"*You'll Never Walk Alone*"

The Use of Brand Equity Frameworks to Explore the Team Identification of the 'Satellite Supporter'

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student

_____

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Those who know me best know that my favourite film is '*Jerry Maguire*'. A successful sports agent questions his direction in life and pens a mission statement – 'The Things We Think and Do Not Say'. "Sports", a younger Tom Cruise writes, "may never be the pure and simple thing that older men pine for. That ball park in the corn fields of Field of Dreams is, of course, a fantasy that lives in the mind. Sports is a huge operation, always was, but for now that fact is no longer a secret" (Crowe 2003). However, little produces such "an extreme level of breathless delight and helpless despair as swiftly as the movement of a ball across a pitch, chased by two rival teams of 11 players" (Kervin 2008). This is why sport remains an important part of my life and consequently fuelled my enthusiasm for this project. I would therefore like to sincerely thank those supporters who willingly gave of their time to share their thoughts and experiences. For those Reds supporters who showed such passion and pride for 'the Liverpool way', I hope that in 2009 you get to celebrate that elusive English Premier League title.

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GLOSSARY AND LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFANA	Australian Football Association of North America
A-League	Australia's (national) football (soccer) league
AFL	Australian Football League
Bundesliga	German football's highest division
Champions League	Annual football club competition (usually refers to UEFA)
Championship (The)	English football's first division (2nd highest behind EPL)
Copa Libertadores	South America's annual football club competition
EPL	English Premier League (its highest football division)
Eredivisie	Dutch football's highest division
FIFA	International Federation of Association Football
IAAF	International Association of Athletics Federations
La Liga	Spanish football's highest division
League One	English football's second division (3rd highest)
LFC	Liverpool F.C.
Ligue 1	French football's highest division
MLB	Major League Baseball (U.S. and Canada)
MLS	Major League Soccer (U.S. and Canada)
NASCAR	U.S. National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing
NBA	National Basketball Association (U.S. and Canada)
NBL	Australia's National Basketball League
NFL	U.S. National Football League
NFL Europe	National Football League (Europe) (now defunct)
NHL	National Hockey League (U.S. and Canada)
NRL	Australia's National Rugby League
Serie A	Italian football's highest division
Serie B	Italian football's second division
Super 14	South Africa, Australia and New Zealand franchises' rugby union championship
Twenty20 Cricket	Modified (shortened) version of cricket
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
UEFA Cup	Europe's annual football club competition
WNBA	U.S. Women's National Basketball League
XFL	U.S. X Football League (now defunct)

ABSTRACT

Globalisation and advances in communications technology have greatly expanded the potential marketplace for professional teams, especially for internationally popular sports. Lewis (2001) claimed that fans are now more likely to support a team based *less* on a shared geographic connection than on personal reasons. As Ben-Porat (2000) claimed, for these fans a foreign-based team is like "an 'overseas sweetheart,' far away but close to the heart" (p. 344).

These 'satellite supporters' (Kerr 2008, in press), or 'satellite fans' (Kerr & Gladden 2008) represent significant revenue, especially for those team brands that seek international expansion. In addition, an individual's decision to purchase the sports product is largely dependent upon their level of identification with a chosen team. Team identification, or "the extent to which a fan feels psychologically connected" (Wann, Melnick, Russell & Pease 2001, p. 3) to a particular team, is critical to the financial viability of a sports organisation. However, despite the increased attention paid to team identification, the reasons why satellite supporters identify with a foreign-based team have been largely unexplored. To address this need this study asks: What are the most important antecedents in the identification of satellite supporters with their chosen sports team? Recent research also suggests that a relationship exists between team identification and brand equity (Carlson, Quazi & Muthaly 2002; Kerr 2008; Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001). Therefore, the study also asks: Can a conceptual brand equity framework predict the determinants of team identification of satellite supporters?

The thesis adopts a case study approach using mixed methods; a strategy that can provide "a fuller understanding of the sports fan" (Jones 1997b). Online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were administered to members of fan organisations dedicated to the English Premier League's Liverpool F.C. Liverpool F.C. was an appropriate subject for the case study as it has a global fan base, a rich history, and is arguably one of the world's premier team brands.

This thesis proposes a number of important antecedents in the satellite supporter's identification with a foreign-based team. These are: media coverage; style of play; the presence of particular player(s); team success; history of success; participation in the

highest division; stadium; history of ethical behaviour; and the broadcast quality of games. Furthermore, a conceptual brand equity framework is shown to shed light on the possible determinants of their team identification. This study also confirms that social identity theory is an appropriate perspective to examine foreign fandom; satellite supporters might derive positive psychological benefits from their fandom; and the existence of a brand community dedicated to a professional sports organisation.

PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS ARISING FROM THE DOCTORAL RESEARCH

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"When you walk through a storm
Hold your head up high
And don't be afraid of the dark
At the end of the storm
Is a golden sky
And the sweet silver song of a lark

Walk on through the wind
Walk on through the rain
Tho' your dreams be tossed and blown
Walk on, walk on
With hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone
You'll never walk alone"
('You'll Never Walk Alone')

1.1. Introduction

The Gerry and the Pacemakers' classic, *"You'll Never Walk Alone"*, was first sung by Liverpool F.C. fans back in 1963 and has become synonymous with the English club ('Kop Classics: How Singing Started on the Kop'). However, on a historic night in 2005, these words filled the streets of Istanbul, Turkey, as the Liverpool F.C. staged a remarkable comeback to claim their fifth European football title. A comeback, defender, Jamie Carragher, exclaimed, that would have people "talking about that game in 20 or 30 years" ('Liverpool wins Champions League' 2005). The dramatic penalty shoot-out victory over Italian club, A.C. Milan, saw it become the latest English Premier League (EPL) side to triumph in the annual European Champions League. Millions of their fans worldwide, like American, Daniel Fallon, rejoiced as their beloved Reds tasted victory, and "cried like a schoolboy when Stevie [Gerrard] hoisted the cup" (Fallon 2006).

That eventful night had seen the Merseyside club join the elite ranks of Spain's Real Madrid and A.C. Milan as clubs who had tasted European glory on at least five occasions ('UEFA Champions League' 2007). Their Champions League triumph significantly boosted the club's fortunes: they received more than 50 million dollars in bonus revenue from European competition, signed new deals with sponsors, Reebok and Carlsberg, and saw their worldwide fan base more than double to 18 million (Gage 2006). Furthermore, their global profile had attracted renewed interest from financiers worldwide, from Thailand to Dubai to the United States (Maidment 2007).

Nearly 40 years earlier, Manchester United had defeated Portuguese club, Benfica, to become the first English club to reach a European final, let alone be crowned champion. The Red Devils, as they had then become known, had galvanised a nation (King 2003). In the pre-Bosman era,[1] clubs were truly representative of their communities. Before the 1995 court decision involving Belgian footballer, Jean-Marc Bosman, European football leagues could impose a quota on the number of non-national players allowed on member teams. European success was a source of national pride and pressure to succeed came from a public hungry for sporting glory.

When clubs met in the sporting arena, entire nations symbolically went to war. This 'warfare' fuelled national pride and rekindled memories of military glory. In 1956, as Manchester United clashed with German club, Borussia Dortmund, journalists referred to other less-friendly clashes with their European rivals.

> The Borussian forwards in their eagerness fell repeatedly into United's off-side trap, much to the satisfaction of the British Tommies who were present in large numbers ... Two superbly judged sorties by Wood held the ravening Germans at bay ... Here was history repeating itself: the Thin Red Line against the German hosts (*The Guardian,* November 21, 1956, cited in King 2003, p. 7).

Then, as now, the 'virtuous' had prevailed. However, professional sport has radically changed, and in the new millennium, European success can make or break a club's season. For instance, as earlier seen, Liverpool F.C. benefitted substantially from their

[1] In 1995, the European Court of Justice prohibited European domestic football leagues from imposing quotas on foreign players. Previously, UEFA had prohibited teams in European competition from naming more than three 'foreign' players in their squads. In 2005, Arsenal became the first team to field an English football side with not one Englishman in their squad ('Wenger defends his foreign 16' 2005).

2005 Champions League triumph while Manchester United's early exit from the 2005/06 Champions League stood to cost the club £15 million ('Manchester United's exit could be costly' 2004). Sports teams, formerly a crucible wherein national sporting dreams were forged, have become largely commercial entities, unable to galvanise a nation like they once could. A professional team, such as Manchester United or Liverpool F.C., is now primarily a business – a business that relies upon on-field success to fuel its fiscal ambitions. As a result, for many sports organisations, talk has gone from holding the 'thin red line' to boosting the 'bottom line'.

Sport, and in particular professional sport, has evolved into a marketable commodity whereby professional teams differentiate themselves so as to succeed in a competitive entertainment marketplace. As a result, the sports industry worldwide is worth more than US$100 billion a year, and analysts expect this to reach US$126 billion a year by 2011 (PWC 2007). Furthermore, sports teams need to develop and strengthen their brands so as to remain popular and financially viable in an increasingly-competitive globalised world. Indeed, according to former Real Madrid President, Florentino Perez, there will be "dire financial consequences" for those organisations that fail to do so (Hatfield 2003, p. 20). Ultimately, the 'commodification' of the sports product has major implications for management as teams seek to remain viable.

1.2. Background to the Research

The sports product is defined as "a good, a service, or any combination of the two that is designed to provide benefits to a sports spectator, participant, or sponsor" (Shank 2005, p. 216). Furthermore, professional team sport is perhaps "the most visible and far-reaching example of sport as a marketable product" (Metcalfe 1987, p. 163). Shank (2005) explained that athletes can also be considered sports products and promoted for commercial gain. The rise in commercialism is largely attributed to the rise of the mass media, especially the "Faustian pact" that has developed between sport and the networks (Meenaghan & O'Sullivan 1999, p. 242).

Many researchers are disturbed by these developments, and have argued the sports product has undergone a process of 'commodification' (Armstrong 1996; Brookes 2002; Euchner 1993; Giulianotti 2002; Haynes 2007; Maguire 1991; Maguire 2008; McKay 1991; McKay & Miller 1991; Real 1998; Rojek 2006; Scherer, Falcous &

Jackson 2008; Sewart 1987; Walsh & Giulianotti 2001). This occurs when sport is valued for its monetary exchange value, and sports institutions submit to the “gradual entry of market logic” (Giulianotti 2002, p. 26). Sport, therefore, has gradually acquired features commonly found in industry; notably a strict division of labour, specialised positions, and a powerful drive to maximise output and hence, profit (McKay 1991). It can also be seen in a wider context whereby athletes are valued as commodities that can be freely exchanged (Walsh & Giulianotti 2001). For instance, much has been written about the commodification of the American basketballer, Michael Jordan (Andrews 1997; Armstrong 1996; Jackson & Andrews 1999; LaFeber 1999).

In a competitive environment, professional sports tailor their product to maximise profit. Sports marketers alter their core product to provide more entertainment, extend their original concept to new markets, and seek wider audiences through creative scheduling (Burton & Howard 1999; Maguire 1991; Sewart 1987; Sutton & Parrett 1992). These strategies have seen the ‘designated hitter’ introduced in Major League Baseball (MLB), the introduction of tie-breaks in tennis and the three-point rule in the National Basketball Association (NBA). The NBA also introduced a sister league, the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA), to expand their fan base (Carter & Rovell 2003). Likewise, the introduction of Twenty20 cricket – a ‘refined’ version of one-day cricket – has “invigorated” the English domestic game (Marks 2005) and been well-received worldwide ('Research shows popularity of 20/20 cricket' 2007). Broadcast schedules are designed to maximise audiences, often despite public opinion. For instance, Australian fans, clubs and players were upset when the National Rugby League (NRL) introduced Sunday night grand finals ('Sunday night NRL grand final under fire' 2004). In addition, changes to the Beijing 2008 Olympics swimming schedule, so events could be seen live by U.S. viewers in primetime, angered non-American broadcasters and athletes (Cowley 2006).

The importance of marketing to the sports product has been further highlighted as sport is now considered one of the “truly global languages” (Meenaghan & O'Sullivan 1999, p. 245). As marketers seek to exploit international opportunities, the customer for professional sport has gradually shifted from the ‘live’ spectator to the television viewer (Williams 1994). Wann et al. (2001) described these individuals as indirect consumers. Mason (1999) claimed that professional sports teams now produce a product for the fans, the media, host communities and corporations instead of the game-day spectator.

With increased commercialism, the professional teams and leagues that relied upon gate revenues for their financial survival now handsomely profit from other avenues such as media rights, merchandise sales and corporate sponsorships (Mason 1999).

In modern society an individual "increasingly becomes a consumer of culture, and culture increasingly becomes a marketable commodity" (Firat & Venkatesh 1993, p. 245). For instance, one league's chief executive explained, "selling basketball will be no different to inducing someone to buy perfume or fine china" (McKay 1991, p. 43). The sports environment, therefore, is increasingly subject to commercialism and, many claim, this has led to greater commodification.

Beside the rise in mass media, this process is arguably fuelled by four major developments: a) the fusion of sport and entertainment, b) increased globalisation, especially in the sports industry, c) the growth in size, and importance, of foreign team fans and d) increased acceptance, and application, of branding principles to sports teams. These four developments are important in the context of this thesis and in particular c) and d) are reflected in the research questions.

1.2.1. The Age of 'Sportainment'

The differences between professional sport and entertainment are increasingly blurred and, perhaps, permanently erased. It is no longer easy to determine whether sport remains primarily an athletic spectacle or has become simply media content. Indeed, the worlds have perhaps inextricably merged, and become, as one newspaper columnist claimed, simply "sportainment" (Lipsyte 1996, p. 8.10).

Professional sports continue to position themselves as entertainment to appeal to both casual and serious fans, however, many claim, as a result they have been 'Americanised' (Duke 2002; McKay & Miller 1991; Nauright & Phillips 1997). For instance, Australian teams have adopted names such as Cowboys, Giants or Broncos, and introduced cheerleaders, mascots and live music, all historically the preserve of the U.S. professional leagues (McKay & Miller 1991; Nauright & Phillips 1997). Likewise, Duke (2002) spoke of the 'Disneyisation' of professional football in England whereby, to attract new consumers and maximise revenue, teams adopted marketing practices successfully implemented by the Disney theme parks. The introduction of

mascots and constant changes to jerseys, he argued, disrupted tradition and alienated fans, as football became a commodity reduced to television entertainment.

The rise in commercialism, however, might simply reflect the increasingly-competitive sports marketplace, especially as sport becomes another entertainment alternative. The wealth of entertainment options continues to grow, adding to a world that includes cable television, the Internet, downloadable music services, DVD recorders, theme parks, cinema, pay-per-view services, instant messaging, alternative sports, and so forth. Traditional options, professional sport included, need to fight for relevance, and hence survival, as a consumer has limited disposable income and leisure time.

With the emergence of 'sportainment', athletes now refer to themselves as 'entertainers' (Jensen 1994). Furthermore, sports executives compare their properties to media companies such as the Walt Disney Corporation or Time-Warner (Hill & Rifkin 1999). For instance, NBA Commissioner, David Stern, explained, "they have theme parks, and we have theme parks. Only we call them arenas. They have characters: Mickey Mouse, Goofy. Our characters are named Magic [Johnson] and Michael [Jordan]" (Swift 1991, p. 84). In a similar vein, Spanish football giants, Real Madrid, studied how Disney marketed the film, "*The Lion King*", to exploit the marketing potential of their 'galacticos' or football superstars ('The Real Deal' 2004).

Global media magnate, Rupert Murdoch, vowed to use sport as a "battering ram" to capture an international audience for his media empire (Teather & Brodkin 2000). Stotlar (2000) explained that such vertical integration is increasingly popular as media companies acquire content and can effectively cross-promote their sports teams. For instance, Disney acquired the National Hockey League's (NHL) Anaheim Mighty Ducks after the team featured in films and then broadcast their games on the Disney-owned ESPN dedicated sports network (Brookes 2002). Indeed, this is not limited to the United States as Murdoch's NewsCorp subsidiaries control 50 percent of Australia's NRL ('NRL History' 2006), the English Super League rugby league (Denham 2000) and an earlier attempt to acquire outright control of Manchester United only failed due to political intervention (Robertson 2004). Furthermore, media companies own European football clubs; Paris St. Germain (Canal Plus) and A.C. Milan (Fininvest) (Brookes 2002), and Australian regional television network, WIN, recently acquired equity in the NRL's St. George-Illawarra Dragons ('WIN Corporation Secures Steelers Future' 2006).

Professional sport and entertainment effectively operate in the same competitive marketplace and, over time, the line where one begins, and the other ends, has become difficult to define. Indeed, any illusions professional sport is not a marketable commodity, or valuable media content, are soon shattered as Rick Welts, former NBA executive, enthusiastically proclaims that the league makes “1,100 new episodes every season with no repeats” (Jensen 1994, p. 4). Perhaps columnist, Lipsyte, was correct when he announced the arrival of ‘sportainment’. Such programming, Sabo (1993) explained, is easily packaged for export and effectively serves as “the advanced guard in the globalization of the sports marketing industry” (p. 4).

1.2.2. The Age of Globalisation

Euchner (1993) argued that the sports landscape has dramatically changed in recent years. Besides increased commodification, he claimed sport has ‘delocalised’ or, more precisely, has become “less dependent on attachment to a specific place” (p. 26). Sport, like other industries, therefore, has had to adapt to the challenges presented by globalisation. According to Cantelon and Murray (1993), this globalisation process refers to the “internationalization of the market economy” (p. 276) and results in individual societies becoming increasingly interdependent (Sabo 1993).

Donnelly (1996) explained that as the removal of international barriers on financial capital brought about economic globalisation, and political globalisation and acceptance of market capitalism followed the collapse of communism, then culture (including sport) as a commodity is also subject to globalisation. This is consistent with Firat and Venkatesh’s (1993) earlier claim that culture increasingly becomes a marketable commodity. However, globalisation does not imply, nor require, the existence of a global culture (Featherstone 1990) nor the homogenisation of existing cultures (Appadurai 1990). Instead, cultural products “are torn out of place and time to be repackaged for the world bazaar” (Robins 1991, p. 31). Levitt (1983) claimed that even small markets are not safe as technological advances further fuel globalisation.

Due to the globalisation of the sports industry, the migration of athletes and coaches has become more noticeable (see Maguire 2008). For instance, the presence of high-quality foreign players is a key reason for the popularity of the English Premier League among global television audiences (Duguid 2004). Furthermore, coaches continue to

succeed abroad, notably with Chelsea, Arsenal and even locally, as Sydney F.C. took out the inaugural A-League title, Australia's domestic football competition, under German, Pierre Littbarski (Hall 2005). Furthermore, professional sports leagues have increasingly modified the structure of their competitions so as to exploit international opportunities. This has seen the introduction of the European Champions League and South America's Copa Libertadores as prestigious international football club competitions. In addition, there is speculation that a European Super League for elite football clubs "is inevitable" (Alexander 2002). In recent years, sports leagues have also expanded to incorporate their geographic neighbours, for instance, Australian and U.S. professional leagues have embraced teams from New Zealand and Canada, respectively, in order to grow their market, brands, and media revenue.

In the globalisation of professional sport, teams even relocate to foreign markets in order to remain viable. Although Canadian franchises, the NBA Vancouver Grizzlies and MLB Montreal Expos, had earlier relocated to the United States to improve their bottom line, Australia's National Basketball League (NBL) took the unprecedented step of relocating a team to a market largely unaware of the league with hopes of establishing a strong presence in Asia. The Hunter (Newcastle, NSW) Pirates became the Singapore Slingers ('Slingers working hard' 2006). According to Director, John O'Brien, "it's just the problem of Australia and New Zealand being too small a market, they have a desire to look at Asia as a potential way of getting a highly viable league" ('NBL Leaves Newcastle' 2006).

As technological developments improve, and the demand for programming continues, sports properties worldwide are prepared to meet demand. Football 'giants', A.C. Milan, Chelsea, Real Madrid and Bayern Munich (Holmes 2005), and minnows such as England's Stockport County, regularly participate in foreign exhibition matches (Freedman 2004), while Manchester United (Holmes, Dawley & Khermouch 2003) and even the Australian Football League's (AFL) Collingwood Magpies have launched broadband subscription television services (Tinkler 2005). Furthermore, consistent with NBA Commissioner, David Stern's belief that North American sports can become a "very interesting global export" (van Alphen 1992, p. F3), the NBA has evolved into a multinational corporation aggressively pursuing international markets (Andrews 1997).

Resistance to such ‘exports’ and the forces of globalisation has also emerged as fans witness their traditions disrupted and beloved teams disappear. Frost (2004) argued that globalisation poses a threat to traditional indigenous sports, however, he is confident they will survive given good management. In addition, Bairner (2001) explained, sport provides an important arena to “celebrate national identities” (p. 17). It is little wonder then that German fans are reluctant to accept the Americanisation of their ice-hockey leagues (Dinkel & Kratz 1998), and fans of Manchester United react violently to the American acquisition of their club ('Manchester United fans declare war on Glazer' 2005). Furthermore, rugby league fans, especially of inner-city club, South Sydney, were incensed as battle raged for control of the game in Australia and the available pay-television rights (Miller, Lawrence, McKay & Rowe 2001; Moller 2002).

The forces of globalisation have changed the sports landscape forever, and professional sport continues to be commodified as many professional sports teams pursue global expansion. However, many clubs have discovered that the lure of the marketplace has eroded their once-loyal fan base. As long-time South Sydney Rabbitohs fan, Mark Courtney explained: “Not for me a game where a club can be ripped from its roots because there might be more pay TV subscriptions to be sold in another city, and to hell with its local community. Bugger the lot of them. I’m a South Sydney fan” (Courtney 2000, p. 221). As professional teams seek to remain viable, the challenge will be to remain sensitive to local fans yet still be in a position to capitalise upon the irresistible potential of the foreign fan.

1.2.3. The Age of Foreign Fandom

For nearly two decades, the U.S. professional sports leagues have considered global expansion (Eskenazi 1989), for sport, as David Stern claimed, “is the international language, and we think basketball is up there at the top of that list in terms of dialect” (Weir 1993, p. 1A). As a result, astute marketers have secured broadcasting deals with countries worldwide in an attempt to speak this international language. At the same time, leagues have imported playing talent from around the world, and have launched new brands, for instance, the now defunct National Football League (NFL) Europe, to capitalise on the global appetite for sport. Although professional teams outside of North America have been largely content to focus on their domestic market, clubs such as Manchester United, Chelsea and Real Madrid have actively targeted foreign fans.

Advances in communication technology, and the acceptance of professional sport as a marketable commodity, have created a global market for professional teams. Fans have unprecedented access to their favourite teams and players regardless of physical location. Indeed, fans are now more likely to support a team based *less* on a shared geographic connection than on personal reasons (Lewis 2001). As Ben-Porat (2000) claimed, for these fans, "the club is an 'overseas sweetheart,' far away but close to the heart" (p. 344). These foreign individuals are the ultimate indirect consumer as they are unlikely to attend in person. Despite being geographically-removed from the epicentre of a team's influence, the city or country where the team is located, these fans often develop an emotional connection. The foreign consumer can marvel at their heroes' athletic exploits content in the knowledge that they belong to a community of supporters worldwide. In addition, they sometimes go to great lengths to sustain a 'connection' with their foreign-based team: they monitor media for news about their team, watch them perform, purchase licensed team merchandise, or socialise with other like-minded individuals. Kerr and Gladden (2008) described these individuals as 'satellite fans' although, since they are likely to differ in their degree of attachment to a chosen team, Kerr (2008; in press) called these consumers, 'satellite supporters'.

Meenaghan and O'Sullivan (1999) argued that since the evolution of the Olympic movement, sport has had the potential to generate interest "across all political and cultural boundaries" (p. 242), however, the number of sports with global appeal is most likely limited. Despite the global ambitions of club management, successfully exporting a team brand is largely dependent upon the international popularity, awareness and acceptance of the sport. This appears feasible when one examines those clubs with large foreign fan bases, usually professional European football teams, although other sports such as basketball and baseball continue to nurture their global audiences.

There is considerable evidence for the existence of foreign fandom. Spanish football club, Barcelona F.C., is believed to have 70 million supporters worldwide ('Nike extends FC Barcelona sponsorship in $189M deal' 2006), while English rivals, Chelsea and Liverpool F.C., have approximately 20 million (Huggins 2005), and 28 million (Rice-Oxley 2007), fans respectively. Indeed, the Liverpool F.C. could have as many as 100 million fans worldwide (Estridge 2007), while the foreign fan base for perhaps the world's most famous teams, Real Madrid and Manchester United, is very impressive. The number of Red Devils fans has doubled in the past five years from an estimated 75

million ('Manchester United fans declare war on Glazer' 2005; Jones, Parkes & Houlihan 2005), to 139 million, worldwide ('Reds fans double' 2008). Real Madrid, on the other hand, has a potential fan base of nearly half a billion (Henriksen 2004). Given their global fan base, perhaps it is no coincidence that Manchester United and Real Madrid are Europe's most valuable football teams (Gage 2009).

The phenomenal popularity of these teams is reflected in their global media exposure and audience. The English Premier League is broadcast to nearly 200 countries and has a global reach of 600 million households (Huggins 2005). In 2002, 360 million Chinese, more than who saw that year's World Cup, watched Everton battle Manchester City. The latter boasted countryman, Sun Jihai, and Everton had recently signed 'China's David Beckham', Li Tie (Gage 2007). Likewise, 30 million Chinese viewers regularly tune into Houston Rockets' games to see countryman, Yao Ming, battle the NBA's finest (Larmer 2005). In addition, more than two billion watched Real Madrid introduce its new star, David Beckham (Hatfield 2003).

Despite the global following for football and basketball, interest in other sports, for instance baseball and, surprisingly, AFL football, also presents lucrative opportunities. For instance, Japanese baseball fans were estimated to spend $500 million on MLB New York Yankees' tickets and souvenirs due to the presence of outfielder, Hideki Matsui (Whiting 2003), while Matsui's participation in the 2003 World Series saw nearly 13 million Japanese witness the Florida Marlins defeat the New York Yankees – compared to around 20 million American viewers (Fry 2004). Indeed, surprisingly, more Americans watch AFL football than Australians: Roy Morgan International found that 7.5 million Americans occasionally tune into the AFL, compared to a domestic Australian audience of around seven million ('More Yanks watch AFL: poll' 2005).

These figures highlight how a sports team can be popular outside its own geographic market and perhaps have millions of potential supporters worldwide. For instance, although 80 percent of Manchester United fans live abroad, nearly 90 percent of their revenue comes from the United Kingdom (Jarvis 2004), which suggests there are enormous opportunities for teams, large or small, to profit from their foreign popularity. Indeed, Stockport County F.C. (in League One or English football's second division), overshadowed by Manchester United mere miles away, now generates 10 percent of its revenue from China (Freedman 2004).

According to Jose Luis Nueno, marketing professor at Barcelona's IESE Business School, markets such as China will soon boast an estimated 80 million fans of foreign teams ('Real Madrid brings Hollywood touch to sport' 2004). Furthermore, former Real Madrid President, Florentino Perez, argued that unless teams captured 10 percent of the Chinese market in a decade, there would be "dire financial consequences in a truly global marketplace" (Hatfield 2003, p. 20). Professional sports organisations need to increasingly nurture and develop their own brands globally as the battle intensifies for the hearts and, perhaps more importantly, wallets of consumers everywhere.

1.2.4. The Age of Branding

As commodification and globalisation continue to effect industry change, management has sought to create and develop their own team brands. Lamb, Hair and McDaniel (2000) explained that a brand was "a name, term, symbol, design, or combination thereof that identifies a seller's products and differentiates them from competitors' products" (p. 323). In addition, it refers to the marketability of a commodity (King 2003). Although Bobby (2002) claimed that few clubs have the potential to be real brands, Bihl (2002) argued that professional teams need to become brands in order to survive.

Levitt (1980) argued that despite commodification all goods and services are ultimately differentiable. Pons (2008) therefore claimed, with respect to a sports team, "the brand must act as a differentiator that will allow a franchise to stand, in the eye of the consumer, for something different than any other team" (p. 1). For instance, Manchester City (Gibson 2005) and the governing body of world athletics, the IAAF ('IAAF appoints leading agencies to review brand and identity' 2008), hired agencies to enhance their brands. Dutch football giant, Ajax F.C., even established a South African franchise, Ajax Cape Town (Browne 1999). "Everything is in the brand", a Manchester United executive explained, "the brand is the team, its logo, the red shirt, the players, the story; it is everything related to Manchester United. It is a precious asset in developing the business" (Richelieu 2004, p. 5). As teams seek differentiation in a crowded marketplace, it is likely that they will reconsider the importance of such assets.

Brand consultants, *FutureBrand*, argued that any organisation that "seeks a relationship with its audience can be considered a brand" (Kleinman 2001, p. 5), and so marketers have applied branding principles to their sports environment. Indeed, many

have argued that professional leagues (Burton & Howard 1999), and teams (Adam & Adam 2002; Fisher 2003; Gillis 2004; Heller 2002; O'Reilly 2005), are now brands. For instance, Manchester United “almost rival the great consumer brands for recognition” (Heller 2002, p. 46). However, references to sports teams as brands are not limited solely to world football powers, and in this age of increased commercialism, the NRL South Sydney Rabbitohs ('Souths won't change name: Richardson' 2005) and Newcastle Knights (Read 2005), and the AFL Sydney Swans (Wilson 2006) and Collingwood Magpies (Tinkler 2005), have been described as valuable brands.

According to former Manchester United Commercial Director, Edward Freedman, there are two sides to the brand: the club and the players. The former refers to characteristics such as the institution, the fans and team history while the latter refers to individual athletes (King 2003). Star athletes are increasingly referred to as ‘brands’. For example, the NRL’s Mark Gasnier ('Gasnier a Dragon For Life' 2006), Australian tennis player, Lleyton Hewitt (Canning 2005b), and Brazilian footballer, Ronaldinho (Hall 2006). Furthermore, in the footsteps of Michael Jordan, English footballer, David Beckham, has become a branding phenomenon ('Branded like Beckham' 2003; Carlin 2004), and his brand appeal almost single-handedly allowed Real Madrid to eclipse Manchester United – Beckham’s former team – as the world’s richest club.

As professional teams become increasingly privatised, they have evolved from community-based institutions to corporate, or private, entities; marketable commodities often termed ‘franchises’. For instance, Australia’s Gold Coast was intent on securing a ‘franchise’ in either the NRL or AFL competition ('Gold Coast could be lost to AFL' 2004). In addition, British icons, Liverpool and Manchester United, were acquired by American owners (Maidment 2007). Despite claims that the NRL South Sydney Rabbitohs was “not a commodity or corporation to be taken over by individuals” (Swanton 2006, p. 90), the club was likewise acquired by private interests ('Souths privatised' 2006). As sport becomes more integrated into commodity culture, the kinds of identification fans make with the team and players will change, from supporting teams that represent their local communities to marketplace products (Whitson 1998).

Real Madrid’s Jose Angel Sanchez suggested that as the football market further globalises there may ultimately be only a few global football brand leaders (Frost 2004). According to many European clubs, international exhibition matches should be

scrapped (McMahon 2003), and the focus be on professional clubs, as some owners call national teams “remnants of the past” (Maguire 2000). Mason (1999) claimed that professional sport now produces entertainment tailored to indirect consumers, despite a traditional reliance upon game-day spectators. As a result, professional teams have adopted aggressive branding practices to strengthen the value, or equity, of their brands. This has seen management rebrand, repackage or even relocate their teams. For instance, Melbourne’s AFL Footscray became the Western Bulldogs and was urged to relocate to western Sydney (Mitchell 2006).

Aaker (1991) defined brand equity as “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service” (p. 15). Hawkins, Best and Coney (1998) further claimed that it is the value “consumers assign to a brand above and beyond the functional characteristics of the product” (p. 355) or, simply, the value the brand contributes to a product (Shank 2005). Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) suggested that it may also be strongly influenced by the social relationships, or community, which exist between the brand and its customers, or in this case, supporters or fans. It is therefore imperative that teams continue to develop their brands to weather periods of poor performance and maintain their brand equity (Couvelaere & Richelieu 2005; Shannon 1999).

1.3. The Research Problem

As has been outlined above, the sports landscape has changed dramatically in recent years. For instance, in 2003 there were no professional sports teams worth US$1 billion dollars yet, by 2008, there were two dozen worldwide (Van Riper 2009). Professional teams now field players from the four corners of the globe while speculation exists that club competition could push national teams to the brink of extinction (Maguire 2000). Furthermore, advances in communications technology, notably satellite television and the Internet, have allowed millions of fans to adopt, and support, a foreign-based sports team. For instance, Jason (2004) claimed, even in the “remotest village in Nigeria, the discussion may center on [former Real Madrid midfielder] Zinedine Zidane’s ankle injury while [Nigerian and former Arsenal striker] Nwankwo Kanu’s groin injury may cause a sleepless night in China!”.

Many fans, Real Madrid's Sanchez suggested, "will support a local side, and one of the world's big six [teams]" (Frost 2004, p. 367). For instance, 130 million fans worldwide follow Manchester United as their second or third team, and five percent of the world's population expressed some support for the club ('Reds fans double' 2008; Anderson 2008). As noted earlier, although foreign individuals have an active relationship with their favourite team, they are likely to differ in their degree of attachment to these teams. Therefore, this research will adopt the more neutral term, satellite supporter. The overall aim of this research is to explore why these supporters identify with their favourite professional sports team. While these issues are complex and multi-faceted, for the purposes of this research, this thesis will address two primary questions:

1. What are the most important antecedents in the identification of satellite supporters with their chosen sports team?

The team fan's decision to purchase the sports product is largely dependent upon their level of identification with their chosen sports team. In addition, satellite supporters often represent significant revenue, especially as brands seek international expansion. This raises the second primary question:

2. Can a conceptual brand equity framework predict the determinants of team identification of satellite supporters?

Recent research suggests the existence of a relationship between team identification and brand equity: as team identification increases, brand equity likewise increases (Carlson, Quazi & Muthaly 2002; Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001). In addition, conceptual frameworks developed to assess brand equity in sports likely contain antecedents which drive team identification (Kerr 2008).

Stephen Greyser of Harvard Business School claimed that the "real test of a sports brand is how much cachet is has outside its geographic region" (Rifkin 1999, p. 78). Given the likely importance of satellite supporters to these sports brands, it is valuable to understand those factors instrumental in their identification with an 'adopted' team.

1.4. Justification for the Research

As indicated above, in a competitive sport marketplace satellite supporters represent significant revenue streams. For instance, 20 percent of merchandise sold through the NBA's official website are to overseas fans (Eisenberg 2003) and Real Madrid now earns 60 percent of merchandise revenue from international markets, up from 10 percent only five years ago (Jones, Parkes & Houlihan 2006). Furthermore, the greater the degree of team identification, the more likely they are to attend their team's games (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002; Fisher 1998; Wann & Branscombe 1993), monitor their team in the media (Fisher 1998; James & Trail 2005), purchase team merchandise (Fisher & Wakefield 1998; Greenwood 2001; James & Trail 2005), and to both recognise (Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Lascu, Giese, Toolan, Guehring & Mercer 1995), and purchase (Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Madrigal 2000, 2004), products from team sponsors. Team identification refers to "the extent to which a fan feels psychologically connected" to an adopted team (Wann et al. 2001, p. 3).

Although satellite supporters might prove to be the future lifeblood of a sports franchise, and despite the increased attention paid to team identification (notably, Greenwood, Kanters & Casper 2006; Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Jacobson 2003; Jones 1998; Kolbe & James 2000; Sutton, McDonald, Milne & Cimperman 1997), why these foreign consumers identify with their chosen sports team has been largely unexplored. Indeed, Richardson and O'Dwyer (2003) claimed, research on factors that contribute to a fan's original choice of team would be a welcome addition to the field. In a competitive global marketplace, there is a need to understand who these consumers are, and why they support a foreign-based sports team. This thesis therefore seeks to address this need and examines the team identification of satellite supporters.

1.5. Methodology and Research Design

A mixed methods case study approach was used to address the research questions noted above. The case study is appropriate when a holistic, in-depth exploration of a phenomenon is required and when a participant's individual viewpoint is important (Orum, Feagin & Sjoberg 1991; Tellis 1997a). Research on sports fans (see Heinonen 2002; Jacobson 2003; Jones 1998; Nash 2000; Reimer 2004), and foreign supporters

(Nash 2000; Reimer 2004), has increasingly adopted this approach. A case study is especially valuable when literature on the issue is poor or scarce (Jacobson 2003).

The Liverpool F.C. was an appropriate subject for the case study. The Merseyside club has a global fan base, a rich history, and is arguably one of the world's premier team brands. In addition, access to enthusiastic research participants was possible given the number of online fan organisations dedicated to the club. Sports fan research has begun to use the Internet to engage with distant participants (End 2001; Heinonen 2002; Lewis 2001; Mitrano 1999; Nash 2000; Silk & Chumley 2004), and so this technology enabled access to the satellite supporter irrespective of physical location.

The complex nature of sports fandom has implications for the choice of suitable methods and although traditional studies have favoured quantitative methods there is now a greater acceptance of a qualitative approach. Indeed, mixed methods, Jones (1997b) claimed, could provide "a fuller understanding of the sports fan". Therefore, this research utilised mixed methods and explored the team identification of these supporters through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The detailed argument for this approach is described in chapter four, while the study's overall research design can be seen in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Research Design

Phase	Research Tasks	Chapter
Phase I Theoretical Foundations	I. Identify existing research into team identification and the sports fan.	2
	II. Identify existing research into the application of brand equity to the sports organisation.	3
	III. Develop a conceptual framework examining the links between team identification and brand equity.	3
Phase II Methodological Foundations	I. Develop an overall approach (the case study – mixed methods) to meet the research questions.	4
	II. Develop a research methodology for the study (questionnaires and semi-structured interviews).	4
Phase III Implementation	I. Implement research methodology.	5
	II. Undertake analysis of quantitative data.	5
	III. Undertake analysis of qualitative data.	6
Phase IV Conclusions	I. Develop conclusions from the quantitative and qualitative data in the context of the research questions.	7
	II. Examine the contributions this research has made to the field.	7
	III. Report on limitations of the study and make recommendations for future research.	7

1.6. The Thesis Outline

The remaining chapters of this thesis review the relevant literature, outline the methodology, and present and discuss the results of this research. The objective of each chapter is outlined below.

Chapter two outlines and reviews the relevant literature regarding sports fandom and the creation of team identification. Furthermore, as the likes of Manchester United, Real Madrid and Liverpool F.C. attract millions of worldwide supporters, it explores the relevance of Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory, a theory that has been consistently used to explore sports fandom, participation in other leisure pursuits, and team identification, as a theoretical framework to explore the satellite supporter phenomenon. For instance, it will be shown, individuals can base their social identity upon geographic location, nationality, ethnicity, religion, or support of a sports team.

Chapter three reviews the relevant literature regarding brand equity and its application to the sports environment. It will explain how, in a competitive marketplace, professional teams will become brands and the need to maintain a strong brand will increase. It will also discuss the evolution of a revised brand equity framework to reflect the international marketplace and the satellite supporter and how, since there appears to be a relationship between brand equity and team identification, this revised framework might shed light on the team identification of the satellite supporter.

Chapter four describes the development of the research design to examine the primary research questions. It explains why a mixed methods case study approach was used, its limitations, and justifies the selection of the Liverpool F.C. as an appropriate case. The chapter examines the English club's historical context and how it arose from the ashes of the Heysel and Hillsborough tragedies to become a global brand.

Chapters five and six analyse the quantitative and qualitative data gathered through the study. Chapter seven summarises the research's key findings, its limitations and directions for future research.

1.7. Definition of Terms

The following section provides definitions of key terms used in the thesis. There are three broad categories of terms noted: those related to the sports spectator; their identification with a sports team; and the value, or equity, of a brand.

Table 1.2: Sports Spectator Definitions

Concept	Definition
Sports Spectator/Consumer	Those who merely observe the sporting action, although many of these individuals are likely to be fans or enthusiastic devotees (Sloan 1989). "Individuals who actively witness a sporting event in person or through some form of media (radio, television, etc.)" (Wann et al. 2001, p. 2).
Sports Fan	One who "thinks, talks about and is oriented towards sports even when he is not actually observing, or reading, or listening to an account of a specific sports event" (Spinrad 1981, p. 354). "Individuals who are interested in and follow a sport, team, and/or athlete" (Wann et al. 2001, p. 2).
Fanship	"An affiliation in which a great deal of emotional significance and value are derived from group membership" (Hirt, Zillman, Erickson & Kennedy 1992, p. 725).
Fandom	"A subculture composed of like minded fans, typified by a feeling of closeness to others with the shared interest" (Thorne & Bruner 2006, p. 53).
Social Interaction	"The need to interact and socialize with others of like interests to achieve feelings that one is part of a group" (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002, p. 198).
Vicarious Achievement	"The need for social prestige, self-esteem and sense of empowerment that an individual can receive from their association with a successful team" (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002, p. 198).

Table 1.3: Team Identification Definitions

Concept	Definition
Team Identification	"The extent to which a fan feels psychologically connected" to a particular team or player (Wann et al. 2001, p. 3). "The orientation of self in regard to other objects (the team) that results in feelings of close attachment" (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002, p. 198).
Community Affiliation	Community affiliation is derived from "common symbols, shared goals, history, and a fan's need to belong" (Sutton et al. 1997, p. 19).
Socialisation	When applied to sports fandom, whereby one becomes a fan by "learning and internalizing the attitudes, values, knowledge and behaviors that are associated with fans of a team" (Kolbe & James 2000, p. 25).
Team-Related	Team characteristics rely almost exclusively upon on-field success (Sutton et al. 1997).
Organisation-Related	Organisational characteristics "encompass the 'off-field' image of ownership, decision making, and tradition of the franchise ... [and] also include the reputation of the franchise and the league/conference in which the team competes, the prestige and reputation associated with a franchise's league, and affiliated division within that structure" (Sutton et al. 1997, p. 18).

Table 1.4: Brand Equity Definitions

Concept	Definition
Brand	"A name, term, symbol, design, or combination thereof that identifies a seller's products and differentiates them from competitors' products" (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel 2000, p. 323).
Brand Equity	"A set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service" (Aaker 1991, p. 15).
	"The value consumers assign to a brand above and beyond the functional characteristics of the product" (Hawkins, Best & Coney 1998, p. 355).
Customer-Based Brand Equity	"The differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (Keller 1993, p. 2).
Brand Associations	"Anything 'linked' in memory to a brand" (Aaker 1991, p. 109).
	"Anything that the consumer takes away from the attending or viewing experience" (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998, p. 13).
Brand Awareness	"The ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category" (Aaker 1991, p. 61).
Brand Loyalty	The ability to attract and retain customers, whereby consumers bind themselves to brands due to their deep-seated commitment (Aaker 1991; Bloemer & Kasper 1995).
Perceived Quality	"The customer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives" (Aaker 1991, p. 85).

1.8. Chapter Review

This chapter sought to lay the foundations for the thesis. It provided background to the research, described the research problem and questions, and justified the topic areas of team identification and the satellite supporter. The chapter briefly described the research methodology, outlined the structure of the thesis, and presented key definitions. In the next chapter, I will examine the literature regarding sports fandom and team identification and discuss social identity theory as a theoretical framework to explore the satellite supporter phenomenon.

CHAPTER TWO

AN EXAMINATION OF SPORTS FANDOM

2.1. Introduction

The previous chapter identified how sport, in particular professional team sport, has undergone a process of commodification. As sport has evolved into a marketable commodity, professional sports teams have become brands, and club management has actively sought to enhance the value, or equity, of their brands. In the process, millions of supporters worldwide have 'adopted' professional teams from abroad.

This chapter examines the relevant literature regarding sports fandom and the creation of team identification, for previous research on the sports fan might provide insights applicable to the foreign team fan. Furthermore, this chapter explores social identity theory, commonly used to explain sports fandom, as a theoretical framework to explore the *foreign* fan phenomenon.

2.2. Notions of Sports Fandom

There have been a number of previous studies undertaken on sports fans and sports spectators (see for example, Madrigal 1995; Slepicka 1995; Smith 1988; Spinrad 1981; Wann & Branscombe 1993; Wann et al. 2001). However, there is often confusion as to what constitutes a fan, a spectator, a supporter or, even, a follower, which are all frequently interchanged (Gantz & Wenner 1995). For instance, Smith (1988) used spectator, fan and follower interchangeably in his exploration of the 'noble sports fan'. Given that this thesis examines individuals, albeit geographically removed from their chosen teams, a common term is therefore required. This requires an examination of previous 'fan' conceptualisations.

Sloan (1989) made the distinction between fan and spectator, arguing that spectators are those who merely observe the sporting action, however, most of these sports viewers were more likely fans, or enthusiastic devotees of the sporting ritual. In reality,

he claimed, the typical viewer fell between the two terms as they are commonly used. Spinrad (1981) defined the fan as any individual who “thinks, talks about and is oriented towards sports even when he is not actually observing, or reading, or listening to an account of a specific sports event” (p. 354). Furthermore, Hirt et al. (1992) defined ‘fanship’ as “an affiliation in which a great deal of emotional significance and value are derived from group membership” (p. 725), while Thorne and Bruner (2006) explained that ‘fandom’ is “a subculture composed of like minded fans, typified by a feeling of closeness to others with the shared interest” (p. 53).

In one of the earliest works to examine these supporters, Anderson (1979) argued that since the term ‘fan’ came from the word ‘fanatic’, a fan could therefore be defined as “an ardent devotee of sport, a person possessed frequently by excessive zeal for sport” (p. 116). Wann et al. (2001) described a sports fan as one who is interested in and follows a sport, team and/or athlete, while a sports spectator, also called a sports consumer, actively witnessed the sporting event either in person or through the media. Although neither term is mutually exclusive, they argued, the use of the latter, sports spectator, described those who actually witness an event.

As sport has become increasingly commercialised, researchers have developed more complicated sports consumer typologies and expanded upon the notions of fan versus spectator (Giulianotti 2002; Quick 2000; Richelieu & Pons 2005; Stewart & Smith 1996; Tapp & Clowes 2000). Giulianotti (2002) argued that with the “mass consumption of televised, market-driven sport” (p. 28), spectators could now be categorised along two major dimensions – traditional or consumer. Traditional spectators either support the club as a representative of their surrounding community or, via electronic media, come to support a range of favoured clubs representing one of their different identities dependent upon the circumstances. In contrast, consumer spectators experience the club, its traditions, its star players and fellow spectators through a market-centred set of relationships and their support is often strongest for the wealthiest teams.

Studies have also discussed the emergence of two distinct groups of sports consumer due to the increased commercialism: the rational and irrational (Quick 2000; Stewart, Smith & Nicholson 2003). According to Quick (2000), the rational consumer is an individual “who wishes to be entertained” (p. 151). The irrational consumer, on the other hand, is one who has “strong tribal and emotional connections” with a club or

team (Stewart, Smith & Nicholson 2003, p. 207). Most recently, Richelieu and Pons (2005) characterised sports consumers as either super fans, social fans, experiential spectators, or situational spectators. The ‘super fan’ has a high emotional attachment to the team, attends games the most and is likely to purchase team merchandise. The ‘social fan’ and ‘experiential spectator’ have medium-to-high attachment to the team; however, while the former is attracted to the social aspect of the event, the latter seeks to experience sensations through the event. The ‘situational spectator’ has low attachment to the team and attends games due to the opportunities to socialise.

Regardless of these consumer typologies, individuals differ to the degree they identify with their favourite team or player, whereby identification is the degree to which they feel “psychologically connected” to the team or player (Wann et al. 2001, p. 3). The degree of identification greatly influences their behaviour, loyalty and attitudes towards their team, and like-minded fans (Milne & McDonald 1999; Murrell & Dietz 1992; Sutton et al. 1997; Wann & Branscombe 1990, 1993, 1995). For instance, for fans with high levels of identification, the role of fan is an important component of their identity. Consequently, the team often becomes a reflection of themselves and team success and failure become personal success and failure (Wann et al. 2001). Although individuals can have an active relationship with the team, they often differ in their degree of attachment, so researchers choose more neutral terms such as ‘supporter’ (Crawford 2003) or ‘follower’ (Kolbe & James 2003).

2.3. Sports Spectator Motives

According to global entertainment consultant, *Octagon*, industry practitioners and researchers largely understand who sports fans are, which sports they follow and when and where (directly or indirectly) they consume the sports product. However, there still remains conjecture as to why fans are passionate about the sports they follow ('Passion Drivers - Quantifying why fans are fans'). Since the earliest research on the psychological motives that drive sport consumption (Sloan 1979; Zillman, Bryant & Sapolsky 1979), it has since been determined that sports fans are likely to be intrinsically motivated (Wann, Brewer & Royalty 1999; Wann, Ensor & Bilyeu 2001), that differences exist between male and female fans (James & Ridinger 2002), and that motives might differ between sports (Wann, Grieve, Zapalac & Pease 2008).

Although most motivation literature has focused on sports participation, Sloan (1979; 1989) suggested these motivational factors could also apply to sports spectatorship. He discussed several classes of theories in relation to spectator motivation. These included a) salubrious effects, b) stress and stimulation seeking, c) catharsis and aggression, d) entertainment and e) achievement-seeking theories.

The first theory discussed by Sloan (1979) suggested that an involvement with sports was attractive because it provided pleasure and enhanced one's physical and mental well-being. For instance, people were able to rejuvenate themselves through play, or "escape from work and the other tediums of life" (Sloan 1979, p. 226). His second and third theories, stress and stimulation seeking, and catharsis and aggression, respectively, argue that sports allows individuals to experience eustress, or pleasant stress, in a socially-acceptable manner, and that sports spectatorship should reduce aggressive tensions in viewers. The fourth theory, entertainment, claimed that sports fans receive increased happiness and enjoyment from their involvement.

The idea that fans seek achievement and esteem through sports victories was the final theory discussed by Sloan (1979). The sports fan feels they belong to a group with the team and will therefore experience happiness in victory and anger or distress in defeat. This theory explains the sports fan's tendency to 'bask-in-reflected glory', he argued, and indeed this phenomenon will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. The motivation to seek achievement, he concluded, was the most heavily-supported theory among the five discussed. This was consistent with a Polish study which found sports fans were motivated by the psychological need for social interaction and social approval (in order to strengthen self-esteem) (Zyto-Sitkiewicz 1991).

Trail, Anderson and Fink (2000) argued that most potential motives given to explain spectator consumption behaviour, or even the creation of a fan identity, are based upon social and psychological needs. Their model incorporated nine potential motives explored by previous researchers: achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, drama/excitement, escape (relaxation), family, physical attractiveness of participants, quality of physical skill of the participant, and social interaction. Wann and his colleagues (2001) identified the most common sports fan motives: group affiliation, family, aesthetic, self-esteem, economic, eustress, escape, and entertainment. McDonald, Milne and Hong (2002) determined the existence of four dimensions of

spectatorship, related to a fan's psychological well-being, social, basic sport, or personal needs. Their motivational framework included physical fitness and stress reduction, but also psychological and social motives such as affiliation, social facilitation, self-esteem and achievement.

Octagon conducted research across 26 sports, eight countries and 20,000 fans (Fogelson 2006). They suggested key emotions, characterised as one of 12 'Passion Drivers', motivate sports fans ('A passion for sport' 2005). Their research highlighted the importance of "reveling in the agony of others" (achievement), "being identified as part of [a] tribe" (sense of belonging), social interaction, appreciation based on personal participation, and a love of the sport. In the context of particular teams, they determined hero worship, television preference and team devotion, based upon obsession and loyalty, to be valid motives ('Passion Drivers'; Wardle 2006).

However, as one expects, there are often cultural differences between fans. Simon Wardle, *Octagon's* Vice President of Research, explained, in Europe, "Team Devotion starts almost at birth. This contrasts to Chinese fans who do not have deep rooted team affinities ... U.K. fans seem to be more team focused and avid than their German counterparts, [while] the French are more overall fans of the sport itself" ('Rivals on the Pitch, Global Football Fans Are United and Divided in Their Passion for the Sport' 2006). Knowledge of these motives is critical, *Octagon* concluded, so that "a brand can truly harness the power of fan emotion as a means through which to enhance brand equity" ('The passion of the fans' 2006). This is of particular interest given the context of this thesis and the contribution satellite supporters can make to sports team brands.

Many researchers have developed instruments to measure spectator motivation. These include: Wann's (1995) Sport Fan Motivation Scale; Kahle, Kambara and Rose's (1996) Fan Attendance Model; Milne and McDonald's (1999) Motivations of the Sport Consumer; and Trail and James' (2001) Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption. Moreover, since spectator motives possibly differ between sports and events, scales have also been created for specific sports contexts. These studies explored the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup (Funk, Mahony, Nakazawa & Hirakawa 2001), the Japanese Professional Soccer League (J League) (Mahony, Nakazawa, Funk, James & Gladden 2002) and the 1999 women's soccer, U.S. Nike Cup (Funk, Mahony & Ridinger 2002).

While active sports participation is beneficial to an individual's fitness, spectatorship is devoid of these benefits (Zillman, Bryant & Sapolsky 1979). Nevertheless, sports fandom is consistently seen to meet various psychological needs, either because it allows fans to seek "achievement and esteem in sports victories" (Sloan 1979, p. 257) or because it can "unite and provide feelings of belongingness" (Zillman, Bryant & Sapolsky 1979, p. 307). In addition, vicarious achievement is highly related to team identification (Trail, Fink & Anderson 2003) and is the primary indicator for team identification (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002). The need for affiliation is also positively related to team identification (Donavan, Carlson & Zimmerman 2005).

Although the literature often uses different terminology, two themes consistently emerge and are represented in this review. Spectators may gravitate towards sport since it can allow them to enhance their self-esteem or experience achievement vicariously through association with successful sports teams (i.e. the need for achievement). Although discussed on fewer occasions, sport may also have positive social consequences as it fosters affiliation with like-minded groups and provides a sense of community (i.e. the need for social interaction). Significantly, these notions are consistent with ideas expressed in social identity theory (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel & Turner 1979; Tajfel & Turner 1986). In recent years, research has begun to explore those factors responsible for fan identification with their chosen sports teams, in particular with reference to these key psychological drives. Yet the unanswered question remains as to which factors influence the satellite supporter to identify with their sports team.

2.4. Exploring Sports Team Identification

Although research has explored why individuals participate in, and watch, sport, why an individual identifies with their chosen sports team has received relatively little attention. Indeed, Wann, Tucker and Schrader (1996) suggested in their landmark study that their research should simply be considered "the first step in understanding the factors involved in identification with sport teams" (p. 1001), while Kolbe and James (2000) were concerned with "who and/or what influences people to form attachments to a sports team" (p. 24). According to Jacobson (2003), the literature failed to "adequately address the creation of fan identity" and had yet to answer the compelling question of how individuals form sport fan identities (p. 5).

Fink, Trail and Anderson (2002) explained that team identification refers to “the orientation of self in regard to other objects (the team) that results in feelings of close attachment” (p. 198) while, according to Wann et al. (2001), team identification was “the extent to which a fan feels psychologically connected” to a particular team or player (p. 3). Since fandom is an intrinsically personal experience there are numerous reasons why an individual might develop this ‘psychological connection’. For instance, a foreign supporter explained that, “something clicked between the word ‘Liverpool’ and my boyish psyche and I became, at that precise moment, a fan” (Farred 2002, p. 10), while another supported EPL Tottenham Hotspur because he “wondered what a Hotspur was” (Silverman 2006). Indeed, respondents in Wann, Tucker and Schrader (1996) gave more than 300 reasons for originally supporting their favourite sports team.

Wann (2006a) argued that potential team identification antecedents related to three major factors: psychological, environmental, and team-related, while Janda (2004) took a similar approach and used individual, environmental and team factors. Although there are many possible reasons to foster team identification, the literature, I suggest, can best be categorised along three main dimensions. These relate to community affiliation, socialisation, and team and/or organisational characteristics.

2.4.1. Psychological Factors: Community Affiliation

According to Wann (2006a), researchers have discussed three psychological factors that facilitate team identification. These psychological factors are: an individual’s need for belonging and affiliation (Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001); their desire to feel part of distinctive groups; and the impact of death salience, whereby identification with a team reinforces an individual’s self-image and acts as a buffer against mortality-based anxiety.

A key psychological factor is one’s need for belonging and affiliation, and the opportunity for affiliation with others was commonly given for team identification (Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996). Motives have been shown to be associated with team identification (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002; Robinson & Trail 2005; Trail, Fink & Anderson 2003; Trail & James 2001; Trail, Robinson, Dick & Gillentine 2003; Wann 1995; Wann, Brewer & Royalty 1999; Wann, Royalty & Rochelle 2002), while the need for affiliation is consistent with sports spectator motives, notably social interaction. Fink,

Trail and Anderson (2002) defined this interaction as “the need to interact and socialize with others of like interests to achieve feelings that one is part of a group” (p. 198).

By adapting Bhattacharya, Rao and Glynn’s (1995) research on organisational identification, a specific form of social identification, Sutton et al. (1997) proposed four managerial factors that directly impact the level of a fan’s identification: team; organisation; affiliation; and activity (i.e. direct or indirect consumption) characteristics. Consistent with Fink, Trail and Anderson’s (2002) definition of identification, each of these factors enhances the attraction of, and ultimately promotes identification with, a fan’s chosen team. Notwithstanding the involvement of the other factors, Sutton et al. (1997) claimed that the most significant element in the creation of fan identification was community affiliation, derived from “common symbols, shared goals, history, and a fan’s need to belong” (p. 19). Furthermore, Chen (2007) claimed that community affiliation might indeed be an important managerial factor affecting team identification. For instance, fans of the NFL Cleveland Browns, Kolbe and James (2000) discovered, had a strong sense of community with their hometown team, however, they also “felt positively toward the idea of a community of Browns fans outside of Cleveland and liked the idea that they were a part of this community” (p. 30). Although Sutton et al. (1997) limited this affiliation to U.S. sports teams and their supporters, arguably it applies to their foreign counterparts.

Gwinner and Swanson (2003) claimed prestige, domain involvement and fan associations might predict fan identification. Linkages, they claimed, between a team and an affiliated community were important in the creation of identification, and argued the team provides a vehicle for fans to belong to the larger community. Spectator sports, they concluded, can create a sense of community that allows individuals to enhance their self-esteem, especially if the community represented by the team is prestigious. Gwinner and Swanson (2003) explained that individuals were more likely to identify with a particular team when they were highly involved with the sport that team played (*domain involvement*), and when they repeatedly interacted with the team (*fan associations*). For instance, the purchase of season tickets, participation in pre-game festivities (Greenwood, Kanters & Casper 2006) or membership of supporter groups, such as ‘Browns Backers’ (Kolbe & James 2000) or among Japanese football spectators (Mahony et al. 2002; Uemukai, Takenouchi, Okuda, Matsumoto & Yamanaka 1995), would likely enhance team identification.

2.4.2. Environmental Factors: Socialisation

According to Wann (2006a), environmental factors contribute to team identification. A key environmental factor concerns the process of socialisation. Identification can be promoted through interactions with agents such as the sport (Dimmock & Grove 2006; Gwinner & Swanson 2003) and friends and peers (Crawford 2003; Dimmock & Grove 2006; Donavan, Janda & Suh 2006; Jacobson 2003; Kolbe & James 2000; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996). In addition, parents and family are also important (Dimmock & Grove 2006; Donavan, Janda & Suh 2006; Funk & James 2001; Greenwood, Kanters & Casper 2006; Jacobson 2003; Jones 1997a; Kolbe & James 2000; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996). Brand consultants, *FutureBrand*, reinforced the importance of personal relationships in fan socialisation. They found most football supporters chose their team in their youth and nearly a third of respondents (31.7 percent) attributed their choice to the influence of family and friends (Gieske & Forato 2004).

