal hockey match between Canada and the United States.

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Dedication

. To my family.

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Epigraph

"I AM A SNAKE, not an apple."

John Ralston Saul, *The Unconscious Civilization*.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“Henderson has scored for Canada!”

- Foster Hewitt, CBC Broadcaster, September 28, 1972.

In 1972 with a nation's eyes and ears honed on their respective media, Team Canada left winger Paul Henderson scored what has become revered as “the goal”. The Summit Series between Canada and the then communist superpower, the Soviet Union, had been organized as a best of eight series with four games to be played across Canada and four games to be played in Moscow. As a result of a 4-4 tie in Game 3, as well as a Canadian comeback from a two-game deficit, the series was tied at three games apiece. This made Game 8 the rubber match with the winning team clinching the home/away Summit Series.

Coming into the third and final period of Game 8, the score was: Canada 3, Soviet Union 5. By 12:56 in the third period, Team Canada had evened the score to 5-5. With a tie game and little time remaining in the third period, the psychological rules of the Summit Series changed. As had been said so often in streets, on ponds and in backyard rinks born from green garden-hoses: “next goal wins.” For the next six minutes and thirty seconds the two hockey superpowers were gridlocked. At 19:26, with 34 seconds left in the third period, Paul Henderson scored the game-winning goal on twenty year old Soviet net-minder, Vladislav Tretiak. Final score: Canada 6, USSR 5. This was an epic victory for the Canadians who experienced this electronically mediated clash of hockey giants; the game would become part of Canada's mythical landscape, part of its cultural memory.

In the fall of 2002, thirty years later in celebration of the pearl anniversary of Team Canada's victory, a boldly named commemorative DVD compilation was released: *Canada's Team of the Century: The Best of '72*. This four DVD box set contained all eight hockey games totalling twenty hours of "uncut" Summit Series footage (Pelletier, 2002). The Summit Series and more importantly its final game, has been seen as a "...defining moment in Canada's cultural and sporting history, easily the most remarkable example of the bond between national identity and sport uniting Canadians from coast to coast"(Podnieks, 1997, p. 129). It is estimated that perhaps half of Canada's population watched or listened as Paul Henderson scored "the goal" in the fading seconds of the Summit Series final live via the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). The event - resident not only in the collective consciousness of Canadians over forty, but digitally preserved in commemorative kitsch - stands as a prominent Canadian example of an electronic monument: a media event. The mediated experience of the Summit Series and its relation to other media-facilitated experiences of the same era is eulogized by Canadian writer Doug Beardsley in his book *Country On Ice*:

Who will ever forget the voice of Foster Hewitt cracking with emotion as he described Paul Henderson's series-winning goal against the Soviets in Moscow? September 28, 1972. Ten million Canadians watched Neil Armstrong take one small step for mankind on the moon. Twelve million Canadians heard Henderson's goal. Canadians who remember where they were and what they were doing when John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas nine years earlier also remember what they were doing on the day when there were 34 seconds left to play and "He shoots! He scores!"(Beardsley, 1987 p. 23).

Three decades after broadcaster Foster Hewitt's famous declaration, "Henderson has scored for Canada!" the media environment that allowed for the broadcast of the Summit Series has become both denser and more technologically advanced. In fact, a hallmark of the current

North American condition is its saturation by electronic media. Electronic media such as television and the Internet are primary, integral, sources of information and personal experience in Canada. Addressing the issue of mediated experience, respected media scholar Todd Gitlin notes:

In the presence of media, we may be attentive or inattentive, aroused or deadened, but it is in symbiotic relation to them, the pictures, texts, and sounds, in the time we spend with them, the trouble we take to obtain, absorb, repel, and discuss them, that much of the world happens for us. Media are occasions for experiences-experiences that are themselves the main products, the main transactions, the main “effects” of media. This is the big story; the rest is details (Gitlin, 2002, p. 10).

It is this media experience, what Gitlin calls the “big story,” which will be the focus of this study. With access to a montage of media from multiple sources, especially in North America, how can one select an event that encompasses the media experience? Is this even possible? Enter the *media event*.

Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History by Dayan & Katz was published in 1992 and is credited with first developing the media event thesis. The media event thesis is a significant academic contribution to modern communication thought on two levels. First, the argument put forward by Dayan & Katz is significant for its identification of a new genre of television, the media event. Second, the media event thesis is theoretical significant by providing a fresh frame of reference for analysing mediated experience. Dayan & Katz argue that certain “historic” mediated experiences, “media events” possess the potential to transfix and transform society (Dayan & Katz, 1992). The power of their arguments rests in the authors’ unique blend of media theory which, grounded in a “neo-Durkheimian spirit” (Dayan & Katz, p. viii, 1992), draws from media effects, audience studies, sociology, and social as well as critical theory. The result is a balanced theoretical model which avoids the

traps of early research into media effects by recognizing audience agency. Further, the authors acknowledge the multiple levels of production and interpretation involved in the production and consumption of a mediated experience. Dayan & Katz accomplish this by exploring the relationships between three variables: the audience, the broadcaster and the media event organizer(s).

The media event thesis asserts that significant media events reinforce existing group values and identities. Media events also impact the collective memory. This is accomplished via the creation of “*electronic monuments*” which Dayan & Katz argue, in time, may eventually represent and organize the audiences’ past experience of the media event (Dayan & Katz, 1992, pp. 211-213). Further, the media event creates collective memory (Dayan & Katz, 1992, pp. 211-213). One of the most insightful observations made by Dayan & Katz is their argument that media events create modern rituals that play a role in “*civil religion*”(1992, p. 16). Unique to the media event is that these rituals are no longer “bound by geography.” The possibility exists for the creation of global rituals; a prospect which is heightened by the fact that media events as a genre draw larger television audiences than any other type of television programming (Dayan & Katz, 1992). According to Dayan & Katz (1992), one of the characteristics of a media event is that it creates a sense of duty to view it; borrowing a tagline from American broadcast giant NBC, media events are “must see TV.”

However, not all television broadcasts constitute a media event. Certain mandatory elements are necessary for a television transmission to be classified as such. Media events are said to:

- Be “*interruptions of routine*,” disrupting the regular flow of broadcasting and of society (Dayan & Katz, 1992 p. 5).

- Be broadcast “*live*,” as it happens, in a “*monopolistic*” manner whereby all channels interrupt their regularly scheduled programming to show the event (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 5).
- Be “*preplanned*” and “*organized outside the media*” and held in remote (i.e. not on a sound stage) locations (Dayan & Katz, 1992, pp. 5-6).
- Be “presented with *reverence* and *ceremony*” (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p.7).
- Have the potential to “*electrify very large audiences*” and in turn, the broadcast is celebrated by its viewing audience (Dayan & Katz, 1992, pp. 8-9).
- “*Integrate* societies into a collective heartbeat and evoke a *renewal of loyalty* to the society and its legitimate authority” (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 9).

The myriad of activities the authors labelled media events includes: state funerals, royal weddings and election debates. Specific examples of media events include: the royal wedding of Princess Diana and Prince Charles in 1981, the Canadian network coverage of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s funeral in the fall of 2000 and American “President” George W. Bush’s evening address on September 11, 2001. Dayan & Katz also note that media events may also be born from sporting events such as the Winter Olympics. Accordingly, the Canadian media’s portrayal of the gold medal game will be the focus of this study. I will argue that the men’s Olympic gold medal hockey game during the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City can be seen as a media event.

While a media event may act as an effective vehicle to study society, sport offers a similar opportunity. MacClancy (1996) notes:

Sport does not merely ‘reveal’ underlying social values, it is a major mode of their expression. Sport is not a ‘reflection’ of some postulate essence of society, but an integral part of society and one, moreover, which may be used as a means of *reflecting* on society (p. 4).

Sport, like a media event, also has an ability to impact one’s identity. MacClancy (1996) believes that sports are “vehicles of identity, providing people with a sense of difference and

a way of classifying themselves and others, whether latitudinally or hierarchically” (p. 2). A last motivating factor in the selection of a sport media event stems from the role of hegemony in sport. Just as media events are “unquestionably hegemonic” (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p.8); hegemonic forces are also apparent in sport (Burstyn, 1999). Examples of the hegemonic role of sport include the maintenance of patriarchy (Burstyn, 1999), idealization of masculine identity (Whannel, 2002) and issues of class (Bordieu, 1978). In summary, sport plays a powerful role in the construction, maintenance and reproduction of society.

As highlighted above, Dayan & Katz (1992) classified the Olympics as a media event. Despite the authors having described the Olympics as a media event, the use of the term in this context is problematic. As a result of the global embrace of corporate capitalism, two critical differences between the classic media event as described by Dayan & Katz and the broadcasting of the Olympics are apparent. The first difference is that media events are *monopolistic* in their coverage while the Olympics favour *monopoly* for their coverage. Dayan & Katz note that in the “most characteristic” media events, “all channels switch away from their regularly scheduled programming in order to turn to the great event” (1992, p. 5). The interruption of the media event is “monopolistic” (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 5). By contrast the Olympics are televised by a *broadcast monopoly*. In an auction sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG) broadcasters in each of the predefined viewing regions bid for title of “official broadcast partner.” This designation entitles the successful bidders to exclusive Olympic broadcasting rights and exclusive access to the host broadcaster’s feed¹ for their

¹ The host broadcaster “is an entity established by the OCOG to record all Olympic events, competitions and ceremonies and to feed the video signal of Olympic events to broadcasters for presentation within their

viewing area. Broadcast revenue has become a vital source of income for the Olympic movement, comprising 50% of Olympic marketing revenue (IOC, 2002a, p. 1.4). The Salt Lake 2002 Winter Olympics generated US\$738 million in broadcast revenue with CBC paying US\$22 million to be the official broadcast partner for Canada. NBC paid US \$545 million for American rights (IOC, 2002a, p. 4.16). The reliance of the IOC on the mono-broadcast model as a source of revenue encourages competition among media entities. In awarding the designation of “official broadcast partner” to the highest bidder, a monopoly broadcast is created as unsuccessful bidders within the same viewing region are barred from broadcasting the event.

The second difference between media events and the broadcasting of the Olympics relates to corporatism. Dayan & Katz argue that when media events are broadcast “often advertising is suspended” as “advertising would violate the sanctity of the occasion” (1992, p. 8, 124). However, as Burstyn (1999) points out, the IOC has developed an intimate relationship with big business². Consequently, advertising plays a significant role in the broadcasting of the Olympics. This role may be explored on two levels. First, Olympic sponsorship provides a significant portion of Olympic marketing revenue. The Salt Lake 2002 Winter Olympics generated US\$840 million, or 43% of its marketing revenue from its

respective countries or territories” (IOC, 2002a, p. 4.3). The host broadcaster for the Salt Lake 2002 Winter Games was *International Sports Broadcasting* (ISB).

² The IOC has developed many sponsorship programs in an effort to generate revenue to support the Olympic movement. Burstyn (1999) cites the “The Olympic Partner (TOP)” program as the IOC’s most successful sponsorship program. TOP members are granted “international marketing rights using the Olympic logo and wording” (Burstyn, 1991, p. 230). The TOP sponsors for the 2001-2004 Olympic quadrennium which includes the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece and the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics, generated US\$6 Billion dollars from ten (10) partners: Coca-Cola, John Hancock Life Insurance, Kodak, McDonalds, Panasonic, Samsug, SchlumbergerSema Information Technology, Sports Illustrated/Time, Visa and Xerox (IOC, 2002a, pp. 5.1-5.20).

OPUS sponsorship program³ (IOC, 2002a, p. 1.4). Second, and directly related to the broadcasting of the event is the use of advertisements during the Olympic broadcast itself. The Olympics draw exceptionally large television audiences. The Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games was viewed by 2.1 billion people (Sports Marketing Surveys Ltd, 2002, p. 1). Considering that “the most important function of sport from the point of view of the broadcasters and advertisers is to create audiences” (Burstyn, 1999, p. 231), broadcasting an event such as the Olympics to such a mass audience provides a prime opportunity for broadcasters to generate revenue and advertisers to hawk their wares. Recognizing the large sums of money doled out for indirect advertising through sponsorship programs, as well the fact that the broadcasting of the Olympics is undertaken by broadcasters to generate advertising revenue, advertising should be regarded as playing a central role in the media event.

In order to provide a contextually accurate representation of the Olympics as a media event, one must resolve the above discrepancies between the reality of the Olympic broadcast and the static definition of the media event. This may be achieved by accounting for the above observations in a revised definition of the media event. In seeking to redefine the media event in the context of the Olympics, two potential criticisms should be addressed. First, media event purists might argue that there is no need to redefine the media event as the aforementioned differences are addressed by the authors’ in their assertion that broadcasts are “often” and not always monopolistic, and that media events “often” and do not always

³ The Olympic Properties of the United States (OPUS) sponsorship program is, “a joint marketing venture between the Salt Lake Organizing Committee (SLOC) and the United States Olympic Committee (USOC)” (International Olympic Committee [IOC], Salt Lake 2002 OPUS Sponsorship Programme). Sponsors of the OPUS program “contribute essential products, services and technology to the staging of the [Olympic Winter]

suspend advertising. Second, Dayan & Katz state that for a television happening to be defined as a media event it is “necessary” for all “elements” of their definition to be present and that, “no subset of them is ‘sufficient’ without the others” (1992, p. 9). Dayan & Katz do not discount the existence of media event hybrids noting, “this does not mean that the elements cannot exist without one another” but note that these events “are not...media events; they are something else” (1992, p. 9). Despite their insistence on limiting the definition of a media event in this way, I believe the definition of a media event must be amended to recognize the *monopoly* broadcast and the role played by corporatism. Consequently, the Olympics will continue to be referred to as a media event; however, the term will be used with the intent of encompassing not only the work of Dayan & Katz, but also the notions of monopoly and corporatism. The motivation, however, is to retain the spirit of the media event as initially described by Dayan & Katz.

Thus far it has been argued that a media event, specifically the Olympics (a sport media event), is an appropriate vehicle to study the impact of mediated experience due to its potential influence on identity. I have also mentioned that this study will examine a specific media event, the men’s Olympic gold medal hockey match between Canada and the United States during the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics. What now must be explained is the rationale behind my selected population. In order to discuss this, it is first necessary to state this study’s research question: Did Canada’s victory in the men’s 2002 Salt Lake Olympic gold medal hockey match as broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation mark an etribalization of first generation Chinese-Canadians? Evident in this research question is the

Games” and have done so to the tune of US\$840 Million (ibid). The 2002 Salt Lake OPUS program is “the strongest in Winter Games history” (ibid).

fact that the primary population selected for examination is Chinese immigrants (also referred to as first generation Canadians).⁴ A second population involved in this study is Canadian-born Chinese (also referred to as second generation Canadians). Although the methodology in selecting specific focus group participants is discussed in Chapter 3, I will offer a brief discussion behind the rationale in wishing to study immigrants in general, and the Chinese-Canadian community specifically.

Canada has long relied on immigration to maintain and increase its population base. Consequently, Canada has developed a reputation as a multicultural society. A potential difficulty with a large (and diverse) immigrant population, at least in the eyes of the nation-state, is attempting to ensure some level of common identity amongst its citizens. While by no means endorsing cultural homogenization, it is assumed that a minimum level of national cohesiveness is required to maintain the nation-state. Beginning in the late 1960s as a result of changes to its “racist” immigration policy, Canada experienced a decrease in immigrants from Europe and the United States and began receiving immigrants from other parts of the world (Wong, 2002). Immigrants from “Asia, Africa, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.... increased from 14 percent of all immigrants in 1965 to 77 percent in 1999” (Wong, 2002, p. 46). The ongoing ethnic and cultural diversification facilitated by this change in immigration policy may be regarded as presenting a challenge⁴ for the nation-state in its quest for a common, inclusive, reference point for all Canadians. In fact, Canada’s continued struggle for a universal identity may, in part, be linked to Canada’s multicultural nature. This is not to imply Canada’s cultural diversity is to its detriment. But, if Canada

⁴ The use of the word “challenge” is not meant to be read as an immigrant population causing a “hindrance” upon Canadian society. In fact, it is my opinion that the multicultural nature of Canadian society is one of

desires to have its newest citizens identify with the nation-state it must instil, at least to some degree, a Canadian identity. In wishing to explore the relationship between media, identity and Canada, an immigrant population was deemed appropriate. I felt that immigrants, having come from an ethnic and/or cultural background different than Canada's, would offer an enlightening study into the power of mediated experience. In an effort to add further texture to my research, I elected to include second generation Canadians along with immigrants. With respect to the specific ethnic group, Chinese-Canadians were selected because China has been the number one "primary source country" for Canadian immigrants since 1998(CCIC, 1998; 2002), in fact, 16.10% of Canadian immigrants in 2001 came from China (CCIC, 1998; 2002).

At first glance any relationship between hockey and first generation Chinese-Canadians may seem spurious at best. However, through the use of a cultural studies framework the aforementioned research question allows for an exploration of the impact and interrelations between mediated experience and the collective imagination in the Canadian context. This study employs a cultural studies approach.

Andrews (2002) notes the use of a cultural studies approach to analyse sport "...has never been more pronounced than it is today" (p. 110). However, Andrews laments a tendency for scholars to "display an unconvincing and/or ill-informed comprehension of the cultural studies project" (2002, p. 110). To remedy this, Andrews calls for an emphasis on context, and "the development of an approach that more closely engages the primary tenets and practices of the broader cultural studies project, while furthering the understanding of

Canada's assets (though there are problems, see Chapter 5). Further, finding a common reference point for new Canadians is also of benefit to the immigrant by facilitating a sense of belonging and acceptance.

contemporary sport culture” (2002, p. 110). While Andrews’ discussion primarily focused on British cultural studies, the American cultural studies⁵ approach as explained by communication scholar James Carey also provides the “intellectual specificity” demanded by Andrews (2002). Consequently, this study is grounded in Carey’s cultural studies framework.

