University of Alberta

Joining the Faithful: The Saskatchewan Roughriders' Fan Subculture and Public Ownership

by

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Abstract

This research examined the Saskatchewan Roughriders' fan subculture and their connection to public ownership. It was socially significant to study this particular case because little scholarly work has been done on the effects of public ownership on a group of fans. This thesis studied this relationship in two ways. First, a political-economical analysis of Canadian professional sport was conducted to examine the ownership patterns of professional sport franchises across the country. Specifically, this research focused on three areas in Canadian professional sport: the CFL, the NHL, and the Toronto-based franchises. Secondly, using semi-structured interviews and content analysis, this research then identified the common features -- or habitus -- of the subculture and its relationship to public ownership in Saskatchewan. At the same time, participants were questioned on the strengths and weaknesses of public ownership to determine its visibility to those involved with the subculture.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the world of professional sport, fans are becoming increasingly aware of the commodified nature of their favorite teams. Many idealistic fans continue to hope that, when "their" team hits the field, they are simply playing for them and the cities and regions that they represent. This is not necessarily the case -- if it ever was -- as professional franchises and athletes are being increasingly pulled in various directions by the economic pressures and limits present in the new economy of professional sport. Recently, some academic studies have taken issue with the ongoing commodification of popular franchises and have argued that private ownership, in particular, is slowly eroding the traditional communal aspects of sport. Others have noted that private owners have increasingly sought to secure public funds for their franchises by calling upon popular associations between community, urban/regional identity, and sport teams. For example, deMause and Cagan (2008) point out in their research that more and more communities are being blackmailed by private owners for new publicly funded stadia and direct subsidies for local professional sport franchises. The journalist David Zirin (2010), meanwhile, not only questions these developments but suggests that the mismanagement of professional sports franchises is alienating fans from the teams within their own communities.

Whitson (1998) builds on these observations by examining the differences that exist amongst sports franchise ownership patterns across the world, and concluded that North American professional sport ownership patterns have developed differently than in other countries. For example, professional soccer and rugby teams in Europe and Australia have historically been run at the community level through a board of governors and fans have traditionally eschewed private ownership models (Whitson, 1998). However, he observes that in North America:

> ... the production and staging of sport as commercial entertainment led to the emergence of entrepreneurial structures and practices that would slowly transform the relationships between sporting teams and the communities they ostensibly "represent". (Whitson, 1998, p. 58)

Whitson (1998) proceeds to note that sports teams in North America are now primarily owned by media conglomerates, or exceedingly wealthy entrepreneurs who often live outside local communities. This means, according to Whitson (1998), that "...the languages of communal traditions and loyalties are increasingly supplanted by corporate images and by the discourse of consumer choice" (p. 60).

Although some academics have investigated these developments and voiced their dissatisfaction with the commodification of popular sports teams and the problems that are being identified with some models of private ownership, alternative realities are rarely discussed. For example, public ownership of sporting clubs is often ignored in academic circles or simply forgotten about in the popular media. However, in response to the ongoing demands from private owners for public subsidy, some scholars are beginning to emphasize the notion that the public and fans of sports franchises should have a direct stake in the ownership of local professional sports franchises (Eitzin, 2006; Zirin, 2010). These academics suggest that by taking a more active role in the ownership of a club, fans and citizens who are already supporting their teams may gain back control of the local franchises they are already subsidizing. The arguments brought forth by Eitzen (2006) and Zirin (2010) merit additional examination as their ideas may have important consequences for sports fans and citizens in general.

Ultimately, I want to delve into the importance of public ownership, and examine whether or not this type of ownership model is relevant to fans and applicable franchises in the

new era of professional sport. One team that is currently publicly owned is the small market Saskatchewan Roughriders, who play in the Canadian Football League (CFL). Thus, the main crux of this thesis will be an examination of public ownership in Saskatchewan, and its relationship to the team's well-known and loyal fan base that is popularly understood as "Rider Nation". Before moving on to address the social significance of this case and my research questions, it is important to contextualize this project through a personal narrative that reflects on my "career" as a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan.

Becoming Part of "Rider Nation"

I became a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan for a variety of reasons although, interestingly, not because I am from Saskatchewan. I actually grew up in Alberta, near the Saskatchewan border, but my whole family -- father, mother, aunts, uncles, and others -- are all from Saskatchewan. Some of my fondest memories as a child were listening to Roughrider games on the radio while camping with the family in Saskatchewan during the summer months. In fact, the biggest influence in my adoption of the Saskatchewan Roughriders as 'my team' was my father. He taught me the ways of "Rider Nation" in easy to learn lessons. In my childhood, the Saskatchewan Roughriders were not a successful team, but my father always remained faithful and regularly told me that Rider fans do not give up on the team, and that the community's "faith" in the team would eventually pay off. It was during those long summer nights that my father taught me many things about being a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan. Out of these lessons, three key traits stuck out: loyalty, resilience, and a sense of community.

Loyalty to the Roughriders is something that I reflect on all of the time, as the team has not always been as successful as they have been in recent years. It seems that you can always trust a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan to be present and never waver in their support of the team

as long as there is a game on. Other fans in today's era seem to regularly switch teams like its nothing to them, but that is sacrilege to Roughrider fans. The old adage of "Once a Rider fan, always a Rider fan" rings loud and true every time you hear it. My father is a prime example of this. During his lifetime, the Roughriders have only won three Grey Cup's, the least of any franchise in the CFL.[1] He has suffered through mediocre season after mediocre season, yet he remained loyal to the 'cause' of the Saskatchewan Roughriders. Enter the man in a conversation about the Edmonton Eskimos, Calgary Stampeders, or the Winnipeg Blue Bombers (the Roughrider's primary rivals) and you are guaranteed to learn a few new expletives. There is simply nothing that can break my father's loyalty and undying love towards the Roughriders except death, and many other fans feel the same way.

Such devotion to the Saskatchewan Roughriders enables a certain resilience to build up. Throughout all of the hard times that the team has gone through, the Saskatchewan Roughriders and their fans have persevered and remained loyal. As a naïve child, I could never understand why my father cheered for the Saskatchewan Roughriders since they always lost, and were a constant disappointment. I think the moment that transformed my casual support into full-on fandom was attending the 1997 Grey Cup in Edmonton when the Roughriders played the Toronto Argonauts. When I saw thousands of Saskatchewan fans show up in some of the worst possible conditions for a football game (it was played in a blizzard), I was enthralled with how this collective group of fans supported their team. The 1997 Grey Cup showed me that no matter what happens, the province of Saskatchewan -- in their support of the Roughriders -- will always be resilient to whatever challenges are posed to it.

The final and most personal reason for being a Roughrider fan is the sense of community that surrounds the team and its supporters. Of all the groups that I have had the pleasure of being

[1] The Grey Cup is the trophy to the winner of the CFL's championship game.

a part of, the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture has produced some of the most enduring feelings of community and some very 'entertaining' memories. At the 2010 Grey Cup in Edmonton, for example, you could hear several Roughrider fans honking their horns or starting random "Let's Go Riders" chants in support of the team throughout the city. Even when I went to New Zealand in 2007 (after the Roughriders won their third Grey Cup), I managed to celebrate their victory with another Roughrider fan who was traveling there at the same time. Related to this, I have always marveled at the sheer amount of Saskatchewan Roughrider fans that will travel to games across Canada to support their team. Even in Edmonton, Commonwealth Stadium will often feel like it is a home game for the Roughriders and not the Eskimos, due to the amount of Saskatchewan fans.[2] Unlike many teams in the CFL, you can actually go to an away game and know that there will always be many other Roughrider fans in attendance. Because of this, you will be comfortable knowing that as a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan, you are part of community of like-minded fans.

Upon further reflection, I realized that I recognized all these traits without actually knowing something really important about the team -- that they are publicly owned. This was, strangely, not part of my father's regular lessons about the team. Throughout my childhood, I never knew about their public ownership and only found out about it when I entered university and starting taking classes in the area of sports sociology. Once I found out about it, I was actually impressed with that type of ownership and its links to the community. This made me feel confident that fans could influence, in some small way, the direction the team was taking. It also reinforced the long-standing communal bonds between the franchise and the province, and that the fans were truly the foundation of the team. Although I had no clue that the Saskatchewan Roughriders were publicly owned for the majority of my fandom, I was elated with the idea that

[2] Commonwealth Stadium is the stadium where the Edmonton Eskimos (CFL) play their home games out of.

I could become a shareholder. The possibility of an even closer connection to the Saskatchewan Roughriders organization only increased the love and respect I hold towards the franchise. For all of these reasons, I decided to take a closer look at the idea of public ownership and its relationship to the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture. In the end, I wanted to simply understand where other fans stood in relation to these issues.

The Social Significance of this Case

It may seem like an odd choice to study the fans of a one team in one specific and, admittedly, small league, but the Saskatchewan Roughriders offer an example of a socially significant case study. When considering the social significance of the Saskatchewan Roughriders and public ownership, there are many angles that I could have pursued in this thesis. Nevertheless, I narrowed my focus down to the three most applicable themes. The three themes that will inform this thesis are the sociological ideas surrounding sports fandom and community, the distinct history of Saskatchewan, and ownership developments in the new economy of professional sport. Before explaining why these three topics are relevant, it is important to contextualize the Saskatchewan Roughriders franchise itself against the rest of Canadian professional sport.

The roots of the Saskatchewan Roughrider franchise can be traced back to the formation of the Regina Rugby Club in 1910, which makes the team one of the oldest in Western Canada (Zakus, 1999). In fact, the franchise recently celebrated its centennial year in 2010. In 1924, the moniker ‘Roughriders’ was adopted and the team became the Saskatchewan Roughriders in 1948 to signify their provincial representation (Zakus, 1999). Although the club has been modestly successful throughout their history, the Roughriders have gone through difficult times on and off the field. In 1997, the club was reportedly $2.6 million in debt and set a target of 200,000 game

tickets sold (by March 15th, 1997) to officially save the club from folding (Zakus, 1999, p. 65). Although a harrowing time for the franchise, the Roughriders and their fans banded together in this difficult time and saved the franchise. The 1990s were a particularly difficult era for the franchise, and the league in general, but the team has experienced a resurgence of sorts, winning another Grey Cup in 2007 and gaining a reputation for having the most active and loyal fans in the CFL.

Currently, the Saskatchewan Roughriders and their fans are at one of the highest points in franchise history, and the team has been successful on and off the field thanks to a host of developments in the CFL, but also broader economic trends, most notably the emergence of Saskatchewan as an important economic player in the Canadian economy. Calder (2010) elaborates on the links between these recent 'successes', noting that:

> Just as Saskatchewan as a whole has emerged in the twenty-first century as a "have" province with a strong economy, the Roughriders have become affluent. This economic clout, together with the CFL's recently created salary cap and the Club's organizational skills, has put it in the strongest position it has enjoyed in its hundred-year history. (p. 115)

Clearly, the CFL's salary cap has provided some cost certainty for the Roughriders, and all Canadian teams. But, there is now more money and economic growth in the province than ever before, and interest in the Roughriders is at an all-time high. Still, despite the renewed sense of optimism in the province, fans of the team have remained unconditionally loyal, even through more tumultuous moments.

This brings me to the first theme that will help guide this research, fandom. Questions of how and why fans become -- and remain -- fans of a team are important to discuss within the context of this paper. A large amount of sociological research has examined the nature of fandom and their relationship between fans, sports teams, and communities, but the two main sources that will be cited throughout this paper are Crawford's (2004) book, *Consuming Sport: Fans, Sport and Culture* and Giulianotti's (2002) article, "Supporters, followers, fans, and flaneurs: A taxonomy of spectator identities in football". The Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture is notorious for their vibrant fan support, so determining the characteristics and subculture of this group is paramount to any study that examines the relationship between fandom and public ownership. Does public ownership help create stronger, more united fans? Can fans truly influence the direction of their favorite team via this ownership structure? Or, is public ownership simply irrelevant to fans (as it was with me until very recently)? This raises the possibility that we have entered into the terrain of mythology in relation to the importance of public ownership and the Roughriders.

As noted earlier, the second theme of interest will be the relationship between the Roughriders and the province of Saskatchewan itself. Waiser (2005) and Eisler (2006) are the two main sources that I utilized to examine the history of Saskatchewan. With this area, I was most interested in exploring how fans feel about the importance of the team for provincial identity and if a community-owned team served as a way for them to embrace a collective identity in opposition to other parts of Canada. The Roughriders have the potential, as Saskatchewan's only professional sports franchise, to represent the province and its values in a much more comprehensive manner. In the past, Saskatchewan has embraced ideals connected to socialism (Crown Corporations, Medicare, etc), making public ownership of its only professional

sports franchise seem not that unlikely of an occurrence. Still, it will be important to understand if these values are still embraced by fans of the team.

The final theme that will guide this thesis is a discussion of the ownership patterns in Canadian professional sport. In terms of studying ownership styles, some research has examined the demographics of professional sports ownership in North America (Harvey, Law, & Cantelon, 2001; Law, Harvey, & Kemp, 2002), but only a few studies have engaged the Canadian context (Field, 2006). At the same time, Field's (2006) research was limited because he only focused on the ownership of professional franchises in Toronto. All of these studies point to the rise of media ownership of sports team in North America as a growing concern simply because the interests of many fans pass into the caretaking of a few privileged owners. Thus, studying the effects of public ownership on a fan base is socially significant because it can point to a different way of running professional sports franchises that may be in the best interests of fans. Further research regarding these three topics of interest will be brought up in the forthcoming literature review.

Three Research Questions

The following is a list of the three questions that guided this qualitative research project:

1. What are the ownership patterns of professional sport franchises in Canada?
2. What are the strengths and limitations of the Saskatchewan Roughrider's model of public ownership?
3. How does public ownership affect the dispositions -- or habitus -- of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture?

These three questions are modeled as such to create a logical progression through the study. The first deals with the broader political-economic context and focuses on the ownership patterns of Canadian professional sport franchises using the publicly-owned Saskatchewan Roughriders as a point of comparison. As previously mentioned, some research has been done on North American professional sport ownership (Law et al., 2002; Harvey et al., 2001; Field, 2006) but no study has focused explicitly on the Canadian market. Thus, this thesis will aim to contribute to this body of knowledge and provide a more comprehensive analysis of professional sports ownership from a Canadian context.

The second question was created to better understand the strengths and limitations of public ownership in the new millennium. Is public ownership a legitimate mode of ownership for Canadian professional sport franchises, or is it simply a residue from the past that will fade away? I posed this question because there is a void in the sociological literature on the merits of public ownership. Most researchers, in fact, identify the positive aspects of this form of ownership, but rarely identify problems that could arise because of this ownership model (Zirin, 2010; Eitzen, 2006). Within the context of this gap in research, I wanted to offer a more balanced view of public ownership.

The last question directly engages the relationship between public ownership and the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture. First, I will attempt to tease out the collective habitus of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture through interviews with fans. How do people become and remain fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders? What makes them a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan? What are the commonly understood values of the fan subculture? Related to this, I questioned the role of public ownership in the creation of the fan subculture. Do fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders realize what public ownership is? Does public ownership affect

their fandom? The link, if any, between public ownership and a fan subculture is vital, as it could provide reasons to continue promoting public ownership as a viable ownership model for other franchises. This thesis will delve into these questions and more as they allow me to examine both interesting and necessary issues in addressing the future of public ownership in Canadian professional sport.

In the following chapters, I will provide a literature review that summarizes relevant sociological literature connected with the Saskatchewan Roughriders and the ownership patterns of professional sport. Next, I will outline the methodological approach that was used to conduct the research. The methods utilized in the research -- semi-structured interviews, content analysis, etc -- will be explained in further detail within this chapter. My methodological reflections are followed by two discussion chapters. The first of these chapters contains a political-economic analysis of the ownership patterns of Canadian professional sports teams. My second discussion chapter provides an analysis of the data gathered in relation to the final two research questions. Here, my focus shifts from the broader political-economic landscape to an examination of the characteristics of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture and its relationship to public ownership. Finally, I will provide a short concluding chapter that summarizes my findings and raises questions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In considering what is important for research concerning the Saskatchewan Roughriders and public ownership, I have broken down the following literature review into three distinct parts. The first topic of consideration will be the idea of sports fandom and how it is conceptualized in relation to the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture. How does one define a fan subculture? Do Roughrider fans continue to follow the local team out of feelings of loyalty or is their interest becoming more globalized and consumer-oriented? The second topic of interest is Saskatchewan itself, as well as the location and significance of a publicly-owned franchise within a province with a long history of communal ideals. Here, the political context and history of the province was the key component in my overall analysis of the topic. Without the history of the province and the team, would the Roughriders franchise even be publicly owned?

At this point, I also considered the idea of mythology and how popular myths associated with communal ownership can potentially alter the perceptions of citizens and fans alike. Is it possible for a publicly-owned franchise like the Roughriders to become mythologized into something more than a sports team by their fan subculture? Is the idea that public ownership is important to fans of the Roughriders in the new millennium itself a myth? Finally, the last topic of consideration will be a general discussion of ownership in modern professional sport. How are professional sports teams (specifically Canadian ones) owned, and what are the current issues that fans face in relation to how current ownership models are structured? At the end of this chapter, a short discussion of the theoretical definitions inherent with this study will be discussed. The best place to start, however, is an explanation of the relevant sociological research conducted on sports fandom.

Sports Fandom

Sports fandom is a complex and thoroughly discussed topic in the sociology of sport community. How do we conceptualize fans? Who are the most dedicated fans, and what marks their dedication to a sport or team? Some researchers propose that, "(u)nlike pop culture fans who were historically marginalized as deviant consumers, sport fans have usually been viewed as part of the cultural mainstream" (Schimmel, Harrington & Bielby, 2007, p . 590). Schimmel et al. (2007) further suggest that the mainstream acceptance of sports fandom and public displays of fan identity "…may stem from the widespread social belief that sport embodies many elements of dominant value systems, including masculinity, meritocracy and patriotism" (p. 590). There are also, of course, extensive variations within fan communities and subcultures. For example, three studies on NASCAR fans (Amato, Peters, & Shao, 2005; Hugenberg & Hugenberg, 2008) and mixed martial arts fans (Kim, Greenwell, Andrew, Lee, & Mahony, 2008) display a vast difference in what each subculture deems to be important attributes and identities for fans.

Arguably, the toughest place to start an explanation on fandom is actually defining what a fan is. The common definition that will be used for this thesis is the one brought forward by Crawford (2004) in his book. He proposes that "(a) fan is generally viewed as an 'obsessed' individual: someone who has an intense interest in a certain team, celebrity, show, band or similar" (Crawford, 2004, p. 19). In fact, much of Crawford's (2004) book deals with the issues involved with identifying what a fan is, and the process of becoming and remaining a fan throughout one's life or 'career' as a sports fan. Crawford (2004) argues that:

> Rather than privileging the activities of certain fans over others, it is important, if we are to understand the contemporary nature of fan cultures, that we consider the full range of

> patterns of behavior of all fans, including those who do not conform to 'traditional' patterns or images of fan activities. (p. 33)

Despite the earlier point by Schimmel et al. (2007), modern fans face many prejudices thanks to recent fan riots and the excessive behavior of hooligans. Nevertheless, Crawford (2004) spends most of his time trying to remedy these views.

One misconception about fans is that their identity is fixed in one place, but Crawford (2004) correctly points out that fan subcultures are constantly changing, with the requirements for membership being very fluid. For Crawford (2004), one of the more important parts of the 'career' of a sports fan remains their introduction and socialization into a particular fan culture:

> Furthermore, an individual's categorization as a fan depends largely on numerous social factors, such as social context or time. For instance, a particular follower of a sport may consider themselves a 'fan', but their patterns of support (for instance, they may not attend 'live' games") may see them deemed as not a 'real' fan by other supporters. (p. 20)

What this quote illustrates is the simple fact that fans are actively socialized and 'taught' various values and meanings associated with a fan subculture. There is no set, natural, or common process through which a fan is created, precisely because any categorization of a fan depends on the socializing factors inherent in any community or subculture at a given time. Within fan subcultures, it is often historical precedents and longstanding rituals that are the pre-established requirements for fan 'admission', based on the social atmosphere of the club at any particular time. This coincides with Crawford (2004) when he interprets that the audience is "…more active in its consumption, where messages by the mass media are reinterpreted or even rejected (resisted) by audience members" (p. 21).

Other research has focused on the consequences of over-identifying with a specific sport team or player. Dietz-Uhler and Lanter (2008) describe affective, cognitive, and behavioral consequences that must be considered when studying the identification of fans with a sport team. Dietz-Uhler's and Lanter's (2008) work:

> …suggests that sports fans engage in a host of behaviors that allow them to maintain a positive view of their team, including holding positive evaluations of their team, making team-serving attributions for their team's performances, engaging in more favourable behavior and holding more positive attitudes towards fellow than rival fans, and displaying fierce loyalty to their team. (p. 111)

Indirectly, this study will be looking at these behaviours with respect to the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture. In this case, various behaviours should not necessarily be viewed in a negative light as they may represent important connections and an increased sense of loyalty for fans. With respect to this thesis, what differentiates Saskatchewan Roughrider fans from others and their relationship to public ownership will be the main topic of examination.

Of course, not all fans exhibit the same dedication or even overall knowledge of the team/sport that they are watching. In discussing the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture, a crucial point to examine will be the extent in which fans identify with the club because different levels of identification will offer differing perspectives on fandom:

> For fans with a low level of identification, the role of team follower is merely a peripheral component of their self-concept. As a result, these persons tend to exhibit only mild reactions to the team's performances. However, for fans with a high level of team

> identification, the role of team follower is a central component of their identity. (Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001, p. 4)

Not every fan will have the same level of devotion or emotional attachment to the trials and tribulations of their chosen team, and these levels will also vary individually over the course of a fan's lifetime.

To evaluate these levels of emotional attachment, Giulianotti (2002) offers a model to differentiate sport fans in the new millennium. Giulianotti (2002) argues that "…old ritual sublimations that served to bind sports fans to their club and community have been replaced by the mass consumption of televised, market-driven sport" (p. 28). He subsequently divides spectators of sports into four distinct categories of reference based upon a traditional/consumer horizontal axis and a hot-cool vertical axis. These four groups are: 'flaneurs', 'fans', 'followers', and 'supporters'. The movement away from the traditional thinking of the fan as a more static and localized supporter is, in part, due to increased economic and cultural globalization. As a result of these processes and a host of technological developments, people are more interconnected than ever before, and fandom has been stretched and delocalized so much that fans can follow an unprecedented number of teams from around the world.

Bourdieu (1988), being highly critical of this recent trend, holds television responsible for 'devaluing' fandom and sport in general:

> In sport matters, one is often, in the best of cases, at the stage of dance in the 19th century, with professionals who perform in front of amateurs who still practice or have practiced. But, the diffusion made possible by television brings in more and more spectators bereft of all practical competency and who care more about the extrinsic aspects of practice, such as the result, the victory. (p. 160)

In today's society, cheering for a team does not have to be based on things like community or even tradition, but instead on other factors like a team's ability to market themselves as a popular global brand, or as a result of a team's track record with success. We can point to the popularity of brands like Manchester United and Real Madrid around the world to suggest that the merchandizing opportunities for the biggest teams have grown exponentially in recent years, especially in regions with little or no traditional connection to those teams. In reaction to these developments, the two consumer-based typologies that Giulianotti (2002) explores are the 'flaneur' and the 'fan'.

Giulianotti's (2002) 'flaneur' is the type of spectator that bases his or her fandom on what is fashionable or trendy at the time in consumer culture. A "…flaneur thereby avoids any personal consumption by the appended signs but instead consumes these signifiers in a disposable and cliché-like fashion, as if adopting a temporary tattoo" (Giulianotti, 2002, p. 39). The flaneur has no allegiance to place or community; instead he or she supports "objects" that signify that they are with the 'in' -- or powerful -- crowd. The old saying "bandwagon jumper" is the perfect example of what a flaneur stands for. Why cheer for a losing team, when you can just follow a championship team to claim the glory they have accumulated? At the same time, the most profitable teams are starting to recognize the presence of this group, and are marketing their franchises towards these non-local fans in an attempt to globalize their brand.

Edensor and Millington (2008), for example, illustrate the extensive marketing efforts that Manchester City initiated to promote their team in comparison to their popular intercity rivals, Manchester United.[3] People were attracted to these two Manchester clubs because of their presence in the popular media throughout England and, indeed, around the world. In this globalizing world:

[3] Manchester City and Manchester United are Premier League football (soccer) franchises in England.

> ...the changing culture of football is bringing together new forms of community association beyond the local. Crowds are becoming increasingly heterogeneous, no longer easily distinguished by conventional notions of class, gender or ethnicity, and media exposure and enhanced travel opportunities enable many new football supporters to pick and choose their preferred team, regardless of location. (Edensor & Millington, 2008, p. 178)

This quote exemplifies the main difference between the supporter/follower and the fan/flaneur and the fact that locality does not necessarily translate into loyalty in today's global society. Fans in North America and throughout the world can follow the most popular soccer teams like Manchester United or Manchester City with the help of television and the Internet. They can also consume their products and merchandise with ease due to an increased global market of goods. Still, these developments are often restricted to the biggest teams and brands, as opposed to smaller clubs that are less well known.

In the case of the hot/consumer spectator, or 'fan', their "…sense of intimacy is strong and is a key element of the individual's self. But, it is a relationship that is rather more distant than that enjoyed by supporters" (Giulianotti, 2002, p. 36). This type of spectator is comfortable having 'distant' relationships with their team/club of their choice, which includes the option of watching them on either television or the increasing options the Internet offers. One study done of sports fandom points out that:

> Although most sports fan literature deals with live stadium attendance, definition of one's fanness can readily occur entirely through television: Some fans never attend games. And viewing on television has become a legitimate form of game consumption. (Eastman & Riggs, 1994, p. 259)

Eastman and Riggs (1994) point out that these "…sports viewers also adopted rituals to help them relate to the game or sports event itself, to *participate* in the externals of the game at home or in a bar, to take part without attending in person" (p. 257; emphasis in text). In essence, fans are a lot like most supporters with respect to emotional attachment to the team of their choice, but they are no longer required to be physically close to the franchise. Although based in the consumer side of fandom, the fan is nothing like the 'flaneur' in their dedication to the consumption of sport.

