5-2008

Creation of an Ice Hockey Tradition in the South

Daryl Paul Wenner
University of Tennessee - Knoxville

Recommended Citation

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Daryl Paul Wenner entitled "Creation of an Ice Hockey Tradition in the South." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Geography.

Thomas L. Bell, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Robin L. Hardin, Ronald Kalafsky, John B. Rehder

Accepted for the Council:
Dixie L. Thompson

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Daryl Paul Wenner entitled "Creation of an Ice Hockey Tradition in the South." I have examined the electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Geography.

_____

Thomas L. Bell, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

_____

Robin L. Hardin

_____

Ronald Kalafsky

_____

John B. Rehder

Accepted for the Council:

_____

Carolyn R. Hodges, Vice
Provost and Dean of the
Graduate School

Creation of an Ice Hockey Tradition in the South

A Dissertation
Presented for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Daryl Paul Wenner
May 2008

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory to the grandparents who never got to see it but did so much to inspire me to it.

Stanley Zatzek
Josephine Zatzek
Henry Wenner
Emma Wenner
Otto Naujoks

Abstract

This dissertation examines the links between culture and tradition. It argues that traditions are influenced by the underlying cultural foundations from which they develop. It also argues that as traits diffuse between cultures, they do not do so "as is" but are interpreted by the recipient culture group and altered by their cultural beliefs. Because of the alterations that occur, the diffusion event is not a one-directional incident. The alteration of the trait causes the original exporter to evaluate the changes made, thereby altering the source culture's opinion of the recipient group.

The dissertation uses a three-stage model to examine the above arguments by using the diffusion of the National Hockey League (NHL) into the South during the 1990s as a data source. The first stage of the model investigates the place of hockey in southern sport culture prior to the NHL's arrival, the Precondition. The second stage examines how hockey culture developed between the arrival of each southern franchise and the Lockout lost season of 2004-05. The final stage compares the cultural underpinnings of southern hockey to general southern sport culture and hockey's hearth culture.

This dissertation found that southern hockey's cultural foundations lie in general southern culture and not with hockey's hearth culture. This finding supports the notion that diffusion events do not occur as direct exchanges of cultural traits but rather diffused traits are altered to fit into existing cultural frameworks. This finding led to an alteration in the original model, with the concept of a "cultural filter" being added.

Key Words: Tradition, culture, South, hockey

Preface

I attended my first Nashville Predators' hockey game in the spring of 2002. I had seen games in many arenas in the Northeast and Canada, but Nashville was my first time in a Southern hockey venue. On the ice, the Gaylord Entertainment Center looked like any other National Hockey League (NHL) arena. Its rink was regulation size, the layout of penalty boxes, team benches and scorer's table was similar to other rinks where I had watched games. I recognized the players, coaches and even the referees. The stands around me, however, provided me with a new experience. Fans were talking and laughing as though at a party, some seemingly unaware of the hockey game taking place a few feet away. The Jumbotron flashed signs telling fans when they should chant and the program told them when to cheer and what to yell. Most striking was the bandstand set up at one end of the arena. My first thought was it must have been left from a concert the night before. During the first intermission, however, I was amazed to hear a live country music band begin to play. Many arenas play music over the PA system during intermission, but a live band? It all seemed out of place to someone who considers himself a hockey fan.

The look of wonder must have shown on my face. A man sitting two seats from me leaned over his wife and asked, "Is this your first hockey game?" I said, "No, but it is the first one in Nashville." He smiled and replied, "I thought so. Welcome to Southern hockey." He was wearing a Detroit Red Wings sweater, the Predators' opponent that evening. We talked through the rest of the intermission about the game and the fans. He

had moved to Nashville from Detroit several years earlier when the automobile company he worked for opened a factory in Tennessee. He was excited when the NHL brought the Predators to town, but was as shocked as I was after attending his first game in Nashville. "The good news is that they're getting better," he told me, referring to the fans, not the team. He also said he was beginning to enjoy the Southern brand of hockey, although he did miss the atmosphere of Joe Lewis Arena, where the Red Wings play in Detroit. Although I had enjoyed the game that night, I could not help but wonder about the differences in the experience of a Nashville game compared to those in the former Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The atmosphere at the Nashville game was more akin to a southern football or basketball game than the northern hockey I was used to seeing. It seemed the transplanted game was gaining new characteristics from its new cultural surroundings. The NHL had come south and the South, it would seem, was coming to the NHL. I came away from the game with two questions in my mind: 1) Why had the NHL moved to the South?; and 2) What accounts for the different experiences of viewing a hockey game in its hearth and in its new home? It is the second question that became the central thesis of this dissertation. To put it into context, however, it is necessary to answer briefly the first question.

The conditions that drew the NHL to the South are complex. The League, and hockey in general, had a history of failure in the South. The Tropical Ice Hockey League opened in Miami in 1938 with four teams and lasted only one season. Other minor hockey leagues, such as the United Hockey League and the Central Hockey League managed to survive, but with both a high failure and movement rate among franchises.

No fewer than ten leagues operated entirely in the South between 1940 and 2000, most of which lasted only a few seasons.

Despite hockey's poor southern record, the late 1980s witnessed economic, political and demographic changes that combined to create an environment that the NHL's Board of Governors and the League's new commissioner believed were conducive for the growth of the League in the region. The migration of northerners to Sunbelt states played a role in changing southern markets. The League assumed these transplants would form the bedrock on which a hockey fanbase could be built. Exposure to NHL hockey has also increased in the past two decades. The all-sports cable networks ESPN and ESPN2 and the Fox Network helped make hockey available to all parts of the United States. Political changes involving former Soviet Republics and other communist bloc countries, which have long been strong in international hockey competition, provided an expanded pool from which to draw talented hockey players. Players from these countries were, for political reasons, often denied entry to the NHL prior to the fall of the Iron Curtain.

The most important changes, however, were those taking place in corporate America. The expansion of corporations into multinational conglomerates, beyond the boundaries of any single national government, became the new way businesses operated. In this atmosphere, brand recognition increased in importance since potential new customers were often unfamiliar with the new products or companies. Corporations were willing to invest in or sponsor events or products unrelated to their own product(s) *per se* simply for the name recognition value. A common means of increasing brand

recognition was to attach the company's name to an already recognized event. Sporting

events such as the Tostitos' Fiesta Bowl, or NASCAR's Winston Cup (now the Sprint

Cup) became effective advertising tools for companies trying to reach a maximum

audience. Another change that occurred was in the configuration of corporate ownership.

Companies that had previously concentrated on one enterprise were now acquiring

holdings in various, often seemingly unrelated, businesses. This last change became an

important factor in the NHL's Southern expansion.

Expansion into new markets is a driving force among most large corporations,

and the increasingly the corporate sports world followed suit. The original five NHL

teams were owned by men with fortunes earned in family-owned businesses (McFarlane,

2000). In contrast, many of the new backers of expansion bids for NHL teams were

multi-national corporations with wide-ranging holdings. Disney, Blockbuster Video, and

Turner Broadcasting Inc. were three corporations that backed NHL expansion teams in

nontraditional markets, using their other venues to promote their franchises. Disney

produced movies to market their franchise. A year before the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim

stepped onto the ice, Disney released a feature film to promote the new team. Disney

would eventually produce three "Mighty Ducks" movies during the NHL team's first four

seasons. Ted Turner's efforts brought NHL hockey back to Atlanta after a 20-year

absence. The Thrashers' arena is part of Turner's development in downtown Atlanta that

includes the headquarters of CNN and TNT. Wayne Huizenga purchased the expansion

rights to an NHL team in South Florida. Using his Blockbuster video empire, Huizenga

promoted the new team with videos explaining the rules of hockey and the exciting parts

of the game. According to Rosenbaum (1997), the NHL never wanted the cities of Anaheim or Miami in the League; rather, they wanted Disney and Blockbuster, and their billionaire owners.   In answer to the first question posed above, the expansion of the NHL into the South can best be understood as part of the larger process of market expansion and globalizing corporate economies.

Research Questions

It is within this context of an expanding NHL market place and its entrance into the Southern cultural region that we return to my second question and the central focus of this dissertation: What accounts for the different experiences viewing a hockey game in its hearth and in its new home? Of fundamental importance in answering this question is understanding what factors help to create a cultural tradition and what sources sustain it. It is my hypothesis that the different experiences in viewing a hockey game in its hearth and in its new southern home come from the different underlying cultures. That is**, the traditions being created by and surrounding Southern hockey are the result of Southern culture, not hockey's hearth culture.** It is the difference in these new traditions and the Southern culture that gave rise to them, that account for their different "feels" when attending games in the two regions. The following questions were used to guide my research in testing this hypothesis.

1. What is the relationship between *culture* and *tradition*?

2. Do cultural traits diffuse "as is" and enter recipient groups unaltered? Or are they reshaped to align with the group's existing cultural belief system?

3. Who is involved in the process of creating and shaping the new Southern hockey traditions?

How can those traditions be classified?

4. Have changes to hockey culture been made by the recipient culture? Have these changes, in turn, affected the hearth culture?

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Culture and Tradition

The intellectual distance between the scholarly investigation of *culture* and *tradition creation* on one side and the differences in "feelings" at northern and southern hockey games is not as great as it may at first appear. At the heart of both lies the process of diffusion. Koppers (1955) considered diffusion as "one of the fundamental phenomena of cultural life." It is through diffusion that groups share, intentionally or otherwise, their cultural traits. The exchanging of traits is prevalent to such a degree that Morris (2002) considers diffusion "an inevitable consequence of contact between groups." The process of diffusion is the history of culture (Koppers, 1955).

The cultural traits diffused between groups are the "learned sets of thoughts, tools, skills, values, and so forth" that convey meaning within or between culture groups (Gritzner, 2002). They are interpreted within a cultural context and taken together form the "ways of living" of a group. We use our cultural traits and traditions to create a group identity. The resulting cultural identity becomes our centering point from which we judge other groups and their traits.

Our modern society is one defined by "cultural mixing and increased interrelations" among cultural groups (Bairner, 2001). Technological advances have increased not only the availability of information and ideas but also the speed at which they are transmitted. Cultural diffusion among groups can now occur over larger distances and in shorter times. The increased speed of diffusion has led to claims of lost cultural identity. Martin-Barbero describes the modern process as one that "aggravates and distorts basic identities whose roots reach deep into history" (Martin-Barbero, 2002).

Geographer Richard Peet (1986) has stated "in the interaction between center culture, regional culture and traditional cultures, . . . the tendency is towards the production of one world mind, one world culture and the consequent disappearance of regional consciousness flowing from the local specificities of the human past." Seen as a cultural steamroller the rapid pace of present-day diffusion is blamed as the destroyer of regional cultures and identities by replacing traditions with new cultural traits.

Tradition and Cultural Identity

To simplify the process of diffusion to merely one culture conquering another is to miss a vital point in the dynamics of the process. This simple view of diffusion assumes that traits diffuse "as is." That is, the trait leaves a donor culture and enters the recipient culture in the same form. But is cultural diffusion a form of conquest? Does it rewrite cultural conceptions of identity, replacing them with more "dominant" forms? To answer these questions it is necessary to examine diffusion events and their outcomes.

Rather than conceptualizing tradition and culture as one in the same, with new traits directly overwriting older cultural beliefs, Morris (2002) describes the relationship between culture and tradition as more intricate. She hypothesizes that societies contain an underlying framework, a "deep structure," that guides their behavior. This deep structure is what tells us how to judge or react to events around us. Surface structures are an expression of those cultural beliefs. Dynamic in form, they can be altered to include new traits while maintaining a linkage to the deeper societal values. Taken as a whole, these surface structures combine to form a "skin" over the framework of the deep structure (Morris 2002).

Let us consider, for example, the American judicial system. The deep structure underlying the American legal system is the series of beliefs from which it was constructed. Ideas such as "innocent until proven guilty or "right to an attorney" suggest something about the beliefs of the group espousing them. In practice they could occur in multiple forms while still advocating the underlying beliefs. The surface structures are the forms those ideas have taken. The color of a judge's robe, the number of people on the jury, and procedures of the attorneys are examples of surface structures. In themselves, the surface structures do not affect the underlying cultural belief. One can assume a judge wearing a purple T-shirt would be equally capable of conducting a trial as his counterpart in a black robe. Likewise, a judge wearing a black robe does not guarantee an American judicial format, as judges in many countries wear black robes. But, in America, the black robe has become a tradition and now has symbolic meaning in American culture. When the symbolic meanings of the traditions in the legal system are considered in totality along with the cultural beliefs that gave rise to them, an image is created of one part of American identity, our sense of justice.

It is also important to realize that surface structures are not permanent in form. Morris (2002) appropriately describes this importance as follows, "Robust traditions assimilate new elements and adapt to new circumstances, while remaining recognizably linked to their communities." A cultural group can change the surface structures overlaying its deep structure without substantially altering that framework or their identity. Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) have shown that traditions can be invented to link new traits to the existing cultural framework without altering identity. As in the example

above, the American system of justice would be relatively unaffected if judges began wearing yellow robes in court. The alteration of a tradition would not change the cultural belief of "presumed innocence."

Returning to my central discussion point, the question at hand then is: are cultures adapting diffused traits to create new traditions in existing cultural frameworks or are they having their cultural identities replaced? What accounts for the different experiences viewing a hockey game in its hearth and in its new home? It is my hypothesis that the different experiences in viewing a hockey game in its hearth and in its new southern home come from the different underlying cultures. To answer these questions my dissertation tests the idea that tradition serves as the outward expression of an underlying cultural framework by conducting a test using a model of diffusion.

Cultural Diffusion Model

The model used in this dissertation is based on Morris' (2002) model for examining culture and imported media. Her purpose was to examine how an aired news report or a written article created in one culture would affect other cultures that saw or read the story. For example, what affect does a CNN story broadcast in the U.S. have on people in China who watch the story? Does the "imported" story impact Chinese culture in some way? She based her work on an earlier model used in linguistic studies and attempted to create a model for use in media studies.

The foundation of her model is drawn from one of Klaus Bruhn Jensen's four frameworks for examining what he termed "social meaning-making." Jensen (1995)

proposed that meaning resulted from a *deep structure* through which new elements were filtered. This process of filtering new cultural traits through an existing framework allows a group to adapt and embody new ideas while simultaneously maintaining their sense of cultural identity.

Morris added to this concept of an existing *deep structure* by suggesting the addition of "an explicit feedback process" to Jensen's model (Morris, 2002). The original model defined three states; the prefiguration, the configuration, and the refiguration to any diffusion event. The prefiguration represents the existing traditions and cultural state prior to a selected event. At this point the diffusing trait has not yet entered the recipient culture group. The configuration is the cultural state as the event occurs. Diffusion events occur over time. During the configuration stage some combination of the new trait spreading through or being resisted by the new group occurs. It is during the configuration that the majority of people in the recipient culture are introduced to the new trait. The refiguration is the resulting new condition of the recipient culture and any changes to traditions or beliefs that occurred as a result the event. To this model of diffusion Morris added the concept of a feedback loop where the refiguration becomes the prefiguration for a new event (Figure 1.1).

Morris proposed this model as a means of examining the effects of a media event on other cultures. For her purposes, the prefiguration was the cultural structure of a group prior to the airing of a given news story. The configuration is the state of the
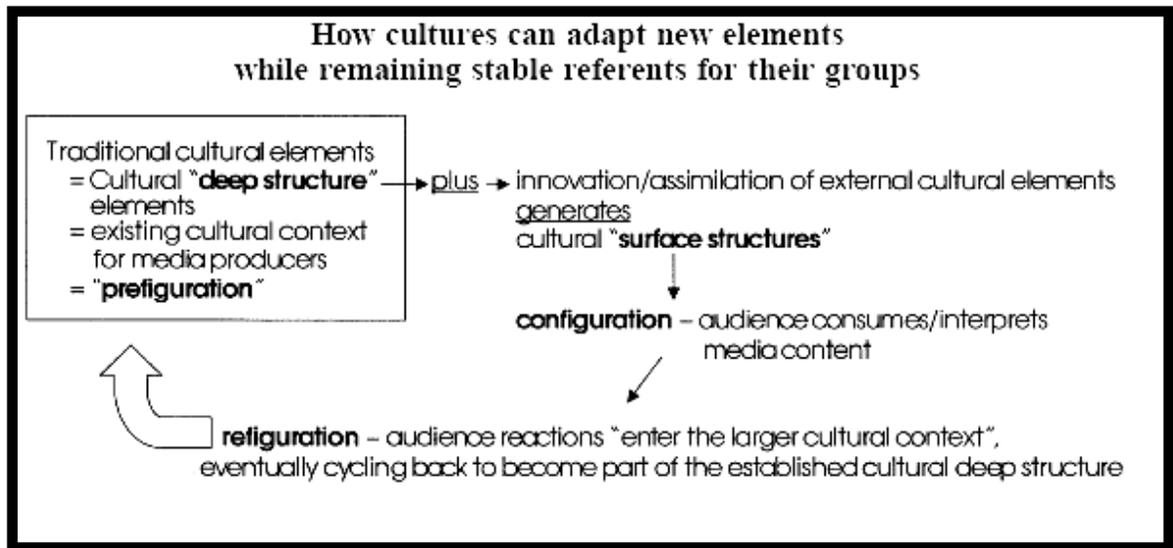
Figure 1.1. Morris's (2002) cyclical model of cultural adaptation.

culture while the story is receiving airtime. The refiguration is the reaction to the story

and any changes created in the other culture. The refiguration eventually becomes the

prefiguration for future events. It is important to keep in mind that the inputs and results

of the model are "absolute values" to borrow the mathematical term. That is, themodel

does not seek to judge a positive or negative change in the culture but only determine the

degree of change from its original state. An event that increased tension between two

cultures and led to war would yield the same degree of change as an event that decreased

tensions and led to peace.

In examining the model in cultural geographic terms, the "deep structures" Morris

refers to is similar to the concept of "culture" described by Gritzner (2002). That is,

culture is the lens through which we see and interpret the world. It serves as both

foundation to our identity and filter to new cultural options we encounter. Culture tells us

6

how to act and react to the events we experience. The "surface structures" Morris describes can be seen as traditions. Traditions become the outward expressions of, and are generated by, our cultural framework and form a covering over that framework. The cover could therefore be changed without necessarily affecting the underlying cultural structure.

Using this model to examine a diffusion event allows us to investigate the relationship between culture and tradition and can offer insight into the extent to which the event was a form of cultural conquest or cultural adoption. Cultural conquest would suggest that traditions are the building blocks of culture and taken together form a group's identity. Changes in tradition brought on by diffusion would alter the group's culture and identity. As shown in Figure 1.2, two culture groups begin in the prefigurative state. As the diffusion event occurs, a cultural trait is transferred from Culture 1 to Culture 2. The result is a fundamental change in Culture 2 where the new trait has replaced the old cultural ways and traditions of the group. In this case, not only are the outward ways of life changed (traditions), but the culture of the group has changed as well. The result would indicate that culture is merely a summation of a group's traditions and that a change in either alters the group's identity.

Figure 1.3 shows the results of a diffusion event where we conceptualize the tradition/culture relationship as framework and covering. Traditions form the cover or skin of an underlying cultural framework. The newly diffused trait may be accepted, but it is modified to fit into the overall structure. In this case the identity of Culture 2 is
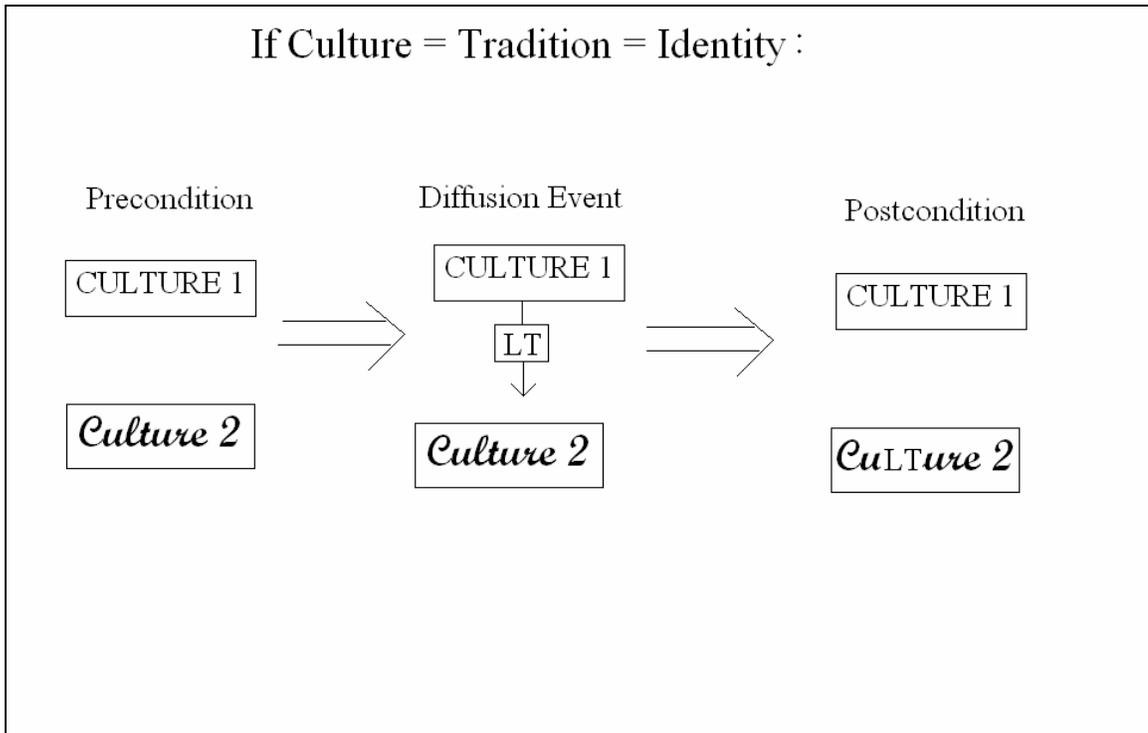
Figure 1.2. Diffusion as cultural conquest.
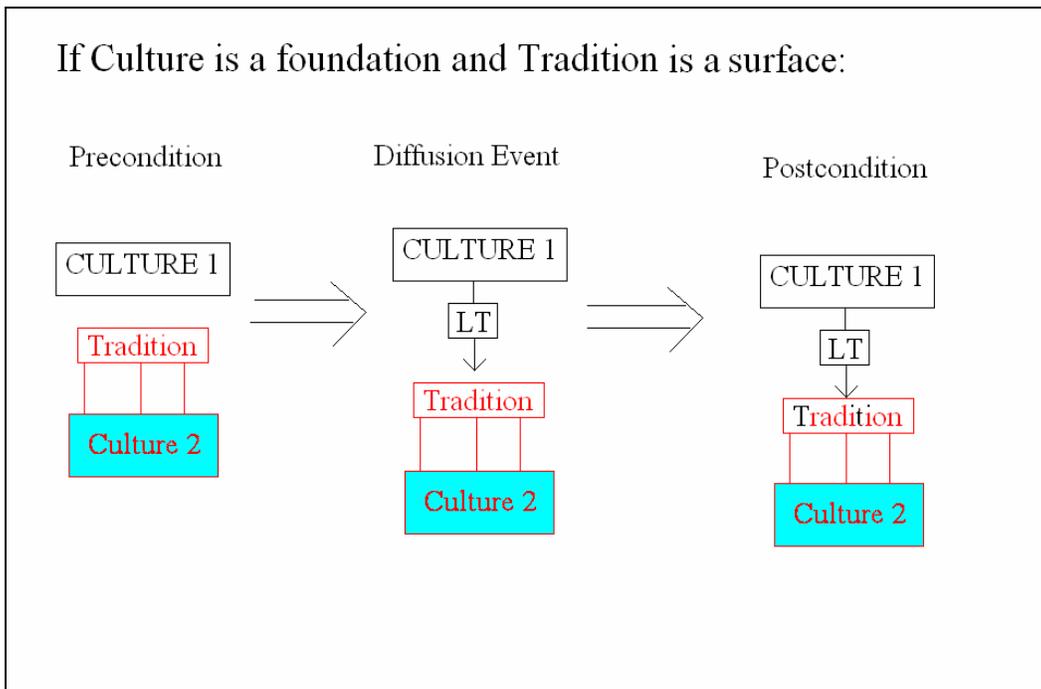
Figure 1.3. Diffusion through cultural framework to create new traditions.

maintained since the new trait is fit into existing beliefs and traditions rather than replacing them.

Using the model requires examination of the traditions surrounding the specific diffusion event. If the traditions are simply transplanted into the recipient culture from the donor culture with the same symbolic meanings, then cultural conquest has occurred. Conversely, if the traditions of the recipient are an amalgamation of imported, generated and altered ideas that stem from its already held cultural beliefs, then the diffusion process is a filtered one.

To test my hypothesis that tradition is created and shaped by the underlying cultural framework, I used the expansion of the National Hockey League into the South as an example. Southern sport culture had little hockey history at any level prior to the 1990s and the NHL had only a short existence in only one southern city prior to the current expansion effort. In terms of the model's input, I used the time prior to the NHL's current expansion into the South, which began in 1991 with the expansion Tampa Bay Lightning, as the Precondition. Selecting the lockout season of 2004-05 as an end date, I defined the Condition as the time between the NHL's arrival and the lockout. The Postcondition was established by analyzing the state of Southern hockey culture at the time of the lockout. By comparing the Postcondition to general Southern sport culture and hockey's hearth culture, the path Southern hockey culture took could be detected. If Southern hockey culture resembles that of the hearth culture then cultural conquest has occurred and invalidates my hypothesis. If Southern hockey culture resembles Southern sport culture in general then the diffusion process was a filtered event. The second

9

outcome would support my hypothesis that the difference in "feel" at Northern and Southern hockey experiences is caused by the differing underlying cultural frameworks.

By examining the traditions that have developed in Southern hockey and identifying their cultural foundations, this study sheds light on the relationship between culture and tradition. It also offers to increase understanding of how traditions develop and the forces shaping them. This dissertation argues that new traditions are created from a blending of adopted, adapted, imported, and original cultural icons and are shaped and controlled by the underlying cultural framework. These new traditions are then woven into a cultural tapestry and become part of a group's identity. Further, since the new traditions sprout from existing cultural frameworks, they take on characteristics of the new cultural surroundings. By altering new cultural traits to fit into existing traditions, members of a cultural group can accept an imported cultural item and weave it into their own cultural fabric without surrendering their cultural identity. It is also argued that far from being a one-directional exchange, diffusion affects both the sending and receiving groups. As the receiving group alters the attribute, its new characteristics will, in turn, alter how the exporting group views the trait and the group that changed it.

To set the context for this study, Chapter Two reviews relevant literature in the fields of tradition and culture. Tradition is discussed to provide a background of theory and definitions from which a theory of sport tradition can be created. The discussion focuses on the debate between the naturalistic notion of tradition and the symbolic conception. I argue that in both cases time, in either the historical or futuristic direction, becomes the underlying factor that provides a unifying link between the two camps.

Tradition becomes both a flow from past to present and a construct of the past in the present and projected into the future. I next examine the body of literature that investigates notions of culture and explain how I came to the operational definition of *culture* used in this study. I also discuss a proposed conceptual link between culture and tradition. Chapter Three presents a general overview of sports geography. Highlighted in this section is Rooney's work, which serves as a foundation for many of the theoretical frameworks constructed in sports geography. Pillsbury and Alderman's investigations of the links between regional identity and NASCAR are discussed and serve as a base for my study. Chapter Four presents a brief history of hockey and the NHL. I explain the history of the game, how the NHL grew and eventually arrived in the South, and define hockey's hearth and peripheral regions.

Chapter Five discusses the methodology used to conduct this study. Content analysis and interviews with fans, reporters and franchise personnel were used to gather data. The pros and cons of each of these data gathering techniques are discussed and their value of each method to answering my research questions is offered. Content analysis of newspapers was important to this study as it allowed an examination of how print media in the six Southern NHL cities studied portrayed hockey over time. It was especially important in establishing a baseline for hockey culture prior to NHL expansion. Interviews provided fan opinions and their view of Southern hockey traditions.

Chapters Six through Nine utilize the data gathered in interviews, surveys and content analysis within the model. The Precondition stage of the model is established by

considering the initial cultural conditions for Southern sports culture in general and Canadian hockey culture based on Noonan's thesis of the "five myths of Canadian hockey" that serve as its cultural foundation. This comparison revealed four foundations of southern hockey in the pre-NHL South. They are: 1) a general lack of coverage, 2) hockey as stereotype, 3) negative depictions of hockey, and 4) the oxymoronic view of hockey as simultaneously part of and separate from Southern sports culture.

The Condition stage of the model examines the six groups who are building Southern hockey tradition. The six sources are: (1) previously existing hockey fans, (2) new hockey fans, (3) the National Hockey League front office, (4) the individual Southern franchises, (5) hockey players, and (6) the media. The traditions being created by these six groups are then grouped into four categories based on the origins of the traditions. They are: 1) imported traditions, 2) adopted traditions, 3) adapted traditions and 4) original traditions.

Examination of the Postcondition stage revealed four foundations upon which Southern hockey tradition is being built: 1) hockey as entertainment, 2) Hockey as a Family Event, 3) a sense of "otherness", and 4) the tradition of being non-traditional. Comparing these foundations to both Canadian hockey culture and general Southern sport culture revealed that Southern hockey is not based in hearth hockey tradition but rather generalized Southern cultural tradition. I also consider how the Southern alterations have changed the northern version of hockey, thereby altering the original traditions and constructing a new Precondition upon which future hockey traditions will rest.

Chapter Ten concludes the dissertation by examining how the model performed in explaining tradition creation through cultural diffusion. I state the implications of this study in the bodies of literature dealing with tradition, sports, and identity and offer directions for future research in these areas of endeavor.

Chapter 2: Literature Review of Tradition and Culture

One of the fundamental questions in investigating tradition is why is it part of society? All societies have traditions of some type yet what does tradition do for a group that makes it valuable? While the questions are simple and straightforward, the answers have proven complex and elusive.

Part of tradition's value in our everyday life stems from unconscious imprinting. Tasks that are performed repeatedly often become ingrained. Each time the task must be performed, we simply rely on the programming to complete it. This imprinting allows us to complete everyday tasks without having to think about the tedious details. Take for example the act of putting on footwear. A person who wears sneakers with shoelaces probably would not theorize about new methods of tying the laces each time the sneakers are worn. He or she would simply use whatever method they were taught as a child and tie the laces without thinking about it. In this form, the traditions we follow may be things we are unaware of ourselves.

In time, these imprinted traits are passed on to the next generation. Parents explain concepts and teach skills to their children based on their own understanding. If, therefore, a parent eats using certain utensils, for example a fork and knife, then the child will be taught that same method. It is unlikely that parents would spend their lives eating with a fork but then attempt to invent a new method for their children to use. Rather, the child, would be taught and internalize the parents' method and imprint it into his or her own mind.

Over time, even the simplest of tasks can take on meaning. Intense emotional and even spiritual feelings can develop around otherwise common events as the weight of countless prior generations bears upon the current members of the group. To break a tradition is not simply to change, but may be seen by others as turning one's back on his or her history and people. Tradition becomes a form of identity, linking an individual to a past. To follow a set of traditions is to claim membership in a group. It is also to declare separation from other groups that do not follow the same traditions. In our modern world where "global society" appears to be overwhelming smaller distinct groups, the struggle to distinguish oneself often occurs through retention of tradition.

The number and diversity of classifications of traditions have complicated attempts to define it. In its simplest form, tradition can be described as an act of repetition. Two friends may meet for lunch on Wednesdays simply because that day best fits their schedules, the day and time are in themselves unimportant. Over time, however, the repetition may lead to deeper feelings or meanings for the event. The friends may begin to look forward to their lunch on Wednesdays, even if their schedules have changed and another day might now be more convenient. The tradition of "lunch on Wednesday" may become more important than the actual event.

Tradition is also defined as a source of knowledge, even though the original source may be unknown. Statements such as "tradition tells us the founders of this country..." use tradition as the basis for establishing "facts" even though we may be unable to prove them. Often these types of statements become the source of myths and legends for future generations (Bronner, 1998).

15

A similar definition relates tradition to precedent. As with the definition of tradition as a source of knowledge, tradition is also a source of authority pointing to a specific event or person. The tradition is established on some past occurrence and with the memory of that event being used to direct future decisions. A "home remedy" is an example of this type of tradition. Even though medical science may have a drug that can be used to cure an ailment, a person may reason: "My grandmother always did it this way and she lived to be 96." The grandmother's actions and her long life becomes precedent for the "correct" way to live. Traditions of this nature are often reinforced when collaborating evidence, in this case studies confirming the effectiveness of homeopathic remedies, is discovered. They are seldom overthrown, however, when contrary evidence is encountered.

In the three definitions listed above, tradition is described from the "insiders" point of view. The concept of "we" and "our group" are the primary concern. A fourth definition of tradition stems from the view of outsiders. By assigning the characteristics of another group as identification, a sense of "them" is created. This definition relies on constructing the "Other" to create an identity of "Us." "*Our* group wears this type of clothing, but *they* wear a different style." By focusing on differences among groups, we may define ourselves as much by what we are not as by what we are.

Tradition is also defined as the act of passing down cultural traits from one generation to the next. Adults instruct the younger generation on how they "should" live. This instills the cultural traits of the older generation into the younger thereby achieving the "perpetuative end" of cultural reproduction (Powers, 1995). It is important to note

that each of the definitions listed here may be accomplished intentionally by teaching the younger generation to observe a certain practice or unintentionally as the younger generation simply mimics the actions of their elders.

