

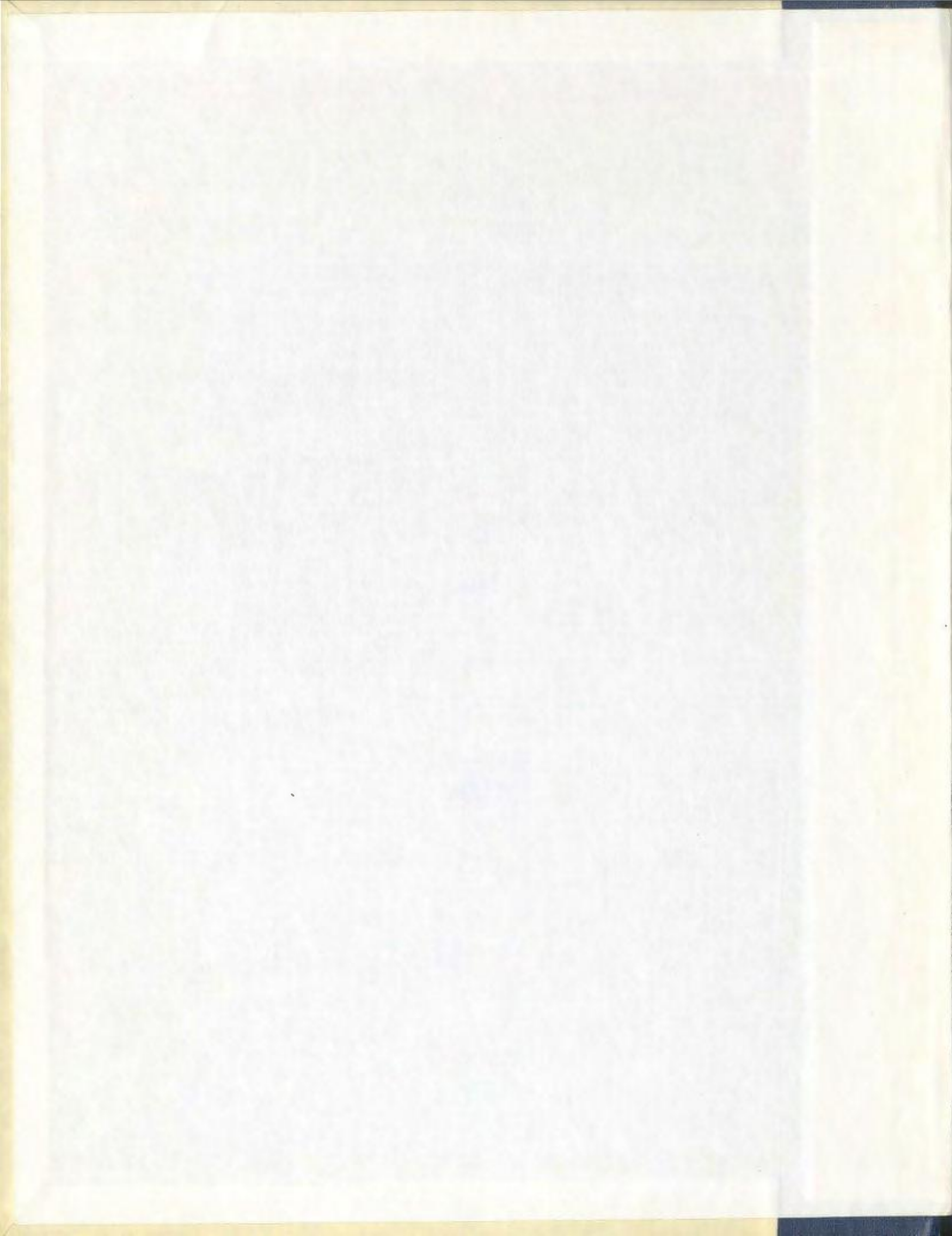
HOCKEY NIGHT IN CANADA: THE IMPACT OF A  
TELEVISION PROGRAM ON WHITE-COLLAR WORKERS

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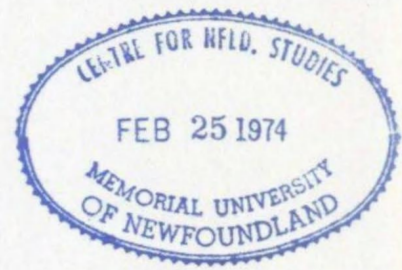
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EUGENE R. OZON



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HOCKEY NIGHT IN CANADA:  
THE IMPACT OF A TELEVISION PROGRAM  
ON WHITE-COLLAR WORKERS

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Committee on Graduate Studies  
Memorial University of Newfoundland



by  
Eugene R. Ozon

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS

April, 1973

## ABSTRACT

As media theorists neglect the temporal aspects of the effect of television and survey analysts probe this medium in generalized fashion, a fundamental consequence of television is overlooked--the effects of a specific program on particular segments of society. Searching for a suitable program from which to explore this problem, I selected Hockey Night in Canada, the twice-weekly telecast of National Hockey League games which has persisted as the top Canadian television program for more than twelve years.

My initial hypothesis was that the effect of Hockey Night in Canada on the social and family lives of the white-collar workers in any city (especially St. John's) varied directly with their degree of interest in the program. The effects of the program influence their interpersonal relationships to such a degree that they are unaware of its total impact.

The lack of sociological research in this area left me with few guidelines on how to gather data bearing on my hypothesis. The method of questionnaire survey was ultimately selected as the most workable approach. The enduring problems of a new major professional hockey league and a historic series between Canada and Russia which may have affected viewers' response, I believe, have been successfully controlled.

## PREFACE

As media theorists neglect the temporal aspects of the effect of television and survey analysts probe this medium in generalized fashion, a fundamental consequence of television is overlooked--the effects of a specific program on particular segments of society. Searching for a suitable program from which to explore this problem, I selected Hockey Night in Canada, the twice-weekly telecast of National Hockey League games which has persisted as the top Canadian television program for more than twelve years.

My initial hypothesis was that the effect of Hockey Night in Canada on the social and family lives of the white-collar workers in any city (especially St. John's) varied directly with their degree of interest in the program. The effects of the program influence their interpersonal relationships to such a degree that they are unaware of its total impact.

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The following chapters bear the result.

Having accomplished the study on a part-time basis while maintaining regular employment as a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation sports announcer, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Robert Stebbins whose stimulating suggestions and criticisms have greatly enhanced this thesis.

Eugene R. Ozon

St. John's, Newfoundland  
April, 1973



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## CHAPTER I

### TELEVISION AND HOCKEY

Play--adorns life, amplifies it and is to that extent a necessity both for the individual as a life function and for society, by reason of the meaning it contains, its significance, its expressive value, its spiritual and social associations, in short, as a culture function (Huizinga, 1964:9).

This passage expresses the motive behind play in concise fashion and pertains to any world region. But the explanation of play, to Canadians as a whole, is, "He shoots--he scores."

Skeptics argue there are many other sports supporting Canada's culture base besides hockey. Regardless of these other sports, hockey and its impact has an overwhelming influence on Canadian society and this influence has been nurtured by television. That is what this study concerns: how "Hockey Night in Canada" (HNIC), the twice weekly telecast of National Hockey League (NHL) games, affects the lives of married, male, white-collar workers in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada.

Originally, it was my intention to attempt an assessment of attitudes towards HNIC for the entire Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. A quick evaluation of financial resources forced me to confine my sphere of operation to the St. John's area. The

question to be answered and eventual hypothesis became apparent. St. John's is devoid of major industry. Besides its roles as educational, political, and medical centre of the Province, it functions as the distribution point of commercial goods and services. Thus, it consists, in the main, of white-collar workers. And preliminary observation suggests that where interest in HNIC is high, home and office life among them is significantly affected.

My goal was set--my task before me. But I soon discovered that only a surface knowledge of the effects of the mass media on modern life exists.

#### Research on the Effects of Media Sport

One of the most difficult problems in studying an area such as media sport is finding current literature. Each year changes in sports organizations and players' co-operatives or unions, combined with technological change, influence the coverage of sport by the media. This possibly leads to a concomitant change in the behavior of the viewer. But there is so little scientific information about this field that, for the most part, one may only speculate about these effects.

It had been my intention throughout the research to rely, to some extent, on the handful of studies by social scientists in the United States concerning the effects of televised American

football (e.g., Johnson, 1971; Toyama, 1971; Boyle, 1970; Cantor-Werthman, 1968). But careful scrutiny of the available material indicates that a different type of sport relationship exists between the American football fan and television, and the Canadian hockey fan and television.<sup>1</sup> Confounding the comparison is the twice weekly availability of television hockey in Canada as opposed to the almost continual weekend availability of television football in the United States. Thus comparisons are drawn here with considerable care.

The neglect of sport and its communicative effect was one of the themes of the Third International Symposium on the Sociology of Sport held at the University of Waterloo in 1971. The thought was expressed openly by P. C. McIntosh of Great Britain:

Sport is socially valued behavior, it reflects and perhaps reinforces class structure, it does not compensate for deprivation on other spheres of life but seems to reinforce it, sport affects marital status and non-competitive sport appears to be more important functionally as far as participation is concerned, than competitive sport. The function of sport for the non-participant through the agency of the mass media has yet to be studied (McIntosh, 1971).

McIntosh's comments on the participant in sport appear to be applicable to the non-participant spectator as well.

---

<sup>1</sup>There are two major differences. The American football spectator is affected generally in daytime hours on weekends while the Canadian hockey spectator is affected at night only on Wednesday and Saturday. As well, the studies originating in the United States have dealt with some isolated aspect of media response rather than on overall impact.

Hockey Night in Canada

The hypothesis that sport has important social value even for the non-participant helps explain the perennially high viewer rating of HNIC. Hockey Night in Canada has enjoyed the number one position in Canadian television ratings for twelve years. Only this year did it drop below that level. A new professional league along with a confrontation, for the first time, between Canadian professionals and Russian players, have been cited as the major reasons for the drop in ratings. Although NHL Vice-President, Don Ruck, says he feels it is a case of viewers just trying to "catch their breath" from the Canada-Russia hockey series. He expects the close race at the top of the NHL's eastern division to catch the viewers' interest as the playoffs approach, once again pushing the HNIC ratings to the top of the list.<sup>2</sup>

The close relationship between Canadians and hockey has not been spontaneous, nor did it come about solely because of television. It is due, for the most part, to a persistent effort by influential sports-minded people to maintain at least weekly coverage of the NHL games from the early days of radio, through the introduction of television, to the present day. With each refinement of the medium

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<sup>2</sup>Vice-President Ruck made this statement publicly on December 15, 1972, after official disclosure that, up to that point in time, HNIC had dropped to seventh place in Canadian ratings for the first time.



of television, that is, instant playbacks, more cameras, color, and the like, interest has grown accordingly. Advances in electronics have facilitated integration of Canadian culture through the national sport of hockey.<sup>3</sup>

Much has been said about the transfer of values through communicative methods in many areas (McLuhan, 1957a). The same principles apply to HNIC. Television has communicated the professional hockey player's way of life, method of play, and outlook on society, which is being emulated by children and adults from coast to coast. Amateur hockey organizers in Canada support the argument that professional characteristics dominate the amateur movement, and that HNIC has been the sole contributing factor.<sup>4</sup> As Marshall McLuhan (1968b:330) puts it: "TV is above all a medium that demands a creatively participant response."

Hockey Night in Canada, in Newfoundland as well as in many northern communities in Canada, probably has a greater influence on the lives of the inhabitants of these areas than on the lives of those in other parts of the country. Take, for example, any Canadian

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<sup>3</sup>Actually lacrosse is Canada's official national sport.

<sup>4</sup>Former NHL player and coach, Howie Meeker, now an HNIC analyst who also supervises minor hockey in St. John's and instructs at several Canadian hockey schools, says an increasing amount of professionalism is being demonstrated by young hockey players at all levels. He feels HNIC has been the prime source of these professional traits.

community in the high density population line between Halifax and Vancouver. Their television viewing habits are much more selective, because of their proximity to American television stations and cable television. These two media, American television and cable, are unavailable to Newfoundlanders which forces them to choose between two networks--the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) or the CTV television network (CTV).<sup>5</sup> This means that on Wednesday night, if a viewer is uninterested in the fare on CBC, then, of necessity, if he wishes to watch television, he must watch HNIC on CTV. The reverse holds on Saturday night. Thus, selection is narrowed to two alternatives, aiding the viewer's attachment to the offering of either channel. Attachment is further strengthened when he has played or had the desire to play a sport (Teewan, 1971), in this case hockey.

Wohl (1971) observes:

It is stressed that thanks to the specific values of sport as an integrating factor, the growing involvement in sport constitutes a very essential factor in the shaping of a whole variety of social ties and patterns of human co-operation which in turn begin to function outside the sports movement . . . various attitudes and patterns of co-operation find their way into the sports movement which have taken shape outside the sports circles.