The 'follower' is the first of Giulianotti's (2002) tradition-based spectators. Giulianotti (2002) says that a followers are "…defined not by an itinerant journey alongside the club but, instead, by keeping abreast of developments among clubs and football people in which he or she has a favourable interest" (p. 34). In other words, the follower does not always have to be involved in the team that they support, but they pursue an active interest in the team's daily activities. For example, someone who "follows" the Saskatchewan Roughriders is comfortable looking up scores on the Internet while keeping track of players and statistics without having to be involved in the team's governance. As a matter of fact, "…the follower arrives at such identification through a vicarious form of communion, most obviously via the cool medium of the electronic media" (Giulianotti, 2002, p. 34-35). This type of spectator does not have as "hot" of a relationship with the team that they follow, but they care enough to have a bit of emotional attachment to the franchise.

A 'supporter', however, is the traditional/hot spectator, who is extremely loyal and emotionally attached to whatever team that they identify with (Giulianotti, 2002). The supporter label is aptly described by Majumdar and Bandyopadhyay (2005) when they discuss the heated fan rivalry between West and East Bengal soccer teams. While there are many rivalries in Indian

soccer, this one is distinct from all others because it fosters "...an intense emotional attachment of supporters towards *their* club and vehement opposition to the *others'* club" (Majumdar & Bandyopadhyay, 2005, p. 222; emphasis in text). For example, the authors cite the stories of a father who came to the game on the day of his son's funeral, and a young boy who kept on celebrating his team's victory even when his toes were chopped off by a train (Majumdar & Bandyopadhyay, 2005, p. 210). This is the perfect example of Giulianotti's supporter label because these fans have a clear emotional attachment to the fate of their team, often to the detriment of other important events in their life.

Another example of the 'supporter' can be found in the book *Fever Pitch*, where celebrated author Nick Hornby (1992) discusses his lifelong journey as an Arsenal fan.[4] He is an example of a devoted supporter because he rarely misses games and is often more concerned about attending Arsenal games than his own physical and mental health. Moreover, no matter how poorly the team has played, he always remains loyal to the club to the point where his identity is directly tied into the team's progress. The two previous examples (Majumdar & Bandyopadhyay, 2005; Hornby, 1992) demonstrate how a supporter's happiness and emotional well-being is often related to the success or failure of the team they identify with.

All of these examples, however, point to the importance of understanding how people become fans and the influence of various subcultures on the socialization process. Rather than trying to label or categorize fans at specific points, Crawford (2004) suggests that "(i)t is far more useful to recognize the historical and cultural specificity of supporter 'communities' and patterns of support and 'authenticity', and adopt a more fluid model of patterns of support as a process and career" (p. 38). In other words, the pre-existing fan subcultures -- including

[4] Arsenal is an English Premiership football team based in London.

longstanding familiar relations -- and the local history of various teams can have a substantial influence on the identity and devotion of fans, regardless of whether they are supporters, fans, or followers. For example, Hornby (1992) would have had less of a commitment to Arsenal if he had lived outside of England but also if the club had not been such a central bonding point between him and his father. Thus, when looking at Saskatchewan Roughrider fans and the team's subculture, these broader structural factors, in addition to the personal histories of each fan will be heavily considered in this study. This is due to the fact that every fan has a different historical path into the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture and their involvement in the fan subculture may change throughout their lives.

The difference between the consumer and the traditional path of fandom points to some important questions that should be raised in any sociological research. For example, Merkel's (2007) examination of German football culture points precisely to these structural and personal considerations. Merkel (2007) also suggests that some recent changes towards more consumer-oriented fan culture have occurred:

> While in the past the bond has been emotional and personal, and club life an integral part of the local community celebrating coherence and solidarity, the modern era increasingly needed synthetic symbols, such as flags, kits, badges or scarves to display support and closeness and to bridge the growing distance between team and fans. However, the artificial nature of these props lacked the intensity of the traditional relationship between local community and team. (p. 229-230)

Following Giulianotti's (2002) typology, Merkel (2007) argued that Germany's national fandom practices are increasingly transforming from a supporter base to a fan-based model of support. This is arguably due to the increasing global reach that commercial products have in our society.

There can be little doubt that professional sports franchises have been commodified to unprecedented levels, and that brand loyalty is now an important economic factor for most teams to consider when marketing their respective franchises. However, as Quinn (2009) notes, just like "… a consumer has a favorite toothpaste or beer, the fans "brand loyalty" to their favorite teams and athletes can be a much more intense attraction - more like a religion or an addiction" (p. 115). The ability to capitalize on this loyalty has, of course, garnered interest from the businessmen who run any number of teams and leagues. Quinn (2009) uses Major League Soccer (MLS) as an example of these trends:

> The five-year Major League Soccer contract signed by David Beckham for an alleged $250 million in 2007 indicates that at least MLS is well aware of such spillover star effects. The contract was only possible because of MLS's "single-entity" ownership structure. Teams are all owned by the league as a whole, while individual franchise operators are partners in the league. Consequently, all of them can cash in on one team's big star. (p. 149)

In other words, MLS is making sure that it takes full advantage of the David Beckham "brand" to ensure that the league stays healthy as a whole. People may not come to watch MLS by itself, but by ensuring the presence of a high profile global celebrity, the league can benefit from the spillover effects associated with this particular "brand".

As owners continue to profit from the intense and loyal relationship between fans and various franchises, the fans themselves must also gain something from the relationship. In their book, Higham and Hinch (2009) note that, "(t)he building of personal identity through subculture membership is an important element of the sport experiences of hardcore sports fans" (p. 107). Higham and Hinch (2009) point out that:

> If the activity (sport) can be experienced equally in the company of the appropriate people in a local pub, sports club or public live site, (i.e., the destination/place of competition is irrelevant) then the need to travel and the interests of the destination are drawn into question. (p. 110)

In other words, as long as the right community of fans is active, any potential viewing site is appropriate. This can be seen in the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture through the amount of fans that travel to away games. It may not be Mosaic Stadium, but the presence of their follow Saskatchewan Roughrider supporters gives any other stadium in the CFL the legitimate experience that supporters covet.[5]

In this day and age, you can act out your fandom in any number of locales, whether it at the stadium or now, more commonly, on the Internet. On the other hand, though:

> Sport spectatorship offers the potential for unique experiences to be derived from social and cultural interactions, which represent the synergistic interplay of intense sporting activities and the coming together of spectators from 'home' and 'away' in a setting that is place-situated and bounded in space and time. The uniqueness of these social experiences represents a counter to the high mobility and transportability of sport in a globalized world. (Higham & Hinch, 2009, p. 123)

This quote suggests that gathering in one place provides spectators with the distinct and powerful experience of being around thousands of similar-minded people cheering for one team at the same time. Arguably, you would not get this same experience if you remained at home to watch a game or going to a bar to watch with close friends.

[5] Mosaic Stadium is the home stadium of the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

The attraction of attending live events is significant because the formation of relationships within the community of fans is important for those who identify with the franchise as they will meet people who possess the same affinities. Admittedly, this has changed with the increasing reach of globalization in our modern world:

> In a media saturated world where cultural influences become one of many global flows that spread around the world, it is increasingly easy to find information on (and connect with) sport all over the globe - and in some cases it is actually easier to watch games of teams in other countries than those local to the individual. (Crawford, 2004, p. 45)

Thus, the fans of any franchise must learn to adapt to the changes that are happening and adjust their subculture accordingly. At the same time, it must also be acknowledged "…that consumers (and in particular fans) may also be 'active' participants in the production of the cultural texts they consume" (Crawford, 2004, p. 37). In other words, it is agency of fans that contributes to the changing atmosphere and habitus of the fan subculture they are a part of.

Throughout this section, the complexities of a fan's relationship with their favorite professional sports franchise have been discussed. With the increasing globalization of the sports market, many researchers have argued that the traditional makeup of fandom has changed. Many have hypothesized that we are moving away from a supporter-type of spectator into the more affluent, consumer-based flaneur type of the spectator. As the thesis moves forward, the question becomes: how do these broader changes affect the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture and its members? Has globalization affected the fan subculture or is it the fans themselves that are contributing to a change in the collective habitus of the group? Whatever the answer, if there is a correct one, this section illustrated that fan subcultures are complex and variable in their very nature and the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture is no different. Before this paper

discusses these issues in more detail, it is important to provide more information on Saskatchewan (as a province) and its special relationship with the Roughriders.

The Province of Saskatchewan and Its Team

The province of Saskatchewan is connected with this thesis because of its obvious, but taken-for-granted relationship with the Roughriders. This relationship is crucial in understanding how both the fans view the franchise and whether or not public ownership is useful in Saskatchewan. This section will start off with an examination of three distinct social issues in the history of Saskatchewan: population fluctuations, economical tendencies, and the politics of the province. After this, the idea of a "sociological myth" will be addressed in relation to these three issues, especially in relation to the importance of the team to the province, but also with respect to the idea of public ownership and its significance for fans. Of course, the logical place to begin is with an examination of the province of Saskatchewan and its history.

In his book, entitled *Saskatchewan: A New History*, Waiser (2005) identifies three compelling aspects of life in Saskatchewan that are vital to any contemporary discussion about the politics and culture of the province. These aspects include the province's population fluctuations, economy, and political history. Traditionally, Saskatchewan has been considered a peripheral province because of its small population. In concordance with this, Li (2009) points out that the population in Saskatchewan was only 3 percent of Canada's population in 2001 (p. 9). In fact, according to Li (2009), the province's population numbers have declined since its creation in 1905. This:

> … relative decline clearly indicates that Saskatchewan has changed from a fast-growing nascent province early in the twentieth century, capable of attracting settlers and

> immigrants, to one where the land manages only to retain its population at roughly the same absolute level. (Li, 2009, p. 3)

The biggest determinant of the population changes proposed by Li (2009) has historically been Saskatchewan's economy, which has traditionally been organized around agriculture and family farms.

The historical reliance Saskatchewan has had on the agricultural industry -- wheat in particular -- is well illustrated by Waiser (2005) in his historical account of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewanites have often pointed towards their agricultural strength as a distinguishing factor of the province, even though there have been substantial changes in recent years due to the development of new industries in the province (potash, oil, etc). As the agricultural industry continues to change due to modern technological and economic developments, some claim "(i)t is inefficient to assist producers who are not economically viable, nor is it desirable to seek to "save" country towns whose economies are in decline" (Lawrence, Knuttila, & Gray, 2001, p. 91). In other words, many rural Saskatchewan communities are facing extinction because of their heavy reliance on the wheat industry and a number of broader economic and social changes related to that.

Most recently, however, globalization has been identified as the cause of this disruption in the province's range of traditions, sense of small-town community, and long-standing agricultural practices. Gruneau and Whitson (1993) say that:

> ...in rural Saskatchewan today, highly mechanized and capital-intensive farming requires fewer people, with the result that the market-town businesses that serviced the needs of farm families have been steadily losing their customer base. In addition, the piecemeal

> reduction of public services due to the fiscal crisis of federal and provincial governments- for instance, the cutting back of postal services and rail lines- has contributed to a growing sense of isolation and desperation. (p. 202)

In a sporting context, globalization and the constant need to grow and develop can be seen in the need for small-town rinks in Saskatchewan. Dryden and MacGregor (1989) talk about struggle for a new rink in Radisson, and how people in that community were worried that if they ended up losing their rink, the community would die. Much like agricultural changes, if a small community cannot keep up with modern times, they will be left behind by a society growing far faster than they anticipated.

Saskatchewan is a distinct province because of the political differences it has cultivated compared to other provinces. It can be said that Saskatchewan has provided a strong provincial democratic system to its residents, as "...nowhere else but Saskatchewan are the features of continuity and change so evident in provincial politics" (Smith, 2009, p. 39). Citizens of Saskatchewan have consistently demonstrated a willingness to change ruling parties. For example, although the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) brought citizens Medicare and successful Crown corporations, Ross Thatcher's Liberals emphasized a new vision of the future which Saskatchewan citizens could not pass up. Thus, they were elected as the new Saskatchewan government in 1964. This is, arguably, the complete opposite of Alberta where the Conservatives have ruled the legislature for decades without substantial challenge.

Although both the Liberal and Conservative parties had their time in power, the CCF/NDP (and their brands of socialism) has, since the CCF was first elected in 1944, spent the most time in power. Zakus (1999) identifies the importance of Saskatchewan's political context when he illuminates that:

> From farm-based collectives, such as grain and equipment co-operatives, and forms of social democratic institutions, such as social democratic parties and governments and the first social welfare programs, to sport based institutions, Saskatchewan exudes this notion of community. (p. 67- 68)

This quote also hints at the relationship between traditional provincial understandings of public ownership of an important community 'resource': the Saskatchewan Roughriders professional football franchise. Clearly, the notion of social democratic values has been extended to the sports field in Saskatchewan, and there are longstanding historical links between the Roughriders and a broader political ideology that emphasizes community ownership of various social institutions in the provinces. Still, it is important to hold these observations up for critical reflection and to question how much of these ideas are grounded in reality in the new millennium, and the extent to which these discourses are perhaps now little more than popular myths.

Sociologically speaking, the idea of a myth is different from the common use of the term in literature and other historical stories of repute. From a sociological perspective, Rowe, McKay, and Miller (1998) suggest that:

> Myths are not total delusions or utter falsehoods, but partial truths that accentuate particular versions of reality and marginalize or omit others in a manner appealing to deep-seated emotions. Dominant myths depoliticize social relations by ignoring the vested interests surrounding whose stories become ascendant in a given culture. (p. 121)

In this thesis, myths are crucial to understand, because a key question that will be central to this thesis is whether or not the historical background of Saskatchewan -- and the importance of

public ownership for the Roughriders and their fans for that matter -- still holds true, especially in relation to the significant changes that have recently taken place in the province. The province is now, for example, governed by the right-leaning Saskatchewan Party and the economy has undergone a massive transformation away from its agricultural basis. Saskatchewan is quickly emerging, along with Alberta, as a prosperous province thanks to its natural resources and the strong Canadian dollar. In this new economic climate of growth, other social institutions and ideas of communal ownership are, arguably, fading from the consciousness of citizens and all of these ideas will be important to consider in any discussion of public ownership and the Roughriders. Indeed, the popular myths about the province and team may be drastically different from the lived realities and the perceptions of fans in the new millennium.

In his book, *False Expectations: Politics and the Pursuit of the Saskatchewan Myth*, Eisler (2006) discusses the importance of myth-making in the province of Saskatchewan. For example, Eisler (2006) suggests that "… myths are public dreams that can be powerful enough to shape the aspirations we have as a society and the choices we make to achieve what we collectively seek for ourselves" (p. 1). Simply put, people often choose to believe ideas that match whatever aspirations they may have, whether they are farmers, politicians, or football fans. Saskatchewan has had plenty of myths to draw from in its long history, but the one that continues to exist and structure reality is the myth about the disadvantaged province:

> The myth endures. A century later, Saskatchewan still yearns for its greater destiny. What persists is a powerful conviction that the province can, must and will do better. That if only the right policies were in place, if only the right opportunities seized, if only the right attitudes developed, if only others understood the truth about Saskatchewan, the province would again become a magnet attracting people. If only. (Eisler, 2006, p. 221)

In other words, Saskatchewan's biggest myth, arguably, is that Saskatchewan is destined for much greater things in the future then what is currently offered although, as noted above, even this popular myth is being increasingly challenged.

Myths have the power to shift popular perceptions, and this has been especially relevant in relation to previous understandings regarding the province's declining population and economic woes. Waiser (2005) elaborates on this, saying that:

> Unlike half a century earlier when the "last, best West" captured the imagination of prospective settlers, few post-war immigrants chose to make Saskatchewan their home, heading instead to the country's larger cities. (p. 355)

In the 1990's, people "…sarcastically suggested that the province's number one export was people, not wheat, and that rural residents should be classified as an endangered species" (Waiser, 2005, p. 461). Many citizens have, of course, left the province for brighter futures in either urban centers or places outside of the province because they offer the best chance at an ideal future but this is slowly changing with the development the province is undertaking. More and more people are, in fact, moving to the province from within Canada and, indeed, around the world.

Another example of this myth-making practice is evident in the economy of the province. Saskatchewan is well known as the "breadbasket of the world" and, as such, takes great pride in their wheat economy. However, Saskatchewan is now moving towards new industries including potash (Saskatchewan's "oil"), oil, and uranium; although wheat will continue to be a key part of the province's economic plan. Waiser (2005) hypothesized that "(t)his continued determination to plant wheat every spring, as if by instinct, helps explain why crop acreage actually increased

during the Depression" (p. 294). Through all of the bad times that have hit Saskatchewan, the province keeps faith in its industry of choice. In fact:

> The Great Depression hit Saskatchewan harder than any other region of country. But remarkably, despite the broken dreams, the cruel setbacks, and the misery and deprivation, people never lost faith in the land and its ability to provide a good living. (Waiser, 2005, p. 302)

Another claim that Saskatchewanites like to the support is their label as a social democratic province.

Saskatchewan has continually been known as a haven for social democratic ideals as policies such as Medicare, Crown Corporations (Sasktel, SaskPower, etc), and other public projects have stemmed from this background. Eisler (2006) emphasizes that:

> The challenge of politics, therefore, is clear. On one hand, it comes down to knowing how to use myth as a means to create a sense of collective identity and common purpose that can mobilize people to help change reality. On the other, it is recognizing that, if not restrained, myth can be a source of false expectations and political outcomes that lead to poor public policy choices. (p. 226)

In other words, myths can be used precisely for political purposes and can structure important policy decisions given their role as historical precedents. As such, it is always important to examine the use(s) of myths in addition to the practices that they uphold and support. For example, policies such as Medicare and various Crown Corporations are so 'natural' that many refuse to even question or debate their significance. Yet, all of these issues need to be openly discussed and debated, or there will be little impetus to improve various institutions and the lives

of residents in the province of Saskatchewan. In the same manner, simply because the Roughriders have been publicly owned -- and mythologized as integral to the community -- for decades, does not preclude the importance of questioning this ownership structure and whether or not fans actually believe in it, or are even aware of it.

Indeed, just like the province, the Saskatchewan Roughriders are a part of a larger, myth-making process. LaRose (2010) alludes to this when he says that:

> On first blush, it might be difficult to see where a football team fits into this myth. But the Saskatchewan Roughrider Football Club was created by community members, for community members, and sought the support of its community. As it progressed through its history—especially crashing into losses in pre-1966 Grey Cups like a cartoon character into a wall—the Roughriders harboured the dreams, the hopes, and resentments of its fans. (p. 153)

Supporters of professional sports teams create and embrace these myths because of the deep, emotional connection that they have to their favorite team and because these myths are actively reproduced in the media and within various fan subcultures. A similar example of myth-making in sport is Kuper and Szymanski (2009) recounting the "myth" of England's epic losing pattern at major tournaments. This "myth" creates the belief that England is destined to follow the same losing path in every single tournament they enter, without fail.

This type of myth is seen in Saskatchewan Roughrider culture as well. For example, current fans of the Saskatchewan Roughrider have always seen their colours as green and white, and nothing else. In fact, as Spasoff (2005) points out, that they have also worn purple and gold,

blue and white, and finally, red and black in their history. They only picked up green and white as:

> …an act of fiscal prudence that continues to this day, [as] a team executive bought two sets of green and white jerseys that were on sale in Chicago because the price was low. (Spasoff, 2005, p. 141)

Spasoff (2005) even cites that there are different theories on how the Roughrider name was picked and who it honors. This example shows the incredible myth-making power fans and other contributors to the subculture have, as they can essentially create an image that symbolizes the fan subculture they are a part of, whether it be factual or not.

Although fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders have created and reinforced some myths over others, there can be little doubt of the central importance of the team to the province. Zakus (1999) exclaims that the historical and contemporary success of the team is remarkable considering the size of the province and its peripheral location in the Canadian economy.[6] As previously stated, the Saskatchewan Roughrider franchise can be traced back to the formation of the Regina Rugby Club in 1910, which makes it one of the oldest franchises in Western Canada (Zakus, 1999). Not unlike the province, the Saskatchewan Roughriders have also shown remarkable durability in the face of constant change.

The operation of the Saskatchewan Roughriders has never been easy and the franchise has experienced many issues in their long history. One such calamity that affected the province of Saskatchewan, as well as the Roughriders, was the depression. Not so surprisingly, according to Zakus (1999), the Roughriders persevered through this time because:

[6] The Roughriders have been western Canadian champions 23 times, participated in 14 Grey Cup games and have won the national championship twice up to 1999 (Zakus, 1999, p. 63). They recently won the 2007 Grey Cup in Toronto, as well as participating in the 2009 (Calgary) and 2010 (Edmonton) Grey Cups.

> Support of the Riders in this era increased in difficult economic times as the team became a rallying point for discontent and solidarity. The club was often worse off in better economic times. (p. 64)

These difficult times have continued throughout the franchise's history. As previously mentioned in the introductory chapter, the Roughriders had a massive debt (over $2.6 million) in the 1990s (Zakus, 1999). Due to these economic pressures, the Roughriders were also unable to afford the best facilities and players, which made them less attractive to free agents, leading to long playoff droughts.[7] These long playoff droughts only multiplied the numerous financial problems that the franchise faced. Only now, with the current competitive and financial success the franchise is experiencing, have the Saskatchewan Roughriders started to come back as a viable sports entertainment business.

A possible reason for the durability, popularity, and visibility of this franchise in Saskatchewan is that it is the only professional sports franchise in the province that plays in a truly national league. The second biggest teams in the province that 'compete' against the Roughriders are the regional Western Hockey League (WHL) franchises, which are illustrated in the following table:

Saskatchewan-based Teams in the Western Hockey League
Moose Jaw Warriors
Prince Albert Raiders
Regina Pats
Saskatoon Blades

[7] One example of a recent playoff drought was from 1977 to 1987 (Zakus, 1999).

Swift Current Broncos

Table 1: Saskatchewan Teams in the WHL (*The official site of the Western Hockey League*, n.d.)

As noted, the Saskatchewan Roughriders are the province's only fully "professional" team, as the WHL is a largely a developmental league looking to send out the next batch of young, NHL stars. Although junior hockey is popular in Canada, these regional leagues hardly compare to the CFL in terms of national visibility and popularity except, perhaps, in their host cities. Thus, sports fans tend to connect more with the Roughriders than with the other "amateur" teams in the province.

The remarkable ability of the Saskatchewan Roughriders to survive difficult times can be contrasted with the struggles of Ottawa, Canada's capital city, to keep an active CFL team in their city. In their commentary on the situation in Ottawa, Nauright and White (2002) propose that the constant shuffling of players led to the dissolution of the bond between team and community, which forced the team to fold. Needless to say, the Rough Riders struggled because of this situation.[8] In the various attempts to keep the Rough Riders, the Ottawa media rekindled memories of the team and a broader mythology about the team's importance to the working class community (Nauright & White, 2002). At the same time, this use of a nostalgic mythology was suggested as a way to try and reclaim the league as a whole, which was facing widespread financial difficulties at the time. Nauright and White (2002) explained this further, noting that:

> The CFL is unique in North American professional sports in that many of the teams are or have been community owned (Winnipeg, Edmonton, Saskatchewan, and Calgary), while community ownership was promoted as the only way to keep professional football in Montreal and to bring it back to Ottawa. (p. 123)

[8] For future reference, the original team name of the CFL team in Ottawa was the Rough Riders.

One could hypothesize that most of the CFL's recent problems could be due to the fact that they did not actively promote public ownership at that time. In fact, Nauright and White (2002) summarize this in their conclusion, saying that the CFL needs to return to having more publicly owned teams in their league to be successful.

When considering the CFL's historical reliance on fan revenue, a greater level of public ownership seems like a reasonable option. Could this type of community ownership structure ensure a strong fan base as the fans literally have a stake in the team? O'Brien (2004) describes the situation, saying that:

> The Saskatchewan Roughriders remain the best example of a CFL club heavily reliant on fan attendance. Regina's population is just under 200,000 so the Roughriders have always had to draw fans from across the province. Some fans, including those who live closer to Edmonton than to Regina, travel seven hours or more to attend a game at Taylor Field. (p. 337)

In other words, the Saskatchewan Roughriders are a strong franchise because of the support they get from across the province at the ticket booth, which may be correlated with the fact that they are publicly owned. The local talent on the Saskatchewan Roughriders could also be important for fans, because the attraction of seeing home-grown players entices fans to support the team.[9] As a team that relies heavily on fan dedication, the Saskatchewan Roughriders will always have to make an attempt to appeal to supporters, and having local and Canadian players accomplishes that. If we look at public ownership this way, the question becomes why are more professional sport franchises not instituting this type of ownership?

[9] This can be shown with the recent popularity of the Saskatchewan Roughriders "Canadian Air Force", when Saskatchewan had four prominent Canadian receivers -- Andy Fantuz, Rob Bagg, Jason Clermont, and Chris Getzlaf -- on the team.

Trends in Professional Sports Ownership

In modern professional sport, it often seems that more and more fans are becoming dissatisfied with the ownership of their favorite sporting teams (Whitson, 1998). Changes in the "traditional" motives for owning a professional sports franchise were noticed as early as the 1980s in Ken Dryden's (1983) memoirs about his life in the National Hockey League (NHL). Dryden (1983) remarked that:

> "Sports" had become "Sports Inc." With big money now to be made in sports, big money *would* be made, and the attitude changed. "Cities" became "markets," "games" became "products," "sports" part of the "entertainment business," fighting for "entertainment dollars." (p. 155; emphasis in text)

This dissatisfaction with current ownership practices raises some important questions that need to be asked. In this section, I will discuss the some of the issues under review in North American professional sports ownership. After this, the different models of ownership actively being used in major league sport will be identified, as well as some of the issues that may have an impact upon the relationships that fans have with their teams.

