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**Silk, Michael and Morgan, Haydn ORCID logoORCID:  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1645-8599> (2015) The  
broadcaster's perspective. In: Routledge Handbook of Sports  
Event Management. Routledge International Handbooks .  
Routledge, London, pp. 329-354. ISBN 9780415858649**

EPrint URI: <https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/5049>

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## **CHAPTER 17**

### **THE BROADCASTERS PERSPECTIVE**

**By Mike Silk and Haydn Morgan**

As Chris Rojek (2013, p. vi) convincingly argued, events are not spontaneous or free expressions of power, they are “closely organized, schooled in the methods of exercising persuasion over human cognition by market research, rigorously planned and monitored in detail.” In a Debordian sense, they are, following this line of argument, a seductive ‘spectacle’ that fascinates the denizens of society and act to commercially direct behaviour, social practices and subjectivities (Debord, 1990 [1988]). Events then, as spectacle, can deeply influence thought and action, acting as tool of pacification and depoliticisation (cf. Andrews 2006a; 2009; Kellner, 2003). Put slightly differently, in Rojek’s (2013, p. vi) terms, events may well be portrayed as “radiant, symbolic representations of civil society coming together”, yet, the realities of neoliberal market logics, surveillance, security, and governance / gentrification (see Paton et. al., 2012; also Masterman, 2009) imperatives is suggestive of the imposition of “principles of hierarchical authority” and keeping citizens at “arm’s length.” Within this chapter we focus on one exceptionally important component of sports events: the broadcaster.

For Byers et al. (2012), the wider concept of broadcasting relates to the transmission of information that is reasoned to be relevant or interesting to society. Clearly, then, in portraying events as spectacle, the broadcaster has a critical role to perform in presenting images and/or messages which are designed to meet the socio-cultural,

political, economic or environmental objectives of event hosts and other key stakeholders (Masterman 2009). Furthermore, the broadcasters perspective is especially relevant in critically understanding sporting events given that sport's evolution has become inextricably tied to the rhythms and regimes of an expanding media-industrial complex such that our present—centred on the logics of the market and an implicit culturalization of the economy—is pre-figured on the operationalizing of the mass media (simultaneously as both core product and process) (Andrews 2006a).

Despite what Michael Real (1998) termed the institutional alignment of sport and late capitalism, there has been a relative dearth of critical engagement with sporting events, sport event management (cf. Rojek 2014; McGillivray 2013), and more specifically of the role of the broadcaster therein. A more detailed comprehension of the television production of events is especially pertinent given new economic relations of production, distribution and consumption, the (re)creation of new commodity markets, events and cultural forms, the dismantling or transcendence of geographical and cultural borders, and the importance of sporting events in the fragmentation, refinement and refurbishment of local and national cultures (e.g., Castells 2010; Hardt and Negri 2000; Morley and Robins 1995; Robertson 1995; Ritzer 2006; Silk and Andrews 2001). Within this chapter, we thus aim for a greater comprehension of the complexities, nuances and intentions of sport event broadcasters (SEBs) given it can not only give us an insight and deeper understanding of events and how they are managed, including the seductive shaping of social practices and subjectivities, but ultimately aide scholars in 'unpicking' the shifting

relations between the global, the state and market, the citizen and the consumer (Murdock 1997). Within the following sections then, we unpack what this context means for sport event broadcasts (SEBs). We begin by thinking through sporting spectacle and the political economy of the media, prior to addressing the role of broadcast professionals—who we will discuss as cultural intermediaries—who recreate sporting events within this context. From that juncture, we address the ways in which this context influences sport event broadcasting through consideration of broadcast production practices. We hold these considerations together in offering three examples that raise important questions about the structure, organization and content of SEBs and together highlight the complexities of the relationships between various differential interest groups who coalesce around the sporting event and who shape the meanings inherent within—and make intelligible—sport event broadcasts.

## **THE SPORTING SPECTACLE: A POLITICAL-CULTURAL ECONOMY OF SEBS**

Sport practices positioned at ‘the end of history’ (Fukuyama 1993) are those that have already successfully succumbed, either willingly or otherwise, to the advances of transnational corporate capitalism. Indeed, sport, as Andrews (1999; 2006a) persuasively argues, as a legitimate cultural industry, is a particularly lucrative site for the accumulation of capital. He argues that professional sports are “brazenly commercial enterprises, that make no pretence as to the cardinal importance of delivering entertaining products designed to maximize profit margins” (Andrews 1999: 76). With Kellner (2003), Andrews (2006a) points to the centrality of the evolution of sport with the rhythms and regimes of an expanding media-industrial complex, such that there exists a seductive “consumerist union of commerce, sport

and television” (Rowe 1996: 566; see also Andrews 1999; Billings 2008; Boyle and Haynes 2009; Maguire, 1999; 2004; 2010; 2011; Tomlinson 2002; Wenner, 1989; Whannel 1992). Coakley and Pike (2009) capture this tension neatly, outlining how the necessity to entertain a mass audience to maximize financial profits has shifted the broadcasting of sport away from the presentation of aesthetically pleasing action—typified by technical mastery and graceful movement—towards a heroic orientation characterized by dramatic expression, excitement, danger and a preparedness to exceed the limits of sporting/human possibility. There are clearly, however, winners and losers in this ‘union’, with those sporting competitions—male, historically entrenched, positioned at the ‘end of history’—who are able to maximize broadcast revenue (Kidd, 1989; Connell, 2005). Aspirant sporting events, or those which involve products deemed to be less attractive to broadcasters and broadcast sponsors (especially certain women’s sports / events, unless hypersexualised), are less likely to benefit (economically at least) from television broadcast deals. Of course, given the expenditure on acquiring rights to sporting events (see Table 16.1), it is of little surprise that the media desire a return of investment and shape and manipulate sporting events to ensure maximal return.

Sut Jhally (1984; 1989) termed the interlocking of sports, media and consumer capital as the ‘audience commodity’, a term deployed to describe the interplay between advertising revenues provided to the media as well as direct sponsorship of events, the purchase of broadcasting rights and the elusive and concentrated audience that sports programming is attempting to capture. This, perhaps contradictory and potentially ‘uneven’ (see Emery 2010), relationship between media/sport/advertising is predicated on both the value of sports to sell advertising and deliver a desired audience demographic and the

value derived from broadcast coverage (for the event). Conflicts of interest herein however can be endemic: the broadcaster wants the event for as little as possible, while the sports event fights to retain a proprietary interest in what it produces for public consumption (Wilson 1994). Further, that there exists a clear and marked line between event organizer and broadcaster, or indeed between the ‘sport’ and the ‘commercial message’ is a matter of debate and will be explored later in this chapter. Thus, and to repeat, the bottom line for broadcasters of events is just that, to satisfy the economic forces impinging on the production of mediated sport (and broadcaster economies are huge, see table 1), and the increased competition from a global industry, producers must produce a show—an entertainment spectacle (a commodity spectacle that embeds celebrity, sponsorship, advertising, products, music, performance, and so on)—that will ensure the broadcaster maximizes revenue on its initial spend to cover the event (see e.g. Baker and Rowe 2012; [Billings et al, 2011](#); Gitlin 2001; Horne and Whannel 2012; Kellner 1995; Real 2013; Rowe 2013; Wenner 2013; Whannel 2013).

[Table 16.1 about here]

Unsurprisingly then, as brazenly commercial enterprises that make no effort to disguise their cardinal objective of delivering entertaining products designed to maximize profit margins (Andrews 1999), the media play a fundamental role in the delivery, organization, management and operations of sporting events. While there are many forms of mediation, and despite the proliferation of multiple streams of online event content, it is the television broadcaster that still, at least in the present moment, which is of most import in shaping, manipulating and communicating events to a wider consumer. Fully appropriated then by the avaricious dictates of oligopolistic

transnational conglomerates, sporting events have been “commandeered by—or indeed turned into—transnational corporations seeking to add multiple revenue streams derived from the all important entertainment economy” (Andrews 1999: 74). Perhaps most importantly, for the purposes of the current chapter, sport spectacles have been manipulated by commercial media outlets, in the pursuit of prized audience demographics deemed most palatable to their corporate advertisers (Andrews 1999). As we will demonstrate in this chapter, the complex amalgam of interests / organizations that envelop sport events to create this context—the media, along with its own commercial logics and accoutrements, is one central component of an increasingly globalized sport event industry. Put simply, within a conjuncture in which “everything ... has become cultural; and culture has equally become economic or commodity oriented” (Jameson 1998: 73), sport, the media, and other commercial backers (such as sponsors) can be thought of as embedded or entangled in a crabgrass like fashion in which it is difficult to tell the two apart. As David Rowe (1999) argued, the boundaries between sport and the media have somewhat blurred to the point of near invisibility, and they have become so mutually indispensable, that it is literally unthinkable to consider one without the other. However, as Emery (2010) proposes, the consequence of a more deregulated media landscape and the advancement of digital technology may challenge this perceived symbiotic relationship and position sporting organizations and events managers as hierarchically inferior “partners” relational to the power of media and commercial organizations.