James Carey is both a patriarch of the communications discipline and a pioneer of American cultural studies⁶. Among Carey’s many contributions to the field of communication is his transmission/ritual dialectic that helped legitimize cultural studies in North America. Carey argued there are two “alternative conceptions of communication,” the transmission view, and the ritual view of communication (Carey, 1989, pp. 14-15). The transmission view regards communication as “a process whereby messages are transmitted and distributed in space for the control of distance and people” (Carey, 1989, p. 15). Rooted in modern thinking, the transmission view of communication is “[derived] from one of the most ancient human dreams: the desire to increase the speed and effect of messages as they travel in space” (Carey, 1989, p. 15). According to Carey, this view has become the most widespread view of communications in North America. While the transmission view of communication concentrates on “the extension of messages across geography for the purposes of control,” the ritual view “conceives communication as a process through which a shared culture is created, modified and transformed” (Carey, 1989, p. 43). Thus the ritual

⁵ The American cultural studies approach put forth by Carey should not be viewed as separate from British Cultural studies; it developed, in part from critical theorists and those of the Birmingham school.

⁶ It is important to note that although Carey’s cultural studies framework is relatively new, having only been published in 1989, Carey’s work is well grounded and was selected for this reason. One of Carey’s major influences was the work of Harold Innis who himself was both trained and influenced by scholars of the Chicago School. Some of Carey’s other influences include scholars from the Birmingham School (the original

view of communication does not concern itself with the physical transmission of a message. Instead, this view explores how through the use of various media, society constructs and organizes itself to form a "...meaningful cultural world that can serve as a control and container for human action" (Carey, 1989, p. 19).

Acknowledging differences in the two approaches, Carey notes that "neither of these counterposed views of communication necessarily denies what the other affirms" (1989, p. 21). Despite this statement, Carey feels there is greater utility in adopting a ritual view as the current emphasis on transmission in communication scholarship is dated and neglects the social construction of reality (Carey, 1989). In summary, the purpose of Carey's transmission/ritual dialectic is to call upon communication scholars to embrace a ritual view of communication and to ultimately employ a cultural studies framework for the study of communication. His argument is convincing. Carey's cultural studies framework comprises the cornerstone of the ensuing argument.

In using a North American cultural studies framework, emphasis is placed on the way in which the message facilitates the construction of reality (Carey, 1989). Further, a cultural studies position contends that both culture and, by extension, reality should be viewed as constructed in a specific context. Thus reality is a joint project created by the individual and through collective action as a result of, and due to, a specific set of circumstances. Consequently, Carey's cultural studies framework seeks to contextualize the individual, culture and message within its specific environment (Carey, 1989). Lastly, this approach

requires a recognition that individuals simultaneously exist in multiple “cultural worlds”⁷ (Carey, 1989, p. 67). Restated, there is not a “hard existential reality beyond culture and symbols to which human imaginative productions can be referred for final validation” (Carey, 1989, p. 65). Having discussed my frame of reference, cultural studies, the concepts and related methodologies I will use in this study will now be introduced.

Media events are potentially transformative experiences; they possess the power to activate and mobilize the “collective imagination”⁸ of a vast viewing audience. The power of a media event to promote celebration, feelings of connectedness, and “mechanical solidarity” amongst viewers is discussed by Dayan & Katz (1992) as an “effect” of a media event on its viewers. In a similar spirit, the potential to bring individuals together, spark the collective imagination and make participants feel a connection with a larger entity via a mediated experience is encompassed in the concept of *etribalization*; the central concept of this study. Although the term *etribalization* will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, it is advantageous to provide a working definition. *Etribalization* is conceptualized as the potential to bring individuals together, spark the collective imagination and make individuals feel a connection with a larger entity via a mediated experience. *Etribalization* is built upon Appadurai’s (1996) concept of the imagination. Consequently, *etribalization* seeks to

⁷ Carey’s notion of multiple cultural worlds is taken from Shutz’s (1970) assertion that we exist in multiple realities. Appadurai (1996) whose work plays a prominent role in this study also recognizes the importance of multiple realities. Appadurai accounts for this in his work via the recognition of five interrelated *scapes*, the *ethnoscape*, *mediascape*, *technoscape*, *financescape* and *ideoscape* (1996, p. 33).

⁸ The collective imagination is one of the key concepts of Appadurai’s work. Appadurai (1996) asserts that as a result of our “postelectronic” world, the imagination, “has become a collective, social fact” (p. 5). According to Appadurai, the imagination has “entered the logic of ordinary life” allowing individuals to imagine new words “that frequently transcends national space” (1996, pp. 5-6). However, Appadurai’s emphasis is not on the individual but the “collective sense of imagination” which is formed as a result of mediated experience. It is in the spirit and context of Appadurai’s “collective imagination,” that the mediated experience is viewed in this study.

acknowledge *migration* and *transnationalism* when assessing the impact or effect of the media event.

In tandem with electronic mediation Appadurai (1996) cites *migration* as the other chief component in restructuring the imagination. According to Appadurai the “mobile and unforeseeable relationship between mass-mediated events and migratory audiences defines the core of the link between globalization and the modern” (1996, p. 4). Migration allows one to physically transcend constructed boundaries such as national borders, yet still through the use of the imagination, mediated via electronic communication, construct and maintain a reality outside of one’s physical confinements (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 5-13). Along similar lines Wong (2002) writes about *transnationalism* which acknowledges the ability for immigrants to “have multiple interconnections that cut across international borders and public identities that are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state” (p. 52). Both Appadurai and Wong recognize the potential impact of media and migration on social identity. Mass migration has allowed for the formation of translocalities while media events are contextually specific. Alternatively, migrants may not be familiar with or sensitive to the significance of the event and elect not to participate in it. Due to transnationalism and the opportunity to consume different cultural media, the event may be deemed of little significance. This study, via the examination of a contextually relevant media event, seeks to explore the appeal of such an event to a transnational audience.

In order to draw the connections between the research question and the macro level concepts it encompasses, it is prudent to restate the research question: Did Canada’s victory in the men’s 2002 Salt Lake Olympic gold medal hockey match as broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation mark an etribalization of Canadian Chinese immigrants? In order

to study the impact of mass media on identity an event had to be selected for analysis. As noted above, media events constitute the epitome of collective experiences in the media age. The study of an event must be contextually grounded. Moreover, particular attention must be given to the specificities of both the broadcast and audience in order to provide a holistic understanding of the social, political and economic relevance of the event (Andrews, 2002; Carey, 1989; Gruneau, 1989, 1999; Thompson, 1990, 1995). Residing in Canada, it was practical to select a Canadian sporting media event. Consequently, the men's 2002 Salt Lake Olympic gold medal hockey match between Canada and the United States was selected. The CBC's broadcast of the men's 2002 Salt Lake Olympic gold medal hockey match exhibited all the criteria of a media event:

- The event interrupted routine. Dayan & Katz note that media events "intervene in the normal flow of broadcasting and our lives. Like the holidays that halt everyday routines, television events propose exceptional things to think about, to witness, and to do" (1992, p. 5). The Winter Olympics interrupts the traditional broadcasting and societal routine as it only takes place once every four years. Further, during the period in which the Olympics were broadcast, all regular programming was pre-empted. Consequently, regular programming was cancelled in lieu of the gold medal hockey game on CBC. Again, Dayan & Katz assert the media event is given "absolute priority over all other programs" (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 89).
- Media events are broadcast *live*, as they happen (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 5). The gold medal match was broadcast live on February 24th, 2002 from the Salt Lake City, *E Center Arena*⁹.

⁹ The event was also rebroadcast in the early morning hours of February 25th, 2002 starting at 1:07am MST and ending at 3:45am MST.

- The game was not broadcast in a monopolistic fashion but broadcast by a monopoly. CBC was the only Canadian network with the rights to broadcast the game and held “official broadcast partner” status.
- Media events are “preplanned, announced and advertised in advance....[with] an active period of looking forward, [which is] abetted by the promotional activity of the broadcasters” (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 7). Although the game was only broadcast on CBC, anticipation for the game was evident in multiple Canadian media outlets. For example, an article in *Sports Illustrated’s* February 4, 2002 Winter Olympic Preview edition ran under the headline “Canada Better Not Lose”. The cover of *The Sporting News’s* “Team Canada Preview” boasted a picture of Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux with the headline, “Great Expectations: The heat is on Gretzky & Lemieux to bring home a gold medal.” Both of Canada’s national papers, *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail* ran front page stories on Saturday, February 23, 2002 about the men’s gold medal hockey match for their weekend editions, and on February 24, 2002, game day, newspapers in Canadian cities such as Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver all had the men’s gold medal hockey match as front page news¹⁰. To contrast the importance Canadian media put on the game with American media, the first mention of the men’s gold medal match in the Sunday February 24, 2002 edition of the *New York Times* appeared on the fifth page of

¹⁰ The *Globe and Mail* ran two articles, “Canada ready for ultimate hockey match” and “A perfect occasion to play hockey hooky,” while the *National Post* sported a picture of a dairy farmer watching hockey in his barn as part of their photographic series, “Our photographers watch Canada watch the game,” and ran an article entitled, “Canada, U.S. to face off for gold”. The *Sunday Herald* out of Halifax although not running a story on the front page on Sunday, February 24, 2002, did place a graphic referencing the game and ran subsequent stories in the paper. On the same date the *Montreal Gazette*, placed two articles, “All eyes on goalie Brodeur: Like his father, Montreal native assured of medal but he eyes gold”, “Drop the puck! Canada vs. U.S.A. in Super ice Bowl” and a large photo of Canadian net minder, Martin Brodeur. The *Sunday Star* from Toronto, Ontario, ran a front page article on February 24, 2002 titled, “Gretzky: Indelibly, undeniably a native son,” while on the same date, the Sunday edition of the *Winnipeg Free Press* ran an article with the headline, “Go Canada Go! Country likely to come to halt as The Game becomes focus”. The *Calgary Herald*, Calgary’s largest daily, ran the headline, “Showdown at Salt Lake: In Canada, it’s more than just a game” on February 24. In Vancouver, the February 23rd, 2002, weekend edition of the *Vancouver Sun* placed a graphic featuring a U.S. and Canadian men’s hockey player with the headline, “GOLD MEDAL SHOWDOWN: Canada and U.S. to battle for Olympic title on Sunday” and also ran the story, “Hockey coach to men’s team: Get out there and play like the women – Canada looks to end 50-year drought”.

section eight, the sports section, in an article entitled, “Canada Seeks a Reprise of its 1952 Gold Medal”¹¹.

- The event exhibited both *reverence* and *ceremony*. Hockey has played a significant role in Canadian nation building and has established itself as an icon of Canadian popular culture (Wong & Trumper, 2002; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). The sacrality of the event was evident in the media coverage leading up to the games, and underscored in the final minutes prior to the start of the gold medal contest when it was referred to as “the game of our lives” by CBC sports broadcaster Ron Mclean (CBC Sports, 2002a). The game was wrapped in ceremony. The introduction of team members, the exchanging of symbolic tokens between Chris Chelios, Captain of the U.S. men’s ice hockey team, and Mario Lemieux, captain of the Canadian men’s ice hockey team before the start of the match, and the medal ceremony complete with the playing of the winning team’s national anthem - the Canadian national anthem - were all symbolic moments.
- With a peak audience of 10.5 million Canadian viewers, the match boasted the “all time highest television audience for a single programme in Canada” as well as the “highest rating ever in Canadian broadcasting history” (Sports Marketing Surveys Ltd, 2002, pp. 1, 6), thus fully realizing its potential, in true media event form, to “*electrify very large audiences*” (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 8).
- Dayan & Katz note that viewers “*celebrate* the event by gathering before the television set in groups, rather than alone” (1992, p. 9). Canadians “celebrated” the match by congregating in groups at public and private facilities, licensed establishments and private homes to watch the match¹². After the Canadian victory

¹¹ It is not surprising that the coverage given to the gold medal hockey game was not as prevalent in the *New York Times* as it was in Canadian print media. Dayan & Katz note that “the same public event may be treated as a media event by networks of channels in one country and as news by those of other countries” (1992, p. 114).

¹² The game was viewed in various venues; however, the most common venues mentioned in newspaper reports were restaurants and bars. People also gathered at places such as Canada Olympic Park in Calgary, and GM Place, Vancouver, home of the NHL’s Vancouver Canucks where 10,000 fans took in the game (Williamson,

celebrations took place on the streets of cities across Canada including Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver and in Ottawa where “1,000 people congregated at an impromptu celebration on Parliament Hill to cheer, wave flags and sing the national anthem” (Williamson, 2002).

- The last element that defines a media event is its ability to “*integrate* societies into a collective heartbeat and evoke a *renewal of loyalty* to the society and its legitimate authority” (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 9). Integration as a result of the event may be seen in the sheer number who watched the event, and the convergence of individuals in various spaces to view the sporting contest¹³. A renewal of loyalty was exhibited in the form of patriotic and nationalistic sentiments attached to the hockey game. Examples of this included displays of national pride via the waving and wearing of Canadian flags; body paint featuring red maple leaves; the wearing of official *Roots*, Team Canada apparel; donning of official Men’s Canadian Olympic hockey team jerseys, complete with *Nike swoosh*; and the sporting of related hockey paraphernalia such as National Hockey League (NHL) jerseys¹⁴.

This last attribute of the media event, the renewal of loyalty, serves as an appropriate segue to explore the phenomenon of etribalization examined in this study. For the purposes of this study, etribalization has been linked with nationalism. The connection will be explained below and covered in greater detail in the Literature Review.

Despite being a global phenomenon, the Olympic Movement is structured around the nation-state (Larson & Park, 1993). As Larson & Park (1993) note, nationalistic symbolism (which fosters nationalism) comprises the core of the Olympic ceremony:

2002; Globe & Mail Staff, 2002). Even Canadian soldiers stationed in Kandahar, Afghanistan watched the gold medal match (Canadian Press, 2002).

¹³ Please see endnote 11.

¹⁴ Observations as to patriotic apparel were gleaned from pictures provided in newspapers, as well as photos taken on February 24th, 2002 at The T-Bar & Grill, Panorama Mountain Lodge, Invermere, British Columbia.

In the opening ceremony, athletes enter nation by nation, the head of state of the Olympic host is accorded special honor, and the national anthem of the host city is played. In each medal ceremony, the winners' names and countries are announced, the national flags of the three medallists are raised, and the national anthem of the winner's country is played (p. 35).

Accordingly, national rivalries play an important part in the framing of the Olympic Games (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 38). Consequently, supporting a team in a quest for national pride is accomplished through an exhibition of nationalistic sentiment. Larson & Park (1993) note, "the pursuit of national pride and national prestige through Olympic success has become a hallmark for the modern Games" (p. 35). Recognizing this, the study of etribalization in the context of the men's gold medal match links the expression of nationalism with the immigrant experience.

The use of immigrants as subjects in tandem with a nationalistic media event adds another dimension to this study. Scholars such as Appadurai (1996) and Wong (2002) along with many others have theorized the demise of the nation-state due to a set of globalizing factors including the spread of electronic media and transnationalism. However, the nationalistic media event may indeed be a potential tool for the nation-state to employ in an eleventh hour attempt to counter globalizing forces and (re)affirm the loyalty of its citizens. Can a media event with deep nationalistic undertones create a connection with an immigrant population? This study of the nationalistic media event in an age of transnationalism endeavours to explore this question.

In advance of exploring how the above question can be answered, it is necessary to describe and acknowledge the multiple realities and identities of immigrants. Discussing the reality of immigrants in an age of globalization, Wong (2002) notes that "increasingly, immigrants have multiple interconnections that cut across international borders and public

identities that are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state” (p. 52). Wong asserts that this phenomenon has resulted in the creation of transnational communities whereby transmigrants “are engaged in taking actions, making decisions, and developing identities through social networks that simultaneously connect them to two or more societies” (2002, p. 52). At this point it is imperative to reiterate the importance and role of the imagination. The imagination is not only a tool for conceiving of worlds that are possible but to also conceptualize the world one functions in. As Wong (2002) notes, this unleashing or expansion of the imagination via mediated communication challenges scholars to accept the establishment of imagined communities outside of the nation-state:

Scholars now face the challenge of reassessing their traditional notions of territoriality based communities and singular societies and cultures. The nation is an imagined community; however, when the imagination moves beyond borders, transnational and diasporic communities are also imagined communities (p. 53).

Just as the media event is not bound by geography, the imagination does not confine the individual to communities established via their physical surroundings. A consequence of this for transmigrants, as discussed above, is the establishment of multiple identities (Wong, 2002). The increasing prevalence of transmigrants may also negatively impact the nation-state. Scholars such as Appadurai (1996) and Wong (2002) assert that transmigrants because of their multiple identities and, by extension, their potential multiple national allegiances, may bring about the demise of the nation-state. Subsequently, the nationalistic media event may indeed be one of the last bastions for the inculcation of nationalism; Carey (1997) notes that nations “are formed, maintained, and repaired through ritual” (p. 312). Although anecdotal evidence suggests that the “average Canadian” took part in the mediated hockey ritual, the “maintenance” of the nation-state also requires new tribe members, transmigrants,

to identify with the nation-state. The mediated ritual presented an opportunity for transmigrants to become etribalized or in this case, nationalized; but did they?

To answer this question etribalization is actualized by looking for parallels on two levels: experience and perception. In soliciting and analyzing subject experience, it first important to determine if the subjects watched the event, then what were their reasons for doing or not doing so. For those who did consume the event, how was this done? Did subjects actively participate in the event by wearing paraphernalia or using other objects such as flags? Was the event viewed in large groups in typical media event fashion? If so, who did the subjects surround themselves with to watch the event? The second component in the examination of etribalization is exploring subjects' perceptions of the event. At what level was the event experienced or interpreted? Did subjects follow the dominant nationalistic reading of the event? If media events are electronic rituals, did the mediated nationalistic ritual of the men's gold medal victory increase the subjects' allegiance to, sense of belonging in, or identification with Canada? More importantly, what is the temporality of this experience? In summary, the notion of etribalization through the examination of physical and perceptual experience seeks to explore the extent to which volunteer subjects identified with the nation-state.

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature that has influenced this study and then uses this literature to help construct the concept of etribalization. This chapter is organized around three overlapping themes: the audience, the media sport complex and the focus of this study, etribalization.