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<sup>5</sup>It would be more significant if there were no selection--just one channel of television--which was the case in most Newfoundland centres from 1955 to 1964.

Sport socializes, including televised sport. At the same time, interest in a particular sport or in simply watching television attracts one to programs about that sport.

McLuhan (1968b:322) notes that there is an increasing interest in televised hockey, football, and basketball, while there is a diminishing interest in televised baseball.

The characteristic mode of the baseball game is that it features one-thing-at-a-time. It is a lineal expansive game which, like golf, is perfectly adapted to the outlook of an individualist and inner-directed society. Timing and waiting are the essence, with the entire field in suspense waiting upon the performance of a single player. By contrast, football, basketball and ice hockey are games in which many events occur simultaneously with the entire team involved at the same time. With the advent of TV, such isolation of the individual performance as occurs in baseball became unacceptable. Interest in baseball declined . . . baseball belonged to the age of the first onset of the hot press and the movie medium.

Although McLuhan wrote from the standpoint of the American viewer, the same can be said for most Canadians.<sup>6</sup>

One of the most authoritative people on matters relating to the NHL, as well as the development of the league throughout the years, including the broadcasts of games from radio to television,

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<sup>6</sup>During the past two years, McLuhan's argument may have lost some of its validity. The expansion of the NHL combined with increased funds poured into major league baseball has made it more attractive for the television fan, along with the fact Canada now has a team in major league baseball, the Montreal Expos. At least, it is reviving the interest for Canadian television baseball fans.

is Clarence Campbell, President of the league since 1946.<sup>7</sup> He has been the controlling factor in the NHL's growth since that time. He states (Personal Interview, 1971) that he must not only serve as Director of Operations for the league, but he must also be constantly aware of the effect of the game on society. This means constant analysis of the publicity given the NHL. HNIC is the NHL's strongest agent of influence, according to Campbell and, as such, is monitored closely by him. When asked if he thought HNIC served a worthwhile purpose in today's Canadian society, Mr. Campbell answered:

We are getting an ever-increasing amount of leisure time in our society. I do not know if sitting in a leisure chair watching television is the best form of employment for our leisure time, I don't suggest that. But the fact remains that people do desire to be entertained and I think its (Hockey Night in Canada) a wholesome type of entertainment for them to have and, consequently, it has enormously modified the habits of life, the life style of millions of people. For instance, to plan a social function in British Columbia before 9:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays is useless if it is to be effective. Conversely, to plan anything after 9:30 p.m. on the same nights in Newfoundland has the same effect.<sup>8</sup> In my opinion, Hockey Night in Canada affects the habits,

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<sup>7</sup>For the first time since his Presidency in 1946, Mr. Campbell, on January 30, 1973, missed attending the annual all-star game in person. He was at home recuperating from a gallbladder operation.

<sup>8</sup>Hockey Night in Canada was seen from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in British Columbia up to 1970, when Vancouver obtained their own NHL team, and now telecasts their games at 8:00 p.m. local time. For Newfoundland, the games still begin at 9:30 p.m. Newfoundland time which is 8:00 p.m. for Eastern Standard Time zones, and the remainder of the country according to their particular time zone.

especially the entertainment habits of family units, more than any other thing that happens on a regular basis. It's true and it makes no difference what professional oriented entertainment is opposing it.<sup>9</sup>

### Spectator Attachment

Hockey is unquestionably Canada's most popular sport. As a result, hockey has generated an extremely intense spectator attachment to both players and teams in spite of some apparent deterrent which I will explain. There are only three Canadian teams in the NHL: Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. And, although fans across Canada can establish team attachments through representation of players coming from their section of the country, the only real regional stimulus to team favoritism is the traditional fight for Canadian prominence between Toronto and Montreal. Vancouver, having only joined the league in 1970, has, because of its location, attracted a majority of British Columbia followers.

Attendance at an NHL game is virtually impossible for the vast majority of Canadians. The perceived good fortune of the season ticket holding "establishment" in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, is a good example of unattainable values for the mass of Canada--especially the hockey fan. Most fans would consider the chance to attend a game as unquestionably a major treat. The chance

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<sup>9</sup>Mr. Campbell was a lawyer by trade before becoming President of the NHL in 1946. At present, he is President of the Canadian Rhodes Scholar Association.

to look inside the arenas where these teams play, even when empty, is apparently another treat to fans who happen to be in the cities on holidays. Because of a scarcity of tickets, nearly all Canadians find themselves totally dependent on the media for live coverage of their national sport. Television is the principal medium. Added to this is the fact that only Toronto and Montreal are featured on a regular basis east of the Rocky Mountains and Vancouver in British Columbia. Television hockey fans must be content with this selection of Canadian teams.<sup>10</sup>

From this view, it is readily seen that spectator professional hockey exists for Canadians mainly as a television sport, usually with a Canadian team featured. While the great majority of Canadians are intensely attached to hockey, "only about one-fifth of one percent (0.2%) of all Canadians ever get to see an NHL regular season game in person" (Canadian Facts Co. Ltd., 1967:58).

One important characteristic of the television sports fan is his desire to view one sport while rejecting others. As I explained earlier, there is reaction to television sports--some good and some bad--but there is reaction. Though I had neither the time nor the finances to explore such an idea, it appears safe in saying

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<sup>10</sup> During the regular schedule, games between other teams in the NHL are shown on HNIC only at rare times--usually when all three Canadian teams are playing outside their cities in an inconvenient time zone. Of necessity, games between two American teams are seen in Canada during playoffs.

that the sports television spectator orients himself to one sport and concentrates his energies in seeing that sport on a regular basis. When that sport happens to be the dominant interest in his community, then his role as spectator is encouraged. That is why football is idolized as the "super spectator" (Johnson, 1970) sport in the United States, while hockey is so idolized in Canada. In St. John's, it is easy to see why, with fewer television attractions, the fan of television hockey can grow still more avid.

#### Detrimental Effects of Hockey Television

Ownership of a television set in the family is taken for granted today. One really never stops to consider that a television set may be the instrument by which one loses contact with, or even alienates, one's family. There are different means by which this can be accomplished. A steady diet of television viewing has the effect of constantly bringing the outside world into the home. Mass consumption of the outside world, by means of the television set, seems, in some cases, to create a mass individual. This effect appears to be accentuated when televised sport is consumed. In fact, there may be cases where the establishment of a super spectator at home threatens to dissolve the family under the guise of fostering family life. For what dominates in the home, thanks to television, is the outside world, and this outside world is so dominant that the realities and functions of the family become secondary. As

Gunther Anders (1957:363) puts it:

Radio and television have transformed the home into a negative family table; and the family into a miniature audience . . . for the fact that the events of the day--the events themselves, not reports of events--that football matches, church services, atomic explosions, visit us at home; that mountain comes to the prophet, the world to man, that fact, next to the production of hermits and the transformation of the family into a miniature audience, is the revolutionary change brought about by radio and television.

Immediately, questions arise. Does this hypothesis hold for the television sports fan in the same way it holds for the general television fan? Is the sports fan affected as much? Maybe there are cliques. Perhaps only certain types of individuals are affected, and they, in turn, transform their families in their attempt to fulfil their desire for television sports. An exhaustive study by William O. Johnson (1970:87) on the effect of television on the football fan in the United States clearly indicates there is a form of super being who has been produced solely for the purpose of maintaining a vigil over football. Johnson calls him the super spectator.

The Super Spectator is upon us and it is stupefying to behold. Consider the major land mass of the North American continent on a Sunday afternoon, say January 12, 1969. From sea to shining sea on that afternoon, 60 million citizens arrange themselves before television screens. In darkened parlors . . . the country sat and the multitude was as one, oblivious to the afternoon beyond. No butterfly, no snowflake, no street fight or car wreckage at the corner would vie for attention. No this was Super Sunday for Super Spectator, the Jets versus the Colts in Miami; the 60 million were bathed as one in the moon-glow of black and white cathode tubes or the ghostly green-peach of living color. They gazed, as one, entranced by the miniature facsimile of the



game on their screens. For them the Super Bowl was played by electric Lilliputians.

It would be inaccurate to say the same thing occurs to the Canadian television hockey fan. But there are similarities. Some fans sustain their interest throughout the winter months until springtime. There, despite other obligations, they sit transfixed in front of the television, watching the conclusion of the NHL Stanley Cup playoffs. They also can be classified as a form of super spectator.

Whether super spectator or fanatic, the individual who maintains a solid interest in viewing one sport or many is considered a high consumer of sport.

The high consumer of sport has been watching professional football on television for eight years and more or less spends five or more hours per week viewing television sport. He reads about football on the high school, college and professional level daily in the newspapers when the sport is in season, although he is primarily interested in football (Toyama, 1971).

Again, a similar result seems to befall the viewer of hockey in Canada, as my data on the white-collar workers in St. John's demonstrate.

Before leaving the subject of sports spectator, let me relate an extreme example of super spectator. As mentioned earlier, the Vancouver Canucks received their NHL franchise in 1970 and began their regular schedule the fall of that year. Consequently, in

British Columbia, games emanating from the Pacific Coliseum in Vancouver are telecast to the rest of that province rather than the traditional Montreal or Toronto games.

On December 12, 1970, the father of an NHL player was shot and killed after he forced his way into a television station in Prince George, because it was not carrying the Toronto Maple Leafs game in which he son was playing. Here is the Canadian Press story which appeared in a St. John's daily newspaper (The Evening Telegram, 1970a):

Roy Edward Spencer, 59, of Fort St. James, B.C., was killed by a Mountie as he left Station CKPG. Police said he shot an RCMP Constable in the foot before he was shot himself. Spencer, the father of Brian Spencer of the Toronto Maple Leafs, had driven for two hours from Fort St. James to complain that the station was carrying an NHL game between the Vancouver Canucks and Oakland rather than between Toronto and Chicago. Official accounts of the bazarre course of events resulted from Spencer's complaints that he was being denied a chance to see his 21-year-old son play in a National Hockey League contest being shown to most of Eastern Canada. At the time of Spencer's appearance at the station, it was carrying the NHL's Vancouver-Oakland game while the rest of the country saw the Toronto-Chicago game which featured a between periods interview with his son.

#### The White-Collar Community

Early in my project I realized that the white-collar workers in St. John's possess boundaries as a group that facilitate data gathering. That is, these white-collar workers are not only a researchable group, but also a group with the characteristics of a

community and a rather homogeneous community at that.

I define white-collar workers as that group of individuals who, by nature of their function in the bureaucratic structure, perform their role in a non-manual manner. White-collar workers between twenty and forty-five years of age were the focus of study.

Roland L. Warren (1963:9) defines community as "that combination of social units and systems which perform the major social functions having locality relevance." In defining any community, one must consider the characteristic ingredients that comprise a community (Matthews, 1971). There must be: (a) people; (b) interaction; (c) culture; (d) territoriality; and (e) consciousness of kind or sense of belonging. How do these ingredients fit the concept of white-collar worker as community?

The system of interaction among themselves is fostered by the roles they play within their organizations. Interaction varies in frequency and content depending on the type of organization they are a part of and the nature and level of contact there. The interaction may be one of importance to the organization. Or it may be an extension of family and community connections; for example, discussing last night's party or hockey game. But this interaction exists as a foundation of their community. Warren (1963:46) has noted that if community is viewed as a social system, then it is "based on the idea of structured interaction between two or more

units. In sociology, these units may be persons or groups of one type or another."

It is easy of see how the values of the white-collar workers I speak of contribute to our culture. They include common activities, such as office bowling leagues, swim parties, Christmas parties, and the like. Their patterns of buying appear to be similar. They hold similar values. They not only develop an office culture, but they also carry it over to their suburbia. In other words, they talk shop at home bringing office concerns into family lives.

Even though these white-collar workers talk of the "rat-race", they have no great sense of plight; they appear content with their lot. One growing factor in the maintenance of a culture among white-collar workers is their increasing attachment to national labour unions. Their feeling of togetherness seems to be enhanced when they become members. In fact, the untapped white-collar labour force is openly the target of Canadian unions today. At the meeting of the Canadian Labour Congress in Ottawa, May, 1972, one resolution passed in the organizational sections of the Congress states:

There are two and one-half million eligible workers in Canada who are not members of a union. The Congress is going to start an extensive drive to recruit white-collar workers. New organizational techniques will be found and additional funds will be allotted to this undertaking.

Togetherhness is aided by meetings held outside office hours, where their union mandate helps guide their actions rather than company rules alone.

In discussing white-collar workers and community, there are many ways of establishing locality. If we think of white-collar workers in the same office, that community of people definitely has a specific location. Expanding it to include the same building, the location is still quite definitive. Even when speaking of a St. John's community of white-collar workers, there are recognizable boundaries. So, Warren's (1963) reference to locality as "the organization of social activities to afford people daily local access to those broad areas of activities which are necessary in day to day living" is obviously applicable to the white-collar workers of St. John's and their collective interest in HNIC.