Given the intensification of global capitalist relations—what we referred to above as a cultural economy—it is important to understand the relationship between the institutional organization of the media and the economic initiatives of various groups.

Indeed, Real (1998, emphasis added) proposes that no force has played a more central role in the media-industrial complex than commercial television and its *institutionalized value system*—profit-seeking, sponsorship, expanded markets, commodification, and competition. Perhaps the most important point then that needs to be made within this chapter is that event broadcasting is a globally oriented, market-led operation underpinned by an institutionalized value system predicated by profit seeking, expanded markets, commodification, and increased competition. There is no pretence that any sporting event is covered transparently or necessarily that sport or the sporting organization or governing body is the core concern. What matters is the ability to extract the maximum bottom line, and that will mean making a whole raft of market-oriented decisions over how to cover the event, what to emphasize and what to downplay or ignore, and indeed, the demands made on other event stakeholders—achieved through various production practices (Whannel, 2013) that heighten the spectacle and ‘frame’ (e.g. Gitlin, 1980; Duncan, 2006) the event. Following Grossberg et al. (1998) then, understandings of sport event broadcasting need to focus on how the media, as economic organizations, both require and produce money and how this in turn influences the way they function and the kind of messages they produce. It also requires looking at *how* the media produce meaningful messages and the major dimensions in which the media affects people’s lives, how the media produce social identities, contributing to people’s sense of who they are and who other people are.

This political economy of event broadcasting of course has implications for the type of product produced (and the content therein, see for example the voluminous amount of work on the messages inherent in televised sport broadcasts, such as: Andrews



2013; Boyle and Haynes 2009; Billings, Mac Arthur, Licen and Dan 2009; Cookey et. al. 2013; Jackson 2013; Lavelle 2011; Lenskyj 2013; Messner 2013; Silk 2012; Whannel 1992) and for the ways in which the global broadcast industry is organized, and structured and with regard to how individual events are approached by broadcasters.

### **THE BROADCASTERS PERSPECTIVE: PRODUCTION PRACTICES**

Most events will utilize a host broadcaster (HB) who produces event coverage and sells various packages of the event to client broadcasters (e.g., broadcasters from other countries) from an international broadcast centre (often termed an IBC). This could be a network in the host country (such as NBC in the United States or Channel 7 in Australia), although it is certainly not pre-ordained to be so. IBCs would also offer bookable facilities for networks that did not have their own studios in an IBC. Host broadcasting can be competitive, and some larger organizations often develop their own host broadcasting networks (the Olympic Games for example uses the Olympic Broadcasting Service [OBS] (see <https://obs.tv/>) as Host Broadcaster made up mostly of freelance professionals. Most HBs recreate or reproduce the actual sport event relational to *accepted industry standards* (see discussion below on institutional practices) and within the context of the political economy of SEB. They do so through providing multilateral footage from venues (often with ‘pool’ commentary) that gets fed through to an IBC. The HB’s role would vary dependent on event, but most would deliver the following to client broadcasters on behalf of the event organizing committee:

1. The provision of live international signals (video and audio) coverage to an agreed production plan for all sports included in the program of events,

2. The provision and management of broadcaster facilities at venues including the village, on behalf of rights holders,
3. The development and management of an IBC together with the provision of the core operations of signal distribution and owned passing of rights-holders program material, and
4. The production of daily highlights programs on behalf of the rights-holders

As MacNeill (1996) outlined, client broadcasters would work with the host broadcast (perhaps adding commentary, locally known presenters, sponsors graphics, or supplementing HB cameras with their own camera positions [unilateral cameras] and so on) to legitimate the broadcasts for consumption in the local marketplace.

Unilateral cameras and commentary positions provide more tailored content for the specific client market and allow for the HB feed to be reshaped and palatable for domestic consumption (e.g., through focus on a particular national athlete or an interview position to talk with a national athlete); yet of course, adding such unilateral positions adds to the cost the client would pay the host broadcaster. Other clients, especially those with smaller budgets, would likely be tied more so to the specifics of the HB (see also Preuss 2004). Prior to any SEB, client broadcasters engage in a series of negotiations with the Host Broadcaster in regard to equipment, facilities, staffing, and other concerns prior to the arrival of any client crews at the SEB. The Host Broadcaster generally produces a rate card prior to any SEB. This rate card sets out for Client Broadcasters the cost for facilities, equipment, additional camera positions and so on right down to the price for square footage rental of the IBC for studios and editing equipment. This is a major source of income for the organizers of any given sporting event. While they would have to pay the host broadcaster to

produce the footage, income from clients is crucial. The IOC, for example derived US\$ 1,739 million in revenue from client broadcasters at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, a figure that has grown event on event since the first televised broadcasts in 1960 (Rome, where income was US\$1.2 million). Prior to an event, broadcasters would also likely discuss the schedule and identify clashes or timing requests (see Billings 2008; Coakley and Pike 2009). Schedules are relatively fluid and subject to negotiations between clients and the HB, and between the HB and the event management. For example, at a multi-sport event, it might be that an event that is likely to garner a high rating in a certain territory would take place at a time suited to that market. Dependent on the (financial) weight of the client, the HB may well decide this makes sense and discuss event timings with organizers. Such negotiations not only maximize exposure, but also ensure the HB can maximize return from individual client broadcasters.

The size of operations notwithstanding (a medium-sized event such as a Commonwealth Games for example could demand over 2000 broadcast personnel, 25 Outside Broadcast Vans, 399 cameras, 180 digital recorders, as well as a series of specialist cameras such as ‘rail-cams’ or ‘snorkel-cams’) the transmission procedure at each event is relatively straightforward. While impossible to accurately depict every type of event, a generic pattern dominates: prior to the start of each event, a 10-minute signal run down precedes a 45-second montage, often incorporating some sort of ‘beauty shot’ (say of a local landmark), timetable, weather and graphic locator follows. At the conclusion of each scheduled competition, a 3-minute countdown was initiated with a series of replays, graphic result, an end 45-second montage, ending with a 20-second black screen. Graphics, timing and results tend also to be included

in the multilateral feeds that come from specific venues. Finally, host broadcasters can influence the style of the broadcasts. They may, for example, through working with the state or the sporting organization want to demonstrate the excitement or style of an event (take, for example, the production of the Red Bull air races, where the event organizer wanted the brand values of Red Bull—young, edgy—reflected in camera positions, editing styles and so on). Of course, such styles can, at some events, be mitigated by the clients' own unilateral facilities.

## **SPORT EVENT BROADCASTING: ORGANIZATION, STRUCTURE AND PRACTICES**

SEBs are not produced in a vacuum, they are created and produced by people—actors if you will—who not only have a degree of 'craft pride' (Stoddart 1994) but are heavily influenced by the economic and cultural context within which they operate (see Johnson 1986, for a more detailed understanding of the 'circuit of cultural production'). These individuals, who following Bourdieu (1984, cf. Amis and Silk 2010; Cronin 2004; Negus 2002) we term cultural intermediaries, are those who sit in the liminal space between the actual sporting event and its consumption. These are symbolic professionals (also found in the fashion, advertising and marketing worlds) whose job it is to make the sporting event meaningful to a given audience. As such, cultural intermediaries articulate the sporting event with the market and the world of consumers; in so doing, they recreate or reproduce the event through a variety of often taken for granted practices for consumption. In this section, we consider some of the institutional practices of cultural intermediaries that underpin the sport event broadcasting (SEB) and how these sit within the global structure of broadcasting. Our understandings in this section derive both from sport media theorizing and our own