Kolbe and James (2000) explained that the socialisation process, whereby an individual becomes a fan by "learning and internalizing the attitudes, values, knowledge and behaviors that are associated with fans of a team" (p. 25), is critical to team identification. In their survey of Browns' fans, fathers (38.8 percent) were most influential in a fan's adoption of the NFL team. This was a likely outcome since nearly 87 percent of the respondents were male, and males traditionally receive greater socialisation into sport than females (Gantz & Wenner 1991). Friends (5.4 percent) had a significant influence, however, 7.8 percent of respondents claimed that they themselves, and not another person, were the reason they became a Browns fan. Furthermore, the majority (55.8 percent) had become 'true fans' of the team before their fifteenth birthday, highlighting the likely influence of a family member.

Kolbe and James (2000) suggested that the fan is introduced to this behaviour early in life by their family. However, as they get older, the influence of friends, peers and the mass media becomes more prevalent. Others have supported the involvement of the media in the socialisation process (Chen 2007; Jacobson 2003; Mahony et al. 2002; Silk & Chumley 2004; Sutton et al. 1997; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996), especially in light of technological advances such as satellite television and the Internet. For instance, a Manchester United fan explained, "I'm 19, born and raised in the US ... [but]

it is because of matches on Fox Sports World, the coverage on Sky Sports news and Pay Per View (when I can) that I chose United" (Silk & Chumley 2004, p. 255).

Donavan, Janda and Suh (2006) examined the key antecedents of brand identification, however, the brands were U.S. collegiate football teams. They ultimately concluded that environmental factors influence identification through both people and place, or "physical proximity to the entity" (p. 125). The importance of geographic proximity is due to this socialisation process (Wann 2006a). Since socialisation is such a powerful force, he argued, and living or growing up close to a team increases opportunities for it to occur, geographic proximity consistently features in the team identification literature. The following describes the significance of geographic proximity.

Japanese researchers, Uemukai et al. (1995), found the following factors influenced spectator identification with their favourite Japanese professional football team: the team was located in their hometown; they belonged to supporter groups; and the time since they had become a fan. Likewise, in England, when asked why they currently supported their favourite football team, nearly 53 percent (Jones 1997a) and 55 percent (Jones 1998), respectively, said because it was their local team. Subsequent interviews reinforced the importance of locality, as one fan explained, "you just build up an attachment to the idea of supporting the club, a club that's local as well, you become attached to it, and the idea that it is local" (Jones 1998, p. 187). In *FutureBrand's* survey of global football fans it was the third most important factor behind family and friends and presence of a favourite player: nearly 22 percent chose and supported a team because it was their "hometown team" (Gieske & Forato 2004).

The importance of geographic proximity is also evident in American studies. Kolbe and James (2000) determined factors related to the host city, rather than the team, had a strong influence upon team identification. Since fans had grown up in Cleveland, and the team was a city 'institution', they supported "the Browns as my hometown team" (p. 29). Likewise, Greenwood, Kanters and Casper (2006) found, local fans identified with the Arena Football League's Carolina Cobras due to pride in their hometown team. Being a native or resident in the Raleigh area was the second strongest predictor of identification. Both studies were consistent with Wann, Tucker and Schrader's (1996) conclusion that 'geographical reasons' were a major cause of team identification.

Schwartz and Barksy (1977) explained that local residents support their hometown team because these sports teams “are exponents of a community to which they feel themselves somehow bound and in whose destiny they find themselves in some way implicated” (p. 657). However, as sport becomes increasingly commercialised, teams often relocate in pursuit of greater profit. For instance, the NHL Hartford Whalers became the Carolina Hurricanes. Lewis (2001) found that when this happens the majority of fans express civic allegiance and sever all ties with the departing franchise. As Whaler fan, Dave Danese, explained, “I can’t root for the [Hurricanes] ‘Canes now. I can’t even watch the NHL anymore” (p. 13). For some fans, geographic proximity is clearly important to team identification for, in the absence of shared geography, team identification is largely erased. In addition, highly-identified fans often find separation difficult, resulting in depression (Mitrano 1999) and even suicide (Fernquist 2001).

2.4.3. Team-Related Factors

A thorough synopsis of team identification and its possible causes was provided by Wann (2006a) who claimed there were three broad types of antecedents: psychological, environmental and team-related. Key team-related factors, he suggested, are team performance, player attributes and organisational characteristics.

i) Team Performance

As described by Sutton et al. (1997), team characteristics focus upon on-field success. Wann, Tucker and Schrader (1996) highlighted the importance of team success when they examined the origin, continuation and cessation of identification with a fan’s specific sports team. They determined that team success, geographic reasons, the players themselves and the group affiliations due to family, friends and peers were important factors in a fan’s identification with their favourite sports team. Table 2.1 summarises the five most popular reasons for their current, and former, support of their favourite team. However, this represents only half of the total responses received, highlighting the range of potential reasons provided by sports fans, especially given that team identification is likely to be an intensely personal and individual experience.

Table 2.1: Causes of Current, and Former, Team Identification

Current Support	Original Support
Team was successful (16.1%)	Parents/family follows team (12.4%)
Liked players/players “were good” (13.3%)	Liked players/players “were good” (10.2%)
Geographical reasons (9.7%)	Geographical reasons (9.8%)
Friends/peers follow team (like group affiliations/friendships) (8.7%)	Friends/peers follow team (like group affiliations/friendships) (9.8%)
Parents/family follows team (5.5%)	Team was successful (7.9%)

Adapted from: Wann, Tucker and Schrader (1996)

Although Chen (2007) suggested team performance would be an important managerial factor affecting team identification, there is mixed support for the importance of this factor. Fink, Trail and Anderson (2002) found vicarious achievement to be the primary indicator for identification. However, the importance of vicarious achievement, defined as “the need for social prestige, self-esteem and sense of empowerment that an individual can receive from their association with a successful team” (p. 198), contrasts markedly with the majority of team identification studies.

Research on fans of professional football has largely failed to support the significance of team performance. As noted earlier, Japanese (Uemukai et al. 1995), English (Jones 1997a, 1998), and U.S. (Greenwood, Kanters & Casper 2006; Kolbe & James 2000) studies highlighted the importance of geographic proximity, while *FutureBrand*’s global survey of football supporters (Gieske & Forato 2004) stressed the influence of family and friends. Kolbe and James (2000), in turn, highlighted the importance of fathers in the development of many Cleveland Browns’ fans. While participants in Wann, Tucker and Schrader (1996) emphasised the importance of team success upon *current* identification, its influence upon their initial support was less dramatic (7.9 percent). Likewise, Gieske and Forato (2004) found team performance (6.8 percent) ranked a distant fourth in importance, and in Jones (1997a) it came fourteenth. In the short term, *FutureBrand* concluded, “losing games and missing out on trophies will affect revenue, but will not necessarily decrease the fan base” (Gieske & Forato 2004).

The type of fan examined most likely explains the apparent contradiction in the importance of team success upon identification. The majority of research has focused on sports fans of local teams, however, it was likely Wann, Tucker and Schrader (1996) inadvertently included fans of geographically distant teams (Greenwood 2001; Wann et al. 2001). Participants focused on their favourite team; however, they were not limited in their choice, either sport or geographic region. Jones (1997a) had earlier concluded that the factors that govern team identification may differ across various sporting contexts, and Branscombe and Wann (1991) found fans of geographically distant teams indeed reported higher levels of identification with more successful teams. Therefore, Branscombe and Wann (1991) suggested, identification for these fans was more dependent upon team performance than for fans of local teams. This might suggest that team success is important in the creation of team identification for satellite supporters, the epitome of fans of geographically distant teams.

An organisation's on-field success is consistent with the motives for sports spectators, notably vicarious achievement or the enhanced self-esteem that results from an association with a successful team. Vicarious achievement is highly related to team identification (Trail, Fink & Anderson 2003). It is also the primary indicator for team identification (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002) and, indeed, was a motive that applied solely to fans of successful teams. In a similar vein, vicarious achievement was associated, albeit less so, with identification with a community or coach (Robinson & Trail 2005), and players (Funk et al. 2001; Funk, Mahony & Ridinger 2002), possibly due to the degree that these elements can contribute to team success.

Fisher and Wakefield (1998) argued that team success did have a positive influence upon team identification, however, success appears to have a different effect upon fans of historically successful, versus unsuccessful, sports teams. For instance, Uemukai et al. (1995) discovered where spectators lived influenced their identification with less successful teams, yet not for those more successful. This was consistent with Branscombe and Wann's (1991) research into fans of geographically distant teams. Fisher and Wakefield (1998) ultimately claimed, team success predicts identification only for fans of successful teams since fans of less successful ones cannot boost their self-esteem as a result of their adopted team's poor performance. The following section will examine the second of Wann's (2006a) team-related factors, player attributes.

ii) Player Attributes

The presence of particular players can also influence team identification (Gieske & Forato 2004; Greenwood, Kanters & Casper 2006; Jacobson 2003; Kolbe & James 2000; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996). For example, Gary Silverman found himself a fan of Manchester United due to French international, Eric Cantona. As the American explained, for "a football neophyte, Cantona's approach was easy to appreciate. He spread the ball around – and created opportunities – like Larry Bird, Magic Johnson and other basketball players I admired" (Silverman 2006).

Wann, Tucker and Schrader (1996) found participants supported, and continued to support, their favourite team because they liked their team's players or because "they are good" (p. 998). In Greenwood, Kanters and Casper (2006), team players and/or coaches provided the strongest predictor of identification with the Arena Football League's Carolina Cobras. Mahony et al. (2002) also found evidence for team support due to player attachment. However, they suggested that a strong attachment to the sport and to a particular team was more important for long-term support.

In Kolbe and James' (2000) analysis of NFL Cleveland Browns fans, specific players were identified as influence agents, especially during a fan's formative years. In nearly 18 percent of cases, specific Browns' players had the greatest influence – behind only paternal influence – upon identification with the team. Likewise, *FutureBrand* found, the presence of a star player or "my favourite player" (21.8 percent) ranked only behind family or friends as to why fans chose their football team (Gieske & Forato 2004). However, the influence of specific players gradually eclipses that of family members as individuals became fans as adolescents or adults (Kolbe & James 2000).

Furthermore, the attractiveness of a team's players, more precisely, "the extent to which the team's players are perceived to have desirable or aspirational qualities" (Fisher & Wakefield 1998, p. 31) may influence team identification. However, the relationship between player attractiveness and identification is significant only for fans associated with less successful teams, again because these fans benefit less from the association. Fisher (1998) concluded, similarity, not attractiveness, better predicts team identification, and argued clubs "may benefit from emphasizing the similarities between the fans and their team" (p. 286). By extension, the similarity between a team's players

and a fan can possibly influence their identification with the particular team. As a result, perhaps satellite supporters identify with teams that boast athletes similar to themselves in either their cultural or national background. Chinese support for the NBA Houston Rockets, for instance, would support this argument.

iii) Organisational Characteristics

Organisational characteristics include the 'off-field' image of the organisation, including managerial decisions, club reputation and tradition, and the quality of their conference or league (Sutton et al. 1997). Kolbe and James (2000) expanded their concept of tradition to encompass team history and playing style. Indeed, a small percentage of *FutureBrand's* surveyed football supporters said they chose their favourite team because they were 'underdogs' (Gieske & Forato 2004). Further studies have examined the potential influence of reputation and tradition (Chen 2007; Jones 1997a; Kolbe & James 2000; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996) and conference or league affiliation (Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996) upon team identification. Therefore, Wann (2006a) suggested, organisations might cultivate identification by maintaining a clean reputation and promoting their rich tradition and successful history.

Fink, Trail and Anderson (2002) defined a fan's identification in terms of "close attachment" (p. 198), and most researchers traditionally focus on attachment purely to a sports team. However, Robinson and Trail (2005) suggested, one may instead become attached to other elements of the sports experience, either in addition to, or instead of, a specific team. For example, Wann, Tucker and Schrader (1996) examined two popular points of attachment: players and geographic community. Although less popular, they also examined team uniform, colours, logo, name, and stadium or arena. A stadium, especially iconic facilities like the MLB Chicago Cubs' Wrigley Field, some suggest, can foster team identification (Chen 2007; Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001).

This argument is consistent with Lewis (2001) who claimed that fans sometimes possess symbolic allegiance to a team and draw on organisational elements to represent some aspect of their past and identity. For instance, although fans often discontinue their support when a beloved franchise relocates, some instead remain loyal. As a fan of the NFL Houston Oilers (now Tennessee Titans) explained, "every time I swear to myself that I won't watch them, that Columbia Blue always brings me

back. No other colors could bring back all the emotions that my 20 years of being an Oiler fan have inspired. I will be a fan until they change names and uniforms" (p. 15).

Robinson and Trail (2005) argued that spectator motives relate not only to the team, but also its coaches, community and university. For instance, it is likely that vicarious achievement relates to points of attachment that may represent success. Consistent with this approach, specific coaches were indeed influence agents (Greenwood, Kanters & Casper 2006; Kolbe & James 2000; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996).

Jacobson (2003) explored the creation and maintenance of fan identity as it applied to the NFL Washington Redskins. She concluded that team identification was the result of a three-tier model which comprised socialisation, socio-cultural and symbolic levels. Furthermore, this socialisation occurs via group affiliation and, as a result, encompasses the first two dimensions discussed in this review. Although, she claimed, it is traditional for individuals to become fans primarily through socialisation, this does not account for all fans, and indeed can occur in the absence of socialisation agents (see Farred 2002). These individuals may become fans due to socio-cultural influences such as media, mass merchandising, marketing or a team's location, or perhaps symbolic factors specific to the team, such as team colours, logo, name or players.

According to Jacobson (2003), individuals can "begin in one tier, and use the remaining two to enhance and maintain their fandom" (p. 9). This is consistent with Wann, Tucker and Schrader (1996), who found a fan's reason for identifying with a particular team often changed during their period as a fan, for instance, the importance of success. As Robinson and Trail (2005) argued, as "individuals are exposed to different aspects of the game, their appreciation of the event or motivation for attending might change, suggesting several possible combinations of motives and points of attachments" (p. 63). For instance, fans may initially identify with a particular team because of a favourite player but will remain loyal to that team because they have developed other points of attachment over time. Her research is valuable since it examined the role of the media, especially the Internet, in the identification process, and determined that organisational factors could cultivate team, domestic or international, identification.

There is serious debate as to whether fans such as satellite supporters derive psychological benefit from their support of distant sports teams (Wann 2006a, 2006b;

Wann, Dunham, Byrd & Keenan 2004; Wann, Inman, Ensor, Gates & Caldwell 1999; Wann & Pierce 2005). Given the competitive global marketplace, and the importance of these consumers, research into this area is warranted. Although there is extremely limited research on the psychology of the satellite supporter and why they identify with their chosen sports teams, insights into their motives have recently come to light.

Recent studies in Scandinavia and Israel determined socialisation through the media to be a major influence upon team identification and, to a lesser degree, so were family and friends (Ben-Porat 2000; Nash 2000). In addition, the presence of particular players was instrumental in fan development (Ben-Porat 2000; Nash 2000). Indeed, Chadwick (2007) observed that for Asian supporters, the presence of a 'native player' on a European football team was "seemingly an important universal reason for supporting that team." Nash (2000) found other team-related factors, such as style of play and European success, were also important in the creation of identification. As one fan club official noted, "when TV coverage started in Denmark ... everybody picked up a team to support: as LFC [Liverpool F.C.] were winning a lot at that time, everyone chose LFC. Now it's [Manchester] United, because they are winning a lot" (p. 8).

A review of the literature concludes that team identification is likely due to community affiliation, socialisation and team-related factors. Table 2.2 summarises these potential antecedents. However, "it is possible", Dimmock, Grove and Eklund (2005) theorised, "that the criteria upon which geographically distant fans develop an attachment to a team are more limited than the criteria used by local team fans. In the absence of other criteria on which to base an attachment to a team (such as geographic proximity), distant sport fans may be more likely to use team success as a criterion to establish an attachment with a team" (p. 84). Indeed, comments such as this highlight the absence, and importance, of research that explores satellite supporters and their value to those sports teams which seek to exploit international opportunities.

Table 2.2: Possible Antecedents for Team Identification

Researcher(s)	Psychological Factors (Community Affiliation)	Environmental Factors (Socialisation)	Team-Related Factors
Uemukai et al. (1995)	Supporter groups.	Hometown team.	Win-loss record important for less successful teams.
Wann, Tucker and Schrader (1996)	"I like the group affiliations".	Parents and family. Friends and peers. "Geographical reasons". Media.	Team success. Team players. Multiple, albeit lesser emphasis (e.g. logo, league, stadium, reputation).
Jones (1997a)	Not explicitly discussed.	Family. Geographic proximity.	Team success largely insignificant. Team style of play*.
Sutton et al. (1997)	Community affiliation is "most significant".	Attendance and/or media exposure.	Successful team or seasons. "Off-field" issues (includes managerial decisions, reputation and tradition, conference or league).
Jones (1998)	Not explicitly discussed.	Family. Minor influence of friends. Geographic proximity.	Team success largely insignificant. Team style of play*. Minor influence of colours and players.
Kolbe and James (2000)	Community of fans (city/worldwide). Supporter groups.	Family, friends and peers. Mass media. Hometown team.	Specific players. Specific coaches.

Researcher(s)	Psychological Factors (Community Affiliation)	Environmental Factors (Socialisation)	Team-Related Factors
Gwinner and Swanson (2003)	Prestige (community-specific). Fan associations.	Not explicitly discussed.	Not explicitly discussed.
Jacobson (2003)	Socialisation "through group affiliation".	Socialisation tier (family, friends). Socio-cultural tier (media, geographic proximity).	Symbolic tier (players). Socio-cultural tier (e.g. marketing). Symbolic tier (colours, logo, name).
Gieske and Forato (2004)	Not explicitly discussed.	Family and friends. Hometown team.	Star, or favourite, players. Team success – "they've won trophies". Sociological factors ("underdogs").
Robinson and Trail (2005)	Vicarious achievement (association with a successful community).	Not explicitly discussed.	Vicarious achievement (association with a successful team, player, coach, etc.).
Donavan, Janda and Suh (2006)	Not explicitly discussed.	Significant others (family/friends). Physical proximity.	Not explicitly discussed.
Greenwood, Kanters and Casper (2006)	Pre-game festivities.	Hometown team. Raleigh native or resident.	Team players. Team coaches.
Wann (2006a)	Psychological factors.	Environmental factors.	Team-related factors (team performance, player attributes, and organisational characteristics).
Chen (2007)	Community affiliation.	Mass media.	Team-related (history of success, performance, tradition, stadium).

* Kolbe and James (2000) expanded the definition of tradition to encompass team history and a sense of playing style.

A review of the literature has revealed, and reinforced, the importance of two key psychological drives. The fan's need to enhance personal esteem, often through vicarious achievement, or their need to affiliate with like-minded groups in order to provide a sense of community, likely accounts for sports fandom. Significantly, these notions are consistent with ideas expressed in social identity theory (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel & Turner 1979; 1986). The following section explores this theory, its relevance to sports fans, and its possible application to satellite supporters.

2.5. Social Identity Theory

According to Tajfel (1981), one's social identity is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 255). Henry Tajfel and John Turner developed social identity theory (SIT) in the 1970's so as to understand the behaviour of individuals in group situations. In addition to those unique characteristics individuals use to describe themselves, one's personal identity, individuals also develop a social identity as they classify themselves and others into various social groups to order the social environment (Stets & Burke 2000; Tajfel 1978; Turner 1975). This enables individuals to determine, and understand, their place within their environment (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel & Turner 1979; 1986). Furthermore, individuals identify with groups they perceive they belong to, and proceed to compare their groups with others to reflect positively upon themselves.

Tajfel and Turner (1979; 1986) explained that the basic hypothesis of SIT is that social groups attempt to differentiate themselves from each other in order to evaluate their own group positively through in-group/out-group comparisons. Social identity theory involves three central ideas: categorisation, identification, and comparison. For this reason it is sometimes referred to as CIC theory (Lala 2006). Social identity theory, Tajfel and Turner (1979) claimed, is based on the following principles:

1. Individuals strive to achieve or to maintain positive social identity.
2. Positive social identity is based to a large extent on favorable comparisons that can be made between the in-group and some relevant out-groups: the in-group must be perceived as positively differentiated or distinct from the relevant out-groups.

3. When social identity is unsatisfactory, individuals will strive either to leave their existing group and join some more positively distinct group and/or to make their existing group more positively distinct (p. 40).

Social identity theory is a useful theoretical lens to explore sports fandom and participation in other leisure activities (for example, Branscombe & Wann 1991, 1994; Dietz-Uhler & Murrell 1999; End 2001; End, Dietz-Uhler, Demakakos, Grantz & Biviano 2003; End, Dietz-Uhler, Harrick & Jacquemotte 2002; Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002; Laverie & Arnett 2000; Wann & Grieve 2005). The theory has also been used to examine team identification (Dimmock, Grove & Eklund 2005; Dimmock & Gucciardi 2007; Donavan, Janda & Suh 2006; Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Heere & James 2007b; Jacobson 2003; Jones 1998; Sutton et al. 1997; Uemukai et al. 1995; Wann 2006a).

Donavan, Carlson and Zimmerman (2005) argued that social identity theory is an appropriate perspective to understand fan behaviour since this behaviour "involves interpersonal and group relationships, it is socially observable, it often revolves around the distinctions that exist between opposing groups, and it is heavily affected by the level of identification with a team" (p. 33). Social identity theory, therefore, is a proven, and popular, framework to explore issues regarding the sports fan. The following sections will explore SIT's three central ideas and how they relate to sports fandom.

2.5.1. Categorisation

Membership in social groups provides an important basis for self-definition (Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi & Ethier 1995). However, group membership only occurs when individuals engage in a process of categorisation. This process is central to social identity theory and enables individuals to determine and understand their place within their environment as they divide their social world into distinct categories or groups (Hogg, Terry & White 1995; Tajfel 1978; Tajfel & Turner 1979; 1986). Brown (2000) suggested that a group exists when "two or more people define themselves as members of it and when its existence is recognized by at least one other" (p. 3).

Although many individuals choose to categorise themselves according to demographic criteria, such as age, race or gender, or organisational membership in religious, political, educational or social institutions, they often do not neatly conform to such

categories and instead choose to create their own (Schouten & McAlexander 1995). Deaux et al. (1995) suggested there were five distinct dimensions of social identity: personal relationships; political affiliations; stigmatised groups (for example, alcoholic, homosexual or criminal); and ethnic or religious groups (for instance, Hispanic/Latino or Muslim). Individuals could also choose to base their social identity upon their avocation or vocation (for example, musician or student).

According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), any group can ultimately exist so long as individuals see themselves as "members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership of it" (p. 40). In this vein, MacClancy (1996b) claimed, sports are also "vehicles of identity, providing people with a sense of difference and a way of classifying themselves and others, whether latitudinally or hierarchically" (p. 2). This leads to the second important component to social identity theory, namely, identification.

2.5.2. Identification

Social identity theory explains how individuals use categories to order their environment and determine their place within society. The extent to which an individual applies a category is termed its salience. Oakes (1987) explained that a social identity is salient when it functions "psychologically to increase the influence of one's membership in that group on perception and behaviour" (p. 118). As a result, individuals tend to choose activities congruent with their salient identities and support organisations that embody those identities (Ashforth & Mael 1989).

Professional sports, given their importance in modern society, often benefit from the identification that develops between the team and its fans. Indeed, team identification is based upon social identification (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002; Madrigal 2004; Wann & Branscombe 1993; Wann et al. 2001). Consequently, fans that identify strongly with their team tend to invest more time and money in support (Wann & Branscombe 1993).

From the earliest research into sports fandom, it is often suggested in modern society that sport serves a valuable need for alienated individuals. As Beisser (1977) claimed, it provides community, for "within this fluid, centerless mass the citizens seek,

sometimes desperately, groups with which they can identify, so as to feel they belong" (p. 126). Spectator sports, therefore, can serve as a primary outlet for many people. The sports fan, Beisser (1977) concluded, "can gather with others, don his [Los Angeles] Dodger cap or some other identification badge, and ... by doing all this, he becomes a member of a larger, stronger, family group, a collective entity" (p. 129).

Social identity theory claims that individuals categorise themselves into groups and then proceed to affiliate with fellow members. Furthermore, sport can serve to construct identities and affirm a sense of community (Donnelly & Young 1988; Klein 1984; Melnick 1993; Stewart & Smith 1996). Wilkerson and Dodder (1987) argued that it can also "activate collective conscience" and affirm group membership as the identity of individuals is linked to the greater community (p. 36). Indeed, Eastman and Land (1997) suggested, participation in these communities, and the opportunities for social interaction they provide, is a primary motive for the sports fan.

According to Ball and Tasaki (1992), individuals are attached to particular possessions to the extent they can maintain their identity. For instance, team-related merchandise allows a fan's personal and social identification with a beloved team (Derbaix, Decrop & Cabossart 2002), and perhaps leads to a more salient identity as a team fan (Arnett & Laverie 2000; Wilde 2004). Social identification, Ashforth and Mael (1989) explained, is "the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate" (p. 21), whereby one is an active or symbolic member of the group and perceives the group's fate as their own. This often occurs with team identification, where team victories become personal successes and, conversely, defeat is viewed as personal failure.

Team identification, discussed earlier in this chapter, referred to the 'psychological connection' that exists between team and fan, and community affiliation had the most significant influence upon its creation (Sutton et al. 1997). This affiliation, they explained, is derived from "common symbols, shared goals, history, and a fan's need to belong" (p. 19). The term community implies that group members share common features which significantly distinguish them from members of other groups (Cohen 1985). For instance, members may be required to possess particular ethnic, national, religious, social or political characteristics (Burdsey & Chappell 2003). Anderson (1991) claimed that many communities are inherently imagined, for members "will never know most of their fellow-members [or] meet them ... yet in the minds of each lives the image

of their communion" (p. 6). Membership of a social group is therefore sufficient to generate concern and pride among members (Abrams & Hogg 1990).

Heere and James (2005) argued that demographic-based identities may include more specific role-related identities. As a result, they claimed, demographic affiliation often drives organisational membership. The proliferation of televised football has encouraged individuals to follow a range of clubs, coaches and players and they have "implicit awareness of, or an explicit preconcern with, the particular senses of identity and community that relate to specific clubs, to specific nations, and to their associated supporter groups" (Giulianotti 2002, p. 34).

As seen earlier, individuals support organisations that are consistent with their salient identity (Ashforth & Mael 1989), while the more important an identity is to the individual, the more attractive products associated with that identity become (Kleine, Kleine & Kernan 1993). Jarvie and Maguire (1994) explained that sports act "as 'anchors of meaning'" (p. 152). It is therefore likely fans identify with teams that symbolise a salient or important identity, and identification is driven by their membership in social groups. It is possible these groups exist due to a geographic, national, ethnic, or religious identity.

i) Geographic Identity

Sports teams are an integral part of many communities, and fans often share in their success and failure (Lewis 2001; Mizruchi 1985; Schwartz & Barsky 1977). The team is a collective symbol of the fan's identity with their region and consequently receives immense support. Almost all teams possess a geographic identity based on the city, region, state or nation (Heere & James 2007a). For instance, the Argentinian national football team was instrumental in the creation of that country's national identity (Archetti 1994). Moreover, fans often support professional teams that represent their hometown (for instance, Branscombe & Wann 1991; Greenwood, Kanters & Casper 2006; Jones 1997a, 1998; Kolbe & James 2000; Rooney 1975; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996). Schwartz and Barsky (1977) explained that local fans invest in this way because their teams "are exponents of a community to which they feel themselves somehow bound and in whose destiny they find themselves in some way implicated" (p. 657).

Historically, sports teams see themselves as representative of their host communities. For instance, Spain's Athletic de Bilbao insisted players be born in the region so as to maintain its strong Basque identity (MacClancy 1996a), and only those born in Yorkshire were allowed to play for England's Yorkshire County Cricket club. However, the globalisation of sport and competitive pressure has seen teams search the globe for talent, irrespective of national origin. In 1992, the Yorkshire County Cricket club changed their longstanding policy, yet local fans continue to support these institutions.

The Premier League's Chelsea and Arsenal have been wildly successful in recent years under foreign managers. They have also fielded teams with not one Englishman, let alone a local Londoner ('Wenger defends his foreign 16' 2005; Lowrey, Neatrour & Williams 2004), yet fans enthusiastically celebrate team successes as their own. In Spain, Barcelona F.C. is seen as a symbol of Catalan identity – an identity that was consistently under threat during the Franco regime – yet the origin of their players do not pose a concern for Barca fans. King (2003) explained that their Catalan pride is demonstrated instead by on-field success, and players represent Catalonia, "merely by wearing the famous blue and maroon stripes of the club, whatever their origins" (p. 88).

ii) National Identity

National identity is a key form of social identity and, arguably, has had the greatest impact upon historical events (Salazar 1998). Wong and Trumper (2002) claimed that national identity and nationalism are partially dependent upon sport, whereby teams can be used by fans to reinforce their cultural identity. For instance, people enthusiastically support athletes of their nationality during the Olympic Games to experience a positive national social identity (Abrams & Hogg 1990). Team identification concerns the 'psychological connection' between fan and team, or player (Wann et al. 2001) and so it is likely, therefore, that people can support any national representative, either team or individual, in order to achieve the same objective.

As teams seek to conquer international markets, the migration of athletes and coaches has accelerated. It is conceivable, therefore, that individuals would support athletes of their own nationality. There is some evidence to suggest this occurs as in the case of Yao Ming (Larmer 2005), and the presence of quality foreign players is a key reason for the international popularity of the English Premier League (Duguid 2004).

Furthermore, the presence of countryman, Avi Cohen, at Liverpool F.C. in the early eighties attracted many Israeli fans (Ben-Porat 2000). Indeed, Britain's Channel Four used English star, Paul Gascoigne (who was playing for Lazio), to promote their broadcasts of the Serie A and generate interest in the league (Blain & O'Donnell 1994).

Although they live elsewhere and ply their trade in foreign markets, certain athletes are important national symbols which can inspire national pride and strengthen existing concepts of nation (Wong & Trumper 2002). For instance, they argued, footballer, Ivan Zamorano, is perceived, both in Chile and to some extent abroad, as Chilean.

> When he [Zamorano] played in Internazionale, as part of a multinational group of players, he was still playing in Chilean living rooms. It is this ambiguity, which owes its existence to the globalization of communications, that makes possible the Zamorano phenomenon. He played simultaneously in Chile and Europe, he was simultaneously a performer and a fútbol player, he played at the same time for Internazionale and, by being a Chilean, for Chile (Wong & Trumper 2002, pp. 178-179).

Wong and Trumper (2002) argued that global celebrity athletes, such as Ivan Zamorano, become a core element in the construction of national identity and patriotism that "serves as a central hegemonic pillar in the reproduction of the nation" (p. 178). Furthermore, Blain and O'Donnell (1994) claimed, although discussions of nationality usually arise in relation to teams, they are constructed around individuals. It is therefore conceivable that support for fellow countrymen, like Ming, Cohen, Gascoigne, or Zamorano, enable fans to experience a positive national social identity.

iii) Ethnic Identity

Support for sports teams, or individual athletes, can be based upon a shared ethnic identity. For instance, Japanese athletes at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics received phenomenal support from the Japanese-American community. As members of a much-maligned social group, it was hoped that Japanese victories would dispel American prejudices against them as second-class citizens. Japanese success boosted the self-image of local Japanese-Americans and enhanced their ethnic pride (Yamamoto 2000). Likewise, American boxer, Joe Louis, and tennis star, Pancho Gonzales, were important symbols for African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans as spectators identified with their sports heroes due to a shared ethnic background (Spinrad 1981).

In Australia, this ethnic pride is commonplace (Hallinan & Krotee 1993; Hughson 2000; Rosso 2007) to the extent that authorities have attempted to 'de-ethnicise' football (Smith 1996). Hallinan and Krotee (1993) found that the football team serves as a vehicle to enhance the fan's ethnic identity, and any assimilation into Australian society was more likely to occur outside of this environment, for instance, in the workplace.

The football club, in part, was seen as an ethnic symbol (Hallinan & Krotee 1993). Although management preferred to sign players who share their ethnic identity, a desire for success had seen them aggressively recruit players. These actions strengthened the team, and consequently boosted the strength of their identity. Club victories were seen as a celebration of their ethnic identity, and recruits, regardless of their ethnic origin, were "draped with the respective club's identifying flags and banners" (p. 128). Club management and spectators however, predominately represented, and expressed, the same ethnic identity as the organisation.

A young black fan in apartheid South Africa epitomised the importance of ethnic identity when he developed a 'long distance love' for Liverpool F.C. (Farred 2002). Although deeply troubled by the club's failure to field a black player, he remained loyal to the Merseyside club. However, in 1987, they signed John Barnes, the first black player to successfully represent Liverpool. As a result, Farred (2002) explained, "I did not have to apologize, however muted (and unspeakable) the apology, for my LDL [long distance love] anymore, for supporting the Whites-only Liverpool" (p. 23). He further explained that the presence of Barnes allowed him to settle an ideological battle between his identity as a black South African and a Liverpool fan.

> John Barnes made my Liverpool fandom ideologically, psychically, and emotionally acceptable to me ... Barnes racialized my fandom (without denuding it of LDL) and, in so doing, reconciled my passion with my politics; he exorcised the bitterness that was undermining the love in my LDL. Barnes did not only make peace between, but he made whole, my warring selves (p. 23).

In Scotland, Glasgow Celtic FC is seen as a symbol of Irish nationalism. Approximately 60 percent of their fans claim to be of Irish ethnicity, the Irish flag flies over their home ground, and over 50 percent of their supporters identify with the Shamrock (Burdsey & Chappell 2003). Moreover, their heated rival, Rangers FC, has a pro-British stance

(Burdsey & Chappell 2003), and some Scots living abroad support the Glasgow club as a means of hanging onto their Scottish cultural identity (Boyle 1994).

In 2004, America's Major League Soccer (MLS) welcomed Club Deportivo Chivas USA, and the new franchise immediately embraced a Mexican-American identity. Based in Los Angeles, they field predominately Latin players, they are sponsored by a Mexican company, and their main language is Spanish. Their importance as a symbol of Mexican identity can be summed up by their marketing slogan, "Chivas USA: Está en Tu Sangre" ("'Chivas USA: It's in Your Blood") ('Chivas USA' 2007; Faflik 2006).

iv) Religious Identity

Although Scotland's most successful clubs, Celtic and Rangers, represent different ethnic identities, it is religious affiliation that most clearly characterises the individual identity of each organisation. For instance, 93 percent of Celtic fans are Catholic, whereas the majority of Rangers supporters are Church of Scotland adherents, and most poignantly, none professed to be of the Catholic faith (Burdsey & Chappell 2003).

Consistent with their supporter base, Rangers had an unofficial policy to field only Protestant players, a policy defended by club management as "part of our tradition. We were founded in 1873 as a Presbyterian Boys' club. To change now would lose us considerable support" (Kuper 1996, p. 206). Indeed, in 1989, they outraged Rangers and Celtic fans alike when they signed the high-profile Catholic player, Maurice Johnston (Burdsey & Chappell 2003). Furthermore, individual athletes play their part in the promotion of their club's respective identity. For instance, Celtic players have been known to cross themselves, an action deeply symbolic of Catholicism, in front of Rangers fans (Burdsey & Chappell 2003).

There exist other notable teams with a distinct religious identity. The athletic programs of Brigham Young University (The Mormon Church) and the University of Notre Dame (Catholic) are heavily supported by followers of those faiths. Tottenham Hotspur FC and AFC Ajax have considerable Jewish support and fans display Jewish symbols ('AFC Ajax' 2007; 'Tottenham Hotspur F.C.' 2007). As a result, Tottenham Hotspur is popular in Israel (Ben-Porat 2000).

This section highlighted how a sports team, and its players, can complement aspects of an individual's social identity. The salience of one's identity can thus influence one's support of institutions that embody that identity. Smith (1988) claimed that sports spectatorship integrates communities, ethnic groups, cities and nations, and "leads to the development of team loyalties and an identification with sports heroes, both of which help to satisfy our need for affiliation" (p. 57). Consequently, a primary reason to become a fan stems from a desire to maintain group contacts and avoid feelings of alienation (Branscombe & Wann 1991; McPherson 1975; Wenner & Gantz 1989).

Burdsey and Chappell (2003) argued, irrespective of the degree it does so, "support of a football club *does* act as a vehicle through which the other elements of an individual's identity can be affirmed and articulated". However, before the third central idea of social identity theory, social comparison, is explored, perhaps the last word should go instead to the fan. As a passionate Celtic supporter explained, "it would kill me if I didn't go to a game ... with Celtic it's not a football club, it's an identity" (Boyle 1994, p. 78).

Tajfel and Turner (1979) claimed that a positive social identity is based largely upon favourable comparisons made between groups an individual identifies with, and relevant out-groups. This therefore leads to the third central component of their social identity theory, namely, comparison.

2.5.3. Comparison

The basic hypothesis of social identity theory is that different groups seek to differentiate themselves from each other to achieve a positive social identity (Brown 1996; Tajfel & Turner 1979; 1986). Social comparison encourages individuals to engage in positive and negative distinctiveness behaviour. They are motivated to perceive their in-group more positively than similar groups, and to minimise differences between the groups so their own in-group is favourably viewed. By implication, if an individual's group is seen as positive, members of that group are also able to see themselves in a positive way (Lala 2006). A significant feature of inter-group behaviour is therefore ethnocentrism (Stets & Burke 2000), or "thinking one's own group's ways are superior to others" or "judging other groups as inferior to one's own" (Barger 2004).

In the event that social comparison is unfavourable, individuals can adopt strategies to combat a negative or threatened social identity (Tajfel & Turner 1979; 1986). However, an individual's reaction is dependent upon their degree of identification with the group, or the salience of that identity to the individual. For instance, highly-identified ('die-hard') sports fans adopt different mechanisms to cope with a threat to their identity as a team fan than do lesser-identified ('fair-weather') fans. These strategies are individual mobility, social creativity, and social competition (Tajfel & Turner 1979; 1986).

Individual mobility assumes, where possible, people will attempt to leave, or disassociate from, groups damaging to their social identity. Thus, Tajfel and Turner (1986) claimed, this implies a disidentification with the in-group. However, if group boundaries are rigid and fixed, such as race, social creativity or social competition is often implemented. Social creativity claims these individuals may instead compare their in-group to the out-group on other more favourable group dimensions. Indeed, they may also change the values assigned to group attributes where comparisons previously perceived as negative are now positive (Tajfel & Turner 1986). In addition, individuals can change, or select, the out-group with which their in-group is compared. Subsequently, members can cease or avoid the superior out-group as a frame of reference and restore their self-esteem. Finally, social competition allows individuals to engage in direct competition with the out-group to seek positive distinctiveness.

i) In-Group and Out-Group Bias

Intergroup discrimination results in a tendency to develop in-group favouritism or even out-group derogation to achieve and/or maintain positive feelings about one's social identity (Branscombe, Wann, Noel & Coleman 1993; Crocker & Luhtanen 1990; Hogg, Terry & White 1995; Meindl & Lerner 1984; Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner 1979; 1986), especially if the group identity is highly salient. In addition, Tajfel and Turner (1979; 1986) explained, a natural outcome of real-world ethnocentrism is in-group bias. Indeed, individuals have been shown to favour their in-group due to a shared nationality (Branscombe & Wann 1994; Tajfel 1981), ethnicity (Meindl & Lerner 1984; Tajfel 1981), and even allegiance to a sports team (Jones 2000; Lee 1985; Madrigal 2004; Wann 1994b; Wann & Branscombe 1995; Wann & Grieve 2005).

The sports environment provides many instances of in-group favouritism. Sports fans often perceive opposing fans to be the enemy (Schlabach 1998), while highly-identified fans are more likely to view fellow fans (the in-group) more favourably than rival fans (the out-group) (Jones 2000; Madrigal 2004; Wann 1994b; Wann & Branscombe 1995; Wann & Grieve 2005). As one fan explained, “there’s this bonding between complete strangers in the street ... you don’t know them from Adam but you see them in a Luton [Town F.C.] shirt and you say hello even if it’s a complete stranger” (Jones 2000, p. 290). Likewise, fans often sanction illegal or unethical behaviour by athletes representative of their salient in-groups, either nationality or team (Dietz-Uhler, End, Demakakos, Dickirson & Grantz 2002; Ungar & Sev'er 1989). For instance, many Canadians defended Ben Johnson after his use of anabolic steroids and even suggested the Olympic sprinter had been a victim of sabotage (Ungar & Sev'er 1989).

ii) Self-Esteem Enhancement/Protection

Tajfel and Turner (1986) argued that the need for self-esteem influenced an individual’s identification with groups, and so, as the sports fan’s need for achievement increased, so did their identification with the team (Branscombe & Wann 1994; Sloan 1989; Wann 1994a, 1995). Furthermore, the importance of self-esteem enhancement or vicarious achievement is often cited as a possible spectator motive (Funk, Mahony & Ridinger 2002; Gantz 1981; Kahle, Kambara & Rose 1996; Mahony et al. 2002; Milne & McDonald 1999; Stewart & Smith 1996; Trail & James 2001). Fink, Trail and Anderson (2002) defined vicarious achievement as an individual’s “need for social prestige, self-esteem and sense of empowerment that an individual can receive from their association with a successful team” (p. 198). Indeed, Gantz (1981) claimed, the ability to “thrill in victory” was the key motivation for television sports viewers (p. 268).

Tajfel (1981) explained that individuals are essentially motivated to create and maintain a positive self-concept, while Tajfel and Turner (1986) concluded, an individual’s need for self-esteem would influence their identification with groups. Wann and Branscombe (1990) therefore argued that an individual could embrace, or reject, sports teams “as a means of moderating their public self image and/or self-esteem” (p. 112). Trail and James (2001) found the need for achievement was also positively correlated with consumption behaviour such as team merchandise purchases and media consumption about the team. This is consistent with Belk (1988), who argued that possessions were

an extension of the individual, and that they therefore are likely to consume products that reinforce the connection between themselves and the source of their self-esteem.

In many cases, the sports fan uses the accomplishments of their team to maintain or enhance their self-esteem, and individuals often strategically manipulate their association with a sports team dependent upon team performance. However, once again, the degree to which individuals do so is dependent upon their degree of identification with the team. For instance, certain teams, such as Major League Baseball's Chicago Cubs, traditionally struggle yet are heavily-supported (Dalakas, Madrigal & Anderson 2004). Hirt et al. (1992) explained that since challenges to an individual's important identity are often perceived as a direct threat to their self-esteem, individuals often employ certain mechanisms to maintain a positive social identity. The first of these is the phenomenon known as basking in reflected glory (BIRG).

Basking in Reflected Glory

Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman and Sloan (1976) claim that individuals publicly announce their association with successful others. This tendency to 'bask in reflected glory' (BIRG), they successfully argued, could be extended to sports fans. In Cialdini et al.'s (1976) landmark study they discovered students were more likely to wear apparel bearing the university's logo or name on days following a team victory. They were also more likely to use the term "we won" to describe the victory, and "they lost" to describe team defeat. An individual's self-esteem and evaluation can therefore be enhanced through an association, and identification, with successful others (Cialdini et al. 1976; Posten 2002). The tendency for fans to BIRG has been a popular topic (for instance, Boen, Vanbeselaere & Feys 2002; Dalakas, Madrigal & Anderson 2004; End et al. 2003; End et al. 2002; Lee 1985; Wann & Branscombe 1990).

As earlier explained, social identity theory argues that individuals wish to be associated with groups that can be positively distinguished from other groups. Indeed, members of high status groups showed more satisfaction, and identification, with their group than did members of low-status groups (Ellemers, Van Knippenberg, De Vries & Wilke 1988; Ellemers, Van Knippenberg & Wilke 1990). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that spectators often choose to follow successful teams rather than those which

perennially struggle (Branscombe & Wann 1991; End et al. 2002; Mahony, Howard & Madrigal 2000; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996).

Team success also directly impacts attendance (Becker & Suls 1983; Noll 1974; Tapp 2004) and had an "overwhelmingly significant" effect upon crowd numbers (Schofield 1983, p. 201). However, fans of less successful teams may still meet their need for self-esteem via identification and belongingness (Branscombe & Wann 1991). Sutton et al. (1997) concluded that the need for vicarious achievement is why successful teams attract fans and why fans 'jump on the bandwagon' when teams perform well.

Cialdini et al. (1976) explained that because a sports spectator or fan's personal image is at stake every time their team takes the field, team victory may be seen as personal success, and defeat, personal failure. Fandom, therefore, is often a dangerous pastime; a theme explored very early by Schafer (1968): "If his team wins, he feels good about himself. Through a kind of extension of self, he too is a winner. But, if his team loses, especially if it loses consistently, he too is a loser in his own eyes" (p. 34).

The sports fan derives positive benefits when their team is successful, notably enhanced mood and self-esteem and increased belief in their own competence, while team failure results in the opposite negative emotions (Hirt et al. 1992). This vicarious achievement, however, is not limited to the team, for fans also consider athletes to be an extension of themselves and can bask in the reflected glory of such celebrities (Basil & Brown 2004; Dalakas, Madrigal & Anderson 2004). Since individuals wish to avoid contact with unsuccessful groups, such as poorly performing teams (Bizman & Yinon 2002; Boen, Vanbeselaere & Feys 2002), there should be a corresponding tendency to distance themselves from these groups. This leads to the second mechanism used to maintain a positive social identity, namely, the phenomenon known as cutting off reflected failure (CORF).

Cutting off Reflected Failure

Snyder, Lassegard and Ford (1986) explained that if BIRGing enables image enhancement, then 'cutting off reflected failure' (CORF) acts to protect one's image. Those who are not highly identified with the team, nor possess strong allegiance, can therefore distance themselves from unsuccessful groups, or in this case, poorly

performing teams, in order to protect their image. The sports fan's decision to CORF enables them to combat their threatened social identity (Branscombe et al. 1993). As such, CORFing is a temporary form of social mobility (End et al. 2002), whereby individuals disassociate themselves from groups detrimental to their social identity.

It is the degree of team identification, Wann and Branscombe (1990) claimed, that accounts for the existence of the aforementioned 'die-hard' and 'fair-weather' fans. Die-hard fans maintain their allegiance irrespective of on-field performance, while the latter associate with the team only when it performs well. Indeed, fluctuations in attendance are likely due to these fair-weather fans (Murrell & Dietz 1992; Wann & Branscombe 1990). Consistent with social identity theory, many die-hard, or highly-identified, fans define themselves as a team fan, however, because this identity is highly salient they "cannot cope by distancing themselves as low identified persons can" (Wann & Branscombe 1990, p. 113). Therefore, it appears that highly-identified fans are unlikely to engage in these distancing tactics (Wann, Hamlet, Wilson & Hodges 1995). Instead, they turn to other coping mechanisms in order to maintain a positive social identity.

Additional Coping Mechanisms

Spectators and fans, it is argued, can enhance their self-esteem by vicariously basking in the glory of their adopted teams. However, this does not explain the popularity of perennially unsuccessful teams such as MLB's Chicago Cubs. Despite claims that fans boost their self-esteem by remaining loyal in the face of team failure (Campbell, Aiken & Kent 2004), the sports fan literature instead suggests individuals are more likely to develop additional coping mechanisms in order to maintain their positive self-image.

Social identity theory would argue that when a fan's team loses, group members may face a threat to their self-esteem and be perceived as inferior to members of the relevant out-group, fans of the opposing team. Tajfel and Turner (1986) argued that individuals seek to restore a positive social identity through a number of image management tactics. The sports fan is unable to schedule direct competition between the two teams (social competition) and highly-identified, or die-hard, fans are unable to leave the group (social mobility). The alternative for these fans is to compare their in-group to the out-group on another more favourable dimension (social creativity).

Lalonde (1992) explains that social creativity allowed members of a disadvantaged group, an unsuccessful ice hockey team, to maintain positive distinctiveness and maintain their self-esteem. The players viewed themselves as less 'dirty' than their rivals and chose to compare their team on an attribute unrelated to athletic success. This comparison even applied to spectators, as fans rated their home team, the in-group, as less arrogant and dirty than their opponents, the out-group, and could maintain their superiority regardless of their team's performance (Lalonde, Moghaddam & Taylor 1987). A similar scene occurred after Argentina's defeat to Uruguay in the inaugural football World Cup. Archetti (1994) claimed that Argentinian players were imbued with "great imagination, elegance and aristocratic flavour, [while] Uruguayans, on the contrary, were interpreted as rude, almost enraged players" (p. 235).

Although in-group favouritism is often more commonly witnessed (Brewer 1979), an additional coping mechanism, 'blasting', has been identified, where individuals resort to out-group derogation and/or aggressive behaviour. Faced with a threat to their self-esteem, individuals cannot receive the positive benefits of basking, and turn to other protective measures, publicly denigrating the opposition so as to boost esteem. Out-group derogation and aggression might therefore allow group members to repair their self-esteem (Branscombe & Wann 1992). This has been witnessed when a valued ethnic (Meindl & Lerner 1984), national (Branscombe & Wann 1994; Stott, Hutchinson & Drury 2001), or even sports team (Branscombe & Wann 1994; Cialdini & Richardson 1980; End 2001; End et al. 2002; Jones 2000; Posten 2002; Stott, Hutchinson & Drury 2001) social identity is threatened. For instance, fans of English football rivals, Luton Town and Watford, engage in out-group derogation. As one Luton Town fan stated, "the day will come when they (Watford) realise that they are not as successful as they think they are and that they are going to get utterly stuffed next season" (Jones 2000, p. 291). This appears to support social identity theory's claims that members, when faced with a threat to their social identity, will derogate members outside that group.

Social identity theory has proven a popular theoretical framework to explore sports fandom. Individuals, the theory claims, categorise themselves into groups in order to make sense of their social environment and then proceed to identify with these groups. One subsequently engages in social comparison to achieve a positive social identity or, as seen earlier, that part of their self-concept "which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional

significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 1981, p. 255). Intergroup discrimination, in turn, can foster in-group favouritism and often out-group derogation. However, should this social comparison prove unfavourable an individual can implement certain image protective mechanisms (such as BIRGing or CORFing) to combat threats to an important social identity.

Although social identity theory appears to be an appropriate theoretical foundation for the examination of sports fans, its relevance to the satellite supporter phenomenon is, as yet, uncertain. The issue remains as to whether social identity theory can provide a logical theoretical perspective to explore these supporters and their identification with foreign-based professional sports teams.

2.5.4. Relevance to the Satellite Supporter

An individual's identification with a sports team is positively correlated with both personal self-esteem (Branscombe & Wann 1991) and collective, or group, self-esteem (Wann 1994a). Highly-identified fans were also less anxious and possessed higher levels of energy and self-esteem (Wann et al. 1999). Team identification, many claim, has a positive impact upon social psychological health because it can facilitate social connections with others (see for example, Melnick 1993; Wann 2006a, 2006c; Wann et al. 2001). However, recent studies claim, fans that identify with geographically-distant teams do not usually receive the same psychological benefits (Wann 2006a, 2006b; Wann et al. 2004; Wann et al. 1999; Wann & Pierce 2005). An examination of sports fans outside of the United States, namely AFL supporters, came to similar conclusions, and suggested that differences in psychological health between fans of local, versus distant, teams were not confined to specific cultures (Wann, Dimmock & Grove 2003).

Wann (2006b; 2006c) claimed that identification with a distant team would not provide significant psychological benefits because these supporters are usually isolated from, and find it difficult to interact with, like-minded fans. Surrounded by fans of rival sports teams, or those disinterested in their preferred team, these supporters are thus unable to acquire the well-being benefits of an increased social connection with others.

Although Wann (2006b) claimed that local sports teams will be more salient than geographically-distant ones, largely due to the visibility of fans and greater media

coverage, distant teams could become quite salient, such as when a supporter is surrounded by similar fans. Wann and his colleagues (Wann et al. 2004; Wann et al. 1999) therefore argued, these supporters could perhaps receive psychological benefits when in the company of like-minded fans. In certain circumstances, fans of these teams may feel a sense of belonging, such as when “groups of like-minded fans attend a party or gather to watch their team on television” (Wann & Pierce 2005, p. 122). Wann (2006c) claimed that these gatherings could provide a temporary social connection and so supporters may resemble local fans and, through their shared identification with the team, enhance their psychological well-being (Wann et al. 2004).

Kolbe and James (2000) found that fans of the NFL Cleveland Browns appreciated the existence of a worldwide community of fellow Browns fans. Although, as stated above, research suggests that fans of geographically-distant teams are unlikely to accrue the same psychological benefits as local fans, it is apparent that under certain circumstances they might benefit from their fandom. This would perhaps explain the existence, and growth, of online (and physical) fan communities, such as ‘Browns Backers’ or Liverpool F.C. Supporters Clubs, which exist worldwide.

Social identity theory is consistently used to explain sports fandom. Furthermore, under certain circumstances, it appears theoretically likely that satellite supporters can accrue psychological benefits from their support of foreign professional sports teams. It is logical that since these supporters can conceivably benefit from their fandom, social identity theory might therefore be an appropriate theoretical perspective to examine satellite supporters, and their support, or as a foreign Liverpool fan termed it, ‘long distance love’ (Farred 2002), for an adopted foreign sports team.

2.6. Chapter Review

A variety of typologies have been recently developed to examine the modern sports fan (Giulianotti 2002; Quick 2000; Richelieu & Pons 2005; Stewart, Smith & Nicholson 2003; Stewart & Smith 1996; Tapp & Clowes 2000). Not content with traditional notions of fan versus spectator, research now examines the fan, spectator, supporter, follower and, given the increased commercialism of professional sports, consumer. Furthermore, sports fandom appears related to one’s psychological well-being (Eastman & Land 1997; Holt 1995; Melnick 1993; Smith 1988; Wann et al. 2001).

Team identification and sports consumption are based on social and psychological needs (Trail, Anderson & Fink 2000). In addition, sport appears to provide both a sense of community and belonging and allows vicarious achievement (Sloan 1979, 1989). Mael and Ashforth (2001) explained that spectator sports facilitate “a sense of belonging, albeit in a vicarious way in the camaraderie of fellow fans” (p. 207). Vicarious achievement, on the other hand, is highly related to, and a primary indicator for, team identification (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002; Trail, Fink & Anderson 2003). Both psychological drives are consistent with ideas expressed in Tajfel and Turner’s (1979; 1986) social identity theory.

Social identity theory has been consistently used to explore sports fandom, participation in other leisure pursuits, and team identification. Tajfel and Turner (1979) argued that social identity theory is based on three central principles: categorisation, identification and comparison. Individuals seek a positive social identity which is largely based upon favourable comparisons made between their in-group and relevant out-groups. However, should inter-group comparison prove unsatisfactory, they will strive either to leave, or enhance, their existing group. Social groups therefore seek to differentiate themselves from each other in order to evaluate their own group positively through in-group/out-group comparisons (Tajfel & Turner 1979; 1986). Intergroup discrimination, in turn, can foster in-group favouritism and often out-group derogation.

Ashforth and Mael (1989) claimed that individuals identify with a group, tend to choose activities congruent with this identity, and support organisations that embody the group identity. However, membership only occurs when individuals categorise themselves into distinct groups and “share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves” (Tajfel & Turner 1979, p. 40). One’s social identity can be based upon, but not limited to, geographic location, nationality, ethnicity, religion, or even support of a sports team. Indeed, millions of supporters have ‘adopted’ a foreign-based team and team identification is widely believed to be based upon social identification (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002; Madrigal 2004; Wann & Branscombe 1993; Wann et al. 2001).

The literature suggests that team identification is most likely due to community affiliation, socialisation agents and team-related factors. Indeed, Sutton et al. (1997) claimed that community affiliation has the most significant influence. A community implies that group members share common features which distinguish them from other

groups (Cohen 1985). Although traditional notions of community have been limited to a team's geographic location, members may possess ethnic, national, religious, social or political characteristics (Burdsey & Chappell 2003). In the absence of shared geography, it appears reasonable that the identification of satellite supporters depends upon other community dimensions. For instance, perhaps they identify with teams that feature members of their favoured in-group (nationality or ethnicity), or instead create their own, such as a brand community (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001). Alternatively, since satellite supporters are the ultimate fan of geographically-distant teams, vicarious achievement (based upon team success) might be instrumental in their identification.

Although there is debate as to whether these supporters benefit from their fandom, the fact remains that global team brands such as Manchester United, Barcelona F.C. and Liverpool F.C. have millions of fans worldwide. Social identity theory proves a useful theoretical framework to examine the satellite supporter phenomenon. Although the factors instrumental in their team identification are not yet understood, the importance of these fans is appreciated in the boardrooms at Old Trafford, Camp Nou and Anfield.

One issue that has received increased attention is the notion of brand value, or equity, and its possible application to a sports organisation. Chapter three discusses brand equity and its importance to professional sports teams in a global marketplace.

CHAPTER THREE

BRAND EQUITY AND THE SPORTS TEAM

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined sports fandom and potential antecedents in the creation of team identification. In addition, identification with a sports team is likely based upon social identification (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002; Madrigal 2004; Wann & Branscombe 1993; Wann et al. 2001). As a result, Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory has consistently been used to explain sports fandom, and consequently, the chapter argued, might explain satellite supporter behaviour.

According to brand consultant, *FutureBrand*, any organisation that "seeks a relationship with its audience can be considered a brand" (Kleinman 2001, p. 5), and so branding principles have increasingly been applied to the sports environment. In a competitive marketplace, professional sports teams ultimately become brands (Bihl 2002). For instance, EPL Manchester City hired a major advertising agency to launch a branding campaign (Gibson 2005). As stated earlier, Lamb, Hair and McDaniel (2000) defined a brand as "a name, term, symbol, design, or combination thereof that identifies a seller's products and differentiates them from competitors' products" (p. 323).

Bobby (2002) claimed that few teams have the potential to be real brands, however, professional leagues (Burton & Howard 1999), and teams (Adam & Adam 2002; Fisher 2003; Gillis 2004; Heller 2002; O'Reilly 2005), have become marketable brands and strive to enhance the value, or equity, of their brands. This chapter examines the notion of brand equity and previous attempts to apply it to the sports organisation. Furthermore, it introduces a revised brand equity framework to reflect the importance of the international marketplace and a professional team's foreign fan base, and argues for the existence of a relationship between brand equity and team identification.

3.2. Brand Equity

In recent years, major conceptual frameworks have been developed to understand brand value, or 'brand equity' (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993). Aaker (1991) defined brand equity as "a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service" (p. 15), whereby these assets create value for both customer and firm. Customers are able to more easily process and interpret product information while firms receive brand loyalty and increased prices or margins. Keller (1993) built upon Aaker's framework, however, he argued, customer knowledge was the central driver of brand equity. Therefore, customer-based brand equity was "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (p. 2).