The problem "*with* tradition", as Bronner (1995) states, is that the multiple definitions are overlapping and not mutually exclusive. A given tradition can fit into more than one definition simultaneously and can change definitions over time. For example, consider a village that has a feast after a harvest. The event is held every year around the same date because the crops are ready for harvesting around the same time each year. The children of the village grow up enjoying the event and continue the practice as adults. Over time a spiritual connotation may develop about the feast, perhaps as a way of thanking a god for the bounty of the harvest. As other groups nearby learn of this village's yearly feast, they may identify the village by that event. The original event, a feast after harvest, has moved through different forms and meanings and becomes tradition in a multitude of meanings. America's Thanksgiving holiday is an example of such a conversion from harvest feast to tradition.

The problem of scholarly definitions for tradition becomes more confused when value judgments enter the equation. Tradition can give authority to practices: not simply saying "This is how we do it" but rather "This is how it *should* be done." Tradition then becomes a measuring device alongside which the present can be tested and a compass by which to direct the future. It can also become a derisive term, indicating not a longing for the past ways but a denunciation of them. Tradition can become a symbol of what is

wrong with a particular society. The past may be seen as inhibiting progress or stunting growth.

Examples of tradition being either vilified or deified are numerous in American advertising. Advertisements depicting "that was then, this is now" unfavorably compare the past to the present. The more modern appliance, electronic gadget, or style is shown as vastly superior than the "traditional model" if for no other reason than it is newer. An example of the plethora of products that have advertised in this manner is the Clorox ToiletWand. Heralded by advertising as a "revolutionary system" the new product supposedly "cleans better than traditional" methods (Clorox, 2006). The company uses a dichotomy between tradition as "old-fashioned" and "modern" to promote its new products.

At the same time other companies try to create a link to the past to instill a sense of quality. Country Time Lemonade's first spokesperson was "Grandpa, a judge of good old fashioned taste!" (Country Time website, 2006) who appeared in ads heralding the tradition behind the drink. Pepperidge Farm takes the tradition link one step further by using the slogan "Because Pepperidge Farms Remembers." The implication is that while modern, mass-produced cookies lack homemade taste, the Pepperidge Farm cookie instead tastes like those baked by grandmothers from scratch using their special, secret home recipes. In both cases the companies are still mass-producing their products and regardless of the level of quality, neither company can claim to have maintained the traditional way of creating either product.

The understanding of tradition is further complicated by its use as a doctrine, that of Traditionalism. Seen mainly in negative connotations, Traditionalism is a rigid adherence to the beliefs and methods of the past. From this viewpoint, a Traditionalist would appear trapped, unable to progress culturally because the weight of the past and strict adherence to it prevents change. Here again we are confronted by a dual nature of tradition. Seen from the outside a group may seem trapped within their traditions while those on the inside believe they are following them of their own free cultural will. While outsiders consider Traditionalists to be "falling behind the times" those keeping the traditional ways view themselves as remaining faithful to how things "should" be done.

One common thread that can be found in most uses of *tradition* is that tradition is often used to guide or to direct the future. This direction or guidance may occur through a positive desire to follow a path, with tradition serving as an authority by which a decision is made. Tradition can also direct the future by being an impetus for change. Rather than follow the "same old way" a break with tradition serves as a new starting point for future traditions. The use of tradition as a guiding of directing force for the future, then, may be an important piece to understanding the value of traditions in human cultures.

Folklore and Tradition

One reason for the failure to understand tradition is the lack of work directed at *tradition* itself, separate from using it as a tool to study another topic. Tradition has become embedded into the study of folklore. While nearly 500 American colleges and

19

universities offer courses in folklore, there is not a single course dedicated solely to "tradition science" (Bronner, 1998). The association with folklore has shaped tradition into something "to think with, not to think about" (Ben-Amos, 1984). Tradition has become so connected with folklore studies that when 21 authorities in the field of folklore were asked to define it, 15 used the term tradition (Bronner, 1995). It is this union between folklore and tradition that leads to much of the difficulty in defining tradition as a concept separate from the folklore studies where it is viewed as a, if not *the*, lynchpin concept.

The reason for folklore's dominance of tradition studies lies in folklore's ability to give concrete form to the abstract notion of tradition (Bronner, 1995). As noted above, numerous definitions of tradition exist and create confusion in scholarship on the subject. A folk society, however, can be examined and classified by scholars as to its modes of production of goods, ceremonies, types of food, and other traits. It is these customs cataloged and their styles, language, and other features recorded and described. The folk society became the physical manifestation of tradition in that it was a set of cultural traits that were passed between generations almost entirely through oral means or apprenticeship. It is through this connection by oral transmission that the concept of tradition became linked to illiterate societies.

The popular media were also important in forging the link between tradition and folklore. Folk festivals, popularized folktales and other forms "folk" activities were reported or transmitted by print and television media. Stories covering "folk music" or "folk dancing" portrayed the activities presented as examples of the "traditional" ways of

the group. In this sense, the general public was exposed to the idea of tradition being synonymous with the customs of the group. In other words, the concepts of culture and tradition have become conflated and confused.

The focus on folk societies has had other effects on the scholarship surrounding tradition. First, scholars focusing on folk societies have done so to the near exclusion of popular culture (Carney, 1995). Considered unworthy of study, popular culture was ignored while research on folk societies continued. As tradition was a central theme of folk studies, its conceptual development also remained largely a part of folk study. The elitist definition of what was "culture" and by extension what was "tradition," meant that popular culture sources, such as newspapers and film, were not included in the development of tradition theory.

The link between folk study and tradition also restricted the topics to which tradition was applied. Sports, for example, are rarely part of folk studies. Although games are often described, "folkloristic scholarship has tended to neglect sports as too formally organized for evaluation in cultural (folk) tradition," (Bronner, 1998). This viewpoint draws on the definitional differences between "game" and "sport." Games are informal, unstructured, and played with a minimum of rules. Sports use the basic rules of a game, and formalize the event with strict guidelines and further developed rules for play. The connection of sports and games, however, is evident in their definitions. All sports have their roots in games. Folklorists are ignoring the next developmental stage in the hierarchy of play-game-sport-athletics-spectacle. The relationship between sport and

tradition will be explored in the following chapter that focuses more specifically on the literature of sport studies.

Although tradition has played a major part in the discussion of scholars on topics including folk societies, cultural studies, and anthropology, the *nature* of tradition has received little attention. As Bronner (1995) points out, five major dictionaries or encyclopedias, including the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and the *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*, lack an entry for the word or concept of *tradition*.

The methodology of defining cultures by the sum of their traditions led to numerous books about the "traditions" of different groups. Brief examination of a library catalog, for example, reveals books on tradition in Christianity and Judaism, tradition in Japan, traditional Native American religion, tradition in art and music and traditions of other groups and fields of study. What is lacking, according to Shils (1981), is a book "which tries to see common ground and elements of tradition and analyzes what difference tradition makes in human life." Scholars have focused on the manifestation of tradition to the near exclusion of its meaning and a theoretical context from which to explain it (Ben-Amos, 1984).

The Naturalistic and Symbolic Models of Tradition

Two theoretical frameworks designed to conceptualize tradition merit discussion in connection with this research. The first has been identified as the "naturalistic conception" (Handler and Linnekin, 1984). This conception of tradition is linked to the folklore studies discussed above and postulates tradition as a core set of beliefs and

customs that are passed on to the next generation. The two key elements in this

framework are that tradition requires time and what Handler and Linnekin have termed

"boundedness", that is, tradition needs to be explained in terms of a literal object, existing

as a physical entity or embodying a mental construct. The two researchers cite Kroeber's

definition as a classic example of tradition viewed through this framework, "tradition is

the internal handing on through time of cultural traits" (quoted in Handler and Linnekin,

1984). In this definition we find both the requirement of time and the existence of a core

of traits which are passed along to the next generation. Within this framework, tradition

can only be created through the passage of time and with a recognizable core of traits that

are maintained over many generations.

Handler and Linnekin disagree with the naturalistic framework for its implied

dichotomy existing between new and old, or traditional and modern. Cultural groups

would be forced to accept the core of traditions given them by the preceding generation

or be forced to abandon their cultural identity. Handler and Linnekin see this as too

limiting as to how cultural groups actually behave, selecting and altering traditions while

maintaining their sense of identity.

In place of the naturalistic model, Handler and Linnekin (1984) offer a model

based on the idea that tradition constantly changes. They liken it to an organism,

adapting to changes in the surrounding conditions. Using Shils (1981) work where he

describes tradition as continually changing, they posit tradition as a "model of the past

and is inseparable from the interpretation of tradition in the present." That is, all

traditions exist in the present, in the minds of individuals within a group, and are solely the product of their interpretation of the event in question.

In developing their model, Handler and Linnekin cite research into the creation of traditions in Quebec and Hawaii. Handler and Linnekin argue that present-day members of these societies have reconstructed their ancestors' "way of life" by using idealized conceptions of their traditions. Traits that presented notions of nation, culture, or heritage, genuine or otherwise, that fit into this ideal view of the past were presented in such a way as to formulate the image the groups wanted to present.

Handler and Linnekin also deny the need for time as a factor in the creation of tradition. In viewing tradition as a symbolic creation in the present, the need to link tradition to the past is lost. An individual who believes something is "traditional" makes it so, regardless of the facts of history. Research into myth creation and tradition creation by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) supports the view that tradition can be created from imagination and retold until the "lie" becomes truth. Handler and Linnekin take this one step further by claiming that even traditions with a fact-based history are still being reinterpreted in the present. They cite an example of a parent passing a cultural trait to a child. The child accepts the tradition with a different view than the parent since he is now attaching the link to his parents. The parents, in originally passing the trait on, did not have that link. No matter how many times the trait is handed down, each successive generation reinterprets the trait in the light of an ever-growing past and new surrounding conditions. It is from this notion of symbolic interpretation that Handler and Linnekin create their conceptual framework of tradition.

The symbolic construction concept of tradition is an important step toward understanding tradition's nature. I argue, however, that it fails in its rejection of time as a factor in creating tradition. While I agree that time is not an absolute determinant for tradition, it is a requirement in the sense that only with the passage of time is there anything symbolically to consider and interpret. For evidence of time's importance, I use Handler and Linnekin's (1983) own work on tradition creation in Quebec and Hawaii. In each case, the authors argue that a modern interpretation of an idealized past led to the construction of a "traditional" way of life by present-day members of the cultural group. Their arguments also imply an attempt to direct the future, in which each cultural group intentionally constructed a "heritage" on which they and future generations of the group could build. Throughout their articles they discuss the past, present and future, which have a clear importance to the groups. The past serves as source ideas, thoughts, and materials; the present as a building "site", and the future as a planned direction. It seems unreasonable then to assume that time plays no part in the construction of tradition. It would appear more likely that time serves as the backdrop for tradition. While it in no way determines tradition, tradition is determined through the symbolic interpretations of a given group, time serves as the canvas on which those interpretations manifest themselves.

Another valuable component that Handler and Linnekin (1984) contribute to the discussion is their metaphor comparing tradition to an organism. I propose to extend this metaphor by combining it with Morris' model of deep and surface structures to form a conception of the linkage between culture and tradition.

To place Morris' model into the metaphor, we consider the deep structure as the internal framework of an organism, its skeleton, organs, and so forth. This structure gives the organism its general shape and controls the organism's functions. The surface structure is the outer covering, or skin in our metaphor. It is my contention that tradition serves as this outer covering, a skin, enveloping the underlying internal structure of culture. As new traits and cultural options are encountered a group either accepts or rejects the proposed trait. Those that are accepted are ingested, to borrow from our organism metaphor, and become part of the culture. In the same way that what a person eats eventually has an effect on his or her appearance, so too new culturally diffused traits appear in the traditions of the group. Since these "ingested" traits are now being integrated from within the culture, they take on the cultural characteristics of the group.

The preceding discussion has brought to light the two major difficulties in defining tradition. First, multiple definitions fit the concept of tradition and a given tradition may alter its definitional category over time. Second, a tradition can have multiple beginning and ending points based on point of view. A tradition can be created intentionally or unintentionally by a group. It can also be assigned to a group by outsiders who notice a common trait. This can be done intentionally or not. The problem is further compounded through time as traditions are altered and perceptions of groups change.

While scholars continue to give attention to solving the definitional dilemmas of tradition, little scholarship attempts to investigate the *nature* of tradition and its functional linkages to culture. Handler and Linnekin make a major step in this direction

in conceptualizing symbolic tradition. Dundes (1965) also aids in this work by conceptualizing traditions as springing "from social interaction and context." His key addition was to theorize that people "need to update and alter their traditions as a basis of identity." The Symbolic Constructionist and Naturalist theories discussed above taken together with the alterations I have mentioned provides a solid framework for the conceptualization of tradition. The challenge now remains to show evidence of tradition serving as an expressive covering over a framework of culture. To do this it will first be necessary to discuss the concept of culture and define it as I will use it throughout this research.

Culture

The concept of culture has suffered from the same confusion as tradition. The causes of this disorder are in many ways similar. Multiple definitions, multiple uses and a propensity among scholars and the general public to substitute terms for culture which are not precise synonyms have caused a great deal of ambiguity in discussions of culture. In this section I will address these three causes of confusion and then define the concept of *culture* as it will be used in this dissertation.

The study of culture, as with tradition, forces scholars to face the dilemma of multiple definitions. Two separate issues are raised in connection to defining the word *culture*. Multiple dictionary definitions and their implications must be taken into consideration. We must examine the multitude of definitions used by scholars.

Microsoft's *Encarta World English Dictionary* (2001) list nine definitions for the word *culture*. Six of these definitions relate to human behavior yet remain sufficiently different to warrant separate entries[1]. A tenth definition, the anthropological understanding of culture as the underlying control of human behavior, is not listed. Adding this definition brings the total to seven human-related uses of the word *culture* (Figure 2.1). It would, therefore, be linguistically correct, although highly confusing, to write the following; "Culturally speaking, Greek culture was more cultured with a higher degree of culture than many other cultures of their time." Each of the five uses of *culture* in the preceding sentence is distinct. The sentence could be rewritten; "Because of their underlying beliefs, Greek civilization was more educated, with a higher degree refinement than many of the other groups of their time." The two sentences illustrate how easily confusion can occur even from the grammatically and linguistically accurate use of the word culture.

Disagreement and variation among scholarly definitions of culture also cause definitional confusion. Bodley (1994) lists eight categories of cultural definitions. A brief examination of six introductory textbooks in various fields of human geography revealed six differently worded definitions of culture. In one instance, the number of definitions for culture appearing in a single work has varied. Three separate sources credited Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) with 100, 160, and 200 different definitions of culture in the same book.

---

[1] The other definitions relate to biology or cultivation.

1. The arts collectively: art, music, literature, and related intellectual activities.
2. Knowledge and sophistication: enlightenment and sophistication acquired through education and exposure to the arts.
3. Shared beliefs and values of a group: the beliefs, customs, practices, and social behavior of a particular nation or people.
4. People with shared beliefs and practices: a group of people whose shared beliefs and practices identify the particular place, class, or time to which they belong.
5. Shared attitudes: a particular set of attitudes that characterizes a group of people.
6. Improvement: the development of a skill or expertise through training or education.
7. Anthropological: The underlying control of human behavior.

Source: Microsoft Encarta English Dictionary

Figure 2.1. The seven human-related uses of the word *culture*.

The differences in definition go beyond mere wordplay. As Bodley (1994) observes, "(t)he specific culture concept that particular anthropologists work with is an important matter because it may influence the research problems they investigate, their methods and interpretations, and the positions they take on public policy issues." The specific definition and conception of culture in the mind of a researcher can direct the questions asked and the methods followed to answer them.

A second cause for confusion arises from the use of substitutes for culture that do not convey the exact meaning. *Encarta Thesaurus* (2001) lists 51 words related to culture. Most of the synonyms are related to culture defined as sophistication, education, or refinement. Five words (civilization, society, nation, ethnicity and tradition) are given as synonyms for *culture* when the term refers to a group. The same dictionary lists a combined 25 definitional entries for these five words. It would seem obvious that with so many possible definitions and substitutions that confusion could easily enter academic discussion of the topic.

It must also be noted that none of the five synonyms listed (civilization, society, nation, ethnicity and tradition) are accurate substitutes for the conceptual use of culture. In each case the synonyms do not connote the idea of underlying symbolic understanding that is intended by the conceptual definition of culture. Gritzner (2002) discussed the definitional differences between civilization, society, nation, ethnicity and tradition in comparison to the conceptual definition of culture. It is his conclusion that through poor word choice scholarly discussion of culture has become unnecessarily confusing.

Yet another area that serves to foster confusion is in naming within the discipline itself. The terms "Human Geography" and "Cultural Geography" are often used interchangeably among geographers to describe one of the two major divisions of geography[2]. This leads to the mistaken assumption that "human" and "culture" are equivalent terms. The cause of this confusion is the existence of two distinct ideas researchers use that can be called "Cultural Geography." The first is the notion of culture as concept. This group of scholars seeks to use the idea of culture as an underlying explanation of all human activities and the geographic consequences those activities produce. The second group may be more aptly named the Geography of Cultures. This group of researchers seeks to study individual culture groups and compare them to others using geographic methods. Researchers in this group would not necessarily suggest that culture is an underlying causation for human behavior.

The answer to the debate over whether the term "Human Geography" or "Cultural Geography" should be used as the overarching theme depends on ones' definition of

---

[2] The other division being Physical Geography.

culture. Using culture to mean individual groups being studied and compared geographically would mean "Human Geography" is the more appropriate term. In this case we are treating culture as a cataloging of traits that would fall under the topic of "human." If we define culture as a concept controlling all human behavior then the discipline would be more aptly named "Cultural Geography." In this case we are saying everything human is caused by our cultural ability, thereby making culture the independent variable.

This large number of definitions for culture is a result of the varying opinions among scholars as to which criteria are the most important to understanding human activity. Some scholars have chosen to focus on the end products of culture while others have concentrated on culture as an overall theoretical framework. It is necessary, therefore, to discuss the definition and use of *culture* in this dissertation and its theoretical development.

Much of the confusion surrounding "culture" stems from its earliest scholarly use. Anthropologist Edward Tylor first used the term in the 19th century. At the time the word was used as a dichotomy between the "civilized" peoples of Europe and the "primitive" peoples of the colonial territories. Culture was explained as something "advanced" groups had and "lesser" groups did not. This view has since been rejected by scholars for its elitist views and its lack of understanding of the underlying nature of cultural groups. But many of the definitions for culture still used today carry an implied sense of superiority or hierarchy.

It is in recognizing the elitist nature of Tylor's definition that scholars came to realize that all groups of people have culture. One relative constant in modern cultural thought is that all humans possess the ability to use symbolic means of interaction. Many anthropologists consider the dividing line between humans and other species to be the ability to create abstract symbolic meanings and communicate them to others. It is in the ability to communicate in the abstract that we find the basis of culture. This ability allows us to pass information on to the next generation.

The nature of passing on information has become the topic of a debate concerning the nature of culture. Some anthropologists follow the lead of Kroeber and White in considering culture to be a superorganic entity. That is, *culture* exists beyond individual humans. We are born into an existing cultural system of beliefs and that system survives us after we die. The only control humans can exert on culture is that which is allowed to us by our culture. This leads to the idea that culture can only be judged based on culture and therefore it can only be "explained in terms of itself" (Bodley, 1994).

This view appeared too extreme for some researchers that deny culture's ability to overwrite human free will. They contend that culture is not an entity, but rather an abstract concept that exists within its human carriers. The failure of this argument lies in the fact that culture can and has outlived its human carriers. The ability to write allows a group to pass information about itself into the future to be read and understood long after the individual members, or even the entire civilization, is gone.

I define culture as the ability to construct symbolic meanings for abstract concepts and pass them on to others. Borrowing from the superorganic theory, I believe that

culture can only be interpreted and understood within itself. But I do not believe this is the limiting factor that many scholars suggest. Culture is not only passed on between generations, but is also reassessed within a given generation (Galt, 2005). Each generation uses its own experiences to reexamine and reconstruct the symbolic meanings passed on by its cultural ancestors. In this way, cultures both grow new traits and abandon those that are deemed unworthy.

In this dissertation I will use "culture" in two primary forms. First, to refer to a group of individuals linked by a common set of traits, such as "southern culture" or "northern culture." I will also use culture in its conceptual form when discussing its links to tradition. Here I refer to culture as the ability to construct symbolic meanings for abstract concepts and communicating those meanings to others.

The preceding sections examined the existing theoretical frameworks of culture and tradition. As the focus of study in this dissertation is the sport of hockey it is necessary to also examine the field of sports geography. The next chapter is devoted to a review of developments in sports geography and a discussion of this dissertation's place within that subfield. Chapter Four then provides a brief history of hockey from its early stages of development through the lockout-cancelled 2004-2005 National Hockey League season.

Chapter 3: Literature Review of the Geography of Sport

Geographic inquiry into the spatial distribution of sport dates back to 1880 (Tylor, 1880). During the next 80 years, however, little work was done in the field. Many geographers avoided the subject area, viewing sports as unworthy of scholarly research. Isolated examinations were conducted such as Carlson's (1942) examination of skiing in New England and Shaw's (1963) geographic examination of baseball. The absence of geographic inquiry into sport is especially notable because of the rapid growth in sport in America during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During the 1920s while American sports were enjoying what sport historians have termed the "Golden Age," geographers failed to investigate the causes, patterns, and impacts of sport upon culture or the landscape. Not until Burley's (1966) article in *Professional Geographer* did a call go out for the geographic study of sport.

It is worth noting that the 1920s were more than a collection of superstars such as Babe Ruth and Red Grange. The decade also so a rise in the coverage of sport in newspapers and the appearance of numerous sports magazines. The increased exposure and sensational writing styles both answered the demand of the public for sports news and also drove it to new heights. Not until the start of the Great Depression in 1929 did the Golden Age come to an end.

The late 1960s witnessed a small increase in the number of investigations into the geography of sport. Papers examining competitive sports in Australia (Rimmer and Johnston, 1967), and orienteering as a geographic sport (Adams, 1972) were published in geographic journals. Reisman and Denny (1969) investigated the spread of American-

style football throughout the United States and the rest of the world. Despite the modest

growth in sport scholarship, the mainstream of the discipline ignored the field of sports

geography.

The first major book in the field can be credited to John Rooney (1974). His

book, *A Geography of American Sport: From Cabin Creek to Anaheim*, examined several

aspects of sport from a geographical perspective. Rooney set forth the rationale for the

need of the geographic study of sports. He noted sports' growing place in American

society and the impact of sport and recreation on both the economy and the landscape.

The Six Traditions of Sports Geography

Rooney (1974) was the first to propose a theoretical framework to develop a

scholarly examination of sports geography (Figure 3.1). He identified six conceptual

subdivisions in sports scholarship. The first is the spatial variations that occur within a

sport. A researcher may examine a single sport over the full geographic extent in which

the sport is played or watched. Second is the spatial organization of sport at different

competitive levels. This subdivision seeks to understand why a region or area may be

fertile ground for the collegiate level of a sport but not supportive of other levels such as

high school or professional. Third is the study of origins and diffusion of sports and

athletes. Central to understanding sports geography is knowledge of where and how

specific games developed and how they spread. Fourth, is the social and symbolic impact

of the spatial organization of sports. Regions identify themselves with certain sports and

take pride in their achievement in a given sport. This fourth framework will serve as the

Rooney's six original frameworks for sports geography:

1. Spatial variations that occur within sports.
   A. Study a single sport over multiple regions (Topical approach).
   B. Study multiple sports in a single region (Regional approach).

2. Spatial variation at differing levels of competition.

3. Study of origins and diffusion of sports and sportspersons.

4. The social and symbolic impact of the spatial organization of sports.

5. The effect of sport on the landscape.

6. The relationship between sports and the national character.

Figure 3.1. Rooney's six original frameworks for sports geography.

basis from which this dissertation will extend. Fifth is the effect of sport on the

landscape. The construction of stadiums and practice facilities requires resources and

leaves an imprint on the cultural and physical landscape in the name of sport.   Last is the

examination of the relationship between sports and the national character. Zeal for a

particular sport can grow to levels of national pride in which the outcome of a game

affects an entire nation.

   <u>Spatial variations that occur within sports</u>

   The importance of Rooney's first framework is that it served as a tie between an

existing body of literature in sports history and the new field of sports geography. It also

established a foundation for the further study of sports geography frameworks. Rooney's

methodology was to examine player production at the state and county level as a measure

of interest in a given sport. Rooney's classic study in this area was on football player source areas (Rooney, 1969). In this study he examined the spatial variation in college football player production at the state level and the "consumption" of those players by universities. The study methodology has been used several times in investigating other sports: baseball (Ojala and Gadwood, 1989), college football (McConnell, 1984, 1988), and British soccer (Gavin 1979).

Spatial variation at differing levels of competition

The second framework, spatial variation at differing levels of competition, has received little attention. Nearly all studies have examined only one level of competition or combined several levels into one general level to form a picture of the overall interest in a given sport. Of Rooney's original six categories, geographers have given the second the least attention.

Study of origins and diffusion of sports and athletes

The majority of work following the third framework, player origins and migrations, has been in the major U.S. sports: baseball (Shelley and Shelley, 1993), football (Rooney, 1980, 1982; Ferrett and Ojala, 1992), and basketball (Swain, 1990). British geographer John Bale (1981) has used the regional concept to investigate the geography of sport in Europe. Bale and Maguire (1994) also examined how athletic talent is becoming an international commodity and the effects of player movement across national boundaries.

Research examining sport diffusion has also led to one of the few "laws" in sport geography. In his now classic book, *A Geography of American Sport*, Rooney (1974)

states, "No sport can be introduced to a foreign area at the professional level before the general populace has adopted it, and it has become an integral part of the country's youth culture." The game's adoption and integration by the youth of a culture is necessary to maintain the sport's viability in that culture. A child who grows up playing baseball, for example, is likely to remain interested in that sport; watching, coaching, or by some other means in adulthood. As a parent, he will also be more likely to involve his children in sports. Passing on an interest in a sport from one generation to the next creates a cycle that sustains the game's place in the society. Since "the passing on of a cultural trait from one generation to the next" is one definition of tradition, we can substitute tradition into the latter part of Rooney's statement. The altered version would read: "No sport can be introduced to a foreign area at the professional level before it has developed a tradition among that society."

Social and symbolic importance of the spatial organization of sports

Research into the social and symbolic attributes of sport and space began in the 1980s. Raitz (1987) examined how the "place" a sport occurs in affects the enjoyment of the event. For example, baseball's infield dimensions are the same regardless of where the game is played. That is, physical dimensions of bases, distance from pitcher's mound to home plate, etc., are set in the official rules. Yet Yankee Stadium, Wrigley Field, and "The Green Monster" (the left field fence) in Boston's Fenway Park all hold a special meaning to baseball fans. Even if the site is that of a hated rival, beating them there means more than simply winning a game (Todd, 1999).

<u>The effect of sport on the landscape</u>

Examinations into the impacts of sport and recreation on landscapes have fallen into two main subcategories: urban development centered on sports facilities and the cultural meanings behind sport landscapes. Urban geographers began investigating the growing impact sports has on urban landscapes. Arenas and stadiums are centerpieces in many urban revitalization projects (Jaeger, 1998). Their growing use as a redevelopment tool has increased the number of urban geographers and economists examining this phenomenon.

The 1990s saw the number of new stadiums increase at a higher rate than at any time in modern sports history. One of the driving forces of this growth was a team owner demanding big and better stadiums so they could generate larger profits (Henry, 1996). Owners claimed that rising operating costs and aging stadiums required new venues for their teams. In years past, owners were expected to finance the building of their team's stadium (Shropshire, 1995). Professional sport teams were seen as "parts" of the league; not independent entities. This limited the team owner's ability to move if his or her current location became financially unprofitable. For an owner to move a franchise he or she first had to seek the approval of the rest of the league which, for various reasons, may not want the team to relocate. Al Davis, owner of the National Football League's (NFL) Oakland Raiders, challenged his League's front office in court and won a victory over the NFL in 1980. This opened the door (some would argue a Pandora's box) to the sport franchise movements of the 1990s (Shropshire, 1995). Davis' legal victory limited the professional leagues' ability to stop franchises from moving. Owners realized they

controlled a limited product, a professional sport franchise, amidst growing demand. Cities could not simply "open" their own teams. If a city wanted a franchise, it had to convince the league to grant an expansion team or allow an owner to move. Since most leagues were expanding to their limits in terms of athletic talent pool, a city's best chance at a franchise was to convince an existing team to move. This gave franchise owners leverage to demand more from cities in the form of new stadiums, more favorable lease terms and other subsidies. If the current city failed to agree, the owner usually had offers from other cities wanting to host the team.

This willingness to move kindled a fire in cities without major league teams. The so-called "major league city" idea began, and soon cities across the United States were scrambling for a professional sport franchise (Shropshire, 1995). Studies have scrutinized this movement from both physical impacts on cityscapes to the economic impacts on cities. The results have been as varied as the studies themselves. Economists have written dozens of articles detailing the fallacy of economic benefits derived from stadiums (e.g. Baade and Sanderson 1997; Agostini *et al.* 1997). Despite these findings others continue to tout the value of sports franchises as a positive economic generator (Spikard 1995; Miller 1998). As long as owners continue to demand new stadiums and cities attempt to lure them with new deals, this topic will remain a hotly debated research topic among urban geographers.

A small but growing body of geographic literature attempts to explain the cultural significance of sport through landscape analysis. Books by Bale (1992, 1994) investigate the distribution of sports in the modern city in an attempt to reveal patterns of stadium

construction as a function of population size. Other studies have examined the basic

elements of a generic sports landscape (Oriand, 1976). One study focused on a single

town to determine the amount of land used, patterns of landuse, and reasons for locations

of sport facilities (Wenner, 1999).

The relationship between sports and the national character

Most of the work among American geographers in Rooney's sixth subdivision,

sport and national character, has been conducted at the regional level and as part of a

larger study. Most often examinations into sport regions stem from the first subdivision

in which the researcher first attempts to determine which regions are "hot beds" of the

sport. Rooney designed the first method to detect such "hot beds" by calculating the

number of high-level participants who were produced in each area per capita (Rooney

1974). Examinations into sport at the national and continental level are more prominent

in research conducted by European geographers. Bale (1979 and 1980) investigated

women's football (soccer) in Wales and England and regional interests in track and field

in Europe.

Rooney (1975) later refined the first of his conceptual frameworks, defining two

methodological directions researchers could use in investigating sport regions. First is

the "regional approach" in which one can examine all the sports in a single region

without regard to other regions. This method follows the standard geographic regional

methods used by geographers during the first half of the 20th century. The second

methodology Rooney described is the "topical approach" designed to study a single sport

and compare and contrast it over several regions. This has been the favored method by

sport geographers as it allows for more in-depth examination of distribution patterns from multiple perspectives.

Media and Tradition Creation in Sports

Research into popular views of tradition has grown. Newspapers, television, film, and other forms of popular media are being investigated with fruitful results. Newspapers have been shown not only to report facts but also to relay notions of what is significant in the public conscience and influence the public's opinion on issues (Fowler, 1991). Studies on the occurrence of tradition in newspapers have been conducted with the aim of developing a "popular" definition of tradition (Bronner, 1995). Bronner concluded that *tradition* in popular use most often occurs in connection with local events, holidays, and family. These three occurrences fit into scholarly definitions of "repeated acts" and "passing on of traits from one generation to the next" and deepen understanding of how this process of tradition-building occurs.

Examination of newspaper articles also shows a link between *tradition* and *sports*. The connection appears in four forms: rivalries, expected level of play, historic precedent, and ritualized events. Rivalries, such as the Army-Navy football game are touted as a "continuing tradition" (Watson, 99). Teams that sustain a certain level of play (either good or bad) may gain "tradition" status. A newspaper described the University of Connecticut women's basketball team as "having built a winning tradition," after the team won its third national title in four seasons. Traditions can also contain low expectations, as was the case with the Cleveland Indians baseball team.   After the team completed a rare successful season a newspaper reported "Indians Break Losing

Tradition." Sport traditions may grow from historic precedent and become ritualized

custom. The Philadelphia Flyers of the NHL played a tape of Kate Smith singing "God

Bless America" prior to a home game. There was no initial significance to the event until

the Flyers unexpectedly won the game. Over the next three seasons, the Flyers were 19

wins, 1 loss, and 1 tie when the song was played. On several occasions following,

including the 1975 and 1976 Stanley Cup Championships, she was invited to sing the

song live prior to the game with the same victorious result for the Flyers. The team now

plays "God Bless America" before every important home game "for a little extra help"

(Flyers' History, 2008).

Little work has been accomplished to link tradition and sport in a geographic

sense. Raitz (1987) examined the importance of "place" in sport and sport gratification.

Although he discusses tradition he relegates it to a subordinate role in defining the way a

specific place, such as Fenway Park, becomes important. The most notable work linking

sport and tradition is Pillsbury's (1989 and 1995) investigation into NASCAR, its history,

and its importance in southern culture. Pillsbury hypothesized that as NASCAR becomes

a national sport it may lose its southern flavor. Alderman *et al.* (2003) have shown that

while NASCAR has grown into a national phenomenon, Southerners have retained it as

an integral part of their cultural tradition. Alderman's work can be seen as the next step

toward developing a geographic framework in which tradition and sport are identified

and investigated. This dissertation builds upon Alderman's framework by using sport to

examine the linkage between culture and tradition. Before turning to the methodology

used to conduct this study, I first offer a brief history of the sport of hockey and the

NHL's expansion into the South.