insights into sport event broadcasting globally—including ethnographic production work and media research in New Zealand, the USA, Canada, Malaysia, and the UK, and at a number of events ranging from the Super Bowl, Olympic games, Commonwealth Games to college basketball, FA Cup football, international football tournaments, tennis grand slams, and, *sportainment* ventures such as Red Bull Air Racing. While a large number of companies may dominate this global market (e.g., Sky Sports, ESPN, STAR, NBC) (Law, Harvey and Kemp 2002), the broadcast profession is composed of a large number of freelance professionals. This has implications for both how SEB is practically organized and indeed for the work routines of professionals. Much like the organization and structure of a large building site, different contractors and freelance individuals join together to create SEBs. Indeed, it is not uncommon for an event to be hosted by an organization (e.g., the BBC) and then employ a number of professionals from around the world (as well as other media organizations) to aid the broadcast production. Likewise, it is common for freelance broadcasters to move from event to event (e.g., from summer and winter Olympics, major state occasions such as a funeral, world cups and so on) to produce SEBs. Within SEB, this has tended to be discussed within the confines of ‘institutional theory’ (cf. Amis and A’issaoui 2013; Clegg 2010; Gondo and Amis 2013; Greenwood, Sahlin-Andersson, Suddaby and Oliver 2012; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Meyer and Scott 1987; Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Scott 1995; Washington and Patterson 2011). In this vein, Pierre Bourdieu (1996) suggested that free market competition has created uniformity and homogenizing tendencies traceable to the pressures imposed by a whole series of mechanisms and institutions. Bourdieu (1996: 82) attends to both micro and macro institutional phenomena, which he terms a ‘two step social construction’. At the micro level, Bourdieu proposes that television

professionals think in clichés or ‘received ideas,’ which, terminology apart, can be seen as ‘institutional wisdom.’ It is argued that these clichés frame work routines and emanate from educational institutions, the political underpinnings of a network, the tensions within the televisual field as a whole to maintain the status quo, the ‘anticipatory socialization’ journalists go through in learning their roles and the pressures the workplace provides for producing audiences. Bourdieu (1996) proposes these micro phenomena can only be understood if scholars understand the structural, or macro, level. He (1996: 38) proposes, “television is a universe where you get the impression that social actors—even when they seem to be important, free and independent, and even sometimes possessed of an extraordinary aura—are the puppets of a necessity that we must understand, of a structure that we must unearth and bring to light.” It is also Bourdieu who has gone some way to addressing SEB in this respect. He offers a research agenda for studying a major event—the Olympics. In line with a comprehension of the micro/macro, Bourdieu (1996) proposes that to understand how the Olympics are symbolically transformed, we must understand the social construction of the entire spectacle. Thus, Bourdieu (1996: 80) suggests:

We would have to look at the whole field of production of the Olympics as a televised show, or in marketing terms, as a ‘means of communication.’ That is to say, we would have to assess all the objective relations between the agents and institutions competing to produce and sell the images of, and commentary about, the Olympics.

In this sense, the size of many major sporting events mean it is nigh on impossible for one company / organization to single-handedly host an event. This structure is important given it highlights how important industry wide accepted practices are for

SEB—above we referred to these as standard industry practices. That is, there is simply not the time / resource to train individuals fresh for each new SEB; rather, they bring with them accepted practices and ways of doing that also ensures a degree (although not complete) uniformity and homogeneity of product. In this regard, there are accepted practices that would be deployed at a large sporting event, a music festival or even an event such as a royal wedding or state funeral that provides both the framework and parameters for what is possible. Like Grossberg and his colleagues, Bourdieu is outlining a project that accounts for the complexities of the media. Specifically, there is an understanding of the interplay between individuals, technologies and institutions that acts to shape the televised sport production process. Substantial realignments in the political, cultural, symbolic and economic spheres and the opening of previously closed or protected consumer markets around the world means that it is crucial that an understanding is gained of the institutional processes involved in SEB. Despite Bourdieu's work on SEB, and those who have written on televised sport production more generally (e.g., Jhally 1989; Rowe 2011; Wenner 1989; Whannel 1992; 2005) the concept of institutionally prescribed codes and values in televised sport has not been given adequate scholarly attention, save for a few notable exceptions. In Richard Gruneau's (1989) landmark case study of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's coverage of World Cup Skiing, it was concluded that production practices were a set of unconscious and informal rules, or conventions picked up on the job (see also Krein and Martin 2006; Norman 2012). Stoddart's (1994) ethnographic study of televised golf attributed a great deal of autonomy to the production crew at live golf broadcasts. At this production, the crew's decisions were decentralized and consensual rather than imposed by an outside influence. MacNeill's (1996) critical observations of the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympic Games productions

by the CTV network did not cede as much autonomy to the production crew. MacNeill (1996) stated that there was a degree of human agency at the production site, but qualified this statement with the recognition that the productions were highly conventionalized, following historical and cultural televisual codes of practice. Silk, Slack and Amis' (2000) work on sporting events produced by the Canadian Sports Network, TSN, revealed production relied heavily on legitimate and accepted industry standards for producing football in a commercial climate. While further work (Silk, Slack and Amis 2001) suggested, like Bourdieu, that the complexities of the reproduction of sport events for television (in this case the Commonwealth Games) in a global, consumer oriented, climate requires an institutional approach that stresses both a micro and a macro level (Scott 1995) so as to account for individuals, organizations, institutions and the wider political, economic and cultural 'field' of production. We thus turn to the landmark work of Di Maggio and Powell in explicating institutional theory given it is fundamental in understanding the SEB process.

### **Macro Institutional Processes**

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Meyer and Scott (1987) have been influential in developing the macro perspective which outlines how institutional effects are diffused through a field of organizations (Scott 1995). This perspective attempts to account for wider belief systems and cultural frames, and explains how these values become appropriate and necessary in legitimating an organization's everyday operations (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Meyer and Scott 1987; Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Tolbert and Zucker 1983; Zucker 1987)—for SEB the emphasis would be on the role that markets, resources, institutional environment, and competition play in determining the



processes of reproducing events for television. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) propose that normative, mimetic and coercive isomorphic processes occur to ensure that such institutionally legitimated values are disseminated to organizations within a particular field. These isomorphic processes occur within a set of organizations or an organizational field (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Organizational fields provide a context in which individual efforts to deal rationally with uncertainty and constraint often lead to homogeneity in structure, culture and output (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Mimetic processes define how organizations model themselves on other organizations, especially those that are perceived to be legitimate and successful. Normative processes stem primarily from professionalization. The existence of formal education for a field, legitimation of a cognitive base produced by university specialists, and of professional networks that exist across organizations are such normative isomorphic mechanisms (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). The filtering of personnel is perceived to be an important normative process. Filtering is said to occur through the hiring of individuals from firms within the same field, through the recruitment of staff from a narrow range of training institutions, through common promotion practices, and from skill level requirements for specific jobs. Furthermore, individuals undergo “anticipatory socialization” to common expectations regarding personal behaviour, dress style, vocabularies and language (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). The final mechanism identified is coercive isomorphism which results from both formal and informal pressures exerted on firms by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the field within which the organization functions. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) outline that such pressures might be felt as force, as persuasion, or as an invitation to join in collusion. It is crucial then in gaining an understanding of the reproduction of sporting events that

such isomorphic processes are critically addressed to aid scholarly comprehension of the how and why of media production. In addition to these structural, macro, processes it is also imperative that we understand the ways in which individuals act within this structure. To do so involves comprehending the micro level of televised sport production.

### **Micro Institutional Processes: ‘Institutional Wisdom’**

At an individual level, institutional theory allows us to account for the day-to-day production practices and decisions of cultural intermediaries involved in the reproduction of sport events. This lens allows us to understand the micro production practices of televised sport professionals as taking place in relation to a wider belief system about what constitutes ‘good television’ as well as to an internal network strategy or initiative. Drawing upon Zucker (1977), Goffman (1974) and Berger and Luckmann (1967), Scott (1995: 41) suggested that “individuals do construct and continuously negotiate social reality in everyday life, but they do so within the context of wider, pre-existing cultural systems: symbolic frameworks, perceived to be both objective and external, that provide orientation and guidance.” Micro institutional research has convincingly shown that many aspects of internal organizational functioning have strong cognitive roots that are shaped by how actors categorize and make sense of their own organizational world at the same time as being embedded in complex relational networks between firms (Porac and Thomas 1994). Porac and his colleagues (Porac and Thomas 1989; Porac and Thomas 1994; Porac et al. 1989; 1995) showed how mental models (such as shared mental representations and language) used by decision makers are implicit in interpreting their task environment. This actor-centred perspective outlines how agents use

collective symbolic, cognitive and subconscious representations, “codes” or “ideologies,” to solve everyday decision problems (Porac et al. 1995). In SEB, this perspective can account for the codes, ideologies, or symbolic frameworks— institutionally prescribed and legitimate values for producing sport on television—that frame the ways in which individuals interpret their environment or social reality. Such codes may not necessarily be inherent in the medium itself but evolve from complex interactions over time. They maintain themselves because they are familiar, taken for granted, and usually unquestioned, both by those in the industry and by the audience (Grossberg et al. 1988). However, few scholars have actually addressed industry-wide constraints or codes, or the familiarity of television programs. ‘Institutional wisdom’ was addressed in one of the first televised sport production studies funded by the British Film Institute (Buscombe 1975). The investigation of the 1974 World Cup of Football addressed the practices of individual production personnel as they existed in relation to pre-existing frameworks and symbolic codes. Buscombe (1975: 5) stated that it was impossible to show a sporting event on television without a production team making decisions in accordance with an institutionally prescribed code of practice:

This does not necessarily mean that decisions are made consciously, indeed the fact that they are not reinforces the argument that they are made in accordance with a code. For in practice decisions about what to cut, about whether to move the camera in or out, need to be taken at speed and must therefore be made with reference to a system which is understood so implicitly that it has become second nature—just like language itself.