Aaker (1991) claimed that brand equity consists of four major dimensions, [2] brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand associations, however, they are also interrelated to a degree. For instance, brand loyalty is a dimension of brand equity and is also affected by brand equity. Likewise, brand awareness, associations in the consumer's mind, and loyalty might influence perceived quality. Brand loyalty concerns the ability to attract and retain customers, whereby, according to Bloemer and Kasper (1995), consumers bind themselves to brands due to their deep-seated commitment. Aaker (1991) defined brand awareness as "the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category" (p. 61). On the other hand, perceived quality is "the customer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives" (p. 85) and brand associations are "anything 'linked' in memory to a brand" (p. 109).

It is perhaps easier to understand brand equity as the "value consumers assign to a brand above and beyond the functional characteristics of the product" (Hawkins, Best & Coney 1998, p. 355), or the value that the brand contributes to a product (Shank 2005). However, it is imperative that sports teams develop their brands for long-term gain rather than a focus on athletic success to realise short-term profits (Couvelaere & Richelieu 2005; Gladden, Irwin & Sutton 2001; Shannon 1999).

[2] There is a fifth dimension, other proprietary brand assets, briefly mentioned in Aaker's original 1991 book, *Managing Brand Equity.*

3.2.1. The Development of Brand Equity

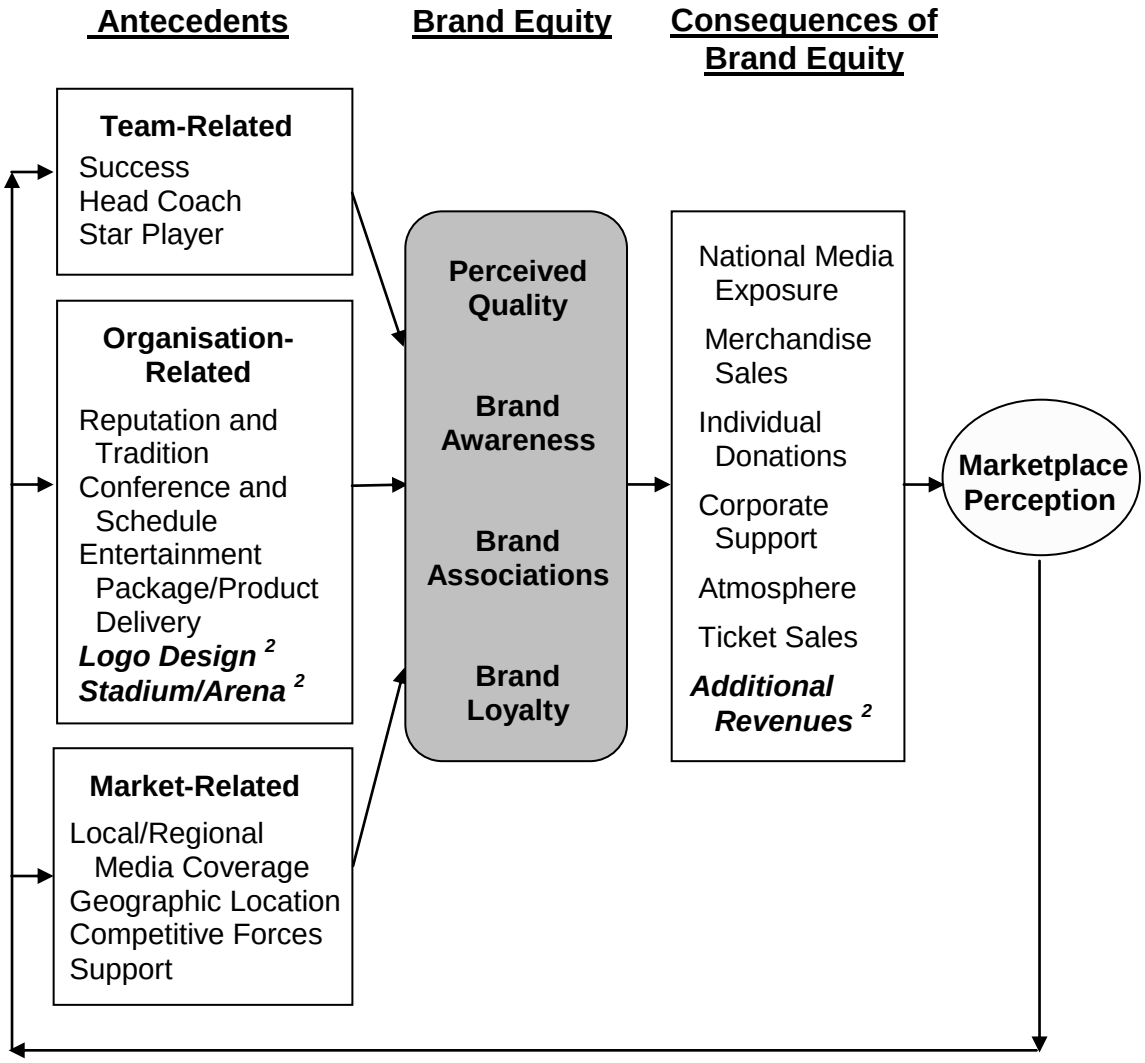
Gladden, Irwin and Sutton (2001) argued that professional sports teams in the 21st century will increasingly focus on strengthening their brands. However, rather than simply re-branding an existing product, or creating a completely new brand, a sports property might instead be able to release latent brand equity, or existing brand equity borne out of elements such as its history or tradition (Chadwick & Holt 2007). Gladden, Irwin and Sutton (2001) further explained that it is imperative that teams build relationships to regain and retain brand equity in the minds of supporters, for they have alienated fans in pursuit of corporate dollars (Burton & Howard 1999; Gorman & Calhoun 1994). Furthermore, sports marketers "have for long neglected strategic branding issues" (Pons 2008, p. 1) yet, Gladden, Irwin and Sutton (2001) claimed, brand strategies are essential if teams are to thrive in an increasingly-competitive marketplace. Indeed, they concluded, "there may be few boundaries for these brand-based efforts … [and] some teams may not succeed" (p. 314). In this light, the next section examines the relationship between brand equity and the sports team.

3.2.2. Brand Equity and the Sports Team: Conceptual Frameworks

In recent years, conceptual frameworks have been developed to assess brand equity for U.S. elite collegiate (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998), and professional (Gladden & Milne 1999), teams. In their application of brand equity to the sports environment, Gladden and his colleagues adopted the major dimensions discussed by Aaker (1991), in particular, perceived quality, brand awareness, brand associations, and brand loyalty. Indeed, Gladden and Wong (1999) later used this framework to discuss the brand equity of University of Massachusetts (UMass) basketball.

Mullin, Hardy and Sutton (1993) explained that the sports product satisfies needs that are less tangible than for traditional products, because it is "invariably intangible, ephemeral, experiential, and subjective" (p. 14). Yet, although sport is unlike any other product, "the uniqueness of sport does not set it exclusively apart from other brands" (Chadwick & Holt 2007, p. 96). The conceptual frameworks developed by Gladden and his colleagues (Gladden & Milne 1999; Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998) include a combination of established brand equity, its antecedents and consequences. A combination of these conceptual frameworks is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework of Brand Equity [1]



Adapted from: Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998), [1] Gladden and Milne (1999) [2]

The conceptual frameworks identified conditions management could manipulate to improve brand equity for their teams, thus resulting in marketplace consequences. The theorised antecedents were ultimately related to the team, organisation, or the market.

i) Team-Related Antecedents

Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) included success, head coach and star player as key team-related antecedents. Successful teams generate brand equity through increased revenue, enhanced game-day atmosphere, and greater media exposure.

These sports teams therefore become more attractive to the marketplace. On-field success may therefore produce the desired consequences of brand equity, however, since sports products are invariably inconsistent, success is often difficult to achieve. The head coach and/or star player, they explained, can significantly contribute to the success and awareness of the institution. For example, although the MLB New York Yankees have an extensive payroll and a stable of superstars, their former manager Joe Torre consistently produced winning seasons (Miller 2005).

ii) Organisation-Related Antecedents

According to Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998), these antecedents include a university's reputation and tradition, conference and schedule, and entertainment package and/or product delivery. These were later modified to account for professional sports teams (Gladden & Milne 1999), notably, the addition of stadium or arena and logo design. Many of these antecedents were similar to organisational characteristics introduced earlier to explain team identification (Sutton et al. 1997). These encompassed the organisation's 'off-field' image, and included managerial decisions, reputation and tradition, and the quality of conference or league. Reputation and tradition concerned management's record of integrity, including the athletics program, and to a lesser degree, their role as an educational institution.

Furthermore, Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) claimed that since collegiate programs usually do not possess sufficient brand equity to secure national media contracts nor create competitive schedules on their own, conference affiliation was especially critical. For instance, the controversial decision by the University of Miami and Virginia Tech to join the Atlantic Coast Conference significantly boosted championship and television revenue for conference participants ('Miami, Virginia Tech quietly join ACC' 2004). In addition, since performance is difficult to control, management needs to ensure the overall game-day experience is as entertaining as possible. This occurs in collegiate sports through activities such as marching bands, stadium music and cheerleaders.

There are two additional antecedents that can significantly contribute to the brand equity of professional teams, notably, their logo and name, and their physical facility (Gladden & Milne 1999). Popular nicknames and fashionable logos can build significant brand equity for their teams. Gladden and Milne (1999) explained how the NHL San

Jose Sharks had developed brand equity through licensed merchandise sales prior to ever playing a game. The same applied to the NBA's Toronto Raptors ('Laying the Groundwork for the NBA in Toronto'). Franchises that control their facilities are also more likely to generate greater revenue through parking, concession and luxury box receipts when compared to teams with less profitable arrangements. This enables a wide range of marketing activities, which consequently increases brand equity. Moreover, certain sports facilities, such as MLB Boston Red Sox's Fenway Park, can assist in the development of brand equity (Gladden & Milne 1999).

iii) Market-Related Antecedents

The final category concerned market-related influences such as local or regional media arrangements, geographic location, competitive forces and team support. Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) claimed that media arrangements can generate brand equity since they increase consumer affiliation and interest in the team. Furthermore, geographic location often influences brand identities, especially as preferences for particular sports can vary dependent upon the region. For instance, they claim, it may be easier to establish brand equity for a collegiate wrestling program in Iowa, given the popularity of the sport in that state, and basketball is historically popular in Indiana (Rooney & Pillsbury 1992). Competitive forces are important, especially if rivals possess greater brand equity in the same marketplace, while team support, defined by the size and loyalty of their fan base, remains central to an organisation's brand equity.

iv) Consequences of Brand Equity

Brand equity, generated through team, organisation, or market-related antecedents, has valuable consequences for sports organisations. These consequences include national media exposure, merchandise sales, corporate support, game-day atmosphere, ticket sales and, specific to collegiate athletics, individual donations (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998). Although there is serious concern regarding the increased commercialism of these programs ('Knight Commission Poll Finds Americans Are Concerned About College Sports' 2006), collegiate athletics is not yet considered professional. Student-athletes are not directly paid and students usually attend university sporting events at no charge. Individual donations are therefore a

welcome means of financial support and can assist in the retention or hire of a visible head coach, improve facilities or enhance spectators' game-day experience.

Gladden and Milne (1999) introduced an additional antecedent, additional revenues. They expanded upon Gladden, Milne and Sutton's (1998) individual donations to include all other marketing activities, excluding merchandise sales, corporate support, and ticket sales, that could benefit from the creation of brand equity. These additional revenues explained the growth of brand extensions that have become increasingly popular in professional team sport. For instance, Manchester United has successfully extended their brand to generate revenue from licensed retail outlets, financial services and even its own subscription-television service (Holmes, Dawley & Khermouch 2003).

The consequences of brand equity create a perception of the sports product held in the mind of consumers. Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) explained that through the introduction of continual feedback loops this perception impacts brand equity antecedents and hence, overall brand equity. They concluded that while antecedents create the initial levels of equity, the resulting consequences could enhance, or diminish, a sports organisation's overall brand equity. This closed-ended system and the 'feedback loops' are seen in Figure 3.1. Although recent studies have examined brand equity in collegiate sports (notably, Bruening & Lee 2007; Easter, Leoni & Wiles 2008; Robinson & Miller 2003), as the marketplace has become increasingly competitive, the importance of brand equity to professional sports has increased.

3.2.3. Application to the Professional Sports Team

Richelieu (2004) claimed that three steps lead to the development of brand equity in professional sports. Management needs to define their team identity, position the team in the marketplace and develop a brand strategy. In addition, certain catalysts can help the team leverage their brand. For instance, internal catalysts include fans bonding with the team or the sale of team merchandise, while external catalysts include market size or industry changes. However, teams face potential obstacles as they seek to build their brands, notably, declining fan loyalty and competition from entertainment options. Also, 'moderating' variables, such as team finances or on-field performance, could either help or hinder their brand efforts (Richelieu 2004).

Hill and Vincent (2006) explained that Manchester United was the first in the industry to develop and leverage its brand marketing capabilities and that other teams could learn from the club's success. The following paragraphs examine the literature and attempts to apply brand equity to North American and European professional sports teams.

i) A North American Perspective

The earliest application of brand equity to a sports organisation compared the value of Major League Baseball team brands to the expansion franchises, the Arizona Diamondbacks and Tampa Bay Devil Rays (Boone, Kochunny & Wilkins 1995). They concluded that despite favourable, almost monopolistic, market conditions, only a quarter of the league's teams had greater brand equity than the new market entrants.

Keller's (1993) conceptual framework of customer-based brand equity underpinned Gladden and Funk's (2001; 2002) examination of brand associations in U.S. professional sport. Gladden and Funk (2001) explored the relationship between brand associations, a major component of brand equity, and brand loyalty among highly-identified sports fans. Gladden and Funk (2002) developed the Team Association Model, a scale that identified dimensions that underlie these associations.

Gladden and Funk (2001) determined that seven of their proposed brand associations significantly influenced brand loyalty while the relative youth of many of North America's leagues meant most franchises had not had time to develop a 'tradition of winning' or a 'rich history'. Gladden and Funk (2002) confirmed the importance of dimensions previously suggested by Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) as antecedents of brand equity: team-related (success, head coach, star player) and organisation-related (tradition, product delivery, stadium/arena). There was also support for two additional dimensions: the team's visual identity (logo) and consumer perceptions of management (Gladden & Funk 2002). They claimed that the logo, uniform and related insignia were important in establishing a "visual link or cue for brand associations" (p. 73). Consumer perceptions of management, it is argued, appear to be consistent with previous discussions on reputation (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998; Sutton et al. 1997).

In Gladden and Funk (2001; 2002), certain characteristics related to the team or organisation were important to consumers. These included success, head coach, star

player, reputation and tradition, product delivery, logo, and stadium/arena. Furthermore, brand associations are important dimensions of brand equity (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993). It therefore appears logical these characteristics could contribute to the creation of brand equity and justifies their inclusion in earlier conceptual frameworks. Likewise, recent studies have examined the head coach as a possible antecedent (Bruening & Lee 2007; Robinson & Miller 2003). Both studies adopted Gladden, Milne and Sutton's (1998) conceptual framework to explore the impact of a coach upon the brand equity of a collegiate sports program. For instance, Robinson and Miller (2003) found that Texas Tech's decision to hire coach Bobby Knight had strengthened the basketball program's brand equity and consequently its revenues. In a similar vein, star players and tradition played an important role in the creation of brand equity for a number of Canadian NHL teams (Richelieu & Pons 2009).

Richelieu and Pons (2006) recently examined how the NHL Toronto Maple Leafs and Barcelona F.C. had developed brand equity. Despite cultural and geographic differences, they shared similarities in their approaches. Both franchises had leveraged their extraordinary records and so their brands were defined as competitive and successful. Therefore, Richelieu and Pons (2006) concluded that a winning tradition "is a necessity for a brand that aspires to become a super brand" (p. 238). Both teams also defined their image and brand in relation to their strongest competitor thus enabling fans to clearly understand what their brand is and, more importantly, what it is not. The Maple Leafs and Barcelona F.C. also emphasised their longevity and tradition and empowered their fans to generate brand attachment and develop brand equity.

ii) A European Perspective

Ferrand and Pages (1999) argued that a professional sports team's brand image could enhance brand equity and result in positive changes to a fan's behaviour. Brand image is "a set of associations, usually organized in some meaningful way" (Aaker 1991, pp. 109-110). For instance, Liverpool F.C. may elicit one or more mental images, for instance, Anfield (stadium), Fernando Torres (player) or Carlsberg (sponsor). A strong brand image creates value for the team since it influences fan behaviour: it explained the propensity for fans of French football club, Olympique Lyonnais, to purchase season-tickets (Ferrand & Pages 1999). Indeed, Beccarini and Ferrand (2006) later found that brand image also led to higher satisfaction among the club's season-ticket

holders. Brand image also enabled Torino and Juventus, football clubs based in Torino, Italy, to differentiate their brands in a congested marketplace (Ferrand & Pages 1999).

Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt (2005) drew upon Gladden and Funk (2001) in a bid to refine existing brand equity models. They determined that brand equity had a “high and significant” (p. 508) effect upon attendance in the German professional football league, Bundesliga, and positively influenced purchase intention, price premiums and brand loyalty for those teams. Furthermore, despite a wide range of variables that could influence attendance, for example, weather and stadium capacity, they claimed that a team’s brand equity accounted for more than 50 percent of the change in game-day attendance. Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt (2005) concluded that most Bundesliga clubs did not understand the importance of professional brand management. Most recently, this is also the case in the fledgling German Hockey League which, despite facing intense competition from football, has struggled to successfully brand its product and create equity for its team brands (Suckow 2009).

Couvelaere and Richelieu (2005) examined the brand strategy of French football clubs, Lille Olympique Sporting Club, Racing Club de Lens, Girondins de Bordeaux and Olympique de Marseille, and found that they had recently adopted brand strategies. A strong brand allows teams to capitalise on the emotional attachment of fans, potentially develop and nurture a loyal fan base, and generate additional revenue. Couvelaere and Richelieu (2005) explained that on-field performance remains important in the development of brand equity and reinforces that sports teams need to build strong brands to weather performance cycles. As a manager of Lille Olympique Sporting Club explained, “if we relegate in Second Division, that could well be the point of no return, as fans might start supporting another team, never to come back to us” (p. 37).

The application of brand equity to professional sport has received increased attention. For instance, a special edition of the *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing* was recently published to provide “practical examples of branding across sport business situations” (Pons 2008, p. 1). However, Richelieu (2004) believes that a team can expand its customer base beyond its domestic market by moving along a ‘brand equity pipeline’, whereby it evolves from a local or regional brand into a national or international brand, or even a true global brand such as Manchester United or Real Madrid (Couvelaere & Richelieu 2005; Richelieu 2004).

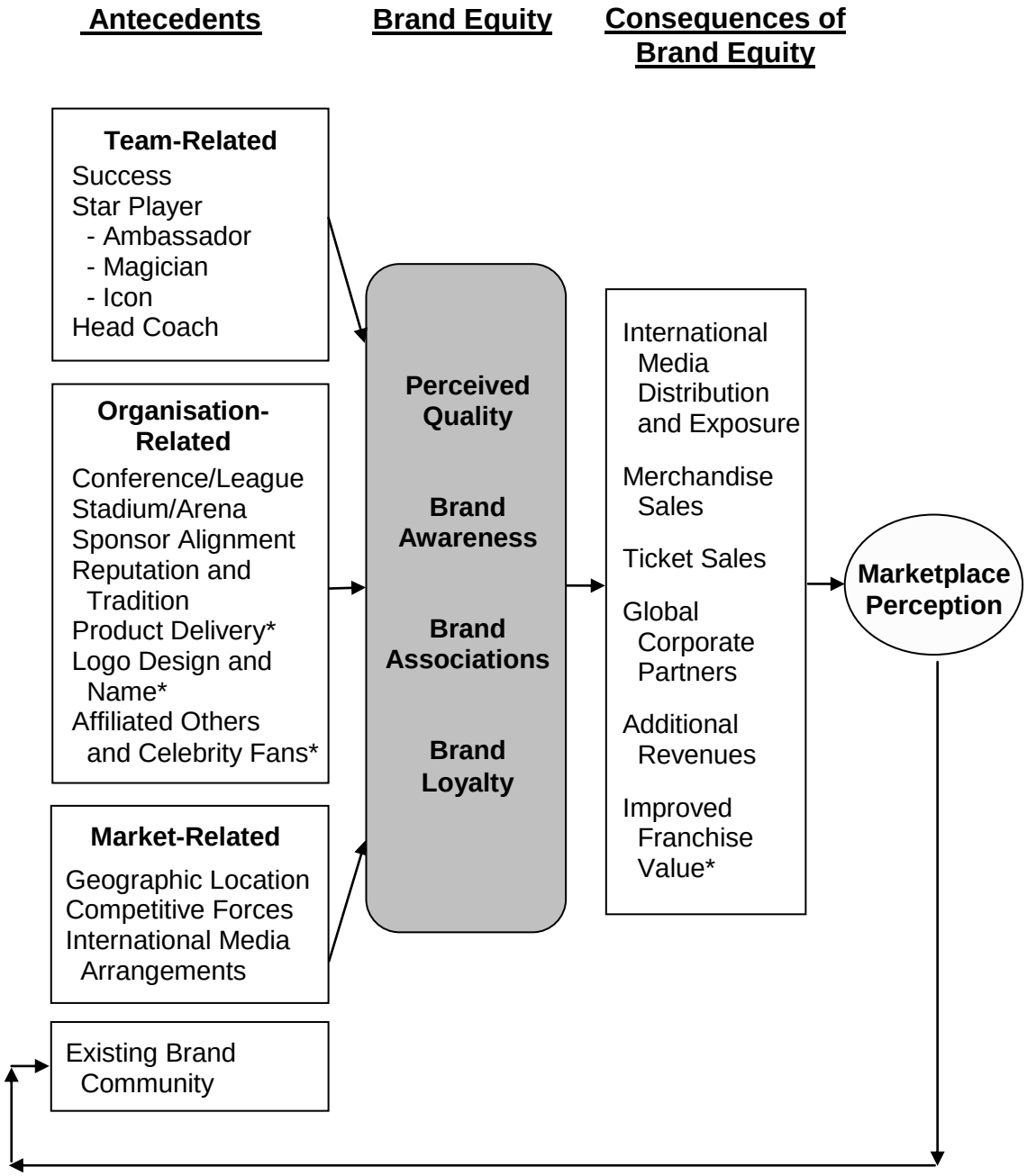
3.3. Brand Equity in a Global Sports Marketplace

Richelieu and Pons (2006) explained that, despite their best efforts, few sports teams are likely to become truly international brands. For instance, although both the NHL Toronto Maple Leafs and Barcelona F.C. have successfully developed their brand equity, the NHL franchise struggles to create significant brand equity abroad. They concluded, therefore, that the major limit to the globalisation of a sports brand lies in the sport itself and, since ice hockey is not a worldwide sport, this limits its appeal.

Previous brand equity frameworks (Gladden & Milne 1999; Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998), were confined to domestic teams, however, Kerr and Gladden (2008) revised the frameworks to explain the development of brand equity across domestic boundaries and to account for the emergence of the satellite fan. The revised framework (Figure 3.2) also includes a feedback loop whereby the consequences of brand equity can further impact the professional team. However, it now does so via the newly-developed brand community antecedent.

A number of the antecedents and consequences are similar or the same as those in the earlier frameworks. In those instances, Kerr and Gladden (2008) discussed how these differ as a result of the satellite fan. In addition, the authors claim, they “may or may not have captured all of the aspects that are involved with brand equity creation among satellite fans” (p. 74). For instance, they speculated that a team’s logo or colours and celebrity fans could lead to the creation of brand equity.

Figure 3.2: The Revised Conceptual Framework



** Indicates items not included in the published framework.*

Adapted from: Kerr and Gladden (2008)

3.3.1. Team-Related Antecedents

Team-related antecedents tend to influence a team's on-field performance in a season. As such, the mix of elements seldom remains the same from year to year. For

instance, coaches are fired and players leave, transfer or retire. There are three key team-related antecedents: success, star player, and the head coach.

i) Success

A successful season or history of performance might be more important for foreign teams than for their local counterparts. Indeed, Richelieu and Pons (2006) suggested that “it seems that winning is a necessity for a brand that aspires to become a super brand” (p. 238). However, while local fans likely have access to a network of fellow supporters with whom they can celebrate victory and lament defeat, satellite fans cannot guarantee having such a network. Local fans may be able to mitigate the negative effects of a team loss upon their psyche, yet this may not be possible for satellite fans. Faced with supporting a losing team, and in the absence of a support network, they may instead adopt other ego-protective devices, such as CORFing (Snyder, Lassegard & Ford 1986; Wann & Branscombe 1990). This cannot be positive for the creation, nor maintenance, of a team’s brand equity in a global marketplace.

A local sports team often benefits from significant media and community support and retains top-of-mind awareness to a potential consumer. As a result, foreign competitors may have to possess certain properties, such as a history of superior performance, to break through the clutter and become a viable option. Consistent on-field success is, however, difficult to achieve, especially in leagues that adopt mechanisms to ensure parity, such as a salary cap or player draft. Indeed, it should be potentially easier for teams to build foreign brand equity in the absence of a level playing field. This allows clubs to generate additional revenue and acquire extraordinary players (Carlin 2004) which enhances their brand’s global appeal and creates further opportunities to generate revenue. Although no guarantee, greater financial resources often lead to on-field success, and hence creates, or enhances, brand equity abroad.

ii) Star Player(s)

A star player is arguably of paramount importance in building brand equity across geographic boundaries. Michael Jordan was instrumental in the international appeal of the NBA Chicago Bulls during the 1990’s and became arguably the most recognisable athlete in the world. In today’s celebrity-driven world, the impact of a star player upon

the creation and maintenance of a team's brand equity may be even more pronounced. For instance, *FutureBrand* estimated that 30 percent of non-European football fans follow a particular club because they like an individual player (Garrahan 2003).

Kerr and Gladden (2008) argued that there are three roles a player can assume to boost a team's foreign brand equity; the player as ambassador, magician or icon.

The Role of Ambassador

As foreign ambassadors, players such as Yao Ming (Larmer 2005) or Hideki Matsui (Whiting 2003) attract the support of millions of fans in their home countries. Real Madrid has mastered this strategy, signing star individuals that brought their own fan base with them: beyond Beckham, Zidane is very popular in France and North Africa, and the Brazilian, Ronaldo in Latin America (Vitzthum 2005). Ambassadors have visible roles for a significant period in countries other than their own. Therefore, when these athletes take the field, they represent not only the team, but their native lands.

The Role of Magician

Occasionally professional sport witnesses a defining moment, or season, that creates purely magical moments. For instance, in Major League Baseball, consider Cal Ripken Jr's consecutive game 'streak', the 1998 home run record chase by Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa or, more recently, Ichiro Suzuki's 2004 pursuit of MLB's hit record undoubtedly created significant interest in the Seattle Mariners (Ichiro's team) in Japan. Moments like these attract unprecedented media interest and fans around the world may become exposed to individual players, teams or sports.

The Role of Icon

Some athletes transcend their sport, become brands in their own right and cross-over to the world of popular culture. Michael Jordan was one, yet David Beckham may have taken it to the next level. He has been the subject of a successful film ("Bend it Like Beckham") and has become a celebrity endorser in markets worldwide. Certain star players have the ability to almost single-handedly cultivate brand equity for their team

and can achieve almost cult-like status: Buddhist monks in Thailand erected a statuette of the Englishman in a spot reserved for figures of minor deities (Foer 2004).

While Beckham contributed to the global fame of Manchester United, his transfer to Real Madrid arguably saw them become the world's premier football team brand. It was expected that five million of their 16 and a half million Asian fans would immediately change allegiance to Real Madrid, and sales of team replica jerseys went from one million to three million shirts within a year of signing the English captain (Carlin 2004). Indeed, sport and sponsorship consultants, *Sport+Markt*, found the popularity of Real Madrid rose eight percentage points in key Asian markets following his acquisition, while Manchester United's popularity fell by seven percentage points (Walsh 2007).

iii) Head Coach

A high-profile coach or manager can create credibility for an organisation and can boost the team's winning percentage and prestige. For instance, the arrival of Alex Ferguson heralded a period of immense success for Manchester United and they have become a household name. In addition, a high-profile coach or manager may also have a loyal cadre of fans that will follow his or her career despite geographic boundaries. For instance, speculation was rife that former Australian Socceroos coach, Guus Hiddink, would coach EPL Chelsea at the end of the 2006/07 season ('Russian soccer chief denies Hiddink Chelsea move' 2007). Had this occurred, some fans in Australia might have become interested in the London club, and the English Premier League. Alternatively, should a former star player try their hand at coaching, fans of that player might develop an interest in their new club. For instance, fans of Wayne Gretzky ('the Great One'), who had a stellar career with the NHL Edmonton Oilers and Los Angeles Kings, in his new role with the NHL Phoenix Coyotes.

3.3.2. Organisation-Related Antecedents

Certain elements can contribute to a team's brand equity over time whereby those with healthy brand equity are more likely to withstand negative events such as the occasional poor season. These organisation-related antecedents include: conference and league; stadium and arena; sponsor alignment; reputation and tradition; product delivery; logo design and name; and affiliated others and celebrity fans.

i) Conference and League

Previous conceptual frameworks emphasised the importance of the conference or schedule in brand equity creation (Gladden & Milne 1999; Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998). However, to reflect the nature of sports competition worldwide, this has been revised to include the concept of the league. While North American sports operate under the auspices of a league, it is in fact more of a governing body. Competition tends to be characterised by contests between, and within, regional divisions. Foreign clubs, however, tend to exist within a league format; a vertical structure often characterised by a system of promotion and relegation. A poor season can see a club demoted to a lower-tier competition, while successful lower clubs can be promoted thus earning a place among the country's elite. Membership of such a league cannot be underestimated as a club seeks to create and maintain international brand equity.

The English Premier League can be seen in 600 million homes (Huggins 2005) which has made household names of their clubs. Their success, on and off the pitch, has also boosted the brand equity of the league. Teams neither exist nor thrive in isolation (Sutton et al. 1997), and the presence of a strong team, a competitive and prestigious division or a well-developed rivalry may increase fan interest and team identification. Aaker (1991) claimed that perceived quality is an integral component of brand equity and provides consumers with a point of differentiation and a reason for purchase. Consequently, because the EPL's quality is well established, inclusion in the league can only enhance the brand equity of lesser-known clubs such as recently-promoted Wigan Athletic. Consistent with this notion of perceived quality, it can be argued that fans tend to gravitate to products that represent the highest level of competition. This might explain why the likes of the EPL, NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, Super 14 (Southern Hemisphere Rugby Union), NRL and AFL continue to find audiences worldwide.

ii) Stadium or Arena

Gladden and Milne (1999) discussed how the sports facility can significantly impact the development of brand equity. According to Stephen Greyser of the Harvard Business School, such venues are "crucial to creation of a brand" (Rifkin 1999, p. 82). The venue is a tangible and visible representation of the team brand (Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001) and often intimate relationships develop between the facility and fans worldwide.

Although satellite fans are largely unable to attend games, the venue might still aid in the development of a relationship with the team. The facility may serve as an important source of brand associations for fans. For instance, Fenway Park conjures up feelings of nostalgia among members of 'Red Sox Nation'. In addition, these venues sometime become tourist attractions. For instance, Barcelona F.C. boasts a museum highlighting club history and success. This museum attracts more than one million visitors a year, reinforces the brand abroad and reaffirms the club's strong traditions of excellence.

iii) Sponsor Alignment

Both Manchester United and Real Madrid are perceived to be strong global brands and their sponsors, (formerly) Vodafone and Siemens, reflect their brand value. A global audience can see these teams compete and instantly recognise the club and sponsor. Sports sponsorship is pursued so as to boost brand awareness and their company's brand image (Grohs, Wagner & Vsetecka 2004). Through these arrangements it is possible to transfer the 'event' image to that of the sponsor (Grohs, Wagner & Vsetecka 2004; Gwinner 2005; Gwinner 1997; Gwinner & Eaton 1999). Gwinner (2005) explained that the 'event' refers to the "*source* of meaning that is transferred to the sponsoring brand" and thus could encompass a facility or team (p. 175).

According to Gwinner and Eaton (1999), image transfer is less likely to move from brand to event when the event has a strong brand image relative to its sponsor. However, Gwinner (2005) suggested that "the strength of an event's image may vary in different regions of the world" (p. 174). Therefore, since a team may be relatively unknown outside its shores, it is plausible that the sponsor's brand is more recognisable than the team brand. For instance, as EPL Chelsea sought to become one of the premier brands in English football, it desired a sponsor that was seen as "global, prestigious and with ambitions for growth"; qualities reflected by the club (Huggins 2005). As a result, sponsor image may be a key ingredient in creating brand equity for the sports team. Strong brands can also benefit from an association: Manchester United partnered with Vodafone, Pepsi, Budweiser and Fuji and both parties benefited from each other's international reputations (Hill & Vincent 2006).

A corporate sponsor can leverage its involvement with a sports property to boost brand awareness and product sales. However, these activities can also enhance brand equity

for the team in markets where the company does business. For instance, Nike used Michael Jordan to promote their products worldwide. Likewise, Gatorade and the Asahi brewery used NBA San Antonio Spur, Manu Ginobili, and Boston Red Sox, Daisuke Matsuzaka, in television commercials in Argentina (Ludden 2005) and Japan (Reed 2006a), respectively. Their appearance in team uniform can boost the brand equity of their teams, especially given the popularity of the players in their native lands.

iv) Reputation and Tradition

According to Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998), an integral component of a team's reputation is management's record of integrity. Furthermore, a sports organisation's reputation is a combination of a "history of on-field success, constant commitment to excellence from team ownership, and a record of dealing with the surrounding community with integrity" (Sutton et al. 1997, p. 18). Team brands may therefore become tainted assets due to organisation or player actions. For instance, Serie A side, Juventus, was stripped of its last two Serie A titles, demoted to the second division and banned from the 2006/07 Champions League for their involvement in Italian football's match-fixing scandal ('Italian trio relegated to Serie B' 2006; 'Punishments cut for Italian clubs' 2006). Player misconduct can also tarnish a club's reputation; for instance, the sexual misconduct allegations made against NRL Canterbury Bulldogs players in 2004 (Hardaker 2004).

Tradition, defined as capturing both team history (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998; Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001) and playing style (Kolbe & James 2000), can develop brand equity in the global marketplace. Although particular organisations, such as the MLB New York Yankees, have experienced great success throughout the years they have also embraced their traditions. In an age where teams frequently tinker with their image, their uniforms have remain unchanged since 1936 (Liberman 2003). Couvelaere and Richelieu (2005) claimed that fans may also gravitate to a club due to its playing style and that this style should be coherent with its brand identity. For instance, French football club, Girondins de Bordeaux, has adopted an elegant style of play in keeping with the image of the city and the team while the NFL Pittsburgh Steelers, as befits an industrial city, are famous for their hard-nosed brand of football.

v) Product Delivery

Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) explained that certain elements of the game-day experience can enhance the spectator's overall enjoyment of the event and thus increase brand equity. Satellite fans, however, seldom have the opportunity to experience these elements firsthand due to their geographic isolation. As a result, the fan's experience is largely mediated by the commercial broadcaster, whether television, radio or Internet. A quality broadcast may positively influence the potential fan's perception of the club and/or league, while the opposite is also true. It is therefore imperative that clubs ensure a quality broadcast so as to best showcase their product. Since satellite fans are unlikely to engage in direct consumption, i.e. in person, those entities that provide superior entertainment may have a considerable advantage as they seek to build brand awareness, attract new fans and boost brand equity.

vi) Logo Design and Name

In recent years, professional sports teams have created brand equity through their logo and name (Gladden & Milne 1999). As teams battle for global market share, such insignia has become even more important. A logo can transcend language and cultural barriers and act as a positive messenger for the team. Where traditionally a team brand arose from "their location, local flora or fauna or some nickname given by supporters long ago", they are now more often the result of extensive market research (Canning 2005a). Furthermore, Karen Raugust explained, while it used to be "a fan-based business, where fans only bought merchandise of local teams they supported … [now] a lot of kids are wearing jerseys of teams [and] they do not even know what sport they play" (Bandyopadhyay & Bottone 1997, p. 13).

A well-crafted logo can build brand recognition, perhaps for years to come, and result in increased merchandise sales, a key consequence of brand equity. For instance, in the NRL, the Auckland Warriors became the New Zealand Warriors and the Eastern Suburbs Roosters, the Sydney Roosters. This change likely led to greater brand recognition in overseas markets due to the global prominence of Sydney. Likewise, the MLB Anaheim Angels changed its name to the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim ('City officials: Change breaks lease' 2005). Due to the global awareness of Los Angeles, the Angels are likely to benefit from greater brand recognition overseas.

vii) Affiliated Others and Celebrity Fans

Sutton et al. (1997) discussed the concept of affiliated others and explained that a socially desirable fan base could attract the support of the achievement-seeking fan as individuals sought to enhance their self-esteem through association with the team. In the context of developing brand equity in a foreign market, this may be extended to incorporate the value of the celebrity fan or other opinion leader.

Some celebrities are renowned for their passion for certain sports teams, such as actors, Jack Nicholson for his support of the NBA Los Angeles Lakers and Russell Crowe for the NRL South Sydney Rabbitohs. *FutureBrand* argued that the brands of the NBA New York Knicks and Los Angeles Lakers benefit from these 'celebrity fans' ('FutureBrand Sports Team Brand Valuation Study Ranks New York Yankees, New York Knicks and New York Rangers in the Top Ten Sports Team Brands in the World' 2001; Evans 2001). Since celebrities attract considerable media attention, their public support often results in increased media coverage and hence brand equity for their favourite teams. For instance, Crowe generated worldwide media exposure for the Rabbitohs brand as he attended games and training sessions with Tom Cruise and used the team to promote his movie, 'Cinderella Man' ('Crowe's Rabbitohs deal' 2005).

The existence of celebrity fans, or other opinion leaders, can lead to increased media attention, ticket sales and corporate support. Keller (1993) claimed that celebrity endorsement can influence a brand's associations, an important dimension of brand equity. A celebrity fan's support appears to be an explicit endorsement of their team. Therefore, a celebrity fan base could be encouraged and prove an important driver of brand equity, especially given the popularity of celebrities in the foreign press.

3.3.3. Market-Related Antecedents

Market-related antecedents are extremely difficult for individual clubs to manipulate. These provide a challenge as clubs seek to expand their fan base, precisely because of their relative inability to influence, or access, consumers in foreign markets. Although some successfully leverage their reputation or tradition, acquire quality players, conduct foreign tours, and so forth, they are limited in their ability to influence market-

related antecedents. There are four market-related antecedents: geographic location, competitive forces, international media arrangements, and existing brand community.

i) Geographic Location

Brand identities are often formed based on geographic location. Although Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) explained that preferences for certain sports can vary between regions, they are especially pronounced between countries. Due to characteristics such as shared cultural influence (Stokvis 1989) or even geography, countries often embrace certain sports yet ignore others. For instance, Rugby Union is followed with almost religious fervour in New Zealand and therefore consumers in that country are more likely to be interested in, and aware of, foreign teams in the Super 14. As a result, it should prove easier to establish brand equity for rugby brands in New Zealand.

ii) Competitive Forces

Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) argued that competition is very influential in the creation of brand equity for a sports team. Indeed, competition with entities that have stronger brand equity will most likely have a negative impact upon revenue. A foreign team, therefore, has to consider the impact of these competitive forces as it attempts to build foreign brand equity. A sports team that lacks a distinct brand image will find it difficult to break through the clutter and establish their own unique brand equity.

A new entrant often faces a similar rival in foreign markets. However, as an established member of the community, a local competitor will likely have a strong defensible position. Although established teams usually have a distinct first-mover advantage, should the new product offer substantially greater quality this can be severely eroded. For example, despite the existence of domestic football leagues, European football teams have little difficulty in capturing market share in foreign markets. Local teams, therefore, have to battle foreign rivals that possess greater brand equity, largely due to their perceived quality. As a result, although there may be entrenched competitors, opportunities exist to create brand equity in the international sports marketplace.

iii) International Media Arrangements

Brand awareness for a local sports team is usually significant as local media outlets devote considerable coverage to the organisation. Satellite fans, however, are most likely not concerned with these local or regional media arrangements for they are unlikely to provide extensive coverage of their favourite foreign team. The media may be reluctant to cover these teams because it is difficult to attract an audience and they are unable to cover the broadcast rights fees. LePla, Davis and Parker (2003) explained that the first stage of brand equity is product awareness, and so if a team is not accessible to potential consumers then it is unlikely to be considered a viable product choice. Therefore, to enhance a team's brand equity, one must strive to create product awareness. International media arrangements can be a valuable vehicle to create brand awareness for the foreign team. For instance, the NBA's decision to promote their product in Europe led to the growth of a strong brand. As Commissioner, David Stern, explained, its appeal and "the growth of television markets around the world meant that NBA games were going to be seen everywhere" (Larmer 2005, p. 71).

iv) Existing Brand Community

Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) argued that team support would not be limited to those in attendance nor indirect sport consumers and is defined by the size and loyalty of the club's supporter base. Historically, fans derived enjoyment directly (game attendance) or indirectly (local or regional media), however, technological advances have expanded the team's reach and hence their fan base. The media's reach and influence allows marketers to expand their horizons, and since media transcends geography, brands likewise have transcended geography (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001). As a result, they claimed, the influence of media has led to the rise of brand communities.

Management should change their mindset from building a fan base to developing a brand community (Couvelaere & Richelieu 2005). A brand community is defined as "a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand" (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001, p. 412). Satellite fans are largely indirect consumers and flourish despite their geographic location; therefore, their presence suggests the existence of a 'non-geographically bound community'. These have been documented for some of the world's most popular

brands (McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn 2001). However, the literature has dealt largely with branded goods.

Brand communities exhibit three markers of community: shared consciousness; rituals and traditions; and moral responsibility (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001). This consciousness of kind, or intrinsic connection between members, transcends geographic boundaries, and members often distinguish between fellow brand users and those of other brands. Furthermore, the brand community has rituals and traditions, and due to their sense of moral responsibility members seek to integrate and retain membership and assist members in brand usage to ensure the group's long-term survival. However, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) claimed, the important distinction with the brand community is that these markers are "situated within a commercial and mass-mediated ethos" (p. 412).

Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) suggested that brand communities could possibly exist for any brand, but are most likely for those with a strong image, rich and lengthy histories and threatened by competition. They also claimed they may be more likely for brands that are consumed publicly, rather than in private. Given that many of the world's most famous team brands possess these characteristics the lack of studies that examine possible brand communities in this setting is noteworthy (Kerr & Gladden 2008). The brand community and the social bonds forged through brand consumption impacts brand equity, especially in its potential to strengthen brand loyalty (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001). Indeed, Upshaw and Taylor (2001) claimed, the value of a brand "grows in proportion to the extent that it is truly 'owned' by a wider brand community" (p. 424).

Kolbe and James (2000) discovered two dimensions of community: the team's local area and the idea of a community of fans, regardless of location. They found that fans liked the idea of a connection with others worldwide and felt positively about the existence of like-minded communities. The existence of online fan communities, especially given the potential psychological benefits (Wann 2006c), suggests the existence of a team brand community. The opportunity to strengthen relationships with the brand is likely a key driver in the growth and maintenance of these communities.

3.3.4. Consequences of Brand Equity

Kerr and Gladden (2008) argued that earlier conceptual frameworks (Gladden & Milne 1999; Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998) needed to be modified to encompass satellite fans and their contribution to brand value. The following paragraphs discuss the likely consequences of the development of brand equity in a global sports marketplace: international media distribution and exposure; merchandise sales; ticket sales; global corporate partners; additional revenues; and improved franchise values.

The capacity for a sports team to generate media coverage outside its domestic market is an excellent indicator of their brand equity. For instance, due to global media exposure, the EPL has become one of the world's most recognisable brands. Greater exposure results in greater brand equity which can result in increased revenues. Furthermore, a club's status can develop international media exposure beyond that generated by the league. According to David Sternberg of the U.S. Fox Soccer Channel, Manchester United games regularly attract twice the number of viewers than other games (Isidore 2005). The club's popularity enabled them to strike a deal with the New York-based YES Network to air tape-delayed games, a deal which saw the Manchester United Supporters Club USA increase their membership (Fisher 2002).

Merchandise sales are sales of apparel and other items bearing the team's name or logo (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998). Once purchased, satellite fans may promote the brand as they wear team merchandise and, in turn, enhance brand awareness in foreign markets. For example, Manchester United has significant brand equity in the U.S. and sells more licensed jerseys than all the MLS teams combined (Isidore 2005). Although satellite fans are limited in their ability to witness their heroes perform in person, a team's strong brand equity might also drive ticket sales in foreign markets. For instance, Real Madrid's 2004 tour to Asia netted nearly 15 million Euros, largely due to David Beckham (Carlin 2004), while A.C. Milan, Chelsea and Bayern Munich also make overseas tours to increase their foreign market share (Holmes 2005).

The creation of brand equity significantly expands the marketing potential of the team for those companies that do business in multiple countries. When recognised beyond their local markets, the pool of global corporate partners significantly grows and this can lead to increased sponsorship revenue. For instance, the global insurance

company, AIG, recently decided to sponsor Manchester United. If one were to follow the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model, AIG could use their association with Manchester United to make potential Chinese consumers aware of their company, products and services. Due to Chinese interest in the EPL, and the team, AIG hopes to engage with potential consumers and generate interest in the company's products. The sponsorship could develop an understanding among Chinese audiences that AIG can help them meet their financial needs and hence stimulate desire for the company's services. Finally, AIG's promotional messages would encourage potential consumers to take action and drive product sales. Ultimately, the deal is tailored to target Asian-based football fans, give AIG an edge over China Life Insurance and Prudential, and "globalize AIG's brand recognition, particularly in Asia" (Cheng 2006).

Aaker (1991) also explained that an organisation can exploit its brand equity by extending its name to different products and European football clubs, such as Italy's U.S. Lecce (Guenzi & Nocco 2006), France's Olympique Lyonnais and Manchester United, have successfully leveraged their brands. For instance, Manchester United has licensed retail outlets in Singapore (Burton 2004) and recently introduced China's first affinity credit card to appeal to the country's 24 million fans (Turner 2005).

Finally, Milne and McDonald (1999) explained that on-field success enhances the long-term value of a sports franchise, and is most likely a prime determinant of its brand equity. Furthermore, the majority of a club's value is comprised of intangible assets, most importantly the trademark and associated goodwill, in other words, its brand (*The Brand Champions League: Europe's Most Valuable Football Clubs* 2005). Therefore, a legitimate consequence of brand equity would be a healthy market, or franchise, value.

Kerr and Gladden (2008) explained that earlier brand equity frameworks (Gladden & Milne 1999; Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998) needed to be revised to reflect the importance of the satellite fan and explain the development of brand equity in a global marketplace. The revised framework introduced additional antecedents of brand equity and modified the consequences of a team's brand equity. Kerr and Gladden (2008) discussed the satellite fan, however, this thesis, as previously explained, examines the satellite supporter. Furthermore, a case will be made later in this chapter that this framework might be able to shed light on the team identification of these supporters.

3.4. Support for the Brand Equity Antecedents

Recent research largely validates the conceptual brand equity frameworks examined in this chapter. For instance, the inclusion of various team and organisation antecedents was supported by Gladden and Funk (2001; 2002) and Robinson and Miller (2003), while Gladden and Milne (1999) argued that professional teams have conclusively proven that their logo and name can create brand equity. Furthermore, *FutureBrand* and *Brand Finance* also reinforced the importance of many antecedents contained within these frameworks. Their reports examined the value of Australian (Stensholt 2006), and European (*The Brand Champions League: Europe's Most Valuable Football Clubs* 2005; Gieske & Forato 2004; Haigh & Park 2006), football team brands.

According to *FutureBrand*, there is a strong relationship between brand value and the subsequent revenue generated by that brand. They argued that the more supporters an organisation has, either in local or international markets, the greater their potential to increase revenue and hence brand value. Indeed, the one dimension common to all the top clubs is “their ability to promote themselves overseas and attract fans from all over the world” (Gieske & Forato 2004). “Building a blockbuster football brand”, David Haigh, CEO of *Brand Finance*, argued, “cannot be seen in isolation [and] is a combination of the activities on and off the pitch that drives the accumulation of brand equity” (Mills 2006). As a result, they determined that certain antecedents, related to the team or organisation, could significantly contribute to brand equity.

Team success can fill an organisation’s coffers and promote their brand to a global audience. Both *FutureBrand* and *Brand Finance* argued that team performance, either in the most recent season, or throughout the years, made important contributions to the brand’s value. *Brand Finance* suggested that ongoing popularity in Europe and Asia is “driven by match results, particularly in the UEFA Champions League” while improved team performance also yielded enhanced brand value, for instance, Liverpool’s victory in the 2004/05 Champions League re-ignited their brand’s appeal (Haigh & Park 2006).

FutureBrand stressed the importance of on-field success and star players for Australian football brands (Stensholt 2006). Haigh and Park (2006) claimed that the loss of a star player could instead damage brand value: Michael Ballack’s departure from Bayern Munich would have “a detrimental impact on the brand’s appeal, both nationally and

overseas". They also claimed that a manager, such as Chelsea's Jose Mourinho, "is a polarising force in forming perceptions of the Chelsea FC brand" (Haigh & Park 2006).

The reports also reinforced the importance of organisational antecedents. For instance, *FutureBrand* was impressed with the lengthy history of Barcelona F.C., Bayern Munich and Liverpool, who drew "on a successful history dating back to 1892" (Gieske & Forato 2004). In contrast, certain circumstances can negatively influence a brand's reputation and tradition. For instance, Chelsea's defensive style of play made the brand less appealing than its competition (Haigh & Park 2006). *FutureBrand's* Australian study also found players had damaged the Canterbury (NRL) and Richmond (AFL) football brands as the result of off-field discretions (Stensholt 2006).

The team's stadium or arena received support as the brand appeal of Real Madrid and Barcelona F.C. was enhanced by the "world famous" Bernabeau and Camp Nou, respectively (Gieske & Forato 2004). *Brand Finance* also reaffirmed the importance of conference or league upon brand equity. For instance, despite being Germany's most recognisable football club, Bayern Munich's presence in the Bundesliga dampens its potential brand value. They argued that, as a result, its international brand appeal, "is some way behind teams from the Premiership and La Liga" (Haigh & Park 2006).

3.5. Brand Equity and Team Identification: A Synthesis

As branding has become more important, conceptual frameworks have been developed to assess the equity of a sports organisation's brand (Gladden & Milne 1999; Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998; Kerr & Gladden 2008). In addition, satellite supporters represent significant revenue and can enhance the equity of these brands. For instance, it was earlier shown, Real Madrid now earns 60 percent of merchandise revenue from overseas markets (Jones, Parkes & Houlihan 2006).

This section (and Kerr 2008) explores the existence of a relationship between these frameworks and team identification and, in particular, examines the value of Kerr and Gladden (2008) to shed light on the team identification of satellite supporters.

3.5.1. The Proposed Relationship

There is evidence that a brand equity framework can be used to better understand team identification and, as a result, provide clues as to why satellite supporters consume a foreign sports product or, as described in the fan literature, identify with a foreign professional sports team. Although this section will explore how a revised framework might shed light on team identification, theorised relationships between the two constructs have been proposed, although never empirically pursued.

Social identification is important in the creation of brand equity, especially for service brands, and sports teams, as service brands, generate high levels of consumer identification (Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001). As stated before, team identification is based upon social identification (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002; Madrigal 2004; Wann & Branscombe 1993; Wann et al. 2001), so fans who identify strongly invest more time and money (Wann & Branscombe 1993). Moreover, for fans with high levels of identification, the role of fan is an important component of their identity.

Underwood, Bond and Baer (2001) ultimately proposed that the greater the degree of social identification between consumer and product, the greater the level of customer-based brand equity. This was empirically tested by Boyle and Magnusson (2007), who found that, “a heightened social identity to the team enhanced the perceived equity of the athletic program (i.e. brand) overall” (p. 497). Carlson, Quazi and Muthaly (2002) expressed similar sentiments and proposed that the level of consumer-based brand equity is positively associated with the level of team identification.

It appears that conceptual frameworks to assess brand equity in sports and team identification share at least one common antecedent: team success. Successful teams are more likely to generate brand equity whereby on-field success translates to off-field riches (Couvelaere & Richelieu 2005; Milne & McDonald 1999). Furthermore, Milne and McDonald (1999) explained that successful teams often have higher gate receipts, sell more licensed merchandise, and receive greater media revenue and exposure. For instance, as earlier stated, Liverpool F.C.’s Champions League victory reignited its brand’s appeal and enhanced its brand value (Haigh & Park 2006).

While successful teams are likely to generate brand equity, the possibility for vicarious achievement and the enhancement of self-esteem also suggests they are likely to attract new fans. As discussed earlier, social identity theory suggests that team success enables fans to 'bask in the reflected glory' of a chosen team. In addition, the need for vicarious achievement is why successful teams attract fans and why these fans 'jump on the bandwagon' when teams perform well (Sutton et al. 1997).

It has been shown that team success is important for sports teams in the creation of brand equity and the growth of a supporter base. As a result, successful teams are likely to have more fans and possess more valuable brands than their less-successful counterparts. It has also been shown that both brand equity and team identification share at least one common antecedent, team success.

According to Kerr and Gladden (2008), antecedents contained within their revised brand equity framework can influence the creation of brand equity and "theoretically have an impact on each of the four main dimensions set forth by [David] Aaker" (p. 70). Two of these dimensions, perceived quality and brand associations, directly influence support for the professional sports team. Furthermore, parallels exist between the consequences of brand equity and the consumption behaviour of the foreign consumer.

3.5.2. Dimensions of Brand Equity

As explained earlier, Aaker (1991) conceptualised brand equity as comprised of four main dimensions: brand awareness; perceived quality; brand associations; and brand loyalty and, when managed astutely, these dimensions create value for the brand.

The first of these dimensions, brand awareness, was earlier defined as "the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category" (p. 61). Awareness is critical to the creation of brand equity, for if potential consumers are unaware of the brand, it will not feature in their evoked set, or that group of brands "one will evaluate for the solution of a particular consumer problem" (Hawkins, Best & Coney 1998, p. 525). For satellite supporters, the market-related antecedents described in Kerr and Gladden (2008) might be critical to the brand awareness of a foreign team. International media arrangements ensure the product is available to a domestic audience, although a heavily-saturated sports landscape is

likely to hinder the awareness of the foreign brand. A shared cultural history or geography is likely to benefit teams which compete in familiar or popular sports and give the foreign product a distinct advantage. Conversely, Kerr and Gladden (2008) claimed, intense competition might make it “impossible for even a high quality brand to gain awareness among fans in foreign markets” (p. 70). A sizable or enthusiastic brand community might also cultivate and maintain support for a foreign-based team. These external characteristics should aid its inclusion in the satellite supporter’s evoked set.

Brand equity assists consumers when they process product or brand information, provides confidence in their purchase decision, and can enhance product satisfaction (Aaker 1991). Furthermore, Aaker (1991) explained, perceived quality and brand associations can ultimately enhance a customer’s satisfaction with the use experience. According to Aaker (1991), as seen earlier, perceived quality refers to “the customer’s perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives” (p. 85) and brand associations are “anything ‘linked’ in memory to a brand” (p. 109). This might apply equally to a luxury automobile (Mercedes-Benz), a bottle of fine champagne (Dom Perignon), or a ticket to a high-quality sports event (Real Madrid). Both these dimensions act to differentiate and position the brand in the consumer’s mind and provide potential consumers a reason to purchase (Aaker 1991). However, for the sports fan, their decision to purchase the sports product is largely governed by their identification with a particular team.

Perceived quality can influence those brands considered, and ultimately selected, and when this is high, enhances the effect of brand advertising and promotion. Brand associations, on the other hand, can provide an important distinction for consumers when faced with multiple brands (Aaker 1991). As a result, this dimension can assist consumers in brand selection and provide a specific reason to purchase and use the brand, especially when brand associations enhance its credibility. Sports organisations and corporations often use athletes to achieve these objectives: differentiate brands and, by providing credibility, help consumers choose between brands. For instance, Nike uses Brazilian, Ronaldinho while Adidas uses David Beckham to differentiate their brands, enhance product credibility, and drive sales. Likewise, their teams, A.C. Milan and the MLS Los Angeles Galaxy, achieve the same objectives.

The consumption process is quite straightforward for conventional products: the consumer selects from their evoked set, or that group of brands most preferred, and completes the transaction. Contingent upon previous satisfaction with the brand, they may decide to re-purchase and this cycle might occur hundreds of times during their relationship with the company or brand (Griffin 1995). However, this is arguably more complicated for the sports fan as their primary reason to purchase the product, in this instance the team, is usually driven by their degree of team identification. According to Todd Donavan, Colorado State University, "people want to identify with something, [and when] they identify, they buy things. Before they can identify, they must have a need to affiliate themselves with something" (May 2003). Therefore, it appears logical, and highly likely, that team identification influences sports consumption.

3.5.3. Team Identification and Consumption

According to Wann (2006a), sports consumption can be divided into three distinct categories: game, team-related and sponsorship. Game consumption includes fans in attendance and those who follow the game via media channels. Team-related consumption relates to those fans that purchase team-related merchandise, while sponsorship consumption, he explained, concerns a fan's "perceptions and patronage of sponsors' products" (p. 338). In an increasingly-commercialised environment, it is also logical that team-related consumption could include the purchase of football club shares and membership in supporter groups, such as the Liverpool Scandinavian Supporters' Club (Nash 2000) or 'Browns Backers' (Kolbe & James 2000).

Team identification greatly influences attendance, or direct consumption (see for instance, Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002; Fisher 1998; Fisher & Wakefield 1998; Greenwood 2001; Kahle, Kambara & Rose 1996; Matsuoka, Chelladurai & Harada 2003; Murrell & Dietz 1992; Trail, Anderson & Fink 2000; Wakefield 1995; Wakefield & Sloan 1995; Wann & Branscombe 1993; Wann, Roberts & Tindall 1999). The influence of identification upon indirect consumption, the likely avenue for the satellite supporter, has received less attention. However, highly-identified fans are more likely to monitor their teams through television or radio (Fisher 1998), and fans, versus spectators, are more invested in the viewing experience (Gantz & Wenner 1995). Furthermore, James and Trail (2005) discovered that team identification is highly related to sports media consumption intentions. It appears likely that team identification influences both direct,

and indirect, sports consumption. Consequently, it is also likely that teams with highly-identified supporters attract greater attendances, ratings and media coverage.

Identification with a sports team also significantly predicts the purchase of team merchandise (Fisher & Wakefield 1998; Greenwood 2001; James & Trail 2005) and influences impulse purchases of these products, both the act and the amount spent (Kwon & Armstrong 2002, 2006). It appears likely that team identification also significantly influences other team-related consumption, such as share purchase or membership in supporter groups. For instance, ice hockey fans were more likely to join a supporters club as they became more 'enthusiastic' about the team (Crawford 2003). In addition, membership in fan clubs was one means of increasing team identification (Mahony et al. 2002), so perhaps identification is likely to drive membership.

Sponsorship recognition was higher among higher-identified fans (Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Lascu et al. 1995). A positive relationship between team identification and sponsorship consumption, where sponsors are more likely to be successful in meeting their corporate objectives, was also more likely among these fans (Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Madrigal 2000, 2004). Sports fans are often intensely loyal to those companies that financially support their favourite teams, such as that shown by U.S. NASCAR fans. These fans consider sponsorship crucial to the success of their team, or driver, and support those sponsors (Amato, Okleshen Peters & Shao 2005; Johnson 2001).

Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) explained how brand equity antecedents influence each of Aaker's (1991) dimensions. Kerr and Gladden (2008) introduced additional antecedents to encompass professional sports in a global environment and came to similar conclusions. The team, or organisation, antecedents were especially prevalent, and in nearly every instance impacted perceived quality *and* brand associations, two critical dimensions of brand equity. Furthermore, both dimensions provide individuals with a reason to purchase a particular brand (Aaker 1991). The next section discusses the potential impact these antecedents have upon these two dimensions.

3.5.4. Proposed Link: Antecedents and Perceived Quality

Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) argued that successful competition has the most impact upon the perceived quality of a sports organisation. Winning games,

participation in post-season play and holding aloft championship trophies are visible signs of a quality team. Likewise, they claimed, a head coach with a history of success can enhance team credibility. As seen earlier, this claim was supported by Robinson and Miller (2003), who also found that a successful coach led to increased media exposure, merchandise sales and attendance. This also occurs in professional sport when either an experienced coach (Phil Jackson) or a legendary former athlete (Leigh Matthews) joins the coaching staff. For instance, the NBA Los Angeles Lakers and AFL Brisbane Lions hired Jackson and Matthews respectively, to restore faith in struggling franchises. Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) also argued that star players contribute to brand equity since they create brand awareness for their teams, however, it also appears likely that these players influence the perceived quality of their team insomuch as their athletic skills contribute to its on-field success and performance.

A college's athletic conference can influence perceived quality (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998). They suggested that teams which boast more competitive schedules are likely to be perceived as high quality programs despite losses. Likewise, Kerr and Gladden (2008) claimed, a professional team could benefit from its conference or league affiliation and its reputation and tradition might influence its perceived quality. Therefore, teams that struggle in the NRL, NFL or Premier League may benefit given the perceived quality of the competition. Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) suggested that the inverse was also true. For instance, the quality of the Australian Socceroos has been criticised given their dominant performance in the Oceanic Football Conference. The perceived quality of Australian football should improve if the national team qualifies for future World Cups and succeeds in the far-stronger Asian Football Confederation.

As earlier seen, *FutureBrand* determined that celebrity fans can enhance a team's brand value. A socially-desirable fan base, such as Jack Nicholson (NBA Los Angeles Lakers) and Woody Allen (NBA New York Knicks), can increase support and media attention for their team. Furthermore, Kerr and Gladden (2008) suggested, sponsor alignment can influence perceived quality. The involvement of high-profile fans or sponsors might enhance a team's perceived quality as potential fans reconsider the brand, especially if those associated with it are seen as reputable and high-quality.

3.5.5. Proposed Link: Antecedents and Brand Associations

Although brand associations, as earlier explained, were “anything ‘linked’ in memory to a brand” (Aaker 1991, p. 109), they might also include “anything that the consumer takes away from the attending or viewing experience” (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998, p. 13). Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) therefore argued that, together with success, reputation and tradition, conference affiliation, and product delivery all contribute to brand associations. Gladden and Funk (2002) concluded that team-related (success, head coach, star player) and organisation-related (reputation and tradition, product delivery, logo, and stadium/arena), characteristics are important dimensions of brand associations. Furthermore, a star player, head coach, conference and league affiliation, or stadium/arena could also influence these associations (Kerr & Gladden 2008). It therefore appears likely that the team or organisational antecedents discussed in Kerr and Gladden (2008) might contribute to the brand associations of satellite supporters.

The NRL Canterbury Bulldogs illustrate how an organisation’s reputation and tradition can contribute to brand associations. In recent years the club has withstood charges and allegations of salary cap impropriety, sexual misconduct, and crowd violence. These incidents may alienate potential fans as they form negative associations about the brand. In addition, the product delivery of games might influence brand associations as certain elements of the game-day experience can enhance spectator enjoyment. However, satellite supporters, as indirect consumers, find these elements mediated by broadcasters where the media influences many of the brand associations available to audiences. For instance, the NFL Dallas Cowboys are famous for their cheerleaders and the MLB Philadelphia Phillies for the antics of their mascot, the Phillie Phanatic. Despite (arguably) being an integral part of the event, these elements are only available to satellite supporters at the discretion of broadcasting authorities.

Often star players or coaches become synonymous with specific sports teams. For instance, coaches, Vince Lombardi (NFL Green Bay Packers) and Wayne Bennett (NRL Brisbane Broncos), remain club icons. Likewise, NFL quarterback, Brett Favre, was the public face of the Green Bay franchise for more than a decade. Furthermore, when they attract attention, for instance, as an ‘ambassador’ for certain communities or due to their celebrity status, they likely contribute to the brand associations of their organisation. Basil and Brown (2004) claimed that fans could identify with sports

celebrities and examined how athletes could therefore be effective community spokespersons. As a result, there might be uniquely personal reasons why many supporters associate key individuals with their beloved clubs. For instance, Lebanese-Australian fans of the NRL Canterbury Bulldogs might associate Lebanon-born winger, Hazem El Masri, with the brand. Likewise, David Beckham was a strong brand association for millions of Asian Manchester United fans but might now be associated with Real Madrid, and perhaps increasingly, the Los Angeles Galaxy.

Logo design, and stadium or arena, are other notable elements that potentially influence a supporter's brand associations. The New York Yankees have left their uniforms unchanged since 1936 (Liberman 2003). As a result, their pinstripes and intertwined 'NY' insignia often come to mind whenever one mentions the franchise. The association is so popular that entertainers worldwide regularly incorporate it within their on-stage wardrobes (Richelieu 2004). Conversely, as seen earlier, teams such as the NBA Toronto Raptors change their logos to capture market share and appeal to new audiences ('Laying the Groundwork for the NBA in Toronto'). Furthermore, it is nearly impossible to discuss the MLB Boston Red Sox or Chicago Cubs without reflecting upon their historic ballparks, Fenway Park and Wrigley Field, respectively.

Celebrity fans and sponsor alignment, discussed earlier with respect to perceived quality, might also influence brand associations. Indeed, celebrity endorsement and sponsorship activities can influence these associations (Keller 1993). A celebrity fan's support for their favourite team, I suggest, is an explicit endorsement. As a result, actor, Russell Crowe's much-publicised support for the NRL South Sydney Rabbitohs ensures he remains linked to the club in the minds of fans. Keller (1993) claimed that when a sponsor becomes linked with an event, "some of these associations with the event may become indirectly associated with the brand" (p. 11). Therefore, some sponsors who had a lengthy association with a sports property might remain 'linked' in the minds of consumers. For instance, some fans are likely to include Sharp as a brand association for Manchester United, especially since the electronics company sponsored the Red Devils for so many years ('Man U lose $21m Vodafone deal' 2005).

3.5.6. Proposed Link: Consequences and Team Identification

FutureBrand argued that there is a strong relationship between a brand's value and the revenue that brand can generate (Gieske & Forato 2004). As a result, professional teams with significant brand equity receive tangible benefits due to their strong market position and a strong team brand can generate multiple income streams – the positive consequences of its healthy brand value. According to Kerr and Gladden (2008), these positive outcomes are international media distribution and exposure, merchandise and ticket sales, the involvement of global corporate partners (sponsorship), and additional revenue through licensing and brand extensions. In addition, as seen earlier, Milne and McDonald (1999) claimed that on-field success enhances the long-term value of a sports franchise, however, the majority of a club's market value is comprised of intangible assets such as its brand (*The Brand Champions League: Europe's Most Valuable Football Clubs* 2005). Therefore, a legitimate consequence of brand equity would be a healthy franchise value and might represent an additional revenue source.

There appears to be a remarkable parallel between these revenues, the consequence of brand equity, and the consumption options available to satellite supporters. However, this relationship is simply the exchange process viewed from the other party's perspective, so perhaps this relationship is not so remarkable. Professional sport is a business; moreover, fans or supporters are its customers. As O'Hara (2004) explained, "sports consumers are fans, Microsoft consumers are, well, consumers. [Sports fans] invest more than money; they invest emotion and time over much of their lives". Due to the globalisation of professional sport there are now multiple opportunities for fans to make such an 'investment'. Satellite supporters can watch team games or other media coverage, purchase licensed merchandise, sponsors' products or brand extensions like the Manchester United credit card. Furthermore, they may purchase tickets if their club embarks on overseas tours or, as seen earlier with Japanese baseball fans, travel abroad to see them play (Reed 2006b; Whiting 2003).

From a financial perspective, the fan consumes the sports product because they identify with, or express support for, their favourite team. This relationship is often straightforward, and the transaction occurs directly, as when a fan attends a game. On other occasions, a fan may purchase team-related merchandise from a retail store. In this instance, the team benefits from licensing fees paid by the likes of Nike or Adidas.

Supporters might even purchase shares in, or join an officially recognised supporter branch of, their favourite team. This might benefit the organisation through an improved franchise value (the team's market capitalisation) or even the receipt of membership association fees. However, due to the rise in television and sponsorship, the sports fan may no longer be the primary customer (Meenaghan & O'Sullivan 1999).

In this era of commercialism, television, other media companies, and corporations are all legitimate customers of professional sport (Mason 1999). In these circumstances the financial relationships and fan support is less apparent, although no less noteworthy. Media organisations purchase the broadcast rights to sport to attract an audience, often supporters of the televised teams. Companies profit when fans subscribe to their services and when advertisers pay to promote their products. Professional teams benefit indirectly from these broadcasts through rights fees, either collectively, as with the EPL, or individually, such as in Major League Baseball. Recently, however, clubs have profited from a more direct relationship with fans through the introduction of pay-per-view services; for instance, Manchester United's subscription channel, MUTV. The technology, Glasgow Celtic's Ian Reid, explained, "had global appeal for people who cannot get to the game, allowing them to enjoy the Celtic experience" (Sharkey 2001).

Corporations sponsor professional teams so as to drive sales revenue, hopeful that supporters of those teams, or audiences exposed to their brand, will purchase their products. According to Crimmins and Horn (1996), a sponsorship "improves the perception of a brand by flanking our beliefs about the brand and linking the brand to an event or organization that the target audience already values highly" (p. 12). For instance, as noted earlier, AIG, and Thailand's Chang Beer entered into agreements with Manchester United and Everton, respectively, in order to drive sales in Asian markets. These sponsorship rights fees are extremely lucrative for professional teams as, in the case of AIG, Manchester United received US$106 million (Cheng 2006).

Professional sports teams with positive brand equity benefit significantly through profitable income streams. These revenues include game (ticket sales or media rights), team-related (merchandise, franchise values, and brand extension sales) or sponsorship income. Furthermore, Wann (2006a) claimed, sports consumption encompasses these same categories. The consumer (sports fan) participates, directly or indirectly, in a market-centred exchange with the supplier (sports team). Team

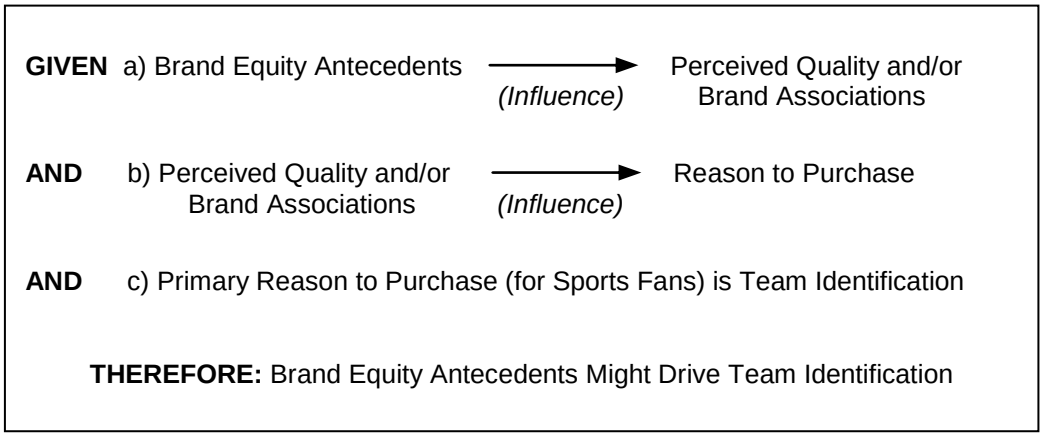
identification manifests itself through this exchange, whereby individuals more highly-identified invest more money, time and emotion in their support of their favourite team.

The success of professional sports organisations ultimately depend upon the level of fan support, and degree of identification, they can maintain. Therefore, those sports products that do not satisfy consumers inevitably fail. For instance, the XFL, a much-hyped rival to the NFL, recorded historically low television ratings ('XFL ratings plummet to historic low' 2001) and lasted only three months. As one journalist claimed, the league failed because it was “everything a sports league should not be, drawn up on a marketing man’s story board with no respect whatsoever for the fan, the game or the integrity of sport” (Todd 2000, p. F6).

3.5.7. The Relationship: An Overview

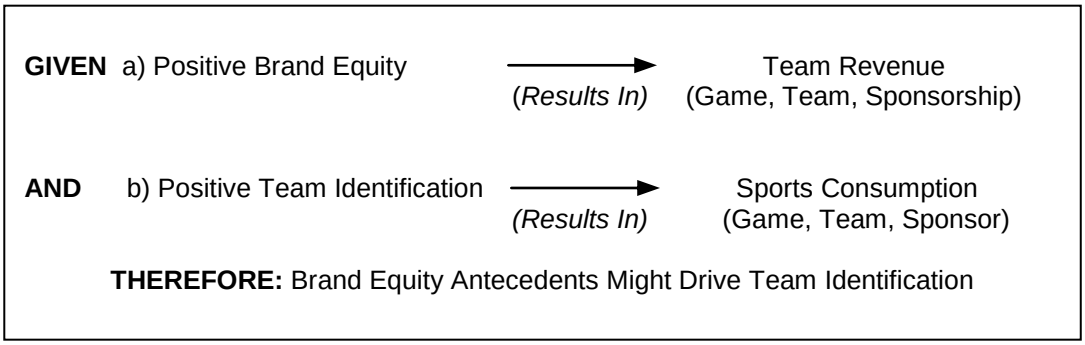
It appears likely that many of the brand equity antecedents influence perceived quality or brand associations and, in many cases, both. This is logical as perceived quality and brand associations are, according to Aaker (1991), dimensions of brand equity. Furthermore, he claimed, these dimensions differentiate the brand and provide potential consumers a reason to purchase. However, a sports fan’s primary reason to purchase team products, or engage in sports consumption, is their identification with the team. Therefore, this section theorises, brand equity antecedents insomuch as they impact perceived quality and/or brand associations, might drive team identification. This proposed relationship can be seen in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Relationship due to Perceived Quality/Brand Associations



The consequences of brand equity (i.e. revenue streams) are related to the consequences of team identification (i.e. sports consumption), albeit, revenue from the supplier's perspective, and consumption from the consumer's perspective. For instance, positive brand equity for a team generates revenue from merchandise sales. A fan's purchase of merchandise is due to their identification with the team. Since the consequences of brand equity and team identification, reflected here in the sale of team-related merchandise, are the same, then it is also plausible that the antecedents responsible for these conditions might be the same. As a result, it is therefore logical, and indeed likely, that brand equity antecedents can be used to understand those that drive team identification. This proposed relationship can be seen in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4: Relationship due to Shared Consequences



Recent studies have suggested that a relationship between brand equity and team identification might indeed exist (Carlson, Quazi & Muthaly 2002; Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001). Furthermore, since team identification is based upon social identification (which was earlier examined in chapter two), both conceptual frameworks hypothesised that the greater social (Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001), or team (Carlson, Quazi & Muthaly 2002), identification, the greater the level of brand equity.

Both perceived quality and brand associations provide a reason for consumers to purchase a product (Aaker 1991). In addition, brand awareness is a necessary condition for purchase. However, a fan's primary reason to purchase the sports product depends upon their degree of team identification. Therefore, it is plausible that brand equity antecedents, since they influence perceived quality and/or brand associations, can prompt supporter identification with their chosen teams. Furthermore, if the consequences of brand equity for the professional sports team, manifested as multiple

revenue streams, are related to fan consumption, *then brand equity frameworks can likely shed light on those factors instrumental in the development of team identification.*

The possible relationship between the revised brand equity antecedents and team identification is noted in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. Figure 3.5 illustrates the proposed conceptual relationship between the two constructs.

Table 3.1: The Contribution of Team-Related Antecedents

Brand Equity Antecedents	Contribution to Brand Equity		Contribution to Team Identification	
	Perceived Quality	Brand Associations*	Group Affiliation	Vicarious Achievement
Team Success	X	X		X
Winning games and holding aloft championship trophies indicates a quality product and allows supporters to achieve vicariously through BIRGing.				
Star Player	X	X		X
A star player can contribute to the on-field success, and hence perceived quality, of a supporter's chosen sports team. Therefore, this can also meet the supporter's need for vicarious achievement.				
Role of Player (Ambassador)		X	X	
The player may serve as a representative of a favoured in-group (nationality, ethnicity or religion). This meets the supporter's need for belongingness and group affiliation.				
Role of Player (Magician)	X	X		X
The player may perform moments of 'magic' achieving sporting immortality. They can contribute to the perceived quality of their team and perhaps the supporter's need for vicarious achievement.				
Role of Player (Icon)	X	X		X
Teams might benefit from perceived quality due to the addition of iconic athletes, such as Michael Jordan or David Beckham, which transcend their sport. Supporters may identify with these athletes, and hence their teams, and meet their need for vicarious achievement.				
Head Coach	X	X	X	X
A successful and/or popular head coach can boost a club's winning record and possibly serve as a representative of a favoured in-group. As a result, a head coach might meet a supporter's need for group affiliation and vicarious achievement. For instance, Arsene Wenger has led Arsenal F.C. to EPL success yet he might also be a key representative for a supporter from the Netherlands.				

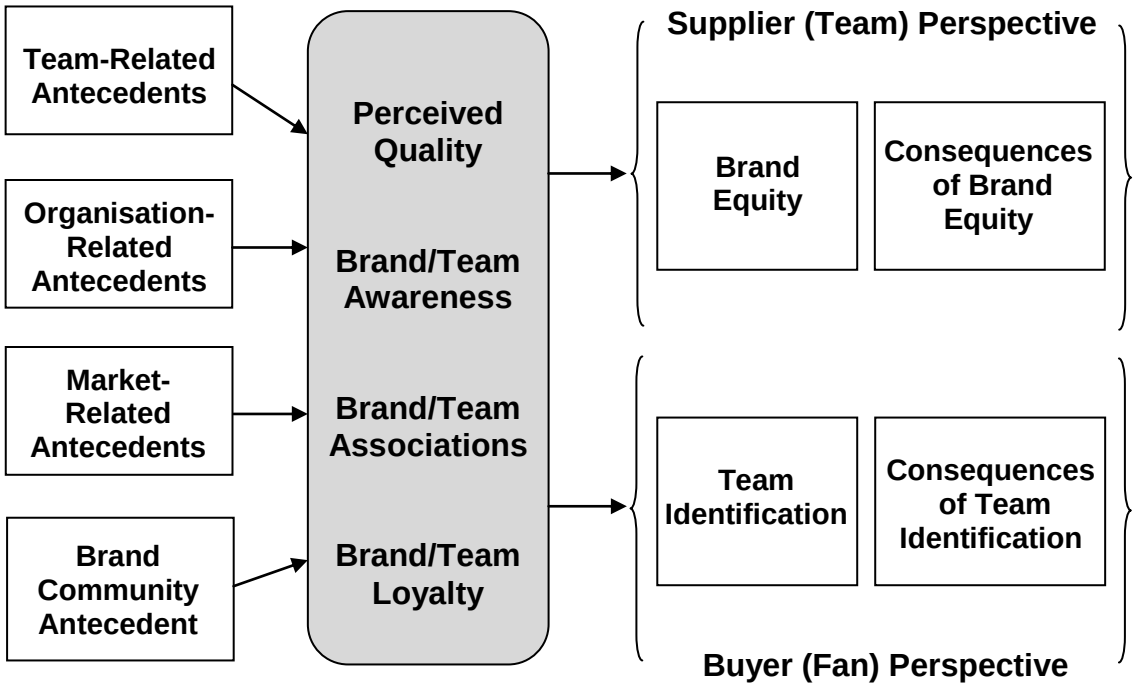
* Brand associations are "anything that the consumer takes away from the attending or viewing experience" (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998, p. 13)

Table 3.2: The Contribution of Organisation-Related Antecedents

Brand Equity Antecedents	Contribution to Brand Equity		Contribution to Team Identification		
	Perceived Quality	Brand Associations*	Group Affiliation	Vicarious Achievement	Symbolic Level**
Conference/ League	X	X		X	
The quality of a team's conference and/or league opponents can contribute to the perceived quality of the club. This may also meet the supporter's need for vicarious achievement.					
Stadium/ Arena		X			X
Professional sports organisations can create brand equity through their stadium or arena. A valid symbolic element important in the identification of supporters.					
Sponsor Alignment	X	X		X	X
The involvement of a high-profile or prestigious sponsor might enhance the organisation's perceived quality and, in the case of 'luxury' brands such as Rolex, might even meet a fan's need for vicarious achievement.					
Reputation and Tradition	X	X		X	
Tradition captures team history and its playing style, while teams, such as Manchester United or the NY Yankees, have a reputation and tradition for success. This contributes to the club's perceived quality and provides supporters vicarious achievement through BIRGing.					
Product Delivery		X			X
The broadcaster controls those game-day elements the satellite supporter receives.					
Logo Design and Name		X			X
Professional sports organisations often create brand equity through their logo or name. A valid symbolic element important in the identification of supporters.					
Affiliated Others/ Celebrity Fans	X	X		X	
Organisations can benefit from a socially desirable fan base as these celebrities attract media attention. High-profile supporters enhance the team's perceived quality and so ordinary supporters, in order to meet their need for vicarious achievement, might identify with the club.					

* Brand associations are "anything that the consumer takes away from the attending or viewing experience" (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998, p. 13). ** Jacobson (2003) described three levels in team identification. The third level (symbolic) includes team colours, logo, name and players.

Figure 3.5: The Proposed Conceptual Relationship[3]



Source: Kerr (2008, p. 64).

3.6. Chapter Review

Aaker (1991) argued that brand equity consists of four major dimensions: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand associations, and creates value for both the customer and firm. In order to create value many sports leagues and teams have increasingly become brands (see, for example, Adam & Adam 2002; Burton & Howard 1999; Fisher 2003; O'Reilly 2005). Heller (2002) claimed that some properties, such as Manchester United, "almost rival the great consumer brands for recognition" (p. 46). Professional teams in the 21st century will increasingly focus on strengthening their brands (Gladden, Irwin & Sutton 2001). However, Couvelaere and Richelieu (2005) argued, the development of a brand is "not a miracle remedy or panacea" (p. 42).

[3] Since professional sports teams are indeed brands, one can interchange the terms, 'team' and 'brand', in the brand equity dimensions. Furthermore, team identification is a product of social identification, and the greater this identification, the greater the level of brand equity. However, there might be exceptions, for instance, EPL Manchester City and MLB Chicago Cubs have a strong supporter base yet, arguably, these teams do not possess strong brands.

Brand equity significantly influences economic success and should apply regardless of team or league location (Bauer, Sauer & Schmitt 2005). In addition, teams with valuable brands often benefit from increased national media exposure (Robinson & Miller 2003), merchandise sales (Gladden & Milne 1999; Robinson & Miller 2003), season-ticket sales (Beccarini & Ferrand 2006; Ferrand & Pages 1999; Robinson & Miller 2003) and attendance (Bauer, Sauer & Schmitt 2005; Robinson & Miller 2003). A team should develop a strong brand for long-term gain rather than focus on short-term on-field success (Couvelaere & Richelieu 2005; Gladden, Irwin & Sutton 2001; Shannon 1999). For instance, the NFL Dallas Cowboys have not been to a Super Bowl since 1996 yet their brand remains one of America's premier team brands ('Dallas Cowboys among top sports team brands' 2002). Indeed, the Texas team is the second most valuable franchise in world sport (US$1.6 billion) (Van Riper 2009).

Although brand equity can lead to a sustainable competitive advantage there has been relatively little research applying it to the sports organisation. As a result, Gladden and his colleagues (Gladden & Milne 1999; Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998) developed conceptual frameworks to assess brand equity in both amateur and professional sport. They argued that management might manipulate conditions related to the team, organisation or market to improve brand equity and produce positive marketplace outcomes. For example, the addition of star player, David Beckham, appeared to enhance the brand equity of MLS Los Angeles Galaxy and dramatically improved merchandise sales ('Beckham sells 250,000 Galaxy shirts' 2007).

FutureBrand explained that a significant relationship exists between brand value and the revenue generated by the brand. Therefore, the more supporters an organisation has, the greater its potential to increase revenue, and hence brand equity. In a competitive international market a foreign fan base might be critical to the profitability, and value, of a team's brand. Existing frameworks, however, did not examine brand equity in a global sports marketplace and so a revised framework was developed to address this limitation (Kerr & Gladden 2008). The revised model (Figure 3.2) introduced additional antecedents (such as 'affiliated others and celebrity fans'), additional consequences (such as 'global corporate partners' and 'improved franchise value'), and a newly-developed feedback loop via a potential brand community.

Brand equity is critical to teams that wish to attract a global fan base. Furthermore, a logical relationship might exist between brand equity and team identification (Kerr 2008). Indeed, as social, or team, identification increases, brand equity likewise increases (Carlson, Quazi & Muthaly 2002; Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001). For instance, success is a key component of a team's brand equity, yet since fans seek to 'bask in the reflected glory' of successful teams, success is likely to drive team identification. Therefore, successful teams are likely to have more fans and possess more valuable brands than less-successful teams. It is conceivable that this, and other, shared antecedents are important in the creation of brand equity and team identification. Therefore, Kerr and Gladden's (2008) revised framework might provide insights into those antecedents instrumental in the creation of team identification.

There is substantial theoretical evidence to suggest a relationship exists between brand equity and team identification although, *Octagon* claimed, "it is only through a thorough understanding of the way fans feed their passion for a particular activity, that a brand can truly harness the power of fan emotion as a means through which to enhance brand equity" ('The passion of the fans' 2006). As a result, insomuch as team identification is derived from social identification, a relationship appears to exist between brand equity and social identification. It is not yet known how this relationship allows one to better understand team identification and satellite supporters. The next chapter examines the research methodology adopted to determine those antecedents most important in the creation of team identification for the satellite supporter.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined how professional leagues and teams are increasingly adopting branding principles. Gladden, Irwin and Sutton (2001) explained that professional teams in the 21st century will therefore focus on strengthening their team brands. Indeed, Bihl (2002) claimed, only those that successfully become brands will ultimately survive. As a result, the need to create, and maintain, brand equity is critical for the sports team, and frameworks to assess brand equity for these organisations have been developed. Furthermore, there is substantial evidence to support a relationship between brand equity and team identification for, as consultant, *Octagon,* explained, “it is only through a thorough understanding of the way fans feed their passion for a particular activity, that a brand can truly harness the power of fan emotion as a means through which to enhance brand equity” ('The passion of the fans' 2006).

This chapter describes the research design used to investigate the satellite supporter and their identification with professional sports teams. The methodology has been developed to address the two primary research questions of this thesis:

1. What are the most important antecedents in the identification of satellite supporters with their chosen sports team?
2. Can a conceptual brand equity framework predict the determinants of team identification of satellite supporters?

The overall research design was earlier outlined in chapter one (see Table 1.1), and provided the logical sequence linking the collected data to the research questions and the conclusions (Yin 2003). This chapter outlines Phase II of this design, the research methodology, and is reproduced in Table 4.2. According to Crotty (1998), research methodology involves “the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the

desired outcomes" (p. 3). It is the framework used to conduct the research and explains which information will be gathered, sources accessed, and procedures to be implemented (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1996; O'Leary 2004). The following sections describe this 'framework' in detail.

4.2. The Research Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study involves a case study using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The case study is an appropriate methodology when a holistic, in-depth exploration of a phenomenon is required, and when the individual viewpoints of participants is important (Orum, Feagin & Sjoberg 1991; Tellis 1997a). Furthermore, it has been increasingly adopted as a vehicle to examine sports fans (see, for instance, Heinonen 2002; Jacobson 2003; Jones 1998; Nash 2000; Reimer 2004), and even supporters of foreign-based teams (Nash 2000; Reimer 2004). Ultimately, the use of the case study approach is especially beneficial when literature on the issue is poor or scarce (Jacobson 2003), and indeed, literature concerning the team identification of foreign supporters has been almost non-existent.

The Liverpool F.C. was deemed to be an appropriate subject for the case study. The club has a global fan base, possesses a rich history, and is arguably one of the world's premier team brands. In addition, access to potentially enthusiastic research participants was possible given the existence of fan organisations dedicated to the club. These issues were critical to the study's success for, as Stake (1995) explained, it is beneficial that cases are chosen which "are easy to get to and hospitable to our inquiry" (p. 4). Sports fan research has increasingly utilised the Internet to engage with distant participants (End 2001; Heinonen 2002; Lewis 2001; Mitrano 1999; Nash 2000) and so this technology enabled both the questionnaire and interviews to be administered to the satellite supporter irrespective of location. The case study used mixed methods which facilitated triangulation of the data. Indeed, triangulation is an implicit feature of case study research (Tellis 1997b; Veal 2005).

4.3. The Case Study Approach: a Rationale

The case study approach was made popular early in the twentieth century at the University of Chicago's Department of Sociology. One of its leading proponents, Robert

Park, encouraged students to “view the constant experiment of human experience”, and stressed the variety and value of this experience (Becker, Dawson, Hannum, Hill, Leydens, Matuskevich, Traver & Palmquist 2005). However, there is disagreement as to whether a case study refers to the object to be studied (Stake 2001) or a strategy (Eisenhardt 1989; Stoecker 1991; Yin 1989). Indeed, the question, ‘what is a case?’ is like a Rorschach inkblot test that can produce a variety of responses (Ragin 1992).

Nevertheless, Stark and Torrance (2005) claimed, a case study is an ‘approach’ to research; an approach that seeks to engage with and document the complexity of social activity. It is an approach which assumes that an individual’s ‘social reality’ is created through social interaction. According to Yin (2003), the case study is therefore an empirical inquiry that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). This form of inquiry relies upon multiple sources of evidence and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions. As a research strategy, he concluded, it contributes to our knowledge of individual, group, organisational, social, political and related phenomena. As Borg and Gall (1989) explained, “when all these views are pulled together, they provide a depth of perception that can contribute significantly to understanding the event being studied” (p. 403).

The case study approach has particular strengths in the context of this study. The approach can allow people, organisations, events and experiences to be placed within their natural setting or social and historical context (Becker et al. 2005; McCormick 1996; Veal 2005). McCormick (1996) claimed that the case study researcher can therefore “see in contextualized action how theories ... are enacted” (p. 367). The use of multiple methods, and triangulation, is implied and strengthens the research design (Veal 2005), while the comparative flexibility of data collection permits researchers to discover and address issues as they arise (Becker et al. 2005; Veal 2005). Furthermore, it permits existing theory to be confirmed or refuted, as of course do other methods, but while there is no need to generalise to a wider population (Veal 2005), it sometimes permits the generation of new theory (McCormick 1996).

Orum, Feagin and Sjoberg (1991) explained that a case study enables an observer to record subjects engaged in real-life activities, and thus examine “not only the complex of life in which people are implicated but also the impact on beliefs and decisions of the

complex web of social interaction" (p. 9). In addition, Yin (1989) argued, it is the preferred approach to examine contemporary events and when the behaviours examined cannot be manipulated. As explained earlier, it is especially beneficial when literature on the issue is poor or scarce (Jacobson 2003). In this context, research on the creation of team identification is limited, and in relation to satellite supporters, almost non-existent, therefore this methodological approach is most likely beneficial and appropriate as one seeks to understand team identification and these supporters.

Case study research can include the study of single or multiple cases (de Vaus 2001; Veal 2005; Yin 2003). Indeed, there is no correct number of cases to include in this approach (de Vaus 2001). Yin (2003) suggested five rationales for single-case designs. These included: the critical case, whereby it is chosen to test a clearly specified hypothesis; the extreme or unique case, where the phenomenon is so rare that it needs to be documented; the revelatory case, where one has the opportunity to examine a phenomenon previously inaccessible to investigation; and longitudinal, which involves the study of a single case at two or more different points in time. However, a final type of case study is the representative or typical case. Yin (2003) explained that the objective here is to "capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation" (p. 41). It is the typical case that is reflected in this study.

Investigators should select cases of "some typicality [but lean towards those] that seem to offer *opportunity to learn*" (Stake 2001, p. 446). This was consistent with Bryman's (2004) claim that many case studies are chosen as exemplifying studies, or because they provide a "suitable context for certain research questions to be answered" (p. 51). Indeed, de Vaus (2001) concluded, since cases are used for theoretical generalisation there is no need to look for 'typical' cases, especially since one cannot be sure whether the case is truly typical and "no way of estimating its typicality" (p. 240).

A case will often be deliberately chosen to increase the likelihood that it will illustrate a particular proposition (Veal 2005). In this instance, the research is concerned with the team identification of satellite supporters, therefore sports teams with a sizable foreign fan base, or satellite supporters, should be deliberately chosen. In addition, a successful case study is often dependent upon access to relevant cases and cooperative participants (de Vaus 2001; Stake 1995). A number of researchers have previously studied professional team fans in attendance, thus exploring the fan

phenomenon *in-situ* (for instance, Bristow & Sebastian 2001; Crawford 2003; de Burca, Brannick & Meenaghan 1995; Fisher & Wakefield 1998; Greenwood, Kanters & Casper 2006; Holt 1995; Jones 1997a; Matsuoka, Chelladurai & Harada 2003; Nakazawa, Mahony, Funk & Hirakawa 1999; Slepicka 1995; Tapp & Clowes 2000; Trujillo & Krizek 1994; Uemukai et al. 1995; Wakefield 1995). However, this approach is not possible in this thesis, for satellite fans are indirect consumers, and support their teams from afar, so accessibility remains a challenge.

The case study has been increasingly adopted in team research, both from fandom (Crawford 2003; Heinonen 2002; Holt 1995; Jacobson 2003; Jones 1998; Mitrano 1999; Nash 2000; Reimer 2004), and commercial (Bof 2006; Chadwick & Holt 2007; Couvelaere & Richelieu 2005; Ferrand & Pages 1999; Gladden & Wong 1999; King 1997; Robinson & Miller 2003), perspectives. Furthermore, with interest to this thesis, a number of case studies have explored supporters, both local and foreign, of European football. For instance, Heinonen (2002) examined Finnish national team fans at a World Cup qualifying game and Jones (1998) explored the team identification of local Luton Town fans. Scandinavian supporters of Liverpool F.C. and Manchester United were also studied by Nash (2000) and Reimer (2004), respectively. Although other methodologies might also be appropriate, this approach has successfully contributed to football fan literature, and therefore suggests its appropriateness as a methodology.

4.3.1. The Case Selection

Veal (2005) emphasised the key importance of case selection in case study research. In the context of this project, certain criteria dictate the selection of appropriate case(s). For instance, not all professional sports teams are equally able to market themselves worldwide, due largely to the international popularity of their sport. Indeed, Richelieu and Pons (2006) claimed that the globalisation of a sports brand is limited to the sport's worldwide acceptance and popularity. While it might be intriguing to examine foreign fans of the NRL South Sydney Rabbitohs or NHL Toronto Maple Leafs, the relatively limited reach, and participation levels, of these sports severely limits the international potential of their brands. Given the successful globalisation of football it is understandable why football teams are better situated to become global brands, and hence a more appropriate choice of case for this research.

Europe is the focus of world football. Its major leagues are televised worldwide and attract the best international players (Gieske & Forato 2004). Indeed, the UEFA Champions League ranks second only to the FIFA World Cup in terms of football importance. The European leagues have an estimated fan base of 130 million and, in the English and Spanish leagues, international fans outnumber their domestic counterparts (*The Brand Champions League: Europe's Most Valuable Football Clubs* 2005). Brand awareness is critical to the creation of brand equity, and international media exposure ensures the foreign product is available to satellite supporters. Brand awareness is thus a necessary condition for the satellite supporter's identification with these football teams. For this reason case selection was limited to these leagues.

The value of Europe's top football brands reflects the emergence, and increased importance, of the satellite supporter. A number of consultants (*Brand Finance, FutureBrand* and *Deloitte*) produce annual reports that rank the top European football teams according to financial performance and brand valuations. Many of the same teams consistently appear in these reports and are members of the G-14, an organisation comprised of European football powerbrokers to have a voice in the management of the international game ('G-14. The Voice of the Clubs'). Thirteen clubs, in particular, have appeared in all nine editions of the *Deloitte Money Football League.* A shortlist of potential case candidates therefore emerged. These are arranged in alphabetical order according to their domestic league (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Case Study Candidates

Premier League	La Liga	Serie A	Bundesliga
Arsenal	Barcelona	A.C. Milan	Bayern Munich
Chelsea	Real Madrid	AS Roma	Schalke 04
Liverpool		Inter Milan	
Manchester United		Juventus	
Newcastle		SS Lazio	
Tottenham Hotspur			

Five of these clubs, notably Manchester United, Real Madrid, Juventus, Bayern Munich and A.C. Milan are what *Deloitte* terms, the 'Money League elite', due to their financial performance over the past decade. They are "truly global clubs with significant and increasing international support to add to their millions of domestic fans" (Jones, Parkes & Houlihan 2006, p. 23). However, a number of others are fighting to join this elite company. These 'second-tier' clubs are of particular interest in this research, for they have the potential to develop their foreign fan base, increase revenue streams, and ultimately emerge as premier team brands. Professional teams that consistently receive international media exposure are likely to possess, or have the potential to develop, a solid foreign fan base. Media exposure allows teams to develop brand awareness abroad and is more likely for teams that participate in top-flight European leagues and the highly-televised UEFA competitions.

The Liverpool F.C., and its 28 million registered fans worldwide (Rice-Oxley 2007), present, as Stake (2001) suggested, an ideal 'opportunity to learn' about this particular phenomenon, the team identification of satellite supporters. It is one of football's top brands, largely in part to its sizable fan base, and has a rich history of both success and tragedy. There is significant evidence for the presence of satellite supporters: the existence of 150 international supporter branches, published journal articles on foreign Liverpool F.C. supporter groups, and individual fan accounts (journal articles and official and unofficial Liverpool website submissions). The club is seen as an ideal candidate due to the aforementioned criteria, the availability of secondary data, and the existence, accessibility and cooperation of fan organisations dedicated to the Merseyside club. As noted earlier, it is beneficial if cases are chosen which "are easy to get to and hospitable to our inquiry" (Stake 1995, p. 4).

4.4. The Research Design: Mixed Methods

The complex nature of sports fandom has implications for the choice of suitable methods. The challenge therefore is to match appropriate methods to the issue, rather than promote any single approach in all circumstances (Flyvbjerg 2006; Patton 1987). Indeed, Yin (2003) argued that the case study approach should not be confused with qualitative research, and can include, and even be confined to, quantitative evidence. The central research theme was explored through both quantitative and qualitative

methods: a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The methods adopted for this research are outlined in Tables 1.1 and 4.2.

Table 4.2: Research Design

Phase	Research Tasks	Chapter
Phase I Theoretical Foundations	I. Identify existing research into team identification and the sports fan.	2
	II. Identify existing research into the application of brand equity to the sports organisation.	3
	III. Develop a conceptual framework examining the links between team identification and brand equity.	3
Phase II Methodological Foundations	I. Develop an overall approach (the case study – mixed methods) to meet the research questions.	4
	II. Develop a research methodology for the study (questionnaires and semi-structured interviews).	4
Phase III Implementation	I. Implement research methodology	5
	II. Undertake analysis of quantitative data	5
	III. Undertake analysis of qualitative data	6
Phase IV Conclusions	I. Develop conclusions from the quantitative and qualitative data in the context of the research questions.	7
	II. Examine the contributions this research has made to the field.	7
	III. Report on limitations of the study and make recommendations for future research.	7

The use of mixed methods has gained greater acceptance (Creswell 2003; Patton 1990), and the triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative data leads to increased confidence in research conclusions (Jick 1979). The use of this design is consistent with a triangulated research strategy incorporating the case study approach (Tellis 1997a). Bavelas (1995) claimed that a highly restricted choice of methods, "inevitably stunts the growth of theory as well" (p. 51). According to Nau (1995), the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods "can produce a final product which can highlight the significant contributions of both". Furthermore, some argue, both methods can not only be employed in a single research design but also within the same interpretivist paradigm (Roberts 2002).

Research conducted to date on the sports fan has favoured the use of quantitative methods (such as Branscombe & Wann 1991; Cialdini et al. 1976; Doyle II, Lewis & Malmisur 1980; End et al. 2002; Fisher 1998; Greenwood, Kanters & Casper 2006; Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Kahle, Kambara & Rose 1996; Mann 1974; Wann 1994b; Wann et al. 2004; Wann & Grieve 2005). However, in recent years, there has been increased use of qualitative methods, (notably Derbaix, Decrop & Cabossart 2002; Eastman & Land 1997; End 2001; Hallinan & Krotee 1993; Holt 1995; Janda 2004; Jones 2000; King 1997; Lewis 2001; Mitrano 1999; Trujillo & Krizek 1994).

4.4.1. Quantitative Methods

Quantitative research is grounded in the positivist mode of inquiry (Borg & Gall 1989; Glesne & Peshkin 1992; Guba & Lincoln 1994). Its main purpose is to detect causal relationships between variables and is used to seek explanations and predictions which will produce generalisable results (Borg & Gall 1989; Glesne & Peshkin 1992).

Jones (1997b) explained that quantitative methods have inherent advantages for the research of sports fans. For instance, he argued, they are appropriate to measure fan behaviour and other descriptive aspects such as the composition of a sports crowd (see Becker & Suls 1983; Schofield 1983; Williamson, Zhang, Pease & Gaa 2003; Zhang, Smith, Pease & Jambor 1997) or, it might be added, a supporter base. Furthermore, quantitative methods permit comparison and replication of past research (Jacobson 2003; Jones 1997b). Reliability and validity might also be determined more objectively than with qualitative methods (Jones 1997b). These methods are

advantageous because they often provide more objective data and allow a more objective analysis since statistical procedures can result in a product "relatively unaffected by personal bias" (Jayaratne 1993, p. 118). However, quantitative methods are typically limited in their ability to explore the deeper meaning of fandom.

4.4.2. Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods are typically located within the interpretivist paradigm, whereby reality is socially constructed, complex, and in a constant state of change (Glesne & Peshkin 1992). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) argued that qualitative inquiry permits the investigator to "show the complexity, the contradictions, and the sensibility of social interactions" (p. 7). According to Crotty (1998), the interpretivist approach "looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (p. 67).

The interpretive approach seeks to explain behaviour in terms of the meaning actions have for participants (Smith & Stewart 2001). Further, it seeks to explain how meanings are "created, negotiated, sustained, and modified within a specific context of human action" (Schwandt 1994, p. 120). Typical data collection methods include unstructured interviews, observation and textual analysis (Patton 1990; Schwandt 1997).

The use of qualitative methods assumes multiple perspectives and multiple 'truths' dependent upon the different views of participants and, as a result, seeks to understand their unique point of view (Patton 1987). This emic approach is contrasted to the more etic, or outsider's point of view, adopted in quantitative research (Glesne & Peshkin 1992). For instance, the definition of key concepts might differ across cultures and individuals. Fans might consider their team successful if they win games or championships, avoid relegation, sign a particular player, or defeat a hated rival. It would appear reasonable that multiple 'truths' will arise in the development of team identification across nations and cultures.

Ragin (1994) explained that qualitative research is especially appropriate for three central goals of social research. Its emphasis on in-depth knowledge can give voice to groups outside of mainstream society; voices seldom represented in the media. This research can also enable investigators to interpret historically or culturally significant phenomena, and provide valuable material to advance theoretical ideas. The voice of

satellite supporters, scattered throughout the world, is rarely heard, as media outlets tend to celebrate the more 'traditional', i.e. local, sports fan. However, the satellite supporter phenomenon is indeed culturally significant as professional teams realise the economic importance of these fans, and the importance of these consumers may well influence key decisions as clubs strive to maintain their international brand appeal.

Qualitative methods have inherent advantages in sports fan research, most notably, because they enable investigators to explore in greater detail the affective and cognitive dimensions of sports fandom (Jones 1997b). Furthermore, these methods allow the introduction of concepts from an emic perspective, or from the individual fan's point of view. This is especially critical in a field which is still largely exploratory due to the limited research on team identification, in particular, regarding satellite supporters.

However, qualitative methods have their critics. For instance, the implicit lack of objectivity has prompted some to suggest, qualitative methods are "synonymous with sloppy research" (Maykut & Morehouse 1994, p. 19) and are "unscientific and based on slipshod methodologies" (Nau 1995). The major concerns with qualitative methods are the issues of research validity (the ability of the research instrument to measure what it was designed to measure) and reliability (the extent to which results can be repeated or replicated). In qualitative research, the investigator becomes the 'instrument' (Glesne & Peshkin 1992; Hoepfl 1997; Patton 1990), and this has prompted debate as to the applicability of validity and reliability to the qualitative realm. Indeed, in the context of this debate, Watling (cited in Simco & Warin 1997) argued that reliability and validity are "tools of an essentially positivist epistemology" (p. 670). Golafshani (2003) argued that although quantitative researchers are concerned with validity and reliability, this concern is usually whether the research is itself credible. Since the credibility of qualitative research is dependent upon the ability and effort of the researcher, perhaps, they claimed, terminology such as credibility should instead be adopted. Patton (1990) concluded that the validity and reliability of qualitative data largely depends upon the investigator's "methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity" (p. 11).

A number of strategies can be used to improve the credibility of research. Researchers should allow for a wide range of responses so as to "provide a counter-balance" to their own personal bias, and secondly, aim to triangulate the data through the use of multiple data sources and methods (Smith & Stewart 2001). Indeed, triangulation is an

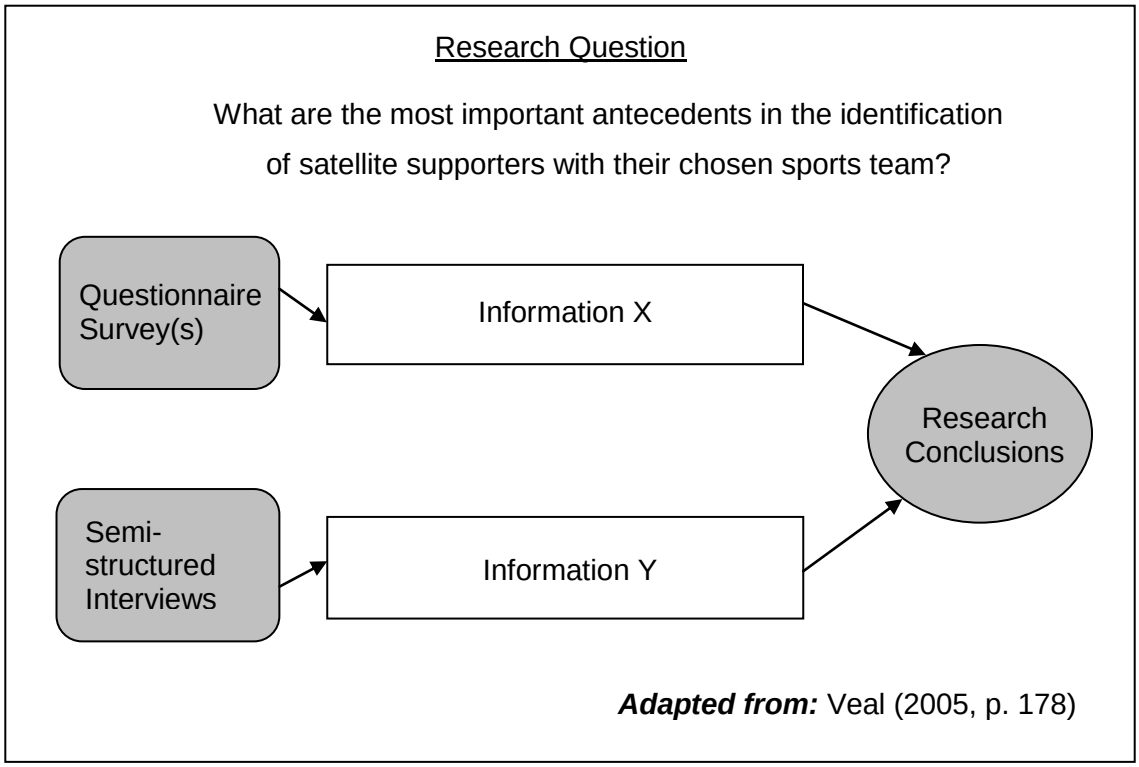
implicit feature of case study research (Tellis 1997b; Veal 2005). Although a considerable number of research projects have implemented quantitative methods, Jones (1997b) argued for the use of mixed methods in order to gain “a fuller understanding of the sports fan” given the emotional significance of fandom.

4.5. The Multiple Methods

The use of multiple methods and data sources provided a deeper understanding of the satellite supporter phenomenon. However, the satellite supporter, by virtue of their geographic location, is not as accessible to researchers as the more ‘traditional’ local fan. While fans of this club are abundant in the north of England, they proved difficult to locate in large numbers abroad. It thus became necessary to solicit the cooperation of fan organisations dedicated to the team. Although there are a handful of international ‘chapters’ in Australia (Queensland, Adelaide, Perth and Melbourne), those based overseas had more members, hence the potential for a larger sample size. For instance, the Scandinavian Branch of LFC boasts more than 25,000 members. The inclusion of international chapters also enhances the diversity of data collected.

A mixed methods approach enables the exploration of both multiple sources of evidence and methods. As a result, this study utilised a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. This approach enhances the overall validity of the research. This triangulation is described in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Triangulation of Methods



Many international chapters maintain their own websites, and so it is logical that satellite supporters would use the Internet to enhance their fan experience, hence its value to engage with their members. Furthermore, Wann et al. (2001) explained, indirect consumers witness the sports contest through the mass media. In an age of increased digital communication, fan research has utilised the Internet to engage with distant participants. For instance, investigators have used online surveys (Nash 2000), analysed online message boards (End 2001; Lewis 2001; Mitrano 1999), and conducted online 'interviews' (Heinonen 2002; Mitrano 1999; Silk & Chumley 2004).

4.6. The Questionnaire Survey

4.6.1. Overview

The survey is probably the most common method used within social research, and is often implemented as a questionnaire or a formal interview (Burgess 1996). According to Alreck and Settle (2004), surveys offer certain advantages, most notably, flexibility and versatility, as both the amount of data collected and the complexity of questions

remains the sole prerogative of the researcher. A well-designed survey can efficiently collect a large amount of information in only a few minutes of a participant's time, and due to sampling, obtain information about a large population from a relatively small sample. As a result, research into sports team identification has consistently relied upon survey research (for example, Jacobson 2003; Jones 1997a, 1998; Kolbe & James 2000; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996).

Although Alreck and Settle (2004) argue that Internet surveys are not always appropriate, the use of a self-administered Internet questionnaire in this design was logical since participants could reside anywhere in the world, and so cost and access were important issues. The use of the Internet in survey research has gained in popularity. This increased popularity is due to factors such as greater Internet access and acceptance, the increased availability of broadband connections, and the time and cost savings the technology can deliver when compared to more traditional survey approaches (Alreck & Settle 2004). However, the primary advantage of computer-assisted data collection is that participant responses are automatically in a machine-readable format (Fowler 2002). The existence of online communities also makes it possible to target very specific and difficult to reach populations (Hoyle, Harris & Judd 2002). Ultimately, according to Bailey (1994), electronic surveys might prove "the ideal method for studying respondents in remote locations all over the world" (p. 205).

Online questionnaires might also produce higher-quality responses. Computer-driven surveys often give participants a greater feeling of anonymity, thus leading to more honest responses, and respondents often seem to provide more thought when completing online surveys ('Complementary Methodologies: Internet versus Mail Surveys' 2000). Furthermore, for surveys featuring open-ended questions, there is evidence to suggest that respondents will provide longer answers than those completing traditional surveys (Elliott, Fricker Jr. & Schonlau 2002) and since the instrument is less restrictive, allow respondents to "clarify and qualify" (Ellis 2002). Ultimately, the online questionnaire was selected as a cost-effective technique and had the potential to yield higher quality data.

The research design adopted for this study involved the conduct of two pilot studies prior to the main survey. Beebe (2007) argued that the pilot study is important in "yielding data to assess cost, feasibility, methodology, and data analysis for future

studies" (p. 213), and helps researchers "identify design flaws, develop data collection and analysis plans, and gain experience with participants" (p. 213). Indeed, Moser and Kalton (1971) claimed that testing the adequacy of a questionnaire, is "probably the most valuable function of the pilot survey" (p. 49). Sections 4.6.2 and 4.6.3 outline the procedures for these studies.

4.6.2. Study One – An 'Exploratory' Pilot Survey

In a similar vein to Wann, Tucker and Schrader's (1996) 'exploratory examination' of team identification, satellite supporters were examined with the cooperation of the Australian Football Association of North America (AFANA). They proved a suitable candidate for this exploratory phase, for AFANA exists to "further the development and exposure of the most exciting game in the world: Australian Football, in North America" (www.afana.com), and their U.S. members were satellite supporters of the Australian league. Indeed, there has been increased interest in the football code: Roy Morgan International found that nearly 7.5 million Americans occasionally tune into AFL broadcasts, compared with an Australian audience of around seven million ('More Yanks watch AFL: poll' 2005).

As an 'exploratory examination', it was also important that the insights gained did not apply solely to fans of one particular team. Respondents were free to support any AFL team and so strengthened the likelihood that the data could apply to other fans. Most notably, management was enthusiastic about the project and agreed to promote the survey to its 2,000 members. It therefore appeared highly likely the survey would generate a sample of sufficient size to assess the structural and methodological integrity of the instrument.

Implementation

i) Participants

Sixty-three members of the Australian Football Association responded to the survey, however, 13 did not complete all of the required questions and so the final sample was 50 cases (44 male; 6 female). The majority of respondents were aged between 36-45 (38.5 percent) and 26-35 (25.6 percent). Eleven of the participants were Australian or

had an immediate family member from Australia. Since the primary purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the team identification of satellite supporters, these individuals, perhaps better classified as ‘expatriate fans’, were excluded.

ii) Materials and Procedure

Respondents followed a link on the official AFANA website that led them to the survey hosted by www.surveymonkey.com, an independent third-party which specialises in the creation and management of online surveys. The questionnaire was available for a period of two weeks.

The questionnaire contained six sections. The first section introduced the researcher and described the purpose of the study. The second section constituted a personal profile and asked individuals to complete demographic items such as age, gender and (U.S.) zipcode, and some information about their favourite professional sports team. The age and gender items were closed-ended while other items were open-ended. The third section asked respondents to name their favourite AFL club and the reasons why they supported that particular sports team (see survey template in Appendix A).

The overall purpose of the questionnaire was to explore participant identification with a chosen sports team; however, the term ‘team identification’ is a psychological definition most likely unknown to many potential participants. Given this qualification they were asked instead about their ‘support’ for their favourite sports team. These questions were open-ended and allowed participants to answer in their own words, which facilitated “richer, more detailed responses” (Lavrakas 2004, p. 903). Bailey (1994) explained that the use of open-ended questions is advantageous when all of the possible answer categories are not known and when there are too many categories to list in the questionnaire. The section’s final question asked if they had a connection to Australia or the city where the team was located.

In the fourth section, participants rated the importance of certain factors upon their initial support. This question used four Likert-scale items where response options ranged from ‘not important’ to ‘extremely important’. These factors related to the team or the organisation and were derived from Kerr and Gladden’s (2008) brand equity model. This question was used to check whether reasons cited as important to their

team identification were consistent with those given in the earlier open-ended question. These items were randomised to minimise response bias.

The final section asked subjects how often each season they engaged in specific sports consumption activities. For instance, did they watch games on television, visit their club's website, purchase team-related merchandise, support team sponsors or other activities. These were randomised to minimise response bias.

The purpose of this initial study was to conduct an 'exploratory examination' of the team identification of satellite supporters. Inspired by Wann, Tucker and Schrader's (1996) landmark paper, this preliminary study allowed participants to express, in their own words, their team identification with a foreign sports product. The outcome of this initial pilot study suggested that the language used was appropriate and appeared to convey the specific intention of the research. The study was critical in the development of a team-specific pilot survey to further explore team identification and these consumers. This study examined satellite supporters of AFC Ajax of Amsterdam.

4.6.3. Study Two – The Team Pilot Survey

The open-ended questions in the pilot survey successfully served as an exploratory examination of the satellite supporter phenomenon, and particular antecedents surfaced as potentially important in the team identification process. The majority of respondents appeared to understand the questions and, in many instances, provided extensive accounts of their team support.

In this second questionnaire, Likert-scaled items were introduced to rank the importance of the antecedents that emerged within the initial pilot survey. Further questions were generated from the initial pilot and additional antecedents identified through the literature as potentially important were included. This was consistent with Bailey (1994), who explained that researchers can begin with open-ended questions and after these responses are analysed, construct closed-ended categories from the earlier data. This combination of items served to provide a more detailed account of this phenomenon. Furthermore, as van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) suggested, so as to improve its internal validity the questionnaire was administered in precisely the same manner as it would be later in the main study.

Study two was conducted with the cooperation of Ajax USA (www.ajax-usa.com), an online supporter club for fans of Dutch club, AFC Ajax of Amsterdam. Ajax F.C. has been European champion four times and, along with Feyenoord and PSV Eindhoven, consistently dominates the Dutch national football league, the Eredivisie. In an effort to exploit international opportunities and expand its brand, the club has also recently established a South African franchise, Ajax Cape Town (Browne 1999). Ajax USA had more than 1,000 registered members, acted as a forum for satellite supporters of the team, and management agreed to promote the survey to members. As Ajax USA explained: "Our club is open to all true fans of Ajax and the beautiful game. We hope Ajax USA helps you to support your team and to make friendships with other Ajax fans around the world" (www.ajax-usa.com).

In addition, access to Ajax F.C. fans allowed this survey to be tailored to an individual team, in contrast with the original pilot and, in particular, a European football team. This was consistent with the choice to study satellite supporters of the Liverpool F.C. and allowed the instrument to be easily adapted. Fans of the English club were not chosen for this revised pilot survey for two reasons. Firstly, their participation was critical for later data collection and I did not wish to exhaust this resource at this early stage, and secondly, some researchers argue, pilot study participants should not be included in the main study (Lancaster, Dodd & Williamson 2004; van Teijlingen & Hundley 2001).

Implementation

i) Participants

One hundred and eighty seven visitors to the Ajax USA website responded to the online questionnaire. However, 34 participants completed only the demographic questions and were therefore removed from the sample. The survey was open to all interested participants from July 12 - July 26, 2007. The final sample comprised 153 individuals, all male, with the majority of respondents (70 percent) aged between 18 and 35. Closer examination further revealed that 25 participants were either Dutch or had an immediate family member from the Netherlands. The primary purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the team identification of satellite supporters and so these expatriate fans were excluded from the sample.

ii) Materials and Procedure

The organisation's management inserted an introductory paragraph written for the Ajax USA website. The paragraph described the purpose of the research and invited all interested Ajax fans to follow a link and complete the online questionnaire hosted by www.surveymonkey.com. Again, it was available to all interested parties for two weeks. The questionnaire contained five sections (see the survey template in Appendix B). The first section introduced the researcher and described the purpose of the study. The second section constituted a personal profile and asked individuals to complete items such as age, gender, country of residence, nationality and whether they had a personal connection to the Netherlands. The residence and nationality questions were open-ended while other items were closed-ended.