Chapter 4: The History of Ice Hockey

The origin of the game of ice hockey, and the word "hockey" itself, are disputed by historians and lexicographers. The Scots, English, French, Dutch, and American Indians all played versions of games known as "hurley, bandy, shinty, randy, ricket, wicket, and breakshins" prior to 1700 (Owen, 2000). These games were similar in that players used sticks with curved ends to hit a ball into a goal or over a goal line. The original forms of the games were played on fields rather than on ice and it is unknown when the games were transferred to a frozen surface. One of the earliest recorded accounts comes from a 1783 newspaper in New York. It reports British soldiers playing "stick-ball, the Irish field game of hurley, on skates and on ice" (Fitsell, 2000). Other newspaper articles between 1786 and 1802 show the ice variety of field games became popular by the beginning of the 19th century. The *Norfolk Herald* of November 13, 1802 reported that, "boys in the middle and northern colonies played bandy on ice and called it shinny" (Fitsell, 2000). Ice games had grown popular as far south as the colony of Virginia.

The debate around the game's origins center on the question what can actually be called "hockey." The game "shinny" is similar to hockey although scholars have noted that shinny and hockey have two distinct sets of rules. Although similar and probably of common origin, the difference is sufficient to state that what was called "shinny" cannot be considered "hockey" (Zukerman, 2000). The confusion surrounding where the game developed is generated by word usage. The on-ice variations developed over a wide geographic range. In many instances the words "hockey", "shinny" and others were used

interchangeably. This has lead to claims by Kingston, Ontario, Montreal, Quebec, and Nova Scotia as the birthplace of hockey.

Historians investigating Kingston, Ontario's claim, doubt that the city is the birthplace of hockey. Sufficient evidence has been uncovered to state that the game played there was Shinny and not Hockey. Nova Scotia has also been ruled out as the likely hearth of the sport. Shinny and similar games were played in the Canadian Maritime provinces, but they never developed into hockey in the modern form of the sport.

Professors at McGill University, researching the origin of hockey, discovered in school records that hockey's birth took place in Montreal at McGill University. The school's newspaper, the *McGill University Gazette*, reported that on March 3, 1875, the first public display of an ice hockey game played indoors occurred as teams of students from McGill faced each other. Two years later on February 1, 1877, the *Gazette* reported that students had formed an organized ice hockey club. On February 27, 1877, the paper printed the club's official rules for the game of ice hockey (Zukerman, 2000). Based on this research, most historians grant McGill, and thus Montreal, the title of "Hockey's Birthplace."

New research, however, is beginning to question this hearth. The *Montreal Gazette* of March 4, 1875 reported, "The game of hockey, though much in vogue on the ice in New England and other parts of the United States, is not much known here (in Canada)" (Fitsell, 2000). Most scholars believe the game reported by the *Gazette* as "hockey," was in fact "ice polo", a game similar to hockey. Ice polo was popular in New

England in the 1870s. The popularity of the game would later prove important to the growth of hockey in the Northeast.

The debate over the location of hockey's hearth as a *game* may never be answered. The location of the *sport* of ice hockey, however, can be granted to McGill. Oriard showed that it is in the statement of rules that "game" becomes "sport" (Oriard, 1997). Games are fluid in their form. A group of children gather in an open field and play the game of football. The field's dimensions are not the same as other fields the children may use. Players determine the sidelines at random distances based on the their own decisions. The sidelines may change from day to day or even play to play as needed. The children constantly change how the game is played each time they play.

Sport, on the other hand, is defined by definite rules. Teams competing in National Football League games, for example, know all fields are 100 yards long between the end zones, the goalposts are a specified height and width, and each team is allowed the same number of players on its roster. It is the printed rulebook that formalizes games and allows for sport to be played with uniform guidelines. Using Oriard's definition then, since it was McGill University that first published rules and distinguished a "game" played on ice with sticks as the sport of "ice hockey," we can accept McGill and the city of Montreal as the hearth of hockey the sport.

Early Hockey Leagues

Amateur Hockey Association of Canada

The sport of ice hockey spread rapidly across Canada. By the early 1880s intra-city leagues had formed in several Canadian cities. In 1886, the first formal hockey league, the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada, formed in Montreal (Kitchen, 2000). Within 10 years of the first rules being printed, ice hockey had spread from coast to coast in Canada. The expansion was so rapid that only a decade after the sport's formalized rules first appeared, students at McGill were calling for a national body to govern the sport. Several teams in Montreal, Quebec City, and Ottawa joined together to form the first such body, the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada (AHAC). Although this was clearly only a regional organization when founded, its importance is found in its mission to "define the nature of hockey for a broad constituency, popularizing the new game, and regulating the state of play" (Gruneau and Whitson, 1993). The association formed a base from which a hockey tradition could be built in Canada.

Early Professional Leagues

Hockey's amateur status changed in 1901. The Western Pennsylvania Hockey League (WPHL) began operations as a professional city-circuit league in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The League had already been in existence for a few years as an amateur venture. It attracted a number of star Canadian hockey players when the city of Pittsburgh had built indoor ice rinks. The league's popularity convinced owners it would be profitable to pay the best players to leave the Canadian amateur leagues and move to the WPHL (Fitzsimmons, 2000). As top-quality hockey players joined the league, the

popularity of hockey spread in western Pennsylvania. This early league served as part of the foundation for American hockey culture.

The success of the WPHL led to the development of other professional hockey leagues. The International Hockey League began operations in 1904. By 1908, at least eight major professional hockey leagues were operating in eastern and central Canada. In 1910, the National Hockey Association (NHA) opened with five franchises located in Canada (Fitzsimmons, 2000).

National Hockey Association

The NHA grew in the pre-World War I years and became a premier hockey league in eastern Canada. Despite the growing success on the ice the League began to suffer from internal disagreements among owners. Eddie Livingstone, the owner of the NHA's Toronto franchise, became the focal point of several disputes of both a personal and business nature with other NHA owners.

The outbreak of war in Europe in 1914 caused many of Canada's best young athletes to trade hockey sticks for rifles. Most of the professional leagues folded or were suspended until the war's conclusion. The NHA attempted to last through the war and might have done so were it not for the increasing internal tensions among the owners.

The National Hockey Association entered its eighth season with a number of disputes brewing among the owners. Toronto franchise owner Eddie Livingstone was becoming, in the minds of fellow owners, more demanding and unbearable. A friend of Livingstone's, Perry Quinn, purchased the NHA's Quebec franchise. Quinn's friendship with Livingstone caused him to become an immediate outcast among the other owners.

In Quebec, the owner of the Arena refused to let Quinn use it unless he severed all ties to Livingstone. As tensions between owners grew, threats and lawsuits between parties became more common. By season's end, it was clear to those involved that something had to be done. The NHA's board of governors suspended operations for the 1917-1918 season, citing the loss of manpower to the war effort. Shortly after the governor's meeting ended, the owners of the Ottawa, Quebec, both Montreal franchises, and a group representing a new Toronto ownership met in secret (McFarlane, 2000). After two weeks of meetings, the new League president, Frank Calder, announced on November 26, 1917 the formation of a new league, the National Hockey League (NHL). One of the major reasons for forming the new league was to get away from Livingstone (McFarlane, 1967). Following the announcement, Tommy Gorman, owner of the Ottawa franchise, said, "Without him (Livingstone), we can get down to the business of making money" (McFarlane, 2000). That statement has echoed through (some would say haunted) the NHL ever since.

The National Hockey League

The first season for the NHL, in 1917, began on shaky ground. The new league faced the same shortage of players that threatened the other leagues. The League formed with five franchises, two in Montreal, both of which played in the same arena, and one each in Quebec City, Toronto, and Ottawa. Before the season even began, the Quebec City franchise announced they were dropping out of the League. Soon after the season began, a fire destroyed the home rink of the two Montreal teams. One of the teams, the

Canadiens, played at an alternate site. The city's other team, the Wanderers, decided to close operations (McFarlane, 1967).

The young League struggled in its first decade amid rival leagues and player shortages. By 1926, however, the NHL was emerging as the world's premier professional hockey league. Franchises were added in several cities, all northern, as professional hockey continued to be both popular and profitable. The Great Depression changed all that. In 1929, the NHL entered a period of serious challenges. Several franchises folded or merged during the 1930s and with the outbreak of the Second World War, the League was further strained by a loss of players. Some stability returned to the League in 1942 when it was reduced to six teams, the mythical "Original Six" of NHL hockey. With a limited number of teams, the limited number of available players was less of a hardship. The NHL then entered a 25-year period some authors refer to as the "Golden Age" of hockey (Hunter, 2000). During this period, the sport continued a modest growth in popularity throughout the United States. Profits for owners, however, began to skyrocket.

Professional baseball and football in the United States began their westward expansions in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The success enjoyed by these other professional leagues prompted the NHL to look at expansion. Minnesota and Pennsylvania seemed obvious choices. Minnesotans were as hockey-mad as Canadians were and both Pittsburgh and Philadelphia had long histories of professional hockey. St. Louis received a franchise because of its large population and the success of its other professional sports teams in the city. The choices that turned most Canadians' heads,

however, were teams in Los Angeles and San Francisco. California had a growing

population and professional franchises in other sports seemed to be succeeding. There

was a history of professional hockey in Los Angeles and minor league hockey throughout

the state (Diamond, 2000). "But, this is California. Do they even have ice there?" was

the question most Canadians (and some from America's hockey hearth in New England

and the Great Lakes) were asking. The answer came quickly. The San Francisco

franchise struggled from the beginning and throughout its ten years in the Bay Area. In

1976, the franchise moved to Cleveland. By then, the franchise's finances were too dire

to survive and the franchise was merged with the Minnesota North Stars (Diamond,

2000). The other California team, the Los Angeles Kings, survived. That would be the

best way to describe the team for the next 20 years. The team had limited success on the

ice, reaching the division finals only once in their first 20 seasons. Off the ice the team

struggled to be noticed amidst the glamour of Hollywood and other professional sport

franchises. That would change on August 9, 1988, when hockey's greatest star, Wayne

Gretzky, joined the team. Hockey in Los Angeles, and the NHL, would never be the

same. The greatest player in hockey now had center stage in Hollywood. Kings' games

became a place "to see and be seen" and ticket sales increased. The League's

headquarters took notice that in a nontraditional market, hockey was thriving. The Board

of Governors determined that expansion could be achieved outside hockey's core area.

The early success enjoyed by most of the NHL's expansion teams prompted

another series of expansions. Between 1970 and 1974, the NHL added another six teams.

As with the previous expansion, most teams went to hockey "hotbeds." One team,

however, went to Atlanta. The team was owned by a group of local businessmen who wanted to bring professional hockey to Atlanta. Despite a solid ownership group, the franchise suffered from the outset from three major problems (Diamond, 2000). First, the team was an expansion club and most expansion teams struggle in the beginning. Second, Atlanta had little hockey history. The team was a new fad for residents, one that quickly wore off. Finally, 1972 was the first year of a new rival hockey league, the World Hockey Association. The new league was offering NHL stars and upcoming young players salaries well above the NHL norm. The expansion Flames found it difficult to compete with the established NHL franchises and the new League for players. After only eight seasons, the team was sold and moved to Calgary.

The impact of the World Hockey Association (WHA) on the NHL cannot be overstated. The new league challenged the old for its players and ticket revenues. The WHA located teams in many of the major U.S. markets in direct competition with the NHL. It also went after either smaller market cities that had large numbers of hockey fans or larger cities that were nontraditional hockey towns. Among the nontraditional cities were Miami, Birmingham, San Diego, Phoenix, and Houston. Although the Miami franchise failed and moved to Philadelphia before even playing a game, and most of the others struggled financially, the Houston franchise would go on to win the WHA championship and be a financial success.

Competition from the new league forced the NHL to act and the two leagues merged in 1979. Four WHA teams, Edmonton, Hartford, Quebec (playing in Quebec City), and Winnipeg, joined the NHL and all other WHA teams were disbanded. The

WHA lasted only seven seasons but changed the course of hockey's future geography.

Despite the initial failure of the NHL in the South the league eventually returned. Its first foray was an expansion franchise in Tampa Bay, which began playing in 1991. This was followed the next season with a new team in South Florida initially playing in Miami. The following year witnessed the first of four franchise movements as the Minnesota North Stars moved to Dallas. Another round of expansion followed three years later with teams being added in Nashville and Atlanta. Raleigh failed to earn an expansion franchise at first but eventually attracted Hartford Whalers' owner Pete Karmonos, who moved his team from Connecticut in 1999.

When the expansion and relocations were complete, the geography of hockey had changed significantly. A sport that prior to 1990 had only one team in the U.S. west of the Rocky Mountains and only St. Louis and Washington south of the Mason-Dixon Line, had become a Sunbelt sport. Ten of the League's 30 teams were located in nontraditional markets (Figures 4.1. and 4.2.) by the year 2000. League officials touted the growth of their sport and Commissioner Bettman proclaimed the arrival of the NHL as a major American sport.

The picture would not remain bright for long. Although hockey's rapid expansion had received notice from the sports world, the attention faded almost as quickly. Hockey had a difficult time attracting television contracts on major networks and the contracts they did sign were often for substantially less money than baseball, football or even
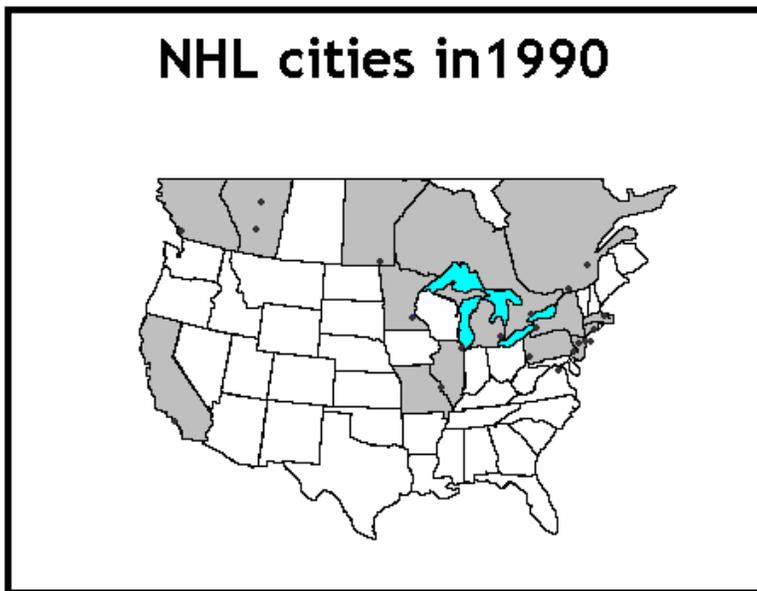
Figure 4.1. Locations of NHL franchises at end of 1989-90 season.

Figure 4.2. Locations of NHL franchises at end of 2003-2004 season.

basketball commanded. As hockey's initial rise in popularity wore off, ratings fell even further and television contracts shrank as well.

Adding to hockey's woes was an era of unbridled spending among owners. Expansion fees paid by the nine new teams totaled $570 million and new sponsors and television contracts, though modest compared to other major sports, increased the available capital for existing teams. Owners used the increased capital to pay star players increasingly larger salaries as the NHL entered the free agent era. Eventually the system crumbled to a critical point as new revenue slowed, arena income stagnated in many areas, and players continued to demand larger salaries. Owners were faced with a system of increasing financial demands and decreasing income.

The system finally imploded on September 15, 2004 as the League imposed a lockout on players. Owners demanded a salary cap to control what they termed "runaway employee costs." Players refused to accept a salary cap and instead offered a series of "luxury tax" systems, a league-wide wage reduction and other concessions. The two sides failed to come to an agreement and, on February 16, 2005, the NHL became the first North American sports league to cancel an entire season.

The lockout that cancelled the 2004-2005 season was finally settled when the League owners broke the Players' Union. Management had installed the hard salary cap they had demanded from the beginning. The players were forced to concede on most major issues. Both sides tried to put a positive spin on the outcome for their own interests and both tried to win back fans. To that end, the NHL Board of Governors instituted sweeping rule changes to address many of the complaints fans had made about

56

the slow pace and increasing violence in the game. Players hailed the changes as well, claiming the changes would encourage better performance on the ice. The League was moving forward with a plan to make the game more friendly to fans, with less violence, more wide-open play and more scoring.

The future of the NHL still remains in some doubt. While the early attendance numbers for the 2005-2006 season have been better than expected, some teams are still struggling at the ticket office. Rule changes meant to increase scoring were quickly circumvented. ESPN reported that by the end of the preseason, many NHL goalies had found ways around the new rules. Concerns over whether referees will enforce the new rules remain. Past rule changes have often been heralded by front office personnel only to be ignored and not enforced on the ice by the referees.

Perhaps worst of all for the League, it lost its broadcast contract with ESPN. The world's largest sports network refused to pay the NHL's requested fee and the League found they had no bargaining power. The League eventually signed a national contract with the Outdoor Life Network. That affiliation lasted one season and the League signed a new agreement with the Versus cable network for the 2006-2007 season. Although the league still has contracts with local or regional cable affiliates, the damage from losing a major network venue could have far-reaching consequences. Not only will it be more difficult to reach audiences outside current hockey areas, but lower or no viewing audience means less attraction for corporate sponsors. In an era when corporations spend billions to have their logo visible to a wide audience, the NHL's lack of exposure may be

its most difficult hurdle to overcome and the longest lasting effect of the lockout and its lost season.

<u>Hockey's Cultural Hearth</u>

To place the sport of hockey into the context of this dissertation it is necessary to define the game's cultural hearth. As my central question focuses on understanding differences in culture and tradition in hockey's hinterland, it is important to understand the culture of its hearth. A logical place to begin this investigation is within the body of literature surrounding the sport of hockey.

The sport of hockey has accumulated its own body of literature within the confines of hockey enthusiasts. This literature can be divided into four major categories: 1) articles that focus on playing the game; 2) players and teams; 3) history; and 4) discussions on the state of the sport. The first two categories are of limited importance in this dissertation as they involve the physical aspects of the game such as, training or strategy and the debate over which players and teams are best. The third category, history, provides insights into the formation and early direction of the league owners and thereby the forces driving today's league decisions. Several histories on the Stanley Cup, the League's championship trophy, have been written. McFarlane discussed the birth of the league until expansion in the 1960s (McFarlane, 1967). His book notes the early days of hockey and anecdotes that have become part of tradition. Among these are several stories of violence in hockey in the 1930s and '40s and the negative reaction by many fans and sports writers to the amount of violence in the game. One popular joke claimed

"I went to the fights the other night and a hockey game broke out." Owners, on the other hand, pushed for the continued violent play, claiming that it sold tickets.

The final category of hockey literature discusses the direction of the game. The League continues to expand and League officials praise their growth at every opportunity. Other authors have lamented the direction the sport has taken (Kidd and Macfarlane, 1972) detailing what they consider to be the downfall of hockey as it becomes more commercialized (Kidd and Macfarlane, 1972). In the minds of Canadians Kidd and Macfarlane, U.S. money corrupted and conquered the sport of hockey. At that time, "southern" referred to the two teams in Pennsylvania and the one in St. Louis. The southern movement of hockey was disturbing to many Canadian hockey enthusiasts. They viewed this movement as a dilution of the talent pool and a corruption of the game. When the book was written in 1972, it was given little serious attention in the United States. The league was promoting its new expansion and fans in the United States were excited about the new teams in their cities. Today, as the league expands into the American Sunbelt, fans in some northern cities are beginning to make the same arguments proposed by Kidd and Macfarlane more than three decades ago.

Geographers have made inquiries into the sport of hockey. One of the earliest was a Master's degree study of hockey regions (Russell, 1974). The study examined player production as a measure of popularity. This same type of study was published a year later by Ojala and Kureth studying hockey player origins in Canada (Ojala & Kureth, 1975). Both of these studies coincide with a period of expansion in the National Hockey League. It seems plausible that the League's expansion attracted attention and

59

studies. Between 1986 and 1994, several geographic articles were written on the growth of hockey and the movement of hockey players. DeChano (1989) and Henzel (1990) both published articles examining hockey player migration in the 1980s, comparing it to the previous studies done on the subject. They found that although Canada is still the leading supplier of hockey talent, its once dominant position is faltering. Since its beginnings, Canadian players have dominated the sport of hockey. Although currently only 20 percent of NHL teams are located in Canada, Canadians still comprise over 70 percent of the players. Genest (1994) examined the effects of international migration on Canadian players and the Canadian view of "their" game being played in other countries.

The popularity of hockey in Canada lends weight to Canada's claim that hockey is "their" game. It has been described as "the only popular culture Canada does not import" (Kidd and Macfarlane, 1972) and a "basic part of Canadian culture" (Conacher, 1970). Radio audiences for Foster Hewitt's broadcasts of Toronto Maple Leaf games in 1937 were estimated at six million Canadians, fully half of the country's population at that time. Hetzel (1990) noted "'Hockey Night in Canada' (on the Canadian Broadcasting Company) draws four million viewers during the regular season and six million during the playoffs. This with a national population of 25 million." The popularity, interest, and demands for success extend into the Canadian government as well. Following several appalling performances in the hockey World Championship in 1977, there were demands by Members of the Canadian Parliament for the team executive to "be brought before the bar of the House of Commons and made to give an

accounting for the disaster" (Hetzel, 1990). Clearly, hockey is embedded in Canadian culture.

The popularity of hockey in the United States reaches the same level of devotion in some areas. Boston has a long and storied history of ice sports predating hockey. Harvard University and others in the Boston area adopted the formal rules printed by McGill in Canada. The game's popularity grew during the first two decades of the 20th century. By the 1920s, the Boston Department of Parks recorded between 500,000 and 700,000 individuals annually skating on public rinks and playing hockey (O'Hara, 2000). When the first NHL hockey game was played in the new Boston Garden, team president Charles Adams was hoping for a "good turnout." His expectations were surpassed when 16,000 fans attempted to fill the 14,500-capacity arena (O'Hara, 2000).

At the western end of the U.S. hockey hearth is the state of Minnesota. Each year the state holds the Minnesota State Tournament for high school hockey. The tournament has been described as, "more than just a high school hockey tournament, it is a culture-fest" (Hetzel, 1990). *Minneapolis/St. Paul* magazine once asked readers "What is another name for the Minnesota State High School Hockey Tournament?" The answer was "Holy Week" (Lethert, 2000). High school hockey has been played in Minnesota since the 1890s. The Tournament began in 1945, the first state high school hockey tournament in the U.S. The passion felt for the games is evident in the fact that in Minnesota only the 17,000-seat St. Paul Civic (now Excel) Center is large enough to hold the fans that attend the games. The level of competition is arguably the highest in the United States.

Evidence of this can be seen when one considers that the 1993 and 1994 champion Jefferson High School team placed 17 players in Division I hockey and three in the NHL.

By combining empirical research conducted on player production, a study of hockey's history, and an investigation into the cultural importance of hockey by area, a clear picture emerges of hockey's hearth region. As shown in Figure 4.3, with McGill University serving as a starting point, hockey's hearth can be defined as Eastern Canada (Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime Provinces), the New England states, and the Great Lakes Region (including New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota). Although hockey is played and is popular in other areas, this hearth region has the highest player production, longest history, and a noted cultural love affair with hockey that goes beyond any other North American region.
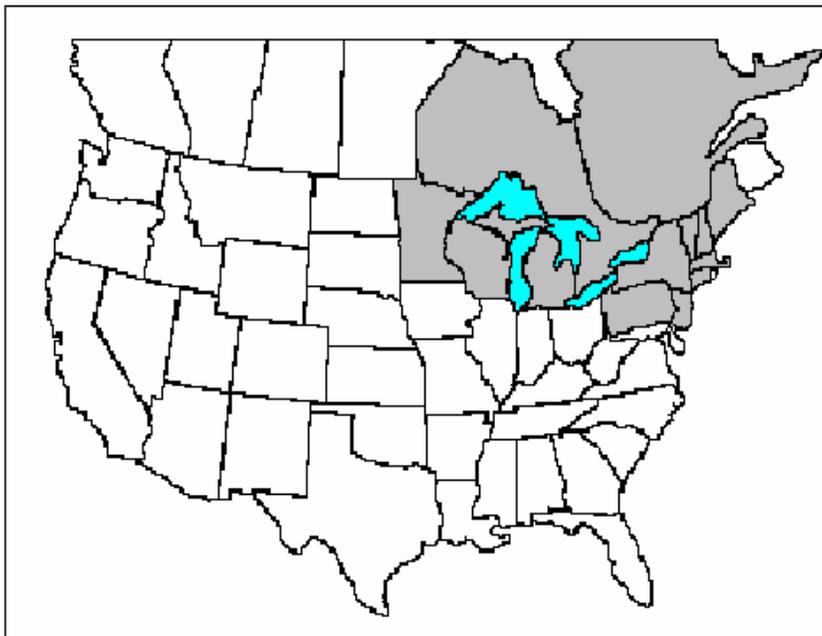
Figure 4.3. Hockey's Hearth region.

Nearly all geographers researching hockey's regions have pointed to Canada's cold climate as a major factor in hockey's northern development and home. This is too gross a generalization. An examination of player production ratios calculated by Henzel (1990) shows no player production in Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, Idaho, or Nebraska. Each of these areas also has cold winters and as much access to natural ice as those areas in the hearth region. The evidence is even more compelling when viewed at the county level. Figure 4.4 shows player production quotients as calculated by Henzel (1990) for all Minnesota counties. The North Central counties have the largest ratios along with the counties near Minneapolis/St. Paul. The rest of the state has very low production in most cases. The climate of Minnesota is relatively constant across the state in winter and natural ice is plentiful. Since ice fishing, cross-country skiing across lakes, and other outdoor ice-based sports and recreational activities are popular throughout Minnesota, it must be a cultural selection, not an environmental one, which determined where hockey developed.

Some may still argue that while hockey may have been a cultural choice in the North, the South was left without that choice since the climate did not permit any natural ice for most, if not all, of the year. Again, this environmental explanation is simplistic. Indoor rinks sheltering artificial ice existed before the game of hockey was first played. It was the presence of indoor ice in Pittsburgh, prior to 1900, that lead to Canadian players moving south to play in the first professional league that began operations in 1902. The technology existed to allow Southerners, had they chosen to do so, to
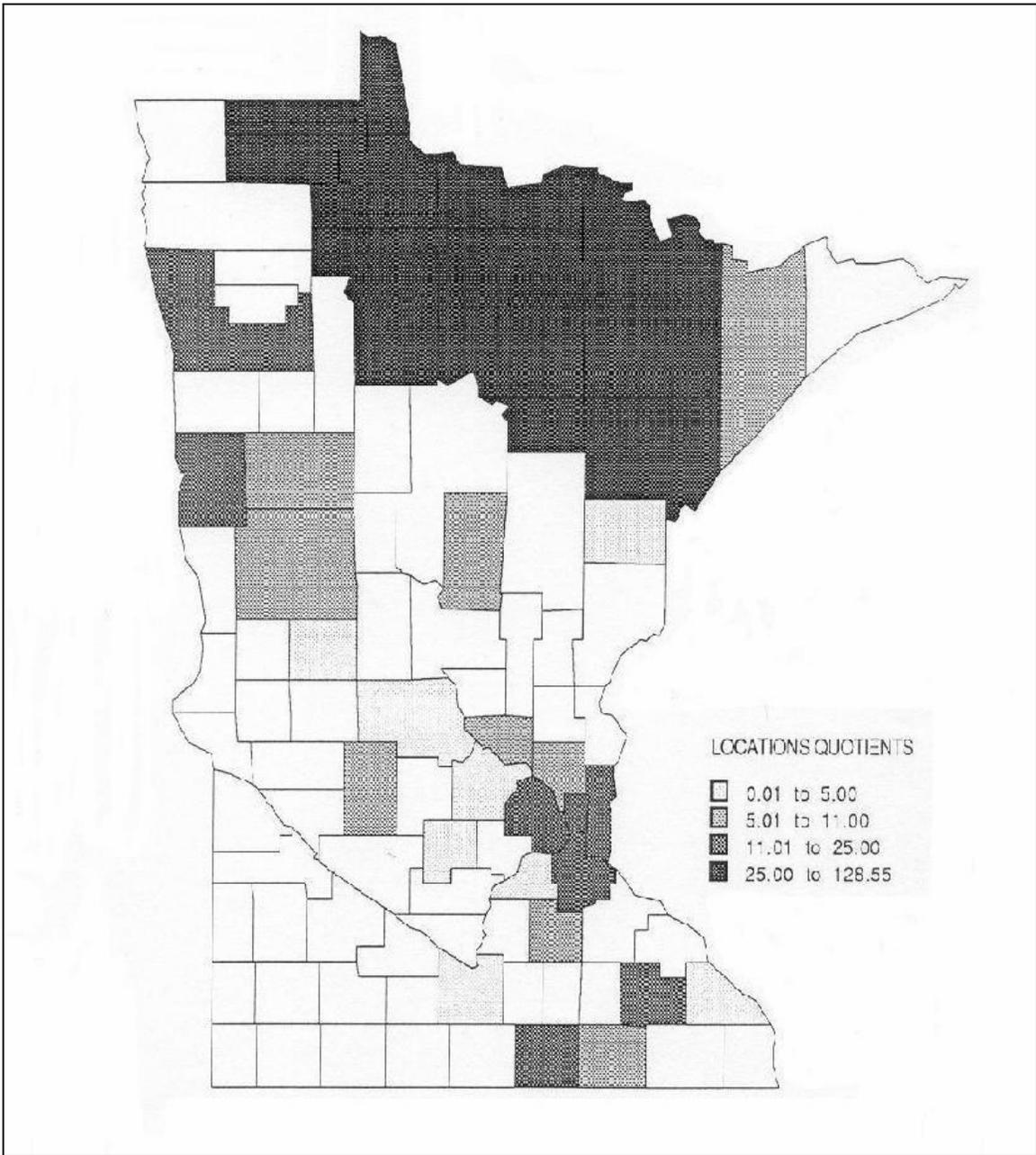
Figure 4.4 Total Player Production in Minnesota. Source: Henzel, 1990.

construct indoor rinks. The fact that they did not was a cultural determination. They chose not to spend resources to play the game of hockey. As evidenced today by the growing numbers of professional, minor league, college, youth, and recreational hockey teams in the American Southeast, that choice is being reversed.

Chapters Two, Three, and Four have set the theoretical and historical context for this study. They have placed the intellectual intersection of this research in a "Four Corners" area between *tradition*, *culture*, *geography*, and *sport*. The answer to my initial question, What accounts for the different experiences of viewing a hockey game in its hearth and in its new home? lies at this crossroads.

Chapter 5: Methodology

The central aim of this dissertation seeks to account for the different "feel" of northern and southern hockey. It is hypothesized that this difference is the result of the different underlying cultures. To achieve my goal I have employed a model that examines diffusion events. By examining the cultural setting before, during and following a diffusion event, the model helps reveal the effects that the new cultural trait had on the recipient culture. Did the trait diffuse "as is" and enter the new group unaltered or was it reshaped to align with the group's existing cultural belief system? To answer this question the model requires three detailed inputs. The initial cultural setting prior to the diffusion event must be determined, followed by a description of how the event developed. The third input involves examining the cultural change(s) the event caused within the recipient group. For my research the three conditions were: 1) the Precondition needed to establish the NHL's place in Southern sports culture prior to the NHL's arrival; 2) the Condition which was defined as the time NHL franchises operated in the South between 1993 and 2004; and 3) the Postcondition was examined by determining the state of the NHL at the time of the 2004-05 Lockout. Since many diffusion events do not have a specific ending date, in this case the NHL's entrance into the South, an arbitrary cutoff date had to be defined. The Lockout seemed a reasonable watershed mark to use for this purpose.

<u>Rationale for Selecting Methods</u>

In selecting my methodology, it was of primary importance to select methods that could provide needed data for constructing the three inputs defined above. I decided to use content analysis and interviews with media reporters, franchise personnel, and fans to collect the needed data. Conducting interviews was essential to understanding the mindset and motivations of individuals involved in creating a Southern hockey tradition and their perspectives and concepts of what that tradition means. While other sources could relate facts and details, the interviews were necessary to gather in-depth knowledge of the beliefs, emotions and thoughts held by those creating hockey communities and a regional "Southern" tradition.

Content analysis not only provided reliable data, but also has an established link to tradition studies. Discussing the relationship of the press and tradition, Bronner (1998) has stated "popular media has [sic] reflected, and contributed, public notions of the significance of tradition in the events of daily life." He further connects the two by explaining that newspapers are often "more than reporting facts, (they) reveal forms of public consensus." In studying newspapers and their connection with tradition creation he found that "sports in general was a special area for mention of tradition." Because they are "formalized links to locality," newspapers provide an important insight into tradition creation.

Content analysis and interviews were also selected because their strengths complemented one another. Content analysis offered two major benefits in collecting data. First, by analyzing written records, the thoughts of writers and their subjects could

67

be examined in temporal context. Newspaper articles represent "frozen in time" accounts of what was reported. That is, the written words in the article once printed cannot be altered and thus represent a view of the writer's interpretation, beliefs, bias while writing the article. Records available in the print media offset a major difficulty with interviews - flawed human memory. While individuals can remember events differently than the way they actually occurred, sometimes intentionally, newspaper articles are captured in time and space. Taken as a whole, the newspaper database became a valuable measure by which to judge interviewee responses.

Another strength of content analysis was providing quantitative results that could be analyzed and compared. Newspaper stories could be classified and counted which allowed for comparisons across the six newspapers (Table 4.1) and the years covered in the study. This improved the process of tracking changes in coverage over time by comparing content of the articles.