DeMause and Cagan (2008) summarize some of these problems in their book, *Field of schemes: How the great stadium swindle turns public money into private profit*. DeMause and Cagan (2008) examine the habitual practices that sports team owners undergo to publicly finance stadiums for their professional sport franchises. DeMause and Cagan (2008) show that the guidelines for getting these publicly backed stadiums are pretty static. The first strategy that owners use is threatening to move the franchise to a city that has promised them a new stadium.[10]

[10] DeMause and Cagan (2008) point out that between 2000 and 2006, many teams threatened to move but only three actually did.

This threat seems to work because local politicians will do almost anything not to lose a city's beloved sports franchise, as they feel it could hurt their political career. In relation to this, owners also create deadlines to essentially blackmail people into compliance. More often than not, these deadlines are simply ruses but they people get scared enough to raise their voice in support of the stadiums. DeMause and Cagan (2008) say that, "…neither elected officials nor local journalists ever seem to notice when drop-dead dates pass and the sky doesn't fall" (p. 237). Due to this, private owners know that these extortion techniques are an effective weapon in their fight to get their proposed stadium out of the public.

Another tool that owners utilize is their pronouncement that without a new, 'world-class' stadium, the playing field will remain unequal for their franchise. Without a brand new facility to play their games out of, the team will never experience success because of the financial support they would lose playing in an old, outdated sports facility. Other teams and cities are thought to be "world class" because they have the facilities that retain that image. In relation to this, owners also try to claim that the economic benefit of having a new stadium or arena will be massive for the surrounding community. Through the use of economic projectors, owners can "confidently" say that their proposed stadium project will have a huge economic benefit on the community.

One substantial part of this is that owners will advertise perks of building a new stadium that are guaranteed to peak people's interest. For example, deMause and Cagan (2008) illustrate this when they describe that:

> One popular carrot to dangle in front of cities has been the promise that they will be eligible to play host to a Super Bowl if they build new NFL stadiums. (For baseball stadiums, the All-Star Game is typically the lure.). In recent years, NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue made the same promise to San Diego, Minneapolis, Indianapolis, Kansas

> City, and New York, in each case portraying the NFL's big game as the source of a flood of new tourists and a multi-million-dollar boon to local economies. (p. 240)

Through these "carrots", owners in Major League Baseball (MLB) and the National Football League (NFL) promote the construction of new, publicly-financed stadia to grow their businesses. DeMause and Cagan (2008) argue that with these common "threats", owners can have significant success in "extorting" public funds for their own personal gain.

Although this might seem like a distinctly American problem, Canadian cities have experienced these issues as well. In fact, in deMause and Cagan's (2008) book, an entire chapter is dedicated to the Montreal Expos (MLB) and their move to Washington, DC after their numerous attempts to build a new baseball facility in Montreal fell through. In "Youppi! Come Home", the authors describe how the Expos fell under the league's ownership and the struggles they had in getting the market of their choice in Washington after a long period of meeting potential suitors.[11] To stir the pot even more, the Washington Nationals and their multi-million dollar publicly funded stadium did not receive a warm welcome from DC residents.

In terms of subsidy issues in Canadian professional sport, nothing is more relevant then the funding that was proposed to the House of Commons to help support NHL teams in 2000 (Scherer & Jackson, 2004). In 2000, John Manley announced the "…government's "contributory" subsidy was to be tailored to each franchise and capped at 25% of a total amount contributed by the NHL and provincial and municipal governments" (Scherer & Jackson, 2004, p. 39). Scherer and Jackson (2004) point out that the overwhelming public response against this proposal convinced the government to reconsider their original assumptions about what was

[11] Potential suitors on "The Extortion across America tour" -- as deMause and Cagan (2008) aptly put it -- were Portland, Oregon; Las Vegas, Nevada; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Monterrey, Mexico; and of course, Washington, DC (p. 250- 252).

important to Canadians. In regards to the proposed subsidy that would support Canadian NHL teams, citizens saw their tax money being used for something that would not benefit them directly and, accordingly, they acted against it. The previous example demonstrates that resistance against the owners of professional sports teams and their supportive government cohorts is possible for fans and citizens.

DeMause and Cagan (2008) provide various examples of resistance groups and highlighted the special issues they faced. Most of these groups eventually fell behind their opponents simply because of the immense monetary advantage that owners and politicians had. At the same time though, certain groups like Save Fenway were successful in their protest when they committed themselves to more cost-effective means.[12] Other fan subcultures have also taken the time to effectively plan a resistance to what they see as encroachment by owners into their territory, facing strikingly similar roadblocks (Brown, 2008; Mitrano, 1999). Still, these examples describe that, although fans are often portrayed as powerless, they do have the ability to conduct some sort of protest against their favorite sporting franchise's ownership perceived failures.

For Delaney and Eckstein (2010), "…midsized cities and those fighting population decline are more vulnerable to being manipulated by arguments about major league status" (p. 15). In Cleveland, for example:

> … the powerful local growth coalition and its political champions have been subsidizing new stadiums rather than decent housing, further exacerbating the metamorphosis of the city into a playground for suburbanites. (Delaney & Eckstein, 2010, p. 10)

[12] Due to a variety of reasons, Save Fenway (which was Boston-based) was successful. For more information on how this particular resistance to a new stadium was successful, please refer to deMause and Cagan (2008) and their exclusive chapter on the group (p. 318- 339).

Since Cleveland, arguably, is a not big enough to be a major league city, they must compensate with the construction of brand-new, modern stadiums in the city. In turn, Delaney and Eckstein (2010) state that larger cities like New York and Boston have been able to develop better resistance movements against new publicly funded stadia simply because these cities were already considered to be 'world-class' without them.

Although previous examples have shown some weaknesses associated with private ownership, a solution has been offered to the issue of the habitual public subsidization of new stadia and, at times, specific privately owned team. In his book, *Bad Sports: How Owners are Ruining the Games We Love*, Zirin (2010) notes that the saving grace of any professional sports organization could be public ownership. The crux of this solution is that "(f)ans should be organized to buy shares of a club and keep it rooted and affordable in the city it calls home, regardless of the vicissitudes of the economy" (Zirin, 2010, p. 182). In accordance with this, Eitzen (2006) directs his readers towards understanding the issue of public subsidies in sport and other egregious owner activities and advocates for direct public ownership of professional sports teams.

As a matter of fact, Eitzen (2006) says it would be not too hard, as "(e)ach locality could buy the team at its market value, which would amount to something less than what they now pay to build the owner a new stadium" (p. 204). In a recent article, Zirin (2011) discussed how public ownership could be a solution to the recent ownership troubles that have plagued the ownership of the Los Angeles Dodgers (MLB). However, the question that must be asked in accordance with this situation is whether or not the government or a group of public citizens would be willing or able to give the cash infusion needed to start public ownership, especially in an era of fiscal austerity.

A franchise that both Eitzin (2006) and Zirin (2010) cite as an exemplar of public ownership is the Green Bay Packers (NFL). The Green Bay Packers were established as a public owned franchise in 1922. According to current numbers, there are 112, 205 stockholders, with 4,750, 940 shares of stock (*Executive committee and board of directors*, n.d.). More tellingly, "(m)ore than sixty thousand of the new shares sold during the 1997-1998 offering were purchased by residents of the state of Wisconsin" (Zirin, 2010, p. 183). These numbers create the image of a healthy franchise due to the sheer amount of shares bought by everyone involved. The team is managed by a seven-member executive committee that is elected from their board of directors which is in charge of monitoring both the financial and managerial decisions of the franchise (*Executive committee and board of directors*, n.d.).

Although they have been held up as the exemplar of public ownership, the Green Bay Packers have experienced financial problems in the past, much like the Saskatchewan Roughriders. For example, Zirin (2010) emphasizes that:

> The team was skating perilously close to bankruptcy in the 1920s until the community stepped in and reorganized the franchise into a non-profit entity, selling shares in the team to the community at large. Volunteers from local charities today work home-game concessions with 60 percent of concessions, 60 percent of every last foam cheese head, going to charity. (p. 182-183)[13]

Although they could have gone bankrupt, it was the residents of the community that saved the team. Today, supported by the league's substantial television revenues and the NFL's salary cap, the team continues to compete on and off the field.

[13] Zirin (2010) adds that "The Pack have operated under this structure since August 18, 1923" (p. 182).

In relation to the success of the Packers, Morris and Kraker (2010) question why other privately owned teams, like the Cleveland Browns of the late 1990s, have left various cities while the Packers have stayed put. For one, Morris and Kraker (2010) note that the movement of the Packers would only be possible "… through dissolution, in which case the shareholders receive only the original value of their shares" (p. 29). At this moment in time, the franchise remains strong with its public ownership model creating a hard-working board of directors and a dedicated fan base, making this possibility a long shot. For example, "(g)ames at Lambeau Field have been sold out for more than 30 consecutive seasons, even through years of mediocrity in the 1970s and 1980s" (Morris & Kraker, 2010, p. 30). The statistics brought forward by Morris and Kraker (2010) demonstrate that publicly owned franchises, especially in smaller markets, can remain financially stable in competitive North American professional sports leagues with lucrative revenue sharing agreements, a firm salary cap, and a devoted community of fans. This begs the question, why are communities not pursuing public ownership as an ownership model?

Eitzen (2006) addresses this question in his book, *Fair and Foul: Beyond the Myths and Paradoxes of Sport (3rd Ed.),* and bluntly notes that "…the owners in each league have passed a rule specifically banning any future team from being community owned!" (p. 204). Essentially, this means that the possibility of any community even considering public ownership has been 'outlawed' in every major North American professional sports league. But if public ownership is something that can save the future of a franchise, or potentially even a league, why would owners be so quick to ban public involvement? To address this probable follow-up question, Eitzen (2006) adds that "(t)his maintains the situation where each team may claim that it is *yours*, but it is really *theirs*" (p. 204; emphasis in text). Essentially, public ownership is banned

in North American professional sport because it does not suit a private corporation's business interests.

Schaffer (2011) concurs with this, when he argues that "…the owners appear concerned only that there is a singular voice able to speak for the organization and vote on matters of league importance" (p. 33).[14] By keeping control of their respective franchises, owners can look after their own interests instead of trying to keep the interests of the fans or their respective communities at the forefront of various decisions. In fact, there are some forms of ownership that private owners are selling as "public ownership" as a promotional device, but in reality is just another way for them to control their interests. On this note, I need to mention that there is another example of "public ownership" in the form of publicly owned companies that sell shares of a sports franchise on the stock market (Schaffer, 2011; Stroz Jr., 2001).[15]

With this method of ownership, "(m)arketable securities are sold to the public and then traded on an exchange" (Schaffer, 2011, p. 31). Schaffer (2011) continues on in his explanation, noting that:

> By conducting an initial public offering (IPO) of some percentage of a franchise, a professional team owner could tap into an important source of capital without ceding any control of the organization, thereby shrinking the competitive gap. (p. 31)[16]

In other words, this notion of "public ownership" is nothing more than another way for the owner to create a stream of money, whilst keeping complete control of the franchise they own.

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[14] This is in reference to the NHL and MLB in particular.
[15] The examples of teams utilizing this method of ownership -- those Stroz Jr. (2001) lists are the Boston Celtics (NBA), Florida Panthers (NHL), and Cleveland Indians (MLB).
[16] Schaffer (2011) provides the example of the Florida Panthers, whose "…IPO netted approximately $66 million, which was primarily used to pay down debt or trained for working capital" (p. 31).

Thus, this practice "…is widely viewed as nothing more than the purchase of a novelty item which does little more than show support for the team" (Stroz Jr., 2001, p. 520).

In other words, if a fan wants to feel closer to their favorite sports franchise, they can buy a share of that franchise on the stock market. However, when they buy shares in their favorite club, they are actually still supporting the owner of the franchise. With respect to the former model of selling shares on the stock market, Stroz Jr. (2001) asks:

> Have these owners discovered a way for fans to become more involved in their team's performance, both on and off the field, or have they simply advanced a more elaborate, relatively risk-free means of lining their own pockets at the further expense of the fans? (p. 520)

In the end, there is a substantial difference between this form of 'ownership' and the form of community/public ownership where fans have some form of voting rights and can be elected to a team's board of directors which creates more enduring ties to the local community.

At the same time, professional sports leagues are, of course, run as cartels, and they can dictate the terms of ownership of various franchises, especially any new expansion franchises or television contracts. Eitzen (2006) notes that "(s)uch arrangements are illegal in most other businesses because they lead to collusion, price-fixing, and restraint of trade" (p. 190). So, why do we allow it to happen in professional sports leagues if we punish it in other businesses? Eitzen (2006) points out that professional sport leagues gain advantages through antitrust laws that other businesses would never experience. For example, "(t)he 1961 Sports Broadcast Act allowed sports leagues to sell their television rights as a group without being subject to antitrust laws" (Eitzen, 2006, p. 191). Thus, with the government implementing laws to protect their respective "cartels", private owners hold the ability to stamp out any unwelcome ideas, which include

public ownership. In the end, fans of these clubs have a right to be heard but it must be questioned how much their opinions matter to the people running privately owned North American sports franchises.

Obviously, fans feel an intense connection to their club of choice and if that club is threatened by relocation or disbandment, the fans will feel betrayed. As Dryden and MacGregor (1989) ask in their book:

> Aren't we just manipulated? "Our" Montreal Canadiens, "our" Edmonton Oilers- do you think Peter Pocklington really cares about us? Do you think Carling O'Keefe, Molson's, Gretzky, and all the knickknack makers care? *Hockey Night in Canada*, radio and newspaper sports, public appearances, ads, endorsements, "nice guy," "good guy" images, aren't they just a web of creations to support a fiction, ways to make a buck? (p. 266; emphasis in text)[17]

Although fans of privately owned franchises think they "own" the club, they actually do not. With public ownership in Saskatchewan and Green Bay, the fans actually have a legitimate way of saying they own part of their favorite sports franchise.

As noted above, though, public ownership is mostly absent from North American professional sport. Many studies have examined the prevalence of certain types of ownership in North American professional sport (Harvey et al., 2001; Law et al., 2002; Field, 2006). Harvey et al. (2001) points to the fact that "…media sport literature argues that professional sport franchises are increasingly integrated into the media/entertainment industry" (p. 438). Harvey et al. (2001) support this statement with facts pertaining to how much media ownership has taken

[17] At the time of Dryden and MacGregor's (1989) book, Peter Pocklington owned the Edmonton Oilers and Carling O'Keefe owned the Quebec Nordiques and both were entertaining offers to buy the club at this point in time.

over North American professional sport leagues. In fact, 20% of the NHL is owned by media conglomerates (Harvey et al., 2001, p. 440).[18] In the conclusion to their paper, Harvey et al. (2001) attempt to answer the following question:

> Does media/entertainment control North American Pro Sport? Our data leads us to answer a qualified yes to the question. Though clear penetration of franchise ownership by media conglomerates stands at 13%, the addition of smaller players into the media/entertainment category brings the number up to 31% - almost a third of professional sports franchises. (p. 454)

In a continuation of this theme, Law et al. (2002) concluded that "…these trends potentially reduce the range of choices among distinct sport spectacle products available, as well as the space for public information and deliberation on these same products" (p. 280). In other words, media ownership limits the choices that regular fans have, as the products they are exposed to are what the conglomerates want them to see.

This is, of course, a positive development for media conglomerates that own professional sports franchises as part of their vertically integrated structures, because "(i)f audience reach is broad and deep enough, generated advertising revenues allegedly extend well beyond the billions of dollars paid out" (Law et al., 2002, p. 281). Law et al. (2002) then cite several case studies of media corporations and their intricate ownership of several professional sports franchises. These companies include, but were not limited to: NewsCorp, Disney, AOL- Time Warner, and Viacom. Through an ownership of multiple sporting entities, these media conglomerates can essentially control all the advertising and television rights associated with the properties (sports

[18] Other leagues have media ownership as well: the NBA is at 17% media ownership, the MLB at 13%, but the NFL had none at the time this paper was written (Harvey et al., 2001, p. 440).

teams) they own, and they can generate enormous profits through a host of cross-marketing opportunities.

Although the previous articles demonstrated the prevalence of media conglomerates in an American context, Field (2006) provided a Canadian example by examining the Toronto professional sport scene. Toronto had 25 sports teams at time the article was written, but "(d)espite this enhanced breadth of sport product offerings, the marketplace is dominated by two groups: Maple Leafs Sport and Entertainment (MLSE) and Rogers Communications Inc. (RCI)" (Field, 2006, p. 29). This limits the amount of control sports fans in Toronto have over their professional sports teams and what products are marketed towards them. For example, Field (2006) makes it clear that:

> The connections of the sport elite to both the media and political backrooms are valuable for creating the public perception that Toronto 'needs' spectator facilities such as a soccer stadium and the Coliseum for hockey ahead of civic investment in publicly accessible recreation facilities of all sorts. (p. 49)

Although Field (2006) did point out the problems with the near monopoly of Toronto's professional sports scene, nothing has been done to examine Canada's professional sports scene as a whole, which is one of the questions that this thesis will attempt to answer.

The three previous examples illustrate a growing trend in North American professional sports where wealthy media conglomerates are buying franchises to represent their own interests and other products. An examination of the history of North American professional sports shows that this should not be a surprise. In comparing North American models of sport ownership to European and Australian ones, Whitson (1998) remarks that:

> In North America, in contrast, professional sport developed from the outset along more business-like lines; and the entrepreneurial ownership structures, team movements, and league mergers that gave shape to American professional sports in the interwar years all prefigure later developments associated with expansion (in the 1960s and 1970s) and, today, globalization. (p. 58)

The above quote from Whitson (1998) makes the point that North American professional sport has always been business-oriented, no matter how much we try to believe otherwise. Although we like to hold on to the hope that our favorite teams are run in our best interests, we must not lose sight of the fact that "our" team is, generally, little more than a privately owned commodity.

Consequently, this means that North American professional sports ownership will veer towards the direction that makes the most business sense. Recent developments such as television and the Internet have only helped evolve the ways in which professional sport franchises are commercialized. In the end, Whitson (1998) concedes that "…the most far reaching consequence of television and expansion in major league sports has been the gradual "delocalization" of sporting tastes and loyalties" (p. 65). In other words, fans of sport now have the opportunity and means to follow a non-local team if they want to due to the effects of globalization. The question then becomes, how do we address this "delocalization" of sporting interests? In the end, public ownership may be the answer to limiting this "delocalization", while keeping up with the current technological developments affecting professional sport.

Theoretical Definitions

Before outlining my methodological framework, I will outline a few key theoretical constructs that were crucial for this research and contributed significantly to the creation of my

two discussion chapters. The three definitions that were used in this thesis are subculture, Giulianotti's (2002) definition of a supporter, and Bourdieu's concept of habitus.

First, it must be made clear that this paper is making observations about the subculture that Saskatchewan Roughrider fans have created amongst themselves within, admittedly, a pre-existing subcultural structure. Fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders are a distinct group of people and, as such, they have produced a subculture with its own rules and structures that reflect a host of common views, along with varying individual preferences. Young and Atkinson (2008) offer an explanation of what a subculture is, saying that:

> Any adequate definition of subculture should, at the very least, emphasise that the concept is an identifiable small social structure within the larger dominant culture, composed of individuals sharing similar values, behaviours, attitudes, symbols and rituals, which set them apart from the larger culture, dominating their style of life and stabilising over time. (p. 9)

Hughson (2008) adds to this point, by noting that most "...subcultural study into music has been driven by a primary concern with the lifestyle of a social category (i.e. youth), [while] the subcultural analysis of sport has traditionally been, and continues to be, activity based" (p. 50). In other words, being a fan of sports teams is based around the different activities and identities that characterize a specific group of fans. When discussing different sport fans and their respective subcultures, the Saskatchewan Roughriders and their fans symbolized an opportunity to determine if public ownership has any relationship with a fan subculture.

The second theoretical point that this thesis focused on was Giulianotti's (2002) supporter label. Giulianotti's (2002) typology has four categories of spectator: the fan, flaneur, follower, and supporter. A supporter is the traditional/hot spectator, who is extremely loyal and

emotionally attached to whatever team they identify with (Giulianotti, 2002). Flaneurs were thought to be the worst type of spectator to interview for this study because they are "temporary" fans who would not show the same amount of involvement within the fan subculture. This research was limited to supporters of the franchise, because their heavy involvement in the subculture would provide more useful data as opposed to a flaneur. Moreover, I suspected that supporters would have stronger emotional attachment to the Saskatchewan Roughriders and would likely be more interested in -- and aware of -- issues of public ownership. In the end, the characteristics of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture are explained better by supporters who have been following the team for the duration of their lives, as opposed to potentially fleeting customers.

The final theoretical point that this research will concern itself with is Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus. A useful definition of habitus is provided by Bourdieu:

> It is an operator of rationality, but of a practical rationality immanent in a historical system of social relations and therefore transcendent to the individual. The strategies it "manages" are systemic, yet ad hoc because they are "triggered" by the encounter with a particular field. Habitus is creative, inventive, but within the embodied sedimentation of the social structures which produced it. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 19)

From this, it is crucial to remember that habitus is a moldable concept that changes from situation to situation and can, indeed, vary from individual to individual at the micro level. Thus, the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture's collective habitus will likely be different from any other fan subculture in not only the CFL, but other professional sport franchises across Canada. In line with this, though, it is also important to remember that the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture and its collective habitus has undergone changes throughout the years and there can

be competing dispositions at any one time in the broader subculture around certain values and points of interest, like public ownership. Thus, an examination of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture's habitus is important to a discussion of public ownership's merits and if it has any relevance to those who follow the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I will explain the methodological framework that I used to gather and analyze my data. The methods that a researcher selects and develops are crucial in determining whether or not a thesis, or any other project for that matter, will succeed or fail. Although a qualitative case study, each section of this research looks at one of the research questions that I raised in the introductory chapter. For my investigation into the political economy of Canadian professional sport, I simply gathered all the necessary data and analyzed it. At the same time, questions two and three were a little more complex, which made it imperative that semi-structured interviews were used to gather the required data. These methodological concepts will be explained in more detail later in the chapter. Related to this, these methods were tailored around the three theoretical definitions -- subculture, Giulianotti's (2002) supporter label, and Bourdieu's concept of habitus -- that I explained in the previous chapter. To begin this explanation of the methodology utilized in this study I will provide some background on the importance of a case study approach.

The Case Study Approach

This thesis utilized a case study approach to focus on the Saskatchewan Roughriders and their position as a publicly owned professional sports franchise in Canada. Stake (2005) suggests that a "... "case study" is emphasized by some of us because it draws attention to the question of what specially can be learned about the single case" (p. 443). One example of a case study is Wilson and White's (2002) analysis of the "Revive the Pride" group in Ottawa and their efforts to get a CFL team back in that city. In their study, the author's pinpointed issues that groups with similar goals to "Revive the Pride" should consider in their future endeavors.

Congruent with this, Stake (2005) noted that the biggest concern most researchers have with case studies is their single-minded focus. How can you fully, and accurately, answer questions when you are considering only one example? This should not be an issue as long as the researcher studies a subject that can yield a lot of useful data on a singular topic. In reflection, this was not a concern for Wilson and White (2002) because they picked a case that yielded an abundance of data on their topic of choice. Obviously, this was not an issue in this research because the subject -- the Saskatchewan Roughriders fan subculture and its relationship to public ownership -- provided me with an adequate amount of data.

To be more specific, I conducted an instrumental case study with this research. This case study was an instrumental because it was "...examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization" (Stake, 2005, p. 445). Along with this, Stake (2005) suggested that it is good to pick a typical case, but also one that gives the researcher an opportunity to expand on previous scholarship. A focus on the Saskatchewan Roughriders' fan subculture accomplishes this because -- as it has been pointed out in previous chapters -- not much research has been done on the merits of public ownership and its impact on fans. In order to address this gap, research needed to be done on the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture and their relationship with public ownership. By utilizing the case study approach, I was able to effectively study the effects public ownership can have on any fan subculture.

Although this fan subculture is an interesting case study, I needed to address some ethical questions before I proceeded with the study. One problem with case studies -- that Stake (2005) points out -- is their immense interest in the personal opinions and viewpoints of participants, which can cause ethical issues for a researcher. To this end, case studies "...often deal with matters that are of public interest but for which there is neither public nor scholarly *right to*

know" (Stake, 2005, p. 459; emphasis in text). In other words, all the information gathered in a case study focuses on a single group in society, and could portray them in an unflattering manner. How researchers address this issue is important because they do not want to do harm to their subjects, but at the same time, they do not want to misrepresent the data that they have collected. Although there is an interest in knowing what the research shows them, researchers who utilize case studies must be able to protect their participants.

Stake (2005) backs this point up, adding that "(e)ven with good advance information from the researcher about the study, the researched cannot be expected to protect themselves against the risks inherent in participation" (p. 459). Consequently, it was up to me to make sure that ethical procedures were followed throughout the research process, and to keep the participants aware of how and why the collected data was being used. On a side note, Stake (2005) argues that although a researcher may have "(f)unding, scholarly intent, or Institutional Review Board authorization [it] does not constitute license to invade the privacy of others" (p. 459). In other words, just because I obtained an ethics approval for this research, it does not mean that I can stop thinking about ethics-related issues at any point during the research process. Ethics is a huge concern, and that is why I will continue to address it in the following sections to elaborate on issues that were on my mind as the research progressed. Although not that laden with ethical issues, the political-economical study of Canadian professional sport I undertook was a necessary first step in my research.

Mapping out Canadian Professional Sport Ownership

To research the current ownership patterns of Canadian professional sport franchises, I conducted an examination of the specific ownership structures of all the major professional sport franchises in Canada. The first step in this process was to conduct a search of all the major

Canadian professional sports teams and find out who owned them. Obviously, it was imperative that the CFL be examined as that is the league that the Saskatchewan Roughriders football franchise plays out of. The other professional leagues that were part of the sample were the NHL, MLB, MLS, and the National Basketball Association (NBA).