While a particular producer or director may not have made exactly the same decision about the rejection or acceptance of a particular shot, a basic logic or structure could

underlie the actions of the decision maker (Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret 1976). As was suggested in the early work of Buscombe (1975), mental models or “codes” may be used by key decision-makers to interpret the task environment of their organizations. These codes, whether cultural or televisual, may not be consciously employed, just as values within an organization take on a symbolic, cognitive and subconscious existence. Production practices thus become naturalized, in the sense that particular techniques involved are reproduced instinctively as the one and only, the “natural” way of doing things (Buscombe 1975). Buscombe argued that institutionalized technical practices become embedded or internalized within an organization’s belief or values system, and that this system becomes a legitimate internalized value, operating as context for everyday production decisions.

## **CASE STUDIES**

Within these cases, we hold together our discussion above on the political-cultural economy of SEB, the institutional structure of broadcast organizations and constraints on creatives or cultural intermediaries, the rhythms and regimes of an expanding media-industrial complex, and the role of events in shaping and manipulating social practices and subjectivities. We also explore what appear as endemic concerns that derive from SEB, namely interrelated issues around the production of sporting events within the logics of capital accumulation, related concerns related to nation / identity within an increasingly globalized age, and the increasingly blurred boundaries between broadcasters, the state, sporting properties, the military and other elements of the commercial sports industry. These seemingly disparate, yet highly interrelated concerns, are crucial, given that they frame the institutional logics / practices of broadcast professionals. To do so, we draw on three emblematic exemplars of SEB;

the 1998 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth, the London 2012 Olympics Games, and the ESPN / Textron Bell Helicopters Armed Forces College Bowl Game.

### **Kuala Lumpur: Global/Local Production and the Recreation of *Bangsa Malaysia***

Within this case, we highlight the importance of understanding the context / perspective of the SEB with respect to how this influences the product that is aired, the production decisions made, the negotiations that would take place between broadcasters and event organizers, and the structure and operation of the broadcast. The host broadcaster for the event was Radio Television Malaysia (RTM). Fully aware they were unable to produce this event singularly, they utilized professionals with event experience and a company they perceived to be legitimate, Television New Zealand (TVNZ). It was RTM's intention to be able to come away from the Games with a set of personnel trained in the 'industry' norms of how to produce SEBs. RTM also wanted to have the facilities, technology, and knowledge that would aid them in their day-to-day productions and being named as a host broadcaster for a future Olympic Games. Thus, through a series of isomorphic processes (DiMaggio and Powell 1983), the 'legitimate' network attempted to diffuse Western standards of television production to the Host Broadcaster. This involved mimetic process as RTM personnel attempted to copy the way in which a legitimate Western network would produce, track and field for example. Further, the education of camera operators, producers, and other television professionals can be seen as a normative process of establishing a cognitive base for the Games productions. There also existed coercive isomorphic pressures on the RTM staff, as the TVNZ consultancy 'pressured' HB staff to get up to their standards (e.g., if the host feed was not deemed to be up to an industry held, yet unstated, 'standard', pressures were placed upon the Host to

conform to the 'way in which the industry would produce the event.' As such, the day-to-day production decisions and operations of the RTM personnel can be seen as taking place in relation to pre-existing symbolic frameworks that were provided by Western networks and were seen to be legitimate, providing orientation and guidance (Scott 1995). In other words, the RTM personnel drew upon the legitimate western industry standards, codes or ideologies of televised sport production, or institutional wisdom, in interpreting their task environment and solving everyday decision problems (Porac et al. 1995). This is not to suggest that individual broadcasters (such as RTM) would not have their own objectives, perhaps relational to broadcast sponsors or other relationships (such as state objectives) but it is to argue that such objectives tend to take place in relation to (or in constant tension with) industry-wide practices that frame SEBs, practices that more often than not are fully grounded within the logics of the *hypercommerical* media-industrial complex (Giulianotti 2002). Indeed, the tensions inherent in the broadcasting of the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur in 1998 offer telling insights into the multitude of forces that shape SEB. The Games were broadcast by a state-owned operator and were part of state-building policies and internationalization initiatives. Amid concerns brought about by the erosion of domestic political authority and the increasing dominance of external economic actors, Malaysia has attempted to retain a degree of national economic autonomy and reposition Malaysia within the global / networked economic order (see Beeson 2003; Bunnell 2002). Ground within what Beeson (2003) termed an 'economic nationalism' was the 'Vision 2020' initiative that set out to re-engineer the social, political and economic climate of Malaysia and stressed balanced economic growth, a high quality of life and the creation of national unity (SUKOM 1996: 5). As Bunnell (2002) points out, this was part of a broader state strategy that aimed to

‘rescript’ the nation and national identity so as to position it to negotiate, facilitate and capitalize upon transnational phenomena. Vision 2020 sought to reduce, if not eradicate, the major problems of poverty, corporate ownership and employment based on ethnicity. Yet, following Bunnell (2002 p. 119), while there are many progressive elements to this multicultural strategy, a more nuanced reading does not necessarily suggest a “commensurate reduction in socio-economic inequality at the nation state level” and is suggestive of a highly uneven distribution of socio-economic benefits in Malaysia’s new knowledge economy (k-economy).

Unsurprisingly, a key vehicle for these economic and ideological strategies was the hosting of the 1998 Commonwealth Games—Kuala Lumpur 98. The recreation of *one* Malaysian race, *Bangsa Malaysia*—the state strategizing to overcome current ethnic and religious divisions and strains that ‘plague’ contemporary Malaysian cultures (Mohammad 1996)—was a central theme during Games coverage. Fully in accordance with regime legitimation, internationalization, global-oriented growth strategizing, economic nationalism and the *re-scripting of the nation*, the organizing committee for the 1998 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games—SUKOM—saw the Kuala Lumpur major urban region MUR as emblematic of a space “that embodies and reflects the nation’s thrust for achievements in education, business and industry, building and accommodation, facilities, transportations systems and multi-racial harmony” (SUKOM 1995: 9). Alongside such strategizing, and indeed to sell an image of harmony attractive to inward investment, the theme tune of the Games, *Bersatu Selamanya* (Forever as One) stressed that to achieve ‘fame’ the people of Malaysia must stand side by side, join hands, unite and let the world see that ‘we’ exist as one. The ‘Forever as One’ theme was also evident in the official ‘promotional’ song of the Games, *Bersama Berpimpin Tangan* (Let’s Join Hands).

The song's message to the diverse Malaysian cultures was to 'strive hard, let's be friends, united as one' (SUKOM 1996: 93). This 'preferred' image was central to the strategizing of the Games broadcaster, RTM's, Games. Specifically, RTM's broadcasts aimed to reflect the intent of the United Malays National Organisation UNMO Baru party to promote a particular interpretation of *the* Malaysian culture—one which both stressed multiculturalism but still held a 'special position' for Islamic Malays—and integrate that nation into global capital, growth and power relations (especially through the 'multimedia super corridor', see Bunnell 2002; 2004; Silk 2002). The production style of the Games emphasized *image* through tourism, corporatism and a utopian cityscape: the graphics package emphasized the commercial business district of downtown Kuala Lumpur, incorporating the iconic mega-project of the Petronas Twin Towers, and the Kuala Lumpur tower; the host provided client broadcasters with 'scenic' interpretations of Malaysia and Kuala Lumpur, video of local attractions and landmarks, and 'fly-bys' of the stadiums and the cityscape; and daily beauty shots were provided to client broadcasters that emphasized gleaming venues, city scenes, landmarks, spectacular facilities and architecture.