The third section asked respondents to rank the importance of certain antecedents upon their initial identification with the Dutch club. A subsequent question asked them to do the same for their current support. These questions used five Likert-scale items where response options ranged from 'not important' to 'extremely important'. These factors were consistent with the review of literature and the initial pilot. Fans were also asked whether they would ever stop supporting Ajax FC. If they would, respondents were prompted to discuss under what circumstances this might occur.

The final sections explored their consumption behaviour. Subjects were asked how often each season they engaged in specific sports consumption activities. In an additional question, they were asked whether they engaged in any of these activities out of football season. The survey then thanked subjects for their participation and asked if they would be interested in any future discussions regarding their fandom.

This second study generated a high response rate and enthusiastic responses from participants. Once again, the majority of respondents appeared to understand each question and answered accordingly. As such, the team pilot survey proved extremely valuable and encouraged confidence in the larger global questionnaire.

4.6.4. Study Three – The Liverpool F.C. Global Survey

Both the exploratory and team pilot surveys confirmed the suitability of the research instrument. However, one question was modified for the final Liverpool F.C. questionnaire. The initial question regarding reputation and tradition was divided into three separate questions: the club's history of success; history of ethical behaviour; and the style of play. This was done for their initial and continued support of Liverpool F.C. Although reputation and tradition encompasses all of these elements, this allowed for greater understanding of those elements believed to be most important.

The final survey was conducted with the cooperation of online supporter clubs affiliated with Liverpool F.C.'s Association of International Branches. The official club's website categorised these branches into geographic zones: England, Europe, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the rest of the world. Within each section, there were contact details for each affiliated branch. It was decided to focus exclusively on those fan clubs outside Great Britain since they were more likely to be satellite supporters rather than expatriate Liverpool F.C. fans. An expatriate fan, in this instance, would be an English Liverpool F.C. fan that lived abroad.

The management of 54 official supporter clubs were emailed regarding their participation in the survey. However, many of these email addresses were incorrect or no longer in use, and often my emails were unable to be delivered. Despite this, my request for assistance was met with enthusiasm from Liverpool F.C. supporter clubs all over the world (Table 4.3.).

Table 4.3: Participating Liverpool F.C. Supporter Clubs

Branch	Location	Web Address
The Calgary Branch of the Liverpool FC Supporters Club	Calgary, Canada	www.lfccalgary.com
Indonesia's Official Liverpool FC Supporters Club	Indonesia	www.big-reds.org
Liverpool FC New York Supporters' Club	New York, U.S.A.	www.lfcny.org
Liverpool FC Supporters Club Scandinavian Branch	Norway	www.liverpool.no
Melbourne Liverpool Supporters Association	Melbourne, Australia	www.liverpoolfc.com.au
Official Canadian Supporters Club of Liverpool FC	Canada	www.liverpoolfc.ca
United States Supporters of Liverpool F.C.	U.S.A.	www.uslfc.com

Implementation

i) Participants

More than 1,500 (1,513) Liverpool F.C. fans from 37 countries followed the link and began the questionnaire. Approximately 77 percent completed the survey. The questionnaire was available to all interested parties from August 9 – September 14, 2007. As was expected, participation numbers were high early and, in the last couple of weeks of its availability, participation numbers dwindled substantially.

ii) Materials and Procedure

I wrote an explanatory paragraph detailing the goals of the research and a link to the online survey hosted by www.surveymonkey.com. The supporter clubs promoted the survey in one, or all, of the following methods: a) posted the paragraph and the survey

link in their fan forums, b) emailed the paragraph and link to their registered members or c) wrote a story about the research and posted the link on their official fan websites.

The format of the questionnaire was almost identical to the previous pilot used with Dutch football team, Ajax F.C. The online questionnaire again contained five sections, utilised closed- and open-ended items, and Likert scales (see the survey template in Appendix C). The final section thanked the respondents and asked if they would be interested in further discussion about the Liverpool F.C. This contact information and consent was important for the proposed qualitative phase of this research.

The next section documents the use of semi-structured, or focused, interviews which were used to better understand the satellite supporter and the reasons for their identification with a favourite sports team.

4.7. Semi-Structured Interviews

The interview can take many forms and range from structured to unstructured (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander 1995). The structured interview consists predominately of closed-ended questions and all respondents are asked the same series of predetermined questions. At the other end of the spectrum lies the unstructured interview. These dispense with formal interview schedules and instead rely upon the social interaction between interviewer and informant. Unstructured interviews appear like normal everyday conversations, although these 'conversations' are controlled to ensure they revolve around the research questions (Minichiello et al. 1995). Between these two types lies the semi-structured interview.

Semi-structured interviews have been increasingly used to understand sports fans worldwide (for instance, Derbaix, Decrop & Cabossart 2002; Dolance 2005; Tapp & Clowes 2000), and due to the qualitative nature of this method, more unstructured interviews can provide a greater breadth of data than other types (Fontana & Frey 2000). In this research, the interview was conducted in the virtual environment, a process foreshadowed by Fontana and Frey (2000). Indeed, they suggested, it was "only a matter of time" before qualitative researchers used the Internet to conduct 'virtual interviews' (p. 667).

Crichton and Kinash (2003) believe that the online interview has a number of strengths. For instance, participants are likely to take more care with their responses, since they can 'take back their words' before posting them rather than commit misspoken comments to print. The instantaneous nature of online communication also keeps the conversation spontaneous and unrehearsed. In addition, the absence of visual, bodily cues, and the fixed nature of the printed word, allows participants to remain oriented to the other's intentions, while the absence of such cues means participants do not second-guess the expectations of the 'other' (Crichton & Kinash 2003).

The use of these interviews was appropriate in this research since, firstly, it was impossible to directly observe events which had occurred in the past, notably the initial creation of team identification, and secondly, it provided cost-effective access to foreign Liverpool F.C. fans scattered throughout the world.

Implementation

i) Participants

The final sample comprised 30 satellite supporters from eight countries. These nations were, in order of the number of respondents, Norway (11), USA (9), Sweden (3), Indonesia (2), Ireland (2), Canada (1), Finland (1), and the Faroe Islands (1). Participant ages ranged from 18 to 65, and 10 percent of the interview sample were female, much larger than the three percent found in the quantitative survey. As a result, those informants who agreed to participate in the interview process were largely representative of the survey sample.

ii) Materials and Procedure

An interview guide, or aide memoire, was prepared after analysis of the questionnaire data. Analysis of the quantitative data had determined which antecedents were most important in the team identification of satellite supporters, whether of Australian Football League (AFL) teams, Ajax F.C., or Liverpool F.C. Qualitative interviews provided an invaluable opportunity to speak with satellite supporters of the English team and explore these antecedents in greater detail. As a result, it proved possible to

better understand what these supporters meant by particular terms, and explain the relevance of social identity theory in their foreign fandom.

These qualitative interviews were conducted via instant messaging technology with the assistance of Online Institute LLC, an independent third-party which specialises in the creation and management of online chat rooms and forums. The interactive nature of the technology allowed the 'conversations' to take place in real-time, be instantaneous, and provided an instant, and accurate, transcription of each interview. This proved invaluable for archival purposes and for later data analysis. The researcher purchased a three-month subscription to the service whereby the company hosted the forum (http://www.liverpoolfc.olicentral.com/) for that period. Each participant was provided an individual username and password to the fan forum and at the scheduled time both parties logged on to the website. Interviews were of one hour duration and the researcher explored the origins of their team identification, the relative importance of a fellow countryman at the club, and the extent of their loyalty to the team.

Nearly 60 percent (587) of survey respondents had provided an email address and indicated they were willing to participate in discussions regarding their fan experience. These addresses were imported into MS Excel, and with the aid of that software's random number generator, selected individuals for an initial round of interviews. This initial round commenced when 12 supporters had agreed to participate and was completed over a three-week period in November, 2007. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) claimed that researchers often wait until they have conducted some initial data analysis before selecting additional participants. Analysis of this preliminary data highlighted a number of emergent themes and these were largely consistent with those from the questionnaire. After the initial round proved workable, the second round began.

A second round of 18 interviews was undertaken. This number was derived according to two criteria: firstly, sufficiency, and secondly, saturation of information (Seidman 1998). Sufficiency concerns the requirement that the sample has sufficient numbers to reflect the range of participants that comprise the population, while saturation concerns that point whereby additional interviews do not unearth new information for the researcher. When 30 interviews had been conducted, both criteria had been fulfilled.

4.8. Methods of Data Analysis

This research involved the use of multiple methods and data sources. This section outlines the procedures used to analyse and interpret the quantitative and qualitative data that emerged from the implementation of these methods.

4.8.1. Quantitative Data

Quantitative data were analysed using the statistical package SPSS 15.0. Although a number of descriptive measures (means, standard deviations, chi-squares and frequencies) were used, factor analysis proved extremely valuable in an attempt to determine what drives the team identification of satellite supporters. According to Aaker, Kumar, Day, Lawley and Stewart (2007), this technique is an analytical tool to study the "interrelationships among variables usually for the purposes of data reduction and the discovery of underlying constructs or latent dimensions" (p. 481).

Factor analysis transforms the original variables into new, uncorrelated variables, called factors (Aaker et al. 2007). Furthermore, Aaker et al. (2007) explained, each factor is a linear combination of the original variables, whereby the first factor listed is the most informative, and the least informative is the last. In this research, factor analysis unearthed a linear combination of variables, for example, team-related or organisation-related, that explored the dimensions that underpin team identification. There are two commonly used types of factor analysis: common factor analysis (also called principal factor analysis or PFA) and principal component analysis (PCA), however, the research objectives determine which analytical procedure to implement.

The objective was to summarise information from a large set of variables into fewer factors so principal component analysis was chosen as a suitable analytical tool (Aaker et al. 2007; Garson 2008; Jolliffe 1986). Dunteman (1989) explained that PCA is a technique that "linearly transforms an original set of variables into a substantially smaller set of uncorrelated variables that represents most of the information in the original set" (p. 7). In order to determine a suitable number of factors, there are four important criteria to address: sample size, factor loading, communality and rotation.

i) Sample Size

Garson (2008) claims that there are multiple 'rules of thumb' used to determine the number of cases required to perform a factor analysis. He explained that the first rule, the rule of 10, states that there should be at least 10 cases for each item in the research instrument while another, the subjects-to-variables (STV) ratio, dictates that the minimum number of observations in the sample should be at least five times the number of variables (Bryant & Yarnold 1995; Coakes, Steed & Dzidic 2006; Garson 2008). Regardless of the STV ratio, Coakes, Steed and Dzidic (2006) argued that a sample of 100 subjects is acceptable, but that more than 200 are preferable. On the other hand, sample sizes of 500 are considered very good while 1,000 or more are excellent (Comrey & Lee 1992). The approach adopted in the Liverpool F.C. questionnaire passed all of these criteria with 17 variables and 1,153 cases.

ii) Factor Loading

A factor loading refers to the correlation between a variable and an eigenvector or factor (Bryant & Yarnold 1995). In addition, it links the factors to the variables and can be used to interpret the factors (Aaker et al. 2007). Zwick and Velicer (1986) explained that when using PCA, each retained component must contain at least two substantial loadings, however, there is debate as to what level is required. Indeed, the farther the loading is from zero, the more one can generalise about the variable (Gorsuch 1974). Although Comrey and Lee (1992) explain that loadings of 0.30 are commonly used, they question whether this is high enough to provide interpretive value. As a result, they developed a range of loadings that they consider valuable for interpretive purposes: between 0.45 and 0.54 are fair; 0.55 and 0.62 are good; 0.63 and 0.70 are very good; and loadings above 0.71 are excellent. This research employed Comrey and Lee's (1992) criteria in determining an appropriate factor loading.

iii) Communality

Communality is defined as "the estimate of the common variance of a variable with the set of other variables" (Fraser 2008). When a variable has a low communality, the factor model is not working well for that variable and its inclusion is questionable (Garson 2008). A communality of 0.75 seems high, he continues, but is meaningless

unless the factor it loads upon is interpretable. Likewise, a communality of 0.25 seems low but might be meaningful if it contributes to a well-defined factor. Garson (2008) concludes that the coefficient per se is not critical, but rather the extent to which these variables can be used to interpret the factor.

iv) Rotation

Rotation is often used in factor analysis to make the output more understandable and facilitate the interpretation of factors (Garson 2008). The types of rotation are usually distinguished as to whether they are orthogonal (uncorrelated) or oblique (correlated) (Bryant & Yarnold 1995). Rummel (1970) argues that orthogonal rotation is sometimes favoured for its simplicity, mathematical elegance in the result, and conceptual clarity. On the other hand, advocates for oblique rotation are willing to sacrifice orthogonality of factors for (arguably) better interpretation (Aaker et al. 2007). Bryant and Yarnold (1995) explained that several types of rotations are performed in an attempt to achieve simple structure. Although varimax rotation (an orthogonal rotation) is most frequently chosen, researchers might be well-served to experiment with alternative rotation methods to see which provides the most interpretive value (Garson 2008). Therefore, consistent with this approach, both rotational methods were performed, although a varimax solution most clearly identified each variable with its corresponding factor. Although there has been some controversy as to which approach to adopt, the choice "need not be phrased in an either-or manner" (Rummel 1970, p. 388).

v) Number of Factors

The objective here is to remove those factors that do not help to summarise the data. There are multiple 'rules of thumb' that can be employed to determine an appropriate number of factors and three of the most common criteria are: the Kaiser criterion, the Catell scree test, and comprehensibility. Kaiser's stopping rule is to exclude all components with eigenvalues under 1.0, as a factor with less than this value is no better than a single variable (Aaker et al. 2007; Bryant & Yarnold 1995; Fraser 2008; Garson 2008). Cattell's scree test plots the eigenvalues against the number of factors. The shape of the plot is used to determine the number of factors where those in the steep descent are retained (Aaker et al. 2007; Bryant & Yarnold 1995; Garson 2008). Furthermore, Garson (2008) argues that one can limit the number of factors to "those

whose dimension of meaning is readily comprehensible." Kaiser's stopping rule was initially used to identify factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and these factors were supported by the scree plot. A number of factors emerged which appeared to be both logical and comprehensible. Based on all of the above issues, the decision was therefore made to accept five factors that explained 57.07 percent of the variance.

4.8.2. Qualitative Data

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998), all researchers develop their own method of qualitative data analysis, however, data analysis involves three distinct activities: ongoing discovery, coding the data, and interpreting the data. The first stage, they explained, involved identifying themes and developing concepts and propositions. Spradley (1980) defined themes as "assertions that have a high degree of generality" (p. 141). They also explained that they apply to numerous situations and it is likely that a culture will feature a set of major themes and minor themes (Spradley 1980). Data collection and analysis go hand in hand in qualitative research (Taylor & Bogdan 1998). Therefore, as the interview data was collected, the researcher kept track of the emergent themes in the transcripts and began to interpret the data.

The coding process saw the data coded into key themes concerning a story line, or "analytic thread that unites and integrates the major themes in a study" (Taylor & Bogdan 1998, p. 151). A story line can both help to guide one's theory and analysis and decide which concepts and themes one wishes to communicate (Taylor & Bogdan 1998). In this research, the interviews told the story of how a group of satellite supporters originally identified with their favourite sports team, the Liverpool F.C. The final activity involves trying to understand the data in the context it was collected (Taylor & Bogdan 1998). During the three stages, all evidence that supported, or even refuted, the key themes was examined so as to understand the phenomenon.

According to Drass (1980), sorting the data is a noninterpretive and mechanical phase. Although computer software can be useful in this phase, it is easy to become "enamored with computer-aided data analysis" and there is no substitute for the insight and intuition of the researcher when interpreting the data (Taylor & Bogdan 1998, p. 155). While software instantaneously transcribed the interviews, there was no need to utilise software to code the data. Drass (1980) explained that once data have been

assigned to a category, a marker (code) is often manually placed next to those incidents representative of specific categories. Consistent with this approach, each individual theme within these transcripts was manually colour-coded for later analysis and ease of reference. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) concluded that, when coding, it is entirely appropriate to “do what makes sense to you and helps you theorize” (p. 156). The themes that emerged from the qualitative interviews are examined in chapter six.

4.9. Limitations of the Research Design

The research design developed to explore the team identification of satellite supporters utilised mixed methods, both quantitative and qualitative. Nonetheless, while these research methods possess certain advantages, there likely are inherent limitations associated with each chosen method (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1996). Three potential limitations need to be addressed: a) the retrospective nature of the cause of their fandom, b) self-selection bias due to the individual’s likely high identification with Liverpool F.C., and c) the ability to generalise based upon this research’s conclusions.

4.9.1. The Retrospective Nature of Fandom

Sport socialisation is retrospective in nature (James 2001), and asks respondents to think back to when they first became involved with the sport and identify which antecedents influenced their participation. This thesis adopted a similar approach, and relied upon their recollection as to those antecedents important to their identification with the Liverpool F.C. Veal (2005) claimed that questionnaire-based research depends upon a respondent’s own account of their behaviour and attitudes. A major limitation of this approach is that a respondent’s recall can be incorrect, especially if the process occurred many years earlier (Jacobson 2003). Therefore, the accuracy of the research conclusions is reliant upon the participant’s accurate recall of their fandom.

4.9.2. Self-Selection Bias

Online research allowed access to members of an overseas-based Liverpool F.C. fan organisation. This was essential since their opinions about the club, and their experience as a satellite supporter, were central to this research. Although Internet research presents certain limitations and concerns, for instance, bad email addresses,

the respondent's lack of knowledge about computers or the Internet, or their inability to return the completed survey (Ellis 2002), these were not an issue. Participants were active participants in an online community of fans and understood and appeared to be comfortable with the medium. However, as with all methods, individuals create a self-selection bias in deciding whether to participate (Ellis 2002). It is acknowledged that self-selection bias is probable in the current study.

As shown earlier, highly-identified individuals tend to support their chosen team more than those with lower levels of identification, and so the most enthusiastic members are more likely to participate. It is therefore expected that participants will be highly committed to the team and their responses biased accordingly. This leads to the third potential limitation of this research design, notably the ability to generalise based on the research conclusions.

4.9.3. Generalisation of Findings

The ability to generalise results beyond the immediate case, or external validity, is sometimes cited as a key 'problem' in case study research (Borg & Gall 1989; Bryman 1988; Stoecker 1991; Tellis 1997a; Yin 2003). However, Veal (2005) argued, the case study "does not seek to produce findings which are generally or universally representative" (p. 171). Indeed, as Stake (1995) explained, case study research is not sampling research, and therefore "seems a poor basis for generalization" (p. 7).

However, one might 'reasonably' extrapolate knowledge derived from the specific case study and apply it to other issues. Unlike usual meanings of the term 'generalization', 'extrapolation' suggests that the researcher "has gone beyond the narrow confines of the data" (Patton 1990, p. 489) to consider other applications of their findings and can enhance the case study's value:

> Extrapolations are modest speculations on the likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical, conditions. Extrapolations are logical, thoughtful, and problem oriented rather than statistical and probabilistic (Patton 1990, p. 489).

An individual's decision to support a particular team, and the antecedents responsible for their initial, and continued, identification with the team, are likely to differ between individuals and across cultures. Lincoln and Guba (1985) claimed that the existence of

local conditions “make it impossible to generalize” (p. 124). Indeed, Cronbach (1975) argued, when proper weight is given to these conditions, “any generalization is a working hypothesis, not a conclusion” (p. 125). Although this study is examining highly-identified supporters of one team within one sport, it is likely to prove valuable to future researchers in this field. Through ‘reasonable’ extrapolation, the results contained herein may be used to better understand the satellite supporter more generally.

In conclusion, successful extrapolation, or the ability to transfer Cronbach’s (1975) working hypothesis, depends upon “the degree of similarity between the original situation and the situation to which it is transferred” (Hoepfl 1997, p. 59). The inability to generalise findings from this study is not seen as a problem, for under the right circumstances, future researchers might be able to extrapolate information from this study to aid their own investigation. Ultimately, the challenge will be to consider the degree of similarity between the groups of fans before making grand conclusions.

4.10. Situating the Case Study: the Liverpool F.C. Story

The Liverpool F.C. is the most successful club in the history of English football and they have won the League Championship 18 times. However, their most recent title came in 1990 before the introduction of the English Premier League. They are also the most successful English representative in European competition: they have won five European Cup (or Champions League) trophies, the last being their memorable 3-2 triumph over Italian rivals, A.C. Milan ('Honours' 2007). A complete list of the Liverpool F.C.’s major honours can be seen in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Major Liverpool F.C. Honours

Year	Honour	Manager
1901/1906	League Champions	Tom Watson
1922/1923	League Champions	David Ashworth
1947	League Champions	George Kay
1964/1966/1973	League Champions	Bill Shankly
1965/1974	F.A. Cup	
1973	UEFA Cup	
1976/1977/1979/1980/1982/1983	League Champions	Bob Paisley
1976	UEFA Cup	
1977/1978/1981	European Cup	
1981/1982/1983	League Cup	
1984	League Champions	Joe Fagan
1984	European Cup	
1984	League Cup	
1986/1988/1990	League Champions	Kenny Dalglish
1986/1989	F.A. Cup	
1992	F.A. Cup	Graeme Souness
1995	League Cup	Roy Evans
2001	F.A. Cup	Gerard Houllier
2001	UEFA Cup	
2001/2003	League Cup	
2005	European Cup	Rafael Benitez
2006	F.A. Cup	

In February 2007, the Liverpool F.C. became yet another English club to be taken over by overseas owners. Announcing they were “ready to restore the glory days to Anfield” (Wood 2007), Americans, George Gillett and Tom Hicks, were welcomed, in contrast to Malcolm Glazer’s takeover of Manchester United. The club has a global fan base of between 18 (Gage 2006), and 100, million fans (Estridge 2007). Although the brand appears ready to tackle the world, Liverpool F.C. came from humble beginnings.

4.10.1. The Early Years (1892-1919)

Despite the fierce rivalry that exists between the Liverpool F.C. and Everton F.C. they share a common history: Anfield. In 1888, the Football League was founded, and this historic stadium was one of the league's original grounds ('1892 - Liverpool Football Club Formed'). However, in 1892, due to a dispute over rental fees, Everton F.C. moved to Goodison Park. As a result, on March 15th, local politician, Houlding, and a few associates founded the Liverpool Football Club to play in the newly-vacated premises ('1892 - Liverpool Football Club Formed'; Purvis 2002c).

Denied acceptance into the Football League, the 'Reds' began life in the Lancashire League. On September 1st, the club played their first match at Anfield while Everton did likewise at Goodison ('1892 - Liverpool Football Club Formed'). As a result a historic rivalry was born. The Liverpool F.C. was ultimately crowned Lancashire League champions in their inaugural year ('Honours' 2007) and were accepted into the Football League Second Division for the 1893-1894 season ('Liverpool F.C.' 2007).

The newly-formed club experienced early success and, courtesy of an unbeaten season in the Second Division ('2nd Division League table for the 1893-1894 season'), were promoted to the highest level of English football, the First Division. In 1894, Houlding adopted the city's colour of red for their playing jersey as, up to this point, they had worn uniforms almost identical to Everton F.C. ('Liverpool F.C.' 2007).

In 1901, against the backdrop of the Boer War, the club was crowned League Champions for the first time ('1901 - Our First Title Win'; Purvis 2002c). They also adopted the Liverbird as their official crest ('1892 - Liverpool Football Club Formed'). Although they were relegated two years later, the club fought their way back through the Second Division and, in 1906, secured their second league title. In recognition of this triumph, and in memory of a local regiment who had suffered heavy losses in the Boer War, they built the famous Spion Kop (Purvis 2002c; Williams & Llopis 2006). In Afrikaans, 'Spion Kop' means 'vantage point', and it has become one of the world's most famous football terraces.

4.10.2. The Post-War Years (1920-1958)

World War I had disrupted the Football League from 1915-1919 (Bevan 2007). In 1920, when attention returned to football, David Ashworth was appointed manager and led Liverpool F.C. to successive League Championships in 1922 and 1923 ('Past Manager Profile - David Ashworth (1920-1923)'). However, after Ashworth's departure during the 1923 campaign, the club would not experience success again until after World War II when, under George Kay, the Liverpool F.C. went on to claim their fifth Championship in 1946-1947. However, perhaps Kay is better known for steering the club to their first Wembley appearance in their quest for "the prize most desired by the Club, the FA Cup" ('Past Manager Profile - George Kay (1936-1951)'). Although losing the 1950 Football Association Challenge Cup to Arsenal, over 100,000 Reds fans greeted the players upon their return ('1950 - First Wembley Appearance').

Although they experienced moderate success under Kay, Liverpool F.C. struggled for many years after their Wembley appearance. Under manager, Don Welsh, the club came last in 1954 and were subsequently relegated ('Past Manager Profile - Don Welsh (1951-1956)'; Purvis 2002c), where they suffered a record 9-1 defeat against Birmingham City (Anderson & Done 2003). Indeed, their trophy cabinet remained bare for many years, and success only returned during the Shankly years.

4.10.3. The Shankly Years (1959-1974)

Upon his appointment in 1959, Bill Shankly claimed, "Liverpool have a crowd of followers which rank with the greatest in the game. They deserve success and I hope, in my small way, to be able to do something towards helping them achieve it" ('1959 - Shankly Appointed Manager'). Languishing in the Second Division, Shankly took dramatic steps to improve club fortunes. He released many players and rebuilt the squad ('Past Manager Profile - Bill Shankly (1959-1974)'). Within three years, they were again promoted to the First Division, where they have remained ever since. He often spoke of the importance of the fans and sought to build Anfield into a bastion of invincibility. Shankly wanted the club to be untouchable, "to build Liverpool up and up and up until eventually everyone would have to submit and give in" ('1959 - Shankly Appointed Manager'). Over the next few years this proved to be the case.

The newly-promoted Liverpool F.C. set their sights on bitter rival, and defending League Champion, Everton, and claimed their seventh title, the first in 17 years, in 1963-1964 ('Past Manager Profile - Bill Shankly (1959-1974)'). The next year they added the F.A. Cup to their trophy cabinet; a day many fans remember as the greatest in club history. Such had been their misfortune in previous campaigns, it was thought the mystical Liverbirds would fly from their perch should the club bring the trophy home to Anfield ('1965 - Winning the FA Cup For First Time').

As the sixties closed, the Liverpool F.C. had become a major domestic force. The battles between the two Merseyside rivals, it is argued, did as much as the Beatles and Gerry and the Pacemakers to put Liverpool on the world map ('Past Manager Profile - Bill Shankly (1959-1974)'). Although victory at Wembley and success in the League had guaranteed Shankly his place in Anfield folklore (Anderson & Done 2003), further success eluded the Reds as a new decade dawned.

Bill Shankly had, over 15 years, transformed the fortunes of the club. Although he often regretted failure in Europe (Farred 2004), he had built a platform that allowed the football club to be the most successful in English history. Indeed, some have argued, “without the driving force and sheer charisma of Shankly, Liverpool’s spell in the doldrums in the 1950s would have reached long into the 60s and perhaps even further” ('Past Manager Profile - Bill Shankly (1959-1974)'). In 1982, a year after his death, the club erected a permanent memorial to their beloved manager, the Shankly Gates. The image of the gates, together with the inscription, ‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’, appears on the official Liverpool F.C. crest.

4.10.4. The Glory Years (1975-1983)

Although reluctant to take the reins from Shankly, and unsuccessful in his first year, Bob Paisley soon surpassed the legendary manager (Anderson & Done 2003). A Reds player for many years, he steered the club to the League Championship and UEFA Cup in 1975-1976 (Purvis 2002c). He had learnt from Shankly’s failures and captured European glory (Farred 2004; Williams & Llopis 2006). In 1977, after 13 years in pursuit of the ultimate prize in club football, they held the European Cup aloft and a year later became the first British club to retain the title (Purvis 2002c). The Reds thus began a period of unprecedented success by an English club in Europe.

Although the F.A. Cup had eluded him, Paisley had overseen a period of immense success for the club. Under his stewardship, they had won 21 trophies ('Honours' 2007) and recruited club legends such as Allan Hansen, Graeme Souness, Alan Kennedy, Ronnie Whelan, Ian Rush, Craig Johnston, Mark Lawrenson, Bruce Grobbelaar, and Steve Nicol ('Past Manager Profile - Bob Paisley (1974-1983)'). A lot of the mystique that surrounds the famous club, and perhaps the growth of their foreign fan base, is likely attributable to these glory years. In recognition of his achievements, a permanent memorial, the Paisley Gateway, is now part of Anfield (Anderson & Done 2003).

4.10.5. Triumph and Tragedy (1984-1997)

In 1985, despite poor domestic form, Liverpool F.C. had reached yet another European Cup final. While a year earlier, the Reds had defeated AS Roma abroad; they were now to face Italian heavyweights, Juventus. Despite safety concerns by Liverpool F.C. officials, Heysel Stadium, Brussels, was chosen for the fixture ('1985 - Heysel Disaster'; Anderson & Done 2003). However, shortly before kick-off, disaster struck.

During the day, skirmishes had broken out as both sets of supporters had been sold tickets in the same section of the stadium (Anderson & Done 2003). An hour before kick-off, a group of Reds fans charged the Juventus section. The fence was torn down and, as fans fled, a stadium wall collapsed under the pressure ('1985 - Heysel Disaster'; Anderson & Done 2003; Purvis 2002a). Despite these events, the match was played, and Juventus prevailed 1-0 (Purvis 2002a). In what would become known as the Heysel Stadium disaster, hundreds were injured, and 39 fans, mostly Italian, were killed ('1985 - Heysel Disaster'; Anderson & Done 2003; Purvis 2002a).

As a result of the disaster, UEFA placed an indefinite ban on English clubs from European competition and, once lifted, a further three years for the Liverpool F.C (Anderson & Done 2003). The tragedy left an indelible mark upon the club and it wasn’t until 1991 that the Reds would again be welcome in European competition (Anderson & Done 2003). In the wake of the Brussels tragedy, legendary club stalwart, Kenny Dalglish, had this to say about the Heysel Stadium disaster.

> You go along to watch a game. You don't go along expecting that sort of ending, do you? Football's not that important. No game of football is worth that. Everything else pales into insignificance ... Yet neither set of supporters could have anticipated the terrible outcome. If they had foreseen the dreadful consequences, or thought what terrible things might unfold, I'm sure the stones would never have been thrown by the Italians and that the English retaliation would never have occurred ('1985 - Heysel Disaster').

Although the eighties finished in glorious fashion as the club won their fourth F.A. Cup and their eighteenth, and last, League title ('Honours' 2007), for many football fans this era is instead remembered for the Hillsborough tragedy.

In April 1989, millions of television viewers were shocked by the events surrounding the F.A. Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest. As the match began, hundreds of fans were crushed against the perimeter fences designed to prevent pitch invasion. Chaos ensued and, as desperate fans ran onto the field, the referee stopped the game (Anderson & Done 2003). Hours later, the Liverpool F.C. had made the Wembley final and nearly 100 Liverpool fans had died (Anderson & Done 2003; Purvis 2002b). Over the next few days, an estimated 250,000 people turned Anfield into a shrine as grieving fans laid flowers and scarves (Anderson & Done 2003).

Once again the tragedy had a dramatic impact on players and supporters alike, as John Aldridge explained: "I didn't care if I never played again ... I seriously considered retirement. I was learning about what was relevant in life. I didn't really see the point in football" ('1989 - Hillsborough'). After the horrific events of Hillsborough, the British Government conducted a review of stadium safety. Known as the Taylor Report, it led to new legislation requiring all-seater stadia ('Football Stadia After Taylor' 2002).

Although the nineties saw the emergence of young talent such as Steve McManaman, Michael Owen, Jamie Redknapp and Robbie Fowler, they won only two trophies. As a result, the famous club had fallen further behind an increasingly-dominant Manchester United; a situation "hard for many Liverpudlians to stomach" (Anderson & Done 2003, p. 68). In 1998, Frenchman, Gerard Houllier, was hired and signalled "the passing of the decent, but limited, British manager and his replacement by the more technical and educated Continental equivalent" (Williams & Hopkins 2005, p. 48).

4.10.6. The Globalisation of the Liverpool F.C. (1998-2004)

As the Liverpool F.C. was headed for their worst League finish in three decades (Anderson & Done 2003), the Reds again needed to be rebuilt. Reflecting the globalisation of the game, their new manager turned to continental Europe.

The club had fielded foreign players before. For instance, in 1979 they signed Israeli international, Avi Cohen, who drove support in his native land (Ben-Porat 2000) and the 1980's saw a large influx from Scandinavia (Anderson & Done 2003). However, the 1990's accelerated the number of foreign players in the English competition, largely due to the introduction of the Premier League in 1992 and the Bosman court decision in 1995, and Liverpool F.C. was no exception. By the start of 2003, 52 non-British players had made senior appearances for the club (Anderson & Done 2003). Likewise, Houllier brought in the likes of Sami Hyypia (Finland), Stephane Henchoz (Switzerland), and John Arne Riise (Norway) (Anderson & Done 2003). Each player had represented their country, and together with Houllier, the transformation began.

In 2001, after many years without a major trophy, the Liverpool F.C. won a historic 'treble': the League Cup, the F.A. Cup and, in an extra-time thriller against Spanish side, Alaves, the UEFA Cup ('2001 - Clinching the Cup Treble'; Anderson & Done 2003). A year later, after Houllier returned from heart surgery, they promptly challenged Arsenal for the Premiership and reached the Champions League quarter-finals ('Past Manager Profile - Gerard Houllier (1998-2004)').

Under Houllier's reign, the club had begun to reclaim their former glory. They aggressively recruited foreign players and had again become a serious threat in the League, able to challenge the likes of Manchester United, Arsenal and, a resurgent, Chelsea. Furthermore, participation in the prestigious Champions League provided them a platform to seriously develop a global brand. It perhaps seemed only fitting that as the League's brightest star, David Beckham, headed to Spain that a Spaniard would, in turn, complete Liverpool's transformation into a truly global brand.

4.10.7. The Emergence of a Global Brand? (2004-Present)

Rafael Benitez had transformed La Liga side, Valencia, into a force in Spanish football. Both team management and fans were hopeful 'Rafa' Benitez would have similar success at Anfield. Despite an impressive squad, featuring locals, Jamie Carragher and Steven Gerrard, and international stars, Harry Kewell (Australia), Sami Hyypia (Finland) and Dietmar Hamann (Germany), Benitez arrived in Liverpool with his own coaching staff and an armada of Spanish players, most notably Xabi Alonso, Luis Garcia, Josemi and Antonio Nunez (Purvis 2002c). However, Benitez was careful to acknowledge the unique character that is the Liverpool F.C. "My interest is that the Spaniards contribute what is necessary for the progression of the team," he explained, "but with the maximum care taken to maintain the very best of English football ... I refer to their style of play, to their search for possession of the ball as a fundamental aspect of the game – to the inheritance of Bill Shankly" (Williams & Llopis 2006, pp. 162-163).

Although the Spaniard's first year in England would disappoint, a fifth place finish; a memorable night in Istanbul soon changed the club's fortunes. Despite only their first appearance in a European Cup final in two decades, the Reds won a dramatic penalty shoot-out over A.C. Milan (Williams & Llopis 2006). It was a victory, Jamie Carragher claimed, that would have people "talking about that game in 20 or 30 years" ('Liverpool wins Champions League' 2005). "The English club proved", Argentinian football great, Diego Maradona, said, "that miracles really do exist. I've now made Liverpool my English team" ('2005 - Champions League Winners').

Victory in Istanbul propelled the Liverpool F.C. onto greater success. In 2006, the club won their seventh F.A. Cup against West Ham in, as now expected, an extra-time thriller ('2006 - F.A. Cup Winners'; Williams & Llopis 2006). Along the way they ended an 85-year jinx when they defeated Manchester United in the fifth round ('Liverpool dump United out of FA Cup' 2006). However, one prize continued to elude the northern English side – League glory: "Winning cup competitions does not have the same deep satisfaction as sitting atop the League at the end of May, but it definitely helps to ease the pain" (Williams & Hopkins 2005, p. 114). Although League titles have eluded them since 1990, the future for the club and, perhaps, the Liverpool brand, seems bright.

European success has significantly enhanced the club's global profile and revenue. Reebok and Carlsberg negotiated new sponsorship deals and their fan base more than doubled to 18 million (Gage 2006). Furthermore, there are more than 150 international supporter branches dedicated to the Liverpool F.C. – for instance, the large Scandinavian Branch (Nash 2000) has approximately 25,000 members. Indeed, the Liverpool F.C. could have as many as a 100 million fans worldwide (Estridge 2007).

In 2007, the club was acquired by Americans, George Gillett and Tom Hicks, for £470 million (Wood 2007). The pair pledged to build upon the club's winning tradition and have largely underwritten the construction of a new stadium, due to open for the 2009-2010 season (Wood 2007), and financed the record signing of Spanish striker, Fernando Torres (Edwards 2007). The club's media exposure, success in the Champions League, presence of 'Rafa' Benitez, and a host of Spanish players, has ultimately seen the Reds "become the 21st club of La Liga" (Balague 2005). Indeed, with a roster full of international superstars (see Table 4.5 for the 2007-2008 squad); the Liverpool F.C. is likely to remain popular worldwide.

Table 4.5: Liverpool F.C.'s 2007-2008 Squad

Nationality	Player
Argentina	Emiliano Insua, Sebastian Leto, Javier Mascherano
Australia	Harry Kewell
Brazil	Fabio Aurelio, Lucas Leiva
Denmark	Daniel Agger
England	Jamie Carragher, Peter Crouch, Stephen Darby, Steven Gerrard, Jack Hobbs, Craig Lindfield, David Martin, Jermaine Pennant, Ray Putterill, Jay Spearing, Robbie Threlfall
Finland	Sami Hyypia
France	Charles Itandje
Holland	Dirk Kuyt, Ryan Babel
Ireland	Steve Finnan
Israel	Yossi Benayoun
Mali	Momo Sissoko
Morocco	Nabil El Zhar
Norway	John Arne Riise
Scotland	Ryan Flynn
Spain	Xabi Alonso, Alvaro Arbeloa, Pepe Reina, Fernando Torres
Ukraine	Andriy Voronin

Source: ('1st Team Squad Profiles: Liverpool FC 2007-2008')

Although many consider the Reds to be a football club, rather than a 'franchise' (Thompson 2007), to new owner, Gillett, Liverpool "is the number one brand in Europe"

('Hicks and Gillett want far east tours' 2007). Although global rivals, Real Madrid and Manchester United, most likely dispute this claim, they have risen from a blue-collar town in northern England to become the most successful club in the history of English football. Indeed, Farred (2004) claimed, their record in Europe ensures that the spirit of the Liverpool F.C., 'Anfield Envy', hangs over their perennial rival, Manchester United.

"We would always be a football club first", former executive, Rick Parry, explained, "and a business later, and the latter *only* in relation to the central concern, the *raison d'etre* of Liverpool Football Club: the production of a team to satisfy the demands of Liverpool's fans" (Williams & Hopkins 2005, p. 175). The Liverpool F.C. has survived, even prospered, despite immense tragedy and almost insurmountable odds. Whether the Merseyside club is a brand, franchise or even an institution, it is undoubtedly on the rise and, to their many fans, such as Peter Hooton, it is indeed something special.

> Since the Sixties, Liverpool's record is second to none, in Europe as well. And there is an actual feeling that there is an institution here. And even though we've had tragedies, tragedies we've all cried over, there was always that feeling that this is a special club. Not many clubs have got that and obviously we have to thank Bill Shankly for that. Everything stems from the day he came to Anfield ('1959 - Shankly Appointed Manager').

4.11. Chapter Review

This chapter outlined Phase II of the study design, notably, the methodological foundations. The research methodology involves "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes" (Crotty 1998, p. 3). A case study approach was adopted so as to address the primary research issue, namely, satellite supporters and their identification with a professional sports team. The case study has been successfully used to examine domestic sports fans and, recently, supporters of foreign-based teams (Nash 2000; Reimer 2004). Therefore, this methodological approach appears beneficial and appropriate as one seeks to understand team identification and the satellite supporter.

The success of pilot testing resulted in the development of a suitable research questionnaire. The final questionnaire was conducted with the cooperation of online

supporter clubs affiliated with Liverpool F.C.'s Association of International Branches. In addition, a number of online interviews were conducted until both sufficiency and saturation of information had been satisfied. Sports fan research has increasingly utilised the Internet to engage with distant participants (for instance, End 2001; Heinonen 2002; Lewis 2001; Mitrano 1999; Nash 2000) and so this technology enabled the questionnaire and interviews to be administered to the satellite supporter irrespective of location. While there are certain limitations to the chosen research design, the adopted methodology appears appropriate to the research issue.

Founded in the shadow of their cross-town rival, and from humble beginnings, the Liverpool F.C. remains the most successful team in English football history. Under the legendary leadership of both Bill Shankly and Bob Paisley, the Liverpool F.C. etched their name in the record books and set the benchmark for all future Reds teams. The next chapter will examine the quantitative data borne out of two pilot studies and the global Liverpool F.C. questionnaire. As such, the chapter will explore the primary antecedents of team identification for the satellite supporter.

CHAPTER FIVE

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research methodology implemented in this study, notably, the use of an online questionnaire to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The chapter also outlined the use of a mixed methods approach within an overall case study strategy. This chapter analyses the quantitative data from the three studies.

5.2. The Exploratory (AFANA) Pilot Survey

5.2.1. The Participants

Sixty-three AFANA members responded to the questionnaire. However, 13 participants failed to complete all of the required questions and were therefore removed from the sample. A further 11 participants, who were either Australian or had an immediate family member from Australia, were also removed. The primary purpose of this study was to understand the team identification of satellite supporters so these individuals, perhaps better classified as ‘expatriate fans’, were outside the scope of the research. The demographic profile of the final sample can be seen in Table 5.1. The majority of respondents were male and nearly two-thirds were aged between 26 and 45.

Table 5.1: Demographic Data of AFANA Respondents (N = 39)

Demographic	%	Demographic	%
Gender		**Age**	
Male	87.2	18-25	15.4
Female	12.8	26-35	25.6
		36-45	38.5
		46-55	15.4
		56-65	2.6
		66+	2.6

In this first study, participants were asked to provide open-ended responses to explain their identification with a favourite AFL team. These were manually coded into SPSS 15.0 and a number of themes emerged. Participants were permitted more than one response and approximately 94 percent of responses fell into 10 or less categories. These appeared to adequately capture the reasons for their team identification.

5.2.2. The Creation of Team Identification

Respondents were asked why they originally supported their favourite AFL team. These themes were, for the most part, consistent with the antecedents of team identification found in the literature, for instance, the role of socialisation agents, team performance, and other team-related factors. Five major themes emerged: early media exposure; logo design and/or name; team-specific appeal; a personal connection to Australia; and the presence of particular player(s). These themes accounted for approximately two-thirds of total responses and can be seen in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Reasons for Originally Supporting their AFL Team (N = 60)

Reasons for original support highest to lowest – grouped	%
Early media exposure	21.7
Logo design and/or name	13.3
Team-specific appeal	13.3
Personal connection to Australia	8.3
Presence of particular player(s)	8.3
Other reasons	6.7
Reputation and/or tradition	6.7
Team success	6.7
Fondness for Australia/host city	5.0
Influence of family and/or friends	5.0
Sport's appeal/Play the sport	5.0

The fan literature consistently argues that socialisation agents are important in the development of team identification. However, a key socialisation agent, geographic proximity, is clearly absent for the satellite supporter. For instance, the majority of AFANA's members reside in the United States, thousands of kilometres from their

favourite AFL sports team. Therefore, given the importance of socialisation upon team identification, perhaps other agents, such as the media, are responsible.

A third of respondents indicated that they originally supported their favourite AFL team because they were exposed to the product at an early age through the media. For instance, a Carlton fan said, “they were the first club I discovered on the weekly games airing here in America on ESPN back in the 1980’s”, while a Sydney Swans fan explained that he “watched them on ESPN as a 15-16 year old when ESPN was looking desperately to put sports on 24/7 ... I have followed them ever since”. Indeed, early media exposure received nearly double the responses of any other item and provided support for the media’s role in the socialisation of these fans. International media arrangements ensure the foreign sports product is available to an international audience. Furthermore, in the absence of international media exposure, sports teams are unlikely to develop significant brand awareness abroad.

While the first half of the questionnaire solicited open-ended responses, the second half asked respondents to rate the importance of a number of proposed team identification determinants. It is the author’s assertion that brand equity and team identification are likely to share common antecedents. As a result, these antecedents were taken from Kerr and Gladden’s (2008) brand equity model for professional teams in a global marketplace. This question asked respondents to rate on a four point Likert scale, ranging from 1 not important to 4 extremely important, the importance of a number of reasons upon their original support. Their ratings can be seen in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Importance of Reasons in their Original AFL Team Support (N = 39)

Reasons for Support	Mean[ab]	SD
Reputation and/or tradition	2.67	0.98
Presence of particular player(s)	2.44	1.00
Conference and/or league	2.41	1.21
Team success	2.28	0.76
Quality of the broadcast	2.21	1.03
Logo design and/or name	2.18	1.02
Presence of a particular head coach/manager	1.77	1.01
Stadium and/or arena	1.59	0.88
Presence of high-profile and/or quality sponsors	1.31	0.66
Existence of famous and/or celebrity fans	1.13	0.41

[a] Lower scores indicate lower levels for each variable; [b] Scale range 1-4 for each variable

Six of the 10 proposed antecedents were ranked (on average) at least 'a little important' upon team support and more than half of respondents considered reputation or tradition, the presence of a particular player, or membership in an elite conference or league as at least very important. In addition, the earlier open-ended responses described the importance of four of these variables (reputation and/or tradition, the presence of particular player(s), team success, and logo design and/or name) in the creation of their team identification with a favourite AFL team.

5.2.3. Continued (and Possible Cessation) of Team Identification

When asked why they currently supported their favourite AFL team, five popular themes emerged. These can be seen in Table 5.4 and accounted for nearly 81 percent of total responses. The most common reasons for their continued support were: team loyalty or devotion; the presence of particular player(s); reputation/tradition or quality organisation; team success or potential success; and no reason to change teams.

Table 5.4: Reasons for Currently Supporting their AFL Team (N = 47)

Reasons for current support highest to lowest – grouped	%
Team loyalty/devotion	25.5
Presence of particular player(s)	17.0
Reputation/tradition or quality organisation	14.9
Success or potential success	12.8
No reason to change	10.6
Other reasons	6.4
Team or sport-specific appeal	6.4
Logo design and/or name	2.1
Maintain personal connection to Australia	2.1
Media exposure	2.1

Successful sports teams attract fans and supporters often 'jump on the bandwagon' when these teams perform well. Team success and reputation and tradition concern the on-field performance of the team, the latter, the organisation's history of success, and a third of respondents highlighted the importance of these items. This suggests that their support might provide opportunities to BIRG. For instance, one fan said he continued to support the West Coast Eagles because "they won their third Premiership", while a Western Bulldogs fan looked forward to future success: "The Doggies are on the upswing. They acquired Jason Akermanis during the off-season, and have a good chance of being 2007 Premiers."

In the absence of geographic ties, satellite supporters might be more fickle and their support for foreign teams less stable. However, this was not evident in this study as almost a third of respondents continued their support due to team loyalty or devotion. As one fan said, "Carlton is my club, first and foremost, and I WILL NOT abandon them in lean times." Team loyalty and devotion was instrumental in their continued support and, when asked under what circumstances they might cease to support the team, this theme was also reinforced. As one fan said, "I'd never stop. I love the game of Australian Football and I love the North Melbourne Kangaroos". Three major themes emerged and accounted for three-quarters of responses: never/unlikely to cease support; team ceases to exist; and relocation. Indeed, the secondary themes represent a fundamental change to the team, i.e. a merger, insolvency or relocation. These themes can be seen in Table 5.5 and highlights the loyalty of respondents.

Table 5.5: Reasons to Stop Supporting their AFL Team (N = 44)

Reasons to cease support highest to lowest – grouped	%
Never/unlikely to cease support	38.6
Team ceases to exist	20.5
Relocation	15.9
Loss of reputation or tradition	6.8
Other reasons	6.8
Loss of certain players	4.5
Change in logo or name	2.3
Loss of certain coaches	2.3
Loss of success	2.3

5.2.4. Sports Consumption Behaviour

The final section asked respondents how often they participated in a number of proposed sports consumption activities during the football season. For instance, one could purchase licensed merchandise, watch team games on television, visit official websites, or purchase team sponsor's products. Respondents were asked to choose between 'never' to 'once per week' and their responses can be seen in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Behaviour to Support their AFL Team (During Season) (N = 39)

Supporter Behaviour	% Weekly	% Monthly	% Seasonally	% Never
Visit the official AFL or team website	66.7	28.2	2.6	2.6
Watch video highlights on the Internet	48.7	28.2	0.0	23.1
Watch AFL or team games on television	38.5	20.5	17.9	23.1
Purchase products from companies that support the club	2.6	10.3	7.7	79.5
Purchase team-related merchandise	2.6	7.7	48.7	41.0
Purchase additional club items	0.0	2.6	7.7	89.7
Purchase tickets to team games	0.0	2.6	5.1	92.3

The absence of geographic proximity reinforces the importance of the media to satellite supporters and their sports consumption. Approximately two-thirds of respondents visited either the official AFL, or their team, website once per week, while the majority

of these supporters watched online video highlights (77 percent) or televised games (59 percent) at least once per month. Furthermore, as would befit foreign supporters, respondents claimed they almost never purchased tickets to AFL games. This most likely reflected their ability, or willingness, to purchase tickets to an overseas sports contest, hence the significance of the media in their consumption.

The purpose of this initial study was to conduct an 'exploratory examination' of the team identification of satellite supporters. Inspired by Wann, Tucker and Schrader's (1996) landmark paper, this preliminary study allowed participants to express, in their own words, their team identification with a foreign sports product. As outlined above, despite its limitations – notably, its relatively small sample size – this preliminary study produced some insights into the team identification of a group of satellite supporters. Furthermore, the study provided initial support that models for brand equity and team identification might share common antecedents and helped to develop a team-specific pilot survey to further explore team identification and satellite supporters. This subsequent study examined satellite supporters of the Ajax F.C.

5.3. The Team-Specific (Ajax F.C.) Pilot Survey

The initial questionnaire was designed to solicit open-ended responses as part of an exploratory examination of satellite supporters. However, the second phase of research concentrated on these consumers and their support of a specific team. The survey was administered to supporters of the Dutch team, AFC Ajax of Amsterdam (Ajax F.C.).

5.3.1. The Participants

One hundred and eighty seven visitors to Ajax USA responded to the questionnaire. Most of the respondents were American, which was consistent with a U.S. supporter organisation, although the sample represented 44 countries. Furthermore, all of the respondents were male and nearly three-quarters were aged between 18-35 years. However, 34 participants completed only the demographic questions and were removed from the sample and 25 participants were Dutch or had an immediate family member from the Netherlands and so, as expatriate fans, were also excluded from the study. Their responses differed significantly from other participants, particularly regarding the importance of family members or a personal or emotional 'connection' to

the Netherlands upon their support for Ajax F.C. These expatriate fans highlighted their support for a ‘mother country’. For instance, an American fan explained, “I have a Dutch ancestry ... so I choose to follow Ajax from Amsterdam, the Capital of the Netherlands”, while another said, “I love Holland and that love tides over to Ajax ... They are kind of a simble (sic) of my love for the Netherlands, and give me an outlet to express that love”. The sample’s demographic profile can be seen in Table 5.7.

Consistent with the earlier pilot, respondents clearly understood the questions and approximately 82 percent of participants completed the questionnaire. Furthermore, the drop-out rate was not progressive: while 18 percent abandoned the questionnaire when asked about their support for Ajax F.C. (section three), only three respondents then failed to finish. Many also chose to provide an open-ended response to elucidate or ‘flesh out’ their earlier responses. The high completion rate and wealth of information provided in these responses indicated that the questionnaire was an enjoyable, simple and valuable exercise. If it had been overly-complicated or lengthy, one would have expected the number who failed to complete the questionnaire to progressively increase as they proceeded. However, as shown, this was not the case and suggested that the questionnaire was easily understood and of a suitable length.

Table 5.7: Demographic Data of Ajax USA Respondents (N = 128)

Demographic	%	Demographic	%
Gender		**Nationality**	
Male	100.0	USA	36.7
		UK	4.7
Age		England	3.9
18-25	46.1	India	3.9
26-35	26.6	Slovenia	3.9
36-45	14.1	Canada	3.1
46-55	9.4	Denmark	3.1
56-65	3.1	Israel	2.3
66+	0.8	Albania	1.6
		Finland	1.6
		France	1.6
		Indonesia	1.6
		Iran	1.6
		Ireland	1.6
		Italy	1.6
		Malta	1.6
		Peru	1.6
		Russia	1.6
		Scotland	1.6
		Uruguay	1.6
		Wales	1.6
		Australia, Azerbaijan	0.8
		Bosnia, Brazil, Bulgaria	0.8
		China, Colombia	0.8
		Croatia, Ecuador	0.8
		Germany, Hungary	0.8
		Lebanon, Macedonia	0.8
		Malaysia, Mexico	0.8
		Poland, Portugal	0.8
		Romania, Singapore	0.8
		Spain, Sweden,	0.8
		Syria, Ukraine	0.8

5.3.2. The Creation of Team Identification

Respondents were asked to rate 14 items in their original decision to support Ajax F.C. The question adopted a five point Likert scale, ranging from 1 not important to 5 extremely important. These items were derived from the exploratory examination of AFANA supporters and Kerr and Gladden's (2008) brand equity model for professional sports teams in a global marketplace. These latter items were included due to the assertion that brand equity and team identification might share common antecedents. These items are ranked highest to lowest based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the item was at least moderately important in their initial support. Respondents highlighted the importance of four reasons: reputation and/or tradition; the presence of particular player(s); team success; and the ability to watch Ajax F.C. play due to media coverage. The importance of these items can be seen in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Importance of Reasons in Original Ajax F.C. Support (N = 128)

Reasons for Support	% Important	% Not Important	Mean[ab]	SD
The team's reputation and/or tradition	96.2	3.1	4.40	0.93
They had a particular player(s) I liked	79.0	9.4	3.65	1.31
They were (and possibly still are) a successful team	77.3	8.6	3.33	1.19
Ability to watch the team play due to media coverage	60.1	24.2	3.00	1.51
The team belonged to the highest division, Eredivisie	53.8	33.6	2.57	1.37
A personal/'emotional' connection to the Netherlands	49.2	40.6	2.60	1.55
Liked the team's logo design and/or name	37.5	39.8	2.26	1.31
They had a particular manager I liked	37.5	49.2	2.12	1.30
Liked the stadium the team called 'home'	34.4	46.9	2.15	1.33
The broadcast quality of their games	31.3	57.0	1.95	1.27
A fellow countryman played for the team	20.3	71.9	1.63	1.16
My family or friends supported the team	13.3	76.6	1.48	1.01
They had high-profile and/or quality sponsors	12.5	75.8	1.43	0.88
They had famous or celebrity fans	11.0	78.9	1.38	0.86

[a] Lower scores indicate lower levels for each variable; [b] Scale range 1-5 for each variable

The most important item was the reputation and tradition of Ajax F.C. Indeed, more than 60 percent of respondents rated the item as extremely important. Participants were informed that this item could include the team's history of success, its style of play, and ethical behaviour as these are features often found in discussions of team reputation and tradition in the fan literature (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998; Kolbe & James 2000; Sutton et al. 1997; Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001). As one American fan said, "At the time they were the top team in the world and I wanted to cheer against them since they were often the favourite to win. However, their fluid, attacking style of play won me over not only to the team, but also the sport of football."

The next most important items were the presence of a particular player, or players, on Ajax F.C. and that the team was successful. A third of respondents said that Ajax F.C. having a particular player they liked was extremely important while a fifth of respondents said the same of the team's success at the time they became a supporter. For instance, one Finnish supporter explained how he "actually got the 'Ajax fever' from Oranje '74 (Cruijff, Neeskens, Krol ...) so in the 70s I was an Oranje supporter who also became an Ajax fan in the 80s when I started to see Ajax's games via Sky Channel."

As can be seen in Table 5.8, these three reasons are quite different from the others as they were almost universally regarded as important in original team support. Indeed, less than nine percent of respondents considered them to be not important. The fourth most important influence regarded media coverage. A quarter of respondents said that the ability to watch Ajax F.C. play due to media coverage was extremely important. As noted earlier, satellite supporters cannot benefit from geographic proximity, and so international media arrangements ensure that the foreign team is available abroad.

As previously mentioned, expatriate fans were excluded from the sample since the aim of this research was to understand satellite supporters. However, these 25 individuals were analysed separately to determine the reasons important in their original identification. Although the relative importance of the 14 proposed items was much the same as for satellite supporters, two key differences were highlighted. A personal or emotional 'connection' to the Netherlands was the second most important item behind Ajax F.C.'s reputation and tradition, with a mean of 3.88 compared with 2.60 for the satellite supporters. In addition, the support of family or friends rated more highly with expatriate fans, with a mean of 2.32, compared with 1.48 for these satellite supporters.

5.3.3. Continued (and Possible Cessation) of Team Identification

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 15 items upon their current support of Ajax F.C. The items were essentially the same (with altered verb tenses) as those for their original team support, although team loyalty was an additional proposition. The question adopted a five point Likert scale and the results can be seen in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Importance of Reasons in their Current Ajax F.C. Support (N = 128)

Reasons for Support	Mean[ab]	SD
The team's reputation and/or tradition	4.46	0.90
Loyalty to the team	4.25	0.93
They are successful, or have great potential for success	3.20	1.26
They have a particular player(s) I like	3.12	1.23
A personal/'emotional' connection to the Netherlands	2.70	1.50
The team belongs to the highest division, Eredivisie	2.59	1.35
Ability to watch the team play due to media coverage	2.32	1.27
Like the stadium the team calls 'home'	2.17	1.27
Like the team's logo design and/or name	2.12	1.23
The broadcast quality of their games	2.05	1.27
They have a particular manager I like	1.80	1.10
They have high-profile and/or quality sponsors	1.48	0.96
My family or friends support the team	1.45	0.97
They have famous or celebrity fans	1.41	0.94
A fellow countryman plays for the team	1.37	0.91

[a] Lower scores indicate lower levels for each variable; [b] Scale range 1-5 for each variable

The most important reasons for their current support were Ajax F.C.'s reputation and tradition, followed closely by team loyalty. Two-thirds of respondents said reputation or tradition was extremely important while nearly half said the same of team loyalty. Indeed, some supporters were quite adamant about their devotion. A Finnish fan explained that "once you got 'the Ajax fever', you will never 'recover' so I still follow Ajax and Oranje", while another fan said he felt that he had a "reputation as an 'ambassador' for Ajax to American fans." These items received almost universal support as less than three percent of respondents considered them to be not important.

The next most important influences were that the Dutch team remained, or had the potential to be, successful and that Ajax F.C. had a particular player or players they liked. Approximately 70 percent of respondents indicated that these two items were at least moderately important in their decision to continue to support the team.