Potential problems with content analysis had to be addressed. Categorizing articles is susceptible to the personal biases of the researcher. For example, one issue considered in this study was defining *violence*. An article or game photo may be considered to portray violence in the sport to one person but "part of the game" to another. As both a researcher and a hockey fan, I had remain cautious that one did not unduly overshadow the other.

To overcome these types of potential errors, I conducted the content analysis and completed the data analysis prior to conducting my interviews. The results of newspaper analysis were used to construct interview questions that could then verify the accuracy of

the prior content analysis. One example of this was noting the lack of "hockey language" in most articles during the Precondition period. My initial interpretation of this was a lack of hockey knowledge among southern sports writers. During interviews with reporters and media relations personnel, I used my assumption as a question: What were the early days of hockey coverage like? The responses of both groups confirmed my initial theory that Southern reporters were not "hockey literate" as one franchise media director described them. This question asked to reporters, however, helped uncover the fact that often it was a sports editor who was trying to minimize the use of hockey terms so as not to confuse readers.

The second method used to collect data was to interview franchise personnel, newspaper sports reporters and hockey fans. The contribution of this method was threefold. First, the three groups interviewed for this study have different perspectives and interests in the sport of hockey. Interviewing allowed me to examine those differences and extract opinions that the groups hold about each other. It also allowed me to gather information on topics that are rarely reported on in the media. Some questions, like game-time habits of individual fans, are of little interest to reporters and are, therefore, not usually covered. Other inquiries, such as "behind-the-scenes" questions of franchise operations or media reporting resulted in answers that were often requested to be "off the record." These answers still provided direction and understanding and generated other follow-up questions.

The interviews also provided an opportunity to "dig" for information by way of follow-up questions. These questions provided flexibility during interviews when

69

interesting or unexpected answers arose (Brenner, et al. 1985). Follow-up questions also helped achieve extended answers when responses to the initial question were too brief or basic to be of value.

Interviews also made it possible to inquire about changes in the interviewees' opinions over time. As mentioned above, printed newspaper articles are locked into a temporal context. While this is a strength in terms of dating accuracy, it can be a hindrance because it can limit the researcher's knowledge of why individual opinions changed. Interviewing, especially among fans, identified changes in opinion or traditions and the reasons behind the changes that were then explored. Individual impressions of hockey culture as a whole or different facets of that culture could, therefore, be examined. Asking fans "What was your initial impression of hockey?" along with follow-up questions on if that impression changed resulted in a wealth of data on how the average fan's view of the sport had developed. Combining these data with those gathered from written articles provided a more complete image of southern hockey's cultural development.

One problem encountered while conducting interviews was errors given by interviewees in their responses. Most often these were minor memory errors resulting in mistakes about a date or location. Other "memory errors" were contradictions of statements printed in articles years earlier. It is not possible to determine whether such "errors" are intentional or accidental. They do, however, indicate a changing attitude about hockey.

Description of Methods

The content analysis was conducted using newspapers from the six southern cities with NHL franchises (Table 4.1). Each newspaper was examined for three selected years. The year prior to the team's founding or arrival was examined to establish a baseline to give insight into the level of hockey interest before the arrival of the NHL franchise. This served to help construct the Precondition state of the model. Next, the year following the teams' first season was examined. It was expected that the first season would receive more coverage simply because it is a new event in town. Therefore, the second year was used to see what level of coverage the team received once the "novelty" wore off. The third year examined was the 2002-2003 season. The 2003-2004 season was the year prior to the Lockout and many newspapers had articles covering talks surrounding the then-impending strike. To avoid potentially inflated numbers of articles due to strike coverage, I chose to use the 2002-2003 season because it had little

Table 4.1. Newspapers and coverage dates used in study. Source: Author.

Franchise	Location	Newspaper	Seasons Covered
Atlanta Thrashers	Atlanta, GA	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	1998-99, 2000-01, 2002-03
Carolina Hurricanes	Raleigh, NC	The News and Observer	1996-97, 1998-99, 2002-03
Dallas Stars	Dallas, TX	The Dallas Morning News	1992-93, 1994-95, 2002-03
Florida Panthers	Miami, FL	The Miami Herald	1992-93, 1994-95, 2002-03
Nashville Predators	Nashville, TN	The Tennessean	1997-98, 1999-00, 2002-03
Tampa Bay Lightning	St. Petersburg, FL	St. Petersburg Times	1991-92, 1993-94, 2002-03

discussion of the looming Lockout. The most recent year (2002-03) allowed me to investigate of how the cities were contemporaneously portraying the sport and, in the cases of Dallas, Tampa Bay, and Florida, how the teams have done ten years after their first seasons.

Each of the years examined was divided into three sections: the first 30 days, the middle 30 days, and the final 30 days of the season. The first "month" is counted from the first day of the regular season for the League as a whole (i.e. the NHL's opening night, not necessarily the study team's opening night.) The second "month" is determined by counting the total number of days in the regular season (from the League's opening night to the end of the regular season) and finding the midpoint date. From the midpoint date, fifteen days were counted on either side to form a 30-day "middle-of-season month." The third "month" is counted backward from the final day of the League's regular season.

This format was used for two primary reasons. First, by sampling from the beginning, middle and end of the season a more complete picture of interest can be obtained. Secondly, dividing the study dates in this manner avoided direct conflict with any other sport over the length of the NHL season. No other major sport's season runs exactly concurrent with the NHL's season. In this way if a city were more interested in another sport, for instance football, that sport would not be able to influence newspaper coverage of hockey throughout the study times. Likewise, spreading the coverage time reduces the chances that a single event could dominate sports coverage for any length of time. Wayne Gretzky's retirement from hockey in April 1999, while dominant news in

some areas for weeks, was not a factor in most papers by the beginning of the 1999-2000 season.

Once the 30-day period was determined, fourteen study dates within each month were selected to form two "composite weeks." A composite week selects newspapers such that an equal number of each day's sports news appears in the sample (i.e. two Sundays, two Mondays, etc.) According to Riffe, Aust, and Lacy (1993), the composite week sampling method is better than other sampling methods when using newspapers as a data source. The study dates were selected by using a random number generator set between one and thirty. After the first two dates for any day of the week were selected, any subsequent dates generated by the random number generator for that day were ignored until all days in the "composite week" were selected twice.

The sports pages of the newspapers were analyzed for key factors. First, occurrences of NHL hockey stories and photos on the front page of the sport section, if any, were examined. The front page of the section contains the news and images the editorial staff finds most important and attractive to readers. This analysis attempted to discover hockey's level of importance (or perceived importance) in the area. To be considered of importance on this factor, a story or photo had to consist of more than a title and "see page x." Many newspapers use single-word descriptions of what is inside the section and page numbers directing the reader to these stories that are more fully elaborated inside. Such lead-in stories and photos were not counted in this study. Along with the number of front-page stories, the total number of NHL hockey stories in the

sports section was tabulated. These articles were then categorized as either "staff" or "wire service" articles based on the articles' byline.

The second analysis consisted of examining headlines of hockey stories to determine how the game is presented. Headlines are meant to draw the reader to the story and the wording used gives clues about how writers perceive hockey and their audience. The headlines were categorized by the words used. For example, "Devils down Oilers 4-3" was categorized as a "Team" headline since it mentions the team names. Other categories used were "Star Player", "Other Player", "NHL News", "Locational News", and "Indirect". Along with this analysis the headlines were examined to determine which groups are presented most often (e.g. the home team, visitors, general NHL news).

A third analysis categorized each hockey article by type of story. Sports sections provide a variety of articles covering a given sport. The most basic coverage is a "News and Notes" or "Roundup" section that relates scores and possibly statistics. In-depth game reports, player interviews and profiles, commentary articles on the sport, teams or players, all indicate a higher level of interest in the game. Categorizing articles in this way made it possible to see how hockey coverage developed, or failed to develop, in the local print media of the six southern cities.

Each hockey article was then read for content and evidence of framing. Framing can be understood as "placing information in context so certain elements of the issue get more attention from a person" (Hardin, 2000). That is, by emphasizing certain details or minimizing others, a writer can influence the message the reader gets from the story

Entman, 1993). How the story is presented, then, gives insight as to what the writer or editor wanted the public to know and also what he/she thinks the public wants to know.

In the context of this study, framing could affect how a southern reader will view the newly arrived sport of hockey. If a game report describes the contest as "physical" and describes several fights, it presents one image of hockey. Descriptions of goals, passes, or strategy convey an entirely different message. Only articles written by staff members of the newspaper being studied were read for content. This was to avoid Associated Press (AP) or other wire service articles possibly written in a different region from influencing the image of hockey in the local paper. The wire service reports are available from other regions of the country and would therefore cloud the image of local hockey culture being examined. Newspapers can edit AP stories to fit local needs and there is no way of accurately determining what, if anything, was added or removed. If the *Miami Herald* prints an AP story on the Vancouver Canucks franchise, for example, the story does not necessarily represent development of Miami's hockey culture.

The next phase in the study consisted of informed person interviews with front office personnel, members of the media who cover hockey, and hockey fans. The value of interviews as a method of data collection has been well-established since the 1940s (Brenner et al*., 1985)*. The one-on-one nature of semi-structured interviewing allows a researcher to both control the interview through pre-selected and prepared questions and still gives the researchers the flexibility to alter and develop the interview when unanticipated responses occur (Patton, 1900). Semi-structured interviews were used for this study because my central question was establishing a reason or reasons for variation

in "atmosphere" at NHL hockey games. This question could only be answered by drawing out the individual feelings of those interviewed. Using unstructured interviews made it possible to extract detailed information when unanticipated answers were given.

Conducting interviews with marketing personnel, front office officials of southern teams, and League officials provided a first-hand knowledge of what the teams and the League are trying to do and what means they are using to accomplish their goals. Fans were interviewed at hockey games, via email, and through online surveys to investigate their perceptions of the event, the team, and their interest in hockey. Reporters covering hockey for newspapers in southern NHL cities were interviewed for their insights on southern hockey and how the media portray it. The interviews were conducted in person, via e-mail, and by telephone conversations.

The data for this study were generated using survey questionnaires and a set of interview questions, which are listed in Appendix A. The questions asked in interviews were used as guidelines with unstructured follow-up questions asked based on the interviewees' responses. This was done to ensure a commonality in the initial questions that would produce answers to specific questions but also allow the flexibility to change direction during the interview if opportunity to gain a new insight presented itself. The survey questionnaire was constructed after the initial findings from the content analysis and informal discussions with hockey fans both at hockey games and in other settings. The questionnaire was conducted both online and in person with hockey fans. Online surveys were conducted by posting the survey to fan chat sites with respondents sending their answers via email. In these cases no follow-up questions could be asked. Surveys

conducted in person at hockey games were read to respondents and their answers recorded. Those conducted in person often led to a longer, more in-depth interview with the fan.

For each group of interviewees (franchise personnel, reporters, and fans) a different selection process was used. The six southern franchises were contacted through either their fan or public relations departments. Through this initial contact I specifically attempted to set up interviews with media and fan relation personnel. Depending on the franchise, other members of the front office were available for interviews.

Sports reporters were contacted through emails sent to their editors. In some cases the reporters were contacted directly at emails available in their published articles. The response to these emails was varied and not all reporters contacted wished to be interviewed. Some were willing to answer questions, but did not want their names used because some of their responses being negative toward southern hockey.

Fan interviews were conducted both online and in person. The in-person interviews were conducted by approaching fans at NHL hockey games and asking if they would complete a brief survey. The questions were read to each interviewee and their responses recorded on tape and in a notebook. The online interviews were conducted by posting the interview questions on fan chat boards for each of the six southern teams. The official team web sites were used for each team as well as the ESPN chat boards. Respondents typed their answers and emailed them in reply.

As noted above, these two methods were selected for their complementary strengths and ability to provide the necessary data. The research questions I needed to

answer were 1) what was the Precondition of hockey in the South (i.e. prior to the arrival of the Tampa Bay franchise in 1991)?; and 2) What changes occurred, if any, during the Condition (i.e. from the establishment of the franchises until the lockout of 2004)? In setting the Precondition, content analysis provided a quantitative method for determining the number of hockey articles present in the newspapers examined. Combining this with answers from interviews allowed for both a numerical analysis of hockey coverage and an examination of how individuals "felt" about hockey prior to the opening of NHL franchises. This combination of methods also aided in determining the Condition by comparing the change in quantitative data obtained from content analysis and changing views and opinions of fans, media personnel, and franchise personnel gathered in interviews.

Chapter 6: A Model of Cultural Diffusion

The model used in this dissertation compares the outcome of a diffusion event to the initial cultural states in the donor and recipient cultures to determine the form the diffusive event might have followed.   This chapter examines the initial cultural states for hockey's hearth and the study region, the South, and then constructs the Precondition, Condition and Postcondition states. The chapter concludes by comparing the Postcondition state to the original states of Canadian hockey and Southern sport cultures to determine what path Southern hockey culture followed.

Initial Conditions: Sport in Southern Culture

Sport and recreation have been important parts of southern culture since colonial times. Unlike their New England counterparts, most settlers in the southern colonies "enthusiastically participated" in recreational activities (Bennett, 1977). That initial enthusiasm for sport has continued into the modern South (Miller, 2002) and led to numerous investigations by scholars. The most frequently discussed topics center around sports as a dividing line for class, gender and race in the American South. The roots of this theme lie in colonial times. First, many American elites aspired to be like their British counterparts. The class-based nature of British society extended to sports and this structure transplanted into the Colonies. Certain types of recreation thereby became associated with certain classes because of the level of wealth and time required to participate. Activities such as fox hunting required not only the wealth to maintain horses but the land area needed for the sport. Sport and recreation often required free time that only the wealthy were able to find.

By contrast manual labor became associated with slaves and the lower economic classes. Individuals in this category still found time and ways to participate in recreation, but these were not in the same form as the elite class. Groups formed along class, gender and racial lines with each enjoying their own "accepted" form of sport. Often the basic form was the same, for example hunting was enjoyed by many southern men, but the intended game (i.e. prey) and the method by which it was hunted varied by social group.

Closer examination of southern sport literature reveals several reoccurring cultural themes underlying the social aspects of sport. The first cultural foundation of southern sport is that, in most cases, sport and recreation were seen as entertainment first with the game itself being secondary. In examining wrestling's place in southern sport culture Kyriakoudes and Coclanis (2002) commented that the "cultural context draw[s] audience and combatants – spectators and spectacle – together to create a larger narrative." Southerners did not simply watch wrestling or fighting simply to "see" the match, but to be a part of the overall collective. Pillsbury (1995) noted this same phenomenon among NASCAR fans. The size of the track and speed of the cars make actually seeing much of the race impossible. He asserted that for most fans it was more important to be at the race for what happened at the tailgate parties and in the grandstands than following who actually won the race. He states, "Tailgate parties and dressing up in the colors of one's favorite team add to the individual's enjoyment of college football games; for stock car fans these are the total event" (Pillsbury, 1995). This same mentality can be also witnessed at southern college football games. Tailgating outside the stadium is, for many, more important than the game itself. While studying at the

University of Tennessee, I have on a number of "football Saturdays" spoken with fans who were tailgating on campus that had no intention of going to the game although tickets were available. They were content to watch the game on a portable television and barbecue with friends. Some confessed to driving for hours just to come to campus because "the atmosphere" to watch the game was better on campus than at home.

A second theme found in the literature was the interest in the violent aspects of sport. Physical sports and activities have long dominated southern sports. Outdoor activities such as hunting or fishing were viewed not only as entertainment but also as proof of a person's "ruggedness." Events such as cockfighting and dog fighting also drew a large audience and, though illegal, still exist in the South today. Two of the more popular sports in the South, football and wrestling, are known as "contact sports" and for many it is the violence that is an attraction (Kyriakoudes and Coclanis, 2002). Even sporting events that are not primarily contact by nature, for example auto racing, have a celebrated potential violent side. Crashes and fights in the pits between drivers are often the "highlights" shown on news coverage of a race. The joke "I only come for the crashes" has long been an axiom in stockcar racing.

A third important facet of southern sport culture in the place of women in sport. Since colonial times women as both participant and observer has been an accepted part of sport. Women and girls were encouraged to learn to ride horses, a useful skill in the pre-automobile era, and often attended horse races (Bennett, 1977). NASCAR officials have noted that 40% of their fanbase are women. Pillsbury (1995) noted it was often young "scantily clad" women who provide the real show at racing events.

Similar percentages of women in the audience are noted in other popular southern sports including football and wrestling. "The chief sponsors of early televised wrestling were household appliance dealers who sought an adult female audience" (Kyriakoudes and Coclanis, 2002). More than just single men or women attended these events; married couples and their children are also often spectators. This means that southern sports are family events rather than the exclusive focus of an individual.

A final basis for southern sport culture is the juxtaposition of *honor* with *cheating*. In this sense, *honor* ties to the notion of the "southern gentleman," whose honor is his most valuable possession. This notion carries through to sport where "fair play" is a common theme among many early discussions of sports in the colonial South. At the same time, the need to break the rules is accepted and celebrated. NASCAR has exhibited what Rybacki and Rybacki (2002) called "a shared romanticism of the frontier spirit and the nobility of the outlaw" in accepting rule-breaking as part of the normal state of affairs. The best example of the *honor* and *cheating* relationship comes from NASCAR in the person of Dale Earnhardt, Sr. Known as the "Last Confederate Soldier" to many race fans, he was heralded for his embodiment of the Old South. He was also "known for his unflagging personal code of honor" (Rybacki and Rybacki, 2002). This notion of an honorable southern gentleman and title of "Last Confederate Soldier" ironically resided with an individual whose nickname on the racetrack was "The Intimidator."

In these four concepts we find the basis of southern sport culture. Sport and recreational activities in the South can be seen primarily as entertainment. They are

women- and family-friendly although they are also enjoyed for their violent aspects. They are also a blending of honorable action and the desire to break the rules. These four notions combine to form the cultural precondition into which the NHL entered.

Initial Conditions: Hockey in Canada

Hockey's importance in its hearth and its links to Canadian national identity cannot be overstated. Numerous publications, both scholarly and popular, have discussed hockey's attachment to Canadian cultural identity. This wide array of literature was succinctly summarized in a single phrase; "Canada is Hockey, Hockey is Canada." Appearing on T-shirts and other memorabilia, the phrase has become part of Canadian hockey culture. Noonan (2002) conducted a more scholarly consideration of the literature. He detected and described five foundational myths that form the principal links between hockey and Canadian cultural identity. Reviewing this foundation provides a baseline for hockey's hearth culture as used in this dissertation. These five myths are (1) Hockey as Historical Tradition in Canada, (2) The "Common Coin" of Canadian Culture, (3) An Extension of Canadian Landscape, (4) The Pastoral Tradition of Hockey, and (5) the Hockey Hero as a Cultural Icon.

The first link between hockey and Canadian identity is the country's claim to being hockey's home. Formal rules for hockey were first published in Montreal, Canada. From that hearth the sport quickly spread across the country. Hockey's popularity led to the formation of dozens of local and regional leagues and a national governing body within a few decades of the first formalized rules. Many of the sport's early developments in strategy, equipment and rules are credited to Canadian hockey. These

ties to the early development of hockey have fueled a Canadian cultural attachment so strong many Canadians refer to hockey as "our game" and Canada as "hockey's rightful home" (Figure 5.1).

The second myth is that hockey binds the nation together, in what Neil Earle termed "Canada's common coin" of national identity. Canada has been described as a divided nation in many cultural and political respects. Issues such as English v. French or rural v. urban have been considered divisive to Canadian national identity. One common thread running across the country is hockey. The game's popularity spans thousands of miles from coast to coast. Hockey is equally strong in French Quebec and English British Columbia and is played by youth in metropolitan areas and small prairie towns.

The third myth of Canada's hockey culture is that of the game as an extension of the natural environment. The myth extends beyond the obvious connection of Canada's cold weather climate and hockey being played on ice. More important are the cultural connections assigned as links between physical environment and the sport of hockey. Noonan found examples of hockey as a metaphor for Canada's landscape in music, art and literature in both "high" and popular culture. The rugged land and rugged players, wide-open prairies and wide-open ice to skate on, and the cold of Canadian winters and the cold of hockey rinks are all common comparisons linking hockey and Canada.

The pastoral tradition of hockey is a growing part of Canadian culture. In this myth hockey does not stand alone but is part of a movement that romanticizes rural life. Noonan cites examples of hockey's "glory days" being tied to the notion of "the good old

Figure 5.1. T-shirt advertisement promoting Canada's "rightful" place in hockey.

Source: River City Sports.

days" when "life was better." The myth distinguishes between two types of hockey, the "corrupted" form where billionaire owners and millionaire players argue instead of playing and marketing and luxury boxes are more important than the "integrity of the game." Contrasting this is the image of hockey as it "was meant to be played." Depicted in numerous artworks, this ideal of hockey centers around a secluded pond, frozen in winter, when children skate for the enjoyment of playing. Surrounded by trees with perhaps a small village or farmhouse in the distance, these paintings convey a sense of simplicity that only comes from rural life.

The final myth is that of the hockey hero as cultural icon. In one sense this myth is that of the superstar athlete who dominates his sport and is the idol of children and adults alike. Legends of hockey greats, such as Maurice "Rocket" Richard, attain a level of cultural glory that empowers them with almost superhuman qualities. These "legends of the game" did not simply play hockey, but rather they transformed it. The myth is also that of the "model" player. His strength, speed, skill, and heart convey a link to the ancient warriors and gods of Greek mythology and become the ideal that would-be players must aspire to reach.

The foundation of Canadian hockey culture is a blending of both the naturalist and symbolic creationist theories of tradition creation. The symbolic creation of tradition is seen in all five myths. Tradition is created in the present, with meaning being assigned to past events. Many of the "facts" these myths are based on are questionable and some are known falsehoods. Yet they remain part of the tapestry of the myths surrounding Canadian hockey. The naturalist view in the importance of time is also found in the

myths. Canada is the birthplace of hockey as a sport and Canadian players and teams have dominated leagues and international competitions since the game's beginnings. Time is part of the Canadian hockey tradition, both as historical fact and symbolic construction.

These five myths combine to offer an image of hockey's hearth culture. Placing this image in contrast to that of southern sport culture establishes the backdrop for this study. The results obtained from the model are compared to these frameworks to determine the way hockey culture has developed in the South. With the backdrops in place it is now time to employ the model.

Establishing the Precondition

The data provided from content analysis and interviews reveal four Precondition frames of hockey in the South. First, there is a general lack of hockey coverage and hockey knowledge. Second, hockey is often presented in stereotypical images. Third, the wording used in newspaper articles describing hockey is negatively biased. Fourth, hockey is paradoxically described as both a nontraditional southern sport and at the same time a part of the existing sports culture. Each of these images will now be considered in detail.

The Four Frames of Southern Hockey

The first frame uncovered is a lack of hockey coverage in the South prior to expansion is evident in both quantity and quality of newspaper articles. The majority of articles appeared under the heading "News and Notes." The stories found in these sections were often game recaps and consisted usually of no more than two or three

sentences per game. A typical story used one sentence to relate the final score and who

scored the game-winning goal. The second sentence usually mentioned a player who had

a noteworthy game. A major event during the game, for example a record-breaking goal

or a career milestone, would on occasion be deemed worthy of a third sentence. This

type of bare-minimum reporting left no room for game analysis or future projections for

the teams involved. The majority of these stories were extracted from the Associated

Press wire service and not written by staff sports writers. Even the opinion columns that

occasionally appeared were taken from wire services. This evidence indicates that a

majority of the little hockey information being published in the South was coming from

outside sources. Table 5.1 shows the total number of hockey stories appearing in the six

newspapers studied the year prior to the NHL's beginning operations in their cities. Only

one of the six had more than 30% of their articles written by staff writers and Dallas'

71% is somewhat misleading. During the first two months examined, *The Dallas

Morning News* carried only five hockey stories, all of which were AP wire service

generated. Only after the announcement that the Minnesota Northstars were moving to

Table 5.1. Wire and staff written hockey stories prior to team arrival.

Newspaper	Atlanta	Dallas	Miami	Nashville	Raleigh	Tampa Bay
Total Hockey Stories	47	31	54	90	73	52
Wire Stories	45	9	47	79	59	39
Staff Stories	2	22	7	11	14	13
% Staff Stories	4.26%	70.97%	12.96%	12.22%	19.18%	25.00%
Front Page Pictures	92	85	120	98	128	137
Front Page Hockey Pictures	0	1	1	2	0	2

Dallas the following season did the *Morning News* begin more detailed coverage of hockey.

Along with the low number of hockey stories it is evident from their placement within the sport section that hockey did not rank high on the papers' priority list. The six newspapers printed only 19 hockey articles combined on the front page of their sport section during the pre-NHL seasons considered in this study. The NHL made up only 1.6% of the 1,155 front-page sports articles published. The lack of coverage is more evident when front-page photos are considered. A total of 655 photos were printed on the front page within the study's timeframe. Of these only six, or just .9% were related to the NHL.

The small quantity of articles was matched by their relatively low quality[3]. The total number of hockey articles printed during the study's timeframe was 347. Of these 184 articles (53%) were under the heading "Roundup" and offered little more than the score and a star player's performance. Additionally, 105 stories (30%) were listed under "News and Notes" and consisted of one or two sentences announcing a trade, injury or a suspension. These two categories combine to account for 83% of the available hockey information offered by newspapers. In contrast, "Commentary" articles discussing teams, strategy, or the general state of the game appeared only 7% of the time (only 25 articles.)

In addition to the lack of coverage in print media southern hockey also suffered from poor television coverage. Prior to the 1991-92 season, the NHL lacked a television

contract with any of the major networks or ESPN. Hockey coverage was sporadic at best without a regular schedule of televised games. The League also suffered from lack of coverage by smaller cable channels or network affiliates. Opportunities for hockey fans in the South to watch games were minimal which made attracting new fans very difficult.

The lack of coverage and information about hockey led to a lack for knowledge of the game. Even basic information was not always available. Greg Bouris, director of media relations for the Florida Panthers, recalled his first staff meeting with the Panthers. He spent much of the time "explaining to other staff members hockey basics such as the names of the divisions and the teams that played in them." This information would have been available on any sports page listing the "Standings" for the NHL. In the six newspapers surveyed, these lists were usually on a "Scoreboard" page that listed standings and results from a variety of sports or events but did not appear every day.

Along with this limited media coverage, a second frame of hockey in the Precondition is hockey as stereotype. Articles, interviews and advertising all attested to the use of stereotypes as a major view, and marketing tool, of hockey. Perhaps the most blatant example of using hockey stereotypes was used by the Nashville Predators marketing staff. Combining Nashville's nickname as the "Music City" with hockey, the Predators used country music stars with their teeth "missing" (having been blackened out) to help sell season tickets.

The Predators' marketing staff turned to stereotype again, violence in hockey, for

---

[3] "Low quality" in this case refers to the amount and level of hockey information available in the article, not the reporters writing style or ability.

Figure 5.2. Nashville's renaming of city to "Smashville" combines stereotypes of hockey with the city in an attempt to attract fans. Source: Predators' mailer.

their "Smashville" campaign. Shown in Figure 5.2, the campaign centered on renaming the city "Nashville" to "Smashville", referring to the arena where the Predators play games. The use of *smash* is in obvious relation to the hitting, legal and illegal, that goes on during a hockey game. It is ironic that while marketing the "Smashville" campaign, implying a hard-hitting, physical team, the marketing staff was also trying to sell the game of hockey as one of speed and skill. Prior to, and during the first season, no marketing campaign actually attempted to sell hockey by using *images* of skill; they all centered on the stereotype of violence.

Perhaps more ironic was the use of stereotypes to argue against the stereotypes of hockey. A *Miami Herald* article on January 23, 1993 claimed to be informing South Floridians about hockey. In the opening sentence the writer relied on an old hockey joke

to show that stereotypes of hockey are the norm[4]. After writing the setup and punch line, the author berated those who believed the stereotypes on which the joke was based. The remainder of the article, however, returned to stereotypes and bad jokes. He claimed Floridians needed to learn a lot about hockey because the game had changed. His one example of change was that "players nowadays wear helmets while exchanging haymakers."

Along with the jokes, two photographs accompany the article. The larger is of a *Miami Herald* writer wearing a goalie mask straight out of a "Halloween" movie. The other photo shows a fight on the ice during a hockey game, again using the "hockey as violence" stereotype. Lastly, the writer attempts to enlighten readers by offering 15 "common" hockey questions. The majority of the questions were about the violence in hockey. Some of the questions were no doubt added for comic effect, such as one that wondered how the lines were painted on the ice. It must be noted that the article was probably meant to be as much humorous as informative, but therein lies an important piece of southern hockey's Precondition. In order to make a joke the reader would understand the writer had to turn to stereotypes of the game. At no time does the author use slang terms that would be understood by an audience already familiar with the game.

The third frame of hockey uncovered was negative wording used in hockey articles and interviews. This wording took two main forms, direct opposition to hockey and a negative inclination toward events surrounding the teams. Direct opposition was

---

[4] The joke was "What is the first thing you do when you start playing hockey?" Answer "Find a good dentist."

encountered more often during interviews with franchise customer relations/sales personnel. Interviewees related incidents where individuals they spoke with during sales calls made negative comments ranging from mild to sometimes "unrepeatable." Negative comments about events were found more common in newspaper articles than interviewee comments[5].

One example of direct opposition that appeared in print was a survey conducted by the Raleigh *News and Observer*. The newspaper asked readers to call in with their opinions on the proposed name for the expansion franchise that Raleigh was trying to obtain. The following day the paper printed 27 of the comments that were called in. Five people liked the proposed name[6] while 15 did not like it with many suggesting other names. Interestingly, seven people called in and ignored the question asked entirely, using the opportunity to state hockey should not be played in North Carolina at all. The reasons given by the respondents varied but all stated their feelings in strong terms.

Although overtly negative comments were a part of the response to hockey's southern movement it is also important to note the subtle, and more prevalent, negative wording of many newspaper articles. The exception to negative reporting was *The Tennessean*, which often used positive language in discussing the Predators. Although the Predators did have trouble attaining their ticket sales goal and some articles containing negative wording did appear in *The Tennessean,* most of the reporting did not overplay the negative aspect.

---

[5] This is probably due to the sample set selected for this study. Sports sections print fewer reader opinion columns because many of these letters appear on the "Letters to the Editor" page. Any fan complaints about a new hockey franchise would have probably been published in another section and therefore outside the data set for this study.

Headlines were the first place a reader encountered negative wording. In discussing season-ticket sales and arena leases, newspapers used words such as "lagging", "struggle", and "cloudy" in their headlines and opening sentences. With headlines being the first words that catch the reader's attention, negative language can create a negative mindset. This creates a sense of impending failure for readers who are bombarded with articles that depict hockey as doomed even before the first game begins. The *Miami Herald*'s coverage of lease negotiations provides an example. A March 17, 1993 article under the headline "Squabble over rebate endangers hockey start." The story reported on a disagreement between the management of Miami Arena and the Florida Panthers' franchise over which entity had the rights to a $2 million tax credit. The article was continued on a second page, under the heading "Squabble may imperil season." The paper again reported on the conflict on March 26, 1993 under the headline "Rebate issue clouds South Florida franchise's lease." That article reported that if the two sides didn't come to an agreement it would result in the Panthers' not playing in October. The issue was eventually settled with no interruption to franchise preparation for the season. Similar language was used to describe lease issues in Tampa Bay and Raleigh.

The negative language continued within the text of articles. When the Tampa Bay Lightning fell behind in their season-ticket sales, the *St. Petersburg Times* reported the story by saying the Lightning were "still struggling" and their deadline was "going to be a challenge." Another article described the team's ticket sales as "stalled." In contrast to this negative reporting, *The Tennessean* in Nashville maintained a positive note when

---

[6] The proposed name for the expansion team Raleigh was trying to get was the "Rhinos."

reporting on the Predators. Under a tough deadline and with a higher sales goal to reach

than any previous NHL expansion franchise, the Predators' season-ticket sales were a

challenge from the beginning. Throughout their campaign, *The Tennessean* printed

articles under headlines containing words or phrases such as "climbing", "closing on"

and approaching." In truth the Predators were no closer to their goal than the Lightning

had been in Tampa but the language of the newspapers made it appear that the Predators

were having no trouble with ticket sales while the Lightning were failing. The Predators

were not immune to negative language though, as *The Tennessean of* January 20, 1998

headline declared "Ticket lag a concern for Predators."

The placement of the articles could also be seen as a negative slant against

hockey. This study selected 42 samples each from the six newspapers in cities where

NHL franchises operated. The samples were taken from papers the year before the

franchise began operations. The 252 sports sections examined revealed a total of 19

front-page stories discussing hockey. Of these 19, only ten appeared "above the fold", or

in a prominent position on the page. More telling is that of the ten appearing as the

headline, five were negative stories of the 1991 strike or "lagging" ticket sales. In other

words, half of the stories that received a prominent place in the newspaper did not

improve hockey's image.

The most glaring example of placement as a negative slant comes from the *St.

Petersburg Times* of January 8, 1992. Two hockey articles appear on page three, one

discussing the Lightning's owners trying to secure an arena lease and the other

announcing a new minor league hockey franchise beginning operations. The arena article

describes the difficulties the Lightning were having signing a lease. The article is not

notably negative in its language and implies that despite the difficulty so far encountered

the owners should be able to reach an agreement. Directly below this article, the minor-

league hockey article opens with the sentence "Minor-league hockey has never gone over

well in St. Petersburg, but someone's always willing to try." The article ends by stating

the last minor-league franchise in Tampa lasted three seasons "before folding." It is not

difficult to imagine a sports fan reading these two juxtaposed articles wondering why the

NHL was even bothering.