Chapter 3 examines methodology. This chapter begins with a discussion on the rationale involved in selecting focus groups as my sole methodology of data retrieval. Next,

the advantages and disadvantages of focus groups are considered followed by an overview of the structure of the focus groups that make up this study. This overview includes information on: participant qualification criteria, methods of recruitment, participant profiles, transcription of focus group sessions and its accompanying rationale. The final section of Chapter 3 describes the general limitations of this research.

Chapter 4 consists of the data analysis itself. The analysis starts with an overview of which focus group members did and did not watch the gold medal hockey game under study. The chapter then goes on to explore the gold medal game as a media event in the eyes of focus group participants who viewed the event as well as parallels in their viewing impressions and experiences. Parallels discussed include Canadian national pride and identity. The impact of the victory of the men's hockey game is then explored which includes an analysis both of those who watched the event and those who did not. The last portion of Chapter 4 synthesizes the concepts of etribalization with concepts previously analyzed and closes with a survey of the limitations of the concept of etribalization.

Chapter 5 synthesizes the findings in this study, offers recommendations and direction for future research, recognizes the limitations of this study and lastly, relays personal insights gained from conducting the research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

As discussed in Chapter 1, this study approaches the subject from a Canadian perspective by examining the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics men's gold medal hockey match between Canada and the United States. Also noted in the previous chapter is the notion that particular attention must be given to the contextual specificities of both the broadcast and audience under study in order to provide a holistic overview of the social, political and economic relevance of the event (Andrews, 2002; Carey, 1989; Gruneau, 1983, 1989; Thompson, 1990, 1995). Studying the event at hand requires acknowledging the importance of context as well as an examination of three distinct, yet interrelated elements: the audience, the MediaSport complex, and etribalization.

Context

There are multiple social, political, and economic forces which influence social events and actions. As Gruneau (1983) reminds us, "...one must always be careful that when attempting to understand what a cultural text means one does not lose sight of how it has been made, of who has made it, and of how the limits and pressures contained within it about how reality is or ought to be..." (p. 48). Thus contextualizing the men's gold medal hockey match within the global capitalist system and within Canada is crucial to understanding its political-economic function.

Compression of time and space through mass media has allowed dispersed individuals to simultaneously view the identical mediated program. This function of mass media has consequently facilitated the spread of corporate capitalism and in the process has created new market opportunities for the MediaSport complex and media events such as the Olympics. Although the MediaSport complex will be discussed in greater detail later in this

chapter, it is prudent to provide the reader with a brief definition. Influenced by Jhally's (1984) exploration of the sport/media complex, Wenner (1998) coined the term MediaSport, which intended to reflect the relationship between media, professional sport and business. The MediaSport complex refers to the various organizations and industries involved in the conception, production, and transmission of the Winter 2002 Olympics in Canada, specifically the men's gold medal hockey match.

The spread of consumer capitalism and the opportunities created via the MediaSport complex have not gone unnoticed within academia. Increasing attention is now being focused on the global reach of the MediaSport complex and its potential influence (see Gruneau & Whitson, 2001). As Gruneau (1999) notes, "...sports have become institutionalized features of the western capitalist societies..." (p. 53). Accordingly, acknowledging the Olympics' function within corporate capitalism is merely a starting point for examining the men's gold medal hockey match. In fact, context is a reoccurring theme in the literature, acting as a thread weaving together the issues of audience, MediaSport complex and etribalization.

Audience

The audience comprises the first of three major components to be considered in the analysis of the men's gold medal hockey match. As mentioned in the first chapter, my approach to the media event under study is based on the work of Dayan & Katz. Writing in a "neo-Durkheimian" spirit, Dayan & Katz (1992) acknowledge the "mechanical solidarity" and "sense of membership, similarity, equality [and] familiarity" (p. viii) that is evoked by a media event. Further, Dayan & Katz highlight some specific audience effects of a media event:

1. Media events interrupt the rhythm and focus of people's lives.
2. The live broadcast transforms the ordinary roles of viewers, causing them to assume the roles proposed by the script of the ceremony.
3. Media events give new status to the living room.
4. The event brings family and friends together and creates an upsurge of feeling.
5. The event connects centre and periphery.
6. The event offers moments of "mechanical solidarity" where the whole population is allowed and expected to attend.
7. The event has the power to redefine the boundaries of societies.
8. The success of the event is a cathartic experience for viewers.

(1992, pp. 195-198).

Although Dayan & Katz take great care in outlining the potential impacts of a media event, the resulting effect on the audience is never described in specific detail. Instead, and understandably, the impact on the audience is folded into the media event concept. As this study has a specific interest in the impact of the media event on the audience, the concept of etribalization was conceived. Etribalization utilizes the aforementioned audience impacts listed by Dayan & Katz in its conceptual framework either directly or indirectly. The phenomenon of etribalization is brought about by a media event which, as Dayan & Katz assert, interrupts the rhythm and focus of people's lives. As etribalization is argued to be brought about from multiple, simultaneous individual mediated experiences, viewers' adherence to the proposed viewing role is an important element in ensuring a similar experience. Media events are social experiences. As Dayan & Katz note, they provide an opportunity for family and friends to experience the media event together. Further, this

experience has the potential to create a feeling of togetherness or “an upsurge of feeling.” The rise in emotion is not limited to the individual groups who gathered to watch the event but can connect space though time bringing about a feeling of “mechanical solidarity.” Lastly, the power of media events and by extension its impact upon an audience must not be overlooked. Media have become a central outlet for experience. Moreover, as the event under study is a sporting “contest,” the outcome of the media event may also have a significant impact on the audience. Thus while a victory may spark a collective celebration, a loss may cause communal depression; both reactions (and any other possible collective emotional response) have the potential to be an etribalized reaction to a media event.

The concept of etribalization is deeply indebted to the work of Dayan & Katz as their work on media events provided a map to explore the impact of a media event on an audience and ultimately the concept of etribalization. Accordingly, in subject interviews conducted for this study the impacts of a media event on its audience were identified and explored in the data analysis; the findings are discussed in Chapter 4. This study adds to media event literature by not only offering a media event case study which, at the time of writing, had not been studied, but it also identifies, isolates, modifies and explores an important component of media event theory.

Not only should the study of a media event look for the presence of the above elements from Dayan & Katz but, it should also examine the audience at both a macro and micro level. Kinkema & Harris (1998) note “there is scant research on audiences of mediated sport...” (p. 53). Of sport-related academic research studying the audience, the majority has either focused solely on the macro level of the audience or on the micro level of

the fan with very few studies incorporating both elements as part of a holistic research undertaking.

The Audience and the Telescope

There is still an air of uncertainty about who invented the telescope. However, historians credit its invention to the Dutch lens maker, Hans Lippershey. Since the invention of the telescope, scientists and philosophers alike have used it in an attempt to gain an understanding for Earth's place in the universe. Just as the telescope allows astronomers to study the big picture, the examination of the macro audience of a media event seeks to do the same. However, examining the audience can be a difficult task. Media events have the potential to appeal to a large and diverse (both culturally and spatially) audience. Consequently, members of the audience may have little in common with one another except for their exposure to the event itself¹⁵. Thus one is faced with the task of contextualizing and evaluating the micro within the macro.

When considering the audience at the macro level, it is first important to consider context¹⁶. In order to grasp the macro level context of the event and its relation to the audience, the study of a media event must include an analysis of its historical, social, political and economic relevance to the audience. However, contextualizing the event in relation to the audience supersedes identifying the mass audience itself. Although this study focuses on

¹⁵ It is important to distinguish the audience as a collective, meaning the entire viewing audience, and the audience as a conglomeration of social collectives, meaning those who gather in specific social groups to watch the event. Although the collective may share some traits in common, it is the diaspora of social collectives who will more than likely share more in common than simply the event itself.

¹⁶ Original context means to be aware of *who* is broadcasting the event and *who* the intended audience is. Media event differs from syndicated television in that the thrill in watching Media event in part is the unpredictability of the outcome. Although a rebroadcast of the event to a secondary audience may elicit alternative meanings (see Ang 1985), the time sensitive nature of media event places emphasis on the original broadcast and therefore its primary audience.

one specific segment of the viewing population, Chinese-Canadians, CBC's broadcast was targeted at the entire country. Thus the mass audience consists of anyone who viewed the English CBC's live coverage of the February 24, 2002 hockey match.

The definition of the mass audience for this case study is relatively simple as the audience was predominantly contained within Canada as this study focuses on the CBC's broadcast of the hockey final. However, not all media events are nation specific. With the increasing global availability of electronic media, a collective imagination may be born from a mediated experience that transcends national borders. Further, what is of interest is not simply the mass congregation of individuals to view an event on television but the visceral reality created by this experience, what Appadurai (1996) refers to as "imagined worlds". Imagined worlds are defined as "the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33). According to Appadurai the imagined world consists of five "scapes": ethnoscapas, mediascapas, technoscapas, financerscape and ideoscapas. The two relevant scapes for this study are the mediascape and the ideoscape. Appadurai defines mediascapas as:

...image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of elements (such as characters, plots and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives, their own as well as those of others living in other places. These scripts can and do get disaggregated into complex sets of metaphors by which people live (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) as they help to constitute narratives of the Other and protonarratives of possible lives, fantasises that could become prolegomena to the desires for acquisition and movement (1996, p. 35).

While "closely related" to mediascapas, ideoscapas are "concentrations of images...often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states..." (Appadurai, 1996, p. 36). The mass audience that viewed the CBC broadcast of the hockey match may be

conceptualized as congregating on the joint plain of the mediascape and ideoscape. At the level of the mediascape, the broadcast is recognized as image-centred due to its broadcast on television, a visual medium. The broadcast is also a narrative-based account of reality as CBC is offering a production (or interpretation) of a real event. In addition, Appadurai's mediascape also recognizes the influence of the technology used to produce and broadcast the event (Appadurai, 1996, p. 35). Because the Olympic final is grounded in nationalism as was discussed in Chapter 1 and will be discussed later in this chapter, the ideoscape must also be recognized.

The purpose of viewing the mass audience as straddling the mediascape and ideoscape is to acknowledge the role of the mediated experience in defining the reality of the individual as well as the collective reality, a position required by Carey's (1989) cultural studies approach. Further, by implementing Appadurai's concept of mediascape one is not limited to defining societies based on national borders (though this is the case for the event under study). Lastly, one is able to account for the potential global reach (spatially speaking) of a collective mediated experience. It is important to note that although a media event may have a global reach, it must still be contextually relevant to the audience whether confined within a national border, or united via scapes.

The contextual relevance of the men's gold medal hockey match to the CBC audience will now be explored. MacAloon (1984) notes that the Olympic Games "are an institution without parallel in nature and scope in the twentieth century" (p. 242). Almost twenty years after MacAloon's assertion, not only has the Olympic Games retained its claim to be a global "institution without parallel," it has built upon it. For example, in 1984 the Los Angeles Olympic Games were broadcast to 156 countries, while the 1984 Winter Olympic Games in

Sarajevo were broadcast to 100 countries (IOC, 2002a, p. 4.4). The 2000 Olympic Games held in Sydney were broadcast to 220 countries, while the 2002 Winter Olympic Games were broadcast to over 160 countries with 77 countries participating in the games (IOC, 2002a, p. 4.4; IOC, 2002c). While the reach (and revenue) of the Olympic Games continues to grow, the meaning nations apply to their performance at the Games appears to have become more deeply embedded in national psyches. For participating nations the Olympics have become an outlet to pursue “national pride and prestige” (Larson & Park, 1993, p. 35). The reason for this, as discussed in Chapter 1, is that the Olympics are structured around the nation-state (Larson & Park, 1993). Thus the twenty-three members of the 2002 Canadian men’s hockey team symbolically represented Canada at the Games. Canadian viewers watching the CBC broadcast, lived vicariously through the Olympic athletes and had a stake in the contest. National pride and prestige have come to be equated with Olympic performance (Larson & Park, 1993).

In addition, the relevance to Canadian viewers is heightened due to the sport itself, hockey. Hockey has played an important role in Canadian culture and Canadian identity. Gruneau & Whitson in *Hockey Night in Canada* provide a well researched historical, political and economic account of hockey’s close association with Canadian identity and its role in Canadian culture. Gruneau & Whitson pay specific attention to the historical evolution of the audience (both live and mediated), the significance of hockey to Canada’s national identity, and the impact of capitalism on the sport and audience. In this work the authors note that hockey has acted as both a venue for expressing Canadian identity and has been employed to reaffirm “a preferred version of ‘national character’: tough and hard, passionate yet determined, individualistic” (Gruneau & Whitson 1993, p. 267).

Hockey, Canada's official winter sport¹⁷, a sport which was conceived in Canada, though as Gruneau & Whitson (1993) note its exact birth place north of the 49th parallel is contested. Regardless, hockey is a cultural icon and a source of identity for many Canadians (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). It can be argued that the men's Olympic gold medal in the sport of ice hockey is coveted as the ultimate medal for Canada. The relevance of the men's 2002 Olympic gold medal hockey match to Canada and, by extension, the Canadian viewing audience, resides in the multiplicity of symbolism contained in the "ultimate"¹⁸ sporting event, the Olympic Games, the signature sport of Canada, ice hockey and the genderized hierarchy of sport itself. Wong & Trumper (2002) though not referring specifically to the Olympic final, highlight a similar notion noting "the formation of Canadian national hockey teams that represent Canada in international tournaments exemplifies the crystallization and organization around a common symbol that reinforces the supposed uniqueness of the nation" (p. 184). In summary, hockey holds a unique and culturally significant place within the symbolic order of Canada. Consequently, the Olympic contest struck a chord with Canadians, which is perhaps why the gold medal game garnered the largest single television audience in Canadian history (Sports Marketing Surveys Ltd, 2002, p. 1).

Thus far the audience has been identified and discussed as a generalized mass. It would be naïve to fall into the traps of the Frankfurt school where the agency of the mass audience is dismissed, and micro audiences are given little credibility or attention. This

¹⁷ On May 12, 1994 the federal government passed bill C-212, *Canada's National Sport Act* which declared hockey as Canada's official winter sport. Incidentally, lacrosse was named Canada's official summer sport in the same bill.

¹⁸ The front page of the February 23rd, 2002 weekend edition of the *Globe and Mail* referred to the upcoming gold medal match as the "ultimate hockey match" in a story by Eric Duhatschek titled, "Canada ready for ultimate hockey match" while the *Montreal Gazette* referred to the match as the Super ice Bowl (Scanlan, 2002, February 24).

study endeavours to avoid this pitfall by examining the audience at both the macro and the micro level. Accordingly, we must now bring out our microscope.

The Audience Under the Microscope

The inventor of the refracting telescope or microscope is not known for certain.

Although an aura of historical uncertainty surrounds the invention of the microscope, its origins have been traced to the Netherlands some time between 1590 and 1610. Despite a lack of agreement about who the actual inventor was, the microscope opened up a new world to science. As communication and media studies continues to mature, theorists are increasingly using their telescope in tandem with their microscope, giving the individual the attention he and she deserves. In this spirit, the role of the viewer in interpreting the event must be considered.

Audience Agency

Initial critiques of mass culture (including sport) such as those offered by the Frankfurt School gave little credit to consumers of mass culture. Juxtaposed to the Frankfurt School's view of the audience as "cultural dopes," cultural studies guru John Fiske views individuals as producing their own version of popular culture from products of the cultural industry (Fiske, 1992b). Thus the work of Fiske marks a theoretical shift from a focus on reception of meaning to a focus on production of meaning (Fiske, 1989 & 1992b). There is no doubt that Fiske's notion of consumer agency has helped communications scholars re-examine the role of the audience in creating meaning from a cultural text. However, as Ang (1994) notes, Fiske's concept of agency exaggerates the existence of a semiotic democracy (p. 201). The task then is to negotiate a balance between the concept of agency and the role

of ideology. An appropriate starting point for the study of the agent in the context of a sport media event is the audience research of Eastman & Riggs (1994).

Role of the Viewer

The current literature focuses largely on the dedicated fan, the fanatic and/or the regular follower of a cultural text. There is little doubt an event such as the Olympics will have its regular devotees. The *Global Television Report*, produced for the IOC, found that the average Canadian who viewed the 2002 Winter Olympics “consumed” 19 hours of Olympic coverage (Sports Marketing Surveys Ltd, 2002, p. 3). However, a main characteristic of a media event is its ability to entice a variety of individuals and not just connoisseurs. Thus the concept of etribalization offered in this study deviates slightly from the current literature on sports fans by asserting that these events have the potential to draw the nonfan or non-traditional viewer into the mediated experience and potentially transform him or her into a fan, if only for the duration of the media event itself.

Building on the work of Fiske, Eastman & Riggs (1994) studied the rituals of viewers of televised sport, exploring “...what meanings ordinary sports fans give to ritualized behaviours in the privacy of the home...how idiosyncratic fan rituals fit into everyday life and how they alter the sports viewing experience...” with an ultimate objective of discovering, “...what explanations best illuminate our understanding of television sports-fan rituals” (p. 254). Eastman & Riggs extract five, “...complex and contradictory dimensions of sport fandom....membership, participation, connection, reassurance, and influence...” and conclude that the five concepts they identified have “...heuristic value for explaining the ritualized actions of sports fans” (p. 257, 270). Although Eastman & Riggs assert that while their research has value in studying the traditional sports fan, their work is also useful for the

study of a sport media event audience. The research is applicable as the event under study is a sport media event, and the dominant role of viewer of the media contest is that of a fan. The viewers become emotionally invested in the media event and exhibit characteristics of traditional sport “fans”¹⁹.

Recognizing Pleasure

Perhaps implicit in the concept of media events as evident through such characteristics as its ability to unite friends and family is the recognition of viewer gratification. Ang (1992) provides an interesting summary of various views about audience pleasure. Ang argues that in the past, pleasure derived from popular culture texts was dismissed by critics such as Adorno and Horkheimer as oppressive and exploitative viewing, “the experience of pleasure in mass culture [as] a false kind of pleasure...”(p. 17). Ang (1992) also provides an overview of Marxist thought towards pleasure noting:

¹⁹The concepts of Eastman & Riggs (1994) may easily be applied to a media event. For example: *Membership* – Eastman & Riggs argue that watching a sport contest through television is a legitimate form of game consumption and that sports fandom creates a sense of membership in a group. Building on Dayan & Katz’s (1992) concept of a media event, the only way to experience a media event is through mediation.