Team loyalty was instrumental in their continued support of the Ajax F.C. and this was reinforced when asked would they ever abandon the team. In response to the question, 'Is it possible you would ever stop supporting Ajax F.C?', only 17 of the 128 participants (13.3 percent) said 'Yes'. Although one might expect satellite supporters to resemble 'fair-weather' rather than 'die-hard' fans, this was not reflected in the study. Die-hard fans, as earlier mentioned, maintain their allegiance irrespective of on-field success, while fair-weather fans associate with the team only when it performs well.

5.3.4. Sports Consumption Behaviour

The final sections asked respondents how often they participated in a number of proposed sports consumption activities to support Ajax F.C. during, and out of, the football season. For instance, they could purchase licensed merchandise, watch games on television, visit official websites, or purchase sponsor's products. The first question concerned their behaviour during the season. The question's sample size was 126 as two respondents declined to answer. Respondents were asked to choose between 'never' to 'once per week' and their responses can be seen in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10: Behaviour to Support the Ajax F.C. (During Season) (N = 126)

Supporter Behaviour	% Weekly	% Monthly	% Seasonally	% Never
Visit unofficial Ajax F.C. supporter websites	91.3	4.8	1.6	2.4
Visit the official Ajax F.C. website	67.5	19.8	7.1	5.6
Watch video highlights on the Internet	57.9	26.2	6.3	9.5
Watch Ajax F.C. games on television	17.5	38.1	27.8	16.7
Get together with other Ajax F.C. fans	7.1	4.8	21.4	66.7
Purchase team-related merchandise	4.0	5.6	69.0	21.4
Purchase products from companies that support the club	1.6	6.3	30.2	61.9
Purchase tickets to Ajax F.C. Eredivisie games	1.6	2.4	22.2	73.8
Purchase additional Ajax F.C. items	1.6	0.8	4.8	92.9
Purchase shares in the Ajax F.C.	1.6	0.0	1.6	96.8
Purchase tickets to Ajax F.C. overseas games	0.0	1.6	15.1	83.3

Three activities were clearly more popular than the other options as more than 90 percent of respondents visited unofficial Ajax F.C. supporter websites, the official Ajax F.C. website, and watched online video highlights at least once per season. Indeed, more than 90 percent of respondents visited unofficial club supporter websites weekly. As seen earlier, it has been argued that fans that identify with geographically-distant teams might not receive the same psychological benefits as more traditional fans (Wann 2006a, 2006b; Wann et al. 2004; Wann et al. 1999; Wann & Pierce 2005) since they find themselves isolated from fellow fans. However, should opportunities arise to interact with like-minded fans then they might receive psychological benefits (Wann 2006c). This might explain the propensity for respondents to visit these unofficial supporter sites as their participation in an online fan community might foster this interaction. However, it does not explain why respondents rarely ‘got together’ with fellow fans, although opportunities for face-to-face interaction might be limited.

Although the Dutch league, the Eredivisie, is not as popular as the major European leagues (EPL, La Liga, Serie A and Bundesliga), 83 percent of respondents watched televised Ajax F.C. games at least once per season, while more than half did so at

least once per month. The absence of geographic proximity most likely reinforced the media's importance to these supporters and upon their sports consumption. In addition, nearly 80 percent of respondents said that they purchased licensed Ajax F.C. merchandise at least once per season. This appeared logical since, in the modern game, clubs regularly re-design their playing jerseys to maximise commercial revenue.

A couple of activities, however, were noteworthy due to their lack of frequency. For instance, nearly two-thirds of respondents claimed that they never purchased products from companies that supported the club. This would be a worrying sign for those companies that financially support Ajax F.C. as a means to drive their company's sales. In addition, nearly three-quarters of respondents said that they never purchased tickets to Ajax F.C. Eredivisie games. This most likely reflected their ability, or willingness, to purchase tickets to an overseas sports contest, hence the significance of the media.

The final question asked whether respondents pursued any of these activities outside football season. The 11 earlier proposed activities were reduced to nine for their out-of-season consumption, largely because, although it was no longer possible to watch live televised games of the Liverpool F.C., supporters could still watch video highlights of previously-completed matches. Furthermore, the question regarding the purchase of tickets no longer differentiated between Eredivisie and foreign exhibition fixtures. This was a simple yes/no question and the results can be seen in Table 5.11. Visiting unofficial Ajax F.C. supporter websites was the most common activity followed by visiting the team's official website. In addition, nearly three-quarters of respondents watched video highlights online or on television. Those activities most popular outside of football season mirrored those pursued during the season.

Table 5.11: Behaviour to Support the Ajax F.C. (Out of Season) (N = 126)

Popularity of Behaviour highest to lowest - grouped	%
Visit unofficial Ajax F.C. supporter websites	94.4
Visit the official Ajax F.C. website	87.3
Watch video highlights on the Internet or television	73.0
Purchase team-related merchandise	49.2
Purchase products from companies that support the club	23.0
Get together with other Ajax F.C. fans	19.8
Purchase tickets to Ajax F.C. games for the upcoming season	12.7
Purchase additional Ajax F.C. items	4.0
Purchase shares in the Ajax F.C.	3.2

While the exploratory study examined satellite supporters of the AFL, this subsequent study examined satellite supporters of the Ajax F.C. This research generated valuable insights into the psychology and consumption behaviour of a specific group of satellite supporters. Three items were almost universally accepted as important in their original decision to support the Ajax F.C., notably, reputation and/or tradition; the presence of particular player(s); and team success. The ability to watch their team play also received considerable support, and highlighted the importance of international media agreements as team brands attempt to exploit foreign opportunities.

Despite their foreign location, these supporters expressed intense loyalty to the Amsterdam team, however, as members of Ajax USA, this was not such a surprise. Respondents had chosen to join a fan organisation dedicated to the Ajax F.C. and were thus more likely to be highly-identified with, and show greater allegiance for, the team. These satellite supporters relied heavily on the media, especially the Internet, to express their support for Ajax F.C. Indeed, given their membership in an online fan organisation, and that they live outside the Netherlands, it was logical that the media would prove an important conduit to their support. More than 90 percent of respondents visited unofficial Ajax F.C. websites both during the season and out-of-season.

In conclusion, the second pilot, tailored specifically to an individual team, proved extremely valuable. The questionnaire generated an extremely-high completion rate and enthusiastic responses from participants, while responses were consistent with the questions asked, suggesting that participants understood each question and answered

accordingly. Furthermore, it appeared feasible that satellite supporters receive psychological benefits from their support of a foreign team, and models for brand equity and team identification might share common antecedents. As such, the Ajax F.C. pilot survey proved extremely valuable and encouraged confidence in a larger global questionnaire, in this instance, focused on satellite supporters of the Liverpool F.C.

5.4. The Liverpool F.C. Survey

As the final phase of quantitative research, an online questionnaire was administered to satellite supporters of the English Premier League's Liverpool F.C.

5.4.1. The Participants

As mentioned in the previous chapter, 1,513 Liverpool fans from 37 countries began the online questionnaire; however, 319 participants completed only the demographic questions and were removed from the sample. Furthermore, 41 participants were found to be expatriate fans and were also excluded. Indeed, as was seen in the Ajax F.C. study, the reasons the expatriate fan identified with the Liverpool F.C. differed significantly from other respondents, especially with respect to the importance of a family member's support of the team and a 'connection' to Liverpool or England.

Similar to the team-specific pilot survey, the drop-out rate was not progressive. For instance, approximately 21 percent of respondents abandoned the questionnaire after completion of their personal profile yet only a further two percent completed the identification questions and failed to discuss their consumption behaviour. Therefore, the online questionnaire appeared to be both easily understood and a suitable length.

Although Norwegian supporters dominated the sample, largely due to the size of the Scandinavian Supporter Branch, ultimately 32 nations were represented. Nearly three-quarters of respondents were aged 35 or younger and might therefore reflect these individuals' increased use of technology and the Internet. Although the original survey included additional age ranges, notably those aged 46-55, 56-65, and over 65, they were largely underrepresented. Therefore, those 46 years and older were combined into one age group. Furthermore, approximately 96 percent of respondents were male. The sample's demographic profile can be seen in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12: Demographic Data of Liverpool F.C. Respondents (N = 1,153)

Demographic	%	Demographic	%
Gender		**Nationality**	
Male	96.4	Norway	81.6
Female	3.6	USA	4.6
		Indonesia	3.3
Age		Denmark	2.3
18-25	34.1	Sweden	1.9
26-35	38.2	Australia	1.3
36-45	24.0	Canada	1.2
46+	3.6	Faroe Islands	0.8
		Ireland	0.7
		Poland	0.3
		Bosnia	0.2
		Sri Lanka	0.2
		Albania	0.1
		Bahrain	0.1
		Bangladesh	0.1
		Chile	0.1
		Cyprus	0.1
		Finland	0.1
		Germany	0.1
		Hong Kong	0.1
		Iceland	0.1
		India	0.1
		Iraq	0.1
		Italy	0.1
		Jamaica	0.1
		Kosovo	0.1
		Kurdistan	0.1
		New Zealand	0.1
		Serbia	0.1
		Switzerland	0.1
		Trinidad	0.1
		Zambia	0.1

5.4.2. The Creation of Team Identification

The questionnaire was designed to determine which items were most important in their identification with the Liverpool F.C. Respondents were asked to rate 16 antecedents and they had the opportunity to describe additional antecedents in an open-ended question. As a result, there were 17 potential determinants of team identification and, through the use of a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 not important to 5 extremely important, individuals ranked the importance of each item in their original team support.

i) Satellite Supporters vs. Expatriate Fans

As described earlier, 41 expatriate fans were excluded from the study. Although the primary focus of this research concerned satellite supporters, a sizable number of expatriate fans provided an opportunity to compare these consumers to their foreign counterparts. A number of themes were clearly important for these consumers, i.e. the theme averaged a score near or above '3', or 'moderately important'. As a result, seven themes were clearly important for the satellite supporter, and only two for the expatriate fan. A comparison of these supporters can be seen in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13: Mean Scores of the Important Reasons in their Liverpool F.C. Support (Satellite Supporters vs. Expatriate Fans)

Reasons for Support	Mean[ab]	SD
Satellite Supporters (N = 1,153)		
Ability to watch the team play due to media coverage	3.68	1.19
Liked the team's style of play	3.67	1.23
They had a particular player(s) I liked	3.60	1.21
They were (and possibly still are) a successful team	3.11	1.18
They had a history of success	3.10	1.26
Liked the stadium the team called 'home'	3.04	1.41
The team belonged to the highest division, the EPL	3.01	1.32
Expatriate Fans (N = 41)		
My family or friends supported the team	3.22	1.65
I had a personal/'emotional' connection to England	2.93	1.60

[a] Lower scores indicate lower levels for each variable; [b] Scale range 1-5 for each variable

An earlier review of the literature claimed that socialisation agents, such as family or friends or geographic proximity, were important in the creation of team identification for direct sports consumers, or local sports fans. However, it was hypothesised, in the likely absence, or reduced likelihood, of these socialisation agents, the media might instead be a key agent. Not only could media exposure generate brand awareness for the foreign team, it could foster an international fan base. For instance, in 2004-2005, 320 million supporters watched televised UEFA Champions League games per week (Chadwick & Holt 2007). Indeed, Table 5.13 substantiates this hypothesis and, for expatriate supporters, only two items were found to be moderately important.

Expatriate fans, despite the fact they now reside overseas, are likely to share many of the same features as local or traditional sports fans. As a result, these supporters reaffirmed the importance of family or friends on their original identification with the Liverpool F.C. In addition, the importance of a connection to England is most likely an extension of geographic proximity, or support for a team that represents the individual's 'hometown' community, in this instance, city or nation. For instance, Juliet, a British citizen living in the United States, explained in her survey that, "as an ex pat, Liverpool and football in general is a way to connect on an emotional level with the old country". Furthermore, another fan, whose family moved to Canada when he was a boy, reinforced these comments in a later interview when he said that the Liverpool F.C. "is a part of who I am and where I came from, the continued support validates that part of me" (Gary: 52-53). A brief comparison of these consumers therefore suggests that satellite supporters do indeed differ from expatriates.

ii) Norwegian vs. Non-Norwegian Satellite Supporters

At first the dominance of Norwegian supporters appeared unusual, however, the Liverpool F.C. Supporters Scandinavian Branch has 25,000 registered members (compared to the Canadian branch with approximately 500 members), is located in Norway, and actively promoted the online questionnaire and so the active participation of these members was understandable. Given the dominance of these participants, the sample was split into two distinct categories (Norwegian versus non-Norwegian) so as to analyse each set of fans in isolation. This research sought to make conclusions about satellite supporters in general and not be unduly influenced by elements which might be solely important to Norwegian supporters. Both sets of fans indicated that a

number of items were important (i.e. averaged a score near or above '3', or 'moderately important') in their initial identification with the Liverpool F.C. Table 5.14 highlights the major responses largely shared by the Norwegian and non-Norwegian supporters.

Table 5.14: Mean Scores of the Important Reasons in their Liverpool F.C. Support (Norwegian vs. Non-Norwegian Satellite Supporters)

Reasons for Support	Mean[ab]	SD
Norwegian Supporters (N = 941)		
Ability to watch the team play due to media coverage	3.75	1.17
Liked the team's style of play	3.67	1.24
They had a particular player(s) I liked	3.62	1.19
They were (and possibly still are) a successful team	3.11	1.17
They had a history of success	3.09	1.26
Liked the stadium the team called 'home'	3.07	1.40
The team belonged to the highest division, the EPL	2.98	1.31
Non-Norwegian Supporters (N = 212)		
Ability to watch the team play due to media coverage	3.41	1.28
Liked the team's style of play	3.67	1.23
They had a particular player(s) I liked	3.48	1.28
They were (and possibly still are) a successful team	3.12	1.20
They had a history of success	3.12	1.29
Liked the stadium the team called 'home'	2.92	1.49
The team belonged to the highest division, the EPL	3.16	1.36
They had a history of ethical behaviour	2.95	1.45

[a] Lower scores indicate lower levels for each variable; [b] Scale range 1-5 for each variable

Despite their dominance of the sample, the Norwegian participants clearly did not bias the overall response. As such, it is indeed possible to analyse the combined group to understand why satellite supporters originally identified with the Liverpool F.C.

iii) Satellite Supporters: Miscellaneous Reasons

Similar to the Ajax F.C. pilot, respondents were invited to 'discuss' why they initially supported the team. Although 23 percent did so, the vast majority of responses simply reinforced ratings they had earlier provided. For instance, one fan noted that family or

friends, media coverage, particular players, a history of success, and style of play was important to his initial team support and he elaborated upon these in his written comment: “At the time there were many games showed on the telly, a few Norwegians played on the team, so they got good media coverage in Norway. Also the team were very popular because [of] the good times in [the] late 80’s, so there were easy to find fellow supporters of LFC. And they played in a very likeable way”.

Almost a quarter of participants provided additional comments and there were 374 unique comments. These comments went on to reinforce the ratings they had provided for their initial identification with the Liverpool F.C. and reflected the passion and dedication they felt for the team. Despite this, approximately a third of responses simply described items already included in the question. For instance, one participant rated media coverage as extremely important in his identification with the Liverpool F.C., however, he then proceeded to explain how, when he was young, the team was on Norwegian television most of the time. In addition, 12 percent simply reiterated their devotion to the Liverpool F.C. Therefore, nearly half of the additional comments simply supported information that was already reflected in the item’s rating.

Given the personal nature of fandom, it was impressive that approximately 87 percent of items important in their initial team identification were captured by the Likert-scale design of the question. Eleven minor themes emerged from the remaining 54 percent of written comments and these are described in the following section (see Table 5.15).

Table 5.15: Miscellaneous Reasons to Support the Liverpool F.C.

Reasons for Support	% 'Other Reasons'
Merchandise	12.03
Fans	10.43
Club history	6.15
Game atmosphere	6.15
Other 'personal' reasons	4.55
Colour	4.01
Oppositional support	2.94
The Beatles	2.67
The 'Liverpool Way'	2.41
Brand community	1.60
Played my local team	1.07

These minor themes warrant further explanation. The first described how supporters had been given team merchandise which had prompted their interest in the Liverpool F.C., while the second referred to the passion and soul of Reds fans, that they truly are 'the 12th man', and includes their reaction to the Hillsborough and Heysel tragedies. The next theme described the Liverpool F.C.'s history of tragedy and triumph, success and adversity, while game atmosphere discussed the atmosphere at Anfield, the singing on the terraces, the Kop, and 'You'll Never Walk Alone!' The satellite supporter's pity for the club (big losses and tragedy) is included in the next theme, while fans occasionally adopted the team so as to support a rival team (oppositional support) to family or friends. The 'Liverpool Way' incorporated the team's tradition and integrity, while the theme, brand community, reflected the presence of Reds fans overseas that encouraged support for the team, and reaffirmed their fan identity.

Despite their inclusion, many of these minor themes are most likely captured by the earlier proposed antecedents, for instance, the team's famous red colour within logo design/name, and both club history and the 'Liverpool Way' within reputation and/or tradition. Game atmosphere might also be a product of the broadcast quality of their games, while the influence of overseas fans in the socialisation process suggested the existence of a brand community; a key element in Kerr and Gladden's (2008) revised brand equity model. Although supporters clearly felt strongly about the English team, less than 10 percent of respondents felt that items not included in the question were

significantly important to warrant additional explanation. Furthermore, nearly 60 percent of participants indicated that 'other reasons' were not important in their initial support.

Since the importance of these 'other reasons' can be largely minimised, the next sections will discuss the importance of the remaining 16 team identification antecedents. However, it is further possible to categorise these antecedents into first-, second-, and third-tier themes based on the relative importance attributed to each item. Chi-square analysis was also undertaken to determine if a significant relationship existed between gender or age and these themes. The relationship was considered *statistically significant* where the Pearson Chi-Square value (*p*-value) was smaller than or equalled 0.05. This indicated that the results were most likely not due to chance.

5.4.3. First-Tier Themes

Data analysis supports the existence, and importance, of seven themes in satellite supporter identification with the Liverpool F.C. These primary themes recorded a mean above '3', or 'moderately important', and are ranked highest to lowest based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that it was at least moderately important in their initial support. The importance of these first-tier themes is seen in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16: Importance of First-Tier Themes in Original Liverpool F.C. Support (N = 1,153)

Reasons for Support	% Important	% Not Important	Mean[ab]	SD
Ability to watch the team play due to media coverage	84.3	8.4	3.68	1.19
Liked the team's style of play	83.3	9.5	3.67	1.23
They had a particular player(s) I liked	81.5	7.7	3.60	1.21
They were (and possibly still are) a successful team	72.5	12.3	3.11	1.18
They had a history of success	69.7	14.8	3.10	1.26
The team belonged to the highest division, the English Premier League	66.2	19.4	3.01	1.32
Liked the stadium the team called 'home'	63.4	21.1	3.04	1.41

[a] Lower scores indicate lower levels for each variable; [b] Scale range 1-5 for each variable

Respondents highlighted the importance of these primary themes: i) media coverage; ii) style of play; iii) presence of particular player(s); iv) team success; v) history of success; vi) participation in the highest division; and vii) stadium. Each theme was considered at least moderately important by approximately two-thirds of the satellite supporters. The following section discusses the importance of each of these themes.

i) Media Coverage

As noted earlier, socialisation is important to identification with a sports team (Wann 2006a). In addition, as seen earlier, this identification is influenced through people and place or via "physical proximity to the entity" (Donavan, Janda & Suh 2006, p. 125). Therefore, Wann (2006a) explained that geographic proximity is a powerful force in this socialisation process. However, these satellite supporters do not share geographic proximity with the Liverpool F.C. and, as previously discussed, the availability of satellite television and the Internet has prompted some to highlight the media's role as a socialisation agent (Jacobson 2003; Mahony et al. 2002; Sutton et al. 1997; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996). International media arrangements ensure the foreign sports product is available to an international audience. Furthermore, without media coverage, teams are unlikely to develop significant brand awareness in foreign markets.

The importance of international media arrangements is evident as respondents highlighted the importance of being able to watch the team play due to media coverage. For instance, nearly a third of respondents viewed this as extremely important, while almost two-thirds saw it as at least very important, in their decision to support the Liverpool F.C. In addition, age was statistically significant (*p*-value 0.006). Approximately a fifth of supporters aged over 45 dismissed the importance of being able to watch the team play, while at least a quarter of all other supporters said media coverage was extremely important. The popularity of the English Premier League has most likely been fuelled by its availability to foreign consumers; however, the introduction of satellite television and the Internet has seen the product become more accessible. As such, perhaps older supporters were not able to see the team play when they first became fans and this is reflected in their assessment of the item.

ii) Style of Play

Although Kolbe and James (2000) claimed that a team's style of play could be included within the broader category, reputation and tradition, the item was isolated in the questionnaire to examine its importance in the creation of team identification. These satellite supporters considered the importance of the Liverpool F.C.'s playing style to be almost as significant as international media exposure and nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated that it was at least very important. Furthermore, as was the case with the previous theme, it was extremely important for a third of respondents.

iii) Presence of Particular Player(s)

As noted earlier, it was believed that 30 percent of non-European football fans follow their club because they like a particular player (Garrahan 2003) and the importance of a particular player, or players, at the Liverpool F.C. received considerable support. Nearly 60 percent of respondents said that the presence of a particular player at Anfield was at least very important and, for about a quarter, was extremely important. Female fans were less likely to support the Liverpool F.C. because they liked a particular player (*p*-value 0.034). Approximately 20 percent of female supporters dismissed the importance of this item; however, some caution must be applied when interpreting this result due to the small number of females in the sample.

iv) Team Success

Successful teams are likely to influence team identification as supporters are able to 'bask in the reflected glory' of their chosen sports team. In addition, since the possibility exists for vicarious achievement and the enhancement of self-esteem, successful teams are likely to be attractive to potential fans. However, as seen earlier, there is mixed support for the role of team success in the team identification literature. Although respondents considered it the fourth most important theme, team success was clearly less significant than those previously discussed. Only 12 percent of respondents said team success was extremely important, while approximately a quarter said it was very important. Age was found to be statistically significant (*p*-value 0.000), whereby it was least important to the youngest supporters. Almost a fifth of those aged 18-25 said success was not important, which was almost double those in the other age groups.

The importance of team success might also be understood as it contributes to brand awareness. Successful teams are unlikely to suffer relegation. They therefore remain in the highest division and are more likely to be televised worldwide, especially if they also qualify for prestigious competitions such as the Champions League. In addition, those more successful teams, especially European teams, are more likely to attract international attention outside their domestic markets. As a result, the greater the international media exposure, fuelled by on-field success, the greater the potential for a sports team to develop a worldwide fan base.

v) History of Success

Reputation and tradition, as previously stated, captures an organisation's history of on-field success (Sutton et al. 1997) but, similar to its style of play, the item was examined in isolation. History of success, although organisation-related, produced similar results to team success. A successful history ranked slightly behind team success; however, similar to that theme, approximately only 40 percent of respondents claimed that it was at least very important upon their initial support. A history of success was most important for the youngest supporters (*p*-value 0.000). While a fifth of those under 26 claimed it was extremely important, this steadily declined as the age of supporters increased. In addition, its importance can be understood in terms of brand awareness. For instance, Liverpool F.C. is the third most valuable football brand in England due to its "successful history dating back to 1892" (Gieske & Forato 2004).

vi) Participation in the Highest Division

As discussed earlier, participation in the highest division is critical to a team's financial performance. As a result, teams from the prestigious EPL, La Liga, Serie A, Bundesliga and Ligue 1 consistently outperformed their European rivals (Jones, Parkes & Houlihan 2006) and highlighted the valuable contribution participation in these leagues made to their brand value. While a quarter of respondents indicated that its participation in the English Premier League was very important in their original decision to support the Liverpool F.C., less than 15 percent said it was extremely important.

Those teams in the highest division, especially in those European leagues earlier mentioned, appear more likely to create brand awareness in foreign markets. Those

that spend considerable time in the lower divisions and often flirt with relegation are unlikely to be widely recognised or supported outside their immediate geographic area. Furthermore, only those in the highest division have an opportunity to compete in lucrative tournaments such as the Champions League. Therefore, those outside of the top division are less likely to create brand awareness abroad since they may struggle to attract fans through international media exposure and prestigious championships.

vii) Stadium

The last of the first-tier themes, whether supporters liked the stadium their team called 'home', ranked seventh in importance for these satellite supporters. As earlier seen, Underwood, Bond and Baer (2001) suggested that sports stadia can successfully foster team identification. This is especially plausible for iconic facilities such as Old Trafford (Manchester United) or Fenway Park (Boston Red Sox) and there was considerable evidence for the importance of the Liverpool F.C.'s spiritual home, Anfield. Anfield was a popular sports stadium and, indeed, nearly a quarter of respondents claimed their affection for the Reds' historic venue played a very important part in their team choice. Furthermore, nearly a fifth of respondents indicated it was extremely important. Given the unique nature of Anfield – for instance, the famous Kop – its contribution to a supporter's team choice can perhaps be understood, however, it is unlikely that other less iconic facilities might be as important to team identification.

5.4.4. Second-Tier Themes

In addition to the first-tier themes, analysis also supported the existence, and importance, of five secondary themes in satellite supporter identification with the Liverpool F.C. These secondary themes recorded a mean considerably higher than '2', or 'a little important', and are ranked highest to lowest based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that it was at least moderately important in their initial support. The importance of these second-tier themes can be seen in Table 5.17.

Table 5.17: Importance of Second-Tier Themes in Original Liverpool F.C. Support (N = 1,153)

Reasons for Support	% Important	% Not Important	Mean[ab]	SD
They had a history of ethical behaviour	56.2	27.6	2.71	1.36
The broadcast quality of their games	56.2	26.5	2.70	1.31
Liked the team's logo design and/or name	42.1	38.0	2.33	1.31
My family or friends supported the team	38.4	48.3	2.23	1.41
They had a particular manager I liked	34.8	41.9	2.12	1.19

[a] Lower scores indicate lower levels for each variable; [b] Scale range 1-5 for each variable

Respondents highlighted these secondary themes: i) history of ethical behaviour; ii) the broadcast quality of games; iii) logo design and/or name; iv) team support by family or friends; and v) presence of a particular manager. Each theme was considered at least moderately important by at least a third of the satellite supporters. The following section discusses the importance, or lack thereof, of each of these themes.

i) History of Ethical Behaviour

Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) explained that a record of integrity is an integral component of an organisation's reputation. Given the existence of scandals in professional sport, the issue of ethical behaviour was isolated to examine its importance in the creation of team identification. Nearly a third of respondents claimed its history of ethical behaviour was at least very important in their decision to support the Liverpool F.C., while approximately 11 percent said it was extremely important.

ii) Broadcast Quality of Games

Satellite supporters, as indirect consumers, have their experience dictated by the broadcast media. As a result, the quality of these broadcasts, irrespective of the medium (television, radio or Internet), might contribute to the attraction of the team product. For instance, knowledgeable commentary and professional camera work might allow foreign consumers to better enjoy the experience. Almost a third, and nearly a tenth, of respondents considered the broadcast quality of Liverpool F.C. games at least very important, or extremely important, respectively, to their support.

iii) Logo Design and/or Name

A South African fan, Grant Farred, earlier explained that when he was young, “something clicked between the word ‘Liverpool’ and my boyish psyche” (Farred 2002, p. 10), and this consequently fostered his identification with the team. The design of a team’s logo and/or name might therefore influence a supporter’s identification with a particular sports team. Indeed, this was the case for a fifth of respondents who considered this item at least very important in their identification with the Liverpool F.C.

iv) Family or Friend Support

As discussed earlier, socialisation makes an important contribution to team identification (Wann 2006a) and common socialisation agents include family members (for instance, Dimmock & Grove 2006; Donavan, Janda & Suh 2006; Greenwood, Kanters & Casper 2006; Jacobson 2003; Jones 1997a; Kolbe & James 2000) and friends (Crawford 2003; Dimmock & Grove 2006; Donavan, Janda & Suh 2006; Jacobson 2003; Kolbe & James 2000; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996). Nearly nine percent of respondents claimed that the fandom of these individuals was extremely important in their original decision to support the Liverpool F.C., while a quarter considered the importance of family or friends as fans to be at least very important. In contrast, this item was far more important for the expatriate fan. It was the most important reason cited for their initial team support and more than a third of these fans considered family or friend support of the team extremely important.

Gender (*p*-value 0.030) was statistically significant with respect to the importance of this item. Females were more likely to have originally supported the Liverpool F.C. because family or friends supported the team. Nearly a quarter of females considered this item extremely important, compared to less than nine percent of males; however, some caution must again be exercised considering the small number of females.

The age of respondents was statistically significant (*p*-value 0.000) and the influence of family or friends was more important for younger supporters than older ones. Although one-eighth of the youngest supporters said the item was extremely important, it steadily declined in importance as the age of supporters increased. It was earlier seen that individuals can be socialised into fandom early in life by their family and that, in the

case of the NFL Cleveland Browns, they became 'true fans' before their fifteenth birthday (Kolbe & James 2000). Likewise, nearly 75 percent of supporters interviewed in this study had become Reds fans before they were adolescents. As such, the importance attributed to this item by the youngest supporters appears reasonable.

v) Presence of a Particular Manager

The final second-tier theme concerned the contribution a manager could make to one's identification with a team. For instance, as earlier discussed, the Liverpool F.C. has "become the 21st club of La Liga" (Balague 2005) due, in part, to the presence of Rafael Benitez. However, only 15 percent of respondents claimed that the presence of a particular manager was at least very important in their original support. Age (*p*-value 0.001) and gender (*p*-value 0.049) were statistically significant and the oldest male respondents were most likely to support the team due to the presence of a particular manager. Indeed, its importance increased as the age of supporters increased.

5.4.5. Third-Tier Themes

In addition to the primary and secondary themes previously explained, data analysis suggested the existence of four tertiary themes in satellite supporter identification with the Liverpool F.C. These tertiary themes recorded a mean of '2' or less, or largely less than 'a little important' to respondents and are ranked highest to lowest based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that it was at least moderately important in their initial support. The importance of these third-tier themes is seen in Table 5.18.

Table 5.18: Importance of Third-Tier Themes in Original Liverpool F.C. Support (N = 1,153)

Reasons for Support	% Important	% Not Important	Mean[ab]	SD
They had famous or celebrity fans	30.8	58.8	2.02	1.42
A personal/'emotional' connection to England	29.2	49.7	1.97	1.18
A fellow countryman played for the team	18.2	66.4	1.62	1.02
They had high-profile and/or quality sponsors	15.9	66.6	1.58	0.97

[a] Lower scores indicate lower levels for each variable; [b] Scale range 1-5 for each variable

Respondents highlighted these tertiary themes: i) the presence of famous or celebrity fans; ii) a ‘connection’ to England; iii) the presence of a fellow countryman; and iv) high-profile and/or quality sponsors. Supporters largely dismissed the importance of each theme and less than a third of respondents considered them at least moderately important. The following section discusses the lack of importance given to each theme.

i) Famous or Celebrity Fans

A socially desirable fan base, as seen earlier, can benefit teams as individuals seek to enhance their self-esteem through association with the team (Sutton et al. 1997). Indeed, it was previously argued, team brands can benefit from so-called ‘celebrity fans’ ('FutureBrand Sports Team Brand Valuation Study Ranks New York Yankees, New York Knicks and New York Rangers in the Top Ten Sports Team Brands in the World' 2001; Evans 2001). Approximately 10 percent of the Liverpool F.C. satellite supporters said the existence of famous or celebrity fans was extremely important, while nearly 20 percent said it was at least very important, in their initial team support.

ii) A ‘Connection’ to England

A personal or emotional ‘connection’ to England was of little importance to satellite supporters. This was logical since expatriate fans had been removed from the sample. The expatriate fan was more likely to possess a ‘connection’ and it was considerably important to their support: a quarter of those fans saw this as extremely important. In the absence of geographic proximity, and the exclusion of expatriate fans, the importance of a ‘connection’ to England was minimal. Approximately 14 percent of respondents considered it to be at least very important. Gender (*p*-value 0.000) was statistically significant. Females placed more importance on this ‘connection’ and, while half of the male respondents dismissed its importance, only a quarter of females did so.

iii) Presence of a Fellow Countryman

The support for a fellow countryman, a subset of the [star] player antecedent, is especially pertinent to the satellite supporter. Kerr and Gladden (2008) claimed that, as ambassadors for their native land, these players might enhance the popularity of team brands outside their domestic market. Recent research suggested that the presence of

a ‘native player’ was an important reason Asian fans support European football teams (Chadwick 2007). However, participants in the present study gave little evidence to support the importance of fellow countrymen. Only three percent considered the presence of a fellow countryman at Anfield extremely important, and approximately four percent said it was very important, to their original team support. Age was statistically significant (*p*-value 0.000) and its importance steadily declined as supporters got older.

Although approximately 96 percent of respondents came from seven countries, 32 countries were represented in the sample. Responses from some of these fans, and whether a fellow countryman played, or still plays, for the Liverpool F.C. might explain this item’s minimal importance. Table 5.19 highlights the percentage of these satellite supporters who considered the presence of a fellow countryman to be not important.

Table 5.19: Importance of a Fellow Countryman in Original Liverpool F.C. Support

Nationality	Mean[ab]	% Not Important	N
Canadian	1.14	85.7	14
American	1.30	84.9	53
Norway	1.59	66.2	941
Indonesian	1.76	63.2	38
Swedish	1.86	59.1	22
Danish	2.12	53.8	26
Australian	2.80	40.0	15

[a] Lower scores indicate lower levels for each variable; [b] Scale range 1-5 for each variable

More than 80 percent of North American supporters dismissed the importance of a fellow countryman at the Liverpool F.C. Furthermore, approximately two-thirds of Norwegian and Indonesian supporters felt the same. The Swedish and Danish supporters considered the presence of their countrymen more important, as reflected in the higher means, however, only the Australian supporters considered the presence of a fellow countryman truly important. Indeed, a quarter of the Australian respondents said that this was extremely important in their support of the Liverpool F.C.

The North American response was not a surprise as only one American, Brad Friedel (and no Canadians) had turned out for the Liverpool F.C., and he had limited playing

time. The Scandinavian responses were more intriguing since there have been notable players from Norway (Stig Inge Bjornebye, Bjorn Tore Kvarme, Oyvind Leonhardsen, Vegard Heggem, Frode Kippe), Sweden (Glenn Hysen) and Denmark (Jan Molby, Torben Piechnik) over the years. Indeed, John Arne Riise (Norway) and Daniel Agger (Denmark) remain on the 2007/08 squad. Perhaps, instead, these supporters became fans before the large influx of foreign players, especially since the Premier League. The importance attributed to this item by Australian supporters might be due to the success Craig Johnston had with the side in the eighties and, to a lesser degree, Harry Kewell, who was also part of the 2007/08 squad ('Players' 2008; Anderson & Done 2003).

iv) High-Profile and/or Quality Sponsors

The quality of team sponsors received the lowest support of any of the original 16 proposed antecedents of team identification. The item was of minimal importance and only six percent of respondents indicated that the profile or quality of sponsors was at least very important in their original decision to support the Liverpool F.C.

5.4.6. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis using SPSS 15.0 was undertaken in order to understand the initial team identification of satellite supporters. Principal component analysis (PCA) allowed a group of 16 variables to be reduced to a smaller, more manageable, number of factors. PCA, with varimax rotation, produced the clearest results and five factors accounted for 57.07 percent of the variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were used to determine whether factor analysis was appropriate. The former measure describes the amount of common variance between the items (Fraser 2008). In this research, the value of KMO is 0.84 and indicates a great deal of common variance (Coakes, Steed & Dzidic 2006; Fraser 2008). In addition, Bartlett's test of sphericity confirmed that there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that the variables are all uncorrelated: the *p*-value (0.000) is smaller than the significance level (0.05) (Aaker et al. 2007). Since both measures were satisfied, factor analysis is an appropriate procedure.

Garson (2008) defined factor loadings as "the correlation coefficients between the variables (rows) and factors (columns)" and these were used to interpret and name the

factors. As seen earlier, Comrey and Lee (1992) consider loadings that are at least 0.55 to provide ‘good’ interpretive value and so, in most instances, only variables that did so were interpreted. However, Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) claim that the choice of which factor loading to accept depends upon individual researcher preference. Therefore, despite a marginally lower factor loading, a couple of variables were also included in the discussion. There was one item, the presence of a fellow countryman on the team, which failed to substantially load on any factor and was therefore deleted from the analysis. This variable was weakly associated with the first, second, and fourth, factors, however, it had a loading of less than 0.45.

The factor loadings, communalities (h^2) percents of variance can be seen in Table 5.20. The variables are grouped according to the size of their loading and, if these loadings were under 0.45, they were replaced by zeros.

Table 5.20: Factor Loadings for Team Identification Using Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

Item	F1*	F2	F3	F4	F5	h^2
They had a history of success	.74	-	-	-	-	.64
They were (and possibly still are) a successful team	.71	-	-	-	-	.57
They had a particular player(s) I liked	.57	-	-	-	-	.46
They had a particular manager I liked	.57	-	-	-	-	.51
Liked the team's style of play	.56	-	-	-	-	.57
They had a history of ethical behaviour	.55	-	-	.52	-	.62
The team belonged to the highest division, the EPL	.49	-	-	-	-	.47
They had famous or celebrity fans	-	.78	-	-	-	.61
They had high-profile and/or quality sponsors	-	.74	-	-	-	.65
Liked the team's logo design and/or name	-	.69	-	-	-	.54
Liked the stadium the team called 'home'	-	.65	-	-	-	.62
Ability to watch the team play due to media coverage	-	-	.80	-	-	.68
The broadcast quality of their games	-	-	.60	-	-	.59
A personal/'emotional' connection to England	-	-	-	.61		.63
My family or friends supported the team	-	-	-	-	.82	.67
% Variance*	16.92	15.53	9.57	7.62	7.43	
Eigenvalue	2.9	2.6	1.6	1.3	1.3	

* Factor Labels:
F1 – Team-related qualities; F2 – Organisation-related qualities; F3 – Media coverage;
F4 – Connection to England; F5 – Family or friend support
Coefficients <0.45 suppressed; h^2 communalities; * total variance explained 57.07%

Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) claim that assigning a name or a label to characterise a factor involves "art as well as science" (p. 625). Both techniques were employed and labels were assigned to characterise the five factors.

Factor 1, 'team-related qualities', identifies most strongly with successful teams, and a history of success, and team success, loaded strongly on this factor. Four other

variables also loaded quite strongly on this factor: the presence of particular player(s); the presence of a particular manager; the style of play; and a history of ethical behaviour. The team's membership in the highest division, although more weakly associated with this factor, also features as a team-related quality. It is therefore appropriate to describe these variables as team-related qualities.

Factor 2, 'organisation-related qualities', identifies with elements of the organisation not related to on-field team performance. As a result, the existence of famous or celebrity fans; high-profile and/or quality sponsors; logo design and/or name; and the stadium loaded strongly on the second factor. It is therefore appropriate to describe these variables as organisation-related qualities.

Factor 3, 'media coverage', concerns the influence of the media, especially the ability for consumers to enjoy the game in a foreign market. Two variables, media coverage and the broadcast quality of games, were strongly associated with this factor.

There were two final factors, factor 4, 'connection to England', and factor 5, 'family or friend support'. The former was strongly associated with a personal or emotional connection to England, while it was also moderately associated with a history of ethical behaviour. The final factor identified strongly with the team support of family or friends.

Factor analysis shows that 15 variables used to ask satellite supporters about their initial team identification can be reduced to five factors. Many of these factors reflect categories found in models designed to examine brand equity and the professional sports team (Gladden & Milne 1999; Kerr & Gladden 2008). Furthermore, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.804 showed that the items within the scale were internally consistent.

5.4.7. Continued (and Possible Cessation) of Team Identification

Although the primary research question concerned the origins of team identification for satellite supporters, the online questionnaire examined, albeit briefly, their continued, and possible cessation of, support for the Liverpool F.C. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 17 items upon their current support of the Liverpool F.C. The question adopted a five point Likert scale and the results can be seen in Table 5.21.

Table 5.21: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Importance of Reasons in their Current Liverpool F.C. Support (N = 1,153)

Reasons for Support	Mean[ab]	SD
Loyalty to the team	4.70	0.60
Like the team's style of play	3.21	1.28
Ability to watch the team play due to media coverage	3.20	1.24
Like the stadium the team calls 'home'	3.18	1.45
They have a history of success	3.15	1.32
They are successful, or have great potential for success	3.04	1.27
They have a particular player(s) I like	3.01	1.30
They have a history of ethical behaviour	2.98	1.39
The broadcast quality of their games	2.69	1.31
The team belongs to the highest division, the EPL	2.56	1.34
They have a particular manager I like	2.48	1.26
A personal/'emotional' connection to England	2.26	1.29
Like the team's logo design and/or name	2.21	1.33
They have famous or celebrity fans	1.99	1.46
My family or friends support the team	1.72	1.10
A fellow countryman plays for the team	1.67	1.02
They have high-profile and/or quality sponsors	1.59	1.01

[a] Lower scores indicate lower levels for each variable; [b] Scale range 1-5 for each variable

Seven first-tier themes were earlier highlighted as important to the team identification of these supporters and respondents claimed that six of these (style of play; media coverage; stadium; history of success; team success; and the presence of particular player(s)) were at least moderately important in their continued support of the Liverpool F.C. A notable exception was its participation in the English Premier League, although they highlighted their team loyalty and the importance of its history of ethical behaviour.

In the absence of geographic ties, one might expect satellite supporters to be less loyal; however, this was not the case. Team loyalty was instrumental in their continued support of the Liverpool F.C. as only one percent said it was not important or a little important. Age was statistically significant (*p*-value 0.020) and loyalty was most important for the youngest supporters. The team loyalty or devotion shown by satellite supporters was evident. For instance, one said, "LFC is my club and I will follow them all the way down to the conference leagues if that was (sic) ever to happen" while

another claimed that he was “positively sure that Liverpool FC came to me, and not the other way”. “The fan spirit and songs”, one fan explained, “make you feel like part of a community, not just a sports fan”, while another claimed, “’You’ll never walk alone’ say’s it all. I could never let the team down.” It is simple, according to Jakob, a Danish supporter, and perhaps he should have the last word. For this satellite supporter, it was simply, “one club, one life.” Clearly then, team loyalty for these individuals is an important part of being a Liverpool supporter or, indeed, a fan.

The importance of international media arrangements was again evident as the ability to watch the team play due to media coverage was highlighted. For instance, approximately 44 percent of respondents said that media coverage of their team was at least very important. Likewise, the Liverpool F.C.’s reputation and tradition appeared significantly important in the continued support of these satellite supporters.

As argued earlier, a team’s reputation and tradition most likely encompasses its history and playing style while management’s record of integrity is also an integral component of an organisation’s reputation (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998). The importance of the Liverpool F.C.’s style of play, and its history of success and ethical behaviour, is reflected in Table 5.21 and at least two-thirds of respondents considered these reasons to be at least moderately important upon their continued support. Successful teams provide opportunities for supporters to BIRG and the Liverpool F.C.’s success over the years and, indeed, their current success was clearly important. Furthermore, the importance attributed to a history of ethical behaviour suggests that their continued support of a high quality team provides further BIRGing opportunities.

Although one might again expect satellite supporters to resemble ‘fair-weather’ rather than ‘die-hard’ fans, this was not the case. When asked whether they could abandon the Liverpool F.C., nearly 96 percent of respondents issued an emphatic denial. For instance, one argued, “you should NEVER turn your back against your team, therefore I always will be a supporter of Liverpool FC”, while a Norwegian supporter claimed, “you can change a car, a job, a wife, but you never change the team you support!” “I love Liverpool FC, and I always will,” Linn-Janette claimed, “so I can’t stop following them. That’d be like leaving a loved one behind!” Ultimately, perhaps Stig from Norway best summed up sentiments: “There is no way I could change team, even if I wanted to. Liverpool will always be ‘my team’. With Liverpool I will never walk alone ...”

Interestingly, age was found to be statistically significant with respect to the future loyalty of these satellite supporters. Younger supporters were the most likely to remain loyal (*p*-value 0.048). Although at least 92 percent of each age group claimed they would never abandon the team, there was a steady decline in loyalty as supporter age increased: 2.3 percent of those 18-25 said they could cease their support, 4.8 percent and 6.5 percent of the middle groups agreed, and 7.1 percent of those over 45 agreed.

5.4.8. Sports Consumption Behaviour

The final sections asked respondents how often they participated in a number of proposed sports consumption activities to support the Liverpool F.C. during, and out of, the football season. For instance, they could purchase licensed merchandise, watch games on television, visit official websites, or purchase sponsor's products. The first question concerned their behaviour during the season. Although these categories were thought to be inclusive during the design process, many respondents indicated that they instead pursued some of these activities daily or, indeed, more often. For instance, some Norwegian supporters said they "visit www.liverpool.no several times a day", while other respondents said that they "visit LFC websites 20-30 times a day on both computer and mobile phone (WAP)", and "can't go a day without checking out news from the club." The question's sample size was 1,128 as 25 respondents declined to answer. Respondents were asked to choose between 'never' to 'once per week' and their responses can be seen in Table 5.22.

Table 5.22: Behaviour to Support the Liverpool F.C. (During Season) (N = 1,128)

Supporter Behaviour	% Weekly	% Monthly	% Seasonally	% Never
Watch Liverpool F.C. games on television	85.5	13.3	1.1	0.1
Visit the official Liverpool F.C. website	84.0	12.2	2.7	1.1
Visit unofficial Liverpool F.C. supporter websites	80.9	11.9	3.5	3.8
Watch video highlights on the Internet	58.6	25.9	6.4	9.1
Get together with other Liverpool F.C. fans	52.3	32.1	11.1	4.5
Purchase products from companies that support the club	12.7	41.1	31.5	14.7
Purchase team-related merchandise	4.9	11.7	77.1	6.3
Purchase additional Liverpool F.C. items	1.9	3.0	24.5	70.7
Purchase shares in the Liverpool F.C.	1.2	1.2	6.5	91.2
Purchase tickets to Liverpool F.C. English Premier League games	0.8	1.8	58.0	39.5
Purchase tickets to Liverpool F.C. overseas games	0.5	0.4	23.0	76.0

Three activities were clearly more popular than the other options as more than 80 percent of respondents watched Liverpool F.C. games on television, visited the official team website, or unofficial supporter websites, weekly. As seen earlier, the English Premier League is broadcast to more than 600 million households in nearly 200 nations (Huggins 2005) and, although participants lived in 17 countries, it appeared that supporters were able to easily access Liverpool F.C. telecasts. Their involvement with unofficial supporter websites was especially logical, since respondents had been directed to the questionnaire via online Liverpool F.C. supporter branches. As the fourth most popular activity, the majority of respondents also claimed to watch online video highlights weekly. Despite the absence of shared geography, satellite supporters clearly reinforced the role the media played in their sports consumption behaviour.

There were significant differences between age groups for two of these activities. Younger supporters were more likely to visit unofficial Liverpool F.C. supporter websites (*p*-value 0.005) and watch video highlights online (*p*-value 0.000). Although

approximately 93 percent of respondents visited these websites once per month, those aged 18-35 were most likely to do so weekly. In addition, while nearly 85 percent of respondents watched online video highlights once per month, two thirds of those under 26 watched these highlights weekly. The popularity of these activities among younger supporters is likely a product of their familiarity and comfort level with the Internet.

The majority of respondents said they 'got together' with other team fans once per week and nearly 85 percent did so at least once per month. Furthermore, age was statistically significant (*p*-value 0.000), whereby younger supporters tended to pursue this activity more often than older supporters. For instance, approximately 60 percent of those aged 18-25 did so once per week compared to 40 percent for those aged over 46. However, as earlier seen, it is believed that supporters who identify with a geographically-distant team are unlikely to benefit significantly from their fandom since it is often difficult to interact with fellow team fans (Wann 2006b, 2006c).

As explained earlier, Wann and Pierce (2005) claimed that should these individuals successfully interact with fellow fans, they may instead resemble local fans, and so enhance their psychological well-being (Wann et al. 2004). It is quite clear that more than half of these satellite supporters interact with like-minded fans, both online, and in person. For instance, one fan explained, "I go to the pub with other LFC fans, or stay at home with some Liverpool supporters and watch the game at home", while an Indonesian supporter said, "I always try to touch with the other LFC fans at least once a week ..." As such, it appears likely that these fans of geographically-distant teams do derive psychological benefits from their interaction with fellow team supporters.

Respondents engaged in a wide range of consumption activities to express their team support. For instance, approximately 53 percent of participants purchased products at least monthly from companies that financially support the Liverpool F.C. Some of these supporters even went so far as to avoid companies that sponsored bitter rivals: "I always support the club's sponsors," Petter from Norway said, "instead of rival team sponsors. For example, I never buy products who sponsor Man. United, Everton, Chelsea or Arsenal." There were also statistically significant differences between the genders (*p*-value 0.012) and age groups (*p*-value 0.014) as younger male supporters were more likely to purchase sponsors' products and to do so more often.

A number of other activities were also pursued by satellite supporters; however, these were undertaken far less often. Approximately 94 percent of participants purchased team-related merchandise at least once per season, while 60 percent said they also did the same with tickets to the team's English Premier League games. For instance, Jo, a Norwegian supporter, explained that he arranges "tours for friends and colleagues so they are able to experience Liverpool and Anfield not only through TV. We are now 15-20 people travelling to Anfield 2-3 times per year." In addition, another fan was able in most years "to arrange my holidays to permit me to attend an LFC match, but there have been seasons when this was not possible." This is remarkable, especially when one considers that these supporters all live outside Britain.

Almost a quarter of respondents described additional activities they pursued to support the Liverpool F.C. As was consistent with the administration of the questionnaire, the majority of responses concerned their membership in official, and unofficial, supporter branches. In addition, many individuals highlighted their participation in online fan forums dedicated to the Reds. However, they were not content to be passive observers, but regularly contributed via message boards and chat rooms. While membership in fan forums and supporter groups dominated their responses, a wide range of behaviour reflected their affection for the team. For instance, one fan built an English bar in his basement and "before each game we are standing hand in hand singing 'you'll never walk alone'", while another "named my child and my dog after players." Furthermore, there seemed no limit to some fan behaviour: one tried to convince his girlfriend's 11 year-old son to switch allegiances from Manchester United; another moved from Sweden to Liverpool "to follow the team closely for three years"; and more than one percent of responses described how they received tattoos as a permanent reminder of their devotion. As Oyvind, a Norwegian fan, explained, "I got a tattoo with Liverpool last summer on my left leg, since I got my heart on the left side."

The final question asked whether respondents pursued any of these activities outside football season. The 11 earlier proposed activities were, once again, reduced to nine for their out-of-season consumption. This was a simple yes/no question and, given that the possibility to view televised Liverpool F.C. games is no longer an option, the most popular activities by supporters mirrored those undertaken during the football season. The popularity of these consumption activities can be seen in Table 5.23.

Table 5.23: Behaviour to Support the Liverpool F.C. (Out of Season) (N = 1,153)

Popularity of Behaviour highest to lowest – grouped	%
Visit the official Liverpool F.C. website	71.2
Visit unofficial Liverpool F.C. supporter websites	66.4
Watch video highlights on the Internet	60.3
Get together with other Liverpool F.C. fans	57.5
Purchase products from companies that support the club	45.1
Purchase team-related merchandise	40.1
Purchase tickets to Liverpool F.C. games for the upcoming season	18.3
Purchase additional Liverpool F.C. items	8.5
Purchase shares in the Liverpool F.C.	4.1

The off-season behaviour of supporters again reinforced the importance of the media. Visiting the official Liverpool F.C. website was the most common activity followed by visiting unofficial supporter websites. In addition, more than 60 percent of respondents watched online video highlights. Age was statistically significant (*p*-value 0.000) in their propensity to do so. While 85 percent of those aged 18-25 watched video highlights online in the off-season, it steadily declined until only two-thirds of those over 46 did likewise. This might again reflect the comfort and familiarity that younger supporters have with this technology. There was also considerable evidence that satellite supporters often took the opportunity to interact with fellow fans, either online via supporter websites or in person. This again suggests that these foreign individuals might receive psychological benefits from their shared support of the Liverpool F.C.

Although supporters participated in a wide range of activities to express their identification with the Liverpool F.C., for many of these individuals the new season cannot come around fast enough. As Hans explained, “we get together and talk getting ready for the next season ... speculate on new signings and evaluate the last one”, while a fellow fan claimed he spent the off-season “waiting in agony for the new season to begin.” Contrary to expectations, it therefore appears that, for the satellite supporter, fandom is not limited to the EPL season, and may indeed be an ongoing concern.

5.5. Chapter Review

This chapter described the analysis of data obtained from three online questionnaires. Preliminary pilot studies yielded valuable data and generated confidence in the final research instrument administered to the Liverpool F.C. supporters. These preliminary studies provided an opportunity to explore the satellite supporter's identification with a favourite sports team and which activities were pursued to express their fandom.

Satellite supporters highlighted a number of primary themes in their initial identification with the Liverpool F.C.: media coverage; style of play; the presence of particular player(s); team success; history of success; participation in the highest division; and stadium. Four of these themes (media coverage, reputation and/or tradition, team success, and the presence of a particular player) were especially prevalent in the three studies. Furthermore, factor analysis showed that the team identification variables can be reduced to five factors: team-related qualities; organisation-related qualities; media coverage; connection to England; and family or friend support. Many of these reflect antecedents contained within conceptual frameworks designed to examine brand equity and the professional sports team (Gladden & Milne 1999; Kerr & Gladden 2008).

Although one might expect satellite supporters to be 'fair-weather' rather than 'die-hard' fans given their geographic location, team loyalty was extremely important. Nearly 85 percent of satellite supporters expressed loyalty to their adopted AFL team, 87 percent to the Ajax F.C. and nearly 96 percent to the Liverpool F.C. For instance, one fan explained that, "once you got 'the Ajax fever', you will never 'recover' so I still follow Ajax", while another claimed that "you can change a car, a job, a wife, but you never change the team [Liverpool F.C.] you support!" Age was also found to be significant and loyalty to the Liverpool F.C. steadily declined as the age of supporters increased.

Respondents highlighted the media's influence as a socialisation agent. In the absence of geographic proximity, international media arrangements ensure that the product is available to satellite supporters. Furthermore, without international exposure it is unlikely that teams would develop significant brand awareness abroad. For instance, one AFL fan said, "they [Carlton] were the first club I discovered on the weekly games airing here in America". In addition, the Internet can now serve as "a vehicle for socialisation at a distance" (Assael, Pope, Brennan & Voges 2007, p. 337).

The media's importance was reflected in their initial identification with the team and their behaviour when supporting their favourite sports team. For instance, more than two-thirds of respondents visited their team's official website, or unofficial supporter websites, at least once per week. Indeed, some said that they habitually visit these websites and "can't go a day without checking out news from the club". Furthermore, at least with respect to the Liverpool F.C., younger supporters were more likely to acknowledge the importance of media coverage in their initial identification, visit unofficial supporter websites (during the season), and watch online video highlights. The popularity of the media among younger supporters might be a product of their comfort and familiarity with media, in particular, the Internet. Participants also took the opportunity to watch televised matches. For instance, 77 percent of the AFL supporters, and 83 percent of the Ajax F.C. supporters, watched televised club matches at least once per season, while 86 percent of Liverpool F.C. satellite supporters said they did so weekly. This disparity is likely due to the phenomenal exposure given to the EPL, as opposed to the less popular AFL and the Eredivisie.

Although many claim that fans of distant teams most likely do not receive significant psychological benefits, many satellite supporters embraced the opportunity to interact with fellow fans. For instance, nearly 85 percent of respondents said they 'get together' with other Reds fans at least once per month, and many individuals highlighted their participation in online fan forums and regularly contributed via message boards and chat rooms. Furthermore, many of these activities were actively pursued outside of football season, which suggested that they might benefit from their shared fandom.

Yin (2003) claimed that a case study approach should not be confused with qualitative research and can include, and even be confined to, quantitative evidence. The team identification of satellite supporters was therefore examined through the use of mixed methods: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews provided cost-effective access to foreign Liverpool F.C. supporters. These interviews were conducted until sufficiency and saturation of information occurred, and the final sample comprised 30 satellite supporters from eight nations. The next chapter will analyse the data from these interviews and discuss those themes respondents indicated were important in the creation of their identification with the English club.

CHAPTER SIX

INTERVIEW RESULTS

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter analysed the quantitative data that arose from three online questionnaires that examined the team identification of satellite supporters and their respective sports teams. This chapter analyses the data from 30 semi-structured interviews and discusses the most popular themes participants gave for their original decision to support the Liverpool F.C. In the process, this chapter explores how these themes were instrumental in their development as Reds supporters or, perhaps, fans.

6.2. Satellite Supporter Interviews

Two interview rounds were held. The first round interviewed 12 people and tested the procedures and scope of the interviews. The second round involved 18 interviews. This round was conducted until both sufficiency and saturation of information occurred.

6.2.1. The Participants

The initial round of interviews was conducted with 12 participants. Norwegian fans accounted for nearly 50 percent of the participants. The second round comprised 18 participants which represented seven nations and all age groups. The details of these participants can be seen in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Details of Interview Participants

Interviewee Details					
No.	**Name**	**Nationality**	**Age**	**Sex**	**Interview Date**
Initial Round of Interviews (N = 12)					
1	Petri	Finnish	36-45	Male	4/11/2007
2	Simen	Norwegian	18-25	Male	5/11/2007
3	Anders	Swedish	26-35	Male	6/11/2007
4	Brian	American	36-45	Male	7/11/2007
5	Ole	Norwegian	18-25	Male	7/11/2007
6	Marcos	Indonesian	18-25	Male	8/12/2007
7	Michael	Irish	26-35	Male	12/11/2007
8	Mikael	Swedish	26-35	Male	13/11/2007
9	Stian	Norwegian	18-25	Male	13/11/2007
10	Jamie	American	36-45	Female	14/11/2007
11	Leif	Norwegian	26-35	Male	22/11/2007
12	Joern	Norwegian	36-45	Male	25/11/2007
Second Round of Interviews (N = 18)					
13	Shane	Irish	26-35	Male	14/1/2008
14	Roger	American	56-65	Male	14/1/2008
15	Nancy	American	36-45	Female	15/1/2008
16	Brendan	American	26-35	Male	16/1/2008
17	Ryan	Canadian	26-35	Male	17/1/2008
18	Christopher	American	26-35	Male	20/1/2008
19	Jarle	Norwegian	46-55	Male	23/1/2008
20	Mikkel	Norwegian	26-35	Male	24/1/2008
21	Jack	American	36-45	Male	25/1/2008
22	Anna	Swedish	26-35	Female	27/1/2008
23	Roland	Faroe Islander	26-35	Male	27/1/2008
24	Doug	American	46-55	Male	28/1/2008
25	Sturla	Norwegian	26-35	Male	29/1/2008
26	Oyvind	Norwegian	26-35	Male	31/1/2008
27	Johan	Norwegian	26-35	Male	1/2/2008
28	Robert	American	18-25	Male	1/2/2008
29	Georg	Norwegian	18-25	Male	3/2/2008
30	Rizal	Indonesian	26-35	Male	17/2/2008

6.3. The Creation of Team Identification

Interview participants were asked one major question: “Can you tell me what made you originally support the Liverpool F.C.?” In addition, they were asked to what degree the presence of a fellow countryman in the team influenced their decision. This secondary question was important since recent research (see Ben-Porat 2000; Chadwick 2007) and social identity theory suggests that fans are likely to support members of a favoured in-group. Therefore, in the absence of a geographic community, perhaps the team was able to represent other salient aspects of supporter identity.