RTM, SUKOM and the Malaysian government thus capitalized upon the Kuala Lumpur 98 opening ceremony—a key place given it sets the tone of the broadcast—as a stage for showcasing selected versions of place and identity; these which offered a particular and highly marketable image and which depicted the specific and functional economic role of Kuala Lumpur and its relationship to global economic processes. The 'Unity towards Progress' segment rendered a specific redefinition of history that depicted *the* story of Malaysia from first settlement, through the first stages of colonization and invasion to independence and the 'struggle' and benefits of *Bangsa*



*Malaysia*. This re-telling of Malaysian history depicted ‘confusion and bitterness’ (invasion and colonization), ‘happiness and *Merdeka*’ (independence) (the building of a ‘strong and independent nation’ and national unity) and ‘struggle and challenge’ which would be overcome through the initiatives of Vision 2020—namely the development of technology, tourism, a refined and unified multi-cultural national identity, global economic acceptance, and, the repositioning of the city as a world city promoted through the international competitiveness of a multi-media super corridor (see also Douglass 2000; Bunnell 2004). Of course, as Bunnell (2002: 120) points out,

state strategies to reposition Malaysia in networked times, of which the multi-cultural re-scripting of the nation forms part, may only serve to render problematic and to marginalize those citizens—of whatever ascribed cultural community—who are unable to participate efficiently and effectively in the so-called ‘k economy.

## **London 2012: Global Spectacle, Tourism, Urban Regeneration and Brand**

### **Britain**

The size of the London 2012 broadcast operation was, in and of itself, staggering. The first summer Olympics to be covered by the OBS as a stand-alone host broadcaster used in the region of 1,000 cameras, 50 Outside Broadcast trucks and 5,500 production staff. OBS also held overall responsibility for fitting the IBC for its own use and that of rights-holders. With a global audience of 4.8bn, OBS made 5,600 hours of broadcast footage available to 13,000 accredited rights holding broadcast personnel representing over 200 countries. In addition, 230 hours of 3D coverage was produced at London 2012. OBS relied on media organizations from twelve different

countries (the BBC for example provided boxing, rowing and canoe/kayak feeds to the HB; BS Korea, archery and taekwondo; TVE Spain, Triathlon, Aquatics-Swimming, Marathon; CCTV, China, Modern Pentathlon, Badminton, Gymnastics, Table Tennis) to control particular venues /sports in which the broadcaster in question has a recognized specialism.

While London 2012, as an event broadcast, was covered by the OBS, there existed a coalescence of interest groups and power blocs—sporting, state, supra-national, corporate, philanthropic, military—who operate, often with a collective affinity to influence the broadcast product as it goes to air. Framing the Olympic spectacle are a group of quite strange bedfellows, a coalition of the organizing committee, LOCOG which defines the overarching Games signature, the dictates of the supra-national IOC, and the British Olympic Association, the mores of the host broadcaster (OBS) and rights-holders, state-led investment, business and tourist strategizing (e.g., through Visit Britain, the Department for Culture, Media & Sport or DCMS), political aspirations related to the positioning of Britain in the world (and indeed of the position and career pathways of British politicians), the legal obligations and market-led desires of various levels of Olympic Partners (such as Coca-Cola, McDonalds, Visa, Dow Chemical), the Civil Aviation Authority (to ensure aerial coverage does not interfere with flight patterns), political and economic rationalities related to neoliberal crafting of place and populace, the overwhelming securitization and militarization of the city, and the context of the values on which the decision to award the Games to London was made. In this example, we consider the ways in which this influences SEB. These different groups would have wanted to ensure that Britain (especially London) was presented in a particular way—one that would use the Games as a platform for inward investment, tourism, and various national identity projects.

Fully in line then with a neoliberal urban politics that stresses the aesthetics of place, the systematic renaissance, creation, and tender management of specific landscapes in the resuscitation of their (symbolic and economic) value, the regeneration of this portion of London was ground in a place-marketing logic that will appeal to footloose investors, shoppers and tourists (Gold and Gold 2008; Silk 2007; Wilcox and Andrews 2003; Waitt 2000; 2008). Alongside the tender resuscitation of sanitized space, city re-imaging for the external tourist market unsurprisingly formed part of the Games-based strategizing. Working in concert with the organizing committee—LOCOG—has been a number of semi-autonomous public-private partnerships (among, for example, Visit Britain, Visit London, the DCMS) attempting to capitalise on the immense possibilities the Games provide to showcase a *specific* image of place to leave a lasting tourist legacy (Visit Britain 2010; DCMS 2007). The Games thus provided the opportunity to construct and promote an urban image with real political value onto a global stage; the resultant return being the attraction of transnational capital to the city which acts as a legitimizing tool and accelerant for urban renewal projects that promote economic growth (Gibbons and Wolff 2012). Fully embracing tourism as “merely human circulation considered as consumption, a by-product of the circulation of commodities” Debord (1967: 169), the Games provided a platform for specific images of place designed for the external tourist market. This image was based around what Charlotte Brundson (2007, in Whitaker 2011) termed ‘Landmark London’ and was exemplified in the equestrian competitions at the Games in which ‘preferred’ material expressions of self were depicted through the obstacles that comprised the jumping courses. These obstacles were themed to depict British maritime histories, landmarks such as the White Cliffs of Dover, Nelson’s Column,

the Greenwich Royal Observatory, Charles Darwin, Tower Bridge, Stonehenge, the White Horse of Wiltshire, Hampton Court, Cricket, a rose garden, the *Eastenders* soap opera, East End Barrows, Wind in the Willows, and, the Diamond Jubilee. Further, this image was bolstered by the use of heritage sites by LOCOG as central elements in the hosting of certain events. An outcome of strategizing between the organizing committee and DCMS sectoral organizations (including English Heritage, Historic Royal Palaces (HRP), and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment), iconic heritage sites formed the backdrop for many events offering dramatic ‘scenery’ for the mediated London Spectacle. The Royal Parks hosted a number of events including Triathlon in Hyde Park, cycling in Regent’s Park, equestrian in Greenwich Park, beach volleyball in Horse Guards Parade (Gibson 2010) as well as providing venues for the BT (British Telecom) sponsored fanzones: ‘Olympics Live.’ That these images dovetailed with the ‘GREAT’ campaign run as part of Visit Britain’s Games strategy (predicated on the ‘Great’ in Great Britain), was of little surprise. Emphasizing the appeal of Britain as a destination—through key pillars of ‘the British brand’, culture, heritage, countryside, music, food, shopping and sport—Visit Britain’s Games Strategy saw the Games as an opportunity to put the Great back into Britain with Games motivated tourism being the opportunity for shape the preferred image of place. Through an offers book for foreign news journalists (which included 750 ‘freebies’ such as entry passes to various tourist sites and meal vouchers), a media and broadcast guide that would aid in promoting ‘positive stories’, the provision of ‘beauty shots’ from around Britain for rights-holders (such as NBC) and a social media campaign centred on a ‘love uk’ tagline, the aim was to enhance the appeal of Britain as a destination and generate up to 4 million additional visitors with a total £2billion spend.

As can be seen in the above, the broadcasting of the event does not take place in a vacuum. Alongside the emphasis on performance, back-stories, closeness of cameras to performers to emphasise emotion, and the rolling out of innovative broadcasting platforms (such as 3D), these strategies need to be reflected in the ways in which the broadcaster would set cameras (historic buildings as backdrops), provide ‘beauty shots’ to rights holders, ensure that certain selected pockets of London (such as the shopping centre that formed part of the regeneration project) are showcased, in decision making about where studios would be located or indeed with regard to which historic stories and images of London would be used and which marginalized to tell the specific story of the Games that were desired by those groups influencing the broadcaster. There was perhaps nowhere more obvious a place for such messages than in the Opening Ceremony of the Games, which like the Kula Lumpur event, was a place to re-imagine (albeit problematically) Britishness: a performance that focused on a multi-ethnic London in which hyphenated persons occupied leading spaces, yet simultaneously denied a focus on minority pasts (specially religious pasts and presents) or the harsh realities witnessed in the everyday interactions of a diverse population; such pasts were silenced (see also Macdonald 2011) in a performance of unquestioned be(long)ing and assumed acquiescence to core British values and pasts (see Silk, in press).

There are a number of extremely important and pertinent questions that arise from the presentation of Britain as a utopic geographical, cultural and multi-ethnic space (see e.g. Davidson and Wyly 2012); yet what is of most interest here is how the broadcaster of the event (OBS) worked with opening ceremony organisers (often

contentiously with regard to ensuring the best camera positions to ensure these messages were presented to the watching world). Indeed, the LOCOG media guide translated the action in the stadium for rights holders, with a number of rights holders providing their own commentary that directly included passages from this guide. The example reveals not only the important groups, institutions and forces that shape the ways in which a SEB may produce an event, but also ensures that any pretence of the presentation of a live event are clearly put to bed; and this is even more marked (than the Kuala Lumpur example) and reveals the institutional production practices of SEB given the broadcaster, OBS, is a Spanish based (Madrid) organization—a fact that caused some consternation among the British SEB community. The SEB thus plays an exceptionally important role—through liaison with other key stakeholders—in the provision of certain key messages through the event, those which dovetail with the interests, policies and strategies of a number of high-profile and influential organizations.