Participation – Eastman & Riggs extract this concept from the work of Fiske (1987). It is the notion that, “a fan’s feeling that she or he is part of the event is another dimension of empowerment for viewers of televised sports”. Relating this concept to a media event is the idea that the media event draws family and friends together in moments of “mechanical solidarity” (Dayan & Katz, 1992). This concept of participation along with other notions of participation can potentially satisfy this characteristic of fandom.

Connection – Borrowing from Fiske, Eastman & Riggs (1994) note, “viewers of televised sports feel connected to other fans and to sport teams” (p. 264). This notion is important and is a hypothesized element of the “contest” media event. People viewing the event adopt the proposed script of the fan and thus feels a sense of connection because of the experience. What is also interesting to note is Eastman & Riggs’ assertion that, “seeking connectedness appeared to characterize both men and women. Observers noted that groups of women and men watching sports behaved in similar ways, employing the same us/them language, high-fiving and hand slapping at good plays, and coaching from the audience” (p. 264).

Reassurance – In speaking about the concept of reassurance, Eastman & Riggs note, “that game outcomes matter to fans goes without question” (p. 264). However, Eastman & Riggs argue, “fans seem to be caught between a desire for the excitement deriving from an unknown outcome and the need for comfort that the outcome will be as they want” (p. 265). This idea relates back to the “contest” version of the media event where the prescribed viewing role requires viewers to pick sides in the event.

The current Marxist idea is as follows: because the production of culture is subject to the laws of the capitalist economy, cultural products are degraded into commodities to make as much profit as possible on the market. The exchange value of those products is therefore essential for the producers, leading to neglect in quality. The capitalist market economy is only interested in the production of surplus value and as such is indifferent to the specific characteristics of the goods: caring only that they are sold and consumed. Mass culture is the economy; its most important characteristic is that it provides profit for the producers (p. 18).

As Ang aptly notes, the argument fronted by some Marxists is one-sided because it focuses only on production. Despite this recognition, similar arguments are still visible in various forms in the current literature (see Kellner, 1990 for example). This study seeks to recognize and explore the extent to which the viewers obtain pleasure from a media event.

As Dayan & Katz note, media events are public celebrations, “the high holidays of mass communication” (1992, p. 1); thus, the impact of gratification should be acknowledged. This does not discount the hegemonic or ideological undertones of the event that may surface via a contextual analysis; media events are “unquestionably hegemonic” (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 8); however, this does not mean viewer gratification should be dismissed or diminished.

Summary

Kinkema & Harris (1998) in their article “Key Research in Mediasport” underline the importance of a need for a literature that takes a holistic approach to the study of audiences of mediated sport. This study takes a two tiered contextual approach to the audience. As discussed above, the macro audience is identified and contextualized, which may then provide an historical understanding of the mass audience. The broad audience is further contextualized to reflect the specificities of the group under study as well as analyzed on the

level of the agent. In exploring the audience on an individual level the literature on fandom is incorporated into the media event thesis in an effort to provide a unique frame to view the consumer of the sport media event. A key factor in the study of the audience, and the central concept of this study, is etribalization. Understandably, this concept is based on literature from the study of the audience, but it is also influenced by MediaSport literature.

Consequently, before I present an exploration of etribalization and its accompanying literature, the Mediasport complex must first be examined.

MediaSport Complex

MediaSport literature comprises both the second component necessary for the analysis of the men's gold medal hockey match as well as the second general body of literature this study draws upon. The objective is to recognize the political-economic influences on, and of, the sport media event. Although the term MediaSport was coined by Wenner (1998) and was intended to reflect the relationship between media, professional sport and business, its roots can be found in Jhally's (1984) work.

The sport/media complex was first introduced by Jhally (1984) in an effort to counter "inadequate" analyses of sport offered by critical theorists (p. 41). Jhally argued that the study of "...cultural phenomenon such as sports should initially locate the material and economic contexts within which such activity takes place" (1984, p. 55). Almost twenty years has passed since Jhally's article was first published and the literature on the sport/media complex has grown dramatically (Wenner 1989 & 1998; Burstyn 1999; Real 1990 & 1998; Gruneau 1989). Since the article was first published, there have also been major changes in the global business environment. Taras (2001) notes that, "...a small fistful of conglomerates now exercises vertical as well as horizontal control over much of the

world's information and entertainment”(p. 71) which includes the broadcasting of sporting events such as the Olympics. The domination of corporate cartels has not gone unnoticed in MediaSport literature and is directly addressed in Burstyn's concept of the “sports nexus.” According to Burstyn (1999), the sports nexus refers to, “an entity consisting of sport in its associations with the mass media, corporate sponsors, governments, medicine, and biotechnology” (p. 17). As Jhally (1984), Burstyn (1999) and Wenner (1998) note, the MediaSport complex is comprised of multiple elements all of which should be recognized in tandem to provide a holistic understanding of the event under study. The MediaSport complex within the context of this paper refers to the various organizations and industries involved in the conception, production and transmission of CBC's broadcast of the Salt Lake 2002 gold medal hockey match.

Deconstructing while simultaneously contextualizing the MediaSport complex lessens the possibility of romanticizing the Olympics. The deconstructing of the MediaSport complex means acknowledging that the media event is itself a construction of the MediaSport complex. As Hargreaves (1986) notes:

Sporting events undergo a transformation when they are presented in the media: what appears on the screen and in the press and comes across on radio, is not what the spectator or performer at the event experiences. Media sport does not just present the world as it is, already constructed – it re-presents the world in terms of its own inferential framework and thus creates events with their own features – media events (p. 141).

This observation by Hargreaves, which is subsequently noted by Real (1990), is particularly important when seeking to examine themes of corporate capitalism as it recognizes the construction, production and packaging of the event. The literature relevant to the MediaSport complex also encourages an exploration of the interrelation between advertising

and the event itself. Gruneau (1987) notes aesthetic similarities between advertisements run during the Olympics and the broadcasting format of the Olympics itself (p. 7-32). Further, Gruneau contends that the blending of sport and advertisement appears natural and concludes that, "...the naturalization of sport as a fetishized commodity throughout the media has undoubtedly become well-established in our common sense" (1987, p. 7-32). Although the naturalization of consumerism in events produced by the MediaSport complex is of interest and relevant to the Olympic event under study, such an analysis is beyond the scope of this study. Further, constraints of space and scope prohibit an in depth analysis of the MediaSport complex that produced and fed CBC's broadcast of the Salt Lake 2002 gold medal hockey match.

In summary, the analysis of the MediaSport complex is intended to provide a political-economic overview of the media event. By contextualizing the event, identifying organizers, sponsors and advertisers as well as any interrelations between them, analyzing the products or services being sold, the influence of consumer capitalism can be observed. It should be noted that the goal of this study is not to pass moral judgement on the potential reach and influence of corporate capitalism. Instead, the purpose of studying the MediaSport complex (which produces the media event) is to gain a stronger understanding of which institutions are involved in the event, the emphasis on corporate capitalism, and ultimately, how it reflects the functioning of society.

Etribalization

Thus far the role of the audience at a macro and micro level as well as the MediaSport complex have been discussed in relation to this study. The notion of etribalization comprises the central theme of this study and incorporates elements from the two bodies of literature

that have been previously discussed. The concept of etribalization is significant in its synthesis and application of literature surrounding media events, audience research, MediaSport and nationalism. The exploration of etribalization is divided into three subsections.

Etribalization Explored

Etribalization is conceptualized as the potential to bring individuals together, spark the collective imagination and make participants feel a connection with a larger entity via a mediated experience. The concept, as highlighted in Chapter 1, is rooted in Carey's (1989) ritual view which "conceives communication as a process through which a shared culture is created, modified and transformed" (p. 43). Just as a ritual view of communication examines the creation of culture, so too does etribalization. What etribalization explores is a "contextually sensitive"²⁰ collection of people who via an electronic experience converge on the same mediated landscape. Thus etribalization acknowledges the possibility of a common cultural thread running through, or perhaps brought out by the collective imagination of those engaged in the mass mediated event. Thompson (1995) in his analysis of the current global media environment acknowledged the possibility of a collective imagination. Thompson noted that the current media structure could allow for "the creation of new forms of action

²⁰ The use of the term "contextually sensitive" is intended to reflect the idea that the concept of etribalization is not envisioned as a spontaneous occurrence. Instead, there are most often elements or perhaps preconditions that facilitate its occurrence. These factors should be acknowledged. For example, it is important to recognize that each broadcast (even of the same event) is its own text. Thus, different broadcasts of the same event may be framed differently. This is especially true in the case of the Olympic gold medal hockey match, a mediated experience that pits nation against nation. Consequently, the viewing experience of the men's gold medal match offered by the American television network NBC would have differed from that of CBC.

Context is also significant with respect to the level of relevance the event has to the viewers engaged in it. It is assumed that the higher the perceived relevance, the greater impact the event may have on the viewer. In the case of the hockey match, Canadians had a stake in the match as the men's Olympic team was competing on

and interaction in the social world, new kinds of social relationship and new ways of relating to others and oneself” (1995, p. 4). Etribalization explores the existence of such a connection.

The “e” of etribalization is a reference to the electronic nature of mass mediated communication. Encompassed in the concept is a recognition and application of Harold Innis’ time/space dichotomy (Innis, 1951). Innis described how electronic communication has compressed time and space, creating the possibility for individuals to be united over space through time. The concept of “etribalization” also derives from another member of the Toronto School, the grandfather of the global village, Marshall McLuhan. McLuhan in the introduction to Innis’ *The Bias of Communication*, notes, “...electronic technology creates not the nation but the tribe – not the superficial association of equals but the cohesive depth pattern of the totally involved kinship groups” (Innis, 1951, p. xiii). At first glance the above quote by McLuhan may appear to be overly deterministic as he speaks of the capacity of technology to create the nation. The utility in McLuhan’s statement comes from the recognition that connections may be made via electronic mediation. The technology facilitates the creation of a tribe - it does not make the tribe. Carey (1989) critiquing the determinism of Marshall McLuhan notes, “technology is technology; it is a means for communication and transportation over space, and nothing more” (p. 140). Technology is a means therefore, the tribe or “etribes” is a result of the active collective imagination of the participants.

behalf of a nation. Furthermore, hockey is of cultural significance to Canada. Consequently, Canadians who viewed the event on CBC may be thought of as a contextually sensitive collection or people.

Returning to the notion of agency discussed earlier in this chapter, it is important to stress it is the individual, as Fiske (1992) reminds us, who must interpret the event. Further, as Appadurai (1996) noted, individuals create their own imagined worlds. Beyond individual differences, cultural differences also exist. Carey (1989) argues “culture is never singular and univocal....people live in distinct zones of experience that cultural forms organize in different ways” (pp. 65-66). Thus the individual must be viewed as an independent and critical agent. Just as the individual must not be viewed as a cultural dope, the symbolic power possessed by event stakeholders must be acknowledged (Thompson, 1995). Recognizing Gitlin’s (1979) warning that “the forms of hegemonic entertainment [do not] superimpose themselves automatically and finally onto the consciousness or behaviour of all audiences at all times...” (p. 577) a balance between agency (which includes the ability to creative alternate narratives from the text) as defined by Fiske (1989, 1992b) and susceptibility to hegemonic messages must be achieved.

Hegemony

The concept of etribalization gains new significance when examined in relation to hegemony. Hargraves (1986) argues that “a sense of unity conferred by the feeling of belonging to the nation, cutting across class, ethnic, gender and other loyalties is, perhaps, the very linchpin of a hegemonic system...” (p. 154). Applying Appadurai’s (1996) mediascape to Hargreaves’ use of the term “nation,” the hegemonic reach of a media event can be understood as potentially exposing all viewers to hegemonic messages. Although hegemonic and ideologically loaded messages may be distributed to all viewers, each viewer still has to interpret and (at a conscious or unconscious level) accept the message.

Dayan & Katz explicitly state that media events are “unquestionably *hegemonic*” (1992, p. 8). Yet are these events interpreted as such? It can be argued that there is an increased likelihood that viewers of a media event will be receptive to hegemonic messages as the event triggers a form of “deep play”. An application of Real & Mechikoff’s (1992) discussion of the “deep fan” and “deep play” and hegemony can lend further credence to the argument that viewers of a media event are particularly susceptible to hegemonic messages. Real & Mechikoff argue that governing a viewer’s mediated sport experience is a mythic deep structure which is influenced by, “...technology, advertising, commercialism, ethnocentrism, and other characteristics embedded in the infrastructure of the political economy of media and sports in contemporary society” (1992, p. 336). Building on the work of Geertz, Real & Mechikoff assert the contemporary fan of mediated sports is a “deep fan” who thus engages in “deep play.”

The concept of deep play was initially suggested by Jeremy Bentham in 1802 to describe, “...play in which the stakes are so high that it is...irrational for men to engage in it at all” (Geertz, 1976, p. 667). Explaining further Bentham’s concept of deep play, Real & Mechikoff (1992) note:

If a man wagers half his life’s savings on an even bet, the disutility of his potential loss is greater than the utility of his potential gain. In deep play, both parties are ‘in over their heads’ (Geertz, 1973, p. 432) and the participants stand collectively to reap net pain rather than net pleasure (p. 336).

Geertz builds on Bentham’s notion of deep play recognizing that, “...much more is at stake than material gain: namely, esteem, honour, dignity, respect....status” (Geertz, 1976, p. 667). It is the observation that deep play involves more than money that sets Geertz apart from

Bentham, and it is this observation that Real & Mechikoff utilize to construct their notions of deep play and the deep fan.

Real & Mechikoff construct their case for deep play and the deep fan by drawing seven parallels between their work and that of Geertz. Common elements include agreement upon:

- The metaphoric power of the event.
 - The elaborate organization of the event including written rules.
 - The presence of financial wagering.
 - The use of violence in heightening the event.
 - The assertion that status hierarchies lend “deepness” to the event.
 - The belief that competition between higher status individuals makes the game deeper.
 - The event in utilitarian terms makes nothing happen.
- (Real & Mechikoff, 1992, pp. 336-337).

Real & Mechikoff (1992) assert that the deep play (which in the case of mediated sport creates the deep fan) holds “symbolic” or “expressive” importance as “...it provides a language or interpretive structure that at once reflects, explains, and interprets social life” and conclude,

...there is substantial evidence that, from its infrastructural base of a specific historical arrangement of technology, advertising, and consumerism, mass-mediated sport today is capable of providing for the deep fan crucial expressive, liminal, cathartic, ideational mechanisms and experiences for the representation, celebration and interpretation of contemporary social life... (p. 337).

The mediated sporting event provides a lens for the viewer to interpret the event. Engaging in deep play holds the symbolic potential of reinforcing the hegemonic system as projected through the lens by raising the emotional involvement, actively engaging the viewer, and in the process naturalizing itself. In the context of this study, the primary hegemonic system that the mediated experience serves to reinforce is that of the nation-state. This is evident as the dominant reading of CBC’s coverage of the Salt Lake 2002 men’s gold medal hockey

requires a nationalist reading. Nationalism which breeds nationalist behaviour, in the context of this paper is based on Kellas' (1991) definition that, "nationalism is both an ideology and form of behaviour. The ideology of nationalism builds on people's awareness of a nation ('national self-consciousness') to give a set of attitudes and a programme of action" (p. 3). Accordingly, subject involvement as a deep fan of the sport media event under study requires the individual to identify with the nation. As highlighted in Chapter 1 the subject population, first and second generation Chinese-Canadians must deal with multiple identities. Consequently, this last section will explore the relationship between the media event, nationalism and subject identity.

Immigrant Identity, Nationalism and Etribalization

The dominant frame provided by CBC's broadcast of the Salt Lake 2002 men's gold medal hockey match was nationalism. As highlighted in Chapter 1, the Olympics foster nationalism (Larson & Park, 1993); thus actively participating in the Canadian sport media event required identification with the nation-state. Wong & Trumper (2002) writing on the relationship between sport, nationalism and identity note, "...national identity, nationalism, and even nation-state reproduction are partially dependent on sports. Sports have provided one of the metaphors for the invention and reaffirmation of the nation" (p. 180). Specifically referencing Canadian nation building Wong & Trumper (2002) note that hockey has played a "fundamental part of nation building" (p. 184). Although hockey has played a significant role in creating Canadian identity in the past, the spread of communication technology and a continual increase of transmigrants have created a potential obstacle for the nation-state's management and enforcement of identity. As discussed in Chapter 1, transmigrants maintain and develop identities that are linked to more than one collective group or nation-state

(Wong, 2002). Given that the nation-state is “an imagined political community” (Anderson, 1991) in order to survive, the nation-state must find a way to prioritize the nationalist identity. This priority has become even more crucial to the Canadian government as a result of the ethnic diversification of its immigrant population (Wong, 2002). The Canadian government’s citizenship process has attempted to place an “emphasis on common values, identity, and social cohesion” (Wong, 2002, p. 78). The government may attempt via its citizenship criteria to impose a sense of national identity upon transmigrants but the nationalistic media event may be a far more influential tool for the creation or reinforcement of imagined communities. This is not to imply the nation-state is in complete control of all the elements surrounding the media event, but it may be able to capitalize on various opportunities presented to it.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter will be to describe the method and accompanying rationale used in this study.

Why Focus Groups?

For the purposes of this study, the method of data collection from participants was accomplished via small, semi-structured group interviews. Using the group interview, a form of focus group, in tandem with contextual analysis offers many advantages for studying a media event. First, as Dayan & Katz (1992) note, media events are frequently watched by groups of people who have specifically gathered to watch the event (p. 131). As viewing a media event is a group activity, it was appropriate that the environment in which subjects were asked to recount their experiences was also in a group setting.