As discussed in chapter four, the chatroom technology utilised for this qualitative phase allowed instantaneous transcription of the interviews. The transcripts were then imported into MS Word and, by using the ‘line-number’ function in the software, each line of the interview was assigned a number. A number of themes had been generated earlier from the questionnaires and each theme was assigned a colour. A colour-coded key was therefore developed and, after the transcripts were printed, each comment was marked by the corresponding colour. Responses were coded into a number of themes previously developed and, in the event they did not accurately reflect these themes, were coded separately. As a result of these measures, an audit trail was generated which allows this author, or other researchers, to locate the quotation in the transcript. In this chapter, a supporter’s comments are referenced by both first name and line number in the transcribed interview. For instance, *Petri: 33* refers to line 33 in Petri’s interview. Furthermore, all comments are presented *verbatim* complete with any spelling or grammatical mistakes made by the participant.

Although for many participants a key antecedent was solely responsible, for others a range of antecedents was significant in their team choice. A list of themes that emerged from the interviews and their definitions, or how they fuelled fan identification, can be seen in Table 6.2. The following sections examine how these themes were responsible for the creation of the interviewee’s identification with the Liverpool F.C.

Table 6.2: Interview Themes

Theme	Definition
Major Themes (N = 7)	
Media Coverage: “You Have to See Them Somewhere”	The availability of regularly-televised English football games.
Family or Friend Support: “Just Natural to Cheer for Them”	Friends or family members support the team, or even as a form of oppositional support.
Presence of Particular Player(s): “He was an Idol”	A favourite, or star, player was instrumental in their selection of the team.
Style of Play: “Football is Entertainment”	The importance of an attractive and entertaining style of football.
Participation in the Highest Division: “Among the Elite”	Membership in an elite football league thus highlighting the quality of the team.
Team Success: “Everyone Likes Winners”	The importance of team success when they chose to support the team.
Presence of a Fellow Countryman: “Good to See One of Your Own Doing Well”	The ability (and desire) to support a fellow countryman playing for an overseas team.
Minor Themes (N = 7)	
Merchandise: “It Started Out With Just a Football and a Postcard”	Interest fuelled by their receipt of a gift of team merchandise.
A ‘Connection’ to England: “I Just Loved My Time in the UK”	An emotional bond with England despite, in most instances, no connection to the city.
Club History: “The Big Triumphs and the Tragedies”	A unique history of achievement and possibly tragedy or adversity.
History of Success: ”They Did Rule the 80’s”	The importance of a history of on-field success and performance throughout the years.
History of Ethical Behaviour: “They Don’t Stand for Any BS”	The team’s reputation for ethical and sportsmanlike behaviour.
Game Atmosphere: “The Atmosphere is Fantastic”	The game-day atmosphere generated by the fans in attendance and the home stadium.
The ‘Liverpool Way’: “It Was Something Special – The Liverpool Way”	A unique (or special) attribute possessed by the team, or even the fans themselves.

6.4. Major Themes

The major themes discussed by informants were: the influence of media coverage; the influence of family or friends; particular player or players; style of play; participation in the highest division; team success; and support for a fellow countryman.

6.4.1. Media Coverage: "You Have to See Them Somewhere"

The most frequent theme discussed by participants concerned their initial awareness, and subsequent support, of the Liverpool F.C. due to regularly-televised English football games. It could even be argued that broadcasts of the English First Division, and now the EPL, became almost a cultural institution for many European audiences, and explains, to a large degree, their enduring involvement with the team. Furthermore, consistent exposure to the team reinforced their levels of fandom and, for many, ensured that their support would be nurtured early in its formative development.

Regularly scheduled English football broadcasts were instrumental in the creation of many of these Liverpool F.C. supporters. "In Canada," one supporter explained, "we were lucky enough to be able to watch a lot of their matches" (Ryan: 150), while "the arrival of Fox Sports and Setanta has definitely increased American fans in my experience, myself being just one of them" (Jamie: 173-174). Saturday afternoons in much of Europe became dedicated to English football. For instance, "there was a game every Saturday on TV" in Finland (Petri: 54), while Sweden had a programme "that focused on English football, having betting schemes and stuff" (Mikael: 16-17).

Support for the English game, and Liverpool F.C., however, reached new heights in Norway. English matches have "been an important part of Norwegian state television since 1969, thus makin most Norwegians following/supporting English football" (Sturla: 42-43), and "there was (and is) a long tradition (from the 60's) to show a match from the English (then) first division every Saturday at 4 pm" (Ole: 110-111). Indeed, through state-run television, the hugely-popular Tippekampen became a cultural institution:

> Tippekampen – it translates to something like 'The betting game'. Tippekampen was once a week – Saturday at 16:00 – a game of football on the telly, usually from the English First Division (as it was called before the PL). It was arranged by a government owned company who had monopoly on gambling in Norway. The setup was a cupon of 12 games, where you had to guess the result (home, draw or away) for all of the games. If you had 10 games correct, you got a small price, if you had 11 it was a handsome sum of money and if you had 12 games correct you got a really big lot of it (Mikkel: 19-28).

Goksoyr and Hognestad (1999) explained that Tippekampen produced a "previously unparalleled nationwide movement of what we could call a 'satellite transmitted passion'" (p. 206). As a result, the football telecasts created team awareness and cultivated new fans, while advances in technology increasingly made the team more accessible: "it wasn't until the internet and cable/satellite TV that it became really easy to get in depth" (Brian: 31-32). Indeed, for many participants, these televised games were the primary cause of their fandom. For instance, "without this TV-show there's a great chance that I wouldn't have supported Liverpool but instead focused [on] a local team" (Mikael: 43-44), and "to start supporting a team chances are you would have to see them somewhere ... when you are in a different country" (Stian: 77-79).

While some actively chose the Reds: "I think when I 'picked a team' I picked from what I could see, but I really grew to become attached to them!" (Jamie: 136-137), for others their team selection was far more random. One claimed his friends support them because "it simply was the first team they saw win a televised match" (Simen: 139-140), while another explained, "If any of the big London clubs had been on the tube that night in the pub, I would probably be supporting them ... It was as random as that" (Jack: 27-28). Ultimately, the media's importance in the original team identification of these individuals might be best summed up by this Norwegian supporter: "If there was no such thing as English football on the TV in the 70's and 80's, I can't see how I would have started to passionately care for a team outside Norway" (Mikkel: 85-87).

While media coverage fuelled their initial interest in the team, many stressed the importance of televised games in the maintenance of their fandom. For instance, "when you're a 13 year old boy you are not going to stay interested in something that you can't see ... my attention span wasn't that good" (Robert: 107-108), and "[I] don't think I could ever support Crystal Palace for example, because they are never on TV. What's the sense of supporting if you can't actually see the team play" (Jack: 54-55). As

another explained, consistent exposure to the team conditioned her to become a fan: “when I was new it was important to get a steady input ... as it was I saw almost every game and that helped to ‘get into the habit’ and to learn more quickly” (Anna: 111-113).

Furthermore, regular media coverage reinforced at least one supporter’s identification with the team: “I have become a much stronger supporter in recent seasons due to the fact that I can see games much more regularly than in the past. You just really get more into the heartbeat of the season” (Doug: 91-93). Indeed, as one Norwegian explained, in the absence of these broadcasts his enthusiasm waned: “when public broadcasting lost the rights to show EPL, I rarely got to see the team and I kinda lost interest a bit” (Simen: 103-104).

6.4.2. Family or Friend Support: “Just Natural to Cheer for Them”

Identification with a sports team can be promoted through interaction with agents such as family and friends. Indeed, *FutureBrand* discovered that most football supporters chose their team when they were young and nearly a third attributed their choice to the influence of these individuals (Gieske & Forato 2004). Kolbe and James (2000) earlier suggested that the sports fan is introduced by their family to these teams early in life, although as they get older the influence of friends, peers or the mass media becomes greater. Although the importance of family or friends was a relatively minor factor in the survey data, it was a popular response in the interviews.

The influence of older family members was consistently highlighted. For instance, one said his friends support the Liverpool F.C. today because “their elder brother did (like my little brother)” (Simen: 138-139), while another explained, “my older cousin was the main reason why I chose to support LFC” (Sturla: 7). Others noted the contribution made by coaches, friends or, for two female fans, boyfriends, upon their original team choice. For example, “a few years back I met a guy whom I started dating. He is a Liverpool supporter so I started watching with him. So I started to learn a bit more about the game and the rules and got interested in Liverpool as a team” (Anna: 8-12).

Many informants claimed that their choice to support the Liverpool F.C. was ‘natural’ given that important people in their lives were themselves fans. For instance, because my father supported them, “it was natural for me to start to follow them too” (Mikael: 8-

9) and “I guess it was just natural to cheer for them, since my older brother supported them” (Oyvind: 5-6). Furthermore, one female supporter said, “he [my boyfriend] loves Liverpool so it was a natural that I would come to love them also” (Nancy: 17-18), while an American said that he “had a good English friend whose father was a Scouser, and they both supported the Reds, so it just seemed a natural at that point” (Doug: 10-11).

While some chose the Liverpool F.C. because a family member or friend had earlier done, they also did so to provide opposition. It was seen as important that opposing teams are selected to increase competitive rivalry between family members or friends. For instance, one informant explained that “my brother [an Everton fan] always had a big influence, 6 years older, and he meant it was better we followed each our club so we could tease each other” (Jarle: 16-17), while another said that his older brother was an Arsenal supporter but “it is more fun to like someone else” (Shane: 120).

Some supported a rival team as an act of defiance or maturity. Although his neighbour was an Arsenal fan, “as a part of growing up, you have to make your own choices, like finding something opposite to your friends” (Leif: 26-27), while one fan said, “I probably didn’t want to support the same team as my father [Everton] or brother [Manchester United]” (Michael: 28-29). Many others, however, were told emphatically to select a different team. For instance, after the 2002 World Cup, “my husband started following Chelsea. He and I are very competitive so he told me I had to pick another team” (Jamie: 8-9). Another said, “an elder friend of mine suggested I should start to support Liverpool in 1973, I was 11 and he was a few years older. His team was Arsenal, and I ‘couldn’t’ choose the same team” (Petri: 19-20). The on-field rivalry occasionally spilled over into family conflict. One female supporter claimed, “last year’s Champions League almost ended the marriage!” (Jamie: 15), while many years ago a young Reds fan suffered at the hands of his brother: “when Michael Thomas scored to win the league for Arsnel, my brother nearly beat me up in excitement!” (Shane: 121-122).

6.4.3. Presence of Particular Player(s): “He was an Idol”

In a number of the interviews the presence of a particular player was instrumental in their decision to support the Liverpool F.C. Indeed, their list of influential players reads like a veritable honour roll of club greats: from legends, Barnes, Clemence, Dalglish, Grobbelaar, Keegan and Rush, to more recent stars, Carragher, Crouch, Gerrard,

McManaman, Molby and Owen. Their heroics, for both club, and country, created awareness for the team and cultivated a new generation of fans. As one explained, “it was in the early 90’s when Robbie Fowler arrived on the scene. I hate to say it, but he was the main reason why I began following LFC, and then things grew from there” (Ryan: 5-8), and “since they [Fowler, Ruddock, Redknapp, McManaman and Owen] played at Liverpool, it was just easier to love the club” (Oyvind: 60-61). Although the presence of these players initially sparked their interest – indeed, if these players had represented another team, some claimed, they might have supported a hated rival – they remained loyal to the team when their idol(s) moved on.

Most commonly, it was their athletic exploits for the team that attracted potential fans. For instance, “we were watching one day and Robbie Fowler scored an amazing goal against Aston Villa ... I knew that there was a spectacular bit of athleticism on display and I was ‘hooked’ on footie in general and LFC in particular” (Roger: 25-29), and “I saw a young Gerrard play and I fell in love with him and the way he played. From then on I just chose Liverpool, and my love for the club has grown since” (Robert: 19-21). However, international competition also shone the spotlight on certain players: “I had been watching most of the England [World Cup] games so I decided to support a team with some English players that I knew” (Christopher: 10-11) and “I’m attracted to Liverpool because Michael Owen shine on World Cup 1998 ... I found out that Owen played for Liverpool that time. From that, I start to take interest” (Marcos: 5-9).

These legendary players proved fan favourites largely due to their athletic skill. For instance, Ian Rush was “always at the right place at the right time, like Fowler [and had] an ability that few strikers have” (Leif: 231-234), “I liked Fowler for his scoring abilities, Ruddock for his way of playing ... and McManaman was a God in dribling” (Oyvind: 59-60), and “at the time I played forward and was very fast so I’d get on the defenders last shoulder for through balls ... when I scored I said I did a ‘Mikey Owen’ (Robert: 58-60). However, supporters also valued certain players for their work ethic: “it was not always scoring that made players a hero ... some were great tacklers” (Leif: 250-252), “his [Fowler’s] hard-working attitude above his raw talent and skill” (Ryan: 54), and “they [McManaman and Gerrard] both had enormous skill but also worked immensely hard and that’s what I really like about a player” (Mikael: 152-153).

Yet for some, their favourite player's skill as a footballer was secondary to other physical characteristics. "I hate to say it," an American fan explained, "but the cuteness factor helped" (Nancy: 73) while another agreed, saying, "I chose Liverpool because I thought Peter Crouch was cute. I am serious!!" (Jamie: 11-12), although "I have said many times if I'd have seen Berbatov first I'd have become a Spurs fan!" (Jamie: 88-89). One supporter explained that Kenny Dalglish "seemed to have a swagger about him that I loved" (Brian: 75) while "Keegan was Keegan, he became the idol to all of us supporting Pool, maybe it was both his skill and look ... he was an IDOL" (Jarle: 45-46).

The influence an individual player had upon the creation of a Reds' supporter was, in some cases, considerable. Some supporters admitted that if their favourite player had represented a different club, it was a distinct possibility they would today be cheering against the Merseysiders. For instance, "I like to think I wouldn't have supported another club" (Oyvind: 85), but "to be honest, if Owen and Gerrard were on Arsenal and Chelsea I might have chosen them" (Robert: 69-70). Once a bond had been established between fan and club, however, team loyalty usually prevailed, and interview participants stressed their commitment to the team: "He [Fowler] didn't leave until Gerard Houllier sold him to Leeds Utd. which was about 5 or 6 years ago. By then, I was an LFC fan for good" (Roger: 82-85), and "even if they traded Crouch, I wouldn't go with him, I feel as if I have become a true supporter" (Jamie: 211-212). Furthermore, "when Torres signed for LFC," one fan explained, "he became a Red, a potential favorite, but if he leaves it doesn't affect my LFC sympathies" (Petri: 147-148). However, team loyalty might be at risk if a strong bond between fan and team has not yet been established. For instance, "I don't know how I would have reacted if Kenny [Dalglish] had moved on early in my support of LFC" (Brian: 87-88).

6.4.4. Style of Play: "Football is Entertainment"

Fans might gravitate towards a particular club due to their playing style. Indeed, Couvelaere and Richelieu (2005) earlier claimed, a team's style should be consistent with its brand identity. Subjects highlighted the role of Liverpool F.C.'s playing style in their decision to support the team. For instance, one supporter said, "I wasn't so taken by football and thought it was a bit boring to watch [but] watching Liverpool was not boring at all" (Mikkel: 114-115), while another said, "when starting to support a team you want to follow a style you want to watch" (Brian: 64).

For these supporters the style of play they most appreciated was the Reds' ability to pass and move, thus dictating the flow of the game. "When I say style of play", one fan said, "we have always played a certain way – pass and move – with an emphasis on good movement" (Michael: 57-58), and "to keep the ball like they did, passing fast in small squares around the opposition looked so cool" (Mikkel: 119). Liverpool F.C. was renowned for their "crisp passing, flowing movement" (Brian: 50) while they also had "their characteristic passing game back in those days and I loved to watch them string all those passes together while the opposition ran and ran after the ball" (Mikael: 86-87). Their style of play "was the 'pass and move' stuff engrained by [legendary manager] Shankley. I never liked the traditional English long ball game and much preferred a passing game like LFC played" (Doug: 54-55). It was important, therefore, they "played attractive, attacking, passing football" (Doug: 45).

One fan said, "when I started supporting Liverpool they had the best individual players, and the best play. It was nice to watch and exciting to follow" (Sturla: 113-114). The Liverpool F.C. in the late 1970's was a juggernaut that converted a young Norwegian:

> It was pretty much down to that one game of excellence where I fell in love with them and the game itself ... They attacked every time they had the ball and looked like they could score in every attack. It was pretty much down to creating chances – goal attempts. Attacking as the best way of defending – knock them down! I know they had some defending games as well, but when they turned it on, they really turned it on (Mikkel: 113-118).

A Norwegian supporter explained that controlling the game was important, "because I knew they would win quite a lot by playing like that" (Joern: 68), however, another asked rhetorically, "do we as fans truly want attractive football or football that wins trophies?" (Michael: 82-83). While victory might be sweet, for most of these informants, the way the team played was considerably important. For instance, "style of play means how do they go about their thing on the pitch ... solid attacking football, strong defense, no bullshit diving out there like some other clubs etc. ... nothing or very little is ever cynical about LFC's play, for better or worse. But win or lose, at the end of the day, you know they tried to be successful the right way" (Jack: 72-76).

These supporters also highlighted the importance of attractive and entertaining football. For instance, attractive football was so important, "'cause it's the beautiful game. You want kids growing up pretending to be Liverpool players when they are outside kicking

the ball around" (Michael: 96-97). Moreover, another explained, "I didn't care actually if they won on a not so good day, but as I recall they almost always played good football" (Jarle: 75-76). When asked did 'good football' mean 'entertaining football', he confirmed that this was indeed the case. Mikael, a Swedish fan, reinforced these sentiments: "Football is entertainment. Some say that [the] result is all that matters but you watch football for recreation and entertainment and you want to see your team perform well. Sure I'm still happy after a win but there are some sour grapes if we have been played off the park and managed to come away with victory" (Mikael: 99-102).

6.4.5. Participation in the Highest Division: "Among the Elite"

Top-flight football leagues are televised worldwide and attract the best international players in the world (Gieske & Forato 2004). The European football leagues have an estimated fan base of 130 million and, in the case of the Premier League and La Liga, international fans outnumber their domestic counterparts (*The Brand Champions League: Europe's Most Valuable Football Clubs* 2005). Membership of one of these elite leagues, it was earlier argued, is extremely valuable in the creation of brand awareness and highlights the perceived quality of these team brands. These two issues consistently surfaced in the interviews regarding Liverpool F.C.'s participation in English football's highest division, the English Premier League.

Foreign broadcasts of the Premier League, or the former First Division, successfully created brand awareness for both the league and those teams that participated in the top-flight competition. For instance, "Finns surely knew of other divisions, but not every 9 year old" (Petri: 69-70), while another said, "I had probably not heard of any teams outside the top division at that time" (Ole: 28). Ultimately, one American supporter explained, "I didn't choose Liverpool because they were in the EPL I'd say, but the fact that they were in the EPL exposed them to me" (Robert: 128-129).

Furthermore, teams in the highest division tended to receive greater media exposure and attention, as lower division football was less likely to be available to foreign audiences. "Playing in the highest division was important", one fan claimed, "because they would not be shown much otherwise" (Mikkel: 132-133), while others explained, that "you wouldn't ever hear anything about lower divisions" (Brian: 37-38), and "they

never would have been on TV in Norway if they were in the first division" (Stian: 116). Indeed, Championship, current first division, football is still rarely seen abroad:

> Matches from the Championship aren't shown consistently, and the clubs rotate. If I decided to support Preston, I might have only seen them once or twice the whole year ... if they [Liverpool F.C.] had been in the Championship I would have supported a different club (Christopher: 117-125).

Successful sports teams provide opportunities for fans to engage in basking tendencies, or to BIRG, due to their association with quality organisations. Many participants stressed that their selection of a team in the highest division guaranteed a high-quality choice for, as one fan suggested, "to be the best you have to play in the highest division" (Mikael: 107). Moreover, "I think everyone wants to support the best ... your team belonging to the Premier League shows that they are among the elite teams and thereby your team is one of the best" (Nancy: 148-149).

Membership of Europe's elite leagues is attractive for both team and fan alike. The Union of European Football Association (UEFA) allocates places in the UEFA Champions League, and the less prestigious UEFA Cup, based on their rankings of Europe's football associations ('UEFA Coefficients' 2007). Furthermore, *Brand Finance* suggested that a team's international popularity is "driven by match results, particularly in the UEFA Champions League" (Haigh & Park 2006). For instance, one supporter explained, "I wanted a team in the top flight (which was still the old First Division when I became a LFC supporter) because of the importance of the European competitions for me" (Doug: 65-67). Qualification for these competitions is highly lucrative and enables management to promote their team brand to a global audience and helps cultivate an international fan base. In addition, clubs from Europe's elite leagues have a far greater chance to qualify for, what has been described by some football analysts as, "the cash cow of modern football" ('Arsenal Top Premiership's TV/Prize Money League' 2006).

6.4.6. Team Success: "Everyone Likes Winners"

Team success can provide opportunities for fans to bask in the reflected glory of successful sports teams, so it is no surprise that these teams often receive more support than those which perennially struggle (Branscombe & Wann 1991; End et al. 2002; Mahony, Howard & Madrigal 2000; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996). Indeed,

Milne and McDonald (1999) earlier explained that successful teams often have higher gate receipts, sell more licensed merchandise, and receive greater media revenue and exposure. The influence of team success was a major theme in these interviews.

Many of the supporters adopted the Liverpool F.C. when they were children and team success was instrumental in their choice. For instance, “at the time LFC was at the top of the table” (Petri: 21), and “when you are young and become interested in sports you start to look at tables and the team that you are likely to support are one of those at the top, which was the case with me and Liverpool” (Mikael: 54-56). “Since they had success,” one explained, “I guess it was ‘easy’ to like them ... and when I started watching them, they won a championship, and one league cup” (Oyvind: 34-38). Indeed, supporting a successful team appeared important to self-esteem and the maintenance of social networks. “I like to say I’m not a sunshine supporter,” Mikkel explained, “but honestly, as a child or kid it matters who wins things. I can’t really see that I would have supported Liverpool had they lost every game” (Mikkel: 175-176). Moreover, “I guess that when you are 9 you want to hang on with the winners” (Petri: 51), as “it meant you could brag to your friends” (Mikael: 66-67), and “no one wants to be teased in school” (Johan: 30). As one noted, “everyone likes winners” (Leif: 149).

However, the term ‘success’ is subjective and so participants were asked what exactly constituted team success. Some participants were quite pragmatic, and success was measured simply by hoisting the Premier League trophy aloft, especially since they had not won the title for nearly 20 years. For instance, “Liverpool ‘need’ to win the premiership soon,” one supporter claimed, “in order to be successful” (Sturla: 65-66), while another explained, “Winning the league is success. Winning the Champions League is a success, too, but I really want the league” (Johan: 132-133). Indeed, given the prestigious track record of the English team, many supporters held their team to a higher standard. “Other teams,” one claimed, “like Everton, Man City, Spurs and so on can be successful if they qualify for Europe, or win the Mickey Mouse Cup (League Cup)” (Sturla: 66-67), and “for teams like West Ham, Sunderland, Everton (hehe) also, avoiding relegation is like winning something” (Johan: 146-147).

Some supporters, however, were satisfied with the promise of future glory. For instance, “I don’t expect my team to win all the time, but I want to see commitment to the shirt and logo they are carrying ... so it’s okay to loose if you do your best” (Leif:

180-183), and “Success to me means that the team is playing well and are likely to challenge for silverware. They don’t have to win something every year but it’s essential [for] me to know that there’s a possibility” (Mikael: 56-58). Yet another dreamt of Premiership glory, and each new season hope sprung eternal:

> I think the important thing for me is that the clubs give hopes of winning trophys. I don’t need trophys every year, but I want a team that is capable of winning – and the best thing would be to win the league. I would say success is to be regarded as one of the teams capable of winning important trophys. Just avoiding relegation is no success for Liverpool, and beating Everton or MU is not that enough (Ole: 177-181).

Some participants explained that just like they had decided to support the team, the on-field success of Manchester United and, to a lesser extent, Liverpool F.C., in the past few years was key to their worldwide popularity. For instance, “Lots of people grew up as [Manchester] United fans at the time, and they were labelled as (what’s the English word?) not ‘real’ supporters, as they just followed the best team” (Ole: 73-75). As one supporter explained, “as a kid you always like the winners. That’s why ‘all’ Norwegian teenagers today support Man Utd” (Sturla: 73-74), while “LFC will have gained a lot of supporters from the last few years when they have done so well in Europe” (Stian: 87-88). Furthermore, “just look at the massive support Man Utd got through the mid 90s when they won pretty much everything, and they got a lot of upcoming fans” (Oyvind: 34-36). For instance, as discussed earlier, successful teams are more likely to qualify for competitions such as the Champions League, and therefore receive global media exposure. It therefore appears that success does lead to greater media attention which, in turn, attracts potential fans worldwide.

Team success, these individuals explained, was critical in their awareness of the Liverpool F.C. For instance, “You usually hear about the successful teams first, and suddenly you have chosen a team – almost without knowing it” (Ole: 41-42), and “for them to be shown in Norway ... they would have to have a certain amount of support ... how do teams normally get support ... mostly from being successful” (Stian: 94-96). Reinforcing this point, one participant explained, “there was a lot of LFC games because they were outstanding those days” (Petri: 54-55), while another agreed, saying, “Liverpool were on TV a lot then – early 1980’s, which was arguably their golden years” (Michael: 11). Ultimately, one Norwegian concluded, “I chose a very good team, of course, otherwise I wouldn’t have heard of them at the time” (Ole: 70).

6.4.7. Presence of a Fellow Countryman: "Good to See One of Your Own Doing Well"

The majority of supporters dismissed the importance of a fellow countryman on team choice, however, a number of participants felt differently. Although the Liverpool F.C. had fielded foreign players before – notably, the Scandinavian influx during the 1980's – the creation of the Premier League in 1992 accelerated the number of foreign players in England. However, for those who had become fans before this time the opportunity to support a fellow countryman was limited. For instance, "[I] don't remember any Norwegians in the big leagues" (Johan: 159), "I guess there was a handfull around Europe ... but not for the big teams" (Mikkel: 143-144), "there really weren't many Americans playing anywhere" (Brian: 102-103), and they "didn't get a Swede until 1990 or so, so it's not something that I connect with Liverpool" (Mikael: 124-125).

According to supporters, foreign football teams that featured a domestic player often received greater media attention than other teams. For instance, the "Norwegian medias focus more about the team" (Johan: 176) and "they do get more attention back home" (Oyvind: 118). Furthermore, another explained, "they were in the Norwegian news a lot since they had Norwegians there pretty much all through the 90s" (Stian: 223-224). As a result, one fan claimed, "you pay more attention to the teams in England that has a fellow countryman" (Oyvind: 103), however, he continued, "it has never been a major factor in supporting LFC" (Oyvind: 106). Indeed, such players could prove a deterrent: "There was a time when Liverpool was flooded with Norwegians, and that was actually embarrassing" (Sturla: 88-89), and "I never felt ANY Norwegians were good enough to use the red suit" (Jarle: 155). Therefore, although increased media attention might lead to brand awareness it did not necessarily lead to identification with the team. That said, a number of supporters explained that the presence of a fellow countryman at Anfield was instrumental in their initial team support.

"Growing up we had some great Irish teams – especially in the mid 80s thru mid 90s," one supporter explained, and "the backbone of those Ireland teams were a lot of Liverpool players: Whelan, Houghton, Aldridge etc." (Michael: 120-121). "Cause I'm Irish," he continued, "[it is] always good to see one of your own doing well on the big stage" (Michael: 128). Similar sentiments were expressed by others: "it was easier to relate to another Norwegian ... a national pride so to speak" (Georg: 150-152), "Soccer

at the time was a foreign sport, so I suppose, if I was going to watch it or follow it, I perhaps needed the Irish connection" (Shane: 132-133), and "it was the late 80's, I was about 8 years old. My Swedish favourite player, Glenn Hysen, signed for LFC" (Anders: 16-17). Others suggested that the foreign popularity of Manchester United (in Norway), Juventus (in Sweden) and Sunderland (in Ireland) was largely due to countrymen, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Zlatan Ibrahimovic, and Roy Keane, respectively.

While the presence of a fellow countryman was instrumental in team choice, some supporters were torn between alternative players and, therefore, clubs. For instance, "I was jumping between LFC [Stig Inge Bjornebye] and Blackburn [Henning Berg]" (Georg: 182), and "it could gone the other way if Liverpool had sold Stig before I had made up my mind that Liverpool was my club" (Georg: 164-165). Furthermore, "perhaps I would have supported Spurs if I had been a bit younger when Erik Thorstvedt joined them" (Mikkel: 165-166). Indeed, one American fan chose the team because their players represented his ancestry: "My ancestors come from several European nations. It was important that Liverpool has/had players from those nations. Finnan from Ireland, Gerrard/Carragher/Crouch from England, Dudek from Poland" (Christopher: 30-32). However, "looking back," he continued, "it seems odd that I didn't weight having an American player more" (Christopher: 59).

Although of little importance in their initial support of the Liverpool F.C., many supporters, ironically, favoured other teams with fellow countrymen. For instance, "in other leagues I tend to favor teams with Swedes strangely enough" (Mikael: 135) and "I liked Parma when Brolin was there, but now I'm more fond of Inter because of Zlatan" (Mikael: 142-143). While the Reds remained a firm fan favourite, many still wished their countrymen well. "I cheer for Fulham when they are not playing Liverpool ... they have a lot of Americans now" (Robert: 189-191), and "he [Thorstvedt] was my hero goalkeeper – shared with Ray Clemence, so when Tottenham played Liverpool I hoped Liverpool would win 1-0, with him playing a sensational game" (Mikkel: 156-157). Moreover, "of course I want Norwegians in England to have success," another fan explained, "as long as they NEVER are better than Liverpool" (Jarle: 175-176).

Similar to sentiments expressed earlier, despite their fondness for these players, loyalty to the team prevailed. For instance, "Glenn [Hysen] made me interested in LFC, but soon the club became the important thing. Glenn left a year later, but the love to the

club remained" (Anders: 37-38). One Irish fan explained, "I would still follow them even if they had no Irish players, but it would be nice to see one or two in there somewhere" (Shane: 201-202), although "when Rafa [Benitez] came in and tried to replace him [Finnan] with a succession of Spanish players I was a little upset" (Shane: 183-184). Indeed, team loyalty even coloured one fan's opinion of his fellow countrymen: "I still despise any Irish player doing well at Man U/Arsenal/Everton etc" (Michael: 144-145).

In conclusion, one supporter explained, while "I needed something to hook me to the club initially, it isn't that important anymore" (Christopher: 73-74). For example, "I once got interested in the club because of a Swedish player, but I don't care about nationality since then. I am proud for the players of LFC, no matter where they originally came from" (Anders: 51-52). Ultimately, one explained, "it's OK if Norwegians played for Liverpool. They all the speak the same language: Football" (Johan: 184).

6.5. Minor Themes

A number of other themes also emerged from these interviews. These minor themes, in no particular order, were: the receipt of a team-related gift; a personal or emotional connection to England; club history; a history of success; history of ethical behaviour; game atmosphere; and a special club philosophy (the Liverpool way).

6.5.1. Merchandise: "It Started Out with Just a Football and a Postcard"

Most football supporters became attached to their particular team when young (Gieske & Forato 2004) and this was reinforced in the interviews. Nearly three-quarters of interview participants became supporters of the Liverpool F.C. before their mid-teens, and 56 percent of these supporters did so before their tenth birthday. However, given their age, sometimes a cherished gift from a family member forged an emotional bond between the recipient and the team. For instance, a participant explained, "when I was about 10 my sister lived in Lancaster, England for school. She sent me a postcard from Anfield and bought me an LFC football. I have kept the football and always had it out where ever I've lived because it looked cool" (Brendan: 18-21). Another fan said his uncle and aunt "had been to England and bought him [my cousin] a Liverpool jersey. After that we both supported Liverpool" (Sturla: 9-10). The importance items of

merchandise might have in the creation of a team fan was highlighted by an American supporter: “It started out with just a football and a postcard, but I fell in love the more I got into it” (Brendan: 42-43). However, he said, if he had been given an item representing another team, say, their hated rivals to the north, he was “embarrassed to say it, but probably would have been a ManU supporter” (Brendan: 76).

6.5.2. A ‘Connection’ to England: “I Just Loved My Time in the UK”

Satellite supporters have developed an emotional bond with the Liverpool F.C. despite, in most instances, no geographic connection to the English team. Geographic proximity features prominently in the team identification literature, and as previously mentioned, expatriate fans were excluded from this study due to their perceived support for their ‘mother country’. However, for some satellite supporters, a personal or emotional connection to England did indeed exist. For some, it was time spent in England that fuelled their love for the team. For instance, “I was studying in London in the spring of ’92” (Jack: 5), “I did a year of university in England (American extension program) in the mid-70’s” (Doug: 7), and “I have lived in England for two years” (Anna: 39). While, for an American supporter, it was more personal: “He [my boyfriend] was born in the UK but moved to the States when he was a child (family move). He then moved back to London when he was 23 and he still lives there today” (Nancy: 24-25).

The positive experience these supporters had in England, and the place football and the Reds team have in British hearts, was instrumental in their connection, and identification, with the team. For instance, “[I] wasn’t able to catch a match, but really liked the city and the people” (Doug: 9-10), “It feels in ways more like home than Sweden does ... I felt that Liverpool as a team had that English spirit” (Anna: 39-43), and “I am a big sports fan, and football being what it is in England, I knew I wasn’t ever going to be ‘just a fan’” (Jack: 5-6). Ultimately, “As to the ‘connection’, I just loved my time in the UK, the ale, the pubs, the history, the football ... The football was something that seemed to continue the ‘connection’” (Doug: 45-48).

6.5.3. Club History: “The Big Triumphs and the Tragedies”

As explained earlier, Liverpool F.C. came from humble beginnings to become the most successful club in the history of English football. In September 1892, the team played

its first match in the Lancashire League and in 1894, with new colours, played in the English First Division. For some supporters this history was instrumental in their initial attachment to the team. For instance, one said, “I think the reason for my support was the history” (Roland: 15), “I guess ‘the guy’ [my boyfriend] had been filling my head with stories about the team and their past and they seemed like a great team to support ... loads of history and obviously a very traditional team” (Nancy: 82-84), while “the history of the team is immense and unlike anything in the US” (Brendan: 34-35). Indeed, one fan acknowledged that, with more than a century of games to its credit, their support had “a lot to do with history – the big triumphs and the tragedies” (Anders: 69-70).

While, “the appeal of the Istanbul story didn’t hurt!” (Nancy: 84), the pain of the Heysel and Hillsborough tragedies had generated worldwide sympathy and support for the English team. In a similar vein, the Munich air tragedy was a major factor in Manchester United’s “big following” in Ireland (Shane: 69). For instance, an Indonesian fan explained, “I just feel more sympathy when I read about Hillsborough tragedy” (Marcos: 87), while another said, “the Heysel tragedy was also such an incident that somehow strengthened the feel of supporting the team” (Leif: 91-92). For one young supporter, the fanaticism of these rival fans, both Juventus and Liverpool F.C., prompted his original team support: “I thought, how could fans support the team like that, well they must be great clubs to have those supporters willing to die over” (Rizal: 18-19). “As a little boy,” he continued, “this tragedy amazed me a lot ... because I never saw, football happened like this” (Rizal: 73-75). While some fans remembered the tragic history of the Merseyside team, many others highlighted the team’s glory years.

6.5.4. History of Success: “They Did Rule the 80’s”

Although most discussion regarding team success tended to focus on a particular season, in some instances it also encompassed a tradition, or history, of success. This was especially prevalent for those who had become fans during the team’s glory years in the 1980’s or, as one supporter put it, “the golden years” (Anders: 39). Their dominance during this period was fondly remembered. For instance, “they did rule the 80’s” (Johan: 18), “we know that Liverpool had a great period in the 1980’s, so that was one reason” (Roland: 12-13) and “it was great during the 80’s! Me and 3-4 in my class; we were kings! No one could say anything bad about Liverpool” (Johan: 45-46).

The team's history of success was important for some, indeed "more important than immediate success, in my opinion" (Ryan: 105), and "I loved the 'story' of the working-class city that fell on difficult times – and their only source of escapism and pride was their football team" (Ryan: 117-118). However, while the team boasted an impressive history of performance, it was also important that the club did not rest on its laurels. For instance, one participant explained, "the fact that LFC had been so successful in the past as well as in the future was important ... [and] they had not only been successful in England, but also in Europe" (Ryan: 107-109). Indeed, "if we look at the history about Liverpool, and what Liverpool is. We can agree that this is a club with the greatest history in the world" (Roland: 30-31). Furthermore, he enthusiastically continued, "we must not end the book here, but keep on writing" (Roland: 31-32).

6.5.5. History of Ethical Behaviour: "They Don't Stand for Any BS"

The team's history of ethical behaviour, although a minor theme in the interviews, also received an emotional response from participants. "As for ethics," one explained, "you have to have pride in doing things the right way in life and that extends to sport" (Brian: 147-148). It was therefore important that Liverpool players, fans, and even owners, behaved themselves in an ethical manner. For instance, "I think Liverpool's hallmark has always been fair play which I think is important" (Joern: 38), and "the club behaving ethically is important cause the fans are the club. The club represents a little bit of all the fans – who we are as such" (Michael: 99-100).

Many of the supporters interviewed expected Liverpool players to engage in ethical behaviour, which means "they behave nicely, the players do not do bad things, they do not cheat, etc." (Marcus: 72-73). For instance, "fair play like the sort Robbie Fowler showed while saying to the ref that it was no foul committed while he was given a penalty" (Leif: 110-111). As one fan claimed, "I hate to see divers and such, match fixing makes me sick" (Brian: 150). Indeed, those Liverpool players who violate this expectation appear to be dealt with severely: "the club has a certain way of enforcing how the players conduct themselves and they don't stand for any BS ... for example El Hadj Diouf (Liverpool player) spat at a fan (against Glasgow Celtic) everyone knew his days were numbered and sure enough he was sold at the first opportunity" (Michael: 70-74). Supporters are proud, for the most part, of how their players behave themselves and were quick to condemn actions seen to be unsportsmanlike:

> I hated to see Dida's [A.C. Milan] histrionics at the Celtic match last month ... he shamed himself and his club and country. I want to see LFC players winning or losing without untoward actions like that. A fan ran onto the pitch, ran by him, and Dida collapsed to the turf, but only after he had started to chase him. Then he dropped like a sack and pretended to be hurt (Brian: 155-165).

These standards of behaviour also applied to members of the boardroom and fellow supporters. For instance, ownership's response to the Hillsborough tragedy was applauded. "The club threw its gates open, made all the players and staff available ... they helped the families that grieved – they were very generous cause they knew the fans make the club" (Michael: 87-91). Furthermore, one Canadian supporter was proud of the social consciousness shown by fellow fans: "I am a fan of history, and I am moved by any social injustice," he explained, "not just that at Hillsborough. That fact that there was never an inquiry into police negligence bothers me" (Ryan: 82-83). As a result, he was impressed that fellow supporters were "never 'giving up the fight' with the injustice of Hillsborough" (Ryan: 65), and when he went to the Champions League final in Istanbul that a supporter group was "promoting awareness in a big way ... and that was 16 years after the fact" (Ryan: 88-90).

Many supporters acknowledged the behaviour of Anfield fans. For instance, "LFC supporters are one of the few sets of supporters in England that will applaud opposing team's players, and at times supporters" (Ryan: 60-61), "when the away team goalkeeper comes down to the kop they always get a round of applause" (Michael: 47-48), and "when Arsenal won the league on the last day of the [1989] season by winning at Anfield – pipping Liverpool to the title – our fans applauded them off the pitch" (Michael: 52-53). Hometown fans were also recognised for their support of the team, as when they sang "You'll never walk alone to your team after they just lost a match in front of you, that is ethics shown by supporters" (Leif: 117-118). Ultimately, a Swedish supporter summed it up: "I know there have been some accidents in the past, involving Liverpool fans [but] I don't want a team that is famous for being rough on the pitch. And I don't want a team where the supporters fight other teams. And from what I have seen Liverpool doesn't have that problem" (Anna: 76-79).

6.5.6. Game Atmosphere: "The Atmosphere is Fantastic"

Some participants acknowledged the importance of famous fans, for instance, Morten Harket from Norwegian band, *a-ha*, while many more recognised the contribution Anfield itself made in their decision to support the team. However, in most instances, it appeared that references to the stadium, and to famous fans, were instead recognising the contribution made by fans in attendance. Indeed, the atmosphere at Anfield and the behaviour of Reds fans on the Kop had achieved international fame.

"From what I had heard," one supporter explained, "Anfield was pretty much the epitome of ALL football fields" (Nancy: 160) while another said he "loved the 'romance' surrounding Anfield" (Anders: 17-18). The game-day atmosphere was the highlight for many others. For instance, "the atmosphere is fantastic and of course 'You'll never walk alone'" (Joern: 73), one said, and "there was a palpable electricity that 'came across' that I felt was like nothing I'd seen/felt/experienced before" (Roger: 40-41). "It was the whole package," he continued, "the fans, the scarves, banners, the singing, the excitement when the Reds scored, etc." (Roger: 56-57).

Indeed, the century-old Spion Kop, one of the world's most famous football terraces, held a special place in the hearts of supporters: "The Kop has never followed anyone – others has followed them. The songs of Anfield is fantastic!" (Anders: 77-78), "the Kop give Anfield the special atmosphere that no other teams have" (Marcos: 111-112), and "when the first match came from Anfield, and I saw the Kop for the first time, well I think it was my first orgasm :)" (Jarle: 100-101). While Anfield, and the famous Kop, was instrumental in the creation of these supporters, for at least one American fan, his visit to Merseyside had solidified his support.

> My trip to Anfield last year was the end. I sat on the Kop for the Merseyside Derby 0-0 draw. Nearly cried when I got there because it was the most intense scene ever. LFC fan for life now. More so than I really care to be (Brendan: 43-45).

6.5.7. The 'Liverpool Way': "It Was Something Special - The Liverpool Way"

Although most fans probably feel that there is something unique, or special, about their favourite team, many interview participants expressed their pride in being a fan of the Liverpool F.C. However, there was a right, and a wrong, way for teams to behave, many argued, and indeed, they were proud of 'the Liverpool way'. As one said, "it was a feeling I got when I looked at the name, logo, players and history of the EPL clubs. It was something special about Liverpool. 'The Liverpool way'" (Georg: 116-117), while another claimed, "an other thing that is VERRY important to me, is the tradission – 'The Liverpool way'. Ways to do ting, to deal with problem and so on" (Roland: 33-34). As seen earlier, ethical behaviour appears to be a club trademark, and indeed all those involved with the Liverpool F.C. are expected to stay true to this club philosophy.

As some explained, "Liverpool's fans have generally been a credit to the team" (Doug: 79-80), and the "one thing I love about the LFC supporters I know, they love the club unwaveringly" (Brian: 137). Furthermore, "I also love the fact the Liverpool derby is so much less violent than so many other derbies" (Doug: 82-83). One Swedish fan claimed that "the supporters are the key to the club" (Anders: 77) and that there is a connection between the club and its fans: "A couple of years ago, after a tournament in Japan, a Kopite couldn't come home because he lacked money after missing the plane ... Carragher then stepped in and payed the flight tickets for the lad!" (Anders: 73-75).

"It isn't so hard to stay loyal to the club," one fan claimed, however, "if we got Hicks out again it would be even easier" (Georg: 190-196). In 2007, the Liverpool F.C. was acquired by Americans, Tom Hicks and George Gillett (Wood 2007), however, concern that the new owners did not understand, let alone adhere to, 'the Liverpool way' was quite evident. For instance, "the Americans went public in the press about talking to [Juergen] Klinsmann about being the next coach, they have screwed around with the stadium plans, and just generally gone about their business in ways I find ridiculous" (Jack: 135-137). This supporter, at least, was upset with the latest events:

> I am unhappy with the whole situation on account of the fact that how it has all played out is not 'the LFC way'. And for some who paid lip service to 'understanding the club and the traditions etc' ... well, those words ring rather hollow (Jack: 121-123).

6.6. Chapter Review

In a bid to better understand the satellite supporter phenomenon and the reasons they identify with their chosen team, 30 qualitative interviews were conducted. A preliminary round of 12 interviews was initially conducted to streamline the research procedure, and the sample represented six nations (Norway, Sweden, USA, Finland, Indonesia and Ireland). This initial round confirmed the value of the semi-structured interview as a tool to explore the origins of these supporters' team identification. A second round of 18 interviews was subsequently conducted until both sufficiency and saturation of information occurred. The interview data represented 30 supporters from eight nations (Norway, USA, Sweden, Indonesia, Ireland, Canada, Finland, and the Faroe Islands).

Interview participants were asked one major question: "Can you tell me what made you originally support the Liverpool F.C.?" A number of themes emerged, both major and minor, as important in the creation of their identification with the Liverpool F.C. The most popular, or major, themes discussed by respondents were: the influence of media coverage; the influence of family or friends; the presence of particular player(s); the style of play; highest division; team success; and support for a fellow countryman. Furthermore, a number of other themes also emerged, albeit far less popular. These minor themes were: the receipt of a team-related gift; a personal or emotional connection to England; club history; a history of success; history of ethical behaviour; game atmosphere; and a special club philosophy (the Liverpool way).

Regularly-scheduled English football broadcasts were instrumental in fan creation and became almost a cultural institution for many European audiences, while others claimed that their support was 'natural' since important people in their lives were fans of the team. The athletic exploits or, in some cases, other physical characteristics of a favourite player created awareness for the team and cultivated a new generation of fans, while their skill with the ball meant the Reds played an attractive, attacking brand of football. A team in the highest division tended to receive greater media exposure than lower division teams for they were more likely to be available to foreign audiences, and so selection of a team in the highest division guaranteed a high-quality choice. Team success allows fans to bask in the reflected glory of their team and, respondents explained, was critical in their awareness of the Liverpool F.C. Finally, foreign football

teams that field a fellow countryman often receive substantial media attention in the player's native land and can nurture 'national pride' in some supporters.

Since fandom is an intrinsically personal experience there are numerous reasons one might identify with a sports team. This research sought to identify the antecedents most important in the development of satellite supporter team identification. The next chapter examines the data that emerged from both the quantitative and qualitative results.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

7.1. Introduction

The previous two chapters analysed data that emerged from the use of mixed methods, both a quantitative questionnaire and qualitative semi-structured interviews. The primary research questions addressed by this research were:

1. What are the most important antecedents in the identification of satellite supporters with their chosen sports team?
2. Can a conceptual brand equity framework predict the determinants of team identification of satellite supporters?

This final chapter reviews the outcomes from the data analysis and identifies those antecedents most pivotal in the creation of a psychological connection with their foreign team. The chapter also examines whether social identity theory adequately explained foreign fandom and whether a revised brand equity framework successfully predicted the antecedents of team identification. Furthermore, the chapter examines whether there is evidence to support the existence of a brand community dedicated to the English club, and the notion that these supporters receive positive psychological benefits from their fandom. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the research, its limitations, implications and future directions.

7.2. Social Identity Theory and the Satellite Supporter

As detailed in chapter two, social identity theory (SIT) was developed in the 1970's to understand the behaviour of individuals in group situations. Individuals develop a social identity as they categorise themselves and others into social groups in order to make sense of their social environment (Stets & Burke 2000; Tajfel 1978; Turner 1975). Puddifoot (1997) claimed that a critical aspect of this theory is that, in seeking a positive social identity, "individuals will characteristically categorize people in such a

way as to favor members of the group to which they themselves feel they belong ... that effectively maximizes intragroup similarities and intergroup differences" (p. 344).

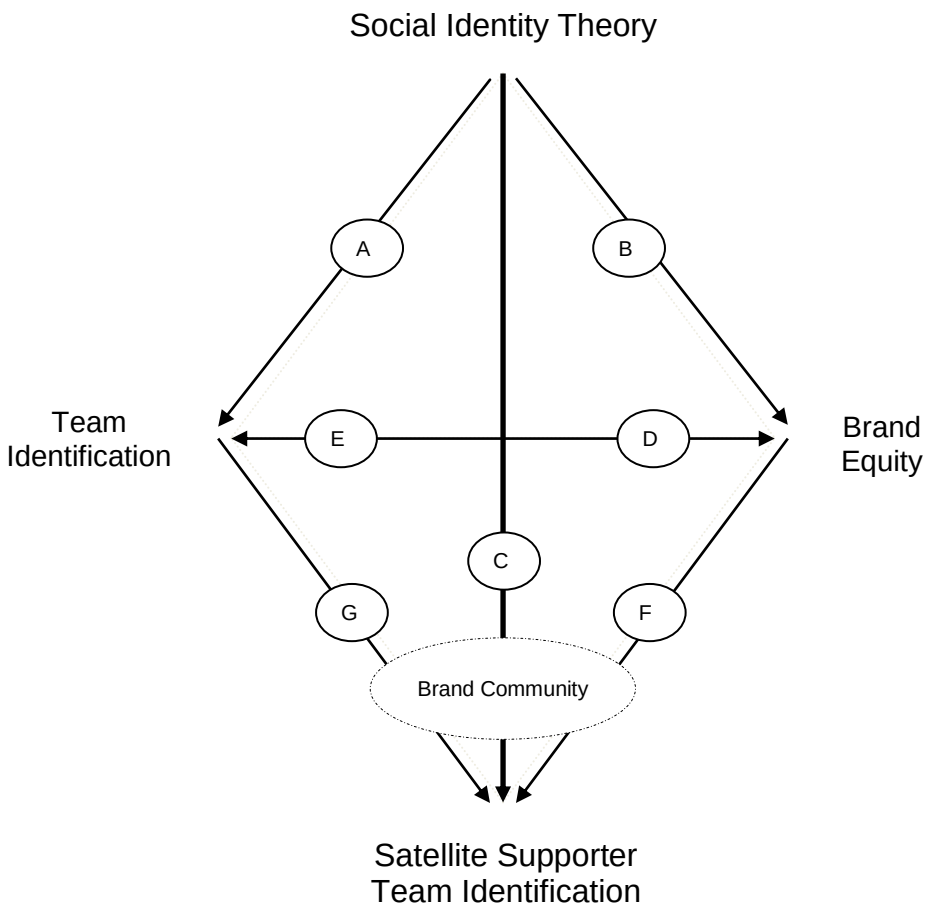
It was noted, according to Tajfel and Turner (1979; 1986), that social identity theory involves three central ideas: categorisation, identification, and comparison. Membership in social groups provides an important basis for self-definition (Deaux et al. 1995). Although many individuals categorise themselves according to demographic or organisational membership, they often create their own (Schouten & McAlexander 1995). Furthermore, individuals tend to choose activities congruent with their salient identities and support organisations that embody those identities (Ashforth & Mael 1989). Social identity theory claims that individuals categorise themselves into groups and then proceed to affiliate with fellow group members. Finally, individuals strive for a positive social identity through favourable comparisons made between groups the individual identifies with, and relevant out-groups (Tajfel & Turner 1979).

There is a clear relationship between SIT and the components of this thesis. This study asked 'what are the most important antecedents in the identification of satellite supporters with their chosen sports team?' and secondly, 'can a conceptual brand equity framework predict the determinants of team identification of satellite supporters?' The relationship between SIT and the research questions can be seen in Figure 7.1. A brief summary of the relationships, and the logic that underpin their existence, follows:

Since team identification is based upon social identification, there is a relationship between SIT and team identification (A). In addition, social identification is important in the creation of brand equity, especially for service brands such as a sports team. Therefore, a relationship exists between SIT and brand equity (B). Since social identification drives team identification, the team identification of satellite supporters is likewise driven by SIT (C). Heightened identification with a sports team leads to greater brand equity for the team, which suggests that team identification is related to brand equity (D), while the enhanced brand equity serves to further enhance identification with the team (E). Brand equity is related to team identification, and so the brand equity of a sports team in a global context is related to the team identification of satellite supporters (F). Likewise, team identification, when expanded to the international marketplace, is related to the team identification of satellite supporters (G). A brand

community dedicated to a sports team, itself a key component in Kerr and Gladden's (2008) brand equity framework, proved invaluable during this research process.

Figure 7.1: The Inter-Relationship of SIT and the Research Questions



Tajfel and Turner (1979) claimed that any group can exist as long as individuals see themselves as "members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership of it" (p. 40). For instance, two interview participants in this study, Shane and Michael, chose being Irish and a fan of the Liverpool F.C. as positive social identities.

MacClancy (1996b) claimed that sports act as "vehicles of identity, providing people with a sense of difference and a way of classifying themselves and others, whether latitudinally or hierarchically" (p. 2). Identification with a sports team often serves as an

important identity for many individuals, and so the next section discusses the relationship between social identification and team identification (labelled 'A').

7.2.1. Social Identification and Team Identification

In section 2.5, it was noted that Donavan, Carlson and Zimmerman (2005) argue that social identity theory is applicable for understanding fan behaviour, especially since this "often revolves around the distinctions that exist between opposing groups, and it is heavily affected by the level of identification with a team" (p. 33). Team identification was earlier defined as "the extent to which a fan feels psychologically connected" to an adopted team (Wann et al. 2001, p. 3). In addition, as seen earlier, social identification is "the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate" (Ashforth & Mael 1989, p. 21), whereby one is an active or symbolic member of the group and perceives the group's fate as their own. This often occurs with the sports fan as team victories become personal successes and defeat is viewed as personal failure.

It was also discussed previously how SIT is often used to examine team identification (Dimmock, Grove & Eklund 2005; Dimmock & Gucciardi 2007; Donavan, Janda & Suh 2006; Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Heere & James 2007b; Jacobson 2003; Jones 1998; Sutton et al. 1997; Uemukai et al. 1995; Wann 2006a). The fan can, however, differ to the degree they identify with a team, and this can greatly influence their behaviour, loyalty and attitudes toward this team (Milne & McDonald 1999; Murrell & Dietz 1992; Sutton et al. 1997; Wann & Branscombe 1990, 1993, 1995). For highly-identified fans, the role of fan is an important component of their identity and they therefore invest more time and money in support of their team (Wann & Branscombe 1993).

Moreover, the behaviour of fans in support of their team reinforces their identification with a favourite sports team. For instance, team-related merchandise allows a fan's personal and social identification with a beloved team (Derbaix, Decrop & Cabossart 2002) and perhaps leads to a more salient identity as a team fan (Arnett & Laverie 2000; Wilde 2004). Derbaix, Decrop and Cabossart (2002) explained that possessions, such as team colours and scarves, "are conspicuously displayed not only to show others the identification with one team but also to be recognized as the member of a group (i.e. the faithful supporters of the team) or a subgroup of it (i.e. a fan club)" (p.

514). Finally, when comparing themselves to relevant out-groups, such as rival fans, individuals often choose to BIRG or CORF so as to maintain a positive social identity.

Ultimately, many have argued that team identification is based upon social identification (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002; Madrigal 2004; Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001; Wann & Branscombe 1993; Wann et al. 2001). Consequently, the sports fan can categorise themselves as a fan of a particular team, identify as a team fan, and compare themselves to fans of other teams. However, while social identification drives one's identification with a sports team, it is also related to the value of a brand, or its brand equity, and the next section discusses this relationship.

7.2.2. Social Identification and Brand Equity

It was discussed in section 3.5 that Underwood, Bond and Baer (2001) believe social identification to be important in the creation of brand equity, especially for service brands, as they generate high levels of consumer identification. The relationship between social identification and brand equity is labelled 'B'. They proposed that the greater the degree of social identification between consumer and product, the greater the level of customer-based brand equity (Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001). Social identity, therefore, is a "mechanism for tapping the emotional connection between the consumer and the service brand" (Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001, p. 2).

SIT's basic hypothesis is that groups seek to differentiate themselves from each other to achieve a positive social identity (Brown 1996; Tajfel & Turner 1979; 1986). Sport can serve to construct these identities and affirm a sense of community (Donnelly & Young 1988; Klein 1984; Melnick 1993; Stewart & Smith 1996). Indeed, the participants in this study categorised and identified themselves as fans of the AFL, Ajax F.C. and the Liverpool F.C. The next section discusses the relevance of SIT as a 'theoretical lens' by which to examine the team identification of satellite supporters (labelled 'C').

7.2.3. A 'Theoretical Lens' to Examine Foreign Fandom

As seen earlier, SIT explains that individuals categorise themselves into groups and then proceed to affiliate with fellow members. Social identity theory involves three central ideas: categorisation, identification, and comparison. Consistent with these

tenets, satellite supporters in this study categorised themselves as fans of an AFL team, Ajax F.C., or the Liverpool F.C., identified as fans of the team, and compared themselves to rival fans. For instance, participants claimed that “Carlton is my club”, that they had been infected with “‘the Ajax fever’” and that “LFC is my club”.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) explained that a positive social identity is largely based upon favourable comparisons between groups an individual identifies with, and relevant out-groups. As a result, social comparison encourages individuals to engage in intergroup discrimination which can foster in-group favouritism and often out-group derogation. This study determined that satellite supporters engage in in-group bias and support members of their favoured in-group, nationality, ethnicity or fan.

i) In-Group Bias

Although discussions of nationality usually arise in relation to teams, they can also be constructed around individuals (Blain & O'Donnell 1994). For instance, Israeli player, Avi Cohen, attracted many fans from Israel to the Liverpool F.C. in the early eighties (Ben-Porat 2000), while Ivan Zamorano “played at the same time for Internazionale and, by being a Chilean, for Chile” (Wong & Trumper 2002, pp. 178-179). Although it was not an option for many participants, some said that their support was due to the presence of fellow countrymen and they expressed pride in their achievements. For instance, one supporter explained, “’Cause I’m Irish, [it is] always good to see one of your own doing well on the big stage” (Michael: 128) while another claimed, “it was easier to relate to another Norwegian ... a national pride so to speak” (Georg: 150-152).

Supporters also favoured other teams with fellow countrymen. For instance, “in other leagues I tend to favor teams with Swedes” (Mikael: 135) and “I cheer for Fulham when they are not playing Liverpool ... they have a lot of Americans now” (Robert: 189-191). For at least one Irish fan, supporting the team was an extension of his national identity and it was important that they fielded an Irishman: “when Rafa [Benitez] came in and tried to replace him [Irish player, Finnan] ... I was a little upset. But it does give me a certain pride in seeing that he has won out ...” (Shane: 183-185). For an American respondent, his support of the English team instead served to reinforce an important ethnic identity: “My ancestors come from several European nations [so] it was important that Liverpool has/had players from those nations” (Christopher: 30-31).