### **The Militarization of SEB: ESPN, Bell Helicopter-Textron and the Armed Forces Bowl**

The two previous examples (a medium sized event, the Commonwealth Games, and a large event in the form of the Olympic Games) revealed the complex relationships between the perspectives of the SEB and a number of key stakeholders. These complexities and contexts have clearly influenced how the broadcast is created, how the event is re-presented for particular audiences, and aids in our understandings of why the actual product that goes to air looks like it does. In the following example, we highlight another important context that has come to frame SEB since at least 2001—the import of the military. This is perhaps not an obvious connection, yet sport

and the military have been closely connected for many years, a relationship that has intensified in the period since 9/11. Henry Giroux (2008) convincingly argued that the symbiotic relationship between neoliberalism and militarization has become normalized in this distinct post 9/11 historical moment. The supposed ‘logics’ of neoliberalism produce a growing culture / spectacle of fear and surveillance at ‘home’; a central component of which being the ‘discursive process’ (Giroux 2004) of militarization. That is, rather than the hard-core military industrial complex—weaponry, increase in army size, military technologies, and so on—what is of interest is how the *values of militarization have become part of the sporting popular*; produce particular views of the world and mobilize an array of pedagogical practices in a variety of sites in order to legitimate their related modes of governance, subject positions, forms of citizenship and rationality (Ferguson and Turnbull 1999). Thus, as a ‘culture of force’ that serves as a powerful, popular and extremely public pedagogy that shapes our everyday lives and memories (Giroux 2004; 2008; Newfield 2006), sporting events—as neoliberal spectacle—operate as texts through which commodities were deployed with the power to shape national identities, social practices and subjectivities (Giroux 2000; Hall 1997; cf. Rojek 2013). In particular, SEB has utilized events to convey dominant militarized / securitized, and highly public, pedagogies (see also Kelly 2013; King 2008; Silk 2012) that serve to shape our understandings of sport, citizenship, terrorism, terrorists, ourselves and ‘others.’ There are numerous examples of these relationships. One only has to think of: Little League World Series LLWS, Miracle, NASCAR, flags, presidents, opening pitches, Support the Troops NHL Tournaments (see Scherer and Koch 2010), the heroification of sporting/military celebrities (see Kelly 2013), the celebritisation of returning injured soldiers paraded as Paralympics (see e.g., Batts and Andrews 2011; Bush et al.

2013) or the general valorisation of the relationships between sport and the military (e.g., in popular programs such as Soccer Am on Sky Sports in the UK. Such examples also align cogently with Coakley and Pike's (2009) notion of the shifting orientations of commercialized sport, whereby heroism, drama, and the exploration of the body's potential to exceed its limits have become the accepted and normalized forms of broadcast. Therefore, the militarization of SEB has clearly become part of the accepted and normalized institutional practices of broadcast personnel; the consequences of which deserve closer critical scrutiny.

Within this case, we focus on a small event, the ESPN Bell Helicopters Armed Forces Bowl game in US college football. Indeed, it might be an impossibility to locate a more overt, and troublesome, example of the militarization of sporting culture and the apparent 'natural' relationship between sport, corporatism, military interests and broadcasting. In 2006, media behemoth ESPN, Bell helicopter-Textron, First Command Financial Services and officials from the annual Bowl game in Fort Worth, Texas, conspired to create the Armed Forces Bowl. Media convergences are of course far from new in sport, nor indeed to ESPN who, at various points in time have, through their parent company Disney, been intertwined with the Anaheim Mighty Ducks, LLWS, and ESPN sports bars across North America, to name but a few (Sullivan 2012). Michael Butterworth and Stormi Moskal (2009) offer an intricate reading of the event (the 2006 incarnation), suggesting that audiences are sold, through the Bowl, an image of national identity that depends on war; an image in which the 'logics' of corporate sponsorship and the militarisation of everyday life is normalised within the militarised sporting spectacle. . Sponsored by a military hardware manufacturer, supported by Department of Defence initiatives to "support



the troops,'” and broadcast by the self-proclaimed “World Wide Leader” in sports, ESPN, Butterworth and Moskal reveal how the broadcast of an entertainment spectacle “masks the violent realities of war and exploits the members of the U.S. military as a means for justifying corporate-military expansion and defusing critiques of military policies” (417). Through an emphasis on ‘fun’—such as the fan-fest exhibition featuring armoured vehicles, tanks, helicopters, simulation machines, and recruiting booths, military demonstrations, fly-overs, the performance of a military band and so on—and the incorporation of service personnel into the actual SEB itself (including a half-time enlistment ceremony, the introduction of players by military personnel and a videotaped message from General David Petraeus, Commander of the Multi-National Forces in Iraq), the spectacle both further embedded the machinery of the military within the culture of sport, and, served to dismiss the seriousness of warfare (Butterworth and Moskal 2009). There are many exceptionally troubling elements in this relationship between militarization and SEB, at this juncture we would like to draw out three central concerns.

First, despite the articulation of sport, corporatism, broadcasting and the military—manifest in spray-painted advertisements for “Textron Systems” and “America Supports You”, the consistent mention of “Bell Helicopter” as sponsor, commercials for various branches of the military—the corporate sponsorship of the game was deemphasized; instead ‘sponsorship’ was replaced with an invitation to support those idealized expressions of American identity: the troops (Butterworth and Moskal 2009). Indeed, following this line of argument, the product for sale through the SEB was acceptance of the offer to support the troops—through appropriate acts of citizenship and consumption, and indeed, ‘tacit support’ for an organization (Bell

Helicopters) that profits from sending troops to war (Butterworth and Moskal 2009: 420). Second, and building on an acceptance that ties citizenship to military support, there is an exceptionally worrying trend—although perhaps not that surprising given Giroux (2008) suggests that university institutions are militarized knowledge factories within the broader context of *the biopolitics of militarization*—towards the use of college football as a site of military recruitment. As Butterworth and Moskal (2009) outline, the Army alone spends US\$1.5 billion a year on places and products—high-schools, shopping malls, on videogames such as America’s Army—to capture youth recruitment (see also Rutherford 2005). In the Armed Forces Bowl, the conflation of sport, the military and the University was normalized through the incorporation and display of military hardware and military personnel. Butterworth and Moskal’s (2009) reading of the broadcasting of the event suggests that active members of the military were easily folded into the media narrative of the event: Brigadier General Tod Wolters introduced starters for the game directly from the cockpit of an F-22 jet, the induction of new recruits during the half-time and a ‘message’ from General David Petraeus, Commander of the Multi-National Forces in Iraq during the half-time show that emphasized the magnificent job of US forces overseas, and an expression of gratitude for the support given by members of the crowd / television audience. With Butterworth and Moskal (2009), these rhetorical broadcasting strategies served to justify US policy through recognition of, and support for, the ‘magnificent’ work of idealized military citizens; in turn this left no space for any questioning of the morality or necessity of the actual work being conducted overseas. Such questioning would, simply, not “constitute the proper limits for American citizenship” (Butterworth and Moskal 2009: 427). Third, and finally, Butterworth and Moskal (2009) point to the way in which Petraeus’ message equated

the 'war on terror' with World War II through reference to the men and women of the Armed Forces as 'America's new, greatest generation.' The reference to the nobility of the ordinary heroes of World War II—no matter how mythologized in popular texts such as *Saving Private Ryan*, *Band of Brothers*, or, *The Pacific*—draws on a nationally defining moment that evoked resilience and unity against a common foe. It framed the contemporary narratives of war and anger with the deployment of history 'lessons' as the metaphor through which the current world should be viewed (see Winfield et al 2002). Through superimposing contemporary concerns (the war on terror) onto reconstructed versions of the past (the greatest generation) the narratives within the SEB are mythologies that simplify and dramatize the nation's past and its place in the world, elucidating its contemporary meaning through (re)constructing its past (Bell, 2003). Much like the rhetorical deployment of the Blitz following the 7/7 terror attacks on London's tubes (see Falcous and Silk 2010), these narratives imagine American unity and an external enemy, an important continuity deployed in the present. Further, it acts as an important national myth that gives a point of origin and an idea that we are a common community, travelling through history together (Stephens 2007). As Gilroy (2004) notes in relation to the continual revision of the Blitz in England, such rhetorical strategizing acts as a model of commonality, a dominant trope through which to understand contemporary national 'struggle.' As Butterworth and Moskal (2009) suggest, the reference to the Greatest Generation, is far more than a simple historic touchstone, it is a rhetoric of identification that sutures the past to the present and makes an appeal to a foundational unity, a nationalist narrative that asks citizens to actively support and participate in the recovery of a lost moment of apparent harmony (Stephens 2007). Perhaps what is most worrying here,

beyond the specificities of the event itself, are that such production practices have become accepted and institutionalized within SEB.