The use of negative language is not new to newspaper reporting and certainly is

not confined to the South. The importance in the context of this study, however, is that

newspapers are still a major source of information for many people. This was especially

true at the time the NHL expanded into the South in 1991. The Internet had not yet

reached its current level of importance as a communication medium. In a region with

little hockey history of its own, and most of that history one of failure, negative language

in newspaper reports could not have helped the NHL's image and almost certainly hurt it.

The final frame deserving of note is that southern hockey appeared to have no

identity of its own. The data collected offered no sense of "this is southern hockey" but

rather a nebulous feeling that hockey was somehow "just not talked about." No source

ever referred to hockey as a "southern sport" or as a "new southern sport." Yet it was not

until the franchises began operating that the term *nontraditional* was used to describe

them. The term *nontraditional* remained in use among NHL and franchise officials but it

did not gain widespread use in newspapers or among fans for some time, in some cases

years. Even when adopting the "nontraditional" label, teams did not always present themselves that way. Dallas and Nashville officials both refer to their teams as playing in "nontraditional hockey cities" yet both clubs created "History of Hockey" sections on their official team Web pages. In both cases, the history referred to is not the NHL or even of hockey in general, but rather the history of hockey in Dallas and Nashville. The franchise is marketing itself as both nontraditional *and* as part of the city's sports tradition. This facet of the Precondition is probably attributable to the northern transplants living in these cities and those Southerners who were already hockey fans. Evidence to support this notion can be found in the NHL's belief that there were a sufficient number of northern transplants living in the South to form a foundation for major league hockey.

One difficulty in confirming the Precondition merits discussion. NHL hockey did not appear in all six cities at the same time nor were all six teams founded in the same way. Three teams were the products of planned expansion, two were relocations from northern cities and one was the result of corporate pressure to find a second expansion location[7]. The six Southern hockey teams began operations in six different years, the first in 1991-92 the last in 1999-2000. The line between Precondition and Condition was not a discrete one dividing mutually exclusive events. To account for this fact, newspapers were examined for all six cities for the 1991-92 season along with the season directly preceding a team's beginning operations in their Southern city. The Tampa Bay

---

[7] Disney Inc. had purchased the rights to an expansion franchise to begin operations in 1992. The NHL needed a second franchise to balance the league. When no favorable sites were found the League urged Wayne Huizenga, owner of Blockbuster Video, to start a franchise in Miami.

Lightning was the first team to begin operations, and as such, the 1991-92 season was the season before they started. For this reason they were excluded from this part of the study. The remaining five teams showed an increase in hockey articles in the season prior to their opening over the 1991-92 season. In all cases this increase was related to articles discussing the new franchise operations (e.g. ticket sales, arena leases, expansion rights) but there was little or no change in the coverage of the NHL in general.

Chapter 7: The Birth of Southern Hockey Tradition

The preceding chapters used the results from a content analysis and interviews to create an image of professional hockey in the South prior to NHL expansion. It also examined general Southern sport culture and hockey's hearth culture to serve as backdrops for comparison with Southern hockey culture.

This section begins by using interviews and the results of an analysis of newspaper articles from 1991 to 2003 to examine how hockey culture has grown and changed during that time. The results of this examination identify six groups that are creating and shaping Southern hockey tradition, which are discussed in detail in the second part of the section. The chapter next turns to classifying the traditions themselves. Four categories of traditions have been identified and will be examined in detail. The categories help explain the methods through which traditions are created. The section concludes with a discussion that sets the *Condition* state in the model used in this study.

Sources of Tradition

Content analysis of the six newspapers together with interviews and web site examination revealed six major sources contributing to the creation of the South's hockey tradition. The six sources are: (1) previously existing hockey fans, (2) new hockey fans, (3) the National Hockey League front office, (4) the individual Southern hockey franchises, (5) hockey players, and (6) the media (Figure 7.1). The interaction among these six groups, in cooperation and often conflict, is shaping and creating a tradition of southern hockey.
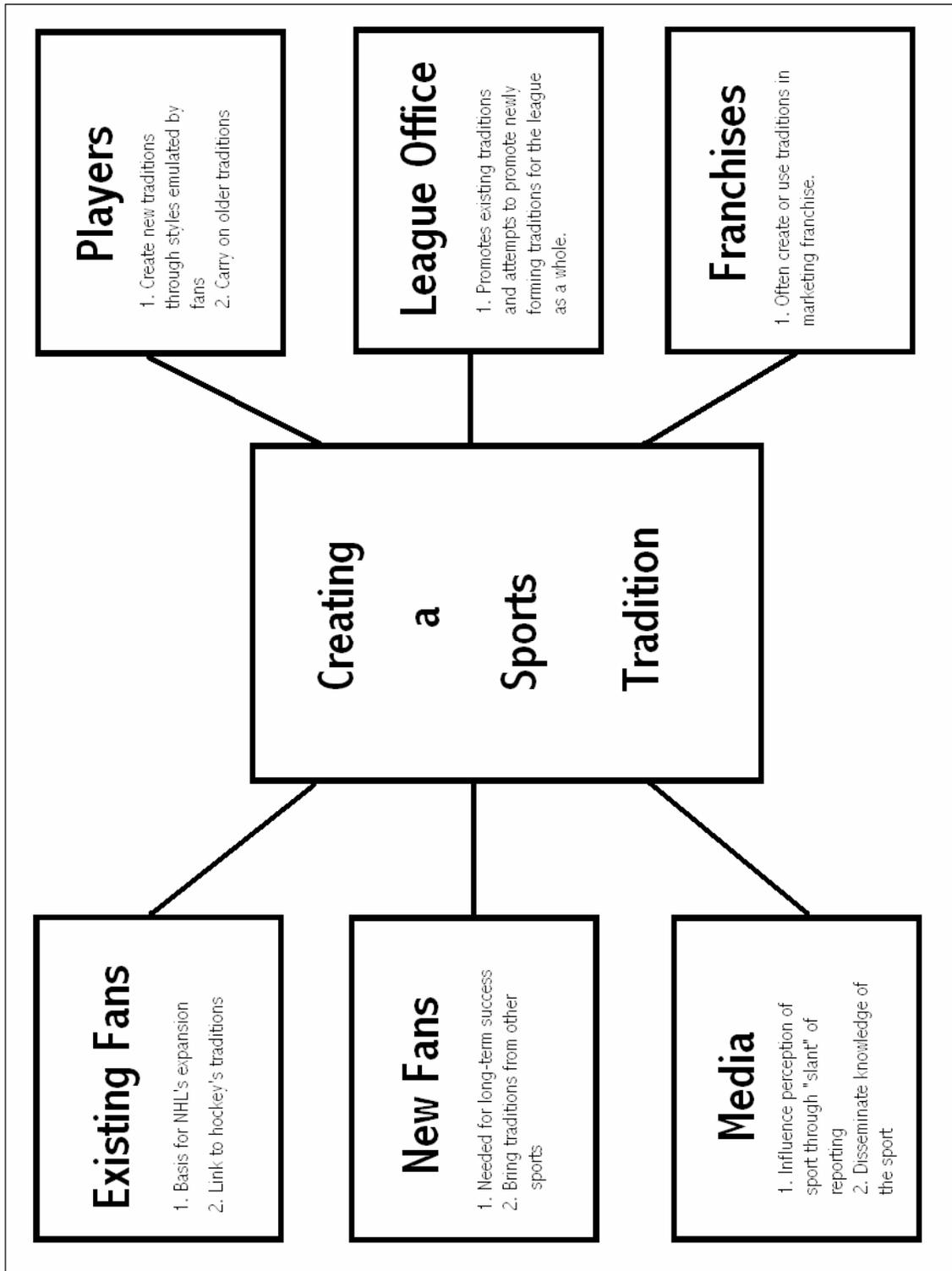
Figure 7.1. Entities influencing tradition creation.

The following discussion describes the role of each participant in building and directing tradition. It defines each group and examines their vested interests in creating and directing tradition. I discuss the successes and failures of each group and seek to explain the causes of each.

Existing Fans

The first groups to be discussed are the existing fans and new fans. These two groups are closely intertwined and difficult to separate. I will discuss the existing fans group first, but this should not be taken to mean they play a more important role in defining hockey traditions than new fans.

Existing fans are defined as those individuals who were hockey fans or enthusiasts prior to the arrival of NHL hockey franchises in the South. It has been estimated that most of this preexisting fan base consisted of northern transplants (Rosembaum 1997; Diller 2004). This group formed the core fan base for most Southern NHL teams. Their prior love and knowledge of hockey is central to their interest in directing its future.

The importance of this group is twofold. First, existing fans of hockey allowed the NHL to believe it could expand into the South successfully. The NHL did a number of market tests and surveys to determine the level of hockey interest in the proposed Southern cities. The response generated, mainly by northern transplants, factored into the NHL's conclusion that there was enough interest to support NHL hockey (Rosenbaum, 1997).

Evidence of this can be seen in the experiences of the Florida Panthers franchise prior to its first season. The team scheduled a six-day public relations tour so fans could meet some of the Panthers' players. The players traveled by vans to malls in the South Florida area to sign autographs and conduct street hockey clinics. The typical day started at 8 AM and went until 10 PM with time out for meals. When the tour was over one of the players, Brian Skrudland, reported that each appearance was packed with fans but over the six days he had met only one person who had been born in Florida (Rosenbaum, 1997). Skrudland's comment may be a slight exaggeration, but based on similar anecdotes from other franchises, it is probably more truth than fiction. As sports writer Dave Rosenbaum (1997) wrote, "What's important is that hockey fans are already here and waiting." Existing fans were important both as a source of potential customers and to form the foundations of tradition.

The second function served by existing fans, and the most important for this study, is their connection to hockey tradition. The northern transplants that comprise the core of Southern hockey fan bases also comprise the core for the creation of Southern hockey traditions. These fans have brought with them from their northern roots not only their love of hockey, but also the traditions they learned growing up in or near the game's hearth. For them hockey is not new but only relocated, as they are, to the South.

The impact this has on tradition can be seen in behavior at games and on Internet message boards. A northern-born fan now living in Tampa, Florida, since 1990 related, "I loved it when the Lightning came to town. The only trouble was some of the other fans, mainly the new ones, didn't get it. I would go to a Lightning game and yell chants I

learned as a kid in Boston and people would look at me like I was nuts. It's funny since most of them probably yell things at football games, but at hockey they were quiet" (Rodgers, 2003).

Similar comments have been made about the Florida Panthers fans. David Neal, a sports reporter for *The Miami Herald* who has covered the Panthers since the team's arrival was announced, stated that "Miami hockey fans are strange. I've seen fans "Shush" other fans for yelling too much. After games, win or lose, the fans are almost docile leaving the arena" (Neal, 2004). Neal also relates a story involving the birth and subsequent death of an incipient tradition.

> "Our goalie was Roberto Luongo, a French Canadian who is half Italian. Back in 2001 or so, the owner of a Pizza restaurant who was also Italian started coming to games with some of his friends and customers dressed in old Roman gear. They called themselves "Luongo's Legion" and would sit in the stands with drums and cheer like it was a World Cup soccer game. It was different, added a little bit, but the other fans didn't like it. They complained that they were cheering too loud or something. Anyway the other fans stopped them from doing it. Now they don't come anymore. Or at least not dressed up."

In one case, a group of northern fans have attempted to educate new fans in the traditions of hockey in a somewhat formal way. Two groups of Nashville Predator fans, both "led" by northern transplants, have developed web sites to instruct new fans on cheers, their proper use, hockey game etiquette, and some of the stories that are common to hockey. The two groups, 'The Predheads' and 'Section 303,' have since merged their web sites, and maintain a vocal presence at Predators' hockey games. The local and national media have commented on the groups and even the franchise's front office has taken notice of them, mentioning the group on the official web page.

Existing fans also serve as an information source for new fans. Many northern fans related stories of sitting next to a Southerner who was at his or her first NHL game and spending most of the game explaining what was happening on the ice. On many occasions at games in Atlanta and Nashville, I too have explained rules or strategy to individuals who had only recently begun watching hockey.

This role of "information server" may not seem related to tradition creation, but it does serve two purposes to that end. First, it serves as a friendly gesture. Hockey players have long been described as "down to Earth people" (Diller, 2004). The description extends to hockey fans as well. Although stories of violence in sports and among fans are sometimes portrayed in sensational headline, the reality is that the majority of fans enjoy the game in a cordial manner. Hockey fans have traditionally, at least in their minds, been interested in the game, its strategy and skill. Friendly discussion about the players and strategies is, therefore, common in the stands at hockey games (Bidini, 2004). As Bidini depicts northern fans, because everyone grows up learning hockey, the discussions go beyond simple explanation of hockey rules. The only people who might be explaining something simple are fathers teaching their sons. The rest of the discussions are involved in analyzing the strategies being employed by the teams and debating what changes should be made.

The desire to talk to other fans during stoppages and intermissions becomes part of hockey culture. To be sure, fans of other sports exhibit this same type of behavior. Discussing the game with the fans around you seems only natural. But, for the hockey fan, it is more than simple politeness; it is part of the game and its experience.

The second function carried out by existing fans acting as information sources is passing on their views about hockey. Hockey fans rarely seem to answer a question simply. More often they discuss matters in great detail. In discussing their opinions, they pass on their view of what hockey "should" be. Part of the survey conducted for this dissertation asked fans "What do you not like about hockey?" The follow up question of "Why do you not like that?" was then asked. The most common answer was "The Trap[8]" or a similar description of that system of defense. The follow-up question was most typically answered, "It slows play and makes it boring." The frequency of this answer led me to begin asking another question "Can you explain the Trap and what it does?" Of the 26 northern transplants who were asked that question, all but one gave an elaborate discussion of hockey theory, how the game was "meant to be played", and why the Trap will ruin hockey completely. Of the 19 Southerners asked the same question, 79% could not describe the trap other than to say it was slow or boring. Despite this, 17 of the 19 or 89.4% were convinced that the Trap was ruining hockey. This evidence suggests that the beliefs of the existing fans have been inculcated into the minds of the new fans and these beliefs have been accepted. This process fits the fourth definition of tradition, passing along cultural views.

It is clear then that existing fans have met with both success and failure in directing the development of traditions in Southern hockey. New fans have been receptive to some of their attempts at passing on the game's traditions while others have been rejected or altered. It is time now to turn to the influence of new hockey fans.

---

[8] The Trap is a defensive system in hockey designed to slow down play and take away room for good

New hockey fans can be defined as those individuals who have become fans since the NHL began operating franchises in the South. The group consists mainly of native Southerners. Although these fans did not make up the early fan base for Southern teams, franchise executives and the League knew it was this group of new fans who would determine the long-term success of NHL hockey in the South (Leipold, 2000).

The South has a long tradition of sports involvement. It has been said, "in the North football is a game, in the South it is a religion." Similar statements can be made about NASCAR and basketball. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, Southern influence on NASCAR culture has increased despite its expansion into new areas. Clearly, Southerners can take their sports seriously and will even guard, in the case of NASCAR, their "rightful" place within a sport. From this attitude toward sport comes the potential interest of the Southern hockey fan. Not one to be a passive bystander, the Southern hockey fan will accept some of hockey's existing traditions but will actively attempt to create his or her own as well.

It is this love of sport and belief in its value within the larger society that Southerners bring to hockey. Traditions surrounding other sports are part of Southern culture and it is these traditions that serve, in part, as the basis for the contribution of Southerners to hockey tradition. Like their northern counterparts, Southerners do not attend a hockey game devoid of their cultural heritage.

---

skaters to maneuver. The system is a "defense first" mentality that many fans find dull.

An example of this cultural heritage could be seen during the 2002 Stanley Cup playoffs. The series between the Detroit Red Wings and the Carolina Hurricanes offered a look at a team in the traditional hearth area for hockey versus a team from hockey's expanding periphery. The Red Wings are an Original Six franchise; the Hurricanes are a franchise that had recently relocated from Hartford, Connecticut. Prior to the first game played in Raleigh, fans arrived at the Arena and began tailgating. Tailgating is common before football games, but is practically unheard of prior to hockey games in the North. According to newspaper reports, the parking lot was filled with thousands of fans. One reporter commented that the scene outside the arena looked more like a North Carolina-North Carolina State football game than a hockey contest.

Another example of bringing traditions from other sports is in the personal habits of the fans prior to or during games. At a Nashville Predators game, I sat next to a man attending his first NHL game. He came back to his seat just prior to the start of the game with an order of food. He commented that he had to have a hot dog and soda ready for the start of the game. When asked why, he responded "that's what I always do at football games to bring the home team good luck and I thought I would try it out for hockey." His tradition, formerly related to football, was therefore transferred to become a general sports behavior, and was now directed at hockey.

As stated previously, the two groups of hockey fans (existing and new) should not be thought of in a hierarchical sense based on experience with the game. Rather, existing fans and new fans each bring with them many valuable elements needed for the creation of a Southern hockey tradition. They exchange ideas through contact to form a single

107

acculturated group over time. Acting as a single body, they have the final say in how hockey tradition will develop. This power is not a form of "consumer sovereignty," but extends from their acting as the main vehicle through which traditions are created and maintained.

The power of fans in this respect is twofold. The first aspect of fan importance is that they are the vessels of tradition. It is the fans that act or dress in certain ways that constitute tradition. The fans are the ones who wear team logos, yell chants, and pass on their ideas about the game to the younger generation of fans. The other four groups discussed below have input into the creation of tradition, but it is with and through the fans that these traditions are actually passed down.

Secondly, because the two fan bases exist, old and new, the League, the individual franchises and the media are forced to accommodate both sides: sometimes separately but at other times treating them as one group. The League, the franchises and the media must acknowledge and address the lowest level of hockey understanding while at the same time not insult the more knowledgeable fans. Changes to the game or game presentation must excite the new fan while not angering the existing fan who does not wish the game changed. Most important, the fans are the paying customers the franchises and the League must attract to remain financially viable. Franchises need high attendance figures to generate income from ticket sales and concessions. The League uses high attendance numbers to negotiate television and radio contracts. Media outlets can point to large fan bases to attract potential advertisers.

It is through these avenues that fans, both old and new, combine to form the basis

of Southern hockey tradition. With these individuals, hockey's old ways, begun in the

1800s in Canada and the northern U. S., will mix with new traditions formed in hockey's

new region. The blending of these two groups will also change as time passes and the

lines between them blur. As Neal (2004) points out, "hockey isn't new to Florida

anymore. The Lightning came here in 1991. There isn't a kid under 13, here (in Florida)

or in Canada, who can remember a time when NHL hockey wasn't played in the South."

The mixing of the two fan bases, however, does not occur in isolation. Other groups are

influencing the path hockey tradition will take in the South.

The Franchises

This study has looked at six franchises operating in the South: Atlanta, Carolina,

Dallas, Florida, Nashville, and Tampa Bay. "Franchise" is defined as the business part of

the organization, separate from the hockey team itself. With regard to the creation of

tradition, three non-player elements of the franchise have the greatest input in creating

traditions 1) personnel in media and fan-relations; 2) the marketing department; and 3)

the executives, which usually include the owner, general manager and president. As with

the fans, it is difficult to separate the different departments in terms of importance. In

most cases the front office can be conceptualized as a team effort with all members

contributing and implementing ideas.

The main interest of the franchise differs from that of the fans. For the franchise,

financial concerns are far more important than grace and skill on the ice. Individuals in

the front office may also enjoy and love the game, want to see their team win for

emotional reasons, and have a personal interest in the growth and future of the sport. The front office, however, must also consider the financial aspects of the game first and foremost and make sound financial decisions.

The role of the franchise in developing tradition is a dual one. The franchise both develops new ideas that may become traditions and responds to what is happening within other relevant groups. It maintains those practices that are well received and removes or discourages those that are not (Hanlin, 2004). It is difficult, therefore, to define the intentions of the franchise in developing new traditions. In some cases the franchises may simply be trying to attract fans with a promotion or gimmick, while other times they may intentionally link to an existing tradition or create one of their own.

According to Tom Hughes, media-relations director for the Atlanta Thrashers, the team has tried to "stick with what works and improve it, but I wouldn't call it tradition. We try to put a good product on the ice and make it entertaining but at the same time honor the game. We don't want to take anything away from the ice." Hughes' comment shows the dual role of the franchise. They are trying to develop ideas and improve upon those that meet with fan approval in order to keep using them. They are intentionally trying to create something that will become part of the experience of a Thrashers' game. At the same time, they are conscious of the game's own history and attempt not to damage the existing traditions.

One example of an effort to improve the game experience that is becoming tradition is Atlanta's pre-game ceremony. Prior to the start of all NHL games, each team

lines up along the blue line nearest their bench for the playing of the National Anthem[9].

The franchise decided to promote youth hockey during that time by having an area youth-hockey player dress in his or her teams uniform and skate out with the Thrashers for the anthem. The idea was well received and has now become part of the pre-game ceremony in the Thrashers' organization.

Although Hughes would not refer to this as a "tradition," time may change that assessment. The practice has continued for three years and the Thrashers plan on continuing it in the future. Children who see others only slightly older than themselves on the ice with the professional Thrasher players might dream of also doing so. Could there one day be a player from the Atlanta area in the NHL who was encouraged to play or keep playing hockey after being on the ice or seeing another youth player out there? While this notion can only be answered by the passage of time, the experience of northern children being influenced by their heroes to play hockey shows this notion could well come true. Even if the pre game ritual does not lead to an NHL player coming from Atlanta, the simple repetition of the event may one day make it a tradition, following the first definition of tradition being a repetitious act.

Other franchises have tried to link directly with the traditions already in place in an area or create traditions for the fans. When Nashville Predators owner Craig Leipold began the process of creating an NHL team in Nashville, his first consideration was riding the coattails of Nashville's national image as the capital of country music. The Predators used Nashville's cultural icons of country music to promote its new team. The

---

[9] In games involving a Canadian and American team both countries' anthems are played.

photograph for the first team promotional poster was taken on the stage of the Grand Ole

Opry. The announcement of the team's logo was made at the Wild Horse Saloon, a

popular and well-known country bar in downtown Nashville that serves as a venue for a

popular entertainment show on the Nashville Cable Network. Leipold wanted to

"tie in with country music" from the beginning. The franchise attempted to link itself to

Nashville's existing traditions so they could "make this Nashville's team in every way."

As Leipold himself mentions, it not only would improve the popularity of the game, but

might sell more tickets as well (Leipold, 2000).

The team's best-known attempt to sell tickets by linking to existing traditions

came in the form of an award-winning advertising campaign. The franchise borrowed the

"Got Milk?" advertisement from the dairy industry and changed it to "Got Tickets?" The

ads featured country music stars holding hockey sticks and smiling with their front teeth

blackened. The ad was clearly an attempt to connect to three popular ideas, a well-

known national advertising campaign, Nashville's association with country music, and

the hockey stereotype of players missing their front teeth. The franchise was trying to tie

hockey to the city any way possible.

Nashville also tried to create a sense of tradition from the start. The words for

chants were shown on the Jumbotron so fans would know what to yell during games.

Ideas such as "Fang Fingers[10]" were used to give the franchise its own flair. In

describing fans during the Predator's first year, Leipold (2000) stated,

"To support their new team, the fifteen thousand Nashville fans chant on cue some of the new mantras they've been *taught*. They've been *carefully schooled* in these new chants by the Predators event staff. Nothing has been left to chance. *Everything has been orchestrated to inform, entertain, educate, and motivate*," (emphasis added).

Leipold's comments show intent on the part of the franchise to instill a sense of tradition in the new fans as opposed to allowing one to grow on its own in a more organic way.

The influence of the franchises in creating a hockey tradition is undeniable, though not on the same level as fan influence. The franchises have a more comprehensive, and sometimes competing, interest than the fans due to their financial concerns. While they have an important input into creating tradition for the love of the game, ultimately the teams must consider what will bring fans to the arena. Front office personnel may have certain opinions on the direction a franchise should go, but the final decision to buy tickets and merchandise lies with the fans.

The need to consider fan interest over the personal choices of management is most clearly seen in the Florida Panthers organization. From the beginning, the organization made no attempt to form a tradition or even let one grow. This attitude stemmed from the top with owner Wayne Huizenga. When deciding the team's uniform color and design the executives were not on the same page. Huizenga wanted colors that matched his other sports teams, the Miami Dolphins and the Florida Marlins. Everyone else involved was thinking in terms of marketing, merchandising, and fan appeal. Huizenga commented that it did not matter what the uniform looked like, they could

---

[10] "Fang Fingers" are two fingers on each hand curled downward to resemble the front teeth of a saber-toothed cat. The gesture is made when an opposing player is given a penalty.

always change it if it did not sell. Team president Bill Torrey, one of the few "hockey men" involved in making the decisions, protested stating, "Wayne, you can't do that. You want to establish a tradition." Huizenga responded by telling Torrey, "All you hockey guys are too traditional. You have to loosen up and be a little more aggressive." The attitude of "nontraditional" remained with the Panthers organization (Rosenbaum, 1997).

Ironically, the uniforms became the one thing that did not change in the Panthers organization. They would move into a new arena, change head coaches and front office personnel and threaten to move in the first five years. In those early years, the Panthers were a success at the box office. Between 1993 and 1997, they enjoyed more sellouts per season than the three other major sports teams in Miami. During the 1996-97 season the Panthers streak of 50 consecutive sellouts was higher that the other three teams combined sellout streaks. That streak and the Panthers' popularity would, however, fall once they moved to a new stadium.

Did the Panthers' early disregard for building a tradition, or at least allowing one to develop, hurt them later? *Miami Herald* hockey reporter David Neal (2004) believes it did.

> "When they played at Miami Arena, they sold out every game. The South Beach crowd would go to games and then go out clubbing afterward. It became the hot ticket. They were popular with the Hispanic community. Hispanic parents wanted their kids to play hockey because hockey is an expensive sport. It means you made it if you can afford to play it. But the team never really tried to connect to the whole area. As soon as they moved, the old fans stopped going because they didn't want to drive two hours to the games. The people in the new area didn't care because the team hadn't connected with them. That's this team's big problem, they aren't connected with the area."

In fairness, the team had tried to connect with the South Florida area but Neal's comments ring true and are borne out in the attendance figures. During the four seasons prior to the 2004-2005 strike the Panthers had failed to reach 85 percent attendance rates for home games and twice were below 80 percent (ESPN, 2004). The team has finished in the bottom half of NHL attendance figures four straight years. It would seem the early failure to encourage or help traditions to grow is now costing the Panthers.

The franchise executives must remember that their role is that of the generator of potential traditions and not the carriers. The fans decide what will become a tradition or if the sport will even survive in that venue or city. Although the input of the franchise, as we have seen with Nashville, can be immensely valuable, the success or failure of tradition and franchise remains with the fans as illustrated by the rise and fall of attendance at Florida Panthers games.

Players

The "athlete as hero" is a common motif in American society. We idolize our sports heroes and honor them with everything from their pictures on cereal boxes to their names on the clothing we wear. Their influence is especially visible on young children who dream of playing as their hero does.

The sport of hockey is no different. Today's players were influenced by those who came before and are influencing future players. For the hockey player, much of this influence comes from veteran players in the dressing room[11]. It is here that young players learn the traditions of hockey from a player's perspective. As Leipold (2000)

---

[11] In hockey a "locker room" is called the "dressing room."

describes it, "much of the lore and many of the traditions of hockey have been born in the dressing room." Most of these traditions, and in many cases superstitions, never reach the fans. Pre-game or team rituals often have no meaning to the average fan who will only be watching a game. In some cases, however, the presence of the tradition among the players becomes part of the fan experience.

One example is the "playoff beard" that many players grow. Originally the idea was a superstition. If a team was playing well, their players did not want to lose their good luck. They refused to shave because when they had not, they won. Over time the superstition become hockey tradition with many players not shaving from the end of the regular season until their team is eliminated from the playoffs or wins the Stanley Cup. The playoff beard has become part of hockey culture now, being noticed by fans (some of whom participate from the stands by growing their own beards), discussed by commentators, and even as a topic for analysis on the correct form and shape a "playoff beard" should have (Bidini, 2004).

The role of the player in creating tradition among fans is a complex one. It is at once active and passive, important and unimportant. In one sense, the players' actions are passive. Players do not actively try to get fans to follow their habits or mimic their rituals. They instill the traditions of the game in each other and in new players, but the fans are not part of this directly. The fans merely observe the rituals of players and may or may not adopt them as part of their own tradition.

At the same time the players are actively propelling hockey tradition forward. During interviews, when meeting with fans, or at other public appearances, players relate

their views of the game. The stories told by and about the players become the basis for the next generation of hockey legends and myths. The stories the players choose to tell and what they emphasize helps shape the public perception of hockey.

The players' role as active/passive engine for tradition is seen in personal habits that become copied. Wayne Gretzky, arguably hockey's greatest player, had the unusual habit of tucking part of his hockey sweater inside his hip pad. As Gretzky's popularity grew so did the number of youth hockey players who copied his style. The trait was not a conscious decision on Gretzky's part to influence hockey fashion, merely a personal preference. His ability on the ice led others to copy his choice. The effect on tradition was active yet passive; he chose to dress a certain way, yet he had no intention of influencing the look of the game.

Tradition is important to players because it provides the norms by which the game is played. Beyond the rules, these norms form the expected behavior of the players on and off the ice. Tradition provides players with a measuring device that allows them to mark their place in the game's history. Simultaneously, players attempt to break from tradition, to make their own unique mark on the game by changing its style, strategy, or other aspects.

The nature of player influence on tradition then makes it difficult to judge its success. Players are not trying to create a tradition and yet they are part of it. A trait, habit or superstition that does become part of hockey lore is usually not intentional. Likewise a trait that fails to become part of hockey history is not a failure since the player never meant for it to become anything more than his own personal preparation or playing

style. Players can, therefore, be best understood as random operators in the creation of tradition in hockey.

The Media

The media played a significant role in hockey's founding and growth in Canada and the north (Noonan, 2001). The popularity of the sport made covering hockey profitable for newspapers. Stories related the significance of each game, if not in the overall standings, then as a rivalry between the teams. Individual players became known through human-interest stories. As Noonan (2001) states, "Through such storytelling, ordinary men ... and the events they participated in became part of popular mythology." Media coverage was one of the factors in Canada's growing hockey culture and a prime component in the development and propagation of its hockey traditions.

Given the media's importance in northern hockey tradition, one might expect that the creation and growth of southern hockey tradition would also rely heavily on the media. This has not been the case. The role of the media has been more of a secondary one for some franchises and a detriment in others. Although the media has made important contributions to the growth of tradition, it has done so through passing on hockey stereotypes.

In defining "media" in terms of hockey coverage in the South one must consider newspapers to be the primary and most important component. Although television coverage of hockey in southern states has expanded over the past decade, it cannot compare to newspaper coverage in scope and volume. Internet sites covering hockey and

chat groups dedicated to the sport or an individual team also serves as significant sources of information for fans of Southern hockey.

The role of Southern newspapers in shaping Southern hockey tradition varies among the franchises and the hometown papers that cover them. Although newspapers can have a positive affect on public opinion, lack of coverage can weaken interest. Examining the relocation of franchises to Dallas and Raleigh from Minneapolis/St. Paul and Hartford respectively give prime example of the value of the press. During the first half of the 1992-93 hockey season, *The Dallas Morning News* had scant coverage of the NHL. Once the announcement was made that the Minnesota franchise would be moving to Dallas, however, the paper began to cover not only the new franchise but increased its overall hockey coverage. Player profiles appeared to acquaint readers with the players soon to arrive. Stories on the rules of hockey, its history and other pieces designed to provide background and generate interest in hockey appeared with regularity.

The arrival of an NHL franchise in Raleigh was not greeted with such interest. The *Raleigh News and Observer* did not have stories far in advance of the new season promoting hockey. The important reasons for this lie with the team owner. First, he waited until the summer to announce the team would move. Summer is the off-season for hockey, when interest is at its lowest even among fans of the sport. He also chose to move without a completed and usable stadium in Raleigh. This forced the team to play its first two seasons in Greensboro. The citizens of Greensboro saw no reason to get involved because they knew the team was leaving in a few years. People from Raleigh had two years of "their team" playing somewhere else and were cool in their reception

when the team did arrive. This can be seen in a poll conducted by the *News and Observer* on the team's name. The question posed was; what do you think of the team's proposed name? A number of people ignored the question and responded, "Who cares about hockey?" For the Hurricanes, the honeymoon was over before they even got to town. This attitude put the newspaper in a position unlike those of Northern papers. People seemed not to care if there was hockey coverage so there was no reason to push the new sport.

Lack of interest by the customers of newspapers weakened the papers' interest in covering the sport. Whereas hockey coverage increased sales of papers in the North, it had no affect in the South. Not only would hockey stories take up space, they would require reporters to cover the games and write about them. Both were expenses to the paper for which they saw little potential returns.

The newspapers also suffered from a lack of experienced hockey reporters and editors who understood the game. Four of the six media-relations personnel interviewed for this study stated that their franchise had to hold special engagements with reporters to explain hockey. As one described it, "The first year was rough. Reporters didn't understand the game so they didn't know what questions to even ask." This translated into newspaper stories that were not interesting to read and offered new fans little toward improving their own hockey knowledge. At times the editors became a bigger problem. One reporter, who asked to remain anonymous for obvious reasons, described a typical exchange with his editor. "He doesn't know hockey at all and figures no one else down here will either. So he refuses to let me use hockey terms in my writing. He even

changes terms he thinks readers won't get, messing up what I meant in the first place."