These five leagues were chosen because they are the most visible leagues in Canada and, as such, they provided the best sample of Canadian professional sport franchise ownership patterns. Within these five North American professional sports leagues, eighteen Canadian-based teams were considered.[19] Teams in the National Lacrosse League (NLL) were initially considered but I came to the conclusion that the NLL is, in fact, too small of a league and not popular enough to be used for this research. The data for this part of the thesis was collected on the Internet, through a search of online sources made available by the professional franchises. For this first phase of the research, I did not need complex data because my purpose was to discover who owned the teams in question.

Another important facet of the research, as it will be shown in the next chapter, was to capture the diverse business interests of the private owners of professional sport franchises in Canada. An investigation into these owners' primary businesses was pursued because it served as a way to explain why these people became owners, but also to examine the differences in wealth and the types of businesses (i.e., from local business owners to media conglomerates) associated with the ownership of Canadian professional sport franchises. This type of research has been previously done (Harvey et al., 2001, Law et al., 2002) but their focus was broad, as they studied the North American professional sport scene as a whole. These articles also focused on the identification of a new oligopoly in North American professional sports ownership, so they focused on media companies -- like News Corporation -- that owned multiple sports franchises

[19] For a list of the eighteen professional sport teams that are a part of this sample, please refer to appendix 1.

as part of their vertical integration strategies. Opposite of this, my paper looked to accomplish a general political-economic analysis of the ownership patterns within the smaller, Canadian professional sports marketplace.

Field's (2006) work shared a similar interest, but his focus was on Toronto-area teams and not the whole country. Arguably, an expansion on Field's (2006) research was needed, which was why one of the goals of this research was to provide a contemporary perspective on the patterns of ownership in Canadian professional sport. The first stage of this process was taking the information that was gathered and organizing it into groups of comparable data. I kept the data comprehensible by separating the collected data into recognizable groups of reference. The three categories that were created to display this data were CFL teams, NHL teams, and Toronto-based teams. This was done to ensure a comparable set of data related to each team, as well as showing differences in Canadian professional sport ownership across leagues and cities. In relation to the Saskatchewan Roughriders, these categories also illustrated how their ownership model (public ownership) compared to the rest of Canada in terms of usage.

While I investigated the ownership patterns in Canadian professional sport, other issues of interest and ownership 'tensions' also emerged. It was important, in this sense, that this section of the research not only be a data analysis but also an examination of Canadian professional sports ownership and the issues surrounding it. An interpretation of two distinct case studies -- MLSE's dominance of the Toronto market and the CFL's recent financial stability -- quickly emerged as issues that needed to be addressed in my analysis. These two issues were also related to the main focus of my paper -- the Saskatchewan Roughriders and public ownership -- because they provided a contrast to and a reason for the success of public ownership in Saskatchewan. While conducting a political-economic analysis helped in the

examination of the professional sports ownership in Canada, another set of methods was required to address the last two research questions.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Sports studies scholars have long used interviewing as a technique to pursue answers in qualitative research. Amis (2005) notes that:

> In either individualistic or focus group interviews, the interviewer attempts to gain insight into the inconsistencies, contradictions and paradoxes that are a quintessential part of our daily lives. Interviews offer a depth of information that permits the detailed exploration of particular issues in a way not possible with other forms of data collection. (p. 105)

In other words, interviews are probably the best-known qualitative method available when a researcher wants to question specific ideas about individuals, and their actions. Thus, interviewing members of the Saskatchewan Roughriders fan subculture about their identities, beliefs, and values was seen as the best way to approach the last two questions that I raised in this thesis. For the specific purposes of this research, the ability to have interviews that were somewhat structured, but allowed room for the pursuit of any new directions that arose during the research process was preferred. This was why semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main interview method for this research.

With a semi-structured interview approach, the researcher plans questions based upon the general themes of their research (Amis, 2005). Amis (2005) points out that although questions are planned, the researcher still has the freedom to move them around and ask new ones depending on how the participant is reacting during the interview. Patton (2002) concurs with this, noting that:

> The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. Thus, the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined. (p. 343)

This was useful for my research because having a general interview guide allowed me to ask the questions I needed to, while providing the space and freedom to pursue any new discussions when they arose during an interview.[20]

While it was important to stick to the questions that I had planned, this method of interviewing left me the opportunity to find other topics of discussion that I had not thought of in the planning stages of this research. Semi-structured interviews aided me in making these discoveries because it provided me the opportunity to have an open discussion about the research-relevant topics with the participants. Amis (2005) noted that "…open-ended questions also allow the participant to provide the most appropriate answers to particular questions, reflecting the diverse ways in which different individuals view the social world" (p. 108). In other words, I was able to gather the most reliable data possible for my research because I gave my participants more control over their answers and the direction in which the interviews progressed.

In using semi-structured interview structure, it was imperative that I accounted for how the theoretical guiding points, specifically Bourdieu's concept of habitus, would be teased out in the interviews. Admittedly, parts of one's habitus are often seen as common sense, making it an elusive concept to gather information on. Any type of identification of habitus will depend, then,

[20] To see a sample of the final interview guide that was used in this research, please refer to appendix 2.

on the researcher asking probing questions on the attitudes, dispositions, and preferences of participants. This included questions concerning how they were socialized into the subculture, issues of regional resistance, and their knowledge of the team's history of public/community ownership. By asking these types of questions, I managed to tease out various taken-for-granted preferences that operate at the core of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture's collective habitus. When conducting the interviews, words like habitus and socialization were purposely avoided to lessen participant confusion. Not all people will understand these complicated terms and I feared that I would lose time explaining them if they were used in the interviews.

As important as it was to address the application of theory in the methods, ethical concerns were a constant concern throughout the interview process. Patton (2002) explains that qualitative interviewing is a tricky process:

> Because qualitative methods are highly personal and interpersonal, because naturalistic inquiry takes the researcher into the real world where people live and work, and because in-depth interviewing opens up what is inside people--qualitative inquiry may be more intrusive and involve greater reactivity than surveys, tests, and other quantitative approaches. (p. 407)

In other words, qualitative interviews are ethically challenging because -- much like the earlier point about case studies -- of their focus on personal opinions and the deep involvement a researcher can have with their participant. Due to this, ethical issues had to be identified early in the interview process.

In agreement with this, Kvale (1996) pointed out that "(e)thical decisions do not belong to a separate stage of interview investigations, but arise throughout the entire research process"

(p. 110). Thus, this study was monitored for ethical concerns at every stage. In the opening stages of the interview process, I was prepared to offer an informed consent to the participants.[21] Informed consent was accomplished through explicit oral consent if the interviews were done over the telephone, or written consent if they were done in person. For the few participants I was able to interview face-to-face, I collected a hard copy of the informed consent.

When I gathered oral consent, the questions I asked were the same as the written version and were transcribed along with the rest of the interviews. In the end, all of the participants I interviewed for this study completed some sort of informed consent. At the same time, if the participants had any questions about the research and the interview process, they were answered before the interview progressed. This was done to ensure that the participants had all the necessary information and understood the research process enough that they would be able to give me an informed consent.

The facilitate this, participants were provided with information before they made their decision to commit to an interview. If they were recruited at the initial gathering site, they were given an information letter that contained details of the study and contact information regarding their potential participation.[22] Before they committed to the interview, every participant received an email providing basic information about the study just in case they misplaced the original information letter.[23] These letters gave participants the opportunity to contact the researcher if they wished to opt out of the study or ask questions about it, while providing them with some rudimentary knowledge of the research process. If the participants had no understanding of this

[21] To see a sample of the informed consent handed to participants during the face-to-face interviews, please refer to appendix 3. This informed consent was what I referred to when I gathered oral consent from the participants I conducted phone interviews with.
[22] To see a sample of the information letter that was handed out to potential participants in this study, please refer to appendix 4. This information letter was handed out at the initial gathering of the participants in order to gauge their interest in the study. They were allowed to keep a copy of the letter.
[23] For a sample of the letter to potential interviewees, please refer to appendix 5.

research and its purpose, then their commitment to the interviews would have been in doubt. Participants will feel much more comfortable if they know what is going on and why the research is taking place. Thus, the acts undertaken to gather their informed consent was an example illustrating the beneficence emphasized through this research.

To Kvale (1996), "...*beneficence* means that the risk of harm to a subject should be the least possible [outcome]" (p. 116; emphasis in text). In other words, the participant's happiness and well-being should always be the researcher's primary concern. Another action that demonstrated the idea of beneficence was ensuring that the participants knew they could withdraw from the research, with their data, at any time throughout the study. This implied that, although I needed their data to complete my thesis, they would be welcome to step away from the research process at any time without complication. Another example of beneficence was using a tape recorder to record the interviews. Patton (2002) emphasizes that "…using a tape recorder permits the interviewer to be more attentive to the interviewee" (p. 381). This extra attention makes the participant more comfortable with the interviewer, which helps in the development of a rapport between the researcher and their participant. So, in hindsight, the use of a tape recorder not only aided me in recording the data, but also in the creation of beneficence.

Once I was done transcribing an interview, a copy was sent to the participants. Through this action, participants had the opportunity to review and approve their interview transcript. It also gave them the opportunity to change or clarify information they provided through their interview. Most importantly, this allowed the participants to keep up to date on the research process and how the data they provided me was being (re)presented. These efforts were made to ensure that the participants realized their opinions were being heard and that these interviews were not just about me and my research. In relation to this, Kvale (1996) points out that "...there

is [always] concern about what information should be available, and to whom" (p. 115). Although I wanted to keep participants knowledgeable in the process of the research, I did not want them to know enough that they would sway their answers to help the research ‘‘succeed’’. This is a hard rule to follow, but allowing the participants to feel involved in the research gave me more tangible data to work with.

Another important term to remember when doing interview-based research is confidentiality. In research, confidentiality "...implies that private data identifying the subjects will not be reported" (Kvale, 1996, p. 114). For this study, all of the data collected from the interviews was put in a secure place that only I had access to. This aided in the protection of the participants' right to confidentiality and prevented interview data from being lost or misused. Related to this, I took steps to ensure that the participants had anonymity along with their answers. One step taken in this regard, was giving them pseudonyms. Examples of pseudonyms used for this research included Tim, Natalie, and Tina. This was done to protect the participants from any ill effects that could come from being identified through their answers. Pseudonyms were picked in such a manner that there was no way someone could identify the speaker through their words. In line with this, all identifying data from the interviews were blacked out from the final transcriptions in order to prevent a possible identification of the participant and their personal views. Although ethics can be a long process; simple actions like providing participants with pseudonyms and carefully securing the acquired data protected both the participant and the researcher.

The Sample

Now that the ethics, definitions, and issues associated with doing an interview-based qualitative project has been discussed, the sample acquired for the purposes of this research will

be explained. For this research, I conducted interviews with a small sample of people involved with the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture, with both members of the board of directors and fans included in the sample. In total, three members of the board of directors and eight fans agreed to take part in this study, making a total of eleven participants.

Members of the board of directors were singled out as possible interview participants because their experience in running the franchise was thought to be a way to gather valuable insights on the strengths and weaknesses of public ownership from within the club. At the same time, this group provided information on how a public ownership model not only functions, but also how it affects the team's fan subculture simply because, as we shall see, those board members were also part of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture. This part of the sample was gathered through personal communication with intermediaries at the club. Once their interest was secured, a time for the phone interviews was set according to their schedules. All of the board of directors interviewed for this study were unable to meet face-to-face, so I had to conduct their interviews on the phone.

As I was gathering interviews with the board of directors, I was also interested in locating fans of the team to interview in order to determine their understandings about the importance of public ownership. Fans were recruited via an initial communication phase at places where large numbers of supporters would gather.[24] An important question to consider at this point is how I went about identifying these "Roughrider supporters" for my sample. I approached fans that had a clear identification with the club and displayed their fandom for everyone to see. I looked for fans that were wearing the team jersey, a melon head, or simply singing songs about the club. Now, this brings up the point of how I could be sure these fans were truly supporters as opposed

[24] The main place where the sample of fans was gathered was at Commonwealth Stadium (October 23rd, 2010) when Saskatchewan played Edmonton. As previously mentioned, this was where I handed out the information letter to gauge their potential interest in the study.

to typecasting them into that role. In my experience with this sample, I noticed immediate differences and characteristics when I began to talk to them about the Roughriders. If they were emotionally invested in the game and were interested in my research, they stood out as supporters. Casual fans would have, in my opinion, displayed less of an attachment to the franchise's fortunes and would not have been interested in my research as the team may not have been that important to them in the first place. In retrospect, using these categories to identify fans kept me focused on what I needed for my sample, and from not diluting the sample with the wrong group of people.

After gaining their interest in the study, I contacted them via email or phone offering them more information on the study and to gauge if they were still willing to do interviews. This email contained many of the same things that the information letter provided, but not to the same detail. If they were interested, I worked around their schedule and tried to find a time/place to do the interview. If possible, the interviews were done face-to-face at an agreed upon location. However, in the majority of cases, a phone interview was required, so a time to do the interview was mutually agreed upon according to what was convenient for the fans involved. At the time of the interview, I made sure that the participants understood the basics of the interview through an informed consent and if they needed another information letter, I was willing to provide them with another one.

For this sample, I wanted a mix of male and female Saskatchewan Roughrider fans with a wide age range. In total, there were 5 females and 6 males in the sample (which includes both fans and members of the board of directors), with an age range from 20-54. I did this to balance the results because if the participants were all males between the ages of 25 and 30, that would not provide a very diverse sample. Without a diverse sample, I would not be able to accurately

draw generalizations from the data. On that note, female fans were sought out because they had the potential to identify potentially different answers from their male counterparts about the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture and its gendered dynamics.

Differences between the genders could have affected the conclusions that I made about the data. As Dietz-Uhler and Lanter (2008) point out in their work on fandom:

> Females reported being a fan of sports for social reasons such as watching or attending a sporting event to spend time with family or friends. For males, sport fandom seems to serve a less-relational function. They reported being a fan because they enjoyed the excitement of following sports and seeking information about sports. (p. 112)

Age differences were also identified as a possible determinant of changes in one's socialization process because a younger supporter may have experienced the subculture a much different way than an older one fan would. Thus, having a random (but at the same time, controlled) sample of Saskatchewan Roughrider fans helped construct a broad, but realistic portrayal of the fan subculture.

I felt that interviewing both the board of directors and fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders provided me with the opportunity to compare the answers from each group. The answers given by both groups were different and, of course, precautions were taken to make sure the differences did not dominate the study. A higher amount of fans was preferred because the diversity among them would be more evident than amongst the board of directors. Since the board of directors all represent a common interest, interviewing more would have been pointless because their answers concerning certain aspects of the club would have been too much alike. More fans were recruited because they would have vastly different views, dependent upon their

history and proximity to the club which, in turn, would provide me with more in-depth information to work with.

Each fan had a different experience supporting the Saskatchewan Roughriders, which added to the data that I wanted for this study. Overall, the original goal for this research was to have twelve participants because that amount of data was thought to be more manageable compared to a higher amount of interviews. If my sample was closer to sixty interviews, I would have gathered too much data and it would have taken a much longer time to break all of it down. In the end, having too much data can hurt a study because it would make it that much harder to break the acquired data down into its simplest form. By not having too large of a sample, I was able to use the analytical method of content analysis to its full potential.

Content Analysis

Now that it has been explained how I acquired the data, the process that I used to analyze the data will be outlined. Smith and Sparkes (2005) considered life stories to be extraordinary complex sets of data which need to be subjected to varying types of analyzes. This applies to this research because all of the people that were interviewed have distinctive and complex life stories associated with their fandom of the Saskatchewan Roughriders. I sought to explore their individual histories as Saskatchewan Roughrider organizers or fans with respect to how they became fans, what they like about being a part of the Roughrider fan subculture, and what they thought about the public ownership model. An examination through multiple lenses -- in this case through the eyes of the board of directors or fans -- was critical to fully understanding the data that was gathered.

Smith and Sparkes (2005) advocated looking into both the “how” and “what” of what is being said. For the purposes of this thesis, I was more interested in the “what”. Thus, the

analytical method that was applied to this research was content analysis. Smith and Sparkes (2005) define content analysis as "(f)ocusing on what is said in and outside stories, [as] this is an analysis that looks at the content or defined categories of the story as manifested in separate sections of the narratives told" (p. 215). Congruent with this, Patton (2002) notes that "…content analysis is used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (p. 453). In other words, content analysis was the simplest method available for getting the meaning behind immense amounts of qualitative data. Content analysis gave me the ability to construct a clearer picture of how public ownership affects the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture.

Smith and Sparkes (2005) also contend that "...content analysis is valuable for examining the thematic similarities and differences between narratives provided by a number of people" (p. 230). In my research, the strategy was to take the collected data and create distinct categories for organizational purposes. I collected a variety of narratives during interviews with different participants, so having an analysis method which made the identification of common themes easier was preferred. An example of a study that used content analysis to this extent was Wilson and White's (2002) examination of the "Revive the Pride" group in Ottawa. Wilson and White (2002) used content analysis to discover common themes from the "Revive the Pride" experience that could be applied to anybody wishing to form a group with similar goals.

Similar to Wilson and White's (2002) analysis, I used content analysis as a tool to develop coherent observations about the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture. For example, some common themes that were identified with the help of content analysis were how members of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture were socialized into their fandom. By tracking

these common themes, I was able to deduce that one of the biggest influences on their fandom were their fathers, which then allowed me to pursue other directions in my discussion chapters. For this study, I also examined the character traits that were concurrent in their collective fandom in order to make generalizations about the collective habitus of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture.

All of the findings discussed later in my discussion chapters were discovered using the content analysis method. At the same time as I searched for similar themes in the data, I also looked for differences amongst the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture via content analysis. By using this analytical method, I was able to find differences between gender and age groups involved with the subculture, and offer a reason for why those differences existed. Through the use of content analysis, I examined how participants felt about public ownership to capture the range of opinions about the visibility of public ownership in Saskatchewan by both the board of directors and fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

The last point that must be made about the content analysis utilized for this particular project is the fact that the researcher is a longstanding Saskatchewan Roughrider fan. By having a clear attachment to the team and its prospects, one could infer that the interpreted data was driven by my personal perception of the franchise. For example, if I was a fan of the Edmonton Eskimos who was researching the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture, would my results have been different? Clearly, my role as both researcher and fan of the Saskatchewan Roughriders may result in some slight biases in the presentation of the data. On the other hand, being a fan of the franchise provided me with enough ‘insider information’ and credibility that I could approach my fellow supporters and gain enough data to make this study possible. If I was an outsider, I may have had a more difficult time engaging fans and approaching them for an

interview. In the end, although being a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan could have affected how I interpreted the data, I took care to be reflexive throughout the research process and continually challenged my own biases and assumptions as I analyzed my data and wrote up my results.

Chapter 4: Discussion–Political Economy of Canadian Professional Sport

This chapter provides a political-economic analysis of the current ownership patterns in Canadian professional sport. Specifically, I examined whether franchise ownership patterns changed across cities and the major sports leagues in Canada (the CFL, NHL, MLS, MLB, and NBA). In essence, all of the North American major professional leagues are cartels. As Eitzen (2006) explains, these "…cartels exist to restrict competition for athletes, to limit franchises, and to divide markets among the league teams" (p. 190). Yet, despite their common structure as cartels, there are a variety of ownership models within Canadian professional sport. The following chapter is structured in relation to three areas of interest: 1) the CFL, 2) the NHL, and 3) the Toronto market. I will examine each of these areas separately but the latter part of the discussion will focus on MLSE's integrated, and arguably 'globalized', approach to sport ownership in Toronto compared with the more modest and undercapitalized national agenda of the CFL, a league that operates in much smaller markets across Canada. These two topics of discussion will provide an interesting dichotomy to examine in relation to Saskatchewan's method of public ownership.

Who Owns What in Canadian Professional Sport?

The findings of this study were split into three categories of professional sport in Canada: the CFL, NHL, and the Toronto market. In order to display their ownership patterns effectively, the two biggest leagues in terms of national presence -- the CFL and NHL -- were isolated. I did this to demonstrate the key differences between these two leagues -- in terms of ownership patterns -- and to reveal some key political-economic pressures that set distinct limits on ownership models in both leagues. As noted above, the Toronto market was singled out because, as the largest and wealthiest city in Canada, it has franchises in every major North American

sports league, which clearly makes it the biggest market for professional sport in Canada. Although eighteen professional teams were a part of the sample for this research, the only league where every team was from Canada was the CFL.

The Canadian Football League

As of 2012, the eight franchises in the CFL were owned and operated in a variety of ways across a wide range of markets, from the country's economic centers of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, through the smaller markets of Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatchewan, and Winnipeg. The following table illustrates the varied ownership of those franchises:

Team	Owner (s)	Source
Edmonton Eskimos	Publicly Owned (Board of Directors)	(*Directors*, n.d.)
Saskatchewan Roughriders	Publicly Owned (Board of Directors)	(*Overview and goals*, n.d.)
Winnipeg Blue Bombers	Publicly Owned (Board of Directors)	(*Board of directors*, n.d.)
British Columbia Lions	David Braley	(*David Braley- Owner, BC Lions Football Club- Alternate Governor, CFL*, n.d.)
Calgary Stampeders	Majority Owned by Calgary Flames LP[25]	Odland (2012)
Hamilton Tiger-Cats	Bob Young	(*Bob Young*, n.d.)
Toronto Argonauts	David Braley	(*David Braley*, n.d.)
Montreal Alouettes	Bob Wetenhall	(*Bob Wetenhall-Owner*, n.d.)

Table 2: Ownership of CFL Franchises

As the table indicates, forms of both public and private ownership are evenly distributed across the league, and because of this, the CFL offers an interesting cross-section of ownership to study in contrast to larger North American professional sports leagues.

The small market prairie franchises in Saskatchewan, Edmonton, and Winnipeg are publicly owned and, as such, their day-to-day operations are determined by a board of directors

[25] The minority owners of the Stampeders are the old majority shareholders -- headed by Doug Mitchell and John Forzani (Odland, 2012).

elected by shareholders or the community at large. What I found interesting about these franchises is their lengthy history of public ownership. In fact, all three have been publicly owned since their inception. This demonstrates that public ownership can be successful in a professional sports league if there is a long-standing relationship with that style of ownership structure. A probable reason for the ongoing presence of this model of ownership in the CFL is that the league is distinctly local (only one American is involved in CFL franchise ownership) and that it operates on an infinitely smaller scale in relation to the more successful major North American leagues.[26] Indeed, the cost of running a CFL franchise on a daily basis is considerably smaller when compared to a team in one of the major leagues in North America. Moreover, the major NHL, MLB, NHL, and NFL franchises require significant amounts of investment capital and the sheer cost of players' salaries is astronomically higher compared to the smaller CFL.

Although public ownership is still a viable model in the CFL, the league clearly has a number of private owners with their own interests. The following table illuminates the CFL's prominent private owners and their respective businesses:

Owner	Business	Source
David Braley	Auto parts manufacturer	(*David Braley- Owner, BC Lions Football Club- Alternate Governor, CFL*, n.d.)
Bob Wetenhall	Investment banking	(*Bob Wetenhall-Owner*, n.d.)
Bob Young	Co-founded Red Hat and founded Lulu.com	(*Bob Young*, n.d.)
Calgary Flames LP	Sports Management Group	Odland (2012)

Table 3: The CFL's Private Owners and their Business Interests

[26] Bob Wetenhall (Alouettes) is the sole American owner in the CFL (*Bob Wetenhall-Owner*, n.d.).

These owners have clearly been successful enough in their business enterprises and professional experiences to have accrued enough capital to purchase their respective CFL franchises. Despite being affluent individuals, the sheer cost of an NHL franchise is still likely prohibitive and beyond their individual investment means which may partly explain why they have turned towards owning a CFL franchise.

Although private ownership in the CFL is currently strong, there are still a number of concerns that the CFL must pay attention to in the future. These include the CFL's current over-lapping ownership issues (David Braley owns two franchises), Calgary's past ownership struggles, and a general debate over what direction the league should take in terms of developing their 'product'. I will return to each of these issues later in this chapter in my expanded discussion on the CFL. The CFL is not only second fiddle to the NHL in the minds of most Canadians, but also in terms of capitalization and franchise value. It is to a discussion of these issues that I now turn.

The National Hockey League

All seven Canadian NHL teams are privately owned and operated by extraordinarily wealthy individuals or powerful corporations. This is a direct contrast to the CFL and their mixture of private and public ownership. The first of the following two tables displays who owns all of the Canadian NHL franchises (Table 4). Concurrently, the table following this displays the current franchise values of these teams (Table 5). These two tables are shown to demonstrate the current configuration of NHL hockey teams in Canada.

Team	Owner (s)	Since	Source
Vancouver Canucks	Aquilini Family	2005	(*Vancouver Canucks,* n.d.)
Edmonton Oilers	Daryl Katz	2008	(*Edmonton Oilers,* n.d.)

Calgary Flames	Calgary Flames LP[27]	1980	(*Calgary Flames*, n.d.)
Toronto Maple Leafs	MLSE[28]	1994	(*Toronto Maple Leafs*, n.d.)
Ottawa Senators	Eugene Melnyk	2003	(*Ottawa Senators*, n.d.)
Montreal Canadiens	Molson Family	2009	(*Montreal Canadiens*, n.d.)
Winnipeg Jets	True North Sports & Entertainment	2011	(*Winnipeg Jets*, n.d.)

Table 4: Ownership of Canadian-based NHL Franchises

Team	Franchise Value	Rank in the NHL	Source
Toronto Maple Leafs	$521 Million	#1	(*Toronto Maple Leafs*, n.d.)
Montreal Canadiens	$445 Million	#3	(*Montreal Canadiens*, n.d.)
Vancouver Canucks	$300 Million	#7	(*Vancouver Canucks*, n.d.)
Calgary Flames	$220 Million	#13	(*Calgary Flames*, n.d.)
Edmonton Oilers	$212 Million	#15	(*Edmonton Oilers*, n.d.)
Ottawa Senators	$201 Million	#17	(*Ottawa Senators*, n.d.)
Winnipeg Jets	$164 Million	#24	(*Winnipeg Jets*, n.d.)