When speaking of a sense of belonging or consciousness of kind for the white-collar worker, a subjective viewpoint concerning each person's involvement is the focus of attention. When does a person really feel he belongs to any community? The answer to this question depends on various group and personal factors.

An individual's sense of belonging depends significantly on his degree of conformity. When he enters the white-collar community, he is immediately aware that his role demands a measure of conformity. In some cases, a great deal of his time is spent

determining the proper pattern to which to conform.

While the office worker is a conformist for the sake of his organization, he is also in continual competition with his peers to determine unconsciously who conforms the best. In speaking of relationships in Levittown, Herbert J. Gans (1967:179) notes that "upper-middle class people, having less to do with their neighbours, conform most closely to the demands of their friends." Further, he says, "Even so, the prime cause of both competition and conformity is home ownership and the mutual need to preserve property and status values."

The number of white-collar workers is said to be increasing each day (Action 72, 1972). The more mechanized our society becomes, the less the need for labour or simple physical skills. This is creating a vast community of white-collar workers. Indeed, if the organization is of sufficient size, then communities within communities emerge. The more bureaucratic we become, the greater the community emphasis. As Peter M. Blau (1956:55) points out: "Bureaucracy with social connections means community."

Consideration of the general effects of televised media sport on viewers, the institution of HNIC, and the attachment of many Canadians to it, constitute sufficient background for the present study. These ideas can be applied to the white-collar workers of St. John's. It can be hypothesized that the cohesion of their community is based, in part, on HNIC as one common interest.

Let us turn now to a discussion of the methods and design of research into how HNIC influences the married, male, white-collar employee in St. John's.

## CHAPTER II

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since there has been no sociological research on the impact of HNIC in the country, it makes little difference on which region or city one focuses first off. As a resident of St. John's, this city became the obvious choice. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the bulk of the working force in St. John's are white-collar workers. And since it would be senseless to attempt to determine family life from single respondents, I felt it best to confine my population to the married, male, white-collar workers in St. John's. Based on my knowledge of life in St. John's and the meager literature on the impact of televised sport on the lives of viewers, I hypothesized that the effect of HNIC on the social lives of married, male, office-workers in St. John's varies directly with their degree of interest in this twice-weekly telecast. During the NHL season, which begins in early fall and terminates in late spring, these men appear to set a pattern which affects their interpersonal relationships immensely. This devotion to hockey on television seems to permeate their lives during the winter months to such an extent that it precludes other social activities. This study, then, in addition to testing the main hypothesis, describes the nature of this devotion and the ways social life is subsequently affected.



Shortly after I decided on this project, I took a trip to Montreal and Toronto. While there, I made arrangements to interview those people who either produce HNIC or have a voice in its airing. My status within the CBC gave me easy access to them. Armed with tape recorder and interview guide, I met and interviewed the producers of HNIC of both CTV and CBC, the executive producer of the program working for the sponsors, the two popular play-by-play commentators, and the President of the NHL. Also included were some NHL players who were, at that time, running hockey schools in these areas. With these people, I explored the ways and means of HNIC, and whether they realized they are constantly shaping our society and its social organization through the many followers of the telecast.

#### The Sample

Having defined and identified the white-collar workers in St. John's, my next task was to sample them for research purposes. My initial search for a listing, in any form, of the white-collar offices and their sizes in the St. John's area was fruitless. I contacted the Provincial Government, through several departments, and was unable to find any listings. I was referred to Statistics Canada and there, again, I was unable to arrive at a list of white-collar offices and their sizes in St. John's. So, I concluded I would have to formulate my own list of offices. My first contact

was Dun and Bradstreet. But they were unco-operative and their lists were unavailable to me from any other source.

So, I began by obtaining the latest edition of the St. John's City Directory (1971). I called every firm listed there, omitting those who would obviously have no stationary married, male, white-collar office workers on their staff (e.g., service stations, beauty shops, taxi companies). I inquired of each how many white-collar workers they employed.<sup>1</sup> I then sorted the firms and their office sizes into three groups: small or one-ten white-collar workers; medium or eleven-twenty-five workers; and large or twenty-six workers and over. Within these three groups, I then randomly selected four offices from each category to be the ones approached.<sup>2</sup>

My next step was to meet the original telephone contacts from the companies I had chosen (usually personnel officers or payroll masters), and tell them the purpose of the survey. I felt an

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<sup>1</sup>In this way, I also established contact with an individual in each firm to whom I could return when and if I happened to select his company for my survey. No one refused to give the number of white-collar employees in his firm. Nor did anyone refuse access to those employees when the time came to distribute the questionnaires.

<sup>2</sup>The offices were selected by means of a stratified random sample, each size representing one stratum. There is no need to worry about over-representation of large offices, even though that, in fact, is true, so long as the N at all strata is sufficiently large to obtain meaningful percentages or proportions on which to conduct chi-square analyses.

intermediary was necessary to eliminate bias through personal contact because of the public nature of my work. They took my questionnaires, distributed and collected them for me, without mentioning my identity. Distribution of the questionnaires to the respondents was done by means of a table of random numbers, thus eliminating bias on the part of the person doing the distributing. The respondents were given time from their office routine to fill them in.

I arbitrarily decided that five respondents were needed from the small offices; ten from the medium size offices; and twenty from the large offices. It is true that the largest number of respondents thus comes from the largest offices and the smallest number of respondents from the small offices. This sampling design was chosen because it is necessary to have a sufficient proportion of people from small, medium, and large offices so that some sense of informal group discussion of HNIC among the total number of employees in the office can be established.

Had every respondent answered the questionnaire distributed by the personnel officer of the firm, there would have been 140 respondents. In fact, 33 of these 140, for some reason, refused to answer the questionnaire, even though the personnel officer distributed them as requested.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>It is possible, of course, that the thirty-three respondents who refused to answer the questionnaire had no interest in HNIC or possibly in televised sports or even in television. Since no data were gathered from these people, there is no way of determining their reasons for refusal. Although the sample is not truly random in the strictest sense of randomness, its representativeness is not seriously attenuated by these refusals.

### The Questionnaire

A largely structured questionnaire was developed for the survey (see Appendix I). Pretesting resulted in a few minor changes.

Given the importance of the degree of interest in HNIC to this study, a special set of questionnaire items was designed to measure it. Item No. 4 was the key item in this connection, while Items 1, 2, 5, 8, 15, and 20 served as reliability checks. Assuming Item No. 4 proved reliable, all other items in the questionnaire pertaining to the effects of high interest in HNIC could be related statistically to Item No. 4. Thus, a test of the hypothesis is mounted in this fashion.

With respect to Item No. 4, there are more accurate ways of establishing the respondent's degree of interest in HNIC than by self-positioning. This was achieved by indicating the number of televised NHL games in St. John's for the past two years, and asking the respondent to estimate how many of them he viewed. With this response, I classified each respondent into one of five categories of interest in HNIC: high, medium-high, medium, medium-low, and low. Each category was one-fifth of the range of possible responses to this item, the range being zero games to sixty-eight games.

Another problem was determining the optimum time for distributing the questionnaire. More precisely, at what point during the season are white-collar workers' habits of viewing HNIC most typical? Certainly not during playoffs; probably not at the start of the season.

Following a search into the monthly ratings of the Board of Broadcast Measurements and the Neilson Ratings, I concluded the best time to obtain a typical attitude toward HNIC would be early December or late January. These appeared to be the times of mean viewing interest in HNIC. I picked early December.

#### Method of Statistical Analysis

Since the field of the effects of media sport is still in its infancy, it was felt that chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) and correlation tests were sufficiently powerful for the statistical analysis, so long as contingency tables remain relatively simple. My object was to determine the statistical significance of any differences found between groups of white-collar workers and their interest in HNIC. Since the direction of difference was predicted in every case, one-tailed probabilities are reported. My original intent of categorizing each response in one of the five classes in the interest scale left me with insufficient cell frequencies from which to carry out chi-square analyses. To remedy this problem, I collapsed the classes in this way: high, medium-high, and medium categories were grouped into one classification labeled "high." The remaining interest categories, medium-low and low, were included in a classification called "low." It was then possible to carry out successfully chi-square tests on the data.

#### Historical Method

The information for the historical segment of my study,

both of the NHL and Canadian broadcasting, came from five sources: Memorial University of Newfoundland Library, personal interviews, newspapers, magazines, and the head office of the NHL.

1. From the Memorial University of Newfoundland Library, I acquired the background material pertaining to the history of individual Canadian teams in the NHL. There was no chronological account of the growth of the NHL in any one volume.

Histories of Canadian broadcasting were a little more abundant than histories of the NHL, though no accounts of recent growth existed. There were several publications dealing with significant aspects of radio and television broadcasting in Canada (commercialism, technical, etc.), but no overall chronology.

2. As mentioned earlier, interviews relating to the history of the NHL were conducted with President Campbell in the summer of 1971.

Interviews relating to Newfoundland's broadcasting history were conducted with two prominent people in contemporary Newfoundland broadcasting. They were members of the Broadcasting Corporation of Newfoundland, the forerunner of the CBC before Confederation with Canada in 1949.

3. Newspaper accounts of relevant present day affairs or flashback references to history-making events in broadcasting and hockey were retained.

4. Magazine feature stories were of some use as accounts of NHL historical incidents, but little has been written on the history of broadcasting.

5. The NHL Headquarters sends out a weekly newsletter, along with an annual report and hockey guide, to all sports broadcasters. My position with the CBC enabled me to collect these since they began the service in 1970.

Having considered the research methodology for the present study, let us now turn to the history of the NHL and HNIC.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE AND  
HOCKEY NIGHT IN CANADA

Hockey, as it is known today in Canada, is generally recognized as having had its roots somewhere in North America, but traces of similar games exist the world over. In 478 BC, the Greek warrior, Themistocles, built a wall in Athens. At its base, clearly portrayed, was a sculptured scene showing two athletes holding clubs curved at one end with sticks crossed above a ball as though engaged in a face-off. The stick resembled those used centuries later in field hockey. Probably some form of the game was played even then (Roxborough, 1964).

Maybe that is too far back. A writer in 1190 AD in Europe described a game played on "frozen water" using bones tied to the feet of the players. Even that could have been hockey since skating has been a popular pastime for over a thousand years. More than three centuries ago, in 1700, a noted Amsterdam artist painted a portrait of uniformed youths with sticks and skates and a ball or puck. In 1862, a London writer confirmed that hockey players were interfering with the activities of figure skaters (Roxborough, 1964).

The Mohawk Indians claim that the word "hockey" was derived from their word ho-ghee, which means "it hurts" (the losers



were hit over the head). The French also claim credit for the origin of the word "hockey," saying the word comes from hoquet, a crooked stick of the kind used by shepherds (Eskenazi, 1969).

Wherever the word came from, it was waiting for someone to make it meaningful, which Canadians did. Having played lacrosse or field hockey in the summer, the long winter months for most Canadian boys was one of comparative idleness. So they took to the ponds and lakes to skate, which led to challenges between groups. For this, they borrowed some of the rules of field hockey and lacrosse and adapted them to ice. The first game may have been played in December, 1879, when two teams of students at McGill took to the ice, thirty on each side, and played a game with rules they had devised. Yet, Kingston and Halifax like to think the first game was their honour. There is no consensus on the starting point for Canadian hockey. Transformation of the game through the first measured surface for playing, called a rink, to use of equipment borrowed and transformed from other sports brought it, by the late 1800s, to recognition. Teams were organized temporarily and games arranged on a voluntary basis.

By the 1890s, hockey had already vied with lacrosse for Canada's most popular sport, but because of a lack of consistent rules and regulations and a lack of proper organization, hockey sometimes fell behind. Little by little, the rules were modified to allow the

goalie to fall on the ice and to limit the number of players. An incident in 1911 put hockey permanently to the fore. A riot at a lacrosse game in Toronto resulted in serious injury to many spectators. Lacrosse, at that point, was first in popularity. But the Toronto riot soured thousands of lacrosse fans on their sport, and turned their attention to hockey (Eskenazi, 1969).

The absence of uniformity in hockey coupled with its expanding popularity was noted by prominent people. In 1885, in Montreal, a group of hockey enthusiasts formed the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada. They began slight modification of the rules which, through time, evolved into the game as we know it today. That same year saw the first organized league formed in Kingston, Ontario.

The first hockey leagues in Canada were strictly amateur, and were born in the 1890s. In 1892, the Governor-General of Canada, Fredrick Arthur, Lord Stanley of Preston, made a gesture that united all factions and resulted in one of the most significant events in the history of hockey. Lord Stanley donated a cup which was to go each year to the amateur champion of Canada (Hewitt, 1961:17). (See Appendix II.) It cost him ten pounds Sterling or about fifty dollars today. In 1893, the Stanley Cup competition began, and became symbolic of the game of hockey.

Ironically, Lord Stanley never saw a Stanley Cup game.