The Snakes and Ladders of Focus Group Research

Frey & Fontana (1993) in a volume of work edited by David L. Morgan²¹, one of the leading advocates of focus group research, argue that “accounts of reality formation are more likely to be stimulated and to be expressed in greater depth when shared in a group interview format” (p. 26). Frey & Fontana also note that accounts gleaned from group interviews are more “polyphonic” as “more subjects would participate; and thus a broader spectrum of respondent’s opinions would be reported” (1993, p. 26). This assertion is echoed by Morgan & Krueger (1993) who note that, “interaction in focus groups often creates a cuing phenomenon that has the potential for extracting more information than other methods”(p.

²¹ Morrison (1998) describes David Morgan as “a noted figure in focus group research” (p. 2). Morgan has published a number of works on focus group research including “one of the two handbooks on focus group research that Sage Publications produced in 1988, marking the ‘arrival’ of academic focus group research” (Morrison, 1998, p. 2). For more on Morgan and focus group research, please see Morgan, 1993 & 1988.

17). Morgan & Krueger highlight a further advantage of focus group research arguing that the interplay between focus group members allows individuals to clarify their own positions on the issues being discussed (1993, p. 18). Frey & Fontana also described the positive impact of interplay among subjects in a focus group setting:

Not only do group interviews take advantage of group dynamics, provide insight into social relationships in the field, reduce distance between researcher and the social context, and reduce total cost, but this type of interview can stimulate new ideas, identify language or symbols not previously acknowledged, serve as a testing ground for hypotheses or analytic suggestions, and expand the depth and variation in response or description of relevant social events (1993, pp. 33-34).

Focus groups, however, are not flawless and it should be noted that in any interview setting there is always the danger the interviewer may influence his or her subjects. Although one may not be able to fully eliminate the influence of the interviewer on the interviewee, conducting group interviews “diffuses” the influence of the interviewer (Frey & Fontana, 1993, p. 26).

Despite the advantages of focus group research, the methodology is not without its critics. Morrison (1998) although citing sources which acknowledge the benefit of focus group research cautions that, “mass communication research should be very cautious about building its understanding of the audience on focus group research” (p. 142). For Morrison the fetishization of focus group research has led some academics to rely on the focus group as their sole methodology. Morrison notes that a “single study cannot grasp the dynamics and complexities of reception” (1998, p. 155). Further, Morrison stresses that focus groups provide “limited reference to a population as a whole, since they cannot with certainty provide data on the general distribution of the responses found in the sample...[and] provide only a limited reference to the life world of the individual” (1998, p. 167). He instead calls

for researchers to employ a combination of qualitative research techniques such as the focus group, with quantitative tools such as the survey.

The researcher's time and resources to conduct this study were severely limited. Expenses for this study were out of pocket by the researcher. Further, in an effort to keep this study to a manageable size, focus groups were selected as the sole method of data retrieval. At this point it should be clearly noted that findings are impressionistic in nature. Consequently, it is difficult to make generalizations beyond the scope of those subjects who participated in the group interviews. However, this study may be of value in identifying the impact of nationalistic mediated experience on Canada's Chinese population and used as a springboard for further research on this subject. Further, this study is not intended as a static meta-narrative. Instead, the tools of analysis employed act much like a camera. Just as a photograph captures and freezes a specific subject at a moment in time, so too does this study. The analysis is also time sensitive and may eventually no longer accurately reflect and account for the social, media, and global environment.

Organization of Focus Group Sessions

A total of (4) four 1.5-hour focus groups were held at the University of Calgary in January of 2003. Three (3) of the four (4) focus groups had five (5) participants while the fourth focus group had seven (7) participants. The primary researcher, who acted as the focus group facilitator was present at each focus group session. An observer took notes during each session. Although participants were not financially remunerated, a light lunch was provided.

Participant Qualification Criteria

In order to be eligible to participate in the study, potential participants had to meet the following three criteria:

1. *Be of Chinese Descent.*

In order to narrow the scope of this research and for reasons outlined in Chapter 1, this study specifically focused on people of Chinese origin. It should be noted that participants were eligible if they came (or had roots) from anywhere within the Chinese diaspora. As outlined below, those who volunteered for the focus group discussions not only came from mainland China but also from Hong Kong, as well as Taiwan.

2. *Be a Canadian Citizen.*

One of the key goals of this study is to examine the impact of a nationalistic media event on a transnational population: Chinese immigrants. Due to the social-psychological reality of being an immigrant coupled with the global (political, cultural, social) realities of the twenty-first century, immigrants must function in a complex environment that requires the juggling of multiple, potentially contrasting, identities. Wong (2002) notes that, “historically, [citizenship] has been linked with the development and evolution of nation-states” (p. 63). Thus the process and eventual awarding of Canadian citizenship may be regarded as a conventional act of self-maintenance by the nation-state. However, in the same article Wong goes on to argue that notions of citizenship are changing and the spread of transnational and diasporic communities, “threaten the modern nation-state’s conception of citizenship because citizenship has been circumscribed in national areas” (2002, p. 63). Wong hypothesizes that while immigrants may technically obtain citizenship within the nation-state, their “sense of belonging and attachment to an

‘imagined national community’” may be affected (2002, p.63). Consequently, placing the requirement of participants to have obtained (or be in the process thereof) Canadian citizenship allows me to explore my primary research question while also exploring concerns raised by Wong (2002).

3. *Be in Canada during the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics.*

As this study revolves around a specific *Canadian* mediated experience, the February 24, 2002 men’s Olympic gold medal hockey match, it is logical to require participants to have been available to view the live Canadian broadcast of the match. However, participants were not required to have viewed the match but merely been in Canada and had access to CBC television’s Olympic broadcast. For the purposes of this study the opinions and experiences of focus group participants who did not view the gold medal game are just as relevant as the reasons and reactions of those who did. It should be noted that there was one anomalous case related to the criteria of being in Canada during the Olympic broadcast. One focus group participant was, in fact, not in Canada for the game’s broadcast as he was on a “Spring Break” cruise. Although technically this individual was not “available” to view the CBC broadcast, I have elected to include the experiences of this individual. During the focus group session this male participant spoke of trying to access the score of the hockey game from the cruise ship by watching satellite television and, upon his return from his Caribbean cruise, he watched a videotape of the complete men’s gold medal match with his father. Consequently, I have included his input.

Participant Recruitment

Four separate techniques were employed to recruit study participants. First, posters seeking qualified volunteers from the student body of the University of Calgary were distributed on bulletin boards across campus (see Appendix 1). Second, two University of Calgary campus clubs- the Chinese Student Society and the Hong Kong Student Association- were also contacted via email. The clubs were asked and agreed to distribute an email request for volunteers to their club members. Third, the researcher attended undergraduate courses within the Faculty of Communication and Culture at the University of Calgary where a two minute presentation on the research and requirements for participation were given in an attempt to recruit participants. Lastly, focus group participants were also obtained via snowball sampling where individuals who expressed an interest in participating in the research were encouraged to contact friends who met the eligibility criteria.

Profile of Focus Group Participants

There were a total of twenty-two (22) participants, eleven (11) males and eleven (11) females. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 35 with the average age of male and female participants being 22 years of age. All participants in the focus group were undergraduate students from the University of Calgary. Of the 22 students, one (1) was in first year university, eight (8) were their second year, ten (10) were in their third year and three (3) were in their fourth year of studies.

The three most popular faculties that participants were recruited from were: Communication and Culture (8), Computer Science (5), and Management (4). Other areas of studies participants were recruited from included: Religious Studies (1), Political Science (1), Social Science (1), Humanities (1), undecided (1).

With respect to country of birth, eleven (11) participants (4 male and 7 female) were born in Canada, while eleven (11) participants were born outside of Canada: Hong Kong (7), mainland China (3), and Taiwan (1). Of those who immigrated the distribution was as follows:

- Two (2) participants immigrated fifteen (15) years ago.
- One (1) participant immigrated ten (10) years ago.
- One (1) participant immigrated nine (9) years ago.
- Two (2) participant immigrated eight (8) years ago.
- Two (2) participants immigrated seven (7) years ago
- One (1) participant immigrated three (3) years ago.
- Two (2) participants immigrated two (2) years ago.

All participants were Canadian citizens or were in the process of applying for Canadian citizenship.

Focus Group Structure

All focus group sessions followed roughly the same format. All of the sessions were held on the second floor of the Social Science building at the University of Calgary. The group sessions opened with a brief overview of the research which was followed by the viewing of a three and a half minute clip from the DVD *Gold Rush 2002*²². The clip featured highlights from CBC's broadcast of the third period of the men's gold medal hockey match in Salt Lake City 2002 edited in with footage of Canadians, decked in Team Canada paraphernalia, viewing the match on television. In addition to the DVD, focus group

²² The clip played from the DVD was: Chapter 20; 1:26 to 1:29.30. The clip consisted primarily of portions of the CBC's broadcast of the 3rd period of the men's gold medal game.

participants also had access to additional material related to the Olympic match and ensuing victory to peruse at their leisure. The material provided was:

- Section A of the Saturday, February 23, 2002 edition of the *Calgary Herald*.
- Section A and B of the Monday, February 25, 2002 edition of the *Calgary Herald*.
- Section A of the Monday, February 25, 2002 edition of *The Globe and Mail*.
- *Maclean's* magazine, March 11, 2002.
- *Sports Illustrated*, "Good as Gold: Team Canada – 2002 Olympic Champions – Men's and Women's Hockey – A Special Collector's Edition".

As mentioned above, a three and a half minute DVD clip was played at the start of each focus group session. Following the DVD clip, a series of questions were posed to participants to both collect specific information regarding their viewing experience (or lack thereof) as well as to act as a catalyst for inciting group reflection on issues of identity.

Although the exact order of the questions varied by group, the same questions, as listed in the *Interview Outline* (Appendix 2) were covered in each session.

The process of devising the questions that came to comprise the Interview Outline was a reflexive one. To accomplish this, a series of *demographic*, *situational* and *impressionistic* questions were devised. The goal of demographic questions such as inquiring about a participant's age, place of birth, academic program as well as year of study and, if applicable, year of immigration was to obtain a profile of the participants. Situational questions concentrated on the Salt Lake 2002 Olympics. Specifically, the questions sought to discover if participants viewed the men's gold medal hockey match and if so, the context in which this was done. The third round of questions attempted to capture the perception of

participants about the significance of their experience, as well as to explore their ideas about citizenry and identity.

Transcription of Focus Group Sessions

Each session was recorded on an audio cassette and subsequently transcribed. The transcripts were then analysed in accordance with the focus group methodology of Knodel (1993), as well as the analysis techniques of Kirby & McKenna (1989).

At this point the process of transcription and its impact on the data should be addressed. An immediate critique of transcribing the group interview sessions is that by doing so the data becomes altered. Hence as the transcriber must reinterpret the sessions to adapt them into text form, he or she is required to punctuate and classify the dialogue. Accordingly, this interpretive process may lead to errors in rendering the text. Further, regardless of errors the final product is a qualitative interpretation of the focus group session. As was previously stated, this study *is* an impressionistic one. This does not mean, however, that because it is impressionistic that it is devoid of merit. What is important to extract from the focus group sessions is the spirit contained within the session and less so its proper syntax. This is not to imply that the transcription and its accompanying analysis is faulty. Every effort was taken to ensure that proper transcription took place. First, the focus group facilitator who is also the primary researcher for this study transcribed the sessions. According to Knodel (1993) having the primary researcher transcribe and ultimately analyze the data is a means to improve study reliability:

The accuracy of the interpretive analysis is also enhanced if the analysts are intimately involved with the actual data collection (i.e., present at the focus group sessions and possibly even serving as moderators). This eliminates considerably the distance between the analyst and subject being studied that so often marks quantitative

social science research in which only interviewers and not the eventual analyst have contact with respondents (p. 50).

The transcription of the group sessions was undertaken with little delay after the focus group. The last effort employed to improve the integrity of the transcripts and ultimately the overall analysis was having an observer present to take notes in each focus group. The observer's notes were used to enrich and supplement gaps in transcripts and contributed to the holistic approach taken in this study. In summary, although there are pitfalls with qualitative research, and particularly with the process of transcription creation, a conscious effort to reduce transcription errors and increase transcription accuracy was made.

Concluding Comments and Limitations of Methodology

It should be immediately recognized that the processes of this study are interpretive. Thus, the findings herein are a result of my experience. Further, the findings are indeed impressionistic and are drawn from a small, non-scientific sample. Recognizing the above limitations, a conscious effort to account for and minimize methodological weaknesses was employed in both the execution and transcription of group discussions. Undoubtedly, the qualitative methodology employed has its shortcomings. However, its strengths in the context of this research outweigh its weaknesses. As previously noted, the focus group setting is ideal for recounting experience of media audiences. Beyond the situational advantages of focus group research, the data provided by participants through the expression of their opinions and experiences is both rich and textured. Consequently, although one may not be able to generalize beyond the scope of this study, the methodology employed allowed for the researcher to capture the reactions and perceptions of a particular group at a particular time.

CHAPTER FOUR: Research Findings

This chapter examines the findings in and across the four focus groups of Chinese University of Calgary undergraduate students. In each of the focus groups three genres of questions were employed: *demographic*, *situational* and *impressionistic*. As mentioned in Chapter 3, this study is impressionistic in nature and based on a small, non scientific sample. Despite this shortcoming, an attempt was made to accurately extract and portray the thoughts and observations of participating focus group members.

Data Collection

As highlighted in Chapter 3, the same set of questions (see Appendix 2) was asked of each focus group although the order of questions varied based on group dynamics and the general flow of the discussion. As also mentioned in Chapter 3, the focus group sessions were transcribed and compared with Observer notes for consistency. For each focus group session an original transcript complete with names of session participants was prepared. In order to protect the identity of participants, a coded transcript file was then created. Subsequently, an identity file was also produced for each focus group. The identity file contained the coded and actual identities of focus group participants along with relevant contact information in the event their responses needed to be verified. Lastly, a focus group profile document was created. Using the coded names assigned to each of the focus group participants, the profile sheet listed the age, year of study, gender, country of birth and, if applicable, year of immigration. If the participant was born in Canada, the profile sheet listed the year the participant's parents immigrated. After concealing the identities of focus group members in the transcripts and profile documents, the transcripts were analysed.

Data Analysis

The initial data analysis resulted in the colour coding of each transcript into six general categories as per Kirby & McKenna (1989). Remarks of focus group members were divided into six sections:

- 1) Comments that expressed an interest in the hockey game and subsequent victory.
- 2) Statements highlighting the rivalry between Canada and the United States.
- 3) Remarks expressing a feeling of connectedness with China and the Chinese community.
- 4) Feelings of pride, nationalism and identity with Canada.
- 5) Opinions of the Olympics and viewing habits.
- 6) Media related comments including perception of the media and media habits.

Once the transcripts were coded, the individual remarks were divided into *bibbits*²³ in order to group like comments in and across focus group sessions. The goal of the analysis was to explore the phenomenon of etribalization. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, etribalization is conceptualized as the potential to bring individuals together, spark the collective imagination and make participants feel a connection with a larger entity via a mediated experience. Etribalization suggests the possibility of a common cultural thread running through, or perhaps brought out by the collective imagination of those engaged in the mass mediated event. Again, the central research question of this study is: did Canada's victory in the men's 2002 Salt Lake Olympic gold medal hockey match as broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation mark an etribalization of Canadian Chinese immigrants?

²³ Bibbits are defined by Kirby & McKenna as, "a passage from a transcript, a piece of information from field notes, a section of a document or snippet or conversation recorded on a scrap of paper that can stand out on its own but, when necessary, can be relocated in its original context"(1989, p. 135).

With respect to providing a direct answer to the research question “did Canada’s victory in the men’s 2002 Salt Lake Olympic gold medal hockey match as broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation mark an etribalization of Canadian Chinese immigrants?” the answer is a resounding, “perhaps”. This is because the ratio of first generation Chinese-Canadians who watched the game to those who did not is 4:7. Despite this ambiguous response, if the research question is rephrased as, “did Canada’s victory in the men’s 2002 Salt Lake Olympic gold medal hockey match as broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation mark an etribalization of first and second generation Chinese-Canadians?” the data reveals some telling insights while raising questions for future research. The process of analysis is a reflexive one that allows the researcher to redefine his or her question through interaction with and analysis of the data. As will be shown below, it becomes more fruitful in exploring the concept of etribalization (and perhaps more importantly, its limitations; discussed below) as a phenomenon not exclusive to immigrants, but inclusive of all focus group participants who viewed the event. Consequently, the analysis of the data draws on experiences from both first and second generation Canadians to explore the concept of etribalization.

Thus to answer this revised question, etribalization is explored on two plains: experience and perception.

To View or Not to View?

The concept of etribalization is built upon the premise that it is most likely to occur as a result of a media event. Consequently, the first element to examine is whether or not the February 24, 2002 broadcasting of the men’s gold medal hockey match was indeed a media event in the eyes of focus group participants. The analysis offered in Chapter 1 made the

argument that the gold medal match was a media event in the spirit of Dayan & Katz. The question is whether participants also saw the match as a media event.

Thirteen (13) or sixty-five (65) per-cent of focus group participants watched part or all of the 2002 Olympic men's hockey gold medal match. Of those who watched the game, nine (9) of the thirteen (13) participants were second generation Chinese-Canadians. Of those who immigrated to Canada and watched the hockey game:

- One (1) participant immigrated fifteen (15) years ago at age four.
- One (1) participant immigrated eight (8) years ago at age fifteen.
- One (1) participant immigrated eight (7) years ago at age thirteen.
- One (1) participant immigrated three (3) years ago at age thirty-three.

The proceeding argument for the gold medal match to be regarded as a media event is based on the experience of the aforementioned thirteen participants.

In advance of exploring the media event thesis, it is prudent to provide an overview of focus group participants who did not watch the hockey game. The data will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter as well as in the conclusion. Nine (9) participants did not view the Salt Lake 2002 Winter Olympic men's gold medal hockey match. Two of the nine participants (B03 & D01) expressed a strong desire to have viewed the match but were unable to because of extenuating circumstances. However, both individuals actively sought information and game highlights at the first opportunity. Consequently, seven (7) participants are classified as not having watched the men's gold medal hockey match. Of the seven (7) who did not watch the match, five (5) - two (2) males and three (3) females - professed to be unaware of the gold medal match. Two (2) participants, who were both male, knew about the gold medal game but did not view it. Of the two males who knew of the

game, one (D03) mentioned he would have liked to have watched the match but was too busy with school, while the second male (C03) stated that the game was not of interest because he doesn't "follow hockey that much" (McCurdy, 2003c, p. 2).