Another reporter also claimed his editor often changed wording, which changed the entire intention of this sentence or paragraph. One example he gave was his description of a goalie making a "poke check" on a play. The editor changed it to read the goalie "checked," thinking readers would not understand the term "poke check." The difference however is enormous. A "poke check" is a play made by a player pushing his stick at the puck and knocking it off the opponent's stick. There is no body contact and the play is one of skill. A "check" is a collision between players where one player skates into another player, ignoring the puck and tries to knock the other player off his skates. A check is a physical play. By eliminating one word the editor changed the expression of the event from one of skill to one of violence.

Southern media has, nonetheless, had an impact on hockey tradition. One success the media has had in helping hockey's growth has come from its coverage, however minimal or negative. According to Tom Hughes of the Atlanta Thrashers, "Even bad press brings in fans. Just getting our name out there generates interest." Hockey stories and photos appearing in sports pages create an image of the game. Franchise media-relations people have worked to get that image to the public and shape it to help sell tickets. Franchises encourage showing the human side of hockey, pushing stories of players volunteering in the community or conducting clinics to teach kids the values of hockey. Although the impact is not as great as the northern media had on hockey's early development, southern media have added to the burgeoning tradition.

The media's largest contribution to Southern hockey tradition may come from their negative attitude toward the game or by virtually ignoring it altogether. The day Wayne Huizenga met with the NHL Board of Governors to finalize an expansion franchise in South Florida, the *Miami Herald* did not cover the story. Even after the team had been in Florida for several years, hockey got the cold shoulder from the media. After a caller to Hank Goldberg's sports talk show was hung up on, Goldberg stated, "We don't talk hockey on this channel." Goldberg also reported on his show that hockey was a failure in Miami because, "they couldn't even sell out their playoff tickets." In truth, the games had sold out in under an hour, an impressive feat even in the North. In another instance, Pavel Bure, then the Panthers star forward, scored his 300th career goal, a milestone for NHL players. Moreover, the goal was an overtime winner to beat the Boston Bruins. The story appeared the next day on page 4, the front-page story was about a high school football coach who was changing jobs.

When the game was reported it was often done from a stereotypical view. Reporter Jimmy Davy of *The Tennessean* in an article attempting to support hockey, resorted to stereotypes. He wrote, "Ice hockey is really a game for Southern sports tastes: speed, blocking and fighting. It's a good ol' boys dream... It's demolition derby with a stick. It's a whole new ball game coming to town, with action, body contact, and fan delirium. That's an old Southern (sic) recipe for success," (quoted in Leipold, 2000). Davy's comments play to hockey's stereotype that the game is simply hitting. Each of his descriptions contains the violence of hockey, with only brief mention of its speed and no mention of skill or talent. While in some respects this may say more about Southern

tastes than hockey per se, Davy's decision to sell hockey's violent side helped shape the Southern perception of the game.

The Southern media's contribution to Southern hockey tradition must be viewed on an individual basis. Dallas, Nashville and Tampa Bay have received the best support from the local media in creating a sense of hockey tradition in their cities. Carolina and Atlanta have received limited help in creating a tradition, although Atlanta's media outlets have given the Thrashers exposure. Miami has suffered from a lack of media involvement. If anything can be said of the overall impact of Miami media's on hockey tradition it is that it has been a negative one.

The League Office

National Hockey League officials also play a part in creating and shaping the game's traditions. This study defines the League as the governing body of the NHL, the Commissioner Gary Bettman and the Board of Governors. Also referred to in this study as the 'Front Office', the League represents the individuals and groups that form the legal and business side of NHL hockey and control the day-to-day functions of the League s a whole.

The importance of creating a hockey tradition in the South is vital to the League. The League's main focus in expanding hockey is, first and foremost, financial (NHL, 2003). Tradition is a marketing tool to the NHL: they sell its heritage to maintain and create interest in the sport. For the NHL to survive in the South, it must develop a fan base that will sustain itself through the next generation.

The focus of this effort has fallen on youth hockey programs and special events. The League has developed, in conjunction with the franchises, programs of street and ice hockey in what the League terms "nontraditional hockey areas" in order to create interest in the sport among area youth. The League has also been active, more so than in the North where youth leagues have been in existence as long as the NHL, in developing youth leagues to develop players skills and hopefully create a future pool of hockey talent.

The role of the League in creating tradition is an active one. Commissioner Bettman has argued that tradition is not a factor of time but of action. Speaking of creating a Southern hockey tradition, Bettman states,

> "Detroit is not a traditional hockey market because it has had a hockey team for a long time. Hockey is a tradition in Detroit because of the way the team related to its fans. Bring a hockey team and a first-class arena, provide quality services, get people interested and excited, they'll come, and they'll get hooked" (quoted in Leipold, 2000).

Bettman's statement is based in the symbolic construction of tradition; that time alone does not make hockey a tradition, but rather the people construct it for themselves. From Bettman's perspective it takes more than simply having a team for a number of years to develop tradition. In a sense he is right. Time alone does not force a trait to become a tradition. As discussed above, however, time is needed to improve the legitimacy of a tradition. Detroit's hockey tradition may have other sources that created and shaped it, but time was certainly a key ingredient. No matter how popular hockey became in its first year in each of the six Southern cities, it could never be argued as "traditional" after only one season. One need only examine Southern hockey's history to

be convinced of this point. The Tropical Hockey League, for example, formed in South Florida in the 1920s and lasted only one season. Yet no one considered Florida a "traditional" hockey area. The same is true of California, which despite having an NHL team since 1966, was still called untraditional when two new franchises were granted there 25 years later. By ignoring the importance of time, the League has missed a vital piece in understanding tradition.

The second sentence in the Commissioner's statement, *"Hockey is a tradition in Detroit because of the way the team related to its fans,"* is important for understanding the League's mindset toward its fanbase. With this statement, Bettman attempts to show why time is unimportant. He argues the team's actions in relating to their fans caused tradition to be created. The statement is in error for three reasons. First, instead of supporting his first statement he contradicts it. The team could not create a tradition of hockey by relating to their fans for only one season. Year-after-year action is required for tradition to develop, hence demonstrating the importance of time. Second, a semantic point needs to be clarified. It is not the fans to whom the team would have related, but rather the individuals living in the Detroit area. These people may have liked hockey but were not necessarily fans of the team. While this is a minor point, it holds importance in terms of viewing Southern markets. It is not southern fans teams are trying to attract; it is Southerners they hope will *become* fans. Third and most important, it is not the relation of the team to its fans that creates tradition but the relation of fans to the team. The fans are the important variable in the tradition equation. Professional sport franchises, especially hockey, rely on gate receipts for income. A team may be successful on the

field of play but if they fail to attract fans they will fail financially. Bettman's statement would imply that the team could force its way into the city's traditions whether the city wants it to or not.

The League's attempts to force or control traditions have failed or enjoyed only mild success in creating Southern tradition for two additional reasons. First, fans seem to have rejected League attempts to change the game and alter its traditions. A survey of fans taken at Nashville and Atlanta hockey games along with Internet chat sites for this study asked 106 people to name things they did not like about NHL hockey. Respondents named some aspect of the League 94 percent of the time (100 out of 106 people). The most common answers were rules changes that lengthen television timeouts, not changing or enforcing rules fans saw as detrimental to the game, and the League's attempts to remove fighting. In regard to fighting, 63 percent of fans surveyed[12] said it was a part of the game they enjoyed and 50 percent listed the League's attempting to limit or remove fighting as something they disliked. The League's attempts to grow hockey's financial concerns appear to be in conflict with the fans' interest in the game.

The second area where the League seems to have run afoul of the fans is in the hearth areas. Canadian and northern fans resent having the game changed and their traditions altered. While most complaints by fans in "traditional" areas are baseless in terms of facts, the feelings are real. The fans believe the League is altering "their game" in an effort to make more money. This has caused feelings of resentment against

Southern fans among some Canadian and northern fans, a topic that will be explored in detail in a later section of this dissertation.

It has also been the League's misfortune to be caught between traditions in the North and a new tradition in the South. Detroit fans, for example, have a long-held tradition of throwing an octopus on the ice during the playoffs. The tradition stems from the NHL's six-team days when it took eight wins in the playoffs (hence the octopus with eight arms) to win the Stanley Cup. Although hockey etiquette forbids throwing anything onto the ice during a hockey game (except hats for scoring three goals, a "hat trick"), Detroit fans have be able to maintain their tradition. The tradition appeared in a new form in Florida in 1996. Florida Panthers fans, during the 1995-96 season and during the playoff run, developed the tradition of throwing rubber rats on the ice after important goals. The League felt it needed to stop this action as it was taking too much time to clear hundreds of rats off the ice after goals. The Florida fans complained that if Detroit fans could throw a real octopus on the ice why could they not throw rubber rats? The League sought to end the problem by banning the throwing of all objects on the ice. Hockey fans across the U.S. and Canada complained that hats for "hat tricks" should be allowed. The League agreed and made the exception. This angered Detroit fans who refused to give up their octopus-throwing tradition. The League tried to come to an agreement, but this only upset Florida fans that felt Detroit was getting special treatment. In the end, the Florida franchise front office put a stop to rat throwing, a fact that turned

---

[12] It is interesting to note that woman, by a slim margin, listed fighting more often than men, 63.3% to 63.0% as something they enjoy about hockey.

some against the team. The League continued to allow hats to be thrown for "hat tricks", and although it is technically still against the rules, Detroit fans still throw the traditional octopus on the ice during playoff games. The only loser in this seems to be the League since fans saw the whole scenario as the Front Office's attempt to take the fun and tradition out of hockey. It is ironic, then, that the League, the one entity in the creation of tradition to which tradition is most important because the League needs tradition for its survival, has had the least positive influence on tradition. In fact, the League is viewed by many fans as the destroyer of tradition.

One area of tradition creation where the League is seeing success in Southern markets is in promoting hockey as more than just a game. Frank Brown, vice president for media relations for the NHL, stated that, "[I]n the past, people did their entertaining in one place and their sports viewing in another. It's now morphing into a single experience" (quoted in Mooradain, 2001). Brown's statement concurs with results from this study's survey of NHL fans. Half of the individuals surveyed at NHL games commented that they came mainly for the "experience of being at a game" more than just to see the teams play and 81% mentioned the overall experience of going to a game as an important reason they attend. One fan expressed his feelings by saying "Yeah, watching at home is easier, and cheaper, but there's nothing like being here. I mean, how can you beat a flaming bird and a rock concert after the game[13]?" (Jervis, 2004). Although the

---

[13] The game was in Atlanta where one of the sideshows is a large construction of a bird head, the Atlanta logo. At different times during the evening the bird would breathe fire out its nose. The franchise also had events after games; this particular night it was a free rock concert.

entertainment aspect is used in all NHL arenas, its importance to Southern franchises and the emerging traditions of Southern hockey cannot be overstated.

<u>Conclusions</u>

The six groups discussed in this chapter, previously existing hockey fans, new hockey fans, the NHL front office, the individual Southern franchises, hockey players, and the media, are the ingredients that combine to form Southern hockey culture and create tradition. The traditions that are becoming part of the Southern hockey fan's experience are created from a blend of old and new traditions, planned and random events, and ideas both desirable and despised.

This chapter has discussed the sources of Southern hockey tradition. In doing so it has answered part one of my third research question: Who is involved in the process of creating and shaping the new Southern hockey traditions? It is time now to focus attention on part two of that question: How can those traditions be classified? The following chapter will examine some examples of Southern hockey tradition in detail, organize them into a classification by origin, and discuss their impact on Southern hockey tradition and the overall game of hockey.

Chapter 8: Classifying Traditions

As discussed in the previous chapter, six groups have worked with, and at times against, each other to shape Southern hockey tradition. Their interactions have produced a number of traditions that are forming the core hockey culture for individual franchises and the region as a whole. These traditions can best be described by classifying them by their origin. Four such groupings have been identified: imported, adopted, adapted and original traditions.

This chapter examines each of the above-mentioned categories by defining each and giving of each group[14]. Each example is detailed to show its origins, value to tradition creation, and how it has impacted the NHL as a whole. The significance of each group is also investigated.

<u>Imported Traditions</u>

Imported traditions are defined as traditions, history, and lore that existed in the NHL or the game of hockey in general prior to coming to the South. They are the traits that "came with the game" when a franchise was created or relocated. They exist in the form of language, artifacts, heroes, and history.

The Imported group of traditions is important because it establishes an immediate link to the history of the game for the new franchises. The Atlanta, Florida, Nashville, and Tampa Bay franchises were "built from nothing" (Diller, 2004). Only Atlanta had a prior history of NHL hockey (now the Calgary Flames) but the former NHL team had left Atlanta 20 years before the Thrashers franchise was founded. For these Southern teams,

entering essentially an NHL void, the link to hockey's past gave instant credibility.

When the Florida Panthers reached the Stanley Cup Finals in 1996, fans in South Florida

were vying for the same championship trophy as northern fans had sought since 1896.

On the trophy were inscribed the names of all the players who had ever won it. Other

trophies awarded that season, such as the Art Ross (to the leading scorer), the Vezina

(outstanding goaltender), Hart Memorial (most valuable player), and the Lady Byng

(most gentlemanly player) were being presented for the sixtieth time. These trophies are

physical artifacts of the League. They are even treated as such, being kept behind glass

in the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, Canada for most of the year.

Along with being physical manifestations of tradition, these trophies carry the

history of the game in another way, the individuals for whom they are named. Hart,

Vezina, Byng, Ross, and Stanley all represent individuals who made contributions to the

game in its infancy and helped shape its early years. Those names appearing on other

trophies and, until Southern expansion, on the names of the divisions and conferences in

the NHL as well, represented a virtual who's who of hockey history.

That the sense of history and the people involved may have been completely lost

on the new Southern hockey fan did not matter. The League, franchises and the media

provided information in the form of articles, programs, videos, and pamphlets to educate

the new fans. The belief was that once fans learned the names, they could be taught the

importance to the game.

---

[14] Some examples have been mentioned in previous sections. They are repeated here, with greater
description, to explain and amplify the classifications schemes.

Other traditions came with the new teams in the form of hockey language. Words such as "face-off", "crease", and "icing" had meanings in hockey that the new fans would need to learn in order to appreciate the game. One image created by the new language was the sense that hockey was a difficult game to understand. I was asked during a Nashville-Detroit game played in Nashville to explain "icing." The individual asking said they had asked several friends but no one could explain it. In reply, I informed the person that "icing" occurs when one team passes the puck over the goal line from their side of the red line. The new fan looked stunned for a moment and asked, "That's it?" Amazed that the rules were actually that simple, he commented, "This game's not that hard then, is it?" As one might expect as the game becomes more popular and with more time to learn its rules, the mystique of hockey being a difficult game to learn seems to be falling away in Southern hockey culture.

One difference in hockey language that does not seem to be changing is the usage of certain terms. In basketball and football, two traditional sports enjoyed in the South, the article of clothing worn by players is called a "jersey." In hockey, however, it is called a sweater. The difference is minor, especially today. Most hockey "sweaters" are now being made of the same material as a football jersey, but the importance and distinction is found in tradition. Originally played on outdoor ice rinks and exposed to the elements, hockey players wore sweaters more for the purpose of keeping warm than to show their team allegiance. Over time teams sewed logos or names onto the sweaters, but the article of clothing itself was still referred to as a sweater. As hockey has spread in the U.S. the name slowly changed to the more American term "jersey". Northern areas

still refer to the garment as both "sweater" and "jersey", but in the South the term is almost exclusively "jersey." A similar name change occurred with the term for the room where players get ready to go out on the ice. Originally referred to as a "dressing room" in hockeyese, it is usually called a "locker room" by Southern fans.

The heroes of hockey became another connection Southern teams used to bond with hockey's past. Southern franchises included in their game programs stories about hockey legends that played for a visiting team in programs and newspapers ran articles mentioned the opponent's "historic role" in hockey. Even living-legends were used to form connections. Although Wayne Gretzky played only one game in Nashville, his picture appears in Craig Leipold's book on the creation of the team. Modern sports leagues often promote their star players as marketing icons to attract fans and, in this respect, southern NHL teams are no different than their northern counterparts. However, a difference between hearth and periphery lies in the fact that while the northern teams are marketing stars to make money, the southern teams are also doing it gain recognition and legitimacy.

It is hockey's legends, stories, terms, and artifacts that encapsulate the history of the game. They are the same if told in Toronto or Tampa Bay. Hockey has been described as "Canada's common coin," a trait that links Canadians whether they are Francophone or Anglophone, city or rural dweller, from the maritime provinces, the prairie or the frozen north. In theory, hockey's history would form a common bond, a language and link between all hockey fans. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the link has been anything but smooth and friendly. Yet the link is there, Southern hockey

133

fans are a part of the game and are now helping to write its history. One clear example of this came in 2004 when Tampa Bay played for the Stanley Cup. Signs were held up during Finals' games played in Tampa that pictured the Stanley Cup lying on a beach chair on a Florida beach. Under the image was written, "Stanley needs a tan!" The statement was simple in concept, Florida is know as a vacation destination, so why not let the Stanley Cup come for a visit? The implications for hockey's tradition went much deeper.

Only one Southern team, the Dallas Stars in 1999, had ever won the Cup. The six Southern teams combined had lost three out of four Finals series and posted a combined seven win, fourteen loss record, with six of those wins coming from Dallas' two Cup appearances. The previous appearances were considered by some to be flukes, more luck than the team's ability. Dallas' 1999 victory has been disputed since the night they won. Fans and hockey experts alike argue about a questionable call on the final goal. Five years later signs reading "No goal!" still can be seen in Buffalo, the team that lost to Dallas.

Tampa Bay is changing the image. The Lightning were not only in the Finals but many analysts considered them the favorite over the Calgary Flames in 2004 (ESPN, 2004). More importantly, Tampa Bay was winning by playing "old-fashioned hockey," using speed and skill to overwhelm opponents. Many northern, and especially Canadian, fans had accused Southern teams of playing "boring" hockey and using the Trap or some other system to slow play. This, they explained, is a sign that Southern hockey teams

were less talented. The Lightning removed that argument completely by play a more "traditional" style of fast-paced hockey[15].

Tampa Bay's victory gave Southern hockey a lasting place in hockey history. The team's name is etched onto the Stanley Cup. The seven-game series was the "stuff of legends," and the South was now part of that legend (ESPN, 2004). More important was the support the team received. Fans filled the St. Petersburg Times Arena to NHL record capacities, setting and then resetting the attendance record during the course of the series. The idea that Southerners would not support hockey, even during the playoffs, was laid to rest. The parades held following the win proved that fans not only wanted to go "for a night out," but also shared a relationship to their team. Newspapers reported thousands gathering to cheer as the parade and the Stanley Cup passed. As one reporter described it, Tampa used to be an area where "icing was something you put on a cake" (McEwen, 2004). Now, it was the center of the hockey world.

Imported traditions, then, are an act of passing down cultural traits from one generation to the next. The traditions that the NHL brought with it to the South are passed on to the new fans. The fans learn the history of the league and become a part of it. All future NHL fans, whether from hockey's hearth or nontraditional regions, will learn the South's role in hockey, whatever that future role may be. Even if hockey should completely fail in the South and all six teams were to relocate or be dissolved, their place in hockey history would still be set. Although future hockey historians may be harsh in

---

[15] Although this argument has been made since the Southern teams began operations it is more opinion and wishful thinking by hockey purists than fact. While the teams are referred to as "southern," they are staffed by predominantly Canadian and European players, coaches and managers.

their descriptions, they will never be able to deny the South's place in NHL history. This then is the central value of Imported traditions, guaranteeing Southern hockey's place in NHL history.

<u>Adopted Traditions</u>

The second category of traditions developing in Southern hockey is Adopted traditions. Adopted traditions are a form of borrowed identity. The new teams were entering territory virtually devoid of prior NHL hockey. The imported traditions discussed in the previous section gave the franchises instant links to the rest of the hockey world but did not connect them to their new cities. The links between team and city could be formed most quickly by connecting to traditions already associated with that city. Cultural traits or icons were already associated with the six cities before the NHL arrived. Miami's beaches and palm trees, the "Lone Star" in Dallas, or country music in Nashville are some examples of images associated with places independent of hockey. By linking to these icons, NHL franchises hoped to form an instant bond with the people they hoped to attract as fans.

The Nashville Predators adopted traditions by actively trying to tie into the city's country music culture. Owner Craig Leipold (2000) relates that, "from the beginning he want to involve the country music industry in the team." Country music stars were enlisted to appear in advertisements to sell hockey tickets. Team announcements were made at local landmarks associated with country music to strengthen the link. The team even went as far as erecting a bandstand at one end of the rink so local country bands

could play during intermissions of games. Needless to say this practice had never been done before in the NHL.

The franchise used other local traits in promoting the team. The executives had been warned that Nashville was "notorious for closing up at the slightest hint of snow." They were also made aware that snow in the forecast usually resulted in large numbers of people buying out items like bread and milk at local grocery stores (Leipold, 2000). The advertising department used these facts in a billboard campaign with the headline "Attention Kroger Shoppers. Ice Coming!" The team was even trying to connect to the 'panic behavior' the area is known to display in winter.

The Stars franchise used a Texas icon to link to Dallas. Originally named the North Stars when the team played in Minnesota, the franchise dropped the "North" following the move to Dallas. Because Texas is known as the Lone Star State, a star is used as an icon in Texas on items from the state flag to T-shirts and bumper stickers. The hockey franchise's name, North Stars, provided a built-in connection by shorting the name to "Stars" and promoting them as Texas' hockey team.

The logos on the uniforms also linked this image. Although a large star on the sweater may seem a logical choice as logo for a team named "the stars," it also connected to the city's most beloved sport franchise, the Dallas Cowboys. The Cowboy's logo, a blue star on a gray background, was the most popular logo in Texas. The NHL franchise borrowed the icon and was hoping to borrow the popularity. The shoulder patch logo on the Stars' jersey also appears borrowed. The icon, the outline of the state of Texas with a star over Dallas, is similar to the logo of Dallas' Major League Baseball team the Texas

Rangers. By combining the logos of the then two most popular professional sports teams in the city, the Stars were trying to associate themselves with Dallas' rich sports tradition.

Franchise nicknames became another method of relating to the area. Five of the six Southern teams selected nicknames that connected the team with the city or region in which they played. The Nashville franchise linked specifically to discovery made in the Nashville area of a fossil saber-toothed cat. The team's name, the "Predators" and their logo, a fossil skull of a saber-toothed cat, were both used to link the franchise specifically to Nashville (Leipold, 2000). Dallas and Tampa Bay selected nicknames that related to the entire state. Dallas used the Star of Texas in both their name and logo and Tampa selecting Lightning, relating to the thunderstorms prevalent in the region. In the cases of the Florida and Carolina franchises, the teams used both names to link to their areas. Carolina selected "Hurricanes" to link them to a common weather occurrence while Florida selected "Panthers" as a tie to a beloved and almost extinct state animal. Both teams also chose to use the state in their name instead of their home city. In both cases the decisions were spurred by a desire to link to the entire region not just the city and, more prominently, by difficulties with building suitable arenas. In Carolina's case, the franchise's new arena would not be ready for two years and the team was forced to play in Greensboro before finally locating to Raleigh. The owner decided to use "Carolina" in an attempt to relate to the entire state rather than changing the name from "Greensboro" to "Raleigh" after two years and risk losing his fan base. Panther's owner Wayne Huizenga chose "Florida" since he planned to move the team out of the Miami Arena, and a financially detrimental lease to the franchise, to a new arena outside Miami. He

138

also wanted to use Florida as a way of competing with Tampa Bay for fans in other parts part of the state.

It is worth noting the success of the names chosen. Nashville, Dallas and Tampa all initially received positive feedback on their names and have continued to enjoy positive feedback. Carolina and Florida have both failed with their name selection in terms of its original purpose. Both teams chose the broader state name knowing they would change home cities. Instead of building a statewide fans base, both teams suffered a loss of fans from the original city after moving and general apathy from fans in the new city. In Florida's case, rather than attracting fans from around the state, the constant bickering over a new stadium and who or what entity would fund it drove some Miami residents to become fans of the Tampa Bay franchise (Thomas, 2004).

The use of a team's nickname to relate to the city is not new. Teams in all four major U.S. sports have chosen names based on local cultural or physical traits. The value worth noting here is that the five Southern teams that did name their team with local connections in mind broke with the recent pattern in team names. Beginning in the 1970s, many professional football, baseball, and basketball franchises selected names with more generic appeal to the name itself. The NFL's "Buccaneers", the NBA's "Magic" and "Hornets", and MLB's "Mariners" offer little or no hint as to the city in which they play. Of the Southern NHL franchises, three of the four expansion teams selected names related to the local area and both franchise relocations changed their names to relate to their new locations. In the three other major sports relocating teams often keep their names and expansion teams select names based on popularity of the

139

name, not linkage to the area. In the past 20 years, only two NFL teams have changed

the nickname after moving, one of those being forced by court order after the city that

lost the franchise (Cleveland) filed an injunction to prevent the new city, Baltimore, from

using the name (the Browns). Interestingly, the other team to change names, the Houston

Oilers who changed to the Tennessee Oilers after moving first to Memphis and then to

Nashville, did so after seeing the success of the Nashville Predators name and logo. The

NFL's Oilers decided to become the Tennessee Titans, a generic name but one at least

without links to another city, based on the positive reviews the Predators received on

their name choice and the lack of enthusiasm for the "Oilers" name.

Adopting identities has had mixed results for Southern NHL teams. The

successes seem to be genuine in the sense that the team was actually helped by adopting

the image. Nashville's use of country music, for example, not only helped gain notoriety,

but also set a then League record for season ticket sales by an expansion club. The

instances where teams have failed to capitalize on adopting traditions or identity cannot

be blamed on the tradition. Florida and Carolina failed because of how they used the

adopted idea. Both relied on "name power" to cover over the fact that the franchises

were in a power play to have taxpayers pay for new stadiums and were not staying in one

city. For both teams, the "honeymoon effect" where fans are so happy to have a team

they forgive bad play or shaky service as part of a learning curve was wasted. Florida

played five seasons in the Miami arena before moving north to western Broward County

while Carolina played only two in Greensboro before moving into their permanent home

in Raleigh. In both cases the novelty had worn off. Many fans near the old arena felt

slighted and did not follow the team to its new home. Individuals in the new city had already been exposed to the sport through newspaper coverage. For them the game held little attraction beyond the first season, as evidenced by the low attendance figures.

The failures in using adopted identities should not detract from their importance in building tradition or its value to future expansion or relocating teams. When done correctly, borrowing an identity, can gain for the team instant standing in the community. Even though the connection was "manufactured", it still existed. Nashville used country music to "get people in the door" and hoped the hockey would keep them coming back. Although initially the link between hockey and the country music industry may not have existed, it has been forged through the efforts of the Predator's front office and country music's stars. It is through these initial connections that Southern hockey tradition is likely to grow. Much as baseball tried to tie itself to a pastoral history with the Abner Doubleday myth[16], Southern hockey may one day pass itself off as a truly "Southern" sport through its forged links to Southern culture.

Adapted Traditions

The third category of importance is Adapted Traditions. In the context of this dissertation, these are traits that are part of other traditions, for example sport or local history, which are incorporated into Southern hockey experience. They differ from Adopted traditions in how the trait is used. An adapted tradition borrows a part of a tradition from elsewhere and changes it for use in hockey. While adopted traditions

---

[16] Most baseball historians now contend that Abner Doubleday did not invent baseball. The sport had a long developmental history with no one person "creating" the game.

attempt to link a team to some existing cultural icon, adapted traditions borrow only part of the icon, with little or no attempt to link it to the larger culture.

Several examples of Adapted traditions have appeared in Southern hockey. The most widespread is "Ice Girls", cheerleaders at hockey games. The use of cheerleaders in the NHL began with Carolina (Carolina Hurricanes Home Page, 2004). The Hurricanes, in an effort to make hockey more attractive to fans used to attending basketball and football games, decided to use cheerleaders at games. The cheerleaders also took part in intermission activities that included games for the fans and giveaways.

The example of cheerleaders shows the difference between adapted and adopted traditions. The franchise took a popular aspect of already popular sports and adapted its use for hockey. Football cheerleaders lead cheers on the sidelines. Hockey, however, has no sidelines and fans would be unhappy with cheerleaders standing in front of the glass blocking the view of the game. The franchises adapted the use of cheerleaders by having them perform services such has giveaways during television stoppages of games and altering the on-ice role. The cheerleaders wear skates while on the ice, making some classic cheerleader moves such as being held overhead by the feet and forming human pyramids difficult if not completely impossible to perform. Rather than performing cheering routines, the women are used more as helpers during events on the ice.

The popularity of this idea has grown in among Southern teams. Four of the six now have cheering squads, although the name "cheerleader" has been dropped and changed to "Ice Girl." This Southern adaptation to the game has impacted its northern brethren as several teams, including a Canadian team, now have cheerleaders on the ice.

142

One difference between the two is that while most of the Southern teams use their Ice

Girls as entertainment, northern teams also put their Ice Girls to work, removing excess

snow from the ice during stoppages (Peterson, 2003).

A second difference between hearth and periphery is the level of acceptance

cheerleaders have received. Southerners have accepted cheerleaders without a second

thought. With no prior hockey experience, they do not view cheerleaders as anything

new. They have been a part of football and basketball, two of the South's more popular

sports, nearly as long as the games have been in existence. In the North, cheerleaders in

hockey are new, and for many not welcomed. One online survey asked fans their opinion

of cheerleaders in hockey (Hockey Attitude, 2003). The response from fans was 75

percent negative, with 67 percent responding "Hell No!" Other fans were even more

outspoken. One woman posted to a hockey chat site stating, "There are enough half

naked women on TV, and I don't need to see them at hockey games" (Linmann, 2003).

Even men, the assumed audience for the "lycra-clad, navel-baring Ice Girls" as one

reporter called them, do not seem to want them. A second survey found that only 12

percent of adult male hockey fans approved of the cheerleaders in hockey. Some blame

the Southern influence and its "ruinous effect" on hockey. One writer began his story on

the growing number of Ice Girl squads by quipping, "Leave it to the land of NASCAR

and Hooters to introduce cheerleaders to hockey." The writer's derogatory tone toward

the South is something that is prevalent in hockey today and will be discussed in detail in

the next section.

Not all northern fans were as opposed to cheerleaders in hockey. Some saw it as a natural addition. "Why not?" asked one fan, "I'd rather see a hot girl clear the ice than some old guy" (Islanders Chat Board, 2003). Hockey has often tried to market itself as a cross between football and basketball, two sports known for having cheerleaders. The addition may irritate hockey purists, but there is a segment of hockey fans that like the idea.

The popularity of the Islanders' Ice Girls is evident in another way. The Islanders web site is host to a fan chat board. One feature of the board is that fans can post survey questions for other readers. The surveys remain on the chat board for some time allowing people to continually add comments. The average survey I found contained 40 responses. One survey asked the question "Who is the hottest Ice Girl??" (sic). It posted pictures of five Ice Girls team members in their uniforms. This survey received 271 responses.

Despite the generally negative reactions by fans, "Ice Girls" squads are becoming a part of more NHL franchises. As of July 2004, ten of the 30 NHL teams have Ice Girl squads. More than just cultural diffusion seems to be at work in this instance. Sponsorship by companies has become part of the world sport culture. This aspect of globalization, mass marketing and name recognition, has become part of the Ice Girls phenomena in the NHL. National or international companies sponsor five of the ten squads. The increased revenue teams gain from sponsorship dollars would indicate that despite northern fan disapproval, cheerleaders are likely to become a part of the NHL. In this instance Southern hockey culture has altered hockey culture in the hearth region.

A second adapted tradition, also originating with the Carolina franchise is that of tailgating before games. Usually a pre-game activity at football games, tailgating entered the NHL cultural world during the 2002 Stanley Cup Finals. Prior to Game 3, the first Finals game held in Raleigh, fans arrived outside the arena well before the game's scheduled start. The parking lot surrounding the arena was soon turned into a scene more reminiscent of a college football pre-game than hockey. The extent to which this tradition expands among other teams remains to be seen, especially among northern teams. Regardless, the practice is becoming a tradition with Hurricanes fans and has appeared outside other Southern hockey arenas.

It is through adapted traditions that Southern hockey fans make their first contribution to hockey culture and begin to create their own sense of tradition. Imported traditions are given to the Southern fan to learn while Adopted traditions merely borrow icons that he or she is already familiar with from the area. Adapted traditions allow the Southern fan to add their own flavor to the blend. In this way, too, Southern fans add Southern culture to the larger hockey world. By creating a niche for Southern culture in hockey, Southerners are creating a place for hockey in Southern culture. The extent to which this place will grow remains to be seen, but having a vested interest in the sport and a sense of control in its traditional and cultural development should only help hockey strengthen its roots in the South.

Adapted traditions appear to be having the largest effect around the League. Imported traditions come from the League and are, therefore, already present among older franchises. Adopted traditions are of interest only at the local level to the franchise

that uses them. Adapted traditions, however, are rippling through the NHL. As discussed above, the use of cheerleaders at games has now expanded to encompass one-third of the league's franchises. Pregame tailgate parties are now coming in to many NHL cities with near carnival-like atmospheres outside arenas before and during playoff games. It is through these adapted traditions that the Southern franchises are making a major impact on the hockey world. This impact is not always appreciated, or respected, especially in Canada.

Original Traditions

The final category of tradition is the Original traditions that are forming. This category includes those traditions that are being generated from within the franchise, team, city, or fanbase. They are not adaptations of previous icons or practices, nor are they borrowed from the larger hockey world. With original traditions we find the creation of new cultural icons and the beginnings of true Southern hockey myths. Original traditions are the most important if a franchise is to be successful, and if the League as a whole is to survive, because it is through these generated traditions that Southern fans create their own hockey identity.