Even the spirit he intended the cup to give the sport backfired. He wanted it to go to the best amateur team, but competition for the cup became so great, and prestige for the winners of the cup so high, that teams gradually relaxed their amateur status by buying and paying the best players available.

In 1899, dissention plagued the new Amateur Hockey Association of Canada and a rival Canadian Amateur Hockey League was formed. This brought even more attention to the game and the cup playoff.

While Canadian hockey was in ferment, something happened in the United States--acknowledged professionalism. In 1903, a dentist named J. L. Gibson gathered a team of Canadian imports, brought them to Houghton, Michigan, and challenged any comers. The American fans were happy to see a team of their own, made up primarily of Canadians. (Seventy years later, the custom remains.)

Dr. Gibson's team played so well in other American towns that they, in turn, began to import Canadian players. As a result, the International Professional Hockey League was formed in 1904 (Eskenazi, 1969).

With the prospect of American dollars luring more Canadian hockey players into the United States, Canadian amateur teams began to reassess their role. A group in Sault Ste. Marie,

Ontario, seeing nothing immoral or wrong with playing for money, became the first Canadian team to turn professional, which it did by joining the new league of professionals in the United States. But the professional league's success was to be its downfall. Great players expected big salaries, and by 1907, the first professional hockey league in North America had disbanded (Selke, 1962).

In 1908, Canada established its first professional league as the Ontario Professional Hockey League. Two years later, the National Hockey Association (NHA) was formed. In that league, were the Montreal Canadiens, a team that still exists today. One of the other teams in the NHA was the Wanderers from Montreal on which was Lester Patrick, a wealthy lumberman from Drummondville. Lester, his brother, Frank, and fifty-year-old father, in 1911, formed a professional hockey league in western Canada with their base of operations in Victoria. Frank and Lester, who did the actual running of the league, established a rivalry between east and west for the Stanley Cup. In 1915, the Patricks incorporated a team from the United States into their league.

By 1917, the NHA's activity in the east, coupled with the player raiding tactics of the Patrick brothers in the west, brought tempers amongst the eastern owners to a fever pitch.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Patricks would offer a good player more money to play in their western league. They usually added fringe benefits, making it difficult for the player to refuse.

So much so that on November 22, in Montreal, a new professional league called the National Hockey League was formed which exists today. The first teams were: Montreal Canadiens, Montreal Wanderers, Ottawa, Quebec, and Toronto Arenas. By 1925, the NHL began to accept franchises from the United States. In 1926, the Patrick brothers sold all their western interests to the NHL and became involved in the newly recruited eastern American teams in the league. The NHL used these western players to stock the new clubs.

By this time, the NHL had ten clubs divided into two sections: the Canadian division had Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal Canadiens, Montreal Maroons, and New York Americans; the American division clubs were Boston, New York, Chicago, Detroit, and Pittsburgh. Also, in 1926, the Stanley Cup became the exclusive property of the NHL, there being no western professional league to vie for it. Never again would it be competed for by any team outside the NHL. The league had come to stay, and although four of the teams were to drop out over the next fifteen years and no new teams added for forty years, the league established itself as the singular major hockey league of North America. From 1942 to 1967, the league consisted of six teams: Montreal, Toronto, New York, Boston, Chicago, and Detroit. Then, in 1967, due to urging from some team owners; due to financially rewarding expansions in professional baseball and football; due to increasing demand for hockey franchises; and due to progressive thinking by NHL President, Clarence Campbell, who became President in 1946, the NHL

accepted six United States teams making it a twelve-team, two-division league. The new teams were Los Angeles, California, Minnesota, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. In 1970, the NHL expanded to fourteen teams adding Buffalo and Vancouver, and in 1972, to sixteen teams with the addition of Atlanta and the New York Islanders (Andrews, 1972). The NHL will add two more teams in 1974.

#### Hockey Night in Canada

Before chronicling the Newfoundland television systems and their association with HNIC, let me briefly recapitulate the events in early Canadian radio and television which led to hockey broadcasting and its prominent role today.

In November, 1919, a recorded voice was heard in Ottawa from Montreal by electro-magnetic waves. This was the birth of commercial radio in Canada and the start of a communications revolution. The voice was broadcast by the Canadian Marconi Company on station XWA, which, by 1920, had received federal approval to broadcast from a station called CFCF in Montreal. Reception that year was a privilege of a few who had receiver sets. Programs were irregular.

The first commercial radio broadcasting license to operate a profit-making enterprise was issued to a newspaper. The Winnipeg Free Press, in 1922, paid one dollar to the old Department of Marine and Fisheries for a license to operate station CJCG (Broadcast News

Wire Services, 1972). Two other licenses issued that year went to department stores: CJCD in Toronto owned by the T. Eaton Co., and CJBC in Montreal owned by Dupuis Freres. But radio was not a lucrative business, for by 1926, both CJCD and CJBC had folded. The problem, peculiar to Canadian broadcasting, emerged in the first years of radio and remains today--large United States stations near the border could smother Canadian signals and dominate the market. (This was discussed earlier in relation to selectivity and television interest in HNIC.) Some faltering stations in Montreal and Toronto, unable to withstand the competition and sensing a possible profit, agreed to merge with United States networks and use their programming almost exclusively (Broadcast News Wire Service, 1972).

Network broadcasting in Canada was operated in its embryonic stages by the Canadian National Railways (CNR). A radio department was added to the CNR in the early 1920s. So that on Christmas day, 1923, the publicly owned company linked stations in Ottawa and Montreal, giving Canada its first network broadcast.

Sports fans still argue about who broadcast the first radio account of a hockey game. Tradition says it was Foster Hewitt on March 23, 1923, but records show that Norm Albert broadcast a game on February 8 that same year (The Evening Telegram, 1972b). What is fairly certain is that the first broadcast came from the old Mutual Street arena in Toronto, over station CFCA, a station

owned from 1922 to 1933 by the Toronto Star newspaper. Hewitt and Albert were in their early twenties at the time; both were reporters for the Star. For Hewitt, the Mutual Street arena broadcasts began a career that is still going today. Albert took a different path, going into business. His broadcast career lasted only two months.

The Toronto Star, on February 9, 1923, credits Albert's feat with being the "inaugural of broadcasting by radio a [sic] hockey game play by play" (The Evening Telegram, 1972b). The game was between North Toronto and Midland of the Ontario Hockey Association. The score was either 16-4, or 17-4, depending on whether one accepts the Star's radio page account or Albert's by-line on the sports page. But the account of the broadcast is still there: "The vivid description by Norm Albert, one of the Star's sporting critics who reported the game, enabled listeners to visualize the skill of the irresistible Lionel Conacher, whom Mr. Albert tagged as 'the hero of the battle'" (The Evening Telegram, 1972b).

The Star claimed the broadcast a success and promised, "from now on the biggest hockey games will be reported through the Star's radio station in this way. Under an agreement with the management of the arena, only those games for which all seating space has been sold out will be reported" (The Evening Telegram, 1972b).

Albert recalls that this first broadcast came about this way. Main Johnson, at that time Manager of CFCA, asked Foster Hewitt's



father, Bill Hewitt, who was then Sports Editor, to do the broadcast. Bill declined and looked for his son, Foster, who was on another assignment. Johnson then offered the job to the late Lou Marsh who turned it down. There was nobody else available, so Johnson asked Albert who, because he had been doing a great deal of sports reporting, accepted the challenge (The Evening Telegram, 1972b). So, we can say with some authority that Norm Albert broadcast the first hockey game in Canada while, traditionally and emotionally, Foster Hewitt holds that honour.

The following year on radio station CFCF in Montreal, Charlie Harwood broadcast the first hockey game in that region. Harwood broadcasted live hockey regularly in the Montreal area for many years thereafter. He holds the distinction of broadcasting the longest hockey game in the history of the NHL (Personal Interview, 1972). In it, the Detroit Red Wings defeated the Montreal Maroons 1-0 in Montreal on March 24-25, 1936, the winning goal being scored by Mud Bruneteau at sixteen minutes and thirty seconds<sup>2</sup> of the sixth overtime period. The game lasted 176 minutes and thirty seconds. It began at 8:00 p.m. the twenty-fourth, and ended at 2:25 a.m. the twenty-fifth (Roxborough, 1964).

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<sup>2</sup>Each hockey game consists of three twenty-minute periods of playing time with a ten-minute rest between each period. If the score is tied and it is a playoff game, twenty-minute, sudden death overtime periods are played with ten-minute rest periods between each period.

To return, for a moment, to the years immediately following the first hockey broadcast in Toronto, the CNR, in 1929, had extended its network from Halifax to Vancouver. The Wall Street collapse of 1929 and depression of the 1930s ended the CNR venture. Its direct successor was the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission set up in 1932, largely as a result of a report by a Royal Commission headed by world renowned Canadian banker, Sir John Aird. The report recommended an autonomous broadcasting organization that would acquire and operate all private stations. At that time, approximately forty percent of the population were within range of existing Canadian stations.

It was also in 1936, the year of the longest hockey game just mentioned, that the three-man Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission was replaced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which owned seven of its own stations and held fifty-four affiliates. Radio, to this point in time, had served many purposes, but reporting the overseas war was considered its most vital one. Next in priority was coverage of the NHL games.

In September, 1952, the CBC introduced television to Canada through two stations in Toronto and Montreal. But television, like radio, suffered from interference from United States stations. In fact, "the only network broadcast that constantly went out across Canada last year [1935] was the General Motors hockey broadcast on Saturday nights" (Peers, 1969:181). O. J. Firestone (1966:256),

Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa, observed that "given a free choice, the majority of Canadians will, in most instances, turn to American instead of the Canadian programmes, with some notable exceptions such as sports events."

Before leaving the topic of sponsorship of hockey games in the early years of broadcasting, let me point out that General Motors, whom I have already mentioned as being the first sponsor in 1931, relinquished its contract in 1936. The contract was immediately taken over by Imperial Oil who holds primary rights to HNIC to the present day.

The first Stanley Cup broadcast or NHL playoff on any network occurred in March, 1924. The teams competing were the Montreal Canadiens and the Ottawa Senators who were playing the last game of the finals in Ottawa. The game was broadcast over the CNR network by commentator Gordon W. Olive (Weir, 1965:85).

While Canada was going through growing pains in radio and television development, Newfoundland, then a British colony, was having its own difficulties with radio. Up to 1932, there was little in the way of broadcasting as we know it today in Newfoundland. There had been several privately owned commercial stations going on the air when they desired, usually to sell a product. These stations, which were mere experiments, were owned

by merchants.<sup>3</sup>

The first major radio broadcasting concern in Newfoundland was the Dominion Broadcasting Company, which opened VONF in St. John's in 1932. In 1936, Joseph L. Butler and Walter B. Williams combined talents and money to open radio station VOCM-St. John's. In 1939, partial nationalization of broadcasting took place under the Commission of Government, and the Dominion Broadcasting Corporation was absorbed into the national system and became the Broadcasting Corporation of Newfoundland.

With the arrival of the American Forces in St. John's in 1941, one more radio station was added: VOUS. This station was owned and operated by and for the United States servicemen. It ceased operating shortly after the war. The Government began its expansion program of radio in 1943 with the establishment of a station at Corner Brook: VOWN. To these two BCN stations, VONF-St. John's and VOWN-Corner Brook, VORG-Gander was added a short time later. In 1948, negotiations began toward the integration

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<sup>3</sup>Prior to 1932, two radio stations were also established in St. John's by religious denominations: VOWR in 1924, and VOAR in 1932. Both stations are still on the air on a daily basis, with modern equipment, limited output, and volunteer personnel. Through a special agreement in the terms of Confederation, they were permitted to remain on the air despite the refusal of the Canadian Radio Television Commission to grant licenses to church groups.

of the BCN stations with the CBC in the event of Confederation. Mr. W. F. Galgay, who played a leading role in the formation of the BCN stations in 1939, and then its General Manager, was commissioned to carry out talks for integration into the CBC. Mr. Galgay died as head of the Newfoundland Region of the CBC on August 15, 1966. Since Confederation, the CBC has expanded its radio coverage of Newfoundland to include every area of the island of Newfoundland and most of Labrador. From the moment the Newfoundland stations hooked up to the CBC radio network, they began to carry the regular Saturday night NHL hockey game from Toronto with Foster Hewitt. CJON, a private radio station in addition to VOCM in St. John's, went on the air October 10, 1951.

The first television in Newfoundland appeared in St. John's in September, 1955, when CJON went on the air. But part of their mandate was to be a CBC television affiliate, which meant carrying the bulk of CBC programming originating from "the mainland." Part of this Canadian programming was the regular Saturday night telecast of HNIC. Newfoundlanders, for the first time, were able to see the NHL in action.

On June 16, 1959, the CBC began telecasting from their own television station in Corner Brook, CBYT. This station carried every Saturday night hockey game thus bringing HNIC to the west coast.