Of those who did not watch the game:

- One (1) participant immigrated fifteen (15) years ago at age eleven.
- One (1) participant immigrated ten (10) years ago at age nine.
- One (1) participant immigrated nine (9) years ago at age ten.
- One (1) participant immigrated eight (8) years ago at age eleven.
- One (1) participant immigrated seven (7) years ago at age twelve.
- Two (2) participants immigrated two (2) years ago at ages thirty-three and twenty-seven.

The Men's Gold Medal Match as a Media Event

Dayan & Katz argue that "media events interrupt the rhythm and focus of people's lives" (1992, p. 195). As evident in personal accounts as well as anecdotal information provided by focus group participants, those who viewed the match made a conscious effort to do so. Perhaps one of the most interesting illustrations of the event indicating an interruption of routine came from a Canadian born Chinese participant who described the day on which the gold medal match took place as a "weird Sunday." She recounted her experience of being at the annual general meeting of her church which coincidentally overlapped with the scheduled hockey match. A04 spoke of a flurry of activity in the church conceding that although she did not technically view the match, she did so in absentia. The following transcript excerpt highlights A04's experience:

A04: That was a weird Sunday. I go to a Chinese Church and it just so happened that they planned the Annual General Meeting on that

afternoon. So it was the craziest thing, we're sitting in this sanctuary, inside the church, a whole bunch of us with our cell phones and they're holding this meeting but everyone is not listening. So, I just remember cell phones being passed around, people walking in and out of the room giving hand signs telling each other the score. So I just remember hearing on the radio when they first scored before the meeting, and then in the meeting just all the hand signals and like muted reactions. So, I actually didn't watch the game but it was the craziest, I'll never forget that afternoon.

P: Because people, my understanding is that people within your meeting still kept up on the score?

A04: Ya. Everyone was checking on their cell phones, getting emailed messages.

P: Really? So they were getting instant messages on cell phones.

A04: Ya and people were walking in and out of the room because we have TVs in the church but not in that room and then after the meeting we just ran to this room turned on the TV and we just watched the medal ceremony and everything. So it was kind of crazy so I actually didn't watch it. (McCurdy, 2003a, p. 2)

A similar church experience and more direct altering of routine was described by a participant from a different focus group. B02, who was also at church on February 24, 2002, recalls asking her church Pastor, "can you speak a little faster so we can catch the game?" (McCurdy, 2003b, p. 2). When asked if the Pastor responded sympathetically to the request, B02 replied "he totally understood" (McCurdy, 2003b, p. 2). Lastly, C04 provided an anecdote which illustrates how the Canadian media event seemed to shift the focus of the viewing public. Although C04 watched the first portion of the men's gold medal match at home, he had to work that afternoon. When asked about his viewing experience C04 noted:

Ya, I watched the game. I watched half of it at home with my sister and the other half at work. I had to drive to work, turned on CBC radio, drove to work listening to it, got there, turned on the TV at work...I worked at a Chinese food takeout restaurant. We had the TV on and there was no one ordering.

P: Were there no calls coming into the restaurant?

C04: Not until the game ended actually. Ya, so we were able to watch the whole game basically in peace.

P: As soon as it ended?

C04: Ya, people started ordering. (McCurdy, 2003b, p. 1).

As evident not only in C04's anecdote but the accounts provided by participants A04 and B02 there was an admitted and observable shift in both rhythm and focus. For those who had become mesmerized by the "hype" of the Olympic medal match, the gravity of the mediated event shifted, if only temporarily, the rhythm and focus of daily life.

According to Dayan & Katz, a second effect of a media event on its viewers is that "*media events give new status to the living room*" (1992, p. 195). The theorists assert that during the broadcast the "television is revived as the family focus, commanding attention and interest in bringing family members and friends together again" (p. 195). For ten of the thirteen (13) focus group participants who watched the match, the game was viewed in a family or group setting. B07 recalls:

I was at home, I was with my parents. We were glued to the TV. We had two TVs; one in the basement and one upstairs. My mom was cooking upstairs; my dad and I were downstairs. Both TVs were on CBC, full blast and we were watching it – it was quite memorable actually (McCurdy, 2003b, p. 3).

While some participants gathered with their parents and/or siblings, others took in the hockey match at a friend's house. Despite having her wisdom teeth extracted just one day before the gold medal game, participant B01 organized a "little hockey party" at her house. A member from the same focus group, B02, also recalled watching the match at a friend's house with 10 to 15 of her friends who, incidentally, were all Canadian-born Chinese. As for the three (3) people who viewed the match alone, one (D05) expressed a desire to have viewed the match with his friends in Calgary but was instead in Vancouver for Spring Break,

while another participant from the same focus group (D02) watched the game alone as her husband was working that afternoon (McCurdy, 2003d). Although not all of those who viewed the match were able to do so with family and/or friends, amongst those who viewed the hockey game, the mediated medal match appears to have captured the collective attention of the viewing participant's immediate reference groups.

The above examples also serve to illustrate Dayan & Katz's argument that "*the event creates an upsurge of fellow feeling*" that is marked by the organization of parties and the open and intentional commentary between individuals' (1992, p. 196). Anecdotal evidence offered by C04 further illustrates this point. As previously noted, C04 worked at a Chinese food restaurant. Although business was nonexistent during the hockey match, activity rapidly accelerated after the Canadian victory. In his dealings with customers, C04 noted, "everybody had comments about the game. Like 'I loved that goal' or 'How did Paul Kariya know that pass was coming?' The comments were made when [customers] came in and ordered food mostly" (McCurdy, 2003c, p. 1).

There are five remaining audience impacts of a media event that Dayan & Katz list which relate to this research. The remaining constructs not only help define the gold medal match as a media event, but they begin to overlap with the core elements of this research. Consequently, the constructs as outlined by Dayan & Katz will be highlighted in point form below and subsequently linked to the data where appropriate. The remaining impacts of a media event suggested by Dayan & Katz are:

- "The live broadcast transforms the ordinary roles of viewers, causing them to assume the roles proposed by the script of the ceremony."
- "The event connects center and periphery."

- “Media events offer moments of ‘mechanical solidarity’.”
- “Media events have the power to redefine the boundaries of societies.”
- “The success of an event is a cathartic experience for viewers.”

(1992, p. 196-197)

My goal is not to cut short the dialogue which establishes the 2002 Olympic hockey final as a media event, but to integrate the remaining elements with the original question this study seeks to address. Thus, it is my belief that the data supports the assertion that the focus group participants who watched the men’s Olympic gold medal hockey game viewed the match as a media event. The remaining audience effects cited by Dayan & Katz will serve to reinforce this claim while simultaneously allowing for the exploration of additional questions raised by this study.

Parallels in Experience

Although the degree of ego involvement varied by participant, due to the proposed national viewing role, parallels in how the match was experienced between focus group participants may be drawn. The first similarity amongst members is related to the notion put forth by Dayan & Katz (1992) that media events are viewed in group settings. Amongst the thirteen (13) individuals who watched the match live, ten (10) did so in the company of friends and/or family. Further, all of the focus group participants who viewed the match did so at a familial dwelling and not at a local bar, restaurant or similar establishment. As previously mentioned, two (2) of the three (3) individuals (D02 & D05) who viewed the match alone did so because of extenuating circumstances.

While similarities existed in the manner in which the game was watched, a second similarity was exhibited by focus group members in their emotional reaction to the media

event. Participants were asked to describe not only the location in which they viewed the match but the viewing atmosphere. Six (6) participants described or implied that the atmosphere surrounding the game as “exciting.” Of interest is that two participants who described the match as exciting- A02 and A04 who incidentally were both born in Canada - admitted to not regularly taking an interest in hockey. However, as A02 recounts, this game was “different”:

It was kind of like exciting to see them score because I usually don't get into hockey games. Sometimes my boyfriend would be watching it and I'm just like “ugh” and I usually leave the room and do something else but this one was kind of different. I don't know, it was more like pride I guess. I guess being Canadian, you just want them to win and you've seen them lose so many times you're kind of like, “finally we actually made it for ourselves.” Like we started the game anyway so we should be winning (McCurdy, 2003a, pp. 4-5).

Feelings of excitement were not limited to those who viewed the match in groups. In fact, focus group participants D02 and D05 who both watched the game alone also spoke of feeling excited. D05 recalled, “I was on the edge of my seat the whole time” (McCurdy, 2003d, p. 10). Related to atmosphere is the allure of the mediated hockey match that was created by anticipation.

Hype

A question posed in each focus group directed at members who watched the men's 2002 Olympic hockey final was, why did you watch the game? What was the draw? Dayan & Katz postulate that “there is an active period of looking forward [to the media event], abetted by the promotional activity of the broadcasters” (1992, p.7). Further, media events “are characterized by a *norm of viewing* in which people tell each other that it is mandatory to view, they must put all else aside” (p. 8-9). A review of data generated from focus group discussions reveals that for some of those who watched the game, the hype generated by

advance media coverage as well as anticipation created by talking up the event increased the hockey match's allure.

A number of focus group participants commented on how the media directed their attention towards the men's gold medal match. Participant A01 who watched little Winter Olympic coverage noted:

Whatever is on the newspaper say for hockey or something, I don't think I would have known a lot about the hockey if it wasn't printed on the newspaper. Say if it was skiing, or other winter sports like bobsledding, I wouldn't know what to watch for. I don't know their names, I don't know who is in what, I don't know about their sports; if it wasn't for the newspaper. So that's why I'd only follow hockey during the Winter Olympics (McCurdy, 2003a, p. 10).

D05 remarked, "media, I guess, makes the game more significant than it already is. The media make it more glamorous I think" (McCurdy, 2003d, p. 4).

Related, perhaps reflexively, to hype generated by media was the build-up generated via interpersonal interaction. Two (2) focus group participants A04 and D05, made specific reference to how the anticipation about the game expressed by people around them increased their desire to take in the match. The following transcript excerpt is A04's response to why she watched the hockey game and serves to highlight her impression of the "hype" surrounding the game:

A04: I think I just got caught up in the hype – everyone was talking about it, it was really just like "Ya, I want to see it." Even in the men's hockey game, I was excited about it so, I don't know much about hockey but it was exciting.

P: What do you mean when you say "hype"?

A04: Everyone is like "Ya, it's going to be so good." And like everyone, no matter who you talked to, like strangers, it was just everywhere. There was just this feeling of unity; it's the only thing I can describe (McCurdy, 2003a, p. 4).

A similar observation was made by participant D05 who remembered the match being the “talk of the town. Everyone was talking about it....It was a hot topic during that time” (McCurdy, 2003d, p. 4). In the days leading up to the gold medal match, as highlighted in Chapter 1, the men’s Olympic hockey final had secured a prominent position on the front page of many Canadian newspapers. The media attention did not go unnoticed. This is not to imply that the amorphous “Canadian media” deliberately set an agenda that ultimately coerced Canadians into viewing the game. The fact that five (5) of the seven (7) participants who did not watch the match professed to have been unaware of the match should deter any attempts at drawing conclusions touting “the media’s” blanket omnipotence. Nevertheless, the power of media coverage should not be discounted. As evident from the comments of A01 and D05, media coverage did influence some focus group participants.

In tandem with the “media hype” was the hype generated by the match becoming the “talk of the town”. The “hype” around the media event is perhaps best thought of as reflexive. However the concept of reflexivity and the seeming self-fulfilling prophecy that amplifies the media event is beyond the scope of this current analysis. Thus far the results that have been discussed have focused predominantly on the build up for the hockey match, the hype surrounding it and the physical context in which the match was viewed. The next section will provide an overview of parallels amongst group discussion members with respect to their nationalistic reading of the event.

Perceptions of the Media Event, the Nation State & Nationalism

Dayan & Katz argue that “the live broadcast [of the media event] transforms the ordinary roles of viewers, causing them to assume the roles proposed by the script of the ceremony” (1992, p. 195). As argued in Chapters 1 and 2, the script required audience

members to assume the role of the nationalistic fan. The following section will explore the nationalistic nature of the game and its impact on those who did and did not watch the event.

National Pride

National pride was undoubtedly a motivating factor for participants to watch the men's gold medal match. As became evident in group discussion, both the Olympics and hockey were viewed as appropriate vehicles for the generation and expression of national pride. However, what was surprising was the manner in which Canadian national pride was envisioned by a large number of focus group participants. In advance of exploring Canadian pride and how it may be interpreted from the group discussions, an overview of attitudes towards the Olympics and hockey as national catalysts will first be provided.

One of the questions posed to group participants was to explain what they thought of the Olympics; how they viewed it. It should be noted that this question was not restricted to those who watched the men's hockey game and was open to all group members. Generally, the comments expressed in the group discussion parallel arguments put forth by Larson & Park (1993) that the Olympics incite nationalism. Keeping in mind the assertion of Dayan & Katz (1992) that media events provide viewing roles, this finding should not be a surprise. Regardless, the comments shared by focus group participants serve to underline this statement. First, the Olympics were conceptualized by group members as the ultimate achievement in sport. A02 remarked, "the Olympics, is held on a higher pedestal. It's a world event, it's not just within Canada or within the US.....It increases the pride and everything" (McCurdy, 2003a, p. 7). The global nature of the event and the belief that the world's top athletes are present at the Olympics was mentioned in each of the four discussion groups. Similarly, the perception that the Olympics are a nationalistic lightning rod,

whereby a nation's performance at the games reflects upon the people of that nation, was revealed in each of the four groups. This assertion is captured in comments made by B06 who stated:

I think the Olympics are very political. I think for the government, the Olympics is not just sport, it's a way of "how do I look?".... I think in the same way, the Olympics are like that. It reflects the country, the people who run the country and the people who live there. These are big events that really show the culture and how productive we are" (McCurdy, 2003b, p. 6).

Not only were the Olympics recognized as a vehicle for nationalism, but hockey was viewed as a particularly Canadian pastime. While one participant (C03) noted that hockey was Canada's national sport, consensus around the notion that hockey is symbolic of Canada was expressed in Focus Group B and restated by D02 in the fourth focus group. Perhaps the clearest statement describing the relationship between hockey and Canada came from Focus Group B where a participant suggested hockey is "our version of football" (McCurdy, 2003b, p. 10). While American sporting culture is closely associated with (North American) football, hockey is the cornerstone of Canadian sport. Incidentally, the football/hockey analogy was also alluded to in Focus Group C where C04 reflected, "in the States you get the image of the dad throwing the football to his son in the park. In Canada I...get the image of the father teaching the kid how to score a goal" (McCurdy, 2003c, p. 11).

Media Events & Nationalism: We're Not American Eh.

As will be outlined at the close of this chapter, those who viewed the mediated event and, to a lesser extent even those who did not, shared in a collective pride that is uniquely Canadian. Canadian nationalism was expressed via an insistent, almost obsessive need of self-differentiation from Canada's neighbours to the south, the United States. Focus group

members seemed to reinforce the stereotype that Canadians define themselves as Canadians by not being American.

The prescribed viewing role for the hockey game was that of the nationalistic fan. Accordingly, watching the match required identifying with the nation-state by supporting Team Canada. All participants who viewed the gold medal game assumed the role of a nationalistic fan, directly in line with the role prescribed by the event. Participant D03 immigrated to Canada in spring 2001, and although he did not watch the hockey game, his opinion as to how the Chinese view Canada serves as an excellent launching point to study Canadian national identity:

In China we just think that Canada is just the little brother of the United States. We've had this kind of opinion for a long time. Even when I moved to Canada I still have a strong feeling that the United States has too much of an influence on this country. It's quite interesting actually (McCurdy, 2003d, p.10).

A participant who viewed the gold medal game also noted Canada's status as a little brother to the United States. C04, a second generation Canadian participant, recounted this amusing anecdote:

...a Comedian [once] said, "Canada is like the US's little brother and the UN is the big mom." "Mom, I'm going to go play hockey."

"Well, bring Canada with you."

"But they don't have anything."

"Let them play goalie" (McCurdy, 2003c, p. 9).

The purpose of the quote from D04, as well as C04's anecdote is to illustrate what could be labelled as "little brother syndrome." A theme raised independently in each of the four focus groups was that a collective response to this syndrome has been for Canadians to seek outlets to differentiate themselves from Americans. With hockey officially recognized as one of

Canada's national sports and with the Olympics being perceived as the ultimate sporting competition, the 2002 Salt Lake Olympics men's hockey final offered a golden opportunity for Canadians to differentiate themselves from Americans.

What is interesting to observe about this yearning for differentiation is that a collective desire was expressed to defeat the opposing team, the United States *because* it was the United States. As a participant in Focus Group C noted, the desire to beat the United States is, "...one of the reasons, one of the driving forces that brings Canadians together" (McCurdy, 2003c, p. 9). In all four focus groups, amongst those who viewed the men's gold medal hockey match, there was consensus that men's Olympic hockey final was more significant because of a perceived rivalry (inferiority complex?) with the United States. Further, the match's stakes were raised and intensified in the eyes of group members because the contest was being held on American soil.

A conclusion that may be generalized from the comments of participants is that the significance, and by extension power, of the media event was amplified within Canada because the contest was against the United States. This idea underpins Dayan & Katz's assertion that, "partisanship is an understatement of the deep identification with a home team facing outsiders..." (1992, p. 136). As for parallels in the perception of participants, a commonality amongst those who viewed the match was the opinion that the hockey game was of national significance as it marked an opportunity to differentiate Canada from the United States to Canadians, Americans and the world. Team Canada's victory solidified this; at least temporarily. Before delving into issues related to the victory, the data will be mined further to explore notions of unity.