## **CRITICAL DISCUSSION**

Three key, and overlapping symbolic, material and theoretical concerns arise out of the relationships between the stakeholder (broadcasters) and normative aspects: a) spectacle, b) identity and globalization, c) state / militarization. Within this section, we point towards some of these critical issues that arise out of the context of SEBs and the taken-for-granted and institutionalized production practices therein. What is abundantly clear is that SEBs take place within what was described above as a hyper-commercial and brazenly for-profit context. Described as a sporting spectacle—drawing on the theorizing of Guy Debord—SEBs are part of the “autocratic reign of the market economy” such that the “spectacle has never before put its mark to such a degree on almost the full range of socially produced behavior and objects” (Debord 1990 [1988]: 2, 9). Indeed, in our late capitalist age of hyper-consumption, Debord (1994) suggests, “in form as in content the spectacle serves as the total justification for the conditions and aims of the existing system” (13). Given the relative inversion of sport, broadcasting, events and consumer society and the capacity for such ‘popular’ texts to ‘seduce’, ‘influence’ and ‘celebrate dominant values’, one of the key concerns that arises is with regard to how SEBs serve as an economy of affect through which power, privilege, politics and position are (re)produced. That is, in the tradition of Giroux (e.g., 2003; 2004), Kellner (1995) and others (e.g., Barrett 2006; Costa 2004; Couldry 2008) who point to the importance of culture and the culture industries (and the discourses they produce) in the shaping, moulding and education of citizens, SEBs are far from banal or innocent broadcasts of sporting events; they

are virulent public, educational, seductive and impactful *representations* that convey values, knowledges, and power relations. To offer but one example, the logics of the audience and interrelated broadcast sponsorship would heavily impact the decisions made by cultural intermediaries at a SEB. Recently, it has been asserted that one of the most important and taken-for-granted production practices among these cultural intermediaries is the ability to construct emotive stories around star performers—if you like to narrate the event. NBC for example famously undertakes this practice in its Olympic coverage, offering a plausibly live promotional, virtual and speculative version of the Olympic Games—as opposed to live coverage, the narrative instead builds through the primetime coverage so that the viewer is gripped once NBC play the massaged and repackaged event. However and unlike the logic that sport only delivers the prized male viewer (aged 18-49), NBC has consciously packaged its Olympic productions to attract a larger female viewership (see Andrews 2006b). Not that NBC was necessarily the proponent of sudden feminist consciousness; rather the broadcaster needed a larger female viewership to ensure it delivers on its promise to advertisers in terms of audience share and thereby justifies its huge spend on the rights for the Olympic Games. Andrews' (2006b) account of the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games coverage unpacks NBC's representation strategy, revealing how the broadcaster produced a stereotypically feminized Olympic spectacle—an Oprah Olympics—that featured events deemed appropriate to female viewers and which were infused with sentiment, affect and aesthetics (hyper-femininity of gymnasts, swimmer and divers, hetero-sexual embodied femininity of selected athletes) feminizing Olympic reality. Additional studies (e.g., Bishop 2003; Rowe 2004), which have attempted to locate broadcaster approaches in connecting with female audiences, have highlighted tensions in the portrayal of female athletes and feminized

spectacle. As such, in an age where the ‘heroic’ is privileged over the ‘aesthetic’ (Coakley and Pike 2009), the broadcaster’s narration of a sporting event may coax female sport towards the fringes of its coverage. Likewise, in our ethnographic work at SEBs, we have seen the audience / commodity context frame choices made by a client broadcaster. Again, the context meant that far from overly progressive gendered logics framed the production with decisions about broadcast sponsorship for Commonwealth Games netball matches be located in ‘logics’ that women would be the audience and that domestic goods (in this case, washing machines) should be tied in to the coverage. Not only did this result in the interweaving of the sponsors’ name into the event (e.g., the Fisher and Paykell player of the game, graphics, ensuring announcers used the sponsors names) but framed decisions about pre-event filming of ‘stars’ undertaking domestic chores in their homes—decisions that took place with regard to pre-conceived ‘logics’ yet acted to normalize particular (and overly regressive) gender discourses and relations.

A second, and related point, is that SEBs (seemingly no matter their relative size, scale and scope) cannot be understood without a global frame of reference; whether addressing the reach of the broadcast, the make-up of the crew, the presumed audience or indeed the perceived logics of the images contained within the broadcasts. In this regard, SEBs form part of overt competitive strategizing by organizations (and states) that sell images based on globalization driven growth. In this sense, SEBs are part of a disordered, paradoxical and complex set of processes that involve a “multidimensional mixture of production and effects of the global economy and capitalist market system, new technologies and media, expanded judicial and legal modes of governance, and emergent modes of power, sovereignty, and resistance”

(Kellner 2002a: 293). These assertions point to the nuances that exist between the local, internationalism and transnationalism; the ways that global, national, and local scenes and events (and for this discussion, sporting events) intersect in the contemporary world (Dallmayr 2002; Kellner 2002b; Preuss 2004; Masterman 2009). In a theoretical sense, at least, and as Grossberg (1997: 9) proposed, the relationships between globalization, broadcasting, neoliberal growth and sporting spectacles needs to be framed in a general recognition that “the local and the global are mutually constitutive, although the exact nature of this ‘mutual constitution’ remains to be specified, and has yet to be adequately theorized.” Thus, we need to think about the ‘complementary and interpenetrative’ relationships between the global and the local in the representations of sporting events through the televised broadcasts. That is, following Robertson (1995), we need to think about how the global is complicit in the ‘creation and incorporation’ of the local within these spectacles, and vice versa. That is, in these events, the local *image* (say of a spectacular landmark) or indeed structure and operations of the SEB, cannot be separated from the global; in Robertson’s terminology the local has become glocal—the glocal (and the process of glocalization) involves the integration of the local and the global. Indeed, the “*local* has been so affected by the *global*, that it has become, in all intents and purposes, *glocal*” (Ritzer 2004: xiii, xi). Alongside such an understanding of the concept of the glocal (and glocalization) exists another important concept that aids our comprehension of SEBs: the grobal (and grobalization)—the imperialistic ambitions of nations, corporations, organizations, and the like and their desire, indeed need, to impose themselves on various geographic areas (Ritzer 2006) and realize their own regional and global economic aspirations and presence. Andrews and Ritzer (2007, 137) thus suggest that the “key dynamic in the process of globalization shifts from the

tension between the local and the global to that between the glocal and the grobal” as grobal forces predicated on growth of power, influence and profit (Ritzer, 2004) exists in constant tension and relation to glocalization (the interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas) (Ritzer 2006). As such, to understand the structure, content and influence of SEBs, there is a need to *hold together* an amalgam of intensive and extensive glocalisation and the simultaneous re-inscription of the importance of the global growth rationalities (through the concept of the grobal, neoliberal and neo-imperial ambitions of a mixed constitution of ‘monarchic entities’ ‘aristocratic entities’ and ‘democratic forces’) (cf. Andrews and Ritzer 2007; Hardt and Negri 2000).

For example, in the Kuala Lumpur and London 2012 cases, we have pointed to how (g)local urban spaces are reconfigured in relation to global understandings of what matters in, and for, a global city or MUR and their grobal aspirations to develop place-based dynamic competitive advantages in relation to their global competitors (Matusitz 2010). The centrality of tourism therein—at least in terms of positioning themselves on the global circuit of culture—cannot be underestimated. The SEB offers an accelerated and concentrated *short cut* through which to *image* and (re)define a city for potential visitors and investors. However, important questions remain about the relevance and morality of such spaces and their symbolism for the wider urban / national citizenry. Indeed, as with any spectacular product, these ‘neoliberal politics of spectacle’ (Waitt 2008) bear forth some uncomfortable truths. This is particularly the case if one ventures behind the seductive, corporate inspired veil of material and symbolic spectacle. That is, in the events depicted above, selective elements of *the* culture, especially spectacular urban landscapes and



structures, form *the marketable image*. That glocal urban image is one extracted and abstracted from local culture and becomes *the* representation of place translated into cultural meanings; an image that is of course simplified and palatable for a global audience. Specific local assets and resources—those conducive to the global market ambitions and the tourist gaze became exploited and ‘specific’ (consumerized) representations of place take centre stage and are used temporarily to showcase place to the world. Take for example London 2012’s projection of the city, through the SEB, as a harmonious, diverse city, a middle-class metropolis and a plural space of opportunity devoid of antagonisms. London is of course a container of multiple narratives and such representations of geographical utopia ignores the exploitation of migrant bodies who nurture and sustain the creative class and the tourist image, the processes of exploitation and social exclusion that remain hidden from view, relationships between the ethnic majorities and minorities, and the authoritarian modes of control sustained through fear and suspicion.