In October, 1964, through a well-documented request for a "national" broadcasting network of television stations prepared by Mr. Galgay and backed by all local St. John's organizations, St. John's went on the air with a CBC owned and operated television station: CBNT. This station became the major production centre for Newfoundland television, and now contributes Newfoundland's portion to the national CBC television network. CJON television, from that point on, lost its affiliate advantages and were forced to find other sources of program material. CJON also had to relinquish microwave facilities which were contracted from the CBC when they (CJON) went on the air and became an affiliate. This means that CBC now carries the regular Saturday night HNIC.

In 1964, immediately following the establishment of CBNT-St. John's, CJON became a member of the CTV network. This meant they were given permission to carry the regular telecast on HNIC on Wednesday nights, which service had just been inaugurated between Halifax and Vancouver on the CTV network. From that point on, all Newfoundland residents enjoyed HNIC on Wednesday night from CJON television and on Saturday night from CBC television.

At the same time, the regular Saturday night CBC radio broadcast of HNIC was switched to Sunday night radio because the surveys indicated that, with television, people would rather watch the game than listen to it on radio. It also brought coverage of

NHL games one more night in the week.

There is one aspect of HNIC that needs mentioning. When CJON television went on the air in 1955 and began carrying the regular Saturday night hockey game, the program began one-half hour after the start of the actual hockey game. This meant the first period was just ending or had finished, and viewers would see the second and third periods only. The same arrangement was in effect when CBC television took over the network game in 1964. This policy of joining the game after the first half hour of play, which was the same across Canada, was due to prior commitments to sponsored programming by the CBC television network. In 1968, due to a cross-Canada poll and to pressure applied by civic and provincial groups across the Dominion, the network was able, through the sponsors, to broadcast the total game. (The only time the full game was seen prior to that date was during playoffs.)

Hockey fans in Newfoundland today enjoy HNIC twice a week for the entire regular season, plus the playoffs and the all-star game. Last season, for instance, there were sixty-seven NHL games seen in St. John's on television, including the playoffs. In the season before, there were sixty-nine.

From the time Newfoundlanders heard Foster Hewitt say, "Hello Canada and hockey fans in the United States", to the present day, and the amount of hockey viewing and listening available from

two television networks and one radio network, both the game of hockey and the technology of broadcasting have changed immensely, but both have endured.

HNIC, as it is known today, is the property of neither of the two Canadian television networks. It is owned and produced by Canadian Sports Network Ltd. (a subsidiary of MacLaren Advertising Co. Ltd.) on behalf of the sponsors for distribution over the CBC English, French, and CTV television networks. Their exclusive ownership of the broadcast is purchased from each individual club on a multi-year individual contract between each club and Canadian Sports Network Ltd. Unlike most Canadian television programs, HNIC is not subsidized in any way by the Canadian networks.

Canadian Sports Network, which owns the show, is an organization which was formed specifically to accommodate the uniqueness of HNIC. The program was originally produced by the broadcast department of MacLaren Advertising. But as it grew, relationships with the NHL, sponsors, media, and networks became more and more demanding and involved. To administer properly these growing responsibilities, a number of MacLaren people were selected to form an independent production company called Videotape Productions. In late 1971, the company name was changed from Videotape Productions to Canadian Sports Network.



In charge of the executive side of the Canadian Sports Network is Ted Hough. With him is Ralph Mellanby who is executive producer to all productions and the operational king-pin behind every televised game.

By mid-summer each year, Canadian Sports Network, both major television networks, representatives of the sponsors, and team and league officials hold a series of meetings to map out the upcoming season's television schedule. Adjustments have to be made, to the best of their ability, in order to retain harmony within the league, to have a Canadian team at home every Wednesday and Saturday night, and to accommodate the Canadian audience as well as the Canadian city arenas. From negotiation time to the opening face-off, usually in October, it is then simply a series of communications between the groups for the purpose of refinement.

Now let me move into the next and most important chapter of this work--how the white-collar workers fit into this hockey oriented, broadcast dominated society in which we live and the effect of HNIC on their lives.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE IMPACT OF HOCKEY NIGHT IN CANADA

The major concerns of this chapter are with the effects of HNIC on the white-collar workers as found in the study. Each section treats the effects, whether in the home or at the office, in relation to the degrees of interest shown in HNIC. After demonstrating that there are degrees of interest in HNIC, the following are discussed: drinking habits, symbolic interaction, hero worship, violence in hockey, home and office harmony, and commercial effects.

#### Interest in Hockey Night in Canada

Earlier I referred to a sense of belonging or consciousness of kind as one indicator of cohesiveness in the white-collar community in St. John's. Now another indicator appears to have been introduced--a common attachment to HNIC.

Of the ninety-nine respondents, sixty-nine indicated their preference for viewing hockey on television over any other sport. Thirteen favoured football, six baseball, two golf, and nine other televised sports (see Figure 1).

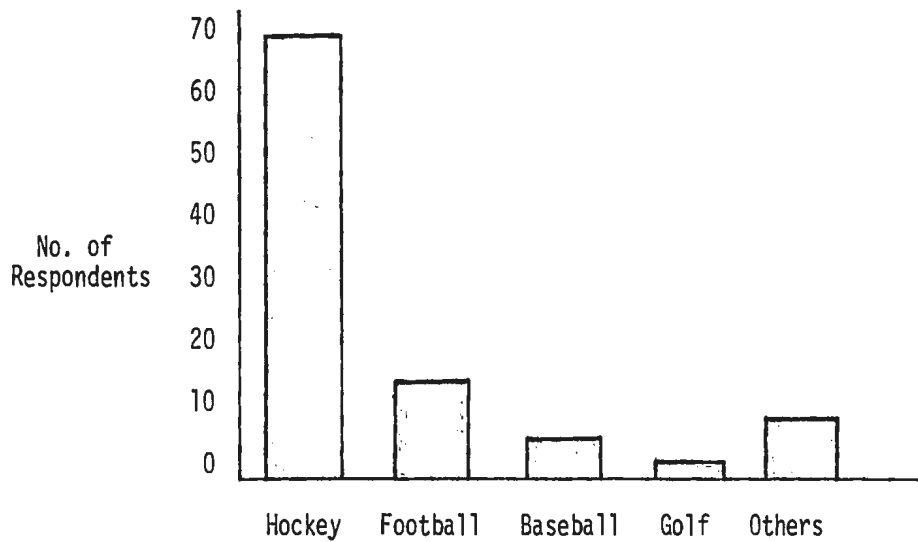


Figure 1. Relative Interest in Television Sport

Although we may visualize hockey as a unifying factor, it is unlikely to be a strong one. Of those who indicated a preference for hockey over other televised sports, only twenty-four percent considered themselves avid fans. The break-even sport was baseball, with fifty percent of the fans avid and fifty percent occasionally interested or three of each (see Table 1).

Table 1. Preference for Televised Sports  
Among Avid and Occasional Fans

	Hockey	Football	Baseball	Golf	Other	Total
Avid	24 (24.2) <sup>a</sup>	1 (7.7)	3 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	28 (28.3)
Occasional	45 (75.8)	12 (92.3)	3 (50.0)	2 (100.0)	9 (100.0)	71 (71.7)
Totals	69 (100.0)	13 (100.0)	6 (100.0)	2 (100.0)	9 (100.0)	99 (100.0)

<sup>a</sup> For clarity throughout, figures in parentheses contained in tables denotes percentage.

As mentioned earlier, for analytical purposes, those who indicated they have some interest in HNIC were placed in one of five categories of interest in the telecast. These categories are high, medium-high, medium, medium-low, and low. Their placement in this fashion did not mean they had no interest in other televised sports. Indeed, some preferred another television sport other than hockey. The only ones excluded were those indicating no interest at all in television sports. Eight white-collar workers out of the one hundred and seven were in the latter category.

Answers to certain questionnaire items were correlated with the respondent's degree of interest in order to check the validity and reliability of this classification of him. Data from the following questionnaire items correlated well with data from Item No. 4, either by means of the contingency coefficient (C) or Spearman rank correlation ( $\rho$ ) (Seigel, Chapter 9):

with Item No. 5,  $C = 0.20$ ;  $p. < 0.025$ ;

with Item No. 8,  $C = 0.142$ ;  $0.10 > p. > 0.05$ ;

with Item No. 15,  $\rho = 0.65$ ;  $p. < 0.001$ ;

with Item No. 20,  $C = 0.347$ ;  $p. < 0.001$ .

The distribution of respondents by degree of interest is presented in Figure 2. As expected, the greatest concentration of viewers fell in the medium category. But it was surprising to find an almost equal number in the medium-low group.

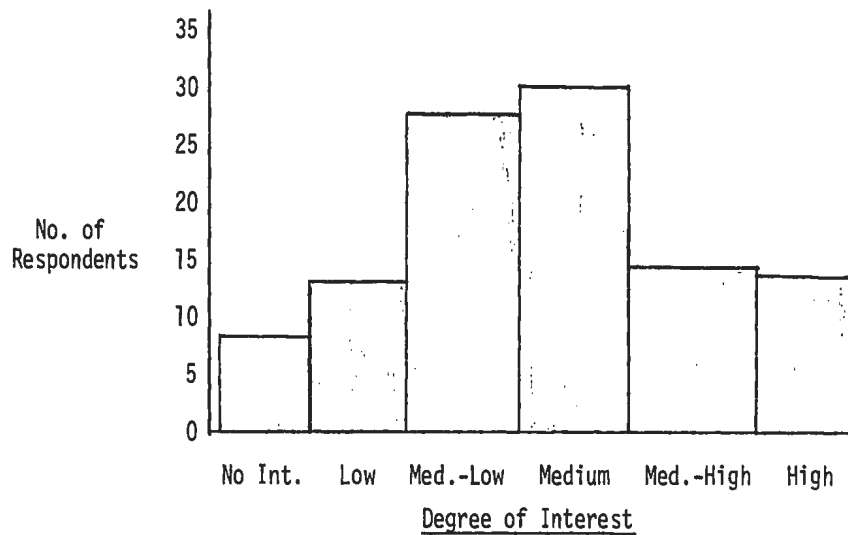


Figure 2. Relative Interest in Hockey Night in Canada

It was predicted that a high degree of interest in HNIC leads to no special preference for one over the other. That is, the effect on work the next day, owing to the lateness of the program, would be immaterial. Data to test the assertion are presented in Table 2, though they fail to support it. Saturday night is the chief preference for both interest groups.

Table 2. Interest in Hockey Night in Canada by Day of Week

Day	<u>Degree of Interest</u>		Total
	High	Low	
Wednesday	18 (30.5)	9 (22.5)	27 (27.3)
Saturday	41 (69.5)	31 (77.5)	72 (72.7)
Total	59 (100.0)	40 (100.0)	99 (100.0)
$\chi^2 = 1.78; .10 > p. > .05$			

An individual's apparent interest in any television program may be due not to genuine attraction, but to habit. A large segment of society seems to watch television as a matter of habit rather than from selection based on cultivated interest. When this orientation exists, an individual sits before his set early in the evening and views the fare presented regardless of what is shown. In this way, he may show spurious attachment over the years to a program. Add to this the narrow selection for St. John's viewers mentioned earlier and false attachment becomes even more likely. Thus, it is hypothesized that a high degree of interest in HNIC leads to program selectivity rather than habitual viewing.

The data in Table 3 fail to support this notion. They reveal that approximately twenty-five percent of the white-collar workers fit into the category of habitual viewer on Wednesday and Saturday nights. They demonstrate that, on these nights, they have no real program selectivity; HNIC is just another program to them.

Table 3. Number Who Watch Television on Wednesday and Saturday Nights Regardless of What is Available

Type of Viewing	<u>Degree of Interest</u>			Total
	High	Low	Non TV Fan	
Selective	43 (72.9)	31 (77.5)	7 (87.5)	81 (75.7)
Habitual	16 (27.1)	9 (22.5)	1 (12.5)	26 (24.3)
Total	59 (100.0)	40 (100.0)	8 (100.0)	99 (100.0)
$\chi^2 = 1.76; p. > .05$				

A possible source of genuine attachment to HNIC is having sons playing in or interested in hockey in general. It was, therefore, predicted that respondents with such sons would manifest a higher degree of interest in HNIC than those without such sons. The differences reported in Table 4, though technically not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, are sufficiently great to suggest that this hypothesis will probably hold under more controlled investigation.<sup>1</sup>

Table 4. Interest in Hockey Night in Canada and Sons' Hockey Involvement

	<u>Degree of Interest</u>		Total
	High	Low	
No Sons in Family	19 (42.2)	21 (58.3)	40 (40.1)
Sons Able to Play or in Organized League	26 (57.8)	15 (41.7)	41 (41.4)
Total	45 (100.0)	36 (100.0)	81 (100.0)
$\chi^2 = 2.11; p. > .05$			

<sup>1</sup>A discrepancy in N appears in Table 4 because twenty-six of the respondents indicated their sons were unable to play hockey due to age or disability.