Unity

Dayan & Katz (1992) argue that media events “*offer moments of ‘mechanical solidarity’*...[whereby] the whole of a population is allowed - and expected - to attend” (p. 196). In doing so the media event, “*connects centre and periphery*... Linked by networks of long-reaching affinity, the mass audiences of television events partially overcome their dispersion and aromatization”(p. 196). When focus group participants who viewed the hockey game were asked to recount their feelings in the lead up to and during the match, the idea of unity in the context of nationalism was expressed in each focus group. The first example of unity I wish to highlight was expressed in Focus Groups A, B and C. Members in all three groups cited the media’s coverage of Canadians across the country viewing the match as contributing to a sense of unity. C04 remembered thinking, “I’m watching the exact same thing every other Canadian is right now” (McCurdy, 2003c, p. 8). Similarly, A05 noted “I think what helps with the excitement is not just watching people score, or watching the game itself but watching the people who are watching the game” (McCurdy, 2003a, p. 6). The comments of C04 and A05 underline the value and impact of the mediation (i.e. its composition and production) of the physical happening. Further, the comments by group members suggest the importance of viewing a media event, with respect to generating feelings of connectivity depends not just on the viewers consuming the specific mediated event, in this case the hockey game, but the broadcasting of real-time pictures of spatially dispersed collectives viewing said event. Although feelings of national unity and national pride were used to describe the atmosphere leading up to and during the match, it was the Canada 5 to 2 victory over Team USA on American soil that amplified those feelings for some, and acted as a catalyst for feelings of Canadian unity, pride and connectedness for other focus group members.

Victory

Dayan & Katz note that, "*the success of an event is a cathartic experience for viewers*" (1992, p. 197 [italics in text]). While feelings of unity and pride were recounted by focus group participants in the build up to and during the broadcasting of the match, the victory caused a release of emotion that not only engulfed focus group members who viewed the match but also touched many of those who did not. As mentioned above, for many viewers, Canadian pride was on the line. The sixty-minute contest, which only occurs once every four years, was viewed as part of a nationalistic script. Flaming the pro-Canadian atmosphere that was generated via viewers assuming the role of the nationalistic fan was the fact that Team Canada had not won a gold medal in men's hockey for fifty years. Participant B07's account of watching the gold medal contest and the ensuing victory in the company of his parents stands as a representative example of the thoughts and reactions expressed by focus group members:

When the American's scored the first goal, it sank the hopes a little bit, it was like "Oh my god, oh my god!" Sitting in my living room, you could feel that across Canada it was like "Oh my God, we're all going to die." Then suddenly Canada came back. The sense of euphoria came until the final buzzer. Then, history was made. Watching that game, it's kind of like the 72 summit series. It will probably turn out that way; where were you in 2002? (McCurdy, 2003, p. 5).

Most focus group members who spoke of the victory spoke of feeling excited, feeling proud of being Canadian and feeling a sense of accomplishment in beating the United States. In fact, one focus group participant (A01) spoke of using ICQ - a popular Internet instant messaging application - to go online and brag to his American friends about the Canadian victory (McCurdy, 2003a, p. 7).

Just as the ability to view and contact “the electronic Canadian other” watching the game added to its impact, the ability to view victory celebrations also had an important effect. Again using the comments of B07,

After the game everybody came out, they were waving Canadian flags, even the people in Montreal were going wild even though that is the hot bed of separatist activity, everybody was waving Canadian flags. But it brought us all together and I think that’s what it means to be Canadian – when we have something good to celebrate we come together and we identify ourselves as Canadian. This is a good starting point of finally establishing a true Canadian identity (McCurdy, 2003, p. 14).

While focus group members who watched the gold medal match spoke of feeling more Canadian, interestingly, the impact of the victory was noticed - if not felt - by those who did not watch the match. Five (5) of the seven (7) focus group members who did not watch the match commented on the relationship between the victory and Canadian national pride. The following transcript excerpt from Focus Group C features the comments of C01, C02 and C03. Female participants C01 (immigrated aged 10) and C02 (immigrated aged 12) did not hear about the men’s gold medal hockey match before or during the game but only after Team Canada won. While male participant C03 (immigrated age 11) knew about the hockey broadcast but elected not to watch it:

P: A bit about national pride for the Olympics. Do you feel pride when your country does well whether it is China or Canada?

C03: Even though I didn’t follow hockey, when you hear that they beat the US you still feel that ‘oh yeah, we did something.’

P: So what do you think causes that?

C01: Part of the Canadian (experience). Somebody that has the same identity as you. You’ll be happy for them even though if you didn’t watch it – you still cheer for them.

C02: We live in Canada right? So.

C03: It's this on going thing as a Canadian, you just pick it up. We're close to the Americans, we do everything differently (McCurdy, 2003c, p. 7).

Four (4) of the seven (7) focus group members who did not watch the men's gold medal match attended Focus Group C. The fourth discussion member of Group C who did not watch the match, C05 (immigrated aged 9), did not know about the men's hockey final and only found out about it while driving. In C05's words, "I didn't know the game was happening, I heard about it afterwards.... I was just on a road and there wasn't any traffic or stuff and everybody just started honking. I was like 'oh, what the hell happened?'" (McCurdy, 2003c, p. 3). Of the two participants from Focus Group D who were classified as not having watched the game, D03 (immigrated in 2001 at age 33) had heard about the Olympic final in advance of its broadcast, but was too busy with school while D04 (immigrated 2001 at age 27) did not know about the match. Despite not having watched the final, both male participants commented on Canada's victory. D03 remarked, "Ya, it made me feel great because we beat the Americans. I like Canada to win and competing with America, I prefer Canada to win. I don't want America to win ever," while D04 stated, "I think it was pretty exciting when I heard that a Canadian team won the gold medal, especially because they beat America" (McCurdy, 2003d, p. 10). What is of note about D03 and D04's comments is that the pleasure gleaned from Canada's victory over the United States parallels the reaction of those who actually viewed the gold medal victory.

A possible response as to why focus group members who both did and did not watch the match felt national pride, specifically a form of Canadian nationalism as defined via an attempt at differentiation from the United States, can be gleaned from the remarks of Canadian born participant B05. Comments expressed by female participant B05 while

relaying feelings of pride incited by the men's gold medal victory also hint at the challenges of establishing a Canadian identity. B05 remarked, "we don't have as much pride [as Canadians] because we don't really know what being a Canadian is. And for me, after the game, I just felt like 'Yay, we have hockey, we have something.' Ya, felt more Canadian or something" (McCurdy, 2003b, p. 13). The issue of Canadian identity was raised and discussed in all four focus groups and requires further exploration to underscore the impact of not only Canadian identity but contrasting identities on the concept of etribalization. Issues of identity and its relation to, and impact on, the concept of etribalization will be addressed when I discuss the limitations of the concept. However in advance of exploring the limitations of etribalization and the modifications to the concept which emerged as a result of this research, a brief overview of observations supporting the hypothesis will be offered.

Etribalization

The goal of this study has been to explore the hypothesized phenomenon of etribalization. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, etribalization is based upon Dayan & Katz's (1992) theory of media events and is conceptualized as the potential to bring individuals together, spark the collective imagination and make participants feel a connection with a larger entity via a mediated experience. Returning briefly to the research question, this study's stated purpose was to explore the etribalization of first generation Chinese-Canadians. As stated above, half the population (11) of the sample group were first generation Canadians. The other half of the sample were second generation Chinese-Canadians. While thirteen (13) participants watched the match, seven (7) focus group participants did not. This left two (2) Canadian-born Chinese focus group participants who

were unable to watch the match but expressed a very strong interest to do so unclassified. Of those who watched the match, four (4) -A01, B07, D02, D05- were immigrants while all seven (7) people who did not watch the match (B04, C01, C02, C03, C05, D03, D04) were immigrants. Acknowledging that the ratio of immigrants who watched the match is larger than those who did not, the distribution with respect to the timeline as to when individuals immigrated is however, similar. Nine (9) of the eleven (11) Canadian-born Chinese group members watched the game live. The two (2) Canadian-born Chinese participants who did not watch the match (B03 & D01) expressed a genuine desire to have viewed the match live but being unable to do so, made a concerted effort to either watch a taped version of the game (B03) or watch the highlights (D01). Thus, all Canadian-born Chinese participants did show an interest in the match.

With respect to providing a direct answer to the original research question of this study, “did Canada’s victory in the men’s 2002 Salt Lake Olympic gold medal hockey match as broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation mark an etribalization of Canadian Chinese immigrants?” the answer, as stated in the introduction of this chapter, is a confident, “perhaps”. Acknowledging this ambiguous response, the research question was rephrased to pose the question, “did Canada’s victory in the men’s 2002 Salt Lake Olympic gold medal hockey match as broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation mark an etribalization of first and second generation Chinese-Canadians?” The results of the revised research question reveal some telling insights and raise questions for future research.

Based on the information provided above as well as my analysis of the data, the following general parallels in the perception and experience of focus group members who

watched the Sunday, February 24, 2002, CBC broadcast of the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic men's gold medal hockey final may be drawn:

1. The CBC broadcast of the gold medal game was interpreted by focus group members as a media event.
2. Of those who participated in the focus group sessions, Canadian born Chinese were more likely to view the event than Chinese who had immigrated to Canada.
3. All focus group members viewed the match in a familial dwelling.
4. With one exception, the majority of focus group participants who viewed the match either did so in a group setting (10 of 13) or expressed a desire to have viewed the match with peers (2).
5. Focus group members recognized the role of the media in hyping and amplifying the event.
6. All focus group participants who viewed the match acknowledged and to varying degrees accepted the prescribed role of the nationalistic fan. Further, participants who watched the match recounted being emotionally involved in the game.
7. The majority of focus group participants who viewed the match shared similar perceptions, thus a similar reading of Canadian national identity. For focus group participants, to be Canadian was to not be American.
8. All participants who viewed the match expressed similar emotions of national pride and unity upon Canada's victory. Comparable though less involved reactions were observed in comments made by six (6) of the seven (7) participants who did not watch the match.

From the above assertions, focus group participants who viewed the men's gold medal match appeared to have similar experiences. Further, based on the accounts of focus group participants who did not view the match, the mediated event appears not only to have had an impact on viewers but also because of the victory, reached even those who did not know of, let alone participate in the media event. However, despite the similarities in viewing experience, which seem to support the concept of etribalization, the focus group discussions conducted for this research also raised two contentious issues related to etribalization that not only must be addressed, but also perhaps offer some of the most significant insights of this study. Under the guise of limitation I will discuss the following elements: temporality and identity.

Limitations of Research

Etribalization and Temporality

Dayan & Katz (1992) define media events as the "high holidays of mass communication" (p. 1). Not only do holidays hold a symbolic significance to those observing them, but they are also of a temporal nature. Similarly, although media events may be promoted well in advance of the specific date, the broadcast itself is limited. Consequently even if the concept of etribalization (as an appendix to the media event thesis) may be thought of as informed, the connections formed as a result of the mediated experience must be contextualized within both the fluid nature of time as well as the ever present pressure for forward progress that is characteristic of our current Western neo-liberal society.

For those who viewed the media event and to a lesser extent for those who did not, Team Canada's men's gold medal victory was visceral. The emotional reactions and (temporal) significance of the match recounted by group participants appeared genuine.

However, due to the fluid nature of time and underscored by the forward pressing nature of our current media environment, the victory eventually faded from news headlines.

Understandably, soon after the victory, the event seemed to be relegated to the back of the collective memory; as B07 noted:

I think it is in the back of our minds. We can probably bring that up 20, 30 years later. And even if some more die-hard patriotic Canadians can go down to the United States and they have American friends, and they bring this topic up they can say “ha-ha you lost!” and we can brag about that until 2006 (McCurdy, 2003c, p. 14).

When focus group members were asked why they thought the media event, while a seemingly cathartic Canadian experience at the time, would be deprioritized, participants in Focus Group A and Focus Group D offered the similar responses. In the words of A05, the media event becomes less important:

Probably because you’re usually tied up in other things. You might bring it up and talk to other people about it and feel good about Canada and feel good about being Canadian and after that you just get on with whatever you had to do in your life and school or work or whatever. I’m not sure, it’s not that significant to me at the moment, I probably wouldn’t have thought about it at all until the next Olympics (McCurdy, 2003a, p. 11).

Thus, in line with Dayan & Katz’s thesis, the media event shifts the focus of society and temporarily alters routine. Once the “high holiday of mass communication” has ended and after a specific amount of time has passed, allowing the energy created around the match to dissipate, the pattern of regularity is resumed. Recognizing the temporality of the experience and that at the conclusion of the media event, people do return to their everyday lives, can the media event have a lasting impact? Although the depth and breadth of this question far exceeds the scope and methodological limits of this study, anecdotal evidence gleaned from the focus group sessions will be offered. Participant D01 described feeling “less Canadian”

then he did during and soon after the match. Reflecting on his feelings one year after the gold medal hockey match D01 noted:

It's different. It's an event for getting people together and cheering for Canada. It's a gathering, it's a big thing right. Whereas now it's everybody is like...

P: Back to our regular...

D01: Ya. Like I feel less Canadian now then I was a year ago during that time right? (McCurdy, 2003d, p. 11).

Participant A04 made a similar comment to D01 stating that the Olympics were the only time she really thought about being Canadian. A04 remarked:

Actually, the only time I would say in four years where I really am proud to be Canadian, where I really think about "I am Canadian". Ya, it just kind of solidifies, not my Canadian identity, but that's the only time I actually think "I am Canadian; I'm glad I'm Canadian" and I count the medals that go to Canada and I look at the rankings and stuff – that's about the only time I think of it (McCurdy, 2003a, p. 9).

The above comments by D01 and A04 would suggest that the media event only had a temporary impact, or perhaps caused only a temporary boost in the participants' identification with Canada. The fact that some participants described only feeling Canadian during the Olympics is understandable. In the routine functioning of daily life I doubt there are few, if any, signifiers as blatantly obvious as the Olympics with respect to inciting nationalism. Instead, it seems the nation state makes its mark on a subconscious level through routinization (schooling), systemic limitations on a national and global level (passports) as well as formal procedures (citizenship). The impact of the nationalistic media event then seems to highlight the affiliation or identity with the nation-state that has been created through other means – the impact of the nationalistic event itself however can not be discounted. Instead, a balance between the event and any hypothesized impact must be contextualized to avoid making any "hypodermic needle" assumptions. Of note, the

nationalistic identity - Canadian identity – scripted for viewers of the men’s 2002 Olympic gold medal hockey match was the source of conflict and confusion amongst focus group members. Consequently, the second limit of etribalization that will be explored relates directly to the Canadian condition: Canadian identity.

Etribalization and Identity

As discussed earlier in this chapter, while feelings of national unity appear to have been elicited as a result of the media, discussion across all four focus groups acknowledged the seemingly problematic nature of Canadian identity.

Alternative Readings of the Nationalistic Script

Although hockey was recognized by focus group members as a national sport and as something that was purported as being distinctly Canadian, the discussion of the relationship between hockey and Canada did raise issues of Canadian identity. Perhaps one of the most interesting comments relating to Canadian identity and hockey was A04’s statement on her perception of the relationship between hockey and Canada:

Ya, that’s what we’ve always said is our own and we finally proved it to everyone else that it is our own and now everyone else can see that it is Canadian; hockey is Canadian. Figure skating, I don’t know, or any other sport but ya, that’s the one thing that we proved to ourselves and to the rest of the world (McCurdy, 2003a, p. 7).

The notion of “proving to ourselves” mentioned by A04 was picked up by a fellow focus group member during the discussion. A05’s response to the above comment is worth noting:

Actually, I thought it was interesting what A04 said about how hockey is Canadian. I’m not a huge hockey fan so I kind of think of it as – I don’t think it makes me Canadian to watch hockey but at the same time, its something that everyone keeps pumping into us and saying that it is Canadian. So, A04, you actually said, ‘we proved to ourselves that hockey is Canadian’ and I just thought that was really interesting because – do we have to prove to ourselves that hockey is Canada? Is it just because we won that its Canadian? Or, is it just because we

think that we're the inventors of hockey that it's Canadian or something? I don't know (McCurdy, 2003a, p. 8).

The statement made by A04 highlights the seemingly Canadian tendency for Canadians to identify themselves with hockey. What is interesting in A04's statement as A05 pointed out is the notion of "proving to ourselves." Living in the shadow of the world's only super-power, Canadians are constantly looking for an avenue to differentiate themselves from Americans – to prove to themselves and the world that they are not Americans. The gold medal hockey match provided this. Recognizing that hockey has been described by individuals and presented by various media (most notably in Canadian beer and soft drink advertising campaigns) as a component of Canadian identity, beyond hockey - whether one accepts the hockey label or not - what does it mean to be Canadian? This question was asked of focus group participants.

If the power of a nationalistic media event is to extend beyond the "high holiday of mass communication," does the event not have to strike a chord with Canadians and by extension Canadian identity at a deeper level than hockey? Based on the thoughts and experience of focus group members and my analysis of the transcripts, a unique answer to this question may be offered: Canada's lack of identity is in fact its very identity.

Evident in focus group discussions a feeling amongst participants was that to be Canadian was to be unified by diversity. Before exploring this notion further it is necessary to make clear that I acknowledge the literature that exists which theorizes and exemplifies the institutional as well as structural inequities of Canadian "multicultural" society. This literature undoubtedly raises relevant and important issues pertaining to Canadian society. However, the purpose of highlighting the view of focus group members as they pertain to Canadian identity is not to enter a dialogue surrounding the theoretically asserted structural

faults of Canadian society but to stress the perceived relationship between Canada, multiculturalism and identity as expressed by focus group participants.

Returning to the relationship between Canadian identity and multiculturalism, focus group members were asked to describe what it means to be Canadian? The question proved a difficult one to answer. Participant D01 responded with a rhetorical question:

But what is Canadian? Is there such a thing as a nationality as Canadian because Canadians is like a mixture of all nationalities? That's why how do you define Canadian? Aside from watching a hockey game that everyone can relate to tell me something else that, because everybody celebrates their own culture. I don't know, to me, I don't know what is Canadian. I cannot define it (McCurdy 2003d, p. 11).