Atlanta fans are creating a sense of identity for the Thrashers by borrowing a tradition that originated with the minor league team, the Knights, that played in Atlanta before the Thrashers. During the playing or singing of the Star Spangled Banner, fans would shout, "Knights" at the point in the song's lyrics that goes "gave proof through the night." The tradition has continued for the NHL Thrashers despite the name change. In some ways it has become a mark of hockey fans "in the know" in Atlanta since only

those who attended the Knights games or those who attend Thrashers games and found someone who could explain the reason for this seemingly odd shout out know the meaning behind it. Although it is a small part of the Atlanta hockey experience, it is a unique attribute of the team's fans.

Fans in Nashville also used their city's minor league history as a source of NHL traditions. A team known as the "Channelcats," which used a catfish as its logo, played in Nashville prior to the Predators arrival. The Predators first playoff game was against the Detroit Red Wings, whose fans have a tradition of throwing an octopus on the ice during the playoffs. Nashville fans decided to throw a real catfish on the ice before their playoff series as an answer to the Detroit octopus.

These two examples show that the NHL did not enter an area that was completely devoid of hockey history nor one without a sense of hockey identity. Although Southern hockey culture may have only comprised a small piece of Southern sport culture, it was nevertheless, present. This notion of a hockey history in the South will be discussed in the next chapter as it has given rise to an important segment of Southern hockey culture and identity.

A second tradition in Atlanta is having a youth hockey player stand on the ice during the playing of the National Anthem. The player, dressed in his youth team's uniform, skates onto the ice with the players and stands with them on the blue line while the Anthem is played. Originally done as a marketing idea to bring more kids and their families to games, Tom Hughes, the Thrashers' marketing director stated it "was never meant to be a tradition. We aren't trying to create artificial traditions here." He added

the team wanted to "honor" the "sanctity of the game" by not forcing traditions on the fans. In this case, however, fans have taken the idea and accepted it as their own. While attending several Thrashers games, I spoke with a number of fans that loved the idea. "It's something that child will never forget. And it's good for hockey to get these kids into it early" (Ketchler, 2003). This type of tradition creation shows the interaction of the different groups involved in Southern hockey. What began as a marketing idea from the franchise is adopted by fans and changed into a tradition. The addition of time as an ingredient of creation will also aid this tradition. If the Thrashers continue to invite local youth hockey players onto the ice, it is conceivable that the next generation of hockey fans will have parents telling them "I remember when I skated out there at your age." This combination of symbolic tradition creation (the team inventing a marketing idea) and the naturalist view of tradition (traditions growing over time between generations) would only serve to strengthen Southern hockey culture.

The Carolina Hurricanes franchise experienced the reversal of Atlanta's tradition creation when the marketing department borrowed from the fans. Hurricanes fans began using the term "Caniacs[17]" to describe themselves on Internet chat sites. Franchise personnel noticed its use and the marketing department adopted the term. It is now heavily used by the franchise to describe their fans (Hanlin, 2004). Hanlin also noted that the franchise has a Website manager who watches for ideas that the fans are discussing or using and brings them to the attention of the marketing department. This is important for tradition creation since the franchise's marketing department can spread the fledgling

---

[17] The term is a contraction of a shortened form of the teams name, "the 'Canes", and the word "maniac."

tradition faster and to a broader audience than may have otherwise noted it on the chat site.

The most famous and for this study most significant original Southern hockey tradition is the story of the Rally Rat. On October 8, 1996, the Florida Panthers were preparing to play their first home game of the season when a live rat ran into the dressing room. One of the players, Scott Mellanby, saw it coming toward him and used his stick to hit the rat like a slap shot. The rat flew into a wall and was killed. During the game that evening Mellanby scored two goals, one short of a "hat trick" (the term for scoring three goals.) After the game the team's goalie joked that Mellanby had "scored a "Rat Trick" by getting two goals and a rat" (Rosenbaum, 1997). The equipment manager wrote "R.I.P. Rat. 10-8-95" on the wall where the animal had died. Before the next home game he placed a toy stuffed rat underneath the spot where the real rat had hit the wall as a joke. A photographer noticed the unusual "memorial" and took a picture that quickly became famous in South Florida. The players' dressing room was renamed "The Rat's Den." The rat became a fan favorite and some began throwing rubber rats on the ice after the team scored a goal. At first it was only a few but by the playoffs the ice was covered with hundreds of rats every time the team scored. The practice became a concern for the league. First, it is an NHL rule that items should not be thrown on the ice during games. Although this rule is broken for hats being thrown for "Hat Tricks" and in Detroit with the traditional octopus, it was more of a concern that it was causing serious game delays. It would take arena workers, known as the Rat Patrol, several minutes to clear the ice of

all the rubber rats and allow play to resume. Following the season the NHL ruled against the throwing of rats on the ice and the franchise has put a stop to the practice.

The rat, however, has not left Florida hockey culture. Rubber rats can still be seen at games, although rarely ever thrown onto the ice, and fans still have their rats from that season. The team has created a mascot named Rall E. Rat and posted him on the team's official Webpage. It is on this page that the first true Southern hockey myth can be found. Far from revealing the true events of the evening, the story posted on the Panthers Website describes a rat that was "born" in Miami Arena and loves hockey. It describes the rat's childhood and his dream of one day seeing the Panthers win the Stanley Cup. The story even contains an image of a cartoon rat dancing while dressed in a Panthers sweater.

The fictitious story presented on the Panthers' Internet site is clearly meant to make light of the actual events and create a story for children (Figure 8.1). It is also an act of myth creation. Noonan (2001) described myth creation in Canada as the stories told. Those stories do not necessarily need to be true. Many of the myths of Canadian hockey are based on true events but have become embellished over time. With the altering of the Rat Story from its actual events to the cartoon version, the Panthers have created the first actual Southern hockey myth.

The previous two chapters have examined, respectively, the Precondition and Condition of Southern hockey culture. The entities involved in its creation have been considered and an attempt to categorize the South's emerging hockey traditions was

presented. It is time now to examine the Postcondition of Southern hockey and compare

it to general Southern sport culture or that of hockey's hearth culture.

Rally Rat - Biography
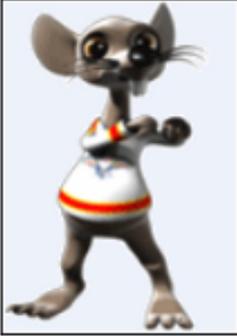
Full Name: Rall E. Rat

Born October 8th, 1995, in the basement of Miami Arena, he was given the name "Rall" as part of a family tradition. His friends call him "Rally". Although he didn't know it, Rally was born at a very special time in South Florida. His "room mates", the Florida Panthers, were beginning an unforgettable journey to the Stanley Cup Finals, and soon Rally would become a part of South Florida sports history.

Rally used to love going upstairs and watching the hockey games with his friends and family. Nothing brought him as much joy as seeing the Panthers win a game, because then his parents would allow him to run around on the ice and celebrate. Some of his over-zealous buddies used to jump onto the ice after each Panthers goal, but they eventually learned to wait until after the game because they could have more fun.

In April of 1998, Rally's roomies, the Florida Panthers, moved north to Office Depot Center in Sunrise. His parents were content to remain in Miami, and Rally loved them so much that he stayed. Although glad to be with his family, Rally missed watching the Panthers play hockey and what he really missed was running around on the ice and celebrating with his team.

This past summer, when his parents decided to retire in a West Palm Beach condominium, Rally knew there was only one place for him to go... Sunrise. Rally can now be spotted at Panthers home games dancing after a big goal, or leading the crowd in his favorite chants like: "We Will Rock You" or "Let's Go Cats", and he still loves jumping onto the ice and celebrating with his pals after a home win. He hopes that some of his old buddies from Miami Arena will come join him, because he wants nothing more than to cheer his favorite team on, and hopefully one day be back at a Stanley Cup Finals game.

Figure 8.1. The story of the Florida Rally Rat is an example of myth creation.
Source: Florida Panthers web site.

Chapter 9: The Postcondition: A Discussion of Southern Hockey Culture's

Foundations

This chapter discusses the Postcondition of Southern hockey using the 2004-05 Lockout season as a termination line for the Condition portion of my model. The Lockout season was chosen as the demarcation between Condition and Postcondition for three reasons. First, the Lockout represents a significant marker in hockey history in several ways. It is the first time since 1917 that the Stanley Cup was not awarded and the only time the National Hockey League failed to crown a champion. The Lockout also marked the first time in North American sports history that an entire season was cancelled because of a labor dispute.

Coupled with the historic aspect of the Lockout are the changes to the game that came about following the League's resumption. Major rule changes involving player equipment, tactics allowed, and the level of enforcement by officials were all altered in meaningful ways. The structure of the game itself was altered when for the first time the NHL ended the practice of games ending in ties and each team being awarded one point in the standings[18]. Under the new system games that are tied at the end of regulation are decided by a shootout. This was installed in an attempt to remove a common team strategy. Late in tied games, many teams simply played for the tie and the one standing point that came with the tie instead of risking a loss and receiving no points. This practice

---

[18] The old NHL system awarded two points for a win and one for a tie. The current system awards two points for a regulation or shootout win and one point for a shootout loss. No points are awarded for regulation time losses under either of the systems.

was blamed for "boring" hockey instead of an intense finish. That rules change was a direct effort by of the League looking to improve the entertainment value of the game.

A third reason why the Lockout season was chosen as the termination point of the Condition portion of the model is the changes in the League's financial structure and outlook. Although the League managed to institute a salary cap on the players they lost investments from sponsors and all major regular-season television contracts. The NHL is airing games on cable networks, but has gone from ESPN in 2004 to The Outdoor Life Network in 2006 and Versus in 2007. Along with this change has come a substantial loss of viewership and corporate sponsorship. For these reasons any scholarly examinations of the NHL conducted in the future will need to be mindful of the Lockout and its effects on the game. The remainder of this chapter examines the state of Southern hockey culture during the Lockout and compares it to the initial conditions established in Chapter 6. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the major findings of this study.

The Foundations of Southern Hockey

Analysis of the traditions that are growing among Southern NHL teams along with the results of fan and franchise personnel interviews yield four distinct foundations for Southern hockey culture. The combination of these four represents the Postcondition of the NHL. Each will now be considered.

Hockey as Entertainment

The first foundation of Southern hockey culture is that hockey in the South is primarily a form of entertainment. Although fans do enjoy the game itself and many are avid fans of their teams, for the majority of those going to Southern hockey games it is an

entertaining night out. Table 9.1 lists the various responses given by fans surveyed at games and via the Internet to the question "What do you like about hockey?" The answers were then grouped into general categories (Table 9.2). Nearly 82% of fans responded by mentioning that the experience of being at the game was important to their enjoyment of the sport. The importance of hockey's entertainment value was also shown in responses to the question "What don't you like about hockey?" Nearly three-quarters of fans (71.7%) mentioned something that reduced the entertainment or excitement value of the game as their first response. The Trap, along with other strategies for slowing or impeding a skater's forward progress, were the most common specific answer. One fan described the Trap as "the seventh ring of Hell for a hockey fan" because it removed all the excitement from the game. Other common responses were related to rules that slowed the game such as offside and icing. The seriousness of the fans' complaints was made apparent when the NHL changed many of its rules following the Lockout to remove these aspects of the game.

Table 9.1. Responses given by fans as to what they like about hockey. A total of 106 people were interviewed.

Atmosphere	Great saves
Beer	Hard hitting
Contact	Intensity
Easy to follow	Protecting the goalie (fighting)
Easy to learn	Skill level
End to End action	Speed
Fighting	Strategy
Goal Scoring	Teammates
Great night out	Tradition

Table 9.2. Categories of fan responses to "What do you like about hockey?"

%	Excitement	Physical	Skills	Experience	# Surveyed
Men	76.5	63.0	58.0	79.0	62
Women	68.4	63.2	38.6	86.0	44
Total	73.2	63.0	50.0	81.9	106

The NHL's rule changes are in accordance with how the League and Southern franchises are trying to market hockey in response to trends among fans. Hockey in the South has become as much a place to be seen as an event to watch. Neal (2004) commented that when the Panthers played in Miami Arena they attracted the South Beach crowd. "You would go to a game and half the people there weren't dressed for a hockey game. Then you go out afterward and the same people are clubbing on South Beach." He attributed this draw to the small number of available tickets. Miami Arena only holds 14,703 for hockey games. This limited availability and relatively expensive ticket prices made Panthers' games a status symbol.

Neal also asserted the cost of NHL tickets was another place that hockey as entertainment could be perceived. Believing that most Southerners love sports, he stated "The question isn't if there are enough hockey fans in Southern cities. The question is will they pay $41 for a mid-level ticket." With the exception of Dallas, the other five Southern teams have not done well at the ticket office despite success on the ice. In 2004 the Tampa Bay Lightning won the NHL championship but finished 12th in attendance[19]. Nashville, despite reaching the playoffs each of the last three seasons, has yet to finish in

the top 20 in attendance. Atlanta reached the playoffs for the first time in 2007 yet finished 22nd in attendance. All of these teams have had increases in ticket prices nearly each season since they began operations. It would seem the cost of NHL games does not equal the entertainment value of the NHL in the minds of many Southerners.

The fact that hockey in the South is primarily entertainment is not lost on the players and coaches who work there. Commenting on his NHL experiences, then Nashville Predators captain Tom Fitzgerald stated:

> Florida was one of the original teams that did things in between periods for the fans. You didn't see that too often around the league before... Even today many of the older teams don't do stuff like that. I guess it's just not in their tradition. I'm glad we do that in Nashville for our fans. The team is committed to the concept of an entire entertainment experience (quoted in Leipold, 2000).

Other members of the Predators organization echoed Fitzgerald's comments. Head Coach Barry Trotz asked, "Nashville is one of the entertainment capitals of the world (referring to Nashville's Country Music Capital nickname). How could our team not be entertaining?"

The Predator's television commentator Terry Crisp described his experience with Canadian friends and family who came to visit and attended Predators' games. "They all loved it. They love the excitement around the arena. They can get hockey in Canada no problem but here it was a night out as well" (Crisp, 2004). The sentiments expressed by the Predators staff and players were repeated in interviews with personnel from other southern franchises. Marketing and public relations departments among southern

---

[19] Attendance figures were calculated using percent of available tickets sold to offset the fact that each arena has a different number of seats.

franchises are using the entertainment value of a night at the arena as a selling point to both families and corporations. This creates a feedback loop in Southern hockey, fans want entertainment along with the game and the franchises try to provide that service. New fans that attend a game are, therefore, likely to see hockey as entertainment first and come to view it in that manner.

Hockey as a Family Event

The second foundation of Southern hockey is the number of women and families that compose a typical audience. Unlike hearth audiences that are primarily male with fathers and sons being the extent of family viewing, Southern audiences contain a large percentage of females. Although no statistical data have been compiled, a number of franchise personnel and some media reporters commented that one is as likely to see a mother sitting with children as a father at a Southern hockey game.

Where statistical data are available the numbers are striking. The Boston Bruins, one of hockey's mythical Original Six and one of the United States' more hockey enthusiastic cities, reported 85% of their typical arena audience was male. In contrast the Nashville Predators have audience compositions that are only 60% male with many of that number being fathers who are with their daughters (Lewandowski, 2004). The numbers are similar among other Southern NHL franchises.

This is not to imply that women are not part of hearth hockey culture. The concept of the "Hockey Mom" has long been a part of the lore of hockey-mad areas. It is in the role that women play in the South that sets them apart. Hearth hockey has relegated women to a supportive role. The majority of Hockey Moms are driving their

sons to games or practices, but rarely their daughters unless it is so they can watch their brothers play. Noonan (2002) examined this phenomenon by looking at hockey in poetry and fiction stories. In many of these works the "little sister" is described as watching her brother play and supporting him, but rarely as the star of a hockey novel.

Opposing this view of women as supporters of hockey is the Southern role of women taking the lead. Terry Crisp (2004) described hockey audiences in Nashville as mainly advocated by women. "I talk to people at booster club events or on game day and it surprises me how often I'm told that the woman dragged her husband or boyfriend to a game. They're doing more to increase our audience draw than anyone." The presence of so many women at Southern games has not been lost on the franchise marketing departments. Advertisements for season or individual game tickets are often oriented toward females. Souvenir stores inside Southern hockey arenas stock more items directed toward female fans than do their hearth brethren.

Otherness

The theme of Otherness in Southern hockey is rooted in the animosity expressed by the hearth region. Northern fans, especially Canadian fans, have targeted Southern expansion as the cause for most, if not all, of hockey's problems. The anger felt over changes in the game and the relocation of Canadian franchises has led to Southern fans becoming the scapegoats for hearth hostility. Chat boards, newspapers, and books have all been used to express the anger felt over the South's perceived ruination of hockey.

Fan chat sites are the most common place these feelings are expressed. One Southern fan interviewed reported she no long went online to discuss hockey because

158

most of the postings were from people who are "wasting time posting garbage." Often

the comments were not based on a particular event. They were merely ranting about why

hockey does not belong in the South. Carolina fans suffered from this type of abuse for

several years as Hartford fans posted comments, often very rude ones, about the South

and Carolina following the Hartford Whalers moved to North Carolina. According to

Carolina media relations director Kyle Hanlin, the negative activity has died down and

was nothing more than a "vocal minority" of Hartford fans. Postings on the official

Carolina Hurricanes' chat site prove the first part of Hanlin's contention but the

widespread examples on chat room boards for Dallas, Miami, and Atlanta cast doubt on

the "minority" label for this group of bitter fans.

Along with comments from fans, Southern media reporters have noticed similar

behavior among their northern colleagues. Several reporters commented, off the record

due to the nature of the comment, that reporters from northern teams "especially

Canadian teams act as though only they understand hockey. It's like they think after

twelve years of covering the game I still don't know a good play from a bad one because

I'm from (the South)." Northern newspapers have been noted by Southern teams and

reporters as making derogatory and unfair remarks about Southern hockey. One

Southern reporter complained that the Southern teams get blamed "for playing the Trap

like we invented it. The (New Jersey) Devils won the (Stanley) Cup with it before

Nashville or Atlanta were even in the League."

The question of "Who is a Southerner?" is often fluid in its response. David Neal,

while covering the Florida Panthers game in Toronto, overhead a Toronto sports reporter

comment, "How could they (the Toronto Maple Leafs) lose to a bunch of Southerners?"

Neal pointed out that the Panthers' lineup that evening consisted of 13 Canadians, six

Europeans and one American from Minnesota. One fan who had lived in upstate New

York until in his forties, and a life-long Maple Leafs fan, moved to Tampa, Florida when

his company asked him to relocate. In an interview he related that "now when I chat on

the message boards people treat me like I've never heard of the game. I played hockey

for twenty years but try to tell that to these guys on the (message) boards. I got so fed up

I stopped even reading the stuff" (Peterson, 2004). The northern fans seem to be

considering anyone currently residing in the South as a Southerner and therefore not a

true hockey fan.

The ostracizing of Southern fans as faux hockey fans has entered into popular

press in Canada as well. In his book *The Tropic of Hockey*, Bidini relates his experiences

as he travels to China, the Middle East, Singapore, and Romania in search of hockey in

"non-traditional places" (Bidini, 2004). Although the book relates many positive

experiences concerning hockey in places outside Canada, there is an underlying current

of resentment that rears up when discussing the United States. At one point Bidini

laments that skating rinks in Canada now use the word "ice" in the title. He derides the

need for the word in Canada by asking, "what does one expect to find in an arena? Beach

volleyball?" He uses this change in word usage as proof that America has ruined

"Canada's game." In another instance Bidini refers to the move of Canadian teams to the

U.S. as "screwy" while demeaning Southern teams that "are as steeped in tradition as

yesterday's goulash." Many of the franchise personnel interviewed from Southern teams

downplayed these types of comments, echoing Hanlin's words that disgruntled fans are only a minority. The frequency with which one encounters bitter statements directed at Southern hockey and the wide variation of those who are making them seem to indicate that there is more resentment than the League wants to acknowledge.

For Southern fans this type of resentment seems to have served as a unifying force. Southern hockey fans have answered the challenge of northern fans, often in a tit-for-tat fashion. During the 2004 Stanley Cup Finals, the Calgary Flames asked their fans to attend Games Three and Four, played in Calgary, wearing red clothing, the teams primary color. The result was an arena packed with red and named The Red Sea. Fans held signs claiming the Red Sea would swallow Tampa's team. Not to be outdone, the fans in Tampa Bay responded by wearing white to Game Five and calling it The White Wave. Similar incidents have occurred during series or games involving other Canadian and Southern teams. The negative actions by some northern fans have become a rallying point, and a cultural foundation, for Southern hockey.

The Tradition of the Non-traditional

The final foundation of Southern hockey is embracing and relishing the notion of being non-traditional. Part of Southern hockey identity is being built on the *idea* of being non-traditional, that hockey in the South is unique. This is the most powerfully sensed of the four foundations yet yields the least empirical data due to the subjective nature of this foundation. The non-traditional foundation is literally a sense one gets while speaking with or interviewing individuals involved in Southern hockey. During interviews with franchise personnel, five of the six front office staffs had at least one member refer to the

161

team as being in a non-traditional market. When asked, "when will the South stop being a non-traditional market?" the most common answer was, "When we start to win." Ironically, two of the individuals who responded this way worked for teams that had either won the Stanley Cup or finished second. This prediction has not proven true as Southern teams have won, as of 2007, three Stanley Cups and lost three additional Finals series all the while receiving the label of "non-traditional" in newspapers.

Southern hockey also embodies the idea that hockey adds a unique aspect to the Southern city that offers it. City and state governments have aided in the financing of arena construction and other infrastructure necessary to attract an expansion or relocating franchise. Local business leaders aided in presentations to the NHL expansion team selection committee. The value of attracting a professional franchise lies not only in the economic value but also in the amenity value of the team. Patrick Williams, President and General Manager of the group that brought the NBA to Orlando stated, "You can have Disney World and every major attraction, but if you don't have a team, in the eyes of the world you're not a big league city" (Shropshire, 1995). Williams' words have an added ring of truth concerning hockey. Neal (2004) pointed out, "Football, baseball and basketball are everywhere down here (the South), but hockey makes you different."

This sense of uniqueness also extends to the individual fan as well. The experiences related by fans during interviews and from personal experience as a club-level hockey player make it clear there is a sense of surprise and wonder when someone learns you are a hockey fan/player. Many fans interviewed specifically mentioned one of the things they liked about hockey was that it was different. "It isn't the same old thing.

162

You go to a hockey game ands it's a whole other experience. I still love other sports and football will always be my favorite, but hockey is something not everybody gets" (Girlock, 2004).

This sense of "non-traditional" is not historically accurate. Although the NHL does not have a long, Southern history many other hockey leagues do. The East Coast League is the oldest still in continuous operation. At least ten other leagues operated or located franchises in the South since 1950. The South may have a long history of failed hockey leagues and franchises, but that does not dismiss the point that it is a *long* history. The notion of being non-traditional must, therefore, be viewed as a symbolically constructed form of tradition, one that ignores time and generates its own mythos.

Comparing the Precondition and Postcondition

This dissertation used Noonan's (2001) extensive examination of Canadian hockey's cultural foundations as the Precondition of the hearth culture of the sport. Noonan found five underlying structures in the hearth region. They were 1) Hockey as Historical Tradition in Canada, 2) The "Common Coin" of Canadian Culture, 3) An Extension of Canadian Landscape, 4) The Pastoral Tradition of Hockey, and 5) the Hockey Hero as a Cultural Icon.

A literature review of scholarship into Southern sport culture was used to establish the underlying cultural views of sport in the South prior to the NHL's arrival. That review found four major frameworks that composed Southern sport culture; 1) Sport as entertainment, 2) Women and family involvement rather than solely a male cultural

163

trait, 3) Acceptance and enjoyment of violence in sport, and 4) the dynamic tension between Honor and Cheating.

The previous section discussed and established four major components of Southern hockey culture. In comparing these four components to the initial conditions of Canadian hockey culture and general Southern sport culture, it is evident that Southern hockey culture is the product of general Southern sport culture. Two of Southern hockey culture's themes, sport as entertainment and women and family involvement rather than solely a male cultural trait, are directly transposed from general Southern sport culture to Southern hockey. The remaining two themes are in opposition to the hearth culture. The sense of "Otherness" felt and expressed by many in Southern hockey is a reaction to animosity from many in the hearth. Even those who are from the northern United States or Canada and now living in the South have expressed being treated as though they are now outsiders to the hockey world by people back home in the north. The final theme, a pride in being part of Southern hockey and the unique venues it offers is in obvious difference with hearth culture since it is against the hearth culture that Southern hockey is priding itself.

Examination of the themes of hearth hockey culture reveals a similar result, that Southern hockey culture is not born from its hearth heritage. Far from taking pride in Canada's claim as "hockey's rightful home" the South is challenging this by considering itself hockey's new home. Instead of becoming part of a "Common Coin" along with the hearth the South stands outside, both by choice and by the rejection of many in the

hearth. Themes Three and Four[20] are directly opposed by Southern hockey culture which celebrates the uniqueness of hockey in a region that rarely has natural ice for long if at all. The final hearth theme, that of the hockey hero as cultural icon, may one day occur in the South but to date that has not appeared. With few Southern-born NHL players their are no "local heroes" to idolize and most Southern teams have not been in operation long enough for a player to reach legendary status while playing for one of those teams.

The Lockout that cancelled the 2004-05 season did not end the NHL's presence in the South. With the resumption of play in the fall of 2005, Southern NHL franchises have returned to continue and build a Southern hockey tradition. While the Lockout represents the ending point for this study's timeframe, it may serve as a beginning point for future studies on the topic. In this way the Postcondition of my study will become the Precondition for future research. This will validate Morris' assertion of a cyclic nature of diffusion events and the ability of her model to adapt to those changes.

Discussion of Findings

Comparing the Precondition to the Postcondition allows for this dissertation's central question to now be addressed. The difference in "feeling" between hearth and Southern hockey can be accounted for by the different underlying cultures in which each is played. The model used in this study has verified the initial hypothesis as stated; that cultural diffusion is not a simple transfer of a trait from one group to another. Rather, diffusion occurs through a cultural filter in which the new trait is accepted, rejected, or

---

[20] Theme Three is the image of hockey as an extension of the natural landscape. Theme Four considers hockey as a tie to the "pastoral history" of Canada.

modified by the recipient group and then fitted into previously existing cultural views. The model proposes that diffusion must not be considered as a unidirectional event. Even though the trait moved in one direction, in this case hockey moving from hearth to the South, the alterations made by the recipient region also had repercussions in the hearth region.

<u>Culture and Tradition Reexamined</u>

The results of this dissertation bring to light the importance of culture in shaping human interpretation and reaction to the events around them. Far from being merely the agglomeration of traits a group exhibits, culture can be seen as the controlling factor as to why the group exhibits the traits shown. The diffusion and adaptation of traits through an underlying cultural foundation has enabled groups to change their practices while retaining their sense of identity.

This study also presents tradition as more than a group's collective ways of living. Traditions are a part of our identity and are used to set us apart from groups around us. They grow not alongside our culture but from within it. It is for this reason that traditions can change and yet individuals still consider themselves part of the cultural whole. Southern cultural traits at the beginning of the 21st century are not those of the late 18th century, yet most Southerners today would consider themselves no less "Southern" because of those differences. Today's "Southern" traits were born in a cultural foundation passed down from previous generations.

Understanding that tradition is an outgrowth of culture also explains the debate in tradition study between the naturalist theory and symbolic constructionalism. Traditions

do require the symbolic understanding of the meaning behind events. Constructionalists are correct in asserting that it is not only time that is important to creating tradition, but the conscious connection made between the event and its meaning. It must be understood, however, that this connection can only be made through the underlying cultural foundation from which the tradition is being created. Without a cultural basis for the tradition there can be no symbolic understanding of the event. For example, the catfish thrown on the ice before the Predators' first playoff game would have little meaning to anyone who did not understand the context created by surrounding events. It is necessary to know the catfish stood for a previous hockey team in Nashville and that it was an answer to the Detroit tradition of throwing an octopus in order to fully appreciate the action. It requires even deeper understanding of hockey culture to understand that the tradition of throwing an octopus in Detroit was born at a time when it took eight wins in the playoffs to win the Stanley Cup. The octopus' eight arms represented each win. The traditions of both old and new teams alike are based on understanding the symbolism they represent.

The naturalist perspective that time is an important factor in tradition creation cannot, however, be dismissed. While time is not a requirement for the creation of tradition, it does appear to be a necessity for legitimacy. Bidini's comments that Southern hockey "has less tradition than yesterday's goulash" points to time as a vital element. Few would question Canadian hockey tradition and most Canadians accept hockey traditions in New England and the Great Lakes as "legitimate." It is the South's lack of time in forming their hockey tradition that is used to argue against their

legitimacy. It is the combination of symbolic understanding with the addition of time that creates the strongest traditions.

The conceptualization of culture and tradition may best be described by adapting an axiom from sociology. In discussing an individual's personality it is said that we are all three people, the person we think we are, the person others think we are, and who we really are. The concepts of tradition and culture follow this same pattern. Cultural groups hold to traditions they consider part of their identity, in essence establishing "who they think they are" while other cultural groups look at these same traditions and attempt to assign different identity "how others see them". The third choice is probably closer to the "truth": culture and tradition have a form that is more than either the generated or assigned create. The true nature of culture and its ties to tradition are difficult to recognize, then, because they are always seen through the viewer's own personal bias. In essence, our own culture becomes a cloud on our lens as we try to view the "pure" concept of culture.

Tradition and culture are difficult to recognize because they are viewed through the "clouded lens" of our own beliefs. We return, then, to Ben-Amos' comment that tradition is thought *with* and not *about*. The concept of culture can also be considered in the same way as many cultural geographers, while examining aspects of culture, spend little effort considering the deeper implications of the concept. Perhaps it is the inability to see clearly through our own cultural lens that limits scholars' attempts to understand the nature of culture itself.

Alterations to Morris' Model

The application of the Morris model in this study gives evidence to its high degree of adaptability. Originally used in language studies, the model has been adapted to media and now geographic fields of inquiry. The variety of topics examined also point to the model's value as a research tool. It also supports Morris' contention that the model could be used to examine the "before, during, and after states" of an event with the "after state" becoming the "before state" for a new event.

From this study's findings, it is possible add two new aspects to Morris' model (Figure 9.1). First, in any diffusion event there are two initial configurations, one in the source region and the other in the recipient region. The Precondition should therefore be viewed as a two-part platform with both the source region and recipient region examined for initial conditions. This change is also true for the Postcondition since the source region reacts to how the recipient region responds to the new trait in a reflexive and dialectical manner. Such an alteration allows the model not only to describe the diffusion event, but also to compare both Pre- and Post- conditions in the source and recipient regions. Analysis can be conducted to see how each region changed and how their views toward the other region may have altered. This alteration adds the geographical concept of *regions* to Morris' model and extends her models utility for geographic analysis.

The second alteration to the model made here is adding the concept of a "filter" through which the diffusion event occurs and through which the source region reacts to the recipient's changes to the trait. This addition is necessary because of the important role culture plays in screening new traits. The original model treats diffusion as simply a
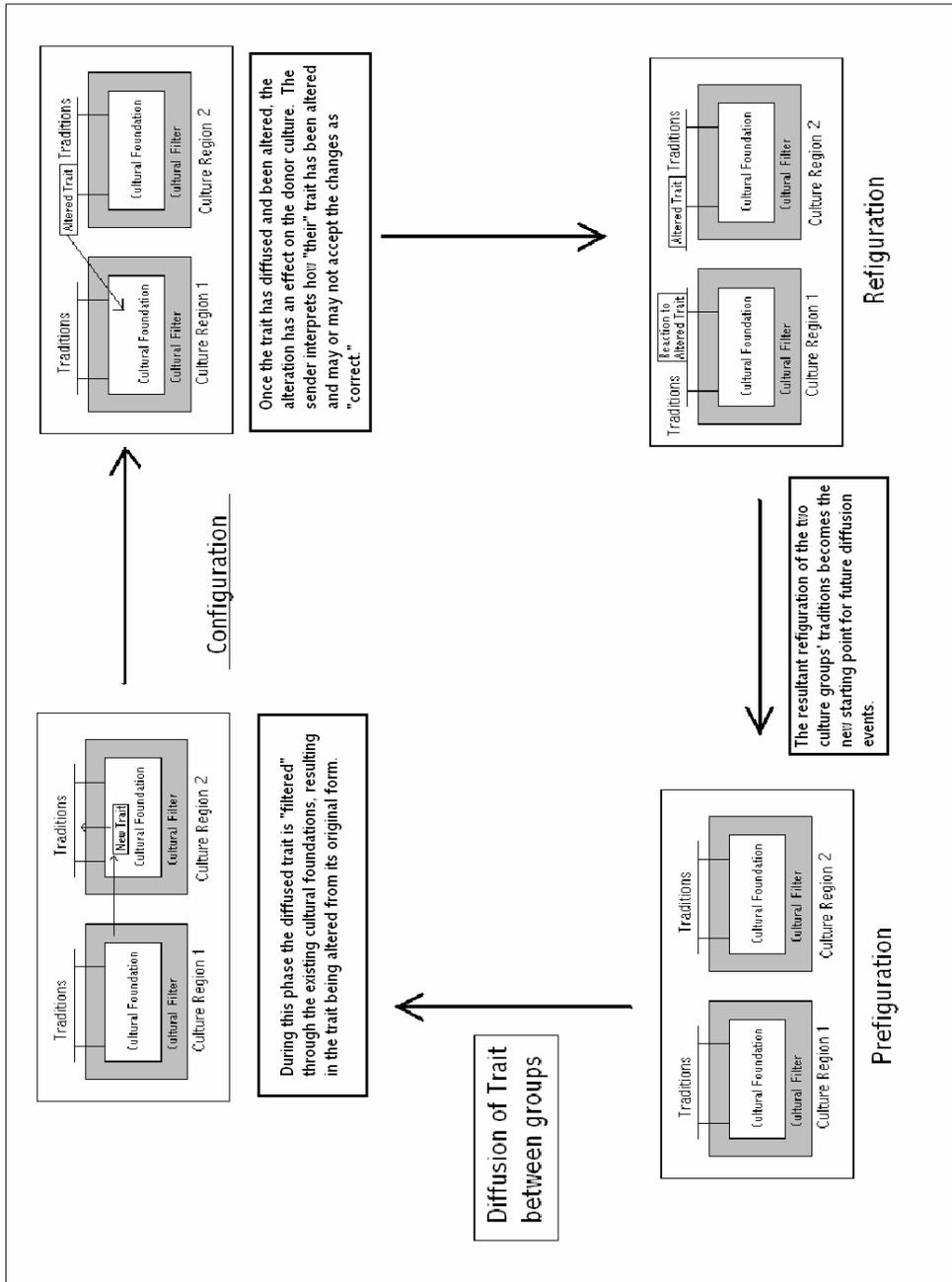
169

Figure 9.1. Model of cultural diffusion and trait alteration.

direct transfer between groups. Although Morris correctly notes that culture allows for new traits to be adopted "while remaining stable referents" for the members of the group, the original model does not convey the thought of bi-directional evaluation. The recipient group filters the incoming trait before it is incorporated into the overall traditions of that group. Likewise, the source group reacts to how the recipients altered the trait by viewing those changes through their own cultural filter.