The Liverpool F.C. supporters also displayed in-group bias towards fellow team fans. For instance, one said, “if I am out and about and see someone in Liverpool wear, I will always strike up a conversation” (Jamie: 71), while another claimed that Reds fans were different than other fans and he had derogatory comments for rival supporters: “You can’t let results sway your allegiance, then you might as well support ManU or Chelski [Chelsea]. That’s one thing I love about the LFC supporters I know, they love the club unwaveringly” (Brian: 133-137). Another fan explained that “Liverpool’s fans have generally been a credit to the team” (Doug: 79-80) while “I also love the fact the Liverpool derby is so much less violent than so many other derbies” (Doug: 82-83).

ii) Self-Esteem Enhancement/Protection

Social identity theory argues that individuals wish to be associated with groups that can be positively distinguished from other groups. There was significant evidence in this study that support for the Liverpool F.C. enhanced the self-esteem of satellite supporters, whether due to team success or its ethical behaviour. These attributes allowed supporters to positively distinguish themselves from other supporters.

It was earlier seen that, for the fan, team victory is often considered a personal success, and defeat, personal failure. As Schafer (1968) explained: “If his team wins, he feels good about himself ... But, if his team loses, especially if it loses consistently, he too is a loser in his own eyes” (p. 34). However, because it provides an opportunity to BIRG, an association with a successful sports team can enhance a fan’s self-esteem (Cialdini et al. 1976). Indeed, the opportunity to BIRG might explain why successful teams often have larger crowds (Becker & Suls 1983; Noll 1974; Schofield 1983; Tapp 2004), and more fans (Branscombe & Wann 1991; End et al. 2002; Mahony, Howard & Madrigal 2000; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996), than less-successful teams.

Many satellite supporters claimed that team success was important, especially when they were children. For instance, “as a child or kid,” one fan explained, “it matters who wins things [and] I can’t really see that I would have supported Liverpool had they lost every game” (Mikkel: 175-176). Ultimately, success was important because “it meant you could brag to your friends [and] I think that I felt better when Liverpool won when I was a kid” (Mikael: 66-69). Indeed, he continued, “I did feel good about myself when Liverpool won and the other way around (still do to a certain extent)” (Mikael: 80-81).

Respondents expressed pride in being a fan, especially when the team performed well. For instance, their Champions League victory was “a reward for following them through good and tough times for fifteen years, so now, I am proud to be a fan of a successful team” (Ole: 56-59). Furthermore, their support for a successful team made fans feel “a part of a group who shared something special” (Leif: 168) and “proud to support a winning team” (Nancy: 100-101). Participants were also proud of the team’s glory years: “It was great during the 80’s!” one explained, “No one could say anything bad about Liverpool. We were #1” (Johan: 45-46), while another said, “it makes me proud to support a winning team with such a great history and tradition” (Nancy: 102-103).

A Canadian respondent claimed that there “is always a level of association with a team that you support and it forms part of your identity, so yes, when Liverpool win, you feel better about yourself, especially when they beat Manure/ManU” (Ryan: 130-135). These comments were consistent with Hirt et al. (1992), who claimed that fans derive enhanced mood and self-esteem when their chosen teams succeed. In addition, supporters derived positive benefits due to the team’s reputation for ethical behaviour.

Since a fan’s personal image is potentially at stake every time their team competes, then a positive reputation might also allow supporters to engage in basking tendencies. Participants said it was important that the Liverpool F.C. engaged in ethical behaviour, as one explained, “the club behaving ethically is important cause the fans are the club. The club represents a little bit of all the fans – who we are as such” (Michael: 99-100).

Respondents wished to associate with a club that reflected positively upon them, and expressed pride in supporting a team that acquitted itself admirably: “you associate with entities that reflect your morals, etc.” (Brian: 196) and “want to be able to be proud of the team ... not to be ashamed to support them” (Anna: 85-86). Another participant claimed that “it does make me proud I wear my LFC kit out and feel very good about the club ... I get many comments from supporters of other clubs that they respect LFC and the way they play” (Brian: 183-186). It therefore appears that the team’s reputation for ‘fair play’ allowed supporters to BIRG. Ultimately, as one supporter concluded:

> The poor conduct of your club reflects on your choice to support them. I take it personally when LFC supporters are criticized for poor conduct, as in last year’s Champs League final and would likewise if I supported one of the Italian sides involved in the match-fixing scandals (Brian: 198-204).

While social identity theory has been widely used to explore team identification, the literature review revealed that it has not been applied to the team identification of foreign consumers. As such, its relevance to the satellite supporter was unknown. A major contribution of this research was to confirm that social identity theory is a conceptually robust perspective to examine satellite supporters and their identification with a foreign-based sports team. There is evidence that their support of the Liverpool F.C. served, in some instances, to enhance their self-esteem and made them 'proud' to support the team. It also appeared that in-group favouritism explained their pride and support of athletes who represented an important identity: nationality, ethnicity, or fellow fan. It therefore appears that social identity theory is an appropriate, and valuable, 'theoretical lens' by which to examine the fandom of satellite supporters.

7.2.4. Brand Equity and Team Identification

A sports team is a service brand that can generate extremely high levels of consumer identification. Indeed, supporters often become 'psychologically connected' to a chosen team and so, since team identification is derived from social identification, it is likewise important in the creation of brand equity. This relationship is labelled 'D'. Underwood, Bond and Baer (2001) proposed that heightened identification with a sports team should result in higher levels of brand equity for the team. Boyle and Magnusson (2007) tested this supposition and found that "a heightened social identity to the team" (p. 497) enhanced the perceived equity of a collegiate athletic programme's brand.

While team identification can enhance brand equity, there is also speculation that brand equity is related to team identification (Carlson, Quazi & Muthaly 2002; Kerr 2008; Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001). This relationship is labelled 'E'. Underwood, Bond and Baer (2001) claimed that the brand equity that results from the individual's heightened identification serves to "make identification with the brand more attractive and provides more content that can be incorporated into a customer's self-concept" (p. 4). Carlson, Quazi and Muthaly (2002) also hypothesised that the level of customer-based brand equity would have a positive effect on team identification.

In section 3.5 it was theorised that a relationship exists between brand equity and team identification. As a result, conceptual frameworks developed to assess brand equity in the sports environment were likely to shed light on the identification of team fans. Kerr

(2008) suggested that collegiate athletics (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998), and professional team sport (Gladden & Milne 1999), frameworks could also be used to examine the team identification of collegiate, or domestic, team fans. Brand equity is critical to those teams that wish to attract a global fan base and so section 3.5 explained how Kerr and Gladden's (2008) revised framework could be used to examine the team identification of satellite supporters. This relationship is labelled 'F'.

The next section addresses the primary research question and discusses the antecedents that were most important in the initial team identification of satellite supporters. This relationship is simply an extension of team identification to encompass the foreign consumer in a global sports marketplace, and is labelled 'G'. For most of the participants in this study, there was no family or geographic connection to the English club and so it appears that other antecedents might instead apply.

7.2.5. The Creation of Team Identification for Satellite Supporters

Factor analysis had earlier shown that 16 variables used to ask satellite supporters about their initial identification with the Liverpool F.C. could be instead reduced to five factors. In addition, analysis of the questionnaire and interview data highlighted a number of themes pivotal in their initial team identification. According to respondents, nine items, representing three factors, were significantly important in their team choice. Table 7.1 lists the most popular antecedents (the majority of respondents indicated the item was at least moderately important, hence reflected in the mean). The first factor concerned an individual's ability to consume the sports product through the media (media coverage), while the second was identified most strongly with successful teams (team-related qualities). The remaining factor was associated with organisational characteristics not concerned with on-field performance (organisation-related qualities).

Table 7.1: The Primary Antecedents of Team Identification

Antecedent	% Important	Mean[ab]	Loaded Factor
Media coverage	84.3	3.68	Media coverage
Style of play	83.3	3.67	Team-related
Presence of particular player(s)	81.5	3.60	Team-related
Team success	72.5	3.11	Team-related
History of success	69.7	3.10	Team-related
Participation in the highest division	66.2	3.01	Team-related
Stadium	63.4	3.04	Organisation-related
History of ethical behaviour	56.2	2.71	Team-related
Broadcast quality of games	56.2	2.70	Media coverage

[a] Lower scores indicate lower levels for each variable; [b] Scale range 1-5 for each variable

i) Media Coverage

The importance of being able to 'watch the team play due to media coverage' was highlighted by satellite supporters and nearly two-thirds of respondents said it was at least very important in their initial identification with the Liverpool F.C. International media arrangements ensure that the EPL teams are well-positioned to develop brand awareness, and a fan base, in foreign markets. For many Europeans, these broadcasts became almost a cultural institution, such as Norway's hugely-popular Tippekampen. For instance, "without this TV-show there's a great chance that I wouldn't have supported Liverpool but instead focused [on] a local team" (Mikael: 43-44).

While televised games created product awareness and cultivated new fans, technological advances saw the brand become even more accessible for, as one fan explained, "it wasn't until the internet and cable/satellite TV that it became really easy to get in depth" (Brian: 31-32). Indeed, many of the AFL, Ajax F.C. and Liverpool F.C. supporters saw the media as a vehicle by which to support their favourite team. In light of this technology, the role of the media in the socialisation process (Jacobson 2003; Mahony et al. 2002; Sutton et al. 1997; Wann, Tucker & Schrader 1996) has received some support. Furthermore, as Assael et al. (2007) argued, the Internet acts as "a vehicle for socialisation at a distance" (p. 337). Indeed, more than 80 percent of the Liverpool F.C. supporters in this study visited official, and unofficial, Reds websites once per week, and nearly 60 percent watched online video highlights weekly.

The broadcast quality of team matches was also associated with this factor. Satellite supporters, as indirect consumers, have their viewing experience largely mediated by the broadcasting authorities and almost a third of respondents considered broadcast quality to be at least very important, although far less important than media exposure.

ii) Team-Related Qualities

As was shown earlier in section 2.4.3, sports teams might be able to cultivate identification by maintaining a clean reputation and promoting its rich traditions and successful history (Wann 2006a). Moreover, as also seen earlier, playing style, history of success, and ethical behaviour, are often linked to a team's reputation and tradition (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998; Kolbe & James 2000; Sutton et al. 1997; Underwood, Bond & Baer 2001). For many satellite supporters, reputation and tradition proved critical in their decision to support the Liverpool F.C.

Fans might support a particular team due to its style of play, and participants highlighted the role this had in their decision: nearly two-thirds of respondents said that it was at least very important in their team support. Indeed, its importance was second only to international media exposure. The Reds' ability to 'pass and move', and their attractive, attacking style of football was appreciated by potential Liverpool F.C. fans: "I wasn't so taken by football and thought it was a bit boring to watch [but] watching Liverpool was not boring at all" (Mikkel: 114-115). Another fan explained that when he began to support a team, "you want to follow a style you want to watch" (Brian: 64).

The English club's successful history, according to 40 percent of supporters, was at least very important in their initial identification. For instance, one explained, "the fact that LFC had been so successful in the past as well as in the future was important ... [and] they had not only been successful in England, but also in Europe" (Ryan: 107-109). Furthermore, it was especially prevalent for those who had become fans during the team's 'golden years' and who therefore remembered past glories: "we know that Liverpool had a great period in the 1980's, so that was one reason" (Roland: 12-13)

Finally, a sports team's reputation and tradition can also encompass its history of ethical behaviour, and nearly a third of respondents considered it at least very important in their initial identification with the Liverpool F.C. For instance, one fan said,

“I think Liverpool’s hallmark has always been fair play which I think is important” (Joern: 38), while, as seen earlier, another claimed that, “the club behaving ethically is important cause the fans are the club” (Michael: 99). Ultimately, ethical behaviour was important for many satellite supporters because “I don’t want a team that is famous for being rough on the pitch. And I don’t want a team where the supporters fight other teams. And from what I have seen Liverpool doesn’t have that problem” (Anna: 77-79).

Nearly 60 percent of participants said that the presence of particular player(s) was at least very important in their initial identification. The athletic exploits of these players created awareness of the team and cultivated a new generation of fans. For instance, one respondent explained, “it was in the early 90’s when Robbie Fowler arrived on the scene. I hate to say it, but he was the main reason why I began following LFC” (Ryan: 5-8). The presence of particular player(s) proved, in some cases, critical to their identification with the team, especially early in the development of their fandom. Indeed, fans suggested that they might have supported a different team if their favourite player did not represent Liverpool F.C. For instance, “to be honest, if Owen and Gerrard were on Arsenal and Chelsea I might have chosen them” (Robert: 69-70).

It was earlier explained that successful sports teams are attractive because they provide opportunities for fans to ‘bask in the reflected glory’ of their chosen team, and allow vicarious achievement and self-esteem enhancement. Indeed, more than a third of the satellite supporters considered team success to be at least very important in their initial identification with the Liverpool F.C. For instance, one supporter explained, “the team that you are likely to support are one of those at the top [of the table], which was the case with me and Liverpool” (Mikael: 55-56). Furthermore, it appeared important to fans of all teams, as one respondent explained, “... you always like the winners. That’s why ‘all’ Norwegian teenagers today support Man Utd” (Sturla: 73-74).

Successful teams are likely to consistently qualify for prestigious competitions, such as the Champions League, and, due to their success, do not face relegation. As a result, successful teams tend to receive significant international exposure which, in turn, generates awareness for their brands. For instance, one fan said, “Liverpool were on TV a lot then – early 1980’s, which was arguably their golden years” (Michael: 11) while another claimed that “you usually hear about the successful teams first, and suddenly

you have chosen a team – almost without knowing it" (Ole: 41-42). Team success therefore results in increased media exposure and drives their international popularity.

Participation in an elite division is critical to a team's financial performance (Jones, Parkes & Houlihan 2006). Moreover, international fans outnumber domestic fans in both the English Premier League and La Liga (*The Brand Champions League: Europe's Most Valuable Football Clubs* 2005). Membership in an elite division is likely to foster awareness and support for their team brands in foreign markets. As such, 40 percent of respondents said that the team's participation in the highest division was at least very important in their initial identification. For instance, one supporter explained, since "matches from the Championship [the current first division] aren't shown consistently ... if they [Liverpool F.C.] had been in the Championship I would have supported a different club" (Christopher: 117-125), while another claimed that "they never would have been on TV in Norway if they were in the first division" (Stian: 116).

Membership in the highest division is attractive for both teams and fans alike, as only 'elite' teams are able to participate in lucrative competitions such as the Champions League. Furthermore, selection of a team in an elite division guarantees a quality choice, as one fan explained, "I think everyone wants to support the best ... your team belonging to the Premier League shows that they are among the elite teams and thereby your team is one of the best" (Nancy: 148-149). A team's international popularity, it was earlier suggested, is "driven by match results, particularly in the UEFA Champions League" (Haigh & Park 2006). These prestigious competitions enable team management to promote their brand abroad and cultivate an international fan base. For instance, one supporter explained, "I wanted a team in the top flight because of the importance of the European competitions for me" (Doug: 65-67). Lower-division teams, insomuch as they struggle to qualify for prestigious tournaments, may struggle to generate media exposure or brand awareness outside their domestic markets.

iii) Organisation-Related Qualities

According to Underwood, Bond and Baer (2001), sports stadia can successfully foster team identification, and approximately 40 percent of the satellite supporters said Anfield was at least very important in their initial identification with the Liverpool F.C. For instance, one claimed, "from what I had heard, Anfield was pretty much the

epitome of ALL football fields" (Nancy: 160). However, for some, it was not the stadium architecture but rather the atmosphere generated by a passionate crowd that fuelled their identification. For instance, fans explained that "the atmosphere is fantastic and of course 'You'll never walk alone'" (Joern: 73) while "the Kop give Anfield the special atmosphere that no other teams have" (Marcos: 111-112). Its importance can be understood given the unique nature of Anfield, and the years of history the venue has seen, however, it is unlikely that this applies equally to other less iconic facilities.

Although nine antecedents were considered primarily important, a number of others were largely dismissed by participants. Table 7.2 lists these secondary antecedents (the majority of respondents indicated the item was less than moderately important, hence reflected in the mean).

Table 7.2: The Secondary Antecedents of Team Identification

Antecedent	% Important	Mean[ab]	Loaded Factor
Logo design and/or name	42.1	2.33	Organisation-related
Family or friend support	38.4	2.23	Family or friend support
Presence of a particular manager	34.8	2.12	Team-related
Famous or celebrity fans	30.8	2.02	Organisation-related
A 'connection' to England	29.2	1.97	Connection to England
Presence of a fellow countryman	18.2	1.62	Multiple (albeit weak)
High-profile and/or quality sponsors	15.9	1.58	Organisation-related

[a] Lower scores indicate lower levels for each variable; [b] Scale range 1-5 for each variable

Section 3.5 theorised that Kerr and Gladden's (2008) brand equity framework could be used to examine the team identification of satellite supporters (labelled as 'F'). The next section therefore addresses the second research question, and discusses whether the evidence shows that their revised framework identified the potential antecedents.

7.2.6. The Predictive Nature of the Revised Brand Equity Framework

Conceptual frameworks developed to assess brand equity in sports, and team identification, share a common antecedent: team success. Successful teams are more likely to generate brand equity and lucrative revenue streams (see, for instance, Couvelaere & Richelieu 2005; Milne & McDonald 1999), while they also attract fans as

they provide opportunities to BIRG. The existence of a shared antecedent raised the possibility that brand equity and team identification share additional antecedents. Indeed, Kerr (2008) claimed, since brand equity antecedents might influence perceived quality and/or brand associations, they might also prompt identification with a chosen team. Brand equity models might therefore be used to understand team identification. This section discusses the evidence and how it confirms the ability of Kerr and Gladden's (2008) conceptual framework to determine those antecedents important in the team identification of satellite supporters.

Kerr and Gladden (2008) revised previous brand equity frameworks (Gladden & Milne 1999; Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998) to reflect the emergence of satellite supporters and the increased globalisation of professional sport. Although some of these antecedents were contained within previous models, especially Gladden and Milne (1999), the revised framework introduced additional antecedents. Similar to earlier frameworks, Kerr and Gladden (2008) categorised antecedents as team-related, organisation-related or market-related, however, they also introduced a feedback loop with brand community. This framework was illustrated in Figure 3.2.

While team success, head coach and star player were team-related antecedents included in the earlier frameworks, Kerr and Gladden (2008) claimed that a star player could also serve as an ambassador, magician or icon and thus enhance the brand equity of their team. When these foreign athletes compete overseas, they represent not only their professional teams, but also their native lands (Kerr & Gladden 2008). As explained earlier, this has been the case with star players such as Hideki Matsui (Whiting 2003), Daisuke Matsuzaka (Reed 2006b) and Yao Ming (Larmer 2005).

There was considerable support in this study for the importance of team success and the presence of 'star', or favourite, players in the creation of team identification (see Table 7.1). However, less importance was attributed to the presence of a particular head coach (or manager): only a third of respondents considered this antecedent at least moderately important. In addition, although fellow countrymen might serve an ambassadorial role on a foreign team, and there is some evidence to support the role these players serve (Chadwick 2007; Nash 2000), there was little support for the importance of native players. However, this was a moot point for many respondents as there either had been no fellow countrymen at Anfield when they initially adopted the

team, or the Reds had never fielded a native player. For instance, nearly 86 percent of Canadian supporters dismissed the importance of a fellow countryman at the Liverpool F.C. (see Table 5.19) but the club appears to have never fielded a Canadian player.

There were a number of organisation-related antecedents included in the revised framework: conference/league; stadium/arena; sponsor alignment; and reputation and tradition. Gladden and Milne's (1999) conference and schedule was revised to account for the international nature of professional sport, while sponsor alignment reflected the brand awareness and reputation of sponsors. Although sponsor alignment appeared to have little importance for satellite supporters, respondents considered most of these antecedents as significantly important in their initial team identification.

The club's participation in the EPL, and historic Anfield, made a considerable contribution to the team identification of many foreign Reds supporters. Approximately two-thirds of respondents considered both antecedents at least moderately important. For instance, as seen earlier, one fan claimed that "Anfield was pretty much the epitome of ALL football fields" (Nancy: 160). There was also significant support for the importance of team reputation and tradition which can encompass its playing style, history of success, and history of ethical behaviour (see Table 7.1).

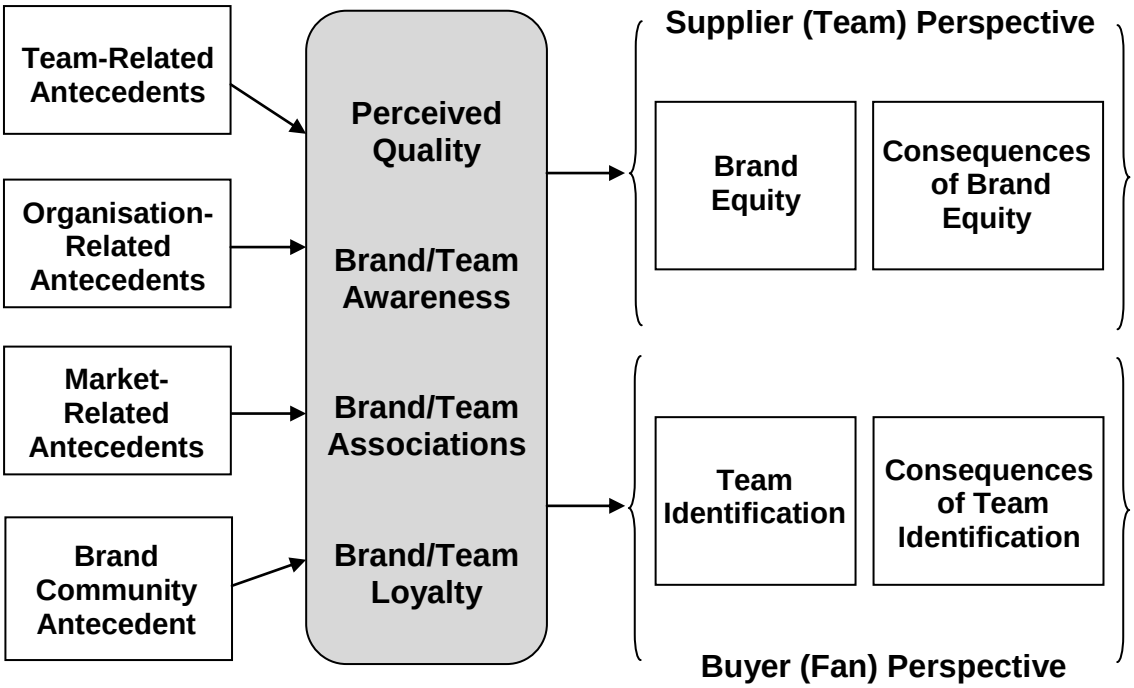
Product delivery and logo design and name appeared in previous frameworks; however, because they did not differ significantly in a global context, they were not published in Kerr and Gladden (2008). Satellite supporters are indirect consumers, and so the quality delivery of games can showcase the sports product and enhance supporter enjoyment. Indeed, the majority of respondents considered the broadcast quality of games important. Furthermore, Kerr and Gladden (2008) claimed, "an argument could be made that the team's logo and colours could lead to the creation of brand equity" and "those celebrities who follow a particular team" (p. 74) might contribute to the creation of brand equity for satellite fans. Although respondents confirmed the importance of logo design and/or name, and famous or celebrity fans, they were clearly secondary antecedents in their identification with the Liverpool F.C.

The importance of media arrangements, and an existing supporter base, was reflected in the brand equity frameworks. Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) argued that an existing base of support would not be limited to those in attendance, nor indirect

consumers, and would be defined by the size and loyalty of its supporter base. As a result, Gladden and Milne (1999) incorporated team support and following, and local and regional media coverage, into their framework. Kerr and Gladden (2008) revised these antecedents to reflect the global sports marketplace, and introduced both international media arrangements and existing brand community. International media arrangements ensure the sports product is available to foreign consumers, and satellite supporters reinforced the importance of media coverage, due to these arrangements, upon their team identification. As is seen in Table 7.1, nearly 85 percent of respondents considered media coverage at least moderately important in their identification with the Liverpool F.C. and it was the most important antecedent for respondents in this study.

In section 3.5 it was claimed that conceptual frameworks designed to examine brand equity in sports might be used to understand team identification (see also Kerr 2008). In this context, it was suggested that Kerr and Gladden's (2008) conceptual framework could be used to predict determinants important in the team identification of satellite supporters. This section addressed the second primary research question and determined that satellite supporters acknowledged the influence of brand equity antecedents upon their initial team identification. These antecedents were classed as either primary or secondary depending upon their importance to the respondents in this study (Tables 7.1 and 7.2). Therefore, a major contribution of this research confirms the predictive nature of brand equity frameworks to examine team identification. Figure 7.2 illustrates the conceptual relationship between brand equity and team identification.

Figure 7.2: The Relationship (Brand Equity and Team Identification)



Source: Kerr (2008, p. 64).

Although not explicitly explored in the questionnaire, substantial evidence supports the existence of a brand community, a key component in Kerr and Gladden's (2008) brand equity framework. As discussed earlier, SIT explains how individuals categorise themselves into groups and then affiliate with fellow group members. Sport can also create a sense of community (Donnelly & Young 1988; Klein 1984; Melnick 1993; Stewart & Smith 1996), while a community of fans proved a natural conduit to explore the team identification of satellite supporters. Therefore, a brand community dedicated to a favourite sports team is 'linked' to SIT, brand equity, and team identification.

The accessibility, and popularity, of the Internet has enabled team fans worldwide to create online organisations to express their fandom. For instance, there are more than 150 international Liverpool F.C. supporter branches. These fan-driven organisations provide a creative outlet for individuals to support their team and interact with fellow fans. Couvelaere and Richelieu (2005) explained that strong sports brands allow customers to "live the brand at different moments of their daily lives" (p. 25) and, in this study, some supporters said that they "visit www.liverpool.no several times a day" and "visit LFC websites 20-30 times a day". The evidence therefore shows that those

responsible for marketing a team should now switch their mindset “from building a fan base to building a team’s brand community” (Couvelaere & Richelieu 2005, p. 43). The existence, and cooperation, of these supporter organisations was instrumental in this research as it provided access to a large number of enthusiastic satellite supporters.

The next section discusses the existence of a worldwide community of Reds supporters and how, through their involvement with a supporter organisation, there is evidence the satellite supporter derives psychological benefit from their fandom.

7.2.7. Brand Community and the Psychological Benefits of Fandom

The reach and influence of the media has created a global marketplace for products and services and, as a result, sports fans have unprecedented access to their favourite teams and players regardless of geographic location. Indeed, the likes of Manchester United or Real Madrid are global brands that have millions of supporters worldwide. Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) explained that since media transcends geography, brands have done likewise, and this has led to the rise of brand communities. This research confirms the existence of a brand community dedicated to the EPL’s Liverpool F.C.

A brand community, Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) earlier explained, is “a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand” (p. 412). The number of international supporter branches dedicated to the Liverpool F.C. suggests the existence of such a ‘non-geographically bound community’, as does the existence of organisations such as AFANA and Ajax USA. Indeed, Kolbe and James (2000) found, fans felt a “connective bond” with like-minded supporters and liked the idea that they were “part of a ‘community of Browns fans’” (p. 30), regardless of their physical location. Furthermore, when surrounded by like-minded fans, it appears that supporters of geographically-distant teams might receive psychological benefits from their team support. These brand communities exhibit three traditional markers of community: a shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001).

Reminiscent of SIT’s intergroup discrimination, a shared consciousness exists as individuals often make a critical distinction between fellow brand users and those of other brands (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001). As Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) explained, while

members feel an important connection to the brand, they feel a stronger connection to each other. As a result, members “feel that they ‘sort of know each other’ at some level, even if they have never met” (p. 418), such as the fan who said she “will always strike up a conversation” (Jamie: 71) with fellow Reds supporters. Furthermore, Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) claimed, members often refer to each other as ‘different’ or ‘special’ in comparison to users of other brands, or rival fans. For instance, fans said, “we have a special way of doing things” (Roland: 44-45) and “they [fellow Liverpool F.C. fans] love the club unwaveringly” (Brian: 133-137) compared to other team fans.

A brand community also exhibits evidence of rituals and traditions. These usually revolve around shared consumption experiences with the brand, and through constant interaction with fellow brand users, community and brand meaning are reproduced (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001). These rituals and traditions involve celebrating the history of the brand, whereby an appreciation of its history often differentiated true believers from those more opportunistic. The importance of Liverpool F.C.’s history was clearly evident in discussions with satellite supporters. For instance, they explained that, “the history of the team is immense and unlike anything in the US” (Brendan: 34-35) and “we can agree that this is a club with the greatest history in the world” (Roland: 30-31). In addition, storytelling, especially “stories based on common experiences with the brand” invests the brand with meaning and creates meaningful links between members (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001, p. 423). For instance, one supporter explained that her boyfriend had been “filling my head with stories about the team and their past ... and the appeal of the Istanbul story didn’t hurt!” (Nancy: 82-84).

Community members believe that the custodians of the brand, the manufacturers and marketers, “should be good and faithful stewards of the community’s brand” (Muniz & O’Guinn 2001, p. 424). For instance, fans have created ShareLiverpoolFC so as to “put Liverpool FC in the hands of the only ‘owner’ who can be trusted. The fans” ('Liverpool Football Club needs our help' 2008). The poor custodianship of the brand was an issue in this research: “for some [the new owners] who paid lip service to ‘understanding the club and the traditions etc.’” one fan claimed, “those words ring rather hollow” (Jack: 122-123). Furthermore, other respondents said that, “I wish the team was not owned by those two particular Americans” (Doug: 121-122) and “if we got Hicks out again it would be even easier [to stay loyal to the club]” (Georg: 196).

The third traditional marker concerns a sense of shared moral responsibility (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001) whereby, to ensure its long-term survival, the community seeks to integrate and retain membership. As a result, a community formally and informally recognises behaviour that is appropriate and inappropriate and, once a member, there is concerted social pressure to remain committed to the fold. For instance, Reds fans reviled those who considered changing brands, or teams, and claimed that it was "contemptible to change one's allegiance" (Doug: 125) and "I would never switch teams ever ... really despise that" (Stian: 293-295). Because community survival is a prime concern, members also act to integrate new members, as one supporter claimed, "I do like to talk to my friends about it and get them interested" (Brendan: 169-170).

Moral responsibility also includes assisting other members in their consumption of the brand, either by solving problems with, or sharing information about, the product. For instance, one supporter explained that, "when I was still learning, it was great to watch with others because you can learn so much more than just depending on what you see and what the announcers tell you" (Jamie: 61-62). As a result, community members were able to educate her about the brand and its usage. Furthermore, another fan said that his membership in the supporters club "makes me feel like I am part of the community" (Brendan: 150). Community members had shared information about the brand and he was encouraged to join the fan organisation: he had found, from the fan club's website, a community pub that televised EPL games, and received "an email list that gives details about upcoming LFC events (mostly other televised games)" (Brendan: 187-188). Ultimately, "being part of the LFC Supporters Club of NY," he explained, "does make me feel more connected to the club" (Brendan: 114-115).

As seen earlier, because team identification often facilitates a social connection with others, it can have a positive impact upon one's psychological health; however, many have questioned whether fans that identify with geographically-distant teams, rather than local teams, can also benefit (Wann 2006a, 2006b; Wann et al. 2004; Wann et al. 1999; Wann & Pierce 2005). This is largely because these supporters are usually isolated from, and find it difficult to interact with, like-minded fans (Wann 2006b; 2006c). However, Wann (2006b) claimed that distant sports teams could become quite salient such as when a supporter is surrounded by similar fans.

Wann and Pierce (2005) explained that these supporters might therefore benefit from social occasions such as when “groups of like-minded fans attend a party or gather to watch their team on television” (p. 122). For instance, an American Liverpool F.C. supporter explained that, “I actually have Setanta [cable TV network] at home, but go to the bar because I just really enjoy watching with others, even if it is 8 a.m.!” (Jamie: 57-59) and “[I like] the camaraderie of watching with other supporters” (Jamie: 149). Furthermore, nearly 85 percent of these satellite supporters said they ‘get together with other Liverpool F.C. fans’ at least once per month, and more than half once per week, during the football season, while nearly 60 percent said they did so out of season.

Through their shared identification with a sports team, Wann et al. (2004) claimed that these gatherings could provide a temporary social connection and so enhance the psychological well-being of participants. A member of the New York supporter club appeared to support this, and claimed that, “now that I was watching and hanging out with dudes that also watched, I got more and more into it” (Brendan: 28-29) and “it felt nice to be surrounded by people that were supporting LFC” (Brendan: 111). These social occasions also reinforced their fandom: “the bar I go to has lots of Liverpool supporters, so that helped solidify” (Jamie: 103-104), and “being in the atmosphere around the supporters definitely strengthens my support” (Brendan: 153-154).

Devasagayam and Buff (2008) claimed that communities, just like in the physical world, may exist and flourish in the virtual world. The virtual brand community, they argued, “meets in cyberspace to share consumption experiences” (p. 21). Indeed, it was seen that satellite supporters embraced the opportunity to interact with each other online. During the football season, nearly 81 percent of respondents said they visited unofficial Liverpool F.C. supporter websites at least once per week, while more than 90 percent said they did so at least once per month. This was also a popular activity out of football season, as two-thirds of supporters claimed they visited unofficial supporter websites.

Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) had earlier suggested that a brand community could exist for any brand, but are most likely for those with a strong image, rich and lengthy histories and threatened by competition. They may also be more likely, they concluded, for brands that are consumed publicly, rather than in private. Many of the world’s most famous team brands possess such characteristics, and the views of Liverpool F.C. fans, themselves members of supporter branches scattered throughout the world,

appear to reflect Muniz and O'Guinn's (2001) traditional community markers. Furthermore, these supporters appear to possess an emotional connection with each other, consistent with their belief that, as a Reds fan, 'You'll Never Walk Alone', and embrace opportunities to interact with each other, both online and in person.

"A strong brand", Pons (2008) explained, "has the potential of transcending the sports arena (event) by building a 'brand community' and a reputation for the sports product" (p. 1). In addition, Kerr and Gladden (2008) claimed, "the lack of studies that examine possible brand communities in this setting is noteworthy" (p. 69). As has been detailed above, and in chapters five and six, there is considerable evidence to support the existence of a brand community dedicated to the Liverpool F.C. and for its acceptance as an antecedent in the team identification of satellite supporters. Therefore, a contribution of this research is to confirm that a brand community can exist for a sports team, and that fans of a geographically-distant team, the satellite supporter, derive psychological benefit from their fandom. As such, this might explain the popularity of online (and physical) foreign fan communities.

As previously discussed, individuals often support organisations that represent a salient identity (Ashforth & Mael 1989). This research shows that satellite supporters of the Liverpool F.C. support the organisation and belong to a community dedicated to the brand. They actively support the team, each other, and fan organisations such as the Liverpool F.C. New York Supporters' Club. Kerr and Gladden (2008) coined the term, 'satellite fans', to describe these consumers, however, while their framework "implicitly assumes that there is one type of satellite fan, one who is extremely loyal, [in] actuality, this is debatable" (p. 74). Since it was unknown to which degree these individuals identify with an adopted team, this thesis described them as 'satellite supporters'. The next section discusses which term is most appropriate in light of the new evidence.

7.2.8. The Re-Emergence of the 'Satellite Fan'

There are millions of supporters around the world who have forged an emotional bond, or 'psychological connection', with foreign-based sports teams. In the absence of geographic ties it was speculated that foreign consumers would most likely resemble 'fair-weather', rather than 'die-hard', fans. However, this did not appear to be the case, as satellite supporters, both in the main study and the pilot tests, expressed strong

allegiance to their chosen team. When asked whether they could abandon the Liverpool F.C., nearly 96 percent of respondents issued an emphatic denial.

"It is impossible to quit being a LFC-supporter", one participant explained, "It is a part of your identity as a football fan" (Ole: 189-190), while another claimed, "I feel like it is something that has just gotten 'under my skin' and now is just a part of my life" (Nancy: 184-185). Other supporters expressed similar sentiments: "I don't appreciate those who are 'fair-weather' supporters and only support a team when times are good" (Ryan: 200-201) and "I think it's contemptible to change one's allegiance with one's address or when fortunes change ... When times get bad, well, that's what YNWA [You'll Never Walk Alone] is all about, isn't it?" (Doug: 125-128). Ultimately, perhaps Johan from Norway best summed up the general sentiments of these supporters:

> Liverpool has just touched my heart. They made me cry. They made me laugh. They made my nearest neighbour my biggest enemy. Haven't spoke to him the last 3-4 years now. My nearest neighbour is a Man U fan. Does that make it clear? (Johan: 232-238).

It was earlier seen that 'fans' derive "a great deal of emotional significance and value" from their membership of important groups (Hirt et al. 1992, p. 725). Indeed, Sutton et al. (1997) claimed that those who are highly-identified, or 'vested', are the strongest and most loyal of those who support a sports team. Ben-Porat (2000) described how, for many Israeli fans, the Liverpool F.C. "is an 'overseas sweetheart,' far away but close to the heart" (p. 344). For many satellite supporters, their adopted sports team was the same: "I guess it's like finding a GF [girlfriend] from another country; you'd fall in love and love her" (Johan: 238). Thorne and Bruner (2006) earlier explained that 'fandom' is "a subculture composed of like minded fans, typified by a feeling of closeness to others with the shared interest" (p. 53). Given their apparent dedication and loyalty to the Liverpool F.C. and, in the earlier study, the Ajax F.C., it seems more appropriate to describe the foreign consumers in this study as satellite fans.

However, perhaps this is not such a surprise. The evidence supports the existence of a brand community dedicated to the English club: these foreign individuals join, and actively participate in, organised supporter groups and they appear to receive psychological benefits from their support. They interact with each other, both online and in the real-world, and use this forum as a vehicle to engage in, what Farred (2002) described as, 'long distance love' for the Liverpool F.C. For instance, one fan

explained, “I deeply in love with LFC especially since I have joined my Supporter Club in Indonesia” (Rizal: 132). However, perhaps those who take a less-active stance to their support of a foreign-based team should remain classed as ‘satellite supporters’.

7.3. Conclusion

Professional team sport, like other forms of popular culture, has become a marketable commodity subject to the logic of the marketplace. Chapter one discussed how sports marketers worldwide have adopted branding principles in order to maximise the opportunities presented by increased globalisation and advances in communications technology. As a result, millions of supporters now follow the world’s most famous sports teams and represent significant revenue for these brands.

Although the ‘satellite supporter’ might prove to be the future lifeblood of a sports franchise and, despite the increased attention paid to team identification (Greenwood, Kanters & Casper 2006; Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Jacobson 2003; Jones 1998; Kolbe & James 2000; Sutton et al. 1997), why foreign consumers identify with an adopted team had remained largely unexplored. This thesis has addressed this imbalance and reports the results of research on the team identification of satellite supporters. Its objectives were to determine the most important antecedents in the identification of satellite supporters with their chosen team, and whether a conceptual brand equity framework could predict the determinants of their team identification.

Chapter two identified existing research into team identification and traditional fans. It raised the possibility that Tajfel and Turner’s (1979) SIT, a theory used to examine leisure pursuits and team identification, might provide an appropriate framework to examine the phenomenon in satellite supporters. Chapter three identified existing research into brand equity and the sports environment. It raised the possibility that a relationship exists between brand equity and team identification and that brand equity frameworks could thus shed light on the team identification of satellite supporters.

Chapter four described the development of a mixed methods case study and why the English Premier League’s Liverpool F.C. was a suitable candidate. The research methodology was implemented and a sample of Reds fans worldwide was examined

so as to understand their identification with the English team. Chapters five and six discussed the results of data collected through online questionnaires and interviews.

This research determined that a number of antecedents (primary and secondary) were important in the satellite supporter's identification with a foreign-based team. The primary antecedents were: media coverage; style of play; the presence of particular player(s); team success; history of success; participation in the highest division; stadium; history of ethical behaviour; and the broadcast quality of games. It also determined that a revised brand equity framework predicted the important antecedents. Table 7.3 describes the contributions this thesis has made to the body of knowledge.

Table 7.3: Research Contributions to the Body of Knowledge

No.	Contribution	Nature of Contribution	
1	Confirmed the relevance of social identity theory as an appropriate framework to explore the team identification of satellite supporters.	X X	Theoretical Managerial Methodological
2	Determined which antecedents were most important in the identification of satellite supporters with a foreign-based sports team.	X X	Theoretical Managerial Methodological
3	Confirmed that a conceptual brand equity framework can predict the determinants of the satellite supporter's team identification.	X	Theoretical Managerial Methodological
4	Confirmed that a brand community can exist in support of a sports team.	X X	Theoretical Managerial Methodological
5	Confirmed that fans of geographically-distant teams can derive positive psychological benefits from their fandom.	X X	Theoretical Managerial Methodological
6	Confirmed that mixed methods can be successfully employed online to explore sports fandom and allow engagement with distant research participants.	 X X	Theoretical Managerial Methodological

There are enormous opportunities for sports teams, both large and small alike, to profit from the satellite supporter. The significance of this research is that, with the globalisation of the sports industry, the satellite supporter is critical to the future success and, possibly, the viability of the professional sports franchise, especially for

those teams which aspire to become international, or global, brands. Indeed, satellite supporters, especially those who are active members of a brand community, have the ability to disseminate the brand and serve as ambassadors or 'missionaries' for the sports team brand. This has been seen with a number of non-sport brands (Chaudhry & Krishnan 2007; Cova & Pace 2006; Muniz & Schau 2005). It is therefore imperative that marketers understand why these foreign consumers support the teams they do. In a similar vein, the study of brand equity frameworks suggest mechanisms that can be manipulated to foster identification with a foreign-based team, and a deeper understanding of how social identity theory can nurture, and strengthen, their support will serve marketers well in an increasingly-competitive sports marketplace.

7.3.1. Limitations and Future Research

James (2001) claimed that sport socialisation is retrospective and asks respondents to think back to when they first became a team fan. In a similar vein, satellite supporters were asked to recall the reasons for their own identification with the Liverpool F.C. Moreover, Veal (2005) claimed that questionnaire-based research depends upon a respondent's account of their behaviour and attitudes. As such, the accuracy of this data is reliant upon their recollection and, since respondents create self-selection bias as to whether they participate, might partially explain their high degree of team loyalty.

According to some, an inability to generalise results beyond the case is problematic (Borg & Gall 1989; Bryman 1988; Stoecker 1991; Tellis 1997a; Yin 2003). However, the case study "does not seek to produce findings which are generally or universally representative" (Veal 2005, p. 171). Although the decision to support a team most likely differs, at least to some degree, between individuals and across cultures, it is reasonable that knowledge derived from this study could be successfully extrapolated to other settings. Patton (1990) explained that extrapolations "are modest speculations on the likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical, conditions" (p. 489). For instance, key themes surfaced in the questionnaires, irrespective of the supporter's location, and were reinforced in the semi-structured interviews. As a result, future researchers might be able to extrapolate information from this study to aid their own investigation, especially as these themes might be more universal than previously imagined. Although these limitations are acknowledged, it is argued that nonetheless, this research makes a valuable contribution.

There are, however, a number of research areas which could strengthen an understanding of the satellite supporter and their identification with a chosen team, and so warrant further investigation. Although the objective of the case study approach was not to make generalisations to other teams, it would be useful to compare the results to other football teams. The Liverpool F.C. has a proud and distinguished history, punctuated by triumph and tragedy, and has fielded international superstars throughout the years. As a result, perhaps the factors that lead satellite supporters to identify with a less distinguished, or popular, football team might be different. Furthermore, although football, due to its universal appeal, was chosen for this study, perhaps the identification of supporters from other sports differs significantly from the football fan.

The individuals in this research, including the pilot studies, showed high levels of team loyalty and could be said to have a high degree of identification with their chosen team. Highly-identified individuals, as earlier explained, are more inclined to support their team and the role of fan becomes an important component of their identity. Therefore, analysis of satellite supporters with lower levels of identification would prove an interesting comparison; however, since they are less likely to join an organised supporter group, locating a large number of these individuals might prove challenging.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the relationship between brand equity and team identification has implications for sports marketing practitioners worldwide, especially as brand equity frameworks can be used to better understand the sports fan. There was considerable evidence that Kerr and Gladden's (2008) framework can be used to determine antecedents important in the identification of satellite supporters. However, it is unknown whether those developed for collegiate athletics (Gladden, Milne & Sutton 1998), or professional sport (Gladden & Milne 1999), might shed light on the team identification of those team fans. Although socialisation agents such as family and friends or geographic proximity are likely to be more influential in those instances, the application of these frameworks to the more traditional fan would be valuable.

Euchner (1993) argued that the sports landscape has changed dramatically as, besides increased commodification, sport has become "less dependent on attachment to a specific place" (p. 26). Sport, like other industries, therefore has to adapt to the challenges presented by globalisation. Although increased globalisation and technological advances have greatly enhanced the popularity, and bottom line, of many

professional sports teams, there had previously been little research on the foreign consumer, or satellite supporter. In a competitive global marketplace, however, *there is a need to understand who these consumers are*, and *why they support a foreign-based sports team*. Although there are inherent limitations with this research design, it has nevertheless addressed a critical need in identifying and analysing the satellite supporter. Hopefully it might also inspire future investigation into this area.

I wish to conclude this discussion as I began, back to the scene of, perhaps, the team's greatest triumph: a thrilling 3-2 penalty shoot-out victory in the 2005 Champions League final. As the strands of the Gerry and the Pacemakers' classic, *"You'll Never Walk Alone"*, reverberated through the Istanbul streets and via television sets around the world, one thing remained clear. Whether due to Goksoyr and Hognestad's (1999) 'satellite transmitted passion', or Farred's (2002) 'long distance love', perhaps millions of Reds supporters "cried like a schoolboy when Stevie [Gerrard] hoisted the cup" (Fallon 2006). For Fallon, an American fan, and millions of fellow fans around the world, supporting the Liverpool F.C. truly means you'll never walk alone.

"When you walk through a storm
Hold your head up high
And don't be afraid of the dark
At the end of the storm
Is a golden sky
And the sweet silver song of a lark

Walk on through the wind
Walk on through the rain
Tho' your dreams be tossed and blown
Walk on, walk on
With hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone
You'll never walk alone"
('You'll Never Walk Alone')

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

AFANA SUPPORTERS FAN SURVEY

1. Description of Study

I am a PhD student at the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia. As a fan myself I understand the agony, and occasional ecstasy, of supporting a favourite sports team thousands of miles away.

As the world becomes a smaller place, however, the teams we love are beginning to appreciate our support. This survey seeks to understand why fans would choose to support a team based thousands of miles away - in your instance, why people in the United States support Australian Football League (AFL) clubs.

It is not always easy cheering for a sports team so far away, hence my interest in this area. It is unknown why sports fans like us adopt foreign teams. Your participation will go a long way towards solving this enigma, so thank you for taking part in this research.

This is an opportunity to tell your story …

2. Personal Profile

Please take a moment to tell me a little about yourself.

1. What is your current age?

☐ 18-25

☐ 26-35

☐ 36-45

☐ 46-55

☐ 56-65

☐ >65

2. What is your sex?

☐ Male

☐ Female

3. What is your zipcode?

_____

4. What is your favourite professional sports team?

_____

5. What sport do they play?

_____

6. In which league do they compete?

_____

3. Reasons for Supporting My Favourite AFL Team

In the following questions please describe the reasons why you began supporting your favourite AFL club, why you continue to support them, and under what circumstances (if any) would you cease to support the club.

Please be as detailed as possible and list whatever reasons are important to your support, no matter how trivial you think the reason might be.

7. What is your favourite AFL club?

_____

8. I originally supported this club because ...?

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. I currently support this club because ...?

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. I might stop supporting this club if ...?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Please tick any of the following that applies to you

☐ I and/or a family member come from the area where this club is located

☐ I and/or a family member come from Australia

☐ I currently/previously lived in the club's location or Australia

4. Rate Factors Important to Your Support

12. Using the scales below, please rate the importance of the following in why you support your favourite AFL club

	Not Important	**A Little Important**	**Very Important**	**Extremely Important**
The presence of high-profile and/or quality sponsors	☐	☐	☐	☐
The existence of famous or celebrity fans	☐	☐	☐	☐
Team reputation and/or tradition	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stadium and/or arena the team calls 'home'	☐	☐	☐	☐
Presence of certain players	☐	☐	☐	☐
Success of the team	☐	☐	☐	☐
Presence of a certain head coach/manager	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conference and/or league the teams belong to (e.g. Premier League)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Logo design and/or name	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality of the broadcast	☐	☐	☐	☐

* Response options were randomised.

5. Consumption Behaviour of Fans

Please indicate which of the following activities you engage in as part of your support for your favourite AFL club.

13. Using the scales below, please indicate which of the following activities you use to support your favourite AFL club.

	Never	**Once per week**	**Once per month**	**Once per season**
Watch their games on television (e.g. cable, pay-per-view)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visit the official AFL or club website(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase additional club items (e.g. a club-branded credit card)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase tickets to club games (in Australia or U.S. exhibition matches)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase team-related merchandise (e.g. caps, jerseys, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase products from companies that support the club (e.g. club sponsors, athletic companies)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Watch video highlights on the Internet	☐	☐	☐	☐

* Response options were randomised.

6. Invitation to Participate

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey.

If you would like to participate in a follow-up discussion about these issues please complete the next section.

14. Name

_____

15. Email Address

_____

16. Contact Telephone

_____

17. Preferred Method of Contact

☐ Email

☐ Telephone

18. I give my consent to be contacted in the future regarding this survey. Please tick the appropriate box.

☐ Yes ☐ No

APPENDIX B

AJAX F.C. SUPPORTERS FAN SURVEY

1. Description of Study

I am a researcher in sport at the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia. As a fan I understand the difficulties in supporting a favourite sports team thousands of miles away.

As the world becomes a smaller place, however, there are now millions of foreign fans like ourselves. This survey seeks to understand why fans support a team based abroad – in your instance, Ajax F.C.

It is not always easy cheering for a team so far away, hence my interest in this area. It is unknown why sports fans like us adopt foreign teams. Your participation will go a long way towards solving this mystery, so thank you for taking part in this research.

2. Personal Profile

Please take a moment to tell me a little about yourself.

1. What is your current age?

☐ 18-25

☐ 26-35

☐ 36-45

☐ 46-55

☐ 56-65

☐ >65

2. What is your sex?

☐ Male

☐ Female

3. What is your country of residence?

_____

4. What is your nationality?

_____

5. Please tick any of the following that applies to you?

☐ I and/or a family member come from Amsterdam

☐ I and/or a family member come from the Netherlands

☐ I currently/previously lived in Amsterdam or the Netherlands

☐ None of these apply

3. Reasons for Supporting Ajax F.C.

This section will now focus on your support of Ajax F.C. In the following questions please tick those boxes that describe why you originally supported Ajax F.C., why you continue to support them, and under what circumstances (if any) would you cease to support the club.

6. Using the scales below, please rate the importance of the following in why you ORIGINALLY CHOSE TO SUPPORT Ajax F.C.

	Not Important	**A Little Important**	**Moderately Important**	**Very Important**	**Extremely Important**
My family or friends supported the team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I had a personal or emotional 'connection' to the Netherlands	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was able to watch the team play due to media coverage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They were (and possibly still are) a successful team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They had a particular player or players I liked	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A fellow countryman played for the team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They had a particular manager I liked	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Not Important	A Little Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
The team's reputation and/or tradition (includes history of success, ethical behaviour, or style of play)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The team belonged to the highest division, Eredivisie	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The broadcast quality of their games (Internet/Radio/TV)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I liked their team logo design and/or name	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I liked the stadium they called 'home'	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They had famous or celebrity fans	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They had high-profile and/or quality sponsors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If other reasons were important, please explain

7. Using the scales below, please rate the importance of the following in why you CONTINUE TO SUPPORT Ajax F.C.

	Not Important	**A Little Important**	**Moderately Important**	**Very Important**	**Extremely Important**
Loyalty to the team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My family or friends support the team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A personal or emotional 'connection' to the Netherlands	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am able to watch the team play due to media coverage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They are a successful team, or have great potential for success	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They have a particular player or players I like	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A fellow countryman plays for the team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They have a particular manager I like	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The team's reputation and/or tradition (includes history of success, ethical behaviour, or style of play)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The team belongs to the highest division, Eredivisie	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Not Important	A Little Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
The broadcast quality of their games (Internet/Radio/TV)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The team logo design and/or name	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The stadium they call 'home'	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Famous or celebrity fans	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
High-profile and/or quality sponsors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If other reasons are important, please explain

_____

8. Is it possible you would ever stop supporting Ajax F.C.?

☐ No

☐ Yes (please explain why)

_____

_____

_____

4. Consumption Behaviour of Fans

This section will explore those activities you pursue when supporting Ajax F.C. In the following questions please tick those boxes that describe how you support Ajax F.C.

9. Using the scales below, please indicate how often DURING THE SEASON you do the following.

	Never	**Once per season**	**Once per month**	**Once per week**
Watch Ajax F.C. games on television (e.g. cable, pay-per-view)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Watch video highlights on the Internet	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visit the official Ajax F.C. website	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visit unofficial Ajax F.C. supporter websites	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase team-related merchandise (e.g. caps, replica jerseys, scarves, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase tickets to Ajax F.C. Eredivisie games	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase tickets to Ajax F.C. overseas games	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase additional club items (e.g. an Ajax credit card)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase shares of Ajax F.C. (if available)	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Never	Once per season	Once per month	Once per week
Purchase products from companies that support the club (e.g. club sponsors ABN AMRO, Adidas)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Get together with other Ajax F.C. fans	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Please describe any other ways you support Ajax F.C.

_____

_____

_____

11. Please indicate which of the following activities you pursue OUT OF FOOTBALL SEASON. Please tick any of the boxes that apply.

☐ Watch video highlights (Internet/TV)

☐ Visit the official Ajax F.C. website

☐ Visit unofficial Ajax F.C. supporter websites

☐ Purchase team-related merchandise (e.g. caps, replica jerseys, scarves, etc.)

☐ Purchase tickets to Ajax F.C. games for the upcoming season

☐ Purchase additional club items (e.g. an Ajax F.C. credit card)

☐ Purchase shares of Ajax F.C. (if available)

☐ Purchase products from companies that support the club (e.g. club sponsors ABN AMRO, Adidas)

☐ Get together with other Ajax F.C. fans

☐ Other (please specify)

_____

_____

_____

5. Invitation to Participate

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey.

If you would like to participate in a possible follow-up discussion about these issues, please complete the next section.

12. Name

_____

13. Email Address

_____

14. Contact Telephone

_____

15. Preferred Method of Contact

☐ Email

☐ Telephone

APPENDIX C

LIVERPOOL F.C. SUPPORTERS FAN SURVEY

1. Description of Study

I am a researcher in sport at the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia. As a fan I understand the difficulties in supporting a favourite sports team thousands of miles away.

As the world becomes a smaller place, however, there are now millions of foreign fans like ourselves. This survey seeks to understand why fans support a team based abroad – in your instance, Liverpool F.C.

It is not always easy cheering for a team so far away, hence my interest in this area. It is unknown why sports fans like us adopt foreign teams. Your participation will go a long way towards solving this mystery, so thank you for taking part in this research.

2. Personal Profile

Please take a moment to tell me a little about yourself.

1. What is your current age?

☐ 18-25

☐ 26-35

☐ 36-45

☐ 46-55

☐ 56-65

☐ >65

2. What is your sex?

☐ Male

☐ Female

3. What is your country of residence?

_____

4. What is your nationality?

_____

5. Please tick any of the following that applies to you?

☐ I and/or a family member come from Liverpool

☐ I and/or a family member come from England (excluding Liverpool)

☐ I currently/previously lived in Liverpool or England

☐ I have visited Liverpool or England

☐ None of these apply

3. Reasons for Supporting Liverpool F.C.

This section will now focus on your support of Liverpool F.C. In the following questions please tick those boxes that describe why you originally supported Liverpool F.C., why you continue to support them, and under what circumstances (if any) would you cease to support the club.

6. Using the scales below, please rate the importance of the following in why you ORIGINALLY CHOSE TO SUPPORT Liverpool F.C.

	Not Important	**A Little Important**	**Moderately Important**	**Very Important**	**Extremely Important**
My family or friends supported the team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I had a personal or emotional 'connection' to England	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was able to watch the team play due to media coverage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They were (and possibly still are) a successful team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They had a particular player or players I liked	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A fellow countryman played for the team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They had a particular manager I liked	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The team had a history of success	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Not Important	A Little Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
The team had a history of ethical behaviour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I liked the team's style of play	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The team belonged to the highest division, the Premier League	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The broadcast quality of their games (Internet/Radio/TV)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I liked their team logo design and/or name	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I liked the stadium they called 'home'	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They had famous or celebrity fans	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They had high-profile and/or quality sponsors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If other reasons were important, please explain

7. Using the scales below, please rate the importance of the following in why you CONTINUE TO SUPPORT Liverpool F.C.

	Not Important	**A Little Important**	**Moderately Important**	**Very Important**	**Extremely Important**
Loyalty to the team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My family or friends support the team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A personal or emotional 'connection' to England	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am able to watch the team play due to media coverage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They are a successful team, or have great potential for success	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They have a particular player or players I like	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A fellow countryman plays for the team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They have a particular manager I like	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The team has a history of success	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The team has a history of ethical behaviour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The team's style of play	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Not Important	A Little Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
The team belongs to the highest division, the Premier League	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The broadcast quality of their games (Internet/Radio/TV)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The team logo design and/or name	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The stadium they call 'home'	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Famous or celebrity fans	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
High-profile and/or quality sponsors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If other reasons are important, please explain

8. Is it possible you would ever stop supporting Liverpool F.C.?

☐ No

☐ Yes (please explain why)

4. Consumption Behaviour of Fans

This section will explore those activities you pursue when supporting Liverpool F.C. In the following questions please tick those boxes that describe how you support Liverpool F.C.

9. Using the scales below, please indicate how often DURING THE SEASON you do the following.

	Never	**Once per season**	**Once per month**	**Once per week**
Watch Liverpool F.C. games on television (e.g. cable, pay-per-view)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Watch video highlights on the Internet	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visit the official Liverpool F.C. website	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visit unofficial Liverpool F.C. supporter websites	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase team-related merchandise (e.g. caps, replica jerseys, scarves, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase tickets to Liverpool F.C. Premier League games	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase tickets to Liverpool F.C. overseas games	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase additional club items (e.g. a Liverpool F.C. credit card, mobile phone ringtone)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Purchase shares of Liverpool F.C. (if available)	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Never	Once per season	Once per month	Once per week
Purchase products from companies that support the club (e.g. club sponsors Carlsberg, Adidas)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Get together with other Liverpool F.C. fans	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Please describe any other ways you support Liverpool F.C.

_____

_____

_____

11. Please indicate which of the following activities you pursue OUT OF FOOTBALL SEASON. Please tick any of the boxes that apply.

☐ Watch video highlights (Internet/TV)

☐ Visit the official Liverpool F.C. website

☐ Visit unofficial Liverpool F.C. supporter websites

☐ Purchase team-related merchandise (e.g. caps, replica jerseys, scarves, etc.)

☐ Purchase tickets to Liverpool F.C. games for the upcoming season

☐ Purchase additional club items (e.g. a Liverpool F.C. credit card, mobile phone ringtones)

☐ Purchase shares of Liverpool F.C. (if available)

☐ Purchase products from companies that support the club (e.g. club sponsors Carlsberg, Adidas)

☐ Get together with other Liverpool F.C. fans

☐ Other (please specify)

_____

_____

_____

5. Invitation to Participate

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey.

If you would like to participate in a possible follow-up discussion about these issues, please complete the next section.

12. Name

_____

13. Email Address

_____

14. Contact Telephone

_____

15. Preferred Method of Contact

☐ Email

☐ Telephone