D01 was not alone in expressing his idea that a unifying or homogenous Canadian identity is difficult to define because of the country's pastiche of cultures. Participant B01 provided perhaps the clearest statement in defining what it meant to be Canadian arguing that Canadians come in pairs:

That's how I see Canada – it's always going to be like, for Canadians, it is always going to be Canada and their culture. Even for some of my Caucasian friends they are like "ya, I'm Irish." It's always I'm Canadian and I'm this. And I think that's why bringing us together is so much more difficult because we come in pairs of two – we're not just one thing. Even if you are born in Canada you still have your background. So I think in general the Olympics is a good way of uniting us but it just takes so much more because there are so many more aspects to look at. I think for America it's so much easier because they just try to integrate everything into one while we try to keep it as different as possible.

I think that is where you get the diversity in Canada; we acknowledge it. Not to sound cynical but Americans are so like "I'm American" but in Canada I think we take the diversity more seriously and we realize there is such a huge diversity in Canada and we accept it (McCurdy 2003b, p. 15).

Evident in B01's comment - who incidentally along with D01 was born in Canada - is the favourite juxtaposition of Canadian middle school social science: the Canadian cultural mosaic versus the American melting pot. Although the analogy is seemingly cliché and may be a contentious issue with some scholars, the notion that Canadians are unified by their acknowledgement of diversity was a common theme across all four discussion groups. Further, not only was this notion expressed by individuals in their discussion but it is also exemplified in their actions; specifically in their viewing of the Olympics.

Dual Identities

With one exception, each focus group member spoke of following the progress of China during the Olympics. What was interesting is that while immigrants followed the progress of China in the Olympics because it was their homeland, Canadian-born Chinese participants followed China in the Olympics out of a "heritage" pride. In the words of B03, "it's my heritage so you are always proud of what China does. They're becoming a world power – things are integrating" (McCurdy, 2003b, p. 8). Thus the Olympics not only acted as a conduit for Canadian nationalism, but it was also a medium to channel Chinese identity.

While the Olympic broadcasts provided focus group participants an opportunity to tap into or touch base with Chinese cultural and nationalistic roots, outside of mediated opportunities such as the Olympics, some focus group participants relayed feelings of being lost. Based on focus group discussions even though the proliferation of media including the Internet do provide a means to access Chinese cultural texts such as movies, music and the news, the formation of cultural identities be it Canadian, Chinese, Canadian-Chinese or the like, extends beyond any temporal media interaction. In fact, in group discussions it became evident that the routinization of Canadian cultural life (as defined by the Caucasian majority)

despite the cloak of multiculturalism has been and continues to be a major influence and source of conflict for some focus group members.

It seems that for many focus group participants, particularly those who received their primary education in Canada, the lack of a Canadian identity has been compounded by the feeling of being lost and not knowing where to fit in. Participant C01 who immigrated at age ten recounted:

Sometimes I don't feel I'm Chinese or I don't feel I'm Canadian. I'm kind of in the middle. I don't know, that feeling is kind of weird. Probably because I speak a lot of Chinese in the house and I well, when I was in elementary, there was probably two Chinese in the whole school in Calgary, and all the friends that I have are Canadian. But when I grew older, in High School I met a lot of Chinese and I kind of ignored my Canadian friends and went into the Chinese group and I kind of lost that Canadian part. I kind of became Chinese. Just in university I have met a lot of people and I feel like I am in the middle right now " (McCurdy, 2003c, p. 11).

C01 also went on to say:

Sometimes when I talk to my parents, they say, "you speak like a Canadian, you don't speak like a Chinese". They say the way I express my ideas. When I talk to my friends they say, "you talk like a Chinese". At home I am not a Chinese and at school I am not a Canadian. I just get so confused... It is frustrating. I don't know what I am! I simply don't know, am I Chinese or am I Canadian? (McCurdy, 2003c, p. 12).

C01 was not alone in feeling in-between cultures. In fact it was a common theme expressed by many focus-group participants. The above comments by C04 raise many interesting questions about the plurality of identity in Canada and I will return to these in the concluding chapter. For the purposes of the discussion at hand, the goal of highlighting fissures in the identities of participants is to make evident a further limit, or at least consideration regarding the concept of etribalization. Although the media event seemed to evoke feelings of unity and identity within Canada, the very nature of Canadian identity is contradictory. Canada

with its reputation as a multicultural nation seems to pride itself on allowing various cultures to exist; Canadians “come in pairs”. However, as evident in the comments of C01 and others in the focus group, it appears as if there is a disjuncture between being multicultural, thus adapting a culture based on your heritage or continuing your culture unabated from your place of origin, and adopting a “Canadian culture” which, though seemingly ambiguous, is a veil for Caucasian dominated culture and values. This assertion is underscored by the fact that the nationalistic media event, the hockey game and the cultural myth and traditions that surround it are a product of Caucasian Canadian culture.

The limitation of etribalization, then, is to recognize the cultural disjuncture that appears to be facing immigrants. While a nationalistic media event may provide Canadian citizens with a rallying point and may even embed itself in the collective memory of the citizenry, the paradox of the multicultural reputation of Canada must not be overlooked. Thus when looking at a nationalistic media event, in a Canadian context at least, the event and the phenomenon of etribalization must be contextualized and grounded to respect deeper issues and divides related to fostering Canadian identity.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion & Discussion

The goal of this thesis has been to examine the concept of etribalization. Based on the work of Dayan & Katz (1992), etribalization was conceptualized as the ability of a mediated experience to activate the collective consciousness and allow individuals to feel a connection with a larger entity. The existence of this phenomenon was tested by conducting a small number of focus groups consisting of first and second generation Chinese-Canadians. Focus group discussions centered on the CBC's broadcast of the Olympic men's gold medal hockey game. Group discussions about the hockey match yielded valuable data that helped me explore and refine the concept of etribalization. Further, group discussions provided useful feedback pertaining to Canadian nationalism and the struggle for a Canadian identity. In advance of reviewing my findings, it should be clearly noted that due to my chosen methodology and non-scientific sample size, this study is an impressionistic one. If I were to conduct the same research again with a different sample or a different group, there is no guarantee that my results would be the same.

The first step in studying etribalization was to establish the gold medal game as a media event. Based on my analysis of Canadian media (Chapter 1) and of focus group discussions (Chapter 4), the Olympic hockey match could be defined as just such an event. Next, similarities in focus group members' viewing experience and perception of the game were sought. The analysis provided in Chapter 4 revealed that the match was watched in familial dwellings and for the most part, viewed in a social, group setting.

Focus group members also exhibited similarities in their perception of the game. All group participants who viewed the match recognized and accepted the prescribed viewing

role of the nationalistic fan. Further, focus group members expressed Canadian nationalism in a similar manner, via constructing a Canadian identity based on not being American..

As a result of the observed physical and perceptual similarities, the hypothesized phenomenon of etribalization appears to be fruitful. However, despite the similarities discussed in Chapter 4, two key limitations of etribalization were also suggested. First, the temporal nature of the media event was noted. Though the hockey match encouraged viewers to assume a Canadian identity, soon after the cathartic men's victory regular life was resumed and the event was relegated to the back of the collective consciousness. Second, the feeling of Canadian unity facilitated by the event is paradoxical. Although group members felt united by the hockey match (and perhaps even more so by the victory) they also believed that Canada lacked a cohesive national identity. In place of a collective identity it was suggested that because of Canada's cultural pastiche, Canadians are united not by their similarities but by their differences.

However, the assertion that multiculturalism brings Canadians together is also problematic as evident in Chapter 4's discussion of dual identities. Based on the comments of group members, a dichotomy exists between their cultural heritage and the conformist pressures of "Caucasian" Canadian culture. Consequently, Canadian culture is neither black nor white, leaving many to tread in a cultural pool of grey. In summary, a second limit of etribalization as it relates to the study of a Canadian media event is the paradoxical nature of Canadian multiculturalism.

Direction for Future Research

It is not my intention to present the concept of etribalization as an omnipotent and static theoretical tool. Although it is flattering to think this interpretive study may be able to

make a small contribution to the media studies literature, I feel that much of the value from this work resides in lessons learnt and questions that have arisen as a result of my research. Consequently, I wish to offer some suggestions and direction for future research in the areas of: Canadian identity and nationalism, in an age of globalization and media power.

Canadian Identity and Nationalism

The country's perceived lack of, but need for a collective Canadian identity has largely become a national preoccupation, especially for journalists, politicians and academics. The irony of this quest must not be overlooked. As discussed in Chapter 4, the process of defining oneself as Canadian appears to involve a conscious differentiation from Americans. This observation in and of itself could warrant further investigation though has already been studied by scholars in some detail. Moreover, Canadians seem to perceive themselves as offering a superior cultural environment to the United States because of Canada's reputation as a tolerant "cultural mosaic." This raises questions on two levels²⁴. First, does the Canadian quest for a common national identity not bear a striking resemblance to the "American melting pot"? Second, if one accepts the "cultural mosaic" premise, how can the cultural disjuncture expressed by focus group members be accounted for? At a time when the Canadian government is exploring avenues to foster a stronger sense of Canadian identity, research is needed to critically examine the government's view of what it means to be Canadian. Further, if the government's intent is to stress Canada's purported multicultural nature, it is critical to explore and addresses potential structural inequities that may exist beneath the current Canadian veil of multiculturalism.

²⁴ Questions raised from my analysis were inspired in part by arguments presented in Seiler (1993).

The Nation-State in an Age of Globalization

Globalization, once a barnacle of the academic lexicon, has become part of the modern vernacular. Yet how does one define globalization and even more difficult, what are its effects? Cameron & Stein (2002) define globalization as a “set of economic, environmental, technological, political, cultural, and social processes that first connect and then integrate societies, fragmenting and transcending the traditional social structures they confront” (p. 1). One contentious issue that has been debated amongst globalization scholars is the fate of the sovereign state. Chapter 1 suggested that the phenomenon of etribalization could help preserve the nation-state by facilitating the creation of national identities, especially in regards to a first generation population. However, after completing my analysis, the impact of a single nationalistic media event is still unclear and requires further study. I would suggest conducting additional case studies with a larger sample size and people from another ethnic background or from a variety of backgrounds.

In addition, when theorizing about the fate of the nation-state in an age of globalization, the importance of place must not be overlooked. This phenomenon was illustrated by the actions of focus group members who despite not having watched the hockey game, still felt a sense of Canadian pride as a result of the victory. Although electronic media have allowed one to imagine and create alternate worlds, the physical context in which one exists (in this case, with a nation’s borders) is critical. Further, the routinization of place should also be recognized and analyzed. Many focus group discussion members cited both formal state apparatus, such as the school system, as well as informal influences, such as Canadian Caucasian culture, as impacting identity formation. Thus, in addition to media, researchers should pay particular attention to the institutions that individuals are routinely exposed in national identity formation.

Related to culture is the fact that television provides multiple events each year: elections, public ceremonies, the Stanley Cup to name a few. Although these events may not carry the same pomp and circumstance as the Olympics, the steady down pour of media activity does bring with it roles to which people are expected to adapt and respond to. Thus, while large media events may pockmark the media landscape, there also exists a constant cornucopia of mini media events. Consequently, the effectiveness of the media event resides not in its grand spectacle but its routinization.

In summary, although I do not think the fate of the nation-state can be determined by something as simple as a singular media event, it is premature to sign its death certificate. Consequently, I believe the debate surrounding the destiny of the sovereign state would benefit from a holistic analysis of the impact of place (physical context) and routinization (of media and place) on citizen identity.

Media Studies

In addition to considering the role of media in each of the above questions, communication studies would benefit from media research in the following three areas, among others:

1) Construction of Identity

One of the goals of this study was to examine the impact of mediated experience on identity. As my results were ambiguous, further non-deterministic studies examining the impact of media on the ongoing process of identity foundation are needed. Moreover, attention should be given not only to media events, but to all elements comprising our media environment.

2) Temporality of Media

Many focus group members noted that soon after the media storm surrounding the hockey game diminished, regular life resumed. This phenomenon is understandable and seemingly natural, a consequence of our journey through the fourth dimension: time. However, what is unnatural about this activity is how media constructs our sense of time. Recognizing this, it would be interesting to analyze to what degree, if any, mass media accelerate and/or dictate our sense of time by amplifying the existing cultural mantra of “forward progress” that typifies North American society.

3) Media Structure and the Concentration of Power

I would suggest that the concentration of media power be explored on two levels.

First, scholars could study the impact of concentrated media ownership on democracy at a national and global level. Does a decrease in diversity of perspective accompany an increase in media concentration? What is the correlation, if any? If increased media concentration is found to have a negative impact on the diversity of views in the media, what are the impacts of this? More importantly, what are some solutions to remedy this situation? With an increasing global media environment, perhaps one of the solutions may be to establish universal policies on media ownership. Regulation could explore issues of cross ownership as well as examine the possibility of limiting the amount of media an individual or corporation may hold.

Accomplishing this lofty objective requires a global legal framework, something which does not yet exist. I would suggest that some direction might be found in David Held's work on "cosmopolitan democracy." Although Held's work is quite broad, I feel it could act both as a source of inspiration and a potential starting point for studying and addressing this pressing issue.

A second area relating to media and concentration of power seeks to explore how media structure impacts the functioning of society²⁵. This level of analysis asks scholars to look beyond issues of who owns which media to question the very nature of media power itself. My call to denaturalize, demystify and deconstruct "the media" aims to quash fatalist arguments that media power is inevitable and inescapable. It is important to remember that the media project was built by people thus *can* be changed by people. Direction and inspiration for undertaking proactive research of this nature may be gleaned from the work of Couldry (2000 & 2003).

Concluding Comments and Observations

The process of researching, analyzing and writing this study has been an invaluable learning experience. However, not all of the lessons that I have learnt during this journey can be adequately conveyed to the reader. In fact, what I would identify as my most valuable experience is precisely of this nature.

The experience I am speaking of is the deep personal appreciation and respect for context and plurality garnered from the group discussions. As a male member of the dominant "Caucasian" Canadian culture, I had never given much thought as to what the "Canadian experience" would be like as a minority - cultural or otherwise. I never had a

reason to. The need to solicit the experiences and opinions of first-generation and second generation Chinese-Canadians provided me with this opportunity. I concede that I will never be able to fully appreciate the “Canadian experience” as interpreted by a Chinese-Canadian; I do feel that the focus group discussions have given me a stronger appreciation for the importance of context and the plural yet intertextual nature of identity. As with many of life’s experiences, one may be well versed in the literature surrounding a phenomenon but until it is experienced, it cannot be fully appreciated.

In the preceding pages I have attempted to suggest methods to rethink our current media environment and avenues for future media related research. There is little question that media have an impact upon society as evident in the eloquent arguments of Innis and others. However, it is important to not to lose sight of the human factor in this equation; while changes in society are perhaps influenced by technology, they are not predetermined. Consequently, it is the duty of the academic as a citizen to explore how society’s bounding advances in technology may be harnessed, or even restructured, to yield better returns for democracy. In closing, it is my hope that the observations offered within this study may at the very least, offer a grain of inspiration if not direction to those seeking to enhance our understanding of media in an effort to continue the quest to build a global democracy.

²⁵ Questions raised from my analysis have been inspired in part by arguments presented in Couldry (2003)

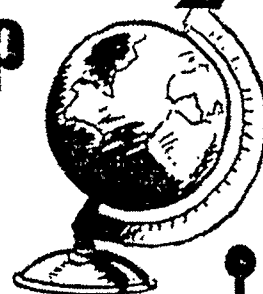
APPENDIX I: Recruitment Poster

Asian Study

Interested in Globalization?

Interested in culture?

Interested in the media?



Volunteers are being sought to participate in a brief, one time small group discussion related to the role of the mass media in global culture.

(Snacks & Beverages will be provided)

Interested participants must:

Be of Chinese decent who have obtained, or are in the process of obtaining Canadian citizenship.

If you want to learn more about the research, or would like to participate in a group discussion, please contact:

Patrick: tel. 286-1884 email: mcnuts@shaw.ca

This research is being conducted to satisfy the thesis component of the Masters program in the Faculty of Communication & Culture and has been approved by the University of Calgary Ethics Board..

Please Post Until January 31st, 2003

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APPENDIX II: Interview Outline

Introduction

- Start with a brief introduction what my research is (Chinese identity in Canada, impact of mediated experience), go over how long this will take (about 90 minutes), session transcribed.
- Do a go around the table to get participants name and biographical information by asking questions on “Member Profile” of each person.

Biographic Information

- 1) What is your age?
- 2) Where were you born?
- 3) When did you move to Canada/ how old were you? If you were born in Canada, when did your parents move here?
- 4) Are you a Canadian citizen? If not, have you applied for citizenship?

Affiliation with country of birth/parent's homeland

- 1) Do you feel a strong connection with your birth country/parent's homeland? Please explain.
- 2) What media from your home country do you consume i.e. television, magazines etc. and how frequently?

Olympics and Hockey

- Introduce props for interview such as newspaper articles, books, magazines, show a short video clip from DVD.
 - Start group discussions attempting to cover questions below:
- 1) Do you feel a strong connection with your birth country/parent's homeland?
 - 2) What media from your home country do you consume i.e. television, magazines etc. and how frequently?
 - 3) Did you watch a lot of Olympic coverage on television? If so, what television station?
 - 4) Did you watch the Women's gold medal hockey match?
 - 5) Did you watch the men's gold medal match? If so, did you watch the entire game? If not, why not?
 - 6) If you didn't watch the hockey game, why didn't you watch it?
 - 7) Why did you watch the game?
 - 8) At what location did you watch the game i.e a friend's house, pub, etc.?

Interview Outline continued

- 9) Who did you watch the game with? Where they new immigrants as well?
- 10) What was the atmosphere like?
- 11) What was your reaction/what did you do while watching the game? Where you cheering, yelling, reacting to the television etc.?
- 12) Were you wearing any paraphernalia while watching the game, if so what and why?
- 13) How did you feel when Canada won the gold?
- 14) What did you do when Canada won the gold?
- 15) What is the significance of the gold medal in hockey?
- 16) Did the viewing experience make you feel more Canadian?
- 17) Is the match still as significant as when you watched it? Do you still feel the same?
- 18) Was that a "Canadian" experience? Make you feel Canadian (temporality?)
- 19) Did you identify as strongly with Canada before as you did during the match? Did the feelings have the same intensity after the match? If not, what level are your feelings at now?

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