At this point, a moment's digression to the professional-amateur conflict conveyed to children through HNIC is in order. Recently, minor hockey in St. John's has grown rapidly. This is due, in a large part, to the efforts of dedicated parents who support their children's desires for better recreational conditions. It is generally the result of an initial effort brought on by the children to see that they obtain a better share of recreational facilities. The wish for better facilities is generated partly from a constant diet of television hockey. Boys observe better facilities and they want them. And the only method to obtain these is through "old Dad."

But an equally damaging effect is transmitted via HNIC through the boys to Dad; that is, the acquisition of professional attitudes and methods where amateur attitudes and methods control the local system. And this is becoming an ever-increasing problem.

Huizinga (1964) refers to the amateur-professional relationship saying: "The spirit of professional is no longer the true play-spirit; it is lacking in spontaneity and carelessness. This affects the amateur too who begins to suffer from an inferiority complex." Huizinga has noted the problem which faces the amateur when professional values are imposed upon him. And HNIC is a imposer of such attitudes and values.

The professional-amateur relationship is, if nothing else, being recognized by the professional to a greater extent now than before.



In former years, professional hockey players have been allied with, or compared with ne'er-do-wells who never made it in society yet were endowed with athletic ability. Some were considered bums-with-skating-ability. This image is quickly vanishing, and its demise is hastened by the leagues themselves. NHL President, Clarence Campbell, says efforts are being made in all segments of his operation to recruit more college players; educate those who wish to have a better education; establish retirement careers for the professional hockey player; and the like. Campbell (Personal Interview, 1971) says, "Today the professional hockey player has a career, and he's working like hell at it as well as getting ready for his second career, because he knows it can only last so long. The whole attitude of the player has changed over the last several years." If the hockey player's attitudes toward society change, then it is reasonable to conclude that they are transmitted, through his playing, to hockey interested youth in Canada.

I also predicted that interest in HNIC is inversely related to the tendency to join voluntary associations. This was established in two ways. One was objectively, by asking each interviewee if he is a member of a voluntary association (see Table 5). The other was subjectively, by asking what effect he believes HNIC had on his tendency to join associations (see Table 6). Although the data in Table 6 were only marginally significant, they, when considered with those in Table 5, support well my prediction.

Table 5. Associational Membership and Interest in Hockey Night in Canada

Membership	<u>Degree of Interest</u>		Total
	High	Low	
Member	8 (13.5)	11 (27.5)	19 (19.2)
Non Member	51 (86.5)	29 (72.5)	80 (80.8)
Total	59 (100.0)	40 (100.0)	99 (100.0)

$\chi^2 = 3.13; p. < .05$

Table 6. Subjective View of Effect of Interest in Hockey Night in Canada on Tendency to Join Associations

Affected Membership	<u>Degree of Interest</u>		Total
	High	Low	
Yes	49 (83.1)	37 (92.5)	86 (86.7)
No	10 (16.9)	3 (7.5)	13 (13.1)
Total	59 (100.0)	40 (100.0)	99 (100.0)

$\chi^2 = 1.92; .10 > p. > .05$

#### Interpersonal Relations and Hockey Night in Canada

I predicted that a high degree of interest in HNIC generates a desire to watch it with someone else, either family or friends. It

was reasoned that interest in something encourages one to discuss it. A quick perusal of Table 7 indicates that the majority of viewers (about fifty-seven percent) prefer watching HNIC with friends rather than with family or alone. Close to twenty-five percent wish to watch with family, and just over nineteen percent alone. This hypothesis must be rejected, however, since the data fail to support it.

Table 7. Interpersonal Conditions Under Which Respondents Preferred Watching Hockey Night in Canada

	<u>Degree of Interest</u>		Total
	High	Low	
Alone	12 (20.3)	7 (17.5)	19 (19.2)
With Family	14 (23.7)	10 (25.0)	24 (24.2)
With Friends	33 (56.0)	23 (57.5)	56 (56.6)
Total	59 (100.0)	40 (100.0)	99 (100.0)

$\chi^2 = 2.05; p. > .05$

One early claim of television was that it united the family. That family life is necessarily made more harmonious is another matter. If one were to observe a family watching television, he would likely notice little interaction. And if the family were watching television sports, which is more attractive to the adult male than to others in the family, it would probably result in practically no interaction. Eleanor Maccoby (1957) found that "increased family contact brought about by television was not social except in the most limited sense:

that of being in the same room with other people."

### Symbolic Interaction and Hero Worship

According to symbolic interaction theory, individuals act toward things on the basis of meanings the things have for them. From this proposition, we can ask the question, "How many fans of television hockey picture themselves on the ice?"

About ten percent of the respondents who said they watched HNIC also stated they pictured themselves on the ice when watching. More precisely, the highest percentage of respondents who picture themselves on the ice were in the high interest range. None of the low interest fans pictured themselves thus (see Table 8).

Table 8. Number Who Picture Self on Ice While Watching Hockey Night in Canada

Respondents	<u>Degree of Interest</u>					Total
	High	Med.-High	Medium	Med.-Low	Low	
Number	3	1	5	1	0	10
% of Total No. of Respondents	21.4	6.7	16.7	3.7	0.0	10.1

It is relatively common to find people who symbolically "act" out their role when watching television. In the case of hockey television, a great deal of the fan's vicarious acting can be explained

by the fact that the viewer, at some time in his past, has either played or been associated with the game of hockey. In most cases, they have played in a league. In this way, the television fan takes the role of a player or players on the ice, which brings us to the next phase of analysis--hero worship.

I believed initially that most hockey fans have a desire to place themselves in the position of one particular idolized player. A television hockey fan's interest is, therefore, enhanced by the presence of this idol or favourite player. The data, however, failed to support this suspicion.

Of the HNIC followers, fifty-eight percent said they had no favorite hockey player at all. Forty-one percent said they had a favorite player. But more significantly, of the forty-one percent who said they did have a favorite player, close to sixty-six percent stated they made a special effort to watch HNIC when that player was scheduled to appear. Just under thirty-five percent did not make the effort.

Otto Penzler (1972) writing in Sports Illustrated forecasts the demise of the hockey hero, as well as other sports heroes, because of the increasing unionization of players. Penzler, who has worked on the sports staff of the New York Daily News and with the American Broadcasting Company for the past ten years, admits that his own interest is dwindling because of unionized players. He says, "Heroes? They are - longshoremen, going on strike and complaining about lunch hours and wash-up time. The age of the hero is gone. The age of the individual

is past. Collective bargaining is the name of the game."

Other explanations for such a low percentage of respondents with hockey heroes are the expansion of the leagues, the diminishing glamour of hockey, and the salary increments made in the last few years. These factors place more distance between the hockey fan and his hero. What Penzler said is becoming obvious to all sports fans, especially fans of hockey who are witnessing daily efforts by the leagues to rejuvenate interest in the game.

One of the most popular methods of rejuvenating interest in HNHC during the last ten years has been the sale of lottery tickets based on the times of goals scored in the televised game. Tickets are sold with each second of the game printed on them. On the televised game on Wednesday or Saturday, the person holding the ticket with the time of the first goal receives first prize, the person with the time of the second goal the second prize, and so on. This type of lottery has become big business for community groups and organizations. Its predominant use is to raise funds for minor hockey across Canada.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The sale of tickets on times of goals across Canada has diminished some during the current season due to the introduction of Sportstoto. Sportstoto is a lottery based on similar rules to that of the English soccer pools. One purchases a ticket for the weekend professional games in several leagues in North America, based on wins, losses, and draws. A correct guess on thirteen games gives the winner a fifteen thousand dollar prize; twelve correct guesses, ten thousand dollars; eleven correct guesses, five thousand dollars. It is obvious why Sportstoto attracts more attention than the time of goal tickets which generally gave a first prize of fifty dollars, and lesser prizes thereafter.

These time-of-goal lotteries, like all lotteries in Canada, are illegal. Yet they are overlooked for the most part by the authorities. Twenty percent of my respondents said they never bought tickets on times of goals, while close to sixty-three percent admitted buying tickets sometimes. Seventeen percent of the respondents said they bought tickets regularly. I noted that of the sixteen percent who bought regularly, seventy-two percent had been winners in the past, in contrast to forty percent of those who bought sometimes.

But it remains big business in the larger cities across Canada. The Evening Telegram (1971c) in one of its stories on lotteries in Canada stated, "However, illegal lotteries, especially on hockey games, have flourished in the province (Quebec). Police estimate that sellers of 25 cent tickets grossed at least 11 million dollars in Montreal alone in 1970, and that figure could double this year. At least 36 persons have been arrested during the current National Hockey League season."

Not only are leagues and executives attempting to glorify again the hockey hero and the apparent dying interest in hockey on a national scale, but also they are concentrating predominantly on the television hockey fan in their endeavours. The newly formed World Hockey Association thought of the television fans in their initial growth stages. In a November issue of Hockey News (1972b), the unofficial digest of the hockey fan,

an article is devoted to this topic: "Officials say colored pucks make it easier for rink fans and TV viewers to follow action. The WHA has ordered 1,500 blue pucks to make sure they won't run short."

It is just another example of the awareness of the leagues of the television fan at home as well as the fan in the stands. They, in one way, are catering to the spectator in a manner never seen in former years when the spectator was eager to accept the game as it was, due mainly to his devotion to idols. But as mentioned, the hockey hero has diminished in popularity. And efforts must be made to create an interest in professional hockey where expansion and dilution may not only be losing the in-house spectators, but, in a few short years, may also be losing the spectators watching television at home.

I discovered that the less the interest in HNIC, the fewer the respondents who would cancel engagements to watch HNIC playoffs ( $\chi^2 = 13.62$ ;  $p. < .001$ ). Furthermore, forty percent of those surveyed said they felt players in the NHL did a substantial amount of acting while on HNIC just to make it a better show. This was strongly denied by all players interviewed who said they played at a professional level at all times. They said they are under lucrative contracts, which means they have a job to do. That job is to win games--winning is paramount at all times. This precludes any playing or acting whether they are on television or not.



### Television Hockey and Violence

All contact sports, of which hockey is one, base success partly on physical strength. Yet, hockey appears to be one sport in which violence plays the paramount role. From the moment a player steps on the ice, he enters a special world in which his physical domination over his fellow players becomes the dominant factor between success and failure. The violence that results is attractive to many of the fans. Robert F. Faulkner (1971) studied violence, camaraderie, and occupational character in hockey. He discovered that the use of assault is an occupational skill rather than an unsavoury sin in hockey. Moreover, it creates a common bond amongst players. He studied professional hockey at one level below the NHL, the American Hockey League. He found that a critical factor in a player's decision to employ physical coercion and strength as a means of interpersonal domination is the nature of his relationships with colleagues and opposing players. Coercion, or what appears as violence, becomes a major key in the establishment and application of a player's sense of work mastery. Professional hockey players see violence as a practical skill to be mastered in order to be successful.

The fans, I predicted, are like the players; the display of violence is a major attraction for them. Data revealed that close to seventy-two percent of the respondents said they enjoyed seeing rough play and fights in televised hockey games (see Table 9). The

chi-square analysis turned up nearly statistically significant differences between the two interest groups.<sup>3</sup>

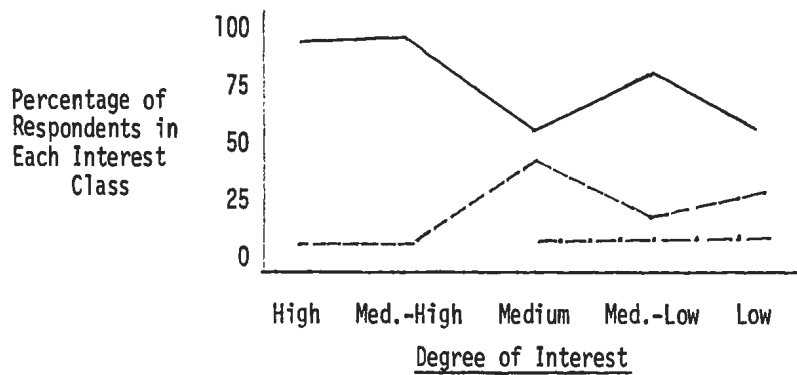
Table 9. Attitudes Toward Fighting on Hockey Night in Canada

	<u>Degree of Interest</u>		Total
	High	Low	
Enjoy	43 (72.9)	28 (70.0)	71 (71.7)
Tolerate/ Object	16 (27.1)	12 (30.0)	28 (28.3)
Total	59 (100.0)	40 (100.0)	99 (100.0)
$\chi^2 = 2.68; p. > .05$			

Thus, the survey not only revealed an attraction for violence in hockey, but it also uncovered a direct relationship between interest and violence. Of those in the high interest category, about seventy-three percent enjoyed violence in hockey as opposed to just over twenty-three who tolerated it. Approximately twenty-one percent of the total tolerated fights and approximately seven percent objected to seeing fights on televised hockey games. In the tolerance category, the percentage of respondents was larger for the high interest group: about twenty-four percent. Clearly, the violence factor of HNIC plays a major role in its attractiveness for spectators (see Figure 3). And the

<sup>3</sup>A chi-square of 2.71 would have the probability of 0.05 (one-tailed test).

players are aware of this.