Table 5: Canadian NHL teams and their Franchise Values

This dominance of private ownership is, of course, due to the high valuation of NHL franchises and the sheer amount of capital needed to successfully purchase and operate a competitive NHL team.

Indeed, given the popularity of hockey in Canada and the value of NHL franchise, it was crucial to examine the business interests of current NHL franchise owners. Many of the businesses indicated in the table below demonstrate the wealth, diverse business interests, and

[27] The owners of the Calgary Flames at the time of research were N. Murray Edwards, Alvin G. Libin, Allan P. Markin, Jeffrey J. McCaig, Clayton H. Riddell, and Byron J. Seaman (*Owners*, n.d.).

[28] MLSE is now owned by a consortium of Rogers Communications/ Bell Canada and Larry Tanenbaum (*Rogers, Bell buy control of MLSE: Deal includes NHL's Maple Leafs, NBA's Raptors,* 2011).

capital held by the owners of Canadian NHL franchises (Table 6).[29] After this, a table showing the current net worth of the richest Canadian professional sports owners brings to light a key difference between NHL and CFL owners (Table 7).

Owner	Business Interest	Source
Aquilini Family	Manages a national real estate portfolio	(*Aquilini investment group*, n.d.)
Daryl Katz	Pharmacies	(*Daryl Katz*, n.d.)
N. Murray Edwards	Oil & Gas	(*N. Murray Edwards*, n.d.)
Clayton H. Riddell	Oil & Gas	(*Clayton Riddell*, n.d.)
MLSE	Media conglomerate	(Grange & Shoalts, 2010b)
Eugene Melnyk	Most businesses are focused on the pharmaceutical side of things	(*Eugene Melnyk- Owner, governor and chairman*, n.d.)
Molson	Breweries	(*Geoff Molson*, n.d.)
True North Sports & Entertainment	Operations of a sports entertainment facility	(*Media: True North Sports & Entertainment*, n.d.)

Table 6: Canadian NHL Team Owners and their Business Interests

Billionaires (Rank in Canada)	**Net Worth** (in billions)	**Professional Team They Own** (League)
Thomson Family (1)	$21.34	Winnipeg Jets (NHL)
Rogers Family (4)	$5.94	Toronto Blue Jays (MLB)
Clay Riddell (11)	$3.19	Calgary Flames (NHL)
Daryl Katz (18)	$2.8	Edmonton Oilers (NHL)
Murray Edwards (22)	$2.47	Calgary Flames (NHL)

Table 7: Canadian Billionaires and their Sporting Interests (*The rich 100*, n.d.)[30]

What these tables demonstrate is the amount of money required to own a Canadian major league franchise, specifically a NHL team. The owners of these teams are definitely part of Canada's

[29] Not all of the Calgary owners were listed in this table due to a lack of concrete data on them.
[30] This list is for the 2011 year.

corporate elite and it seems that a clear sign of one's economic prowess and prestige is to own a professional sports franchise, specifically a Canadian NHL franchise. In contrast to the CFL -- where there are no billionaire owners -- the NHL seems to attract the most affluent owners available in Canada. This is in search of not only profits, but also the glamour associated with owning a franchise in such an important sport in Canadian popular culture.

The business interests of Canadian NHL franchise owners shows that the majority of these owners have interests that extend far beyond owning a NHL team. At the same time, most of these companies hold major business interests within Canada, and arguably the best advertisement for a company based in Canada is to own a professional hockey franchise. Therefore, these owners have a vested interest in seeing the 'popularity' and visibility associated with the ownership of a Canadian NHL franchise transfer to their other businesses. Although a strong investment, NHL franchises in Canada have had serious issues in the past (possible relocation, disbandment, and long futility streaks), which has caused problems for private owners. Hockey is widely regarded as a national religion in Canada and if the owners make one wrong move, their Canadian business interests could suffer because of it. For example, Quebec fans boycotted Carling O'Keefe when the team was originally looking to relocate in the 1980's (Dryden & MacGregor, 1989).

This demonstrates that if the fans of a Canadian NHL team feel slighted, they could take out their anger on ownership, although the long-suffering fans of the Toronto Maple Leafs have yet to pursue such strategies. As Whitson (1998) has noted, though, "…the force of "tradition", coupled with a sense that these leagues were national institutions, has effectively insulated them against pressures for change" (p. 58). In other words, although some owners have enacted controversial decisions, the fact that hockey is "Canada's game" and its status as a cartel

prevents anyone from making substantial changes towards how professional hockey is run in Canada. Although fans can act out against the owner of a team, they will rarely do anything that could potentially harm their "national institution".

Concurrently, this makes the NHL extremely popular with Canadian citizens who watch hockey because of the intense connection we have to hockey and the fact that it is the only major hockey league in North America. The same cannot be said about the much smaller CFL and the constant 'threat' of the National Football League and, as such, the NHL will consistently enjoy a protected status amongst the Canadian populace compared to the CFL. The CFL and NHL represent vastly different aspects sports ownership in Canada simply because of their place in the professional sports marketplace in Canadian culture, and the city that best demonstrates these stylistic differences across the board is Toronto.

Toronto-based Professional Sport Teams

As noted in the literature review, Field (2006) examined Toronto-based professional sports franchises and discovered that they were run by two major media conglomerates: MLSE and Rogers Communications (RCI). There have been some developments over the course of the past six years, but the general trends have remained fairly static. The following table illustrates the current configuration of franchise ownership in the Toronto market (Table 8) and their most recent franchise values (Table 9):

Team	Owner (s)	Since	Source
Toronto Argonauts (CFL)	David Braley	2010	(*David Braley*, n.d.)
Toronto Maple Leafs (NHL)	MLSE	1994	(*Toronto Maple Leafs*, n.d.)
Toronto Raptors (NBA)	MLSE	1998	*(Toronto Raptors*, n.d.)

Toronto FC (MLS)	MLSE	2007	(*Ownership*, n.d.)
Toronto Blue Jays (MLB)	RCI	2000	*(Toronto Blue Jays*, n.d.)

Table 8: Ownership of Toronto-based sports teams[31]

Team	Franchise Value	Source
Toronto Maple Leafs	$521 Million	(*Toronto Maple Leafs*, n.d.)
Toronto Raptors	$382 Million	*(Toronto Raptors*, n.d.)
Toronto Blue Jays	$413 Million	*(Toronto Blue Jays*, n.d.)
Toronto FC	$44 Million	(Schwartz & Badenhausen, 2008)[32]

Table 9: MLSE and Rogers Communications-owned Franchises and their Values

With the exception of David Braley's ownership of the Argonauts, Roger Communications now owns a stake in all the professional sports teams in Toronto through their recent acquisition of MLSE. Table 8 also demonstrates that all the major league sports franchises in the city are worth a considerable amount of money. With this amount of money at stake, major businesses will do anything to have a huge share in the brands associated with the Toronto professional sports scene. This makes it all the more interesting that only two companies -- MLSE and Rogers Communications -- have a majority share as a duopoly in Toronto's professional sports teams.

MLSE is by far the most influential, and profitable, sports and entertainment business in Canada. When MLSE recently sold their shares to Roger Communications and Bell, the companies estimated value was just short of $2 billion (*Rogers, Bell buy control of MLSE: Deal includes NHL's Maple Leafs, NBA's Raptors*, 2011). In addition to operating these valuable professional sports teams, MLSE also has a variety of interests in other related areas. These include -- as Grange & Shoalts (2010b) point to -- interests in arenas/stadiums (Air Canada Centre), minor league hockey teams (the Toronto Marlies), bars (Real Sports), condominiums,

[31] This table includes the previously mentioned Argonauts and Maple Leafs.
[32] This 2008 article held the most recent valuation of the Toronto FC (MLS) franchise.

and restaurants. This shows that the main properties of MLSE (the professional sports franchises) are being used to develop their other business interests and vice versa.

Not to be forgotten when talking about the ownership of Toronto-based professional sports teams is Rogers Communications. Interestingly, Rogers Communications also owned the Argonauts prior to the team's current owner, David Braley. Today, this telecommunications empire owns the Toronto Blue Jays -- the only MLB franchise in Canada -- as well as the Rogers Centre.[33] Ownership of the Toronto Blue Jays -- a key franchise -- helps in the promotion of their brand across the country by providing popular sports content that drives sports fans to their products (television, Internet, phone) and services. This is, in fact, the precise reason why Rogers Communications has recently partnered with Bell Canada to each buy 37.5 percent of MLSE, for about $533 million each (*Rogers, Bell buy control of MLSE: Deal includes NHL's Maple Leafs, NBA's Raptors*, 2011).[34] This deal ensures that Rogers Communications will own almost everything involving professional sport in Toronto and will have control over the product that Toronto sports fans will see on their favorite fields of play.

Upon reflection, these developments accurately support Whitson's (1998) comments that were made over a decade ago:

> In the era of cable and satellite television, an important far-reaching synergy is found in the ownership of sports franchises (increasingly, several in a city) by the owners of regional cable or satellite networks. (p. 67)

By owning the teams and sports content that subscribers in their primary area of interest want to watch, Rogers Communications will be able to effectively advertise their communications and

[33] Rogers Centre is where the Blue Jays (MLB) play their games out of.
[34] Larry Tanenbaum will own the other 25% in MLSE (*Rogers, Bell buy control of MLSE: Deal includes NHL's Maple Leafs, NBA's Raptors,* 2011).

television properties, and control this market of interest. As Field (2006) argued in his work, this raises a question about how much influence MLSE and Rogers Communications has on the Toronto sports scene and more importantly, its relationship with Toronto sports fans.

Case Studies in Canadian Professional Sport Ownership

In response to the data described above, I will examine the integrated and diverse ambitions of MLSE in contrast to the 'modest' national agenda of the CFL in this section. The differences between these two cases will allow me to create new observations on the state of Canadian professional sport. This discussion will also relate to the subsequent section on public ownership in Saskatchewan as it provides both a contrast to the MLSE business structure and some evidence for the recent stability of the CFL and the loyalty of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture.

MLSE: Success or Failure in Toronto?

The first case that will be considered when talking about the political economy of professional sport in Canada is the prevalence of MLSE in the Toronto sports scene. As it has been pointed out in Table 7, MLSE owns the Maple Leafs, Raptors, and Toronto FC. Due to this, MLSE almost has complete control over the Toronto professional sports market. MLSE also has a stake in many other sports-related ventures such as bars and television stations that allow the company to extend its already well-established promotional reach with the Maple Leafs, Raptors, and Toronto FC.[35] In retrospect, the current Toronto professional sports scene supports the trends pointed out in many of the academic articles cited earlier in this thesis (Harvey et al., 2001; Law et al., 2002; Field, 2006). These academic papers persuasively make the assertion that the most valuable and profitable franchises are owned by deep-pocketed and integrated corporations that

[35] As previously mentioned, such investments include the Air Canada Centre (where the Maple Leafs and Raptors play), the Toronto Marlies (Toronto's AHL farm team), condominium towers, Real Sports (a sports bar recognized as the best in North America by ESPN), and a gourmet restaurant (Grange & Shoalts, 2010b).

seek to extend their brand and dominate a desired market. In MLSE's case, this includes Toronto and the rest of Southern Ontario.

Historically, MLSE was comprised of three principle owners with the largest share held by the Ontario Teacher's Pension Plan, which amounted to 66 percent of the company (Grange & Shoalts, 2010b). The following table shows the former ownership distribution of MLSE:

Shareholder	Percentage of Shares (%)
Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan	66
Kilmer Sports Inc	20.5
TD Capital	13.5

Table 10: Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment Ownership Group Makeup (Grange & Shoalts, 2010b)

For many people, this seemed like an odd group to have such a significant stake in a sports-entertainment company, but it has clearly been a profitable investment, and less an "active" form of ownership. In fact, when the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan sold its shares to Rogers Communications and Bell Canada, their net profit will be $1.32 billion, which is immense considering they bought it for $180 million (*Rogers, Bell buy control of MLSE: Deal includes NHL's Maple Leafs, NBA's Raptors*, 2011). This illustrates the marketing potential inherent in owning multiple professional sports franchises, especially the ones in Toronto.

Ownership of Canada's most profitable brand name, the Maple Leafs, plays an enormous part in the success of MLSE. In fact, the Maple Leafs and Raptors were valued at $521 Million (*Toronto Maple Leafs*, n.d.) and $382 Million (*Toronto Raptors*, n.d.) in their most recent franchise valuations. This shows why they have made the net profit they have, because without these franchises and the synergy the company enjoys with them, their profit made by the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan would have been much less. With this sale complete, the way MLSE will

be used to make a profit will completely change under the majority ownership of Rogers Communications and Bell Canada.

By associating with the brands they own, MLSE can extend the imagery of whatever asset they want to advertise. This is concurrent with Whitson's (1998) thoughts when he emphasizes "…that an important feature of the transformations in professional sport today is a new kind of corporate integration in the media and entertainment industries" (p. 59). In other words, professional sport ownership is moving towards these synergies as they can provide valuable content and promotional opportunities for various media conglomerates and telecommunication empires. Although widely profitable off the field, fans routinely claim that MLSE has had little success on the field of sporting play and only focuses on turning a profit. This is particularly evident in the long-term failures of the Maple Leafs (who have not won a Stanley Cup since 1967) and the Raptors (who have never even come close to an NBA championship). Although the brand name and business ventures bring in a bonanza of money into the company, on-field success has always been MLSE's problem.

In his work, Whitson (1998) makes the observation that "(t)he irony is that it is now team colors and logos (and names), rather than a team's competitive prowess, that sell merchandise" (p. 66). This is Toronto's situation epitomized. The Leafs, for example, rarely make the playoffs but their brand remains very strong because of the merchandise and ticket sales they enjoy every year. Although the teams owned by MLSE are attracting a more affluent crowd with their product, their failures on the field are arguably alienating the hardcore supporters that made their franchises what they are. As a company, MLSE creates financial gains on par with some of the other profitable teams in the major North American sports leagues, but the big difference is that these other franchises routinely field competitive championship teams. For example, teams like

the New York Yankees (MLB) and Los Angeles Lakers (NBA) have huge brand values like the Maple Leafs, but they also have had recent success in their sport. As Grange and Shoalts (2010a) note, fans routinely complain that that MLSE is content in making vast amounts of money as a business, as opposed to making their legions of fans happy by fielding competitive teams that win league championships.

Although MLSE's "on-field" success has been lagging for all of their teams, the franchise that stands out in this regard are the Maple Leafs. Grange and Shoalts (2010a) explain that success in the salary cap-based NHL often results from "bottoming out" and building the franchise through strong draft picks and good managerial decisions. In their article, Grange and Shoalts (2010a) compare the Maple Leafs and the Washington Capitals to illustrate their point. In the previous year, the Maple Leafs had dealt their first round draft pick to the Boston Bruins (which turned out to be the highly touted Tyler Seguin) for Phil Kessel, a one-dimensional sniper which allowed a temporary fix for the team's woes. Meanwhile, Washington has been building themselves into contenders by drafting players like Alexander Ovechkin, Nicklas Backstorm, and Mike Green. Although the acquisition of Kessel allowed MLSE to keep on making money with a new "attraction", they will never get the required pieces to win a championship building their franchise this way.

Evidence like the previous example suggests that MLSE is focused on ensuring they continue to generate vast amounts of revenue instead of building a championship team for their fans to enjoy. How can MLSE expect to keep making money if the main contributors to their success, the fans, are unhappy? In the end, the fans are clearly more interested in following competitive franchises that can be successful and contend for future titles. This raises a huge conundrum for MLSE, and whatever their future business plans might be. Admittedly, this is a

tough situation for both parties, but Grange (2010) points to some positive developments involved with MLSE ownership. For example, MLSE does not run their teams like Dan Snyder, the current owner of the Washington Redskins (NFL). Grange (2010) cites Snyder's decisions to sell beer in the washrooms, peanuts from a bankrupt airline, and his lawsuit against a grandmother for failing to make a payment on her lifelong season seat as examples of egregious behavior. If cheering for losing teams is the only thing that Toronto fans have to worry about, is that not a good thing?

As previously mentioned, Rogers Communications (along with Bell Canada) has bought controlling shares in MLSE, which raises a few questions about the future of this company. What, if anything, will change? As huge telecommunication giants, how will fierce competitors like Rogers and Bell utilize their ownership of Canada's top sporting brands to their competitive and commercial advantage? Rogers Communications could potentially make watching the Maple Leafs harder as they could give the broadcast rights to one of their subsidiary channels, thus restricting the access that people have to their product. Although this is just speculation, it is important to consider the effects this possible change in ownership will have on the future of Canadian professional sport.

Essentially, the main problem with the Toronto sports scene is that, with the exception of the Argonauts, there is clearly a monopoly on all professional sports teams in the city. This harkens back to a quote from Dryden (1983), when he asks, in relation to the team he played for, "(w)hy should we think of the Montreal Canadiens as *ours*?" (p. 230; emphasis in text). For fans of the Toronto Maple Leafs, and the other teams owned by MLSE, this is a current issue they must address. What right, if any, do fans of these teams have to consider these teams as theirs? Due to their cartel of interests, Rogers Communications and Bell Canada own the rights to these

teams through MLSE and, as any business; they hold the right to do whatever they want to with them. This means that the voices of Toronto sports fans are unlikely to be heard unless a change in ownership happens, or if fans actually start withholding their discretionary income.

No matter how this issue is resolved, it is an interesting dilemma to ponder in relation to Canadian sport, not only in Toronto, but in other cities as well. For example, in Saskatchewan, this contentious ownership situation is something fans must be happy to avoid. The Saskatchewan Roughriders organization has to be accountable to the fans (at the very least, they annually elect a board of directors), and must not only heed their advice, but also pay close attention to the financial stability of the community owned team. Upon reflection, it could be possible for Saskatchewan to avoid the problems that MLSE currently has, although the pressure for them to succeed in both areas would be staggering compared to any other CFL team.

The CFL: Canada's Strongest (and only) League?

With its eight franchises, the CFL represents the most diverse profile of professional sports ownership in Canada. Currently, the CFL has three teams which are publicly owned, while five are privately owned. This shows quite a variance in ownership, but there remain three prominent issues that the league needs to address. These three issues are: ownership of two teams by one man, the strengths/weaknesses of both forms of ownership in the league, and how to market their product to a national audience.

The first, and arguably most contentious issue, is the ownership of two teams -- the Toronto Argonauts and British Columbia Lions -- by David Braley. Although troubling, this issue can be shown to have a positive side as well. Braley clearly stepped up and provided the capital to support a financially struggling team in transition (the Argonauts) and demonstrated that he was willing to offer them the financial stability that they needed at a crucial time. Such an investment also provides an example of an owner who not only cares about the league and his

own investment-- although this is important -- but for the overall culture of Canadian football. At the same time, however, the fact that Braley owns two teams in the same league raises some concern. For example, it creates a clear conflict of interest between those two teams. What if the Lions and Argonauts meet in the Grey Cup one year? Could these types of scenarios have connotations of fixing or other related issues attached to them? No other professional league in North America has this conflict of interest because most teams would want to avoid this type of issue altogether. Although it was a good thing that David Braley was able to provide financial security for the Argonauts, it does project certain images that the CFL will need to address in the future. The most important of which may be a lack of overall interest and demand from potential investors in the ownership of CFL franchises.

Although public ownership is popular -- compared to other North American leagues at least -- in the CFL, it does have a number of structural varieties and, unsurprisingly, some detractors. In fact, recent articles in the *Winnipeg Press* have criticized the Blue Bomber's model of public ownership. Complaints have been raised in Winnipeg because the Blue Bombers' board of directors conducts all the operations of the club, both football-related and non-football related (Lawless, 2010). Lawless (2010) argues that due to this style of 'careful' management, the success of the football club has been put on standstill. The high amount of bureaucracy created due to the board of directors expanded role at the club slows down processes that are necessary in the successful running of a football franchise. Thus, the way public ownership is run in Winnipeg may need to be expedited in order to run a successful professional sports franchise in the contemporary era.

Simply put, if the board of directors needs to approve every transaction and decision, then how can a club adjust to an ever-changing season of needs in a timely manner? When these

decisions are simply conducted behind closed doors by a publicly owned franchise, moreover, there is also a potential lack of fan involvement and trust; much like MLSE and other private owners are accused of. In contrast to this, Lawless (2010) points out that Saskatchewan's idea of hiring a CEO to manage the team's football operations in their stead has been a crucial part in their recent resurgence. This demonstrates that there can be significant differences in how publicly owned franchises in the CFL are run, and that not all of them enjoy the same success as Saskatchewan. At the same time, it could be inferred that Lawless' (2010) complaints are anchored in the fact that Winnipeg was having a poor stretch of years when the team was, at times, amongst the worst in the league. Thus, the Winnipeg example shows that publicly-owned franchises are still susceptible to a fan rebellion, especially if the team is performing poorly on the field of play.

Although the previous example may show that public ownership is not without its detractors, privately owned teams often face similar issues. In discussing the strength of privately owned teams in the CFL, one needs to look no further than the Calgary Stampeders and their recent ownership history. In a recent article, *The Globe and Mail's* Allan Maki (2010) points to the troubled past of the Stampeders under their former owner, Michael Feterik. Maki (2010) hypothesizes that Feterik would have bankrupted the franchise if the team's current owners had not stepped up to introduce new styles of management and to provide capital investment. It was widely rumoured, in fact, that Feterik had purchased the Stampeders franchise to provide a place for his son to play professional football (Maki, 2010). Although an extreme example, this shows how poor private management can cripple a good franchise.

Calgary's situation has radically improved under the recent tenure of John Forzani, Ted Hellard, and Doug Mitchell, and a group of other men who purchased the franchise (Maki,

2010). Maki (2010) admits that, although it is hard to get solid fiscal numbers from a privately owned franchise, it is obvious that the Stampeders have prospered under Forzani and company.[36] Arguably, if the Stampeders had not changed owners when they did, the franchise would have been mismanaged into the ground. Nevertheless, it is too simple of an argument to suggest that mismanagement can be halted or avoided by switching to a public ownership model. Moreover, although it is valuable to study individual franchises and their particular fortunes, one must question whether or not the league itself is successful.

This leads into the final and most important question concerning the CFL and its potential avenues for growth. When discussing the CFL's history, a constant topic that arises is financial crisis. *The Globe and Mail's* Stephen Brunt (2010) has argued that under Commissioner Mark Cohon, the CFL has never been stronger. With numerous stadiums being plotted (Winnipeg, Saskatchewan, and Hamilton), a potential return to Ottawa in the near future, and a renewed hope for a Maritimes-based franchise, the CFL seems to be quite healthy at the moment (Brunt, 2010). At the same time, Brunt (2010) does note that the league's current stability largely stems from the CFL's lucrative national television contract with TSN.[37] This national contract is the key source of revenue for the teams and, like other sports cartels; the league negotiates with broadcasters on behalf of all of the teams in the league. Unlike other major leagues (the NBA, the NHL, and MLB), however, individual CFL franchises do not benefit from local television contracts -- there simply are not enough games played in a football season for this to be a revenue stream. The CFL franchises also receive significantly less revenue from sponsorship and merchandising than teams in the other major sports leagues.

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[36] Since they bought out Feterik, the Calgary Stampeders has accomplished the following: a winning record (65-42-2), a Grey Cup win in 2008, and hosted a successful Grey Cup in 2009 (Maki, 2010).

[37] Scherer and Whitson (2009) notes that the deal (signed December 2006) is a five-year contract with TSN for about $16 million a year.

Even though the CFL is having a prosperous run, there are significant business decisions that need to be made to ensure the league's continued growth. In fact, besides renewing its national television contract, the CFL's biggest business concern moving forward may be trying to expand into the Southern Ontario market (Parkinson, 2010). Realistically, the CFL cannot expect to grow if their Ontario franchises continue to flounder. An example of this problem was evident in the 2010 East Semi-Final between Hamilton and Toronto, a game that attracted only 1.2 million people to watch on television, while the West Semi-Final had 2.1 million viewers (Parkinson, 2010).[38] Such a discrepancy demonstrates that there is a massive shift in audience interest between the eastern and western parts of the country. For the CFL to guarantee future success, they need to become more than a regional league. Economically, the CFL is viable but if Toronto and Hamilton grow as expected, the league will see far greater revenue. In the end, Southern Ontario is the Canada's most populous market, and if they fail to harness its potential, the CFL could face financial crises in the near future.

At the same time, there are also important questions to answer about the CFL's marketing strategy in the new millennium. Parkinson (2010) claimed that recent Grey Cup half-time extravaganzas point to a schizophrenic and confusing marketing approach. He notes that in 2005, the league targeted a younger demographic with a Black Eyed Peas halftime show; while a few years later in 2010, they geared the show towards an older audience with a Bachman & Turner performance (Parkinson, 2010). Parkinson (2010) is simply pointing out that for the CFL to grow, they need to determine a consistent and professional marketing approach. To its credit though, the league has abandoned its earlier ambitions for expansion south of the border and has focused on the Canadian market.

[38] Arguably, this Western Semi-Final (British Columbia versus Saskatchewan) had huge numbers because the Roughriders were involved.

This movement has helped stabilize the CFL possible, as the league is now focused primarily in the Canadian marketplace. As Gruneau and Whitson (2001) explained, any:

> … illusions about the CFL as any kind of competitor in the world of major league sporting entertainment were short-lived. While Toronto might find the investment and sponsorship base to compete for marquee players with NFL teams, this was always an absurd proposition in cities such as Winnipeg, Regina, Hamilton, and Edmonton. (p. 246)

Business-wise, the CFL simply cannot compete against the larger and more financially dominant NFL and perhaps even the more marginal football leagues, like the Arena Football League. Yet, its more modest national agenda has also allowed for the ability of three publicly owned franchises to 'stay in the game' of professional sports ownership, as the league knows from experience that they cannot win bidding wars against the NFL and has abandoned its U.S. expansionary dreams, at least for now.