The filtering of diffused traits can be illustrated by reexamining the entrance of cheerleaders into hockey. As hockey entered the South it was altered by southern sports culture. The addition of cheerleaders, a common southern sport trait, altered the hockey experience. The change did not just occur in the South, however, as some hearth teams also began using cheerleaders. The bi-directional flow of the original trait (hockey to the South) was countered by a respondent flow of the altered trait returning (cheerleaders moving to the hearth.) The altered trait was not, however, welcomed wholesale into the hearth. Resistance to changes in the game have been a common source of material for reporters and fans. This example highlights the need for "cultural filters" to be used in the model and for bi-directional flow of traits to be accounted for.

Limitations of Study

Several factors limited the construction and execution of this study. Most importantly was its use of only NHL teams in constructing the image of Southern hockey. As noted earlier, hockey at the minor league, high school, and club level does exist in the South and has since the 1930s. The presence of hockey in other forms besides the NHL meant that the Precondition was not truly a hockey void.

171

Availability of interview subjects was also a dilemma encountered during data collection. Individuals in a specific position, for example Marketing Director, could not always be reached for comment. Although all six teams did grant interviews with front office personnel, the lack of continuity between who was interviewed made analysis of responses more challenging.

Another limitation to this study is that it focused on those involved with hockey and not the general public as a source of data. Surveys and interviews were conducted with individuals who attended NHL games or posted on Internet chat rooms. These individuals could be seen as biased toward hockey and, therefore, less likely to give a negative impression of the game. Since the central concern of the study focused on the traditions growing in Southern hockey, this limitation is considered minor because it was the opinions of those involved with hockey that were shaping its growth and development.

Chapter 10: Conclusions

This dissertation was an effort to explain why hearth and Southern hockey games have a different "feeling" to them. It was hypothesized that the underlying cultural foundations of each region were shaping the growth of the traditions that surrounded the sport of hockey and that these foundations were the lenses through which the game was viewed. The key to answering this central question was to understand how tradition and culture interact and how they influence our sense of identity.

Much of the current research on regional identity notes that feelings of cohesiveness sometimes rise in opposition to the perceived cultural loss. Although most of these investigations seek to understand tradition and culture they continue, as Ben-Amos described it, to think *with* tradition and not *about* tradition. My study endeavored to follow Ben-Amos' counsel and investigate the nature of culture and how it relates to tradition creation.

This study used a model of diffusion events to test the initial hypothesis: the different experiences in viewing a hockey game in its hearth and in its new southern home come from the different underlying cultures. Morris' model examined the impacts of imported-media stories on other cultures. This served as the basis for my model used in this study. The Morris model consists of three states, the Precondition, the Condition and the Postcondition. My dissertation used the NHL expansion into the South as a case study and examined the state of Southern sport culture before the NHL expansion of the 1990s (Precondition) and the League's growth and how franchises entered Southern sports culture (Condition). I next analyzed Southern hockey culture at the time of the

Lockout and compared it to the initial conditions of Southern and hearth hockey culture (Postcondition).

The employment of the model yielded results that concurred with the initial hypothesis of this study. The difference in hearth and Southern hockey can be found in the different underlying cultural foundations. Southern sports culture shaped how Southerners saw the new game and how they reacted to it. It also provided evidence that the diffusion of hockey was not unidirectional: that is, the recipient culture altered how hearth fans viewed the game.

The application of the model supports Morris' contention that the model can be adapted to show a pattern of "Pre-Event, Event, Post-Event" actions in which the Post-Event conditions become the Pre-Event conditions for future diffusion. The use of this model in this dissertation is evidence that it can also serve as a useful tool to geographers. Two alterations to the model were suggested. First, the Precondition of both source and recipient region need to be determined. This allows for comparison of the recipient region's Postcondition with the initial conditions to evaluate how the diffusion event occurred. The Postcondition of the source region is also considered as a separate component for study since the changes made by the recipient culture alter how the source region reacts to both recipient and trait. The second proposed change in the model is the addition of "cultural filters" located between the source and recipient groups at both the Pre- and Post- condition stages. This is to account for the bi-directional filtering that occurs when a trait diffuses and is then reinterpreted by the original source.

The findings of this study suggest a need to reexamine tradition's interaction with culture. It is my assertion that traditions are outgrowths of cultural beliefs and values and all new traits are filtered through those cultural foundations in order to maintain identity. The new traditions are therefore created from the existing culture and maintain a "legitimate" sense of identity. That is, since the tradition is perceived as growing from within one's own culture, the trait is accepted as being part of the group's identity regardless of its origins.

The hockey culture developing around southern NHL teams is evidence of this outgrowth. Fans have created a southern hockey experience based on southern sport cultural foundations and not simply recreated hockey's hearth experience. The southern hockey foundations of sport as entertainment, the role of women as spectators, and the enjoyment of the violent side of the game all attest to the creation of traditions based in southern cultural underpinnings. Because these foundations derive from the surrounding cultural system they maintain a sense of "authentic" southern culture.

Using the conclusions from this study it is also necessary to reexamine Rooney's Theory of Sports Diffusion. Rather than growing from the grassroots level into a professional sport, hockey has entered the South primarily at the professional level with little and, in many cases, no prior hockey activity at the grassroots level. Minor league hockey and the arrival of the NHL have spurred a growth in lower-division hockey. Many southern colleges and high schools are beginning to develop club-level and interschool leagues. This "top down" growth is in direct opposition to Rooney's theory and Rooney's "law" will need to be reexamined in light of the southern hockey

experience. Although outside the scope of this study, data gathered for this dissertation

suggest that increases in communication, particularly the Internet, and increased

availability of equipment[21] have probably influenced the increases in interest and

participation in hockey.

<u>Future Research</u>

The investigations conducted to complete this dissertation yielded several avenues

for conduct of future research. The use of content analysis in a geographic study proved

a valuable tool and opportunities for further investigation exist. A variation of this study

could be conducted using the entire newspaper as a data source and not only the sports

page. Because this study attempted to use story placement as a test of hockey's

importance in the sports sections of southern newspapers, articles discussing hockey that

appeared in other sections were not be used. Research examining the total number and

content of articles throughout the newspaper without regard to placement may reveal

further understanding of hockey's place in southern sport culture.

Comparisons between newspapers in the hearth and southern regions offer future

researchers the opportunity to refine the understanding of variations in hockey. A general

study comparing several newspapers in the hearth and the South covering the same time

period would allow for insights into whether variations exist in how events are covered.

Content analysis could also be used to examine a single event to search for

differences in reporting. The 2004 and 2006 Stanley Cup Finals, for example, pitted

---

[21] In discussing hockey with fellow players and from personal experience it can be said that hockey
equipment is difficult to obtain through conventional stores in many parts of the South. Internet shopping
has helped alleviate this problem.

Canadian teams against a Southern team. Each series went the maximum seven games and represent the last championship series played before the Lockout and the first series played after. Comparing how the local newspapers covered these events should yield further understanding how hockey varies between hearth and the South.

During the course of completing this study it also became evident that hockey culture varies between levels of the game. After attending games at several levels of hockey, including college and club leagues, I noticed that the theme of "Hockey as Entertainment" appeared more prevalent at the lower levels. The use of "gimmicks" to induce people to come to games appears common at lower-level southern hockey venues. Bikini contests, two-for-one beer nights, and giveaways are common minor league hockey attractions attempting to bring in paying customers (Cohen, 2001). Research into the diversity of hockey culture between levels may produce greater polarization between hearth and Southern hockey culture. This type of inter-level research has been a noted absence in the field of sports geography since Rooney's *A Geography of American Sport* was published in 1974 and little research has been conducted subsequently to fill the void.

There is also the need for sports geographers to answer Alderman's call for further development of theoretical frameworks. Much of the original research conducted by Rooney and followed by others laid a foundation for the discipline by answering basic geographic questions. These early studies identified player production areas and tracked player movement in attempts to identify hearths or nodes of activity. It is now time for the field to expand from this less comprehensive form of analysis. This dissertation used

sports to research the nature of culture and its links to creation of tradition. While this is a first step, others must follow to expand the field's contribution to the discipline of geography as a whole. If sports can be used to investigate culture and tradition other topics such as gender or nationalism can also be examined by sports geographers, which have to date received little attention.

Further research is also needed into the nature of culture. Although the refinements to the model are a first step, continued improvements to the model are needed to increase understanding of culture's role in directing human behavior. Additional research must also be focused on the complex links between tradition and culture. To this end it is important that researches begin to think about tradition and culture instead of only their component parts such as race or gender. Better understanding of the underlying cultural foundations would enable scholars to make increased gains in comprehending the framework of cultural groups.

This dissertation's origins are found in a question concerning hockey and culture. It therefore seems appropriate to return to that impetus in conclusion. The question of cultural variation and why different groups of humans have contrasting views is one that has long been asked by scholars. From the early Greek philosophers who put the emphasis on environmental controls to modern concepts of cultural control, the mechanism for directing human behavior is not yet, and may never be, fully understood. That culture's effects can be witnessed in something as simple as the sport of hockey affirms the power and control that culture exudes.

The culture and traditions surrounding hockey in the hearth region developed slowly over a period of more than 100 years. This allowed for subtle nuances within the culture to develop and mature. Team personas develop and fan customs pass from one generation of hockey fan to the next. Rivalries, chants and songs sung during games, and other traditions blend to give the League a cohesive flavor. Each team develops and possesses its own unique characteristics.

Southern hockey teams have not had a long gestation period. The history of hockey in most current Southern NHL cities is that of failed minor-league franchises, few college teams and little grassroots development. Into this near vacuum, the NHL thrust professional hockey. Yet Southern hockey has developed its own sense of identity and the roots of that identity are in Southern culture. The personas that are developing around Southern teams carry a distinct Southern flavor. It was the intention of the NHL front office to bring the League to the South. Southern hockey fans have reciprocated by bringing the South to the NHL.

Bibliography

Bibliography

Adams, W. 1972. "Geography and Orienteering." *Journal of Geography*, 71 (8): 473-482.

Agostini, S. J., Quigley, J. M., and Smolensky, E. 1997. "Stickball in San Francisco," in *Sports, Jobs, and Taxes*. Eds. Noll, Roger and Zimblist, Andrew: 385-426.

Alderman, Derek, Preston Mitchell, Jeffrey Webb, and Derek Hanak 2003. "Carolina Thunder Revisited: Toward a Transcultural View of Winston Cup Racing." *The Professional Geographer* 55 (2), pp. 238-249.

Appadurai, A. 1990. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." *Theory, Culture, and Society* 7 (2-3), Special Issue: 295-310.

_____, 1996. "*Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Applebome, Peter 1996. *Dixie Rising*. New York: Times Books.

Baade, Robert and Sanderson, Allen 1997. "Employment Effect of Teams and Sports Facilities." in *Sports, Jobs, and Taxes*. Eds. Noll, Roger and Andrew Zimblist: 92-118.

Bairner, Alan 2001. *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization*. Albany: State University of New York Press

Bale, John 1979. "Track and Field Regions of Europe." *Physical Education Review* 2 (2): 87-90.

Bale, John 1980. "Women's Football in England and Wales." *Physical Education Review* 3: 137-145.

Bale, John 1981. "Cricket in Pre-Victorian England." *Area* 13: 119-122.

Bale, John 1992. *Sports, Space and the City*. London: Routledge.

Bale, John 1994. *The Landscapes of Sport*. Leicester: Leicester University Press.

Bale, John and Joseph Maguire, eds. 1994. *The Sports Arena: Athletic Talent Migration in an Interdependent World*. London: Frank Case.

Ben-Amos, Dan 1984. "The Seven Strands of *Tradition*: Varieties in Its Meaning in American Folk Studies." *Journal of Folklore Research*, 21: 97-132.

Bennett, Bruce 1977. "Sports in the South up to 1865." *Sport in America,* Winter 1977: 4-18

Bidini, Dave 2004. *The Tropic of Hockey*. The Lyons Press.

Bodley, John H. 1994. "Cultural Anthropology: Tribes, States, and the Global Systems."

Brenner, Michael, Jennifer Brown, and David Canter, eds. 1985. *The Research Interview*. London: Academic Press.

Bronner, Simon 1998. *Following Tradition*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press.

Burley, R. 1966. "A Note on the Geography of Sport." *Professional Geographer*, 14: 55-56.

Carlson, Albert S. 1942. "Ski Geography of New England." *Economic Geography* 18: 307-320.

Carney, George 1995. "Culture: A Workable Definition." in *Fast Food, Stock Cars, and Rock & Roll*. USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Cohen, Jason 2001. *Zamboni Rodeo*. Vancouver: GreyStone Books.

Conacher, Brian 1970. "Hockey in Canada: The Way It Is!" Gateway Press, Toronto.

Crisp, Terry, personal communication, broadcaster, Nashville Predators, April 21, 2004.

DeChano, L. M. 1989. "The Changing Geography of NHL Player Origins." *Sport Place*
10 (2): 4-22.

Diamond, Dan 2000. "Franchise Histories." In *Total Hockey, 2nd Edition,* ed. D.
Diamond, pp. 209-211. Scarborough, Ontario: Dan Diamond and Associates, Inc.

Diller, Jack, personal communication, President, Nashville Predators, April 21, 2004.

Encarta World English Dictionary 2001. Microsoft Corporation. Bloomsbury
Publishing Plc.

Entman, R. M. (1993). "Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm." *Journal
of Communication*, 43, 51-58.

Ferrett, Robert L. and Carl Ojala 1992. "Geographic Shifts in Divisional College
Football Recruiting Since the Inception of Proposition 48."
Sport Place 6 (1): 29-38.

Fitsell, Bill 2000. "The Rise and Fall of Ice Polo: The Roots of Hockey". In *Total
Hockey, 2nd Edition,* ed. D. Diamond, pp. 32-36. Scarborough, Ontario: Dan
Diamond and Associates, Inc.

Fitzsimmons, Ernie 2000. "Early Pro Leagues." In *Total Hockey, 2nd Edition,* ed. D.
Diamond, pp. 32-36. Scarborough, Ontario: Dan Diamond and Associates, Inc.

Flyer's History 2008. "Kate Smith." http://www.flyershistory.net/cgi-bin/kate.cgi.
Retrieved on April 10, 2008.

Fowler, Roger 1991. *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*.
London: Routledge.

Galt, Anthony 2005. *Definition of Culture*. Wisconsin-Green Bay Webpage,

    http://www.uwgb.edu/galta/MRR/Backup/CULTDEF.HTM

Gavin, T. 1979. "Up form the Mines and Out from the Steelworks: A Study of Regional

    Variations in the Production of Top-Flight Professional Footballers in Great

    Britain." *South Hampton Geographer* 11: 22-34.

Genest, Simon 1994. "Skating on Thin Ice? The International Migration of Canadian Ice

    Hockey Players." In John R. Bale and Joseph Maguire, eds, *The Sports Arena:*

    Athletic Talent Migration in an Interdependent World. London: Frank

    Case: 112-125.

Gritzner, Charles, 2002. "Restoring *Culture* and Related Terms to their Rightful

    Geographic Meaning." *Journal of Geography* 101: 222-223.

Gruneau, Richard and David Whitson 1993. *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport Identities*

    and Cultural Politics. Toronto: Garamond Press.

Hanlin, Kyle, personal communication, Public Relations for Carolina Hurricanes, April

    26, 2004.

Hardin, Robin L. 2000. "Promoting Gold in the Golden Age: A Frame Analysis of the

    Writings of O.B. Keelor and Grantland Rice." Unpublished Doctoral

    Dissertation, University of Tennessee.

Henry, Donald L. 1996. "On the Move." *Business Facilities* April: 28-38, 51-52.

Henzel, Jerry P. 1990. "From Rivers to Rinks: A Geographical Analysis of the Origins of

    Ice Hockey Players." *Sport Place International* 4 (3): 16-22.

Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger 1983. *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hockey Attitude 2003. "Cheerleaders and Hockey." Online site http://www.hockeyattitude.com/html/cheerleaders_and_hockey.html

Houlihan, B. 1994. *Sport and International Politics.* United Kingdom: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Hughes, Tom, personal communication, Public Relations for Atlanta Thrashers May 11, 2004.

Hunter, Douglas 2000. "1942-67: The Original Six." In *Total Hockey, 2nd Edition,* ed. D. Diamond, pp. 32-36. Scarborough, Ontario: Dan Diamond and Associates, Inc.

Jaeger, Lauren 1998. "Hartford (Conn.) Waterfront Project to Include $1 billion Event Facility." *Amusement Business*, May 25: 10.

Jarvie, G. and J. Maguire 1994. *Sport and Leisure in Social Thought.* London: Routledge.

Jensen, Klaus Bruhn 1995. *The Social Semiotics of Mass Communication.* London: Sage.

Kidd, Bruce, and John Macfarlane 1972. *The Death of Hockey*. Toronto: New Press

Kitchen, Douglas 2000. "The 'Original Six' 1942-43 to 1966-67". In *Total Hockey, 2nd Edition,* ed. D. Diamond, pp. 128-131. Scarborough, Ontario: Dan Diamond and Associates, Inc.

Kroeber, A. L. and C. Kluckhohn 1952. *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. Peabody Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States.

Kyriakoudes, Louis M. and Peter A. Coclanis 2002. "Tennessee Test of Manhood:

    Professional Wrestling and Cultural Stereotypes." In *The Sporting World of the*

    Modern South, ed. Patrick Miller, pp. 276-293. Urbana, Illinois: University of

    Illinois Press.

Leipold, Craig, and Richard Oliver 2000. *Hockey Tonk: The Amazing Story of the*

    Nashville Predators. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Lethert, Patrick 2000. "Minnesota's Holy Week." In *Total Hockey, 2nd Edition,* ed. D.

    Diamond, pp. 32-36. Scarborough, Ontario: Dan Diamond and Associates, Inc.

Lewandowski, Cathy, personal communication, Public Relations, Nashville Predators

    April 21, 2004.

Maguire, J., 1999. *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations.* Cambridge: Polity

    Press.

Manasso, John, personal communication, staff reporter, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*,

    February 23, 2004.

Martin-Barbero, Jesus, 2002. "Identities: Traditions and New Communities." *Media,*

    Culture & Society 24:621-641.

McConnell, Harold 1984. "Recruiting Patterns in Midwestern Major College Football."

    Geographical Perspectives 53: 27-43.

McConnell, Harold 1992. "Where They Came From Revisited: Division I-A Football

    Player Production, 1988." *Sport Place International* 6 (3): 36-45.

McFarlane, Brian 1967. *50 Years of Hockey*. Toronto: Pagurian Press Limited.

McFarlane, Brian 2000. "The Founding of a New League." In *Total Hockey, 2nd Edition,* ed. D. Diamond, pp. 121-123. Scarborough, Ontario: Dan Diamond and Associates, Inc.

Meyer, John W., John Boli, George M. Thomas, Francisco O. Ramirez, 1997. "World Society and the Nation-State." *American Journal of Sociology* 101 (6):144-181.

Miller, Patrick, 2002. *The Sporting World of the Modern South*. Urbana, Illinois: University of   Illinois Press.

Miller, Terry K., "Sports Venues Bring Economic Energy Back Downtown." *Urban Land*, February 1998. pg. 53-55.

Morris, Nancy, 2002. "The Myth of Unadulterated Culture Meets the Threat of Imported Media." *Media, Culture & Society* 24:278-289.

Neal, David, personal communication, staff reporter, *Miami Herald*, February 27, 2004.

Noonan, Kerry 2001. "The Discourse of Hockey in Canada." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Carleton University.

O'Hara, Aidan 2000. "Common Ice: The Culture of Ice Hockey in Greater Boston." In *Total Hockey, 2nd Edition,* ed. D. Diamond, pp. 3-4. Scarborough, Ontario: Dan Diamond and Associates, Inc.

Ojala, Carl F. and Elwood J.C. Kureth 1975. "From Saskatoon and Parry Sound: A Geography of Skates and Sticks in North America." *Geographical Survey* 4 (4): 177-198.

Ojala, Carl F. and Michael T. Gadwood 1989. "The Geography of Major League
  Baseball Player Production, 1876-1988." *Sport Place* 3 (3): 24-35.

Oriand, Michael. 1976. "Sport and Space." *Landscape* 21: 32-40

Oriard, Michael 1997. "In the Beginning Was the Rule." In *The New American Sport
  History*, ed. S.W. Pope, pp, 88-120. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press.

Owen, Gerald 2000. "The Origins of 'Hockey'". In *Total Hockey, 2nd Edition,* ed. D.
  Diamond, pp. 3-4. Scarborough, Ontario: Dan Diamond and Associates, Inc.

Pandit, Kavita 1992. "Snowbelt-to-Sunbelt Migration and the North-South Fertility
  Convergence: Exploring the Theoretical Links." *Southeastern Geographer* 32
  (2): 138-147.

Patton, M. Q. 1990. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods,* 2nd ed.. Newbury
  Park, CA: Sage.

Peet, Richard, 1989. "World Capitalism and the Destruction of Regional Cultures." In
  R.J. Johnston and P.J. Taylor. *A World in Crisis? Geographical Perspectives*, 2nd
  edition. Oxford: Basil Blackwell: 175–99.

Peterson, Scott, 2003. "Sens could be latest to sex-up game presentation — and it
  works". Online site "http://www.carleton.ca/ctown/archiv/nov2202/sport4.htm"

Pieterse, J.N., 1995. "Globalization as Hybridization." In Featherstone, M., S. Leah, and
  R. Robertson (eds.), *Global Modernities*. London: Sage.

Pillsbury, Richard, 1989. "A Mythology at the Brink: Stock Car Racing in the American
  South." *Sport Place International* 3(3): 2-12.

Pillsbury, Richard, 1995. "Carolina Thunder: A Geography of Southern Stock Car Racing." In *Fast Food, Stock Cars, and Rock & Roll*. Carney, George O. ed. USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Powers, William K, 1995. "Innovating the Sacred: Creating Tradition in Lakota Religion." *European Review of Native American Studies* 9 (2): 21-24.

Raitz, Karl B. 1987. "Perception of Sports Landscapes and Gratification in the Sport Experience." *Sport Place* 1 (1): 5-19.

Reisman D. and R. Denny 1969. "Football in America: A Study in Cultural Diffusion." In J. Loy and G. Kenyon, eds., *Sport, Culture and Society*, London: McMillan.

Rimmer, P. and R. Johnston 1967. "Areas of Community Interest in Victoria as Indicated by Competitive Sport." *Australian Geographer*. 10: 311-313.

Riffe, D., C. Aust, and S. Lacy 1993. "The Effectiveness of Random, Consecutive Day and Constructed Week Sampling in Newspaper Content Analysis." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 70 (1): 133-139.

Robertson, R. 1990. "Mapping the Global Condition: Globalization as the Central Concept." *Theory, Culture, and Society* 7 (2-3), Special Issue: pp. 15-30.

Robertson, R. 1995. "Globalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity." In M. Featherstone, S. Lash, and R. Robertson (eds.), *Global Modernities*. London: Sage: 25-44.

Rooney, John F. Jr. 1969. "Up From the Mines and Out from the Prairies: Some Geographical Implications of Football in the United States." *Geographical Review* 59, (3): 471-492.

Rooney, John F. Jr. 1974. *A Geography of American Sport: From Cabin Creek to Anaheim*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.

Rooney, John F. Jr. 1975. "Sports From A Geographic Perspective." In Donald Ball and John Loy, eds, *Sport and Social Order*, Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.

Rooney, John F. 1980. *The Recruiting Game: Toward a New System of Intercollegiate Sports*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Rooney, John F. 1982. "Intercollegiate Athletic Recruiting: A Geographical Analysis of Its Origin, Diffusion, and Potential Demise." *National Forum*, 62: 32-36.

Rosenbaum, Dave 1997. *Miami Ice: Winning the NHL Rat Race with the Florida Panthers.* Tampa; McGregor Hill Publishing Inc.

Russell, Michael 1974. "Hockey and Its Regions: A Spatial Analysis." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Oklahoma State University.

Rybacki, Karyn Charles and Donald Jay Rybacki, 2002. "The King, the Young Prince and the Last Confederate Soldier: NASCAR on the Cusp." In *The Sporting World of the Modern South*, ed. Patrick Miller, pp. 294-325. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press.

Sassen, Saskia, 1996. *Losing Control? Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization.* New York; Columbia University Press.

Shaw, E. 1963. "Geography and Baseball." *Journal of Geography* 62: 74-76.

Shelley, Arlene M. and Fred M. Shelley 1993. "Changing Migration Patterns of Major League Baseball Players." *Sport Place* 7 (1): 23-35.

Shils, Edward, 1981. *Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Shropshire, Kenneth 1995. *The Sports Franchise Game.* Philadelphia: University of
Pennsylvania Press

Silk, Michael and David L. Andrews 2001. "Beyond a Boundary? Sport, Transnational
Advertising, and the Reimagining of National Culture." *Journal of Sport &
Social Issues*, 25 (2): 180-201.

Spikard, Steven E. 1995. "Value of a Major League Sports Franchise to a Community."
Presented to the *Annual Conference of the Counselors of Real Estate, Atlanta,
GA*, November 5, 1995.

Swain, Gregory L. 1990. "Spatial Analysis of Big-Time Basketball Talent Production,
1987-90." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Oklahoma State University.

Todd, Brian J. 1999. "Five-diamond Tour." *Home & Away*, March/April: 25, 26.

Tylor, E. 1880. "Remarks on the Geographical Distribution of Games." *Journal of
Anthropological Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 9: 23-30.

Watson, Bruce 1999. "It's More Than Just a Game." *Smithsonian*, November: 30:142.

Wenner, Daryl 1999. "The Sportscape of Brookings, South Dakota." Unpublished
Master's Thesis, South Dakota State University.

Wiedeke, Jennifer, "Factors Affecting Attendance in the National Hockey League: a
Multiple Regression Model," M.A. Thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel
Hill, 1999.

Zukerman, Earl 2000. "McGill University." In *Total Hockey, 2ⁿᵈ Edition,* ed. D.
Diamond, pp. 16-19. Scarborough, Ontario: Dan Diamond and Associates, Inc.

Newspaper articles

Miami Herald March 17, 1993 "Squabble over rebate endangers hockey start."

Miami Herald March 26, 1993 "Rebate issue clouds South Florida franchise's lease."

St. Petersburg Times of January 8, 1992 "Steinbrenner visits Dome on behalf of Lightning."

St. Petersburg Times of January 8, 1992 "New minor league plans to put team in Bayfront Center."

The Tennessean January 20, 1998 "Ticket lag a concern for Predators."

Appendix

Appendix 1

1. Interview Questions for Front Office Personnel:

As a team in a "nontraditional" hockey market, does the media speculation of a work stoppage for the 2004-05 season affect how you approach selling your team? What affect do you see a work stoppage having on teams in southern markets?

What has been your most successful means of attracting fans? Have there been attempts that failed?

In your opinion, do people come to games for the hockey or for a night out? Has this changed since the first seasons?

What questions are most asked by fans and prospective fans?

Did the <u>team name</u> attempt to invent traditions for the fans to follow (i.e. songs, chants, wearing certain colors)? If so, what were they and how successful have they been?

What traditions have emerged among fans and personnel since the first season?

How does the organization "stay in touch" with the people of <u>Team's city</u>?

How much advertising does the team do and, in your opinion, is it vital to advertise to bring in fans?

How do prospective players (free agents or draft picks the team is interested in) respond to playing in a southern city?

What do you think has helped the most to bring credibility to southern hockey teams?

What are some of the challenges still facing southern franchises?

2. Interview Questions for Sports Reporters:

How long have you covered hockey for the Name of Newspaper? Sports in general? Were you a hockey fan prior to covering hockey? (If not: Are you a hockey fan now? If yes: How long?)

Where did you grow up?

When you write a story, are there specific aspects of hockey you focus on? If so, why? Has this changed over the years?

Do you travel to away games to cover them? (If so: Do fans in northern cities accept southern hockey?)

Do you believe there is a prejudice in hockey against southern teams by northern teams?

What do you think has helped the most to bring credibility to southern hockey teams?

What affect do you see a work stoppage having on teams in southern markets?

In your opinion, do people come to games for the hockey or for a night out? Has this changed since the team's first season?

What traditions have emerged among fans since the team's first season?

What are some of the challenges still facing southern franchises?

Appendix 2

List of Examined Web sites

1. www.atlantathrashers.com

2. www.carolinahurricans.com

3. www.dallasstars.com

4. www.floridapanthers.com

5. www.nashvillepredators.com

6. www.nhl.com

7. www.tampabaylightning.com

8. www.espn.go.com/nhl

9. www.foxsports.com

Appendix 3

Coding Sheets for Content Analysis

Newspaper							
Date							
FP Total Stories							
FP Hockey Stories							
FP Pictures							
FP Hockey Pictures							
Total NHL Stories							
Wire Stories							
Staff Stories							
Box Scores	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Stadings							
NHL Point Leaders	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Other Hockey News	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Hockey Roundup	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Other							
Story Type	Game Report	Game Report	Game Report	Game Report	Game Report	Game Report	Game Report
	Player Report	Player Report	Player Report	Player Report	Player Report	Player Report	Player Report
	NHL News	NHL News	NHL News	NHL News	NHL News	NHL News	NHL News
	Commentary	Commentary	Commentary	Commentary	Commentary	Commentary	Commentary
	Roundup	Roundup	Roundup	Roundup	Roundup	Roundup	Roundup
Headline	Team	Team	Team	Team	Team	Team	Team
	Star Player	Star Player	Star Player	Star Player	Star Player	Star Player	Star Player
	Other Player	Other Player	Other Player	Other Player	Other Player	Other Player	Other Player
	Other	Other	Other	Other	Other	Other	Other

Tabulation Sheets for Content Analysis

| Newspaper | | | Study Month | | Year | | |

Types of Pics	Check				Photos	Home Team	
	Celebration					Vistitors	
	Team					Both	
	Player					Other NHL	
	Goal						
	Coach						
	Fight						
	Bench						
	Skater						
	Game Action		-----	Game Action	Save		
			>				
	Pregame				Scrum		
	Practice				Boards		
					2 Players		

					Headline	
Headline	Team				Home Team	
	Star Player				Vistitors	
	Other Player				Other NHL	
	News				State of Game	
	Coach					
	Locational					
	Indirect Player					
	Indirect Team					

Story Type	Game Report	
	Player Report	
	NHL News	
	Commentary	
	Roundup	
	Home Tm Notes	
	NHL N & N	
	Gen. N & N	

Vita

Daryl Wenner was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania on May 10, 1969. He

attended Luzerne County Community College in Pennsylvania and earned an Associate

in Applied Science degree in computer technology in 1990. After working a few years as

a customer service representative, he entered The Pennsylvania State University. There,

he received two Bachelor of Science degrees, one in Earth Science focusing on geology

and a second in Geography, in 1997. That fall he enrolled at South Dakota State

University and in 1999 earned his Master of Science in Geography.

After taking time off while his wife finished her Master's degree in Education, he

enrolled in the doctoral program in geography at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville

in 2000. During his time in residence there, he taught as a graduate teaching assistant at

UT and as an adjunct instructor at South College. He was also active as a volunteer in

the community, serving as coordinator of Geography Awareness Week in 2001,

organizing volunteers to visit over 25 classrooms to present programs to 3rd-5th graders.

He also worked for six years as a volunteer for the Tennessee Geography Bee, serving as

a moderator.

His professional memberships include Gamma Theta Upsilon Honor Society and

the Association of American Geographers. He is also a certified Teacher Consultant as a

graduate of South Dakota State's Summer Institute sponsored by the South Dakota

Geographic Alliance.

He is married to Krista A. Wenner, which he considers one of his better decisions.