Key:

1. ————— enjoy fights and rough play
2. - - - - - tolerate fights and rough play
3. - . - . - . - object to fights and rough play

Figure 3. Respondents' Attitude Towards Fights and Rough Play in Televised National Hockey League Games

Bill Harris, an NHL star who retired two years ago, says the players are aware of the attraction fights or any sort of violence has for the average fan. Harris (Personal Interview, 1971) says players realize the league is selling the game to the entire country via television, not just the in-house attendance; and, therefore, players adapt as much as possible to the preferences of the fan. This means, in most cases, joining in or instigating some sort of physical confrontation during the game. Harris believes, as do all opponents of violence in hockey, that no matter how harmless the

end result, the impression it makes on kids watching on television could be detrimental. This aspect alone has encouraged the league to change the rules governing fights and brawls. In 1971, President Campbell spearheaded an effort to have the NHL Board of Governors implement heavy fines for excessive fighting in NHL games. The new rules were introduced in 1972.

Writing in Sports Illustrated, May, 1972, in his description of the first game of the Stanley Cup finals, Mark Mulvoy noted that the overriding attitude of both teams (Boston and New York) as they entered the game was, "violence is the goal."

Superiority in hockey takes many forms; violence is one of them. Huizinga (1964:50) refers directly to this: "Winning means showing oneself superior . . . in this respect he wins something more than the game as such. He has won esteem, obtained honor; and this honor and esteem at once accrue to the benefit of the group to which the victor belongs."

As with all contact sports, there is more at stake on the ice than the primary objective of putting the puck in the net. As part of a group of players before the eyes of the country, members of a hockey team playing on HNIC are assessed according to how well they execute control over adversaries in winning their game. While some are noted for their skating and scoring ability, all are admired for their maintenance of physical superiority. One may say with

reasonable accuracy that "hockey sense" contains a triple meaning for good players. It not only refers to an individual's ability to handle the puck, or skate, or score goals, but also it refers to his reliability in maintaining physical superiority. He must know when and how to move into trouble on the ice and to never back away from adversaries or from the obligations he owes fellow players. But the most important characteristic of hockey sense is the ability to mould the first two qualities into an image attractive to the fans in the rink as well as the millions of fans across the country. Players of the NHL have a well-developed hockey sense.

#### Harmony at Home and Office

One factor governing harmony or conflict at home on Wednesday and Saturday nights is the overall family interest in HNIC. Here one must assess the combination of husband and wife interest in HNIC. It was hypothesized that when the respondent's wife views HNIC regularly, conflict is rare. The data in Table 10 fail to support this notion.

Table 10. Wife Conflict Over Hockey Night in Canada

Home Conflict	<u>Wife Patterns of Viewing Hockey Night in Canada</u>		
	Regular	Occasional or Never	Total
Occasional	18 (66.7)	43 (59.7)	61 (61.6)
Frequent	9 (33.3)	29 (40.3)	38 (38.4)
Total	27 (100.0)	72 (100.0)	99 (100.0)

$\chi^2 = 1.66; .10 > p. > .05$

A relatively small percentage of wives are regular viewers of HNIC (about twenty-seven percent) as opposed to those who are only occasional viewers or never watch the program (about seventy-three percent). The three respondents for whom there was frequent conflict in the home and whose wives were occasional fans or non-fans, had only one television set. There were no cases of conflict over programming with more than one television set in the home.

Table 11 presents data on the number of television sets in the homes of the respondents. It was predicted that two or more television sets in the home would greatly reduce conflict over programs.

Table 11. Conflict Over Viewing Hockey Night in Canada  
by Number of Television Sets in the Home

Amount of Conflict	<u>No. of Television Sets in Home</u>		
	One	Two or More	Total
Rarely or Never	43 (66.2)	18 (53.0)	61 (61.7)
Occasionally or Frequently	22 (33.8)	16 (47.0)	38 (38.3)
Total	65 (100.0)	34 (100.0)	99 (100.0)
$\chi^2 = 1.64; p. > .05$			

The data, unfortunately, conform to no meaningful pattern. Occasional conflict, even with multiple sets, may be due to reasons completely

divorced from HNIC. The most significant finding is the frequent argument in homes where there is one television only and the wife never or occasionally views HNIC. I compared the degree of interest of the respondent and the number of sets in the home, but no statistically significant association resulted.

It is possible that some housewives adjust to a routine of hockey viewing on Wednesday and Saturday nights whatever the number of sets or personal interest in HNIC. This adjustment may take the form of a cultivated interest in HNIC. But it should be emphasized that this part of the routine of family life is usually founded on somewhat less than unanimous approval. It is also possible that housewives react differently to the HNIC habit of the husband. It is safe to say that some become interested in the game on television because of their husband's interest. But this may be a superficial interest; their real interest is only aroused with game highlights or between-period offerings. We could speculate further that some wives never achieve an interest in the game, but by virtue of their physical presence, even though they might knit or read, provide some token accompaniment to their husband's interest. We could go as far as saying that a wife's disinterest may be expressed by taking distance from HNIC. She could invite people to her home for the game, and display her distance by catering to the viewers and turning the evening into a social event. So, the wife's reaction to her husband's degree of interest in HNIC plays a large role in conflict or lack of it in

the home on Wednesday and Saturday nights in St. John's.

There is a comparison to be made between the wife who is disinterested or just slightly interested in HNIC and her endeavours to facilitate the enjoyment of the group, and the disinterested fan at the office. The data indicate, as was predicted, that a substantial amount of time is lost talking about HNIC. Each respondent was asked to estimate the amount of time spent talking each week with fellow office workers about HNIC. I classified the answers in the following manner: negligible (under ten minutes per week); small (eleven to thirty minutes per week); moderate (thirty-one to sixty minutes per week); and large (over sixty minutes per week). Data bearing on this matter are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Time Spent Talking About Hockey Night in Canada at Office

Time Spent Talking About HNIC	<u>Degree of Interest</u>		Total
	High	Low	
Large/Moderate	20 (33.9)	8 (20.0)	28 (28.3)
Small	19 (32.2)	3 (7.5)	22 (22.2)
Negligible	20 (33.9)	29 (72.5)	49 (49.5)
Total	59 (100.0)	40 (100.0)	99 (100.0)

$\chi^2 = 15.35; p. < .05$

Generally, Table 12 demonstrates that the percentage of



time lost at the office increases with the degree of interest in HNIC among workers. Herein lies the comparison that can be made with the low interest wife and home harmony. It may be conjectured that for those in smaller offices to not talk hockey, even if not interested, would mean a certain amount of exclusion from the group. Even in large offices, this could be the case. If an individual wishes to enter the group, he must at least physically attend its discussions on hockey and contribute, however little, to those discussions. He might, from this involvement, even develop a desire to watch HNIC. From Table 12 one can see that slightly over twenty percent of the respondents fit into the moderate range of time lost at work through talking hockey. A slightly larger percentage (twenty-two percent) were in the small category. The eight percent in the large group were mostly high and medium interest fans. In fact, the medium-high and low interest fans had no one in the category of large amount of time lost. For both the low interest wife and the low interest office fan, group harmony results from a form of forced involvement.

Concerning the time of goal lotteries, tickets are usually sold at the office. Group discussion of the lotteries for those with tickets, occurs following each HNIC telecast. This practice accounts for some of the man-hours lost at work by white-collar workers. But to distinguish between each would be impossible. It can only be said that for those who are interested in HNIC, and who spend time at work discussing it, some of that time is spent

discussing the lotteries. I suspect the amount of time spent thus is proportionate to the number of tickets sold at the office.

#### On Commercials

As in all major sports events, the sponsors of the broadcasts play an important role in the presentation of the contest. Sometimes commercials become a contentious issue with the viewer, even though each viewer realizes the sponsor is subsidizing the bulk of the broadcast.

On HNIC, during each of the three periods, there are three ten-second, one sixty-second, and two thirty-second commercial inserts.<sup>4</sup> Added to this is a one-minute message at the beginning and end of each period. The commercials inserted while the period is in progress are inserted when there is a stoppage of play. For reasons of expediency, the producer of HNIC is equipped with a button which has a minitransmitter in it. In the pocket of the referee or the linesman, there is a buzzer which can be activated by the HNIC producer's button. In this manner, the producer can signal the referee to delay the play long enough for a commercial to finish so the people at home can see all the action of the game. This system has been working successfully for the past three years.

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<sup>4</sup>On January 1, 1973, this format was revised. There are now three twenty-second commercial inserts, and one ten-second insert each period. The present rate to the sponsor is \$17,000.00 per minute on Saturday; \$12,000.00 on Wednesday.

As explained by Ralph Mellanby (Personal Interview, 1971), Executive Producer of HNIC for Canadian Sports Network, the cost of presenting HNIC each year is approximately fifteen million dollars. This is paid by the sponsors, so they have the right to implement as many innovations as they wish within the guidelines of their contract. The number of commercial inserts are sanctioned by the NHL in annual contracts.

Former NHL player Harris (Personal Interview, 1971) says the players notice the delay of the game. He said the spectators in the rink are aware of the delay for commercials and they object vocally, but to the players, it is an advantage. It usually gives them a few seconds rest which is very welcome, especially near the end of a game. From this, I hypothesized that high interest fans are annoyed with commercials. As far as my respondents are concerned, about sixty-six percent--a substantial number--said they were annoyed with commercials while just over thirty-four percent were not (see Table 13). The hypothesis was supported.

Table 13. Commercials and Interest in Hockey Night in Canada

Reaction	<u>Degree of Interest</u>		Total
	High	Low	
Annoyed	47 (79.7)	18 (45.0)	65 (65.7)
Not Annoyed	12 (20.3)	22 (55.0)	34 (34.3)
Total	59 (100.0)	40 (100.0)	99 (100.0)
$\chi^2 = 12.71; p. < .05$			

Table 13 also indicates that low interest in HNIC is associated with tolerance for commercial messages in the game. This implies that high interest television fans also dislike interruption in the flow of action.

### Conclusion

Hockey, like all professional sports, is a way of life for the players. Watching it is also part of the leisure habits of most Canadians. But hockey, with its television appeal, has made a significant impact on our Canadian society. So much so, that our lives are affected daily by its impact. As shown in this chapter, some of the effects are good while some are undesirable. Let me now, in summary form, review the impact of HNIC with concise conclusions.

## CHAPTER V

### HOCKEY NIGHT IN CANADA IN PERSPECTIVE

That HNIC has a decided effect on the life style and habits of a cross-section of the Canadian population is apparent to many people. But to what degree and in what areas are the effects most pronounced? This has never been studied. The fore-going has dealt with the white-collar workers in St. John's and how their degree of interest in HNIC affects aspects of their lives.

Canada's culture base is sprinkled throughout with an interest in HNIC. This interest has grown over the years, reaching back to the early days of radio when Canada, because of its climate, adopted hockey as its unofficial national game. The game itself, although born amateur, has become one of the central sports in the professional sports world. This professionalism is conveyed to the nation by means of television. Two nights each week, HNIC is watched by more people than any other telecast. This top rating has been maintained for over twelve years.

Not only has hockey become adored by many, but also its presentation by the media has unconsciously affected the lives of many Canadians. And in St. John's, Newfoundland, it has possibly had an exaggerated effect. Newfoundland, because of its insularity and remoteness from central Canada, has less of a selection when it

comes to television programming. This tends to force HNIC on the Newfoundlander, which probably affects family life more than it does in many other parts of the country. The leagues and teams in the NHL are the ultimate source of HNIC. Their control of the game has brought adjustments and expansion, which it is hoped will enhance the effect on the population.

Divergent views have been put forward concerning the impact of HNIC. Some say it is aiding the growing process of the nation. Others view it as another televised sport, in which super spectators are born and nurtured, producing a population of non-thinking, passive individuals.

My major hypothesis was, based on my knowledge of life in St. John's and the meager literature on the impact of television sport on the lives of the viewers, that the effect of HNIC on the social lives of married, male, white-collar office workers in St. John's varies directly with their degree of interest in the twice-weekly telecast. During the NHL season, from early fall to late spring, many of these men behave in ways which immensely affect their interpersonal relationships. Indeed, the white-collar workers were found to have many of the characteristics of a community. A questionnaire survey was the means by which data were gathered to test the main hypothesis. A brief history of the NHL and broadcasting in Canada was presented and linked to the white-collar population in St. John's.