Although the CFL has some pressing issues, the league can boast of several recent success stories although these are admittedly difficult to measure. Is David Braley's ownership of two teams in British Columbia and Toronto a good or bad thing for the league? Is the presence of strong private owners in cities like Calgary a reason for the league's recent stability or does public ownership become a viable option in the smaller league? Can the league truly expand across Southern Ontario and in the Maritimes, or are there not enough investors who are committed to the league? Could a public ownership model be pursued in any of these cases? Will the league be able to secure significant national television contracts in the future? These are all fascinating questions that need to be considered when talking about the CFL's future. In the end, I believe that having a league that is "Canadian" is, without question, important for Canada's national identity.

Common Discourses Found in the Research

In comparing the two case studies of MLSE and the CFL, I have discovered a dichotomy that demonstrates a vast difference in the ownership patterns of Canadian professional sport. MLSE is a massive sport and entertainment conglomerate with a vertically-integrated structure that employs a diverse approach to their business interests. On the other hand, the CFL is a considerably smaller and undercapitalized league with a nationally-based business approach. These two distinct business models demonstrate contrasting versions of how professional sports can be run, and how they affect the fans that will follow their failure or success.

It must be emphasized that MLSE is a company dedicated to capital accumulation though a variety of properties and platforms. This relates back to Field's (2006) observation that "…delivery of desirable market segments to advertisers remains important, but the generation of marketable content for converged print-radio-television-online media conglomerates is gaining ascendency" (p. 47). MLSE has interests in all facets of Toronto sports, which include not only the teams, but also the sports bars, television channels, and other enterprises that have something to gain from being associated with the MLSE brand. Whitson and Gruneau (1997) would call this cross-ownership, which is:

> … the increasing ownership of sports teams by large, integrated corporations, which also have substantial interests in related leisure and entertainment businesses: beer, films and videos, leisure and sports wear, theme parks, and television and radio. It extends in a strategic direction an existing tendency towards corporate ownership that contrasts with older traditions of ownership by collections of local business leaders or flamboyant entrepreneurs such as George Steinbrenner and Peter Pocklington. (p. 375)

Cross-ownership exemplifies what MLSE is doing with their brand in not only Toronto, but across Canada. By using the Maple Leafs and other professional sports teams as promotional tools, they are spreading the reach of their products across Canada.

This is a direct contrast to the CFL, which is the one truly Canadian professional sports league. In reality, none of the eight existing CFL teams are owned by media conglomerates or companies that have larger, more integrated promotional ambitions. This makes the CFL a much smaller and economically 'modest' league that appears to have heeded the lessons of failed expansionary visions in the 1990's. In contrast to MLSE, CFL franchises rely heavily upon ticket revenues for a small number of games and a share of a national television contract. Due to this, the CFL is a more accessible league and franchises do not market their product exclusively to affluent fans and the corporate sector. Moreover, because the salaries of CFL athletes are comparatively lower than the other major leagues, tickets prices are kept relatively low, allowing ordinary fans and families to regularly attend games and potentially purchase season ticket packages. This creates a connection with the people who will determine the continuing success or failure of the CFL franchise in their respective city or province.

The rights of the fans, and if their voices are heard, is another crucial point that can be dissected from a discussion concerning MLSE and the CFL. As previously pointed out, MLSE is not popular with fans because of the losing reputation of their teams, which has caused ongoing criticism to be levied at the company by fans for MLSE's sole focus on profit. Whitson and Gruneau (1997) offer a point that supplements observation when they suggest that:

> Clearly, major leagues in all professional sports are now best understood as combines of team owners whose perspective on the "good of the game" has less to do with national or

> civic traditions than with the prospects of their businesses, individually and collectively. (p. 366)

On the other end of the scale, the CFL has a tighter connection to its fans due to the structure of the league and its history as a Canadian institution. As a national league that operates in smaller markets across the country, the CFL depends on the ability of fans to attend games and support local franchises every year. Recently, the CFL has felt a resurgence in their product, which is due to a more modest business structure and the modeling of a fan-friendly product that they can offer to Canadians at a reasonable price.

The last point that must be made is that MLSE, as a company, does not necessarily support the interests of the community at large. How can teams represent a local community if some members of that community are regularly excluded? As Field (2006) pointed out in his previous paper, there are lots of connections between MLSE and the Canadian financial elite, which naturally informed MLSE's corporate structure. MLSE is a huge organization which demands a large amount of capital to join in on, which contributes to the large presence of the Canadian financial elite on its board. This illustrates that change at the corporate level in MLSE will be hard to come by, and in the future, it will be unlikely that MLSE will come to represent the community in a more diverse way.

Although the CFL has some wealthy owners such as Bob Young (Tiger Cats) and Bob Wetenhall (Alouettes), the league is simply a more diverse group of owners and ownership structures. The obvious counterexamples to MLSE are the publicly-owned franchises, as they represent the interests of the community at large. Public ownership entails that all members of the community -- shareholders in the Saskatchewan Roughriders -- have a right to aide in the organization of the franchise. Due to this, the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture has a

diverse sample of fans and community members who are on the board of directors. At the same time, the Saskatchewan Roughriders board of directors can also change year-to-year if the shareholders deem it so. Arguably, no one can say that the MLSE board has this same ability to change its internal structure from year-to-year to protect the interests of its fan subculture. The only commonality amongst these boards is their dependence on creating sound financial structure so their franchises can be run at an optimal capacity.

The MLSE board is beholden to the financial success of their product, while publicly owned franchises will always have broader community interests and a range of constituents to support. In this sense, the CFL's 'risks' (a smaller, undercapitalized league based across the country including a number of small market centers) are also its opportunities to pursue more diverse forms of ownership. In the future, perhaps fans of the Argonauts will recognize the merits of this style of ownership to have their 'voices' heard and to counter the presence and influence of MLSE and Rogers Communications. Continental leagues like the NHL and NFL, with extraordinarily costly franchises, cannot easily harbor public ownership outside of the only existing, and protected, publicly owned franchise: the Green Bay Packers. At a much smaller level, with an already existing history, public ownership of the Roughriders continues to make sense in Saskatchewan, but in the end, the opinion that counts the most will be the voices of fans and the community at large.

Chapter 5: Discussion- The Saskatchewan Roughrider Fan Subculture

In this discussion chapter, data gathered from interviews conducted with members of the board of directors of the Saskatchewan Roughriders and fans of the club will be analyzed. From this analysis, four themes will be discussed in this chapter. Upon further reflection, some of these four themes were also touched upon in the personal narrative regarding my fandom of the Saskatchewan Roughriders in the introductory chapter. The first theme is the socialization of the fan. In other words, how and when did people become socialized into the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture? Secondly, this chapter will move into a discussion of what makes someone a part of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture. At this point, the interviews conducted with fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders will provide insight into what makes this subculture distinct.

After this, my next section will examine the larger presence of the Saskatchewan Roughriders in the broader culture of Saskatchewanites. Specifically, how do fans feel other Canadians view their province, and do the Roughriders represent a site of popular resistance for fans against the rest of Canada? The final section of this discussion chapter will examine how both fans and the board of directors view the idea of public ownership, especially as it relates to the subculture and how fans feel about the club. In the end, I will suggest that whether or not a fan recognizes public ownership will depend upon how they were socialized into the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture.

The Creation of the Saskatchewan Roughrider Fan

Within this section of the discussion, I will examine how a fan of the Saskatchewan Roughriders is socialized into a member of the Roughrider fan community and subculture. Throughout the interview process, participants were asked two common questions: when did you

become a Roughriders fan, and why? I used these two questions to determine the socialization process of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan.

Participants explained their socialization into the Saskatchewan Roughrider subculture in a number of different ways. However, amongst these historical differences, two themes were consistent amongst all participants: they have been Saskatchewan Roughrider fans throughout their entire lives, and all of them have longstanding connections to Saskatchewan. The following participants, for example, literally claimed to be fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders since birth:

> Umm, well being from Saskatchewan pretty much means it is kind of like from birth I guess. (Jenna)
>
> 20 years, pretty much since I remember. (Nathan)[39]
>
> Wow, I am not sure I became one, it just was always there, always around me, did not think there were any other options I suppose as a young kid. (Tina)

The common thread within these quotes portrays members of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture as fans who consider their fandom to be a part of their "birthright", an identity that is so naturalized as part of their lives that they believe it is simply inherited just by being born in the province of Saskatchewan.

At the earliest point in their lives, these participants could remember being fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders. Their fanship was not acquired later in life as a consumer choice, but instead represented a lifetime of dedication. This is congruent with Giulianotti's (2002) portrayal of the supporter. As previously mentioned in the literature review, the supporter is someone who

[39] At the time of the interview, Nathan was 20 years old.

has a strong, emotional attachment to whatever sports franchise he or she cheers for. Thus, this lifetime of dedication to the Saskatchewan Roughriders demonstrates the presence of supporters in the research sample.

The second similarity that was found amongst participants was the strong connection they have to the province of Saskatchewan. Participants in this study were either been born in the province or continue to live there. The fact that all the fans in this sample have some connection to Saskatchewan makes it seem that anyone born and raised in the province will become a fan of the Roughriders franchise. This is part of the socially constructed mythology of being a fan in general and a fan of the Saskatchewan Roughriders in particular. Calder (2010) implies this when he notes that fandom of the Roughriders "… is now in the genes and consciousness, not only of their great grandchildren, but of almost everyone who has ever spent much time in Saskatchewan" (p. 115). This excerpt suggests that being a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan is much more than an acquired taste, but a hereditary trait of those who have lived or are currently living in the province.

Although some of these fans have moved on to work or live in other areas of Canada, they continue to support and follow the Saskatchewan Roughriders. In this regard, there are some similarities to Crawford's (2004) analysis of the processes of becoming a fan:

> There are many reasons why a particular individual may begin to take a specific interest in a sport or team and embark on their process of induction (and career) as a sport fan. However, for many of us this induction often occurs as a small child, and in our adult life the reasons and motivating factors behind this induction may not always be clear, and in many cases this process may seem almost predestined- as if it is not we who choose our team, but rather our team who chooses us. (p. 43)

In other words, Saskatchewan Roughrider fans may not know the exact reason for their fandom or may not recognize the exact moment they "became" a fan. They simply feel that that it has "always" been a natural part of their life and their identity since they were born.

Despite their claims that being fan was just a natural part of their lives, I asked fans to reflect on how they were "inducted" into the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture. Following this question, many of the participants, in fact, recognized that they were socialized into the subculture and were introduced to it via family members who were also long-term supporters of the team. The influence of a parental figure, in particular, was widely recognized by most participants. For example, there seemed to be quite a range in socializing agents as some of the participants said that their moms (Jenna) or grandparents (Nathan) influenced their fandom. In the end, though, the main familial influence seemed to be the participants' fathers.

This was similar to the narrative I offered in the introductory chapter, when I discussed how it was my father who sparked my interest in the Roughriders and educated me about the team and the sport of football, and socialized me into the team's subculture. When pressed about how their respective fathers encouraged their fandom, fans said:

> Well if we [participant and her father] did not watch games on TV or listen to them on the radio, we would travel into Regina to go to them. (Tina)

> It started off as a family thing, my dad would take me to Roughrider games when I was a kid and eventually it just became… now it is a whole Saskatchewan culture, it reminds me of home, type of thing. (Chris)

These examples demonstrate that one of the easiest ways for a family member to encourage fandom is to get their loved ones involved in cheering for the Saskatchewan Roughriders from an

early age, including all of the cultural activities associated with the club in addition to attending football matches. Yet, all of these comments suggest that, despite being fans for the duration of their lives, the process of becoming a fan was far from a natural occurrence. Instead, the previous examples demonstrate that process of becoming a fan is based on pre-existing cultural values and a variety of personal influences.

Although a lifetime of familial associations fosters a deep respect for the team and the culture involved with being a fan of the Saskatchewan Roughriders, the previous examples also point to the gendered nature of fan socialization. Undoubtedly, the fathers of the participants -- and their support of the Roughriders (something inherited over generations) -- were the central elements in the socialization of both male and female participants. I believe that this gendered process is not uncommon amongst sport fan subcultures because it has historically fallen on the father to be the resident sports fan and "expert" in the household. At the same time, sport has always been the classic cultural form through which fathers can bond with their sons. A good example of this gendered dynamic can be found in the writing of Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* (1992) and his description of how he became a devoted Arsenal fan. He was socialized into the Arsenal fan subculture by his father who always brought him to games to bond after his parents' divorce. Clearly, this process is not exclusively restricted to boys and their fathers. For example, in the following section I note that, while the fan induction process may be distinctly gendered, fathers were pleased to educate both their sons and their daughters about Saskatchewan Roughrider football.

The second common method of socialization into the subculture that participants noted was that they became fans of the team simply because they were taught that it was the "Saskatchewan thing" to do. Some examples of this thread in the research include:

> It kind of has its own culture … in Saskatchewan, everyone cheers for the Riders and if you don't, something's wrong with you kind of thing. (Nathan)

> Well, it is hard not to be a fan in Saskatchewan. (Joe)

> Well, I think the obvious answer to that one is that simply, you know, they were close by and were a professional football franchise. (Tim)

The above quotes illustrate that a huge element of the subculture is the fact that most fans believe it part of their duty as citizens of Saskatchewan to support the franchise. Clearly, there is a unifying element that allows fans to come together (being from Saskatchewan), and embrace their identities as football fans, but also as citizens of the province. However, as noted above, there is nothing about the process of becoming -- and continuing to be -- a fan that is necessarily "natural". Despite the common sense understandings suggested by participants, becoming a fan is a complex process, one that is also the result of the team's standing as the only professional sports franchise in the province, but also because of the ubiquity of the Roughriders in the local media and in popular culture in general.

Interestingly, some fans became even more involved as supporters of the Roughriders when they moved away from home and out of the province of Saskatchewan. If they were dedicated fans while living in Saskatchewan, their feelings towards the Roughriders only intensified when they moved to a different part of Canada. Illustrations of this transformation include:

> But I really started getting into it when I came here to Alberta and then it started being something that distinguished me from anybody else. (Jenna)

> [In 2000] I moved to Edmonton actually. It was really why I think I started becoming a Rider fan. I went to a couple games at Taylor Field before that but when I moved to Edmonton, it was kind of a pride for my homeland thing … (Ethan)

Somewhat unsurprisingly, it seems that becoming an "outsider" in a strange land helped foster an even more intense fan identity and interest in the Saskatchewan Roughriders.[40]

Clearly, this is related to the processes of identity differentiation. For example, being a Roughrider fan in Alberta set fans from Saskatchewan apart from Albertans and this was something they were recognized for. Ethan's point about "pride for my homeland" is also telling because it illustrates that being a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan is a statement of love for the province and a powerful reminder of home for students and increasingly mobile workers. Most fans who have not reached the level of supporter could easily lose or chose to discard their fandom in favor of a team from their new home. This was clearly not the case for members of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture because they are long term, and often life-long, supporters of the team.

Although there were other factors in the socialization process, these three -- having a familial influence, the ubiquity of the Roughriders, and being an "outsider" in a new place -- stand out as the most prevalent. Overall, three generalizations can be inferred about this subculture. First, if someone is a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan, they will likely remain one for the duration of their lifetime. Secondly, the majority of Roughrider fans will have some connection to the province and they will continue to nurture that relationship even when they move away from Saskatchewan. Finally, each and every fan will have their own back story with common elements about how they were socialized into the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan

[40] In this case, the "strange land" was Edmonton, Alberta.

subculture. With these gathered observations, I will now turn my attention to what characterizes the collective habitus of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture and its members.

What Makes the Roughrider Nation, Roughrider Nation?

Now that I have analyzed the data about how fans are socialized into the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture, I will address what makes a Roughrider fan part of this subculture. Across Canada, Roughrider fans are widely known for their dedication to the team as well as their distinct fan identities. In some instances, outsiders may, in fact, perceive Saskatchewan Roughrider fans to be a little "crazy", albeit in a very dedicated way. On the other hand, the insiders interviewed for this study offered a far different interpretation of themselves. Within his book, Crawford (2004) notes that his ideas concerning fandom are:

> ... primarily about the *agency* of fans, however, it recognizes that to a large degree this agency will be shaped by the continual importance of *structures* in people's lives, such as gender, ethnicity and social class. (p. 6; emphasis in text)

In other words, what everybody deems important to their fandom of the Saskatchewan Roughriders is largely dependent on their personal, individualized history and how it relates to the football franchise.

What is important to remember in relation to Bourdieu's concept of habitus is that the similarities apparent within the majority of the interviewee's stories will create a depiction of this subculture's collective habitus. This also helps relay the important point that this habitus is not fixed and will change dependent on each individual's socialization process and over time. After the interviews were analyzed, four characteristics of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture's collective habitus were identified because they were the most prevalent within the

subculture. These four common characteristics gave the most accurate description of what the collective habitus of this fan subculture is.

The first and probably most notable characteristic is that members of Rider Nation hold an unwavering loyalty towards their team. Long-standing loyalty is a desired quality amongst fan groups for a number of reasons, and the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture is no different than many other teams. This was represented through the interviews by Jenna and Sam:

> I think people, until maybe more recently with the more recent Grey Cup win, but when we went through this long drought, people kind of pitied us and saw us as being, like kind of loveably irrational for continuing to cheer for this team that consistently did not do well. (Jenna)[41]

> … they are true and loyal to their roots, they are not as much of in-flow and out-flow of population, so I think that you kind of have that bred in to you at an early age and because there is such excitement and loyalty and you see that demonstrated time and time again, even when the Riders are not doing well on the field. (Sam)

These two quotes demonstrate a widely embraced belief that fans of the Roughriders go above and beyond with the type of loyalty they show their beloved team. This is, once again, congruent with the Giulianotti (2002) conceptualization of supporters. For supporters "(r)enouncing support or switching allegiances to a rival club is impossible; [as] traditional supporters are culturally contracted to their clubs" (Giulianotti, 2002, p. 33). In other words, if someone is a supporter of a club, they are often one for life.

[41] This was a reference to the 2007 Grey Cup victory, their most recent championship.

This displays an unbreakable bond to the team, one that will remain strong throughout all of the pitfalls that could possibly befall the team. Key to these demonstrations of loyalty is the idea that no matter how badly the Roughriders are doing on the field of play, their fans will remain "faithful". One difference (in the eyes of the participants at least) between Rider Nation and other fan subcultures is that Saskatchewan Roughrider fans are not "bandwagon jumpers." They do not drift away from the franchise when it is performing poorly, and then return when all is well again. But is this actually true? Could this fanatical devotion/loyalty be simply part of a broader myth created by the fans? Naturally, there would be Saskatchewan Roughrider fans who are loyal to the club as described above, but there is no doubt that fans of other teams are just as dedicated. At the same time, Saskatchewan Roughrider fans are capable of disloyalty, as everyone cannot suffer through the bad times as well as others can. In the end, although Roughrider supporters may have been socialized to never give up on their team, this could ultimately be a myth that it is created through the subculture.

Although this notion of loyalty could be mythologized into the subculture, how exactly this attribute is created is another idea to consider. In regards to this, Crawford (2004) notes that "(f) actors such as tradition, nostalgia and locality are not monolithic sentiments that belong to a bygone era, but rather have multiple meanings and manifest themselves in many different ways" (p. 31). In other words, words like tradition and loyalty change depending on the situation they are being used in. Thus, a supporter of the Saskatchewan Roughriders will be socialized to believe that these traits are specific to them when they are really not. On the other hand, a less-dedicated person (a flaneur, for example) may not have been socialized into the subculture in the same way, and would be more likely to abandon their loyalty to the Saskatchewan Roughriders. Again, this shows that this process is not natural, but instead relies on a multitude of social

influences. Although this idea of loyalty is debatable, the ways in which fans outwardly display their fandom are undeniable.

The second part of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture collective habitus that I identified is the physical appearance of the fans as a "performance" of a distinct subcultural identity. Many Roughrider fans "perform" their allegiance just like many other groups of fans by donning all sorts of garments; green and white team shirts, jerseys, hats, body paint, masks, wigs, and jackets. But, the fan subculture of the Saskatchewan Roughriders is also based upon an even greater desire on the part of fans to differentiate themselves from other teams through even more exaggerated "performances", including the tradition of wearing watermelons on their heads! The interviewees pointed this out, identifying the Roughrider fans' reliance on being noticeable:

> … it tends to be very boisterous people, you know, they are not shy about showing who they support and like I mean, I went once with a couple of guys who just went all out. They had to have the face paint, wearing like flags for capes, green and white from head to toe, big like green wigs and stuff, so yeah you can…[in reference to differences between Roughrider and Eskimo fans] like just visually, you can tell the difference between people and just how much they like seem to passionately care about it. (Jenna)

> Yeah, they are very visible, they tend to always seems to have something on, a wig or melon head, or they have found some… they want to be physically displayed. You hardly see a Roughrider fan that does not have some sort of silly outfit on, or green paint, or green in their hair. (Tina)

These examples portray Roughrider fans as a very visible fan subculture that engage in a host of activities to create a similar and common identity amongst their fellow fans that simultaneously distinguishes their subculture from other fan groups.

Saskatchewan Roughrider fans do not want to go to games simply to watch, but instead they want to go and proudly display their fandom for all to see as part of an exterior performance of their fandom. Crawford (2004) notes that:

> …it is the supporters themselves, through their performance (for instance, as part of a 'Mexican wave', chanting or singing, displaying flags, banners or using musical instruments), who play a crucial role in generating the spectacle and atmosphere within the venue. Moreover, participation within the crowd can help cement their feelings or belonging and membership of this supporter 'community'. (p. 85)

This shows that a crucial part of the any fan subculture's collective habitus is the exterior performance of their fandom. On the other hand, it is important to remember that "…the nature of being a fan is not only historically and culturally specific, but also dependent on individual definitions and specific social situations" (Crawford, 2004, p. 49). Although the subculture does embrace wild and outrageous displays of fandom, these actions are often dependent on what individual and subcultural preferences are active at the time. In the modern, materialistic world that is professional sports, this notion of a fan subculture recognizing the importance of "suiting up" should not be that much of a surprise, but many of these actions would have been unheard of for my father's generation of Roughrider fans.

Crawford (2004) says that "(s)port supporters will often display their identity and membership to a particular supporter community through the use of sport related consumer goods" (p. 114). In the modern sports fan subculture, it is all about being noticed, so why should

the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture be any different? From a marketing standpoint, this represents an opportunity for the franchise because if the fans see it as their duty to dress up in Roughrider garb, it only helps to spread their brand across the province and Canada. On a personal level, I believe that outward displays of fandom market the franchise in a positive manner, creating an opportunity to socialize more people into the subculture. In time, such regular public displays of personal attachments to the team will encourage other potential fans to learn more about the Saskatchewan Roughriders and Canadian football in general.

The third characteristic of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture's collective habitus is the belief that that they must possess an impressive amount of knowledge about Canadian football and their team. Participants consistently remarked that Saskatchewan Roughrider fans were knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the game of Canadian football. Excerpts supporting this viewpoint include:

> The other distinction that I see, um, [is that] Rider fans are very knowledgeable about football. They know football and sometimes that is a good thing, most times. But sometimes it is not such a good thing as was witnessed this last year when we were having some issues with our special teams, and everybody basically was a special teams coach then. (Jill)

> (In response to what makes Roughrider fans distinct) … I think one of the reasons is, and I liken it a bit to the PGA tour in Scotland or the Montreal Canadiens fans, and what I mean by that, is that I think our fans are very well educated on the game of football. They take their pride in understanding it and ah, therefore sort of embrace it more. (Tim)

The fans interviewed for this research indicated that having extensive knowledge and understanding of not only the Saskatchewan Roughriders, but also Canadian football in general, was a necessity for fans seeking to join the subculture. In this group of fans, if you do not understand the game, it will be difficult for you to socialize yourself into the subculture and be respected by other fans. Again, this suggests that being a member of this fan subculture is much more than a consumer choice that people make.

Detailed knowledge of the Saskatchewan Roughriders and Canadian football can, however, work in both a positive and a negative manner. It is positive in the sense that, this knowledge and recognition of Canadian football can help to develop the sport not only in the province of Saskatchewan, but also across Canada. At the other end of the spectrum, it can be bad for the organization because if the fans are so intimately aware of what is going on with the franchise, they may want their respective voices to be heard beyond radio call-in shows. They become "temporary coaches" who are often the biggest critics of the organization, and try to dictate what the team should accomplish. This could potentially frustrate coaches, and possibly scare off future players because of the pressure put on them by such passionate and outspoken fans. An excellent example of when this enthusiasm might go a little far is when loyal Roughrider fans showed their displeasure with a recent placekicker by dumping manure on his lawn. Although the knowledge and passion of Saskatchewan Roughrider fans can be a disadvantage in this respect, the fact that fans, players, and administrators are involved with the franchise as part of an extended community is something that cannot be ignored.

The final commonality that was gleaned from the interviews was the importance of Roughrider fandom in creating a sense of community and long-lasting friendships. By following this franchise, fans felt part of a larger community, and many remarked during the interviews

about the experiences they had with others based around their shared allegiance to the Roughriders and the province. Examples of this include:

> …I think it gives the whole province something to cheer together with and it is something that brings everybody together, and it seems that no matter where you go, everybody knows about the Roughriders. (Natalie)

> …almost everybody seems to be a Roughrider fan so like it is always a conversation topic I guess and kind of the community extends in the whole province but also like in every other province, if you meet someone from Saskatchewan, you kind of say "oh hey how are the Roughriders doing" or "hey, did you see the last game" or whatever. (Ethan)

These sentiments were similar to those that I expressed in the personal narrative at the beginning of this thesis, when I bonded with a fellow traveler to New Zealand who was also a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan. Socialization into the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture makes it possible for one to join the community of fans that follow the team and to learn the collective habitus from the group.