Finally, and in tandem with the global context, a hyper-commercial sports industry / consumer culture and the neoliberal politics of spectacle, and as we proposed above, SEBs cannot be understood without understanding how the discursive processes of militarization have become embedded within the institutionalized logics and production practices of sports event broadcasters. That is, and fully appropriated within the realm of popular culture, SEBs are highly affective domains that have been clearly appropriated and mobilized as a central space in which discourses are produced that “affirm and celebrate the violence of warfare” (Butterworth and Moskal, 2009: 412), such that it “normalizes war, rendering it habitual, seemingly rational, and largely immune to challenge” (Ivie 2007: 204, in Butterworth and

Moskal 2009). While there may have been a voluntary moratorium on the conflation of sport/war metaphors by the media in the immediate aftermath of 9/11—replaced by a narrative of ‘lost innocence’ and the ‘healing’ power of sport—it was not long before sport in the post 9/11 moment became conflated with the rhetoric of a ‘war-consumed state’ (King 2008: 529). Indeed, building on Burstyn (1999), the post-9/11 military/sport rhetorical coupling serves to further emphasize the celebration of the masculine body politic and which equates war, and thus sport, as male preserves (see also Scherer and Koch, 2010). In this sense, SEBs have become another highly ‘popular’ space in which a strange neoliberal amalgam of state / military and corporate entities invested in the pursuit of profit—the new ‘modern intelligentsia,’ to paraphrase Anthony Smith (1999)—in which the lines between war and entertainment, service and consumption, fighting and fun (Butterworth and Moskal 2009), politics and culture, the popular and the ‘official,’ have become blurred.

### **SUMMARY: THE COMPLEXITIES OF SEB**

An amalgm of state-sponsored gentrification, corporate economic rationalities, the ‘logics’ of neoliberal globalisation/grobalisation and state-/military strategies coalesce around sport event broadcasting. These stakeholders—sporting, state, corporate, philanthropic, military—operate with a seeming collective affinity and with ‘normalized’ and deeply institutionalized production practices to produce sporting events for assumed audiences. SEBs, despite the variances in size and context, also have deeply ingrained structural arrangements, in part an outcome of a deregulated global media industry in which freelance contracts predominate. These contexts heavily influence the content and ideological messages of sport event broadcasts; messages that we have argued tend to normalize and consolidate exiting relations of

power. This is hardly surprising, with the logics of sport event broadcasters so closely tied to the logics of the market, what else might we perhaps expect? But, as scholars who are attuned to a morally centred and critical project, one focused on human rights, history and politics, should we not continue to question normalized cultural narrations of embodied existence (Titchkosky 2012) in sport event broadcasting? Should we not, as Denzin (2012) argued about the potentialities of critical sports studies, and to which we should hold to the same scrutiny sport event management, open a critical dialogue and a radical intervention into the multiple worlds that shape and contain sport, sporting bodies and sporting events? For, as Rojek (2014: 14) argues, global events, as “products of entrenched global power structures and causal sequences” are about “moral regulation and political quiescence of the polis” and act as “therapy” to a powerless polis; a smokescreen (a bread and circuses if you like) to pressing global social concerns.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

We argue, that there is an urgent need, following Denzin (2012), to construct a utopian imaginary, a radical democratic present, a safe and sheltered place where the shackles of neoliberalism are cast aside and where consumer culture / (discursive) militarization is held in abeyance. This requires a suite of critical, interpretive methodologies that can help us make sense of bodies/lives; critical methodologies that “exhibit interpretive sufficiency; ... [are] free of racial, class, gender, or sexual stereotyping; rely on multiple voices; enhance moral discernment; and promote social transformation and critical consciousness” (299). With Denzin (2012), this would involve us as scholars re-imagining what the sport media should and should not do. We should demand that broadcasters and journalists that are trained and valued in a self-

conscious, self-reflexive, ethical, communitarian and transformative ethic and who produce stories that provide the conditions for cultural beings to fulfil their civic tasks (Christians, Ferre and Fackler 1993). This is a call for broadcasters who can interrupt and interpret sporting cultures and histories (Denzin 2012), and for critique of banal sport event broadcasting and indeed of academic studies that produce the same; a trajectory that may well involve loosening the shackles of 'sport' from the global logics of neoliberal (and neoconservative) political and economic rationalities. For sure, this is not an easy task, yet as scholars committed to social justice we should not just sit in silence—in acquiescence—as we consume. We should be moved to action, to not accepting 'accepted' patterns of production and sport event products. This is not perhaps as radical as it might seem, Brian Wilson, for example, at the University of British Columbia is currently involved in re-training sport media professionals in sport-related reporting that is thought to promote peace, democracy, and/or social justice and which is free of violence and xenophobia. Likewise, high-profile cases—such as the Richard Keys and Andy Gray case at Sky Sports—are chipping away at the acceptability of gendered / sexualized norms within the sports industry. As academics, we have a role here, and Chris Rojek (2014) has challenged the event management field to undertake precisely such a calling. Rojek (2014) argues, in comparing Leisure Studies to Global Event Management as academic disciplines, that event management scholarship is overwhelmingly uncritical and self-congratulatory and should be attuned to the role of events in issues around manipulation, neoliberal social control, moral regulation and management, securitization, and corruption—to which we might add governance, the commercial direction of social practices and subjectivities, the erosion of democracy, belonging, human rights and the impingement of civil liberties (see McGillivray 2013 for a response). While

disciplinary labels are somewhat unimportant to us—we would not position ourselves as Leisure Studies or Event Management scholars, preferring instead to embrace a critically engaged interdisciplinary approach to the event / site under interrogation—to realize our impact and to act as just and moral individuals and event intellectuals, and indeed to question the inevitability of hypercommercial sport events, we perhaps should take more heed of Edward Said, who advanced an ‘amateurism in intellectual life’; an amateurism he juxtaposed against professionalism. For Said (1994: 55) professionalism means

thinking of your work as an intellectual as something you do for a living, between the hours of nine and five with one eye on the clock, and another cocked at what is considered to be proper, professional behavior—not rocking the boat, not straying outside the accepted paradigms or limits, making yourself market- able and above all presentable, hence uncontroversial and unpolitical and “objective.”

Yet, if we are to really interrupt the logics of sport event broadcasting, then perhaps as Said argues, it is time to rethink our relationships and our scholarship on such events. Rather, drawing on Said (1994: 13) we should become intellectuals with a vocation that is “publicly recognizable and involves both commitment and risk, boldness and vulnerability” in a field that fosters “a spirit in opposition, rather than in accommodation” in which the “the challenge of intellectual life is to be found in dissent against the status quo” and in which intellectuals “cannot be mistaken for an anonymous functionary or careful bureaucrat”?

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TABLE 16.1

## Domestic Broadcast Economies: Selected Recent Rights Deals

<b>Sporting Competition</b>	<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Monetary Value</b>	<b>Major Players</b>
National Football League (NFL)	2013-2022	\$28bn	Fox, NBC, CBS
National Basketball Association (NBA)	2008/9-2015/6	\$930m	ESPN / Turner Sports
WNBA	2017-2022	\$72m	ESPN
Major League Baseball (MLB)	2014-2012	12.4bn	Fox, TBS, ESPN
Summer Olympic Games	2016 (Rio)	\$1.226bn	NBC
National Hockey League (NHL)	2011-2021	\$2bn	NBC
F1 (UK rights)	2012-2018	£455m	Sky Sports
NASCAR	2014-2022	\$2,4bn	Fox
FA Premier League Soccer (UK rights)	2013/4-2016/7	£5.5bn	Sky Sports / BT
Women's Super League (UK, football)	2011	£0 production costs covered	ESPN
ANZ Championship	2013-2015	Rumoured to be negligible / Netball	Fox / SBS

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(Netball,

paying for

Australia/NZ)

coverage

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