Summary of the Findings

The first and most obvious finding was that Newfoundlanders studied here, like most other Canadians, preferred watching hockey on television to other sports on close to a three to one basis. Yet the majority of white-collar workers were classified as average or medium interest viewers. There were pockets of avid and low interest viewers as well. Whatever their degree of interest, seventy-five percent of viewers preferred HNIC on Saturday to Wednesday.

Attachment to HNIC is fostered by the telecast. Reduced selection for St. John's viewers aids this attachment. However, the prediction that having sons in the family of hockey playing age would result in a higher degree of interest in HNIC than their absence received only marginal support. The same was true for the prediction that a high degree of interest in HNIC generates a desire to watch it with someone else (either family or friends). Fifty-seven percent prefer to watch HNIC with friends rather than with family or alone. Generally, the desire to watch HNIC alone increases with decreasing interest in the game. But interest in HNIC was found to be inversely related to the tendency to join voluntary associations.

There is a certain amount of vicarious interaction with the players and roughly ten percent of the viewers of HNIC, most of whom are high interest fans. Further, a significant number of

respondents said they have a favorite hockey player in the NHL. Thus they tend to watch games on television when their hero is playing. The reason for so small a number with hockey heroes is related directly to expansion of the NHL and the addition of many more players.

I discovered that even though lotteries on televised NHL games were prevalent, comparatively few people spend large amounts of time at the white-collar office discussing them and HNIC. The largest number of respondents spend a negligible amount of time at the office talking about this topic (approximately forty-nine percent).

The attraction of violence in hockey was unquestionably the most significant finding in the investigation. My data indicated a strong attraction for fights and arguments in HNIC as being an integral part of the game. To remove them from the NHL would detract from the overall enjoyment of viewing. To counteract the adverse effects this may have on children, I suggest a professional attitude toward the display of the confrontations--especially by HNIC. The desire for its continuation is evident. Seventy-two percent of the respondents said they enjoyed fights and arguments on HNIC. Approximately twenty-eight percent said they tolerated or objected to it. The desire for retention of violence as part of the game increased with the increased interest for HNIC.



There were several items in the survey concerning harmony in the home or office. One dealt with the attraction of HNIC for the wife of the white-collar worker. A relatively small percentage of wives, according to their husbands, are regular viewers of HNIC. Yet, even though a rather large segment were placed in the category of uninterested, they occasionally aided the enjoyment of the husband. This sometimes meant turning HNIC viewing into a social evening through the husband's desire to be with friends while watching the game.

Having more than one television set in the home, in which there is a dissident wife, may be the way to maintain home harmony. But, my data conform to no meaningful pattern here. Of the husbands who indicated there was frequent or occasional conflict at home on hockey television nights (thirty-eight percent), the only cases of frequent conflict were found in homes with one set.

Overall, the results of this study show that a high degree of interest in HNIC is associated with low organizational membership, considerable time devoted to its discussion at work, dislike of commercials on the program, and tendencies to cancel other engagements when the playoffs are being shown. More controlled research with larger samples would probably also demonstrate that a high level of interest is linked to a taste for violence in television hockey and to having sons of hockey playing age.

Having dealt with the factors behind the cause and effect of HNIC, one must realize that interest, and hence the effects of HNIC, appear to be fading. As mentioned earlier in this work, the perennial first place rating of HNIC across Canada has slipped down the interest scale of viewers in the past year. Why?

#### The Future of Hockey Night in Canada

One of the major factors behind this decline is the immediate effects of the highly publicised Canadian-Russian exhibition hockey series played in the fall of 1972. It was brought about following years of speculation in which Russian hockey teams were hypothetically pitted against the Canadian professionals in the minds of world hockey fans. The Canadians were renowned for their professional leagues and their supply of professional players to the United States. At the same time, the Russians were renowned for their domination of world amateur hockey, having taken that position from the Canadian amateurs several years ago. Through many legal barriers and political manipulations, the series between the Russian amateur champions and the Canadian professional champions was played. The result, even though the Canadians won the eight-game series four to three with one tie, left the world wondering if the Canadian pros were any better after all. Not only did the series raise the doubts of the viewers, but also it apparently attracted the highest percentage of viewers ever recorded for a sporting event.

Only a few short weeks after this historic series, at the start of the regular NHL seventy-eight game season, the addition of two more teams to the sixteen team league, according to my data, disappointed the spectators of television hockey. It was as if the Stanley Cup was terminated, and an anti-climatic shroud covered the fans. So, it has taken a long period to acquaint the fan with the expanded NHL league. Some speculate it will never be the same. In the meantime, another series with the Russians is planned for the fall of 1973.

Another factor relating to the dwindling interest in HNIC is the formation of a second major professional hockey league in Canada and the United States: the World Hockey Association. The league began operations in the fall of 1972, and its formation lured many top-rated NHL players. This has resulted in an influx of new talent to the NHL thus further alienating some of its staunch followers. It is especially disconcerting to the television viewer to see his hockey heroes opt for the new league.

The overall effect of these two major developments--the Canada-Russia series and the formation of the World Hockey Association--has been to force the NHL to compete for attention.

The NHL has now become highly promotion conscious. It is cashing in on its former high esteem. Games and equipment that bear the NHL seal appear to be increasing in content and variety.

Now when a player in an advertisement or television commercial wears the sweater of his team, the club gets a percentage of the profit. It all points to one thing--the NHL is worried about the impact the competitive league can have on them and hockey followers across Canada. So television, more than ever, is being modified to please the fan.

Hockey Night in Canada plays a large role in this effort. Hockey Night in Canada, as we approach the end of another season, appears to be regaining its lost viewing audience. Notwithstanding outside forces, HNIC still remains the greatest influence on the lives of Canadian hockey fans.

#### Further Research

A study such as this raises more questions than it answers:

What will be the long term effect of the confrontations with the Russians on the hockey television viewer?

Will home life change as a result of the diversity of teams and leagues?

Are there too many television attractions becoming available to our youth as a result of a more mobile society?

What might the impact of HNIC be if expanded to three,

maybe four, nights a week?

Will our habits at home and at the office remain as described here in relation to the viewing of HNIC?

There are many possibilities. Like all studies of mass media, the results become tenuous even at their writing because of rapid technical and social changes. One force that is bound to affect the impact of television is the professionalism of our era; it is almost impossible to find an amateur any more. Huizinga (1964:206) sums it up well. "Civilization today is no longer played, and even where it still seems to play, it is false play . . . so that it becomes increasingly difficult to tell where play ends and non-play begins."

## APPENDIX I

Hockey Night in Canada Study Questionnaire

The following questionnaire is designed to gather information relating to the effects of viewing hockey on television by office workers in St. John's. The information will be used by a Memorial University student in a Master's thesis. All answers will be held in the strictest confidence and will be destroyed once the results are analyzed.

If your viewing habits regarding Hockey Night in Canada have changed considerably because of the recent Canada-Russia exhibition series, or by the formation of the W.H.A., please remember the information to be used from this questionnaire relates solely to the years prior to this current season.

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1. Into what classification would you place yourself: (check one)

- (a) Avid TV sports fan ( )  
 (b) Occasional TV sports fan ( )  
 (c) Non TV sports fan ( )

(If answer is (c), please omit questions 2 - 29.)

2. What is your favourite television sport? \_\_\_\_\_

3. If you watch hockey on television, which night do you prefer:

Wednesday or Saturday? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Last season, there were 67 NHL games seen in St. John's on TV including playoffs. The season before there were 69. As close as you can estimate, how many games per season did you watch. (check one)

- 53 - 65 (or over) ( )  
 40 - 52 ( )  
 27 - 39 ( )  
 14 - 26 ( )  
 0 - 13 ( )

5. How many teams are there in each division of the NHL, including the two additions during the spring meetings in 1972:

Eastern Division \_\_\_\_\_  
 Western Division \_\_\_\_\_

6. Does your interest in hockey on television depend on who is scheduled to play in the televised game? (check one)
- (a) does not matter at all ( )
  - (b) interest decreases if expansion club involved ( )
  - (c) interest increases if two of the original 6 NHL clubs are playing ( )
7. Do you know there is an NHL game broadcast on radio every Sunday night? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you listen to the Sunday night games of the NHL on radio:
- (a) Frequently ( )
  - (b) Occasionally ( )
  - (c) Seldom ( )
  - (d) Never ( )
9. Under what conditions do you most enjoy watching hockey on television?
- (a) Alone ( )
  - (b) With family ( )
  - (c) With friends ( )
10. Do you like to discuss the game while watching it? \_\_\_\_\_
11. How does your wife react to your staying home to watch Hockey Night in Canada?
- |                                    | <u>WEDNESDAY</u> | <u>SATURDAY</u> |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| (a) She dislikes it.               | ( )              | ( )             |
| (b) She tolerates it.              | ( )              | ( )             |
| (c) She follows her own interests. | ( )              | ( )             |
| (d) She enjoys it.                 | ( )              | ( )             |
12. Do you drink alcoholic beverages while watching Hockey Night in Canada?
- (a) Regularly ( )
  - (b) Occasionally ( )
  - (c) Seldom ( )
  - (d) Never ( )
13. If (a) or (b) in question 12, what do you like to drink while watching TV hockey?
- (a) Beer ( )
  - (b) Hard liquor ( )
  - (c) Other ( )

14. Do you enjoy seeing rough play or fights in televised hockey games?

- (a) enjoy them as part of the entertainment game ( )
- (b) tolerate them ( )
- (c) object to them--they should be banned ( )

15. Who were the five sponsors of Hockey Night in Canada last season?

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you have a favourite NHL hockey player?

Yes ( ) No ( )

If "No", omit questions 17 and 18.

17. If "Yes", who? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Do you make a special effort to watch the game if he is playing that night?

Yes ( ) No ( )

19. Does your interest in TV hockey increase during playoff time?

Yes ( ) No ( )

20. Would you cancel other engagements to watch TV hockey during playoff time?

Yes ( ) No ( )

21. What has the expansion of the NHL done for your viewing habits of Hockey Night in Canada?

- (a) increased your interest ( )
- (b) decreased your interest ( )
- (c) had no effect on your interest ( )

22. While watching hockey on TV, do you picture yourself on the ice?

Yes ( ) No ( )



23. Do you watch Hockey Night in Canada on a black and white TV, or colour TV set?

Black and White ( )                      Colour ( )

24. Do you feel NHL players occasionally put on an act knowing they are on TV?

Yes ( ) No ( )

25. Do commercials on Hockey Night in Canada annoy you?

(a) Yes ( )  
(b) No ( )  
(c) Sometimes ( )

26. Does a particular announcer "turn you off" to viewing hockey?

Yes ( ) No ( )

27. Who is your favourite NHL team? \_\_\_\_\_

28. How many years have you watched Hockey Night in Canada? \_\_\_\_\_

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29. How many television sets in your home? \_\_\_\_\_

30. Where is it/are they located? \_\_\_\_\_

31. Is your wife a follower of television hockey?

(a) Regularly ( )  
(b) Occasionally ( )  
(c) Seldom ( )  
(d) Never ( ) If "Never", omit question 32.

32. How much does your wife enjoy Hockey Night in Canada?

(a) Very much ( )  
(b) Moderately ( )  
(c) Very little ( )

33. Are you a member of any social group, i.e. Kinsmen, Lions?

Yes ( )      Active ( )  
                    Inactive ( )  
No ( )

34. Would you join such a social group if there were no NHL games on television?

- (a) Yes ( )  
 (b) No ( )  
 (c) It has no bearing. ( )

35. How many hours per week do you think you spend talking about television hockey at work?

\_\_\_\_\_

36. On Wednesday or Saturday evening, do you watch television throughout the night regardless of what is being shown?

Yes ( ) No ( )

37. How many boys in your family? \_\_\_\_\_ Ages \_\_\_\_\_

38. How many of your boys play hockey in an organized league? \_\_\_\_\_

39. Do you ever buy tickets at work on the times of NHL goals?

- (a) Never ( )  
 (b) Sometimes ( )  
 (c) Regularly ( )

40. How many times have you won in the past two years? \_\_\_\_\_

41. What are your five favourite television programmes? (List in order of preference.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

42. Is there conflict over programme selection in your home when hockey comes on television?

- (a) Rarely or never ( )  
 (b) Sometimes ( )  
 (c) Frequently ( )

APPENDIX II

LETTER READ TO BANQUET IN OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA  
BY LORD KILCOURSIE, AIDE TO LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON  
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA, MARCH 18, 1892

March 18th, 1892

I have for some time been thinking it would be a good thing if there were a challenge cup which should be held from year to year by the champion hockey team in the Dominion.

There does not appear to be any such outward and visible sign of championship at present, and considering the general interest which the matches now elicit, and the importance of having the game played fairly and under rules generally recognized, I am willing to give a cup which shall be held from year to year by the winning team.

I am not quite certain that the present regulations governing the arrangement of matches give entire satisfaction, and it would be worth considering whether they could not be arranged so that each team would play once at home and once at the place their opponents hail from.

Lord Stanley of Preston  
Governor-General of Canada

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