Without this community, teaching the collective habitus of this subculture would be impossible, because it provides the necessary teachers -- the fans themselves. In relation to this, Crawford (2004) notes that "…the theorization of a career permits a view of the individual as an active social agent within the organization(s) to which they belong" (p. 39). This means that it is up to the current supporters of the Saskatchewan Roughriders to become social agents, and socialize new members into the fan subculture throughout their "careers" as fans. Without these supporters becoming active social agents, the subculture would stagnate and cease to exist in its current form. These sentiments of community are similar to those felt by supporters of any other

professional sports franchises where fans from around the world can come together in one large, communal setting.

The communal support of a team may also provide fans with a sense of community that they might not have in their daily lives. The most telling part of the quotations above is that the team represents a focal point for the creation of community. Whether fans come together within Saskatchewan's borders or outside, what they all have in common is the team they cheer for; a team that represents their provincial identity. The Roughriders provide fans with a way to connect with their home province and keep the community they knew/know close to them as they move away from home to work or attend school. Saskatchewan is a sparsely populated province, but metaphorically speaking, it extends across Canada because of the relationship its citizens have with the Roughriders. This aids in making the Saskatchewan community much larger than one would think.

However, there are also key differences within the habitus of the fan subculture itself that must be considered. Two demographics that were addressed in this study were gender and age. Despite the hypermasculine culture of football, many participants did not distinguish between female and male fans or identify the subculture as a masculine domain. In fact, they reiterated the belief that the fandom of this franchise and its fan subculture was inclusive:

> … I think we have a fairly good spread of female/male, and youth through adult through seniors, frankly it is a very diverse fan base. (Sam)

> You know, there is a lot of females going to the games in my opinion. I have never seen any stats but when I sit around where we sit, okay so it is a lot of season ticket holders, I see an equal split. (Jill)

From inside the subculture, it seems like fans believe themselves to be inclusive, but there are counterpoints to this argument. In fact, the collective habitus of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture can change depending on the gender and age of the participant.

One point to make, which was brought up earlier in the chapter, is the influence that fathers have in socializing their children into the Saskatchewan Roughrider subculture. As noted earlier, gate-keeping to the subculture remains a distinctly gendered process. Clearly, fathers were pleased to socialize sons and daughters and, as the quotes above suggest, there are now more female fans than ever in a sport that has historically been regarded as hypermasculine. Yet, it was also clear that males are the main socialization agents of the subculture. These social agents create and manage the meaning of the fan subculture, and as men socialize new fans, male-centric views will be predominant within the subculture. In other words, it is the fathers of these Saskatchewan Roughrider fans that are teaching them the habitus required for the subculture. Still, there is a new generation of female fans who will soon assume key roles in socializing new fans (their children). As such, it will be interesting to see if the meanings associated with the fan subculture change over time.

To continue on with the latter theme of generational differences, participants interviewed for this thesis did, however, note a distinct difference in the attitudes and preferences of older and younger fans:

> I think that you have the younger kids getting more involved because they are winning. It's just a different generation getting involved. (Natalie)

> … I think that people who have been around long have more a relationship with [the Roughriders], like "oh, those Riders", like... umm, you don't necessarily expect them to

> win but you are going to be loyal anyway whereas the younger fans are maybe more hopeful, like "no, it is going to be this year, this year we are going to do it"… (Jenna)

The big distinction to be drawn from these answers and others is the questioning of motivations for both older and younger fans. Within this subculture, older fans are seen as inherently loyal to the franchise, as they have gone to games to support the team for years. Meanwhile, the loyalty of younger fans can be questioned because they are regarded by an older generation as only joining the Roughrider fan subculture to bask in the glory the club has recently felt. On the other hand, these young fans could be providing unbridled hope for the future of the club, while older fans are not so optimistic due to past failures.

Generational differences in values and preferences bring up an interesting discussion concerning the dynamics of a fan subculture. A point related to this discussion is made by Crawford (2004) when he describes that:

> Though it is possible that an individual's level of involvement and interest in a sport may remain fairly static, the nature of the fan community itself will inevitably change over time, its boundaries and patterns of inclusion and exclusion develop, and the general nature of support change. (p. 47)

Although older and younger fans may have differing opinions on fandom and subcultural values that are negotiated over time, they may not necessarily take into account that what they have considered normal behavior for a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan may be constantly changing.

What used to be popular actions and beliefs in the 1980s or earlier may simply not be as popular now for a younger, media savvy generation. This is especially so as society continues to

become a more globalized marketplace and as younger fans have a lot more options in regards to sports fandom than their predecessors did. In relation to this, Whitson (1998) notes that:

> One important result of this increasing integration of sport into commodity culture, it will be suggested, is to refashion the kinds of identifications that fans are encouraged to make with teams and players. (p. 59)

As a result of the development of global market and an unprecedented number of commodities and leisure options, younger fans are increasingly being pulled in more directions than older fans were when they first became fans of the Roughriders decades ago. Although the age differences are not always recognizable, they are there due to the globalization of sport and a constantly adapting subculture.

A final concern of this section, which resonates with Crawford's (2004) work, is whether or not the image of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan is a reality or an elaborate construction of truth. Crawford (2004) suggests that:

> …consumption should not been seen as an end product and outcome of processes of production, but rather as an active process, which can involve the production of meaning, further consumable texts and can also play a significant role in the users' construction of identity. (p. 112)

This quote is useful because it demonstrates the importance of interrogating the myth's associated with a particular franchise, myths that are actively (re)created by the members of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture. The image of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture is a powerful one that many citizens of the province 'buy into' and support by

cheering for the team. Yet, they are also not uncontested. I will extend this idea further in the next section when I elaborate on the relationship between the province and the Roughriders.

The Saskatchewan Roughriders as Representatives of the Province

Throughout Canada, as it has been touched upon in previous chapters, Saskatchewan has a historical reputation as a marginal, peripheral prairie province. These stereotypes are summarized by Waiser (2005) when he notes that:

> In the national consciousness, sleepy Saskatchewan was frozen in time, a land of wheat fields, grid roads, and country elevators, where nothing important ever happened and anybody with talent or ambition left to make their mark elsewhere. (p. 462)

In relation to Waiser's (2005) observations, I investigated the opinions of participants concerning these stereotypes as a part of this research. Are the viewpoints of Saskatchewan consistent with Waiser's (2005) claims? At the same time, how do the Roughriders factor into this as representatives of the province against the rest of Canada, if at all?

I examined the team's relationship to the province by asking questions that focused on how fans thought the rest of Canada viewed the province. In their responses to these questions, participants consistently perceived that Saskatchewanites remain stereotyped across the country. Some examples of these stereotypes include:

> Well, living in Alberta, I can tell you that people sometimes do not like Saskatchewan that much. I think the province is viewed as a… I think it is kind of a cousin to the other provinces, kind of low end, not much respect. (Natalie)

> Well, I know that in Manitoba they call us the "Gap", as in the gap between them and Alberta. Kind of just a big open space that is not good for much. (Jenna)

> You know we are kind of the quiet, the farmer type, that you know, low population, no one really wants to be here but there are a few people you know, sometimes people feel pity for us and other times we are the brunt of many jokes. (Ethan)

These three excerpts illustrate some of the biases that Saskatchewanites feel they are subjected to on a regular basis. In their eyes, Saskatchewan is commonly portrayed as a poor province, with lower class sensibilities, which makes little, if any, contribution to Canadian society.

Although prejudices undoubtedly exist, many of the participants expressed hope and optimism for the future of Saskatchewan. Indeed, participants passionately noted that Saskatchewan is a growing powerhouse in the Canadian economy. Some examples from the interviews that illustrate this are:

> I mean historically we may have had socialist roots which you know kind of produced you know a reliance on government and crown corporations to sort of make everything happen. That is less the case now, I mean it is a little more free enterprise and it is more optimistic. (Joe)

> … I don't know, Saskatchewan is full of possibilities and potential. Potential that we don't necessarily want everybody to come in and start, you know, developing that away. I don't know, it just feels like it is in the control of the people who live here. We are happy with it, we don't need, you know people to come in and start drilling for oil everywhere. (Jenna)

Interestingly, these two examples -- while pointing to the same topic (economic growth) -- illuminate a revealing dichotomy and some of the inherent tensions that the province is experiencing in the new millennium.

For Joe, Saskatchewan has grown because it has recently embraced a deregulated, free enterprise system, while Jenna values the traditional social democratic system the province has utilized in the past. This is important because for the province to truly move ahead, these political differences -- which cover the entire political spectrum -- will have to be debated, negotiated, and resolved in the years to come as Saskatchewan continues to grow primarily through oil and potash production. It can also be suggested that there will be even greater pressure on community institutions as ideologies continue to change and be pushed towards conservatism.

Notably, these themes were also evident within the subculture of the Saskatchewan Roughriders and the changing political economy of the province and the recent good fortune that the franchise has enjoyed. It was crucial to determine whether or not fans made links between the recent emergence of the province and the success of the Roughriders. The following two quotes exemplify the connection that the province has with the Roughriders from the fans' perspective:

> And I think in the last couple years in this whole recession, Saskatchewan is doing very well and that's because we never have huge quick peaks, or huge quick drops, we are just steady as she goes. And that's brought success to both our football team and to our province. You look at our football team, we don't have those big flashy guys like those other teams have right, but she is steady as she goes. We don't have a Geroy Simon; we just have steady guys who keep making catches. (Jill)[42]

> It is kind of funny to show these capitalists that well, with this kind of more socialist/public approach to things, you can still make money, you can still be successful

[42] Geroy Simon (Johnstown, PA) is a slot back receiver, entering his eleventh year playing for the British Columbia Lions (*Geroy Simon*, n.d.).

> in a variety of different marketplaces, [and] you can still get fans out to games and have that public support. (Jenna)

At the broadest level, these examples illustrate the hope that citizens have for Saskatchewan's future but also for the future of the team. For example, Jill asserts that the team has been successful recently because it still shares the traditional common values that have long been associated with the province and its citizenry.

In retrospect, the two excerpts from the interview with Jenna demonstrate that some fans genuinely believe the mythology that the Roughriders and the province of Saskatchewan remain the antithesis to all that capitalism stands for. For Jenna, the Saskatchewan Roughriders have shown that they do not have to be funded by a private corporation because they have had tremendous success as a community institution. To this end, the football franchise illustrates a strong correlation with the province it calls home. Clearly, some fans are proud of the fact that Saskatchewan's differences and tradition make them successful but, again, all of these connections and cultural meanings associated with the team's mythology are being actively negotiated.

In relation to these issues, I also investigated whether fandom of the Roughriders represents a form of symbolic resistance against other, more metropolitan places in Canada. In the previous sections, I noted that supporters often embraced their identities as fans of the team when they moved away from Saskatchewan. For many fans, given their perception of the stereotypes levied against their home, it is perhaps not surprising that the football club continues to be a source of local identity. Zakus (1999) draws our attention to this point by saying that the province "... has had a long history of pioneer spirit, hinterland identity, and regional resistance to the central Canadian metropole (southern Ontario and the St. Lawrence River section of

Quebec)" (p. 58). For some fans historically, the only way that the province was able to symbolically "compete" and, at times, beat the rest of Canada was on the football field, although this attitude is clearing changing.

Admittedly, though, even the assertion that the Saskatchewan Roughriders stand for and represent the province was greeted with mixed responses from the participants. Some fans agreed with this assertion, while others did not. The following statements were in agreement with this assertion:

> [In regards to the Roughriders representing the province of Saskatchewan] In a way, yeah I think so. Especially during the season, it's what keeps us like unique to other provinces. So I think they do represent us. (Nathan)

> But maybe now, having seen the success of the Roughriders, maybe they have a different image or idea of what it [Saskatchewan] is like. (Tim)

> …I think everybody can identify with the Saskatchewan Roughriders; not to say they don't hate us and want to kick our ass when we go to their stadium, but people identify with the little team that you know in the smallest market in the country you know sort of being successful. Everybody likes the underdog like that, so we get a little benefit of that across the country. (Joe)

These examples suggest that the Roughriders not only symbolize the province, but also serve as a conduit that can be used to potentially change opinions about Saskatchewanites throughout the country.

Any Canadian professional sports franchise symbolizes their community in some way, but it could be argued that this is more pronounced for the Saskatchewan Roughriders and their fans

because the club is publicly owned and because the CFL is the only ‘game in town’. The fans own the team and, as such, the team stands for the community. At the same time, Joe alluded to the “underdog” label that Saskatchewan possesses. Due to the fact that Saskatchewan is by far the smallest market in the CFL, I believe that many people latch on to them and lend their support to a team that, arguably, should not be very successful given its geographical location. The distinctiveness of the Roughriders and their relationship with not only Saskatchewanites, but also other Canadians, is something that separates the club from any other Canadian professional sports franchise.

At the same time, though, other participants disagreed with these ideas. Here are two examples of such detractors from the interviews (Sam) and other sources (LaRose, 2010):

> …do I think the Saskatchewan Roughriders, in and of themselves, play a role in changing people’s perspective about the province as a whole, no. Would it be one consideration, yes, but not that significant that it could change somebody’s perspective of the province. (Sam)

> Do the Roughriders, as a football team, and as a group of individual players, still have that power to inspire people? Saskatchewan people may still carry a historical chip on their shoulder, but they no longer regard themselves as financial or social underdogs—and neither does today’s Roughriders. In an age where nearly half of the entire roster comes from the United States, and the team scouts and drafts players from across Canada—not just in Saskatchewan—how much of an emblem of this province do the Riders remain? (LaRose, 2010, p. 158)

These quotes support the argument that although Saskatchewan Roughrider football is huge for the province of Saskatchewan and its citizens, it is not the only thing that can change the attitudes that other Canadians hold towards the province. The Roughriders are popular, but their victories do not translate into greater respect for the province because they are simply a sports team. Indeed, there are much broader economic and cultural concepts at play that are shaping provincial relations, and spurring Saskatchewan's economic growth. Arguably, these broader patterns and developments are also transforming the common stereotypes held against the province.

This section illustrated the complex cross-section of the Saskatchewan Roughriders football subculture and the overall perception of the province itself. Data gathered from the interviews provided many directions to take in a discussion about the relationship between the football club and the province. This shows that perhaps the biggest part of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture's collective habitus was their close relationship to the province and acknowledging that the team represents the province against the rest of Canada. Interestingly, this part of the subculture's collective habitus seems to be "silent" because it is an unspoken aspect of the subculture, although some divisions were evident, most notably along generational lines. The divisive nature of this idea proves that perhaps this characteristic of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture is the most important facet of their collective habitus.

In the end, this section's focus was on the stereotypes levied at Saskatchewan and what relationship these citizens/fans have with the Saskatchewan Roughrider franchise. In other words, if the province did not have the football team, how would provincial identity change? At the same time, if a single owner owned the team, would fans possess an equivalent emotional attachment to the team? Personally, I believe that a publicly owned franchise creates a deep,

emotional attachment for many Saskatchewan fans simply due to their everyday involvement in the club. These questions relate back to the main crux of this thesis, and that is whether or not public ownership "works" in the minds of the fans.

Public Ownership: The Saskatchewan Point of View- The Board of Directors

Before I move into the exploring what the fan's thought of public ownership, I will emphasize the interviews I had with the board of directors. When I interviewed members of the board of directors about public ownership, two common threads were investigated: how/why someone joins the board of directors and what they think of public ownership as an ownership model for the team. To become a member of the board of directors, one must be a shareholder first, so some information on what buying into the club can entail is relevant information. As a publicly owned franchise, the Saskatchewan Roughriders sell shares to any citizen interested in being a part of the franchise.[43] Ownership of a Class A share in the club entitles the shareholder to the things outlined in the following table:

What a Class A share in the Saskatchewan Roughriders Entitles you to:
You can attend all meetings pertaining to Members of the club
You receive the club's annual report and audited financial statements
One vote in club affairs
To elect the club's board of directors
To transfer your share to family or an affiliated party

Table 11: Saskatchewan Roughrider Stakeholder Entitlements *(Overview and goals,* n.d.)

The highest level a fan can reach within the Roughriders organization is to be elected to the club's board of directors and that can only be accomplished with the purchase of a share. Thus, it was apparent that the proper way to start an analysis of public ownership is with the people who are most involved in day-to-day operations of the football club -- the board of directors.

[43] Currently, buying a share in the Saskatchewan Roughrider football club would cost someone $250 (*Shares*, n.d.).

In the interviews conducted with members of the board of directors, there were three common explanations for why these individuals decided to join the board of directors: they were fans, they had valuable financial and organizational experience, and they simply wanted to give back to the community. Their status as devoted and lifelong Saskatchewan Roughriders fans was the most compelling reason for becoming a board member. In other words, none of them would have considered joining the board if they did not feel strongly about the team and its place in Saskatchewan culture. Consider the following excerpt from Tim's interview:

> For one, I am a huge fan, and I firmly believe that the Roughriders and the CFL need to remain strong, so I wanted to do whatever I could to make that happen. (Tim)

The desire to contribute to and be a part of the everyday running of your favorite franchise can play a tremendous role in determining a fan's willingness to not only join the board of directors, but become a shareholder as well. In terms of fans, this can be beneficial because it means that they will have a small stake and a part to play in running the franchise. Not having to worry about whether a private owner could change or mismanage the franchise -- let alone move it -- is, arguably, a boon to the Saskatchewan Roughrider's organization and their fans. Also, as Tim alludes to in the above quote, fans are more likely to care not only about the success of the Roughrider organization, but the broader status and strength of the CFL as well.

Another reason why people decided to become a part of the board of directors was their financial and organizational background. The operation of a successful professional sports franchise -- even in a smaller league like the CFL and a smaller market like Saskatchewan -- now requires an immense amount of expertise in these areas. Thus, it is imperative that a publicly owned franchise has access to people with these selective skill sets. The following excerpts from the interviews serve as evidence of this:

> [In terms of what the Saskatchewan Roughriders needed] A financial background, in particular I have my CA designation and they needed additional… at least one additional board member who had a financial expertise in their background. (Sam)

> Now, obviously the board of directors are like all corporate boards where you seek out individuals largely to fill holes or put in skilled individuals to help grow your organizations. Really, the entrance point for me was back in 2003 when I was part of the executive committee of our 2003 Grey Cup. (Tim)

The necessity of a financial skills requirement is an interesting path onto the board of directors because it shows that the football team has that constant drive to improve upon its product for future fans to enjoy as well as the need to be financially stable.

Based on the history of the franchise and the league, it should come as no surprise that the board of directors actively recruits people who have the financial and organizational acumen required to steer the team in the right direction. As pointed out by the Gruneau and Whitson (2001) quote in the previous chapter, teams in the CFL should hold no illusions that they can compete financially with other major North American sporting leagues, especially the NFL. Still, CFL teams must adjust their spending and be financially prudent to look after their own interests but also to ensure the entire stability of the league. The pressures to move from the "kitchen table" styles of governance to a more professional model peaked during the 1980's, a period of significant financial challenges for many CFL franchises and the league in general. It was at this time that "…the market value of the league's Canadian television rights fell as teams across the league struggled with diminishing fan interest and inflated payrolls" (Gruneau & Whitson, 2001, p. 246). In turn, the Saskatchewan Roughriders reached out to more business-minded people and

fans to be on their board and help manage the team's finances and maintain a financially sound position.

The final reason that participants listed for joining the board of directors was their commitment to giving something back to the local community. A common denominator between all of the board of director's members interviewed for this study was that they do their business and reside in the province of Saskatchewan. Each participant was very successful in commerce and felt the need to use their skills to give back to the community (through the running of a community-owned organization that is central to the province) that had given them their livelihood. In one interview, in reference to why he joined the board, a participant commented that:

> …I was convinced by the other members of the board who, you know, indicated that there was a requirement for someone of my skill set and that it would be an interesting thing to do and it was a bit of a way to give back to the community, so all of the above sort of influenced my decision and so I agreed to let my name stand. (Joe)

The idea that joining the board of directors is regarded as a way to give back to the community is an interesting point to come in a discussion of public ownership and its merits. Saskatchewan Roughrider fans represent a large portion of the province's population, so lending a hand to the team is one of the best ways to give back to the province. At the same time, if you are a prominent businessperson in the province, having a leadership position with the Saskatchewan Roughriders could also be an excellent promotional tool for not only yourself, but your respective businesses. Although there are many advantages to joining the board of directors, there are also some drawbacks to consider.

Through their close connection to the inner workings of the Saskatchewan Roughriders and the public ownership system, the board of directors has an insider perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of this system of ownership. Two threads common on both sides of the equation included: the passion of Roughrider fans, and the financial status of the club. Active supporters can be a strength, especially to a publicly run franchise, but they can also generate problems. The following excerpt from an interview demonstrates a positive aspect of this close relationship:

> … when times are bad, the community will rally around and you can gain support and garner support on that basis, because they quote "own the team". So that's a benefit of public ownership, which if you were a private guy, you know if it was going in the ditch, you would have to sell it and you would lose your money. (Joe)

On the other hand, a potential disadvantage is that these "owners" sometimes believe that they all should have substantial input in running the club. Each shareholder may have an individual vision for the club's future, and will want that to be realized along with their purchase of a share. Thus, with a large amount of shareholders, only a selected few will have the ability to make substantial contributions to the franchise.

In reality, only the elected board of directors, along with the managers and coaches they appoint, can have any immediate impact on the on-field product. Although this is the reality of the situation, if the team starts to veer off in a direction disliked by a majority of fans, the board members could find themselves in a precarious position. Again, in comparison to MLSE, the Saskatchewan Roughriders board of directors has the difficult task of being a success both on and off the field because of shareholders' expectations. On the other hand, the MLSE board only really has to concern itself with off-the-field numbers, which makes their teams financially

successful, but at times, not very competitive. Even though having many opinions can cause problems, having that extra accountability from the board is widely perceived as an asset because the board cannot make substantive changes without taking into account the interests of their shareholders and the broader community, and their status as elected members of the board.

The club's financial status is another theme that can be understood as both a strength and weakness in regards to the relationship between the Saskatchewan Roughriders organization and their fans. Throughout their franchise's history, the Roughriders have been plagued by financial difficulties but are presently moving towards stability. Regrettably, as Tim noted, the stigma of past financial difficulties persists in the eyes of some fans:

> …maybe they still see us sometimes as a Ma and Pa organization, run on the back of a cigarette package. This is big business now; you look at the where the club is now today. In '04, I think we had revenues of $8 million. Today we have just under $40 [million]. You know, our staff has increased significantly, I mean it is big business now. (Tim)

Due to past troubles, the Saskatchewan Roughriders have had a difficult time eliminating the image of being a poor franchise that continually struggles to survive in the modern world of professional sport. As the above quote illustrates, the Roughriders are a financially stable and professionally run franchise, but some detractors still regard the community-owned organization as a "Ma and Pa" setup. The board of directors and other people involved in the Saskatchewan Roughrider organization should take the time to spread the values of public ownership and inform their fans about the recent changes within the club and the strength of the team's financial position.

On the other hand, this lack of awareness could be construed as a positive for the Saskatchewan Roughriders organization, as it potentially indicates that they are doing such a

good job that there is little trepidation amongst its fans. If the team was facing financial ruin and was continually struggling on the field, the fans might look towards the board of directors and demand answers on these issues. Since this is not happening, the current management and board of directors may be addressing all of the pressing issues that are important to the fan subculture in Saskatchewan. Counter to this, fans in Toronto have developed strong anti-ownership feelings against MLSE because it appears that current ownership is not listening to them and is only concerned with the bottom line. This is not currently happening in Saskatchewan, but with that being said, it could happen if the board of director's starts to stray from what the fans need.[44] This brings up the important issue of whether or not fans actually notice public ownership and what they think about it.

Public Ownership: The Saskatchewan Point of View- The Fans

Although the board of directors may represent the organizational culture and identity of the franchise in a positive way, and as something that they enjoy, one of the main research interests of this thesis is to ascertain how fans view and react to the idea of public ownership. This issue was approached with two simple questions throughout the interview process. First, it was important to see if fans were even aware that the team was publicly owned. Secondly, I investigated the opinions that fans held concerning public ownership and whether they were generally supportive of it or not. From these questions, an interesting set of data arose about the public ownership of the Saskatchewan Roughriders in relation to the fan subculture surrounding the team.

Only half of the fans that I interviewed were aware that the team was publicly owned. The other half simply had little to no knowledge of the ownership of the Roughriders.

[44] Lawless (2010) demonstrated that this can happen with a publicly owned franchise as well through his complaints about how the Winnipeg Blue Bombers were being managed.

Interestingly, younger fans seemed to be less aware of the ownership situation, while older fans were fully aware that the team was publicly owned before the interview. From this data, I posited that younger fans were largely unaware of public ownership because of a number of issues. First, due to globalization, a younger demographic of fans now has a myriad of consumer choices available to them and may not pay attention to current issues concerning ownership. Younger fans may simply not care for the politics of the club and may not want to have that much interest in the off-field position of the club. On the other hand, due to their longer association with the Saskatchewan Roughriders, older fans would be more familiar with the financial trials and tribulations of the team and would likely know more about public ownership. They would also likely have a deeper knowledge of the history of the team and the province in general, and may be more aware of the historical significance of community-owned institutions for the province.

At the same time, it could be inferred that public ownership of the franchise is invisible to the common fan. One interviewee pointed this out in her interview:

> … I think the thing that stood out to me was that it was not something that stood for me. It was not something that made me think "oh, that explains it" because I have been a fan for many years and if I know it were a community-based entity it was only because of my more adult years and paying attention to the news I suppose and how things get done. (Tina)

From a management perspective, this quote illuminates a problem that may need to be addressed by the board of directors in Saskatchewan. This lack of visibility indicates that the team could have trouble attracting people to buy shares in the future and help manage the club, especially as a younger generation of fans with much wider consumer interests comes of age. This demonstrates that there may be value in promoting the process and idea of public ownership as a

long-term goal of the board of directors. If more citizens of Saskatchewan were educated on the process of public ownership, this could attract future Saskatchewan Roughrider shareholders and raise additional funds if necessary. If this happened, the long-term growth of the franchise would be further ensured.

Still, although some of the fans may not necessarily know that much about the Roughriders and their style of ownership, they still seemed to support the ownership model throughout the interviews. One question that came up during the interviews was whether or not the franchise should switch to private ownership. The response was mixed towards this question. What follows are some of the answers in favor of keeping public ownership:

> You kind of lose something about having Saskatchewan's team when it's suddenly owned by one guy. Or it used to be owned by Saskatchewan and now it's owned by one person. You lose part of the identity I guess. (Chris)

> I think people wouldn't like the idea. I think they might feel a little bit differently about it but at this point, I think the team is so well established with its fans that they wouldn't just abandon it because of something like that. (Jenna)

> … I think you might lose some of the feeling the team has, like the people have. I think they would still support Saskatchewan but I think it might be just a little different feeling. (Natalie)

These quotes demonstrate the importance of public ownership to the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture even if many fans are unaware of the ownership model. Indeed, all of the quotes have a tie-in to the identity of the subculture. This was important to fans because without public ownership, all of the fans were worried about the resulting changes to the identity of the team,

and, in turn, to the broader fan subculture. Although some fans may not have known about public ownership beforehand, it was fascinating to note that once they thought about it, they soon claimed that the model was important to the team and their identity as fans.

These examples raise the question of why these fans suddenly developed so much loyalty and trust in something that they did not necessarily know that much about. One explanation could be that fans are aware of the Saskatchewan Roughriders current success both on and off the field, and consider the dismantling of public ownership a potential threat to that success. Even to an uninformed observer, it is clear that the team has done extremely well in recent years, both on and off the field. Without big money, the ownership still manages to field a competitive team, which is something fans would likely not want to tamper with. Also, public ownership is inviting to fans, even those who know nothing about it because it means that their favorite team is run by their fellow fans. Who -- other than themselves -- can they trust more to run the Saskatchewan Roughriders?

On the other hand, some fans noted that a change to private ownership would not represent such a radical departure provided that the transition was handled correctly. For example, one of the interviewees noted that:

> [In regards to change] … it would need to be done in a delicate way if there was a single owner. There is something always lost when change is made, but if handled correctly it could be fine. I think that there is a really strong fan base that can probably put up with and probably survive an awful lot of change. (Tina)

Since the Saskatchewan Roughriders have been publicly owned for the team's entire existence, any incoming private owner would clearly have to take some cautionary steps so as to not upset the fan subculture. If they did not do this, they could face a backlash from the fans. Admittedly,

this is a complicated and hypothetical issue for fans, as some were unaware that the team was even publicly owned in the first place. In order for public ownership to survive, Saskatchewan needs to educate not only their own fans, but the wider professional sports community, about the strengths and limitations of community ownership.

In the end, it is important to analyze the effect that public ownership has had on the fan traditions of the club in question. One excerpt from the interviews that stands out in this regard is:

> People are proud to be a part of the organization and I think as well, it's a community-owned team [and as such] it carries a different persona then a corporate-owned team may have. (Sam)

Because the Saskatchewan Roughriders are publicly owned, certain characteristics of their collective habitus can experience growth and expand beyond their normal parameters over time. These fans have developed a significant amount of loyalty to the team which is exemplified by their willingness to publicly demonstrate their fandom, increase their need to gather knowledge about the sport, and provide the confidence to reach out to fellow fans/owners. This is important because if the people already involved with organization of the Roughriders do not reach out to their future fans and investors, public ownership will fail due to a lack of interest and capital. Without the deep, emotional investment in the club that public ownership encourages, the traits that fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders would, in my opinion, decrease in intensity.

To conclude this discussion of public ownership, education is the key to keeping public ownership strong in Saskatchewan, and without public ownership, the collective habitus of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture would undoubtedly change over time. In retrospect, public ownership of a sports franchise works in Saskatchewan for a number of reasons, all of

which were described in this chapter. The biggest reason, however, is that the CFL is a relatively marginal league with small market franchises, which makes massive injections of capital unnecessary for the operation of a franchise in the league. Community ownership also works in Saskatchewan because of its longstanding association with the team (the only professional sports franchise in the province), and the loyalty of Roughrider fans who are "created" by being born in the province or inheriting a love of the team from family members. As result of this, the Saskatchewan Roughriders has become much more than a football team and provides enduring points of connection for fans and broader members of the community.

Chapter 6: Concluding Remarks

Overall, this thesis examined the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture and its relation to public ownership. First, through a political-economic analysis, I have examined the ownership patterns of Canadian professional sport. At the same time, interviews were conducted with members of the board of directors for the Saskatchewan Roughriders to determine how public ownership runs and what some possible strengths/limitations this type of ownership creates. Fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders were also interviewed for the purpose of discovering more about their fan subculture and the importance of the public ownership model. Within this chapter, I will offer some concluding thoughts as well as some considerations for future research surrounding this topic.

Conclusions

To truly emphasize what this research accomplished, one must go back to the research questions that were proposed in the introductory chapter of this thesis:

1. What are the ownership patterns of professional sport franchises in Canada?
2. What are the strengths and limitations of the Saskatchewan Roughrider's model of public ownership?
3. How does public ownership affect the dispositions -- or habitus -- of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture?

These three questions drove the research throughout the entire paper and, as such, this chapter will elaborate upon what I concluded regarding these questions.

To answer the first question, I conducted a political-economical analysis of Canadian professional sport. Back in the first discussion chapter, the two main threads concerning this type of research were explored. First off, the current ownership styles prevalent in Canadian

professional sport were analyzed. Similar to previous work (Harvey et al., 2001; Law et al., 2002; Field, 2006), this analysis displayed the ownership of eighteen Canadian professional sport franchises; spread throughout the CFL, NHL, MLB, NBA, and MLS. To analyze my data, I narrowed the data down into three distinct categories: CFL teams, NHL teams, and Toronto-based teams. In the CFL, ownership was split evenly between public (Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, and Edmonton) and private ownership (Calgary, British Columbia, Toronto, Hamilton, and Montreal). Compared to the NHL, where all seven Canadian franchises were privately owned by extraordinarily wealthy individuals or corporations, the CFL showed a healthy diversity and an ability to embrace public ownership due to a host of factors. Finally, the Toronto professional sports scene was clearly dominated by two media conglomerates (MLSE and Rogers Communications); findings that were not that different from what Field (2006) found in his earlier work.

Related to these findings, two key themes were examined. The first concerned the prevalence of MLSE in the ownership of Toronto-based professional sport franchises and the second related to the recent financial stability of the CFL. Although MLSE is successful off the field with the immense financial success their franchises have been, they have faced tremendous difficulties in fielding competitive teams, thus exacerbating the frustration of fans. Undeniably, this has caused some supporters to disconnect from their teams and openly complain about MLSE. Meanwhile, the CFL enjoys a modest, national agenda, but one that includes a few issues that need to be addressed. First, David Braley's ownership of two CFL franchises causes some questions of trust and possibly even the viability of a league with one owner having to look after two teams. Secondly, the CFL faces an ongoing issue in terms of a lack of presence in the Southern Ontario sports marketplace. Although the CFL has problems, the league has created a

stable platform from its current national television contract with TSN, a salary cap, and strong gate revenues for many teams. In the end, studying both MLSE and the CFL provided a contrast to and reason for public ownership of the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

Of course, public ownership was the crux of this paper and, as such, one specific question was created to assess the role of this ownership model in relation to the Roughriders. Two groups were interviewed to determine how public ownership is viewed in the context of the Saskatchewan Roughriders -- members of the board of directors and fans. Interviews with the board of directors depicted the everyday running of the club and added some interesting ideas as to what public ownership means to the team and its fan subculture. Fans joined the board of directors for a variety of reasons (giving back to the community, having certain skills requirements, etc.), demonstrating why people aspire to serve on the board of directors. In interviewing the board of directors, it was also determined that some of the strengths of public ownership could also be its weaknesses. For example, being publicly owned means that you have the strength of many owners being there to help support the club. On the other hand, this can be a disadvantage because all of these owners have differing opinions on issues and they all want them to be accounted for. Although interviewing the board of directors yielded a lot of useful data, the answers they gave were much more collective then what was received from the fans.

In terms of the fans, an interesting dichotomy emerged concerning their beliefs about public ownership. As demonstrated in the second discussion chapter, although many fans were unaware that the team was publicly owned, once they became aware of the ownership model, they did not want to dispose of it. This raised a fascinating question: why would someone want to keep the status quo for a franchise if they knew nothing about it? From the discussion, I deduced that public ownership's biggest strength is its instant appeal to the common fan. The

idea that fans can own a legitimate share of the club they love is a huge factor in their acceptance of public ownership. Another possibility would be that they do not want the problems that commonly plague privately owned franchises to affect them, while others recognized that the team was performing well on and off the field, and that this demonstrated the success of the ownership model.

In general, most North American professional sports franchises are predominantly run by private owners, and public ownership represents the complete opposite of this trend because it gives rights back to the fan and may force leagues to implement much more extensive revenue sharing agreements (including even local television contracts) that would help support publicly-owned franchises. This could be the reason why the major North American professional leagues (NFL, NHL, NBA, and MLB) have both written and unwritten sanctions against public ownership in their leagues. At the same time, most Saskatchewan fans realize that without public ownership, the Roughriders might not exist in the current North American professional sports marketplace. What must be questioned after looking into the role of public ownership in Saskatchewan is whether or not this affects the formation of the fan subculture surrounding the team.

In addressing the third question raised in the introduction, interviews were conducted to determine what the main characteristics -- or collective habitus -- of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture are. Two types of data were specifically targeted: why and when participants became fans and how they remained fans. This research discovered common ways that fans were socialized into the team's subculture. These included familial influences, following the Saskatchewan 'way', and moving away from home. These socialization patterns introduced participants of this research to the supporter subculture of the team. Once in the

subculture, Saskatchewan Roughrider supporters displayed embraced four common traits and assumptions.

The collective habitus of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture included their unwavering loyalty, passionate and dramatic outward displays of the fandom through material culture, extensive knowledge of Canadian football and its history, and a long term embracement of the community they are associated with. These traits were evident through the interviews I conducted with the members of this fan subculture. At the same time, I also questioned the mythology that the Saskatchewan Roughriders represent the province against the rest of Canada. Due to the common stereotypes levied at Saskatchewanites from other Canadians, some of the interviewees believed that the team symbolized their chance to strike back against those beliefs. At the same time though, some fans clearly disagreed with this notion, especially as the province is now prospering under a new economic situation. This demonstrates that this is a contentious viewpoint and that although it is an enticing idea, the notion is not necessarily a core component of the subculture's collective habitus.

Still, as noted above, the main point behind the interviews was to determining if public ownership was valued by the fans as an important part of the subculture. Admittedly, it was difficult to determine whether or not public ownership had any tangible effect on the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture. In and of itself, it could be said that public ownership has little impact on many of the fans that I interviewed. Indeed, there are also several privately owned teams around the world whose fans exhibit similar levels of loyalty and devotion as fans of the Saskatchewan Roughriders do. Still, I want to suggest that public ownership can bring a different level of association to the identity of fans and the habitus of various fan subcultures, and there is a clear opportunity here for the Roughriders to promote these ideas along the same

lines as other popular community-owned teams around the world with devoted fan subcultures (Barcelona FC, the Green Bay Packers, etc.). Although this paper did address many positive ideas about the Saskatchewan Roughriders and their fan subculture, questions about the validity of these claims must be asked.

A Critical Reflection

In a critical examination of the issues present in this paper, four assumptions must be questioned. The first of these assumptions that must be addressed is the presumed health of the CFL and the teams involved in the league. Although the CFL has rebounded in the last decade, how strong is the league in reality? It is a small league with little reach outside of its Canadian borders. In fact, when the CFL tried expansion into the United States, they failed miserably and are understandably scared to try again in the future. Thus, ideas about the continued development and strength of the league may be exaggerated. At the same time, if the CFL lost its television contract with TSN, their growth could grow stagnant. Also, how can a league as small as the CFL expect growth when their wealthiest and biggest market (Ontario) has been performing woefully? Without the development of the Ontario market, the CFL will more than likely cease to be relevant in the Canadian professional sports scene.

At the same time as questions about the future of the CFL need to be addressed, it is also important to question the relevance of the Saskatchewan Roughriders' fan subculture. Saskatchewan Roughrider fans are very dedicated but their loyalty has limits, especially as the province continues to change, and as popular culture in Canada expands? In an increasingly globalized word, can the subculture continue to grow with the increasing amount of options available to today's youth? Saskatchewan citizens are finding more options than just the Roughriders, and it is not guaranteed that people in Saskatchewan will automatically associate

themselves with the franchise in the future. With the developments in social media and web-based offerings, it is easier than ever for someone from Saskatchewan to become involved with an English soccer club fan subculture as opposed to supporting the Roughriders. The traits discussed in this thesis could potentially change in a decade depending on these broader economic and cultural developments.

Finally, one must question the continued viability of public ownership in Saskatchewan and its meanings in that province. The most relevant issue for the Roughriders is the construction of a new stadium. Such an expensive development may create a potential challenge to public ownership. For example, what if a wealthy businessperson decides to donate a large amount of capital to the club to build the stadium, on the condition that they receive a majority share of the franchise? Would fans remain loyal to the idea and ideals of public ownership if a new stadium is on the line? Public ownership is not infallible, and can experience detractors who bring up valid business points as to why private ownership is better. As the province of Saskatchewan moves into a new economic role in the coming years, the business model that public ownership represents may not be that relevant to the new ideals of the province. Thus, public ownership in Saskatchewan could face an immense challenge in the future.

In conjunction with the rest of the thesis, we must also question who benefits from the "myth" of the Saskatchewan Roughriders and public ownership? Is it the fans, the league, the board of directors, or some other unseen group? I believe that many groups benefit from the direct and positive influences that this "myth" has on the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture. The fans get the opportunity to buy into something that represents much more than just a football franchise. Through their socialization into the "myth", both the league and the board of directors are 'rewarded' with a group of supporters who, as consumers, are attached and

attracted to anything associated with the Roughriders. This includes merchandise, ticket revenue (home and away games), and broadcasts of CFL matches. Indeed, fans of the Roughriders routinely set the 'gold standard' for merchandise purchases and other related consumer behavior that all other franchises now aspire to. To this end, the "myth" of the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture is not destructive by any means. Instead, it is simply a creative construct that assists in the development of not only the franchise's fan base, but the other properties associated with the team and the league in general (merchandise and television contracts, etc).

In the end, the preceding critical discussion of the issues prevalent in the papers brings up important points concerning the future of the ideas presented in this thesis. At the same time, it must be remembered that this is a study concerned with a snapshot of single franchise at a particular point of time. These assumptions are important critical steps to take in the evaluation of this research, but they might not happen this way. Without examining these detracting points, one would not see the entire picture of the Saskatchewan Roughriders fan subculture and not understand the potential future of the franchise in relation to its current values. In addition to these contradictory points, three future considerations were deemed important if someone were to continue this type of research.

Future Considerations

Although this research has contributed to a base of knowledge that had been developed by other researchers interested in this field, it also emphasized new data that identified a different take on the same issues in Canadian professional sport. That being said, there are some future considerations that incoming researchers ought to take into account. The three considerations that come to mind are:

(1) Keeping a steady tally on ownership patterns in Canadian professional sport.

(2) More in-depth with research on public ownership in Saskatchewan, but also in Winnipeg and Edmonton.

(3) Doing a comparative study of privately and publicly owned franchises and patterns of fan identification.

The first thing any researcher interested in this area should do is keep a steady tally of how professional sports teams are run in Canada. A difficult part of this thesis to deal with was that ownership patterns are regularly changing. In fact, during the research phase of this thesis, new professional sports franchises were being created in Canada. For example, the Winnipeg Jets -- in their new form -- did not exist when I began my research for this thesis, and it may not be long before there is another NHL franchise in Quebec. Also, during the time period I was writing this thesis, the Calgary Stampeders changed majority owners while MLSE was also entering a period of transition.

The second consideration is the possibility of taking a more in-depth look at the process of public ownership in Saskatchewan and the other publicly-owned teams in Canada. Moreover, while I focused on interviews, I could have gone more in-depth and attended games in Saskatchewan to gather a sample of fans. Or, I could have attended the annual meetings that shareholders have. If I would have sampled Saskatchewan Roughrider fans from the games in Regina, I would have gathered a much more "localized" sample. Meanwhile, attending public shareholder meetings would have given me a more intense view of what happens with public ownership at the grass roots level. Also, researching the public ownership methods that the Edmonton Eskimos and Winnipeg Blue Bombers use to the same detail I did with the Roughriders would have added to the data. The main hindrances to achieving these goals were the distance and time constraints concurrent with doing a thesis.

Finally, the last consideration that future researchers could take would be to conduct some sort of comparative study that examines the patterns of association and identification between fans of publicly owned and privately owned teams. This paper focused only on the Saskatchewan Roughriders form of public ownership and, as such, only emphasized data on that particular fan subculture's relationship with its respective ownership method -- public ownership. A study that compared fan subcultures of both publicly and privately owned clubs would allow the researcher to give a more concrete conclusion on the effects competing ownership styles can have on fans.

In the end, to accurately develop the study of this topic area, a continuing effort must be made to constantly keep tabs on every new development that happens in this ever-fluctuating area of interest. For example, the Green Bay Packers has proven public ownership is still an efficient enterprise for that franchise's needs. In their most recent stock offering -- in which they sell shares of the team for $250 -- the Packers claimed $67 million in profit (Ramde, 2012). At the same time, the Green Bay Packers opened up this stock offering to Canadians for the first time ever and sold 2,000 shares in Canada (Ramde, 2012). By opening up their stock options to Canadians, the Packers are actively seeking fans across national borders -- a version of globalization that could benefit franchises and fans alike in the new, and ever-developing, economy of professional sport.

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Appendix 1: Sample of Canadian Professional Sport Franchises

Canadian Football League (CFL)

Edmonton Eskimos
Saskatchewan Roughriders
Winnipeg Blue Bombers
Toronto Argonauts
Montreal Alouettes
Calgary Stampeders
Hamilton Tiger Cats
British Columbia Lions

National Hockey League (NHL)

Edmonton Oilers
Calgary Flames
Vancouver Canucks
Ottawa Senators
Toronto Maple Leafs
Montreal Canadiens
Winnipeg Jets

Major League Baseball (MLB)

Toronto Blue Jays

National Basketball Association (NBA)

Toronto Raptors

Major League Soccer (MLS)

Toronto FC

Appendix 2: General Interview Guide

General Introduction Questions

1) How old are you?
2) Where are you currently living? Where are you originally from?
3) What is your occupation?
4) What is your relationship to the Saskatchewan Roughrider franchise? Board of directors or fan?

Socialization into the Saskatchewan Roughrider Subculture

1) How long have you been a Roughrider fan?
2) How were you introduced to the Roughriders?
3) Was there anyone in particular who had a huge influence on you becoming a Roughrider fan?

Characteristics of the Fan Subculture

1) How would you rate your level of participation within the club?
2) Do you regularly watch games on television or live at the stadium?
3) Are you a season ticket purchaser or shareholder of the club?
4) In your opinion, why are the Roughriders important to Saskatchewan?
5) What do you think characterizes Roughrider fans? Provide examples of activities/traditions that one can be a part of as a Roughrider fan.
6) What differientes Roughrider fans from other groups of fans (of CFL teams in particular)?
7) Do you believe that Roughrider fans form a sort of "community"?
8) Why or why not?

Entrance onto the Board of Directors

1) When did you become a part of the Roughrider organization?
2) How/why did you become a part of the Roughrider organization?

Public Ownership in Saskatchewan- The Board of Directors

1) What is your view on the Roughriders being a publicly owned franchise?
2) What are the strengths/weaknesses of this particular type of ownership in your eyes?
3) Do you think that being based in Saskatchewan has any connection to the Roughriders being publicly owned?
4) Why does it succeed in Saskatchewan? Or does it succeed?
5) With this economy as it is, is it an advantage to have the Roughriders in the hands of the public?
6) If there was a situation where the team would have to go to a private owner to subsidize a new stadium in Regina, do you believe it would be a good idea to switch to private ownership and abandon public ownership altogether to get said stadium?

7) Would there be differences in the fan community if the Roughriders were owned by a single private owner?

Public Ownership in Saskatchewan- The Fans

1) Who owns the Saskatchewan Roughriders?
2) What is your view on the Roughriders being a publicly owned franchise?
3) What are the strengths/weaknesses of this particular type of ownership in your eyes?
4) Do you think that being based in Saskatchewan has any connection to the Roughriders being publicly owned?
5) Is the presence of public ownership in Saskatchewan similar to the province having lots of Crown Corporations?
6) Why does it succeed in Saskatchewan? Or does it succeed?
7) Would there be differences in the fan community if the Roughriders were owned by a single private owner?
8) If there was a situation where the team would have to go to a private owner to subsidize a new stadium in Regina, do you believe it would be a good idea to switch to private ownership and abandon public ownership altogether to get said stadium?

Concluding Questions

1) How important are the Saskatchewan Roughriders to the province?
2) Is there a certain "mythos" of the club which creates the fandom it does, when in real life, they are not the strongest club historically?
3) Is there a reason to stay confident that the Roughriders will always represent the province of Saskatchewan?

Appendix 3: Informed Consent

Part 1: (to be completed by Primary Investigator)

Title of Study

"Joining the Roughrider Faithful: The Saskatchewan Roughrider Subculture and Public Ownership"

Primary Investigator

Scott Cramer, MA student, University of Alberta, (780) 678-5615, sacramer@ualberta.ca

Supervisor

Jay Scherer, University of Alberta, (780) 492-9146, jscherer@ualberta.ca

Part 2: (to be completed by participant)

Do you understand that you have been asked to part in a research study? Yes No

Do understand who will have access to the information you provide? Yes No

Do you understand what the study is about? Yes No

Have you had the opportunity to discuss questions you had about this study? Yes No

Has the researcher helped you understand the benefits and risks associated with your participation in this study? Yes No

Do you understand that you can refuse to participate in the study, or withdraw your data from the study, without any consequence? Yes No

Has the issue of confidentiality been adequately explained to you? Yes No

This study has been explained to me by: _____

I agree to take part in this study:

Printed name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 4: Information Letter

Title of Study: Joining the "Roughrider Faithful": The Saskatchewan Roughrider Fan Subculture and Public Ownership

Primary Investigator: Scott Cramer, MA Student, University of Alberta, sacramer@ualberta.ca

Dear participant,

My name is Scott Cramer and I am currently a grad student at the University of Alberta, pursuing my Master of Arts (Thesis-based) in sports sociology under the supervision of Dr. Jay Scherer. I would like to use this letter as an opportunity to provide you with more information on my project so you would have enough information to make a decision on whether or not you would like to participate.

My research topic is on the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture and what their traditions as fans are. In particular, I want to find out what effect, if any, public ownership of the club has on the creation of this fan subculture. My project hopes to delve into the relationship that public ownership can have with a club and if it can provide a positive atmosphere for a fan subculture to thrive in. At the same time, I wish to talk to the board of directors for the Saskatchewan Roughriders to find out their perspective on public ownership, and how it affects the fans of the Roughriders. Using this project, I am hoping to investigate what the advantages and disadvantages of public ownership are in Saskatchewan, and to look at the ownership patterns present across Canada.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you are allowed to withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. If you wish to decline from the interview, I ask that you do so at least an half an hour before the interview. To pull your data, you will have till the data analysis is complete. Our interviews will be up to an hour and can be done either over the phone or face-to-face, depending on the preference of the participant. All interviews will be recorded in order to be transcribed and at the researcher's disposal. Your interviews will be confidential and your real name will not be used to label the tapes, as pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. All the data will be keep in a locked cabinet in my or Dr. Scherer's office so only we will have access to the data. All primary identifier data will be erased once the study is underway. Interview data must be kept on the University premises for five years after publication before it is destroyed.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss these topics with you. Since I am currently based at the University of Alberta, if you know of any Edmonton-based Saskatchewan Roughrider fans who might be interested, please let them know they can contact me. If there are any questions you want to ask, my email is sacramer@ualberta.ca. My supervisor is Dr. Jay Scherer and his phone number is (780) 492-9146 (email: jscherer@ualberta.ca), if you want to

contact him. Also, you can contact Dr. Kelvin Jones at (780) 492- 0302 if you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in a study conducted at the University of Alberta.

I look forward to talking to you and I thank you in advance for your assistance in this study.

Yours Sincerely,

Primary Investigator	*Supervisor*
Scott Cramer	Jay Scherer

Appendix 5: Letter to Potential Interviewees

Scott Cramer
(780) 678-5615
sacramer@ualberta.ca

Dear participant,

Hi my name is Scott Cramer and I am currently a grad student at the University of Alberta, pursuing my Master of Arts (Thesis-based) in sports sociology. My research topic is on the Saskatchewan Roughrider fan subculture and what their traditions as fans are. In particular, I want to find out what effect, if any, public ownership of the club has on the creation of this fan subculture. My project hopes to delve into the relationship that public ownership can have with a club and if it can provide a positive atmosphere for a fan subculture to thrive in. At the same time, I wish to talk to the board of directors for the Saskatchewan Roughriders to find out their perspective on public ownership, and how it affects the numerous fans of the Roughriders. Using this project, I am hoping to investigate what the advantages and disadvantages of public ownership are in Saskatchewan, and to look at the ownership patterns present across Canada.

Participation in this study in voluntary and you are allowed to withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Our interviews will be up to an hour and can be done either over the phone or face-to-face, depending on the preference of the participant. All interviews will be recorded in order to be transcribed and be used at the researcher's disposal. Your interviews will be confidential and your real name will not be used to label the tapes, as pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. All the data will be keep in a locked cabinet in mine or Dr. Scherer's office so only we will have access to the data. Interview data must be kept on the University premises for five years before it is to be destroyed.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss these topics with you. Since I am currently based at the University of Alberta, if there are any Edmonton-based Saskatchewan Roughrider fans, you can also contact me if you are interested in taking part. If there are any questions you want to ask, my phone number is (780) 678-5615 while my email is sacramer@ualberta.ca.

Thank you,

Scott Cramer