EXAMINING THE SPORTS WATCHING CULTURE OF EXPATRIATES LIVING
IN
TAIWAN

By
Ayaka Sung
Stockholm University
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Abstract

This study looks at the functions of watching sports for an expatriate living in Taipei, Taiwan - specifically rugby fans because during the time of study Super Rugby was taking place. With the emergence of online streaming, watching live sports games that take place in other parts of the world, is made possible and more convenient. Previous studies came up with different theories as to why people watched sports and this paper researched whether those theories applies to the expatriate community or if there is a unique difference. In order to find data, field observations were done at both public and private settings. There are two sports pubs in Taipei, The Brass Monkey and On Tap, that have a large expat audience and therefore, were chosen for public field observations. The private field observations were made at the home of a rugby fan who watched games on a weekly basis with three other participants. This study looked at what social behaviors (such as high-fiving each other) and interactions took place while watching sports in the bars and private home. Prior to the field observations were interviews done on the group of sports fans to direct what to look for in field observations. The paper classifies motivations for watching sports as an expat, using Gantz’s 1981 study with additional motivations that was more appropriate for recent studies. Results found that while there were similarities with previous theories on how watching sports with others enhance some behaviors, the notion of patriotism was not exemplified as other studies may imply. Discussions focuses on how sport watching is not just about the act of supporting specific teams, but instead building a social community. Lastly, after completing the field observations and interviews, suggestions for future studies is discussed.
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1. Introduction

“The word “fan” induces associations in popular culture and an intense involvement in which musicians, actors, players and teams are admired and often imbued with symbolic meanings and imagined personal relationships. Nevertheless, hegemonic European football fan moralities suggest that most fans would be insulted if you compared them with fans of, say, Lady Gaga, Johnny Depp or individual sports stars such as Roger Federer. Claims to identity among football fans are often charged with moral imperatives about “true”, “life-long”, “real” and “genuine” support. Football fans like to see themselves as active participants in the drama of elite-level performances” (Hognestad, 2012:25)

Our society today has integrated mediated sports to become a part of everyday life—with sport talk radio, sport magazines, and televised matches. Today, sports can be watched in any location with the help of the internet as well. In fact, online and mobile applications are quickly becoming a popular method for consistent and efficient updates on sports games, scores and schedules. Sports pubs also take part in cultivating the sports fan culture as they stream live games for people to gather together and collectively watch a sports game. Games can be aired from anywhere in the world and be streamed live to a television screen. The immediate connection sports fans share is one that is quite incomparable to any other spectator event. Sports attracts people simply because “the unpredictable and inherently conflict-oriented nature of sports contests provides television with immediate, unscripted dramatic events—content that is perfectly suited to the medium and to broadcasting’s commercial interests” (Sullivan, 2006:131). Watching team sports through media outlets differ from other spectator shows such as The Voice, or Eurovision, because results rely solely on the players. Outside influences, such as fan votes, cannot alter the result of the match or contest. The ultimate score of the game is set at the end of a given timeframe and the outcome is immediate. Given that the success of any material broadcasted is dependent on high viewership, sports games—especially those that occur annually—achieve a spectatorship throughout the different mediums that other genres cannot compete with.

Sports and media has vastly become a popular subject to study as it provides various
perspectives of the sports and fan culture with scholars such as Earnheardt, Haridakis, and Hugenberg 2012, Gantz and Wenner 1991, Raney and Bryant 2006, to name a few. For instance, Gantz and Wenner’s 1991 study focuses primarily on motivations for watching sports—however, due to the year in which the study was published, it has become rather outdated. Therefore, this study will take those motivations and revise them so that they are more relatable to the current ‘sports fan’ demographic by including elements of the internet and online streaming.

Different motivations derive from the activity of watching sports and it is intriguing to relate it to fans living in Taipei, Taiwan—more specifically, foreigners living in Taipei. The reason behind studying expatriates living in Taiwan was because the majority of the patrons who follow sports on a regular basis in sports pubs in Taipei were foreigners. Basing the study on locals would not provide efficient findings because the chosen sports pubs lacked constant viewership from the local Taiwanese patrons. Additional research was done on the relationship between fans and the settings in which sports viewership takes place and why certain individuals watch sports games. By studying their patterns and social behaviors, we are able to see what makes the sport watching culture unique to these expats living in Taipei.

1.2 Background

Sports can be defined as any activity that requires physical exertion with the assumption that the activity is institutionalized—meaning “rules are clearly established and enforced by some governing body” (Delaney & Madigan, 2009:6). However, there is also a clear distinction between those who participate in the physical aspect of sports and also watching sports. While there are a large number of those who actually engage in sports, it is nothing compared “to the extent in which they watch, talk, or read about it” (Rowe, 2004:4). The difference between sports conducting yourself, and sports you watch, is that being a sports fan does not mean you necessarily have to play a specific sport, but can still be engaged by watching. Going back to the Ancient Greeks for example, sports has progressed to become a representation of something far beyond just a leisure activity. In fact, it “reflects the higher valuation of the indi-
vidual and his merits and the widespread custom of making the games into a medium of power for the sponsors” (Scanlon, 2006 p. 18). Today, broadcasted sports games not only serve to celebrate the players, coaches and those involved in the physical attributes of sports, but also the sponsors for the games are constantly advertised.

With the prevalence of technology within mass communication, it is inevitable for something as popular as sports, to be unaffected. That is to say, sports media is relevant not only to individuals, but also to companies, as sports generates a great economy. Since sports games are usually connected with broadcast television—“where programs are watched at the time they are transmitted, in the home on a television set” and can be received over a large geographical area (Bignell 2013 p.13)—the enormous fan base of televised sports games involved is nothing out of the ordinary. Since its beginning in 1967, television audiences for televised sports have continued to increase tremendously. For example, the FIFA (Federation International de Football Association) World Cup in 2002 generated one and a half billion viewers in 18 different countries (Mullin, Hardy, Sutton, 2007:4).

Fans who share an interest in sports games gather in sites such as bars and stadiums to create a sense of belonging. According to Mullin, Hardy and Sutton (2007), sports are special because it creates a dependence of social facilitation, stating that whether the individual is a player or a fan, the function of sports is to interact with other people—less than 2% attend sports events go alone (p. 18). A large part of this ‘imagined community’ is built upon the notion of national identity as well as through international sports (Raney & Bryant, 2006). Similarly, Michael Billig’s Banal Nationalism, emphasizes the notion that national identity is “to be found in the embodied habits of social life” and that citizens partake in the notion of ‘flagging’ or a reminding of their nationhood (Billig, 1995:30). Sports fans often root for their nation because the separation of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ (other nations) become a sign of patriotism. Billig further points out that people (especially men), look into sports media to share “in defeats and victories, feeling at home in the world of waved flags” (Billig, 1995:122). Because nationalism and the practice of ‘flagging’ becomes so ingrained
in conventional life, rooting for your home nation somewhat becomes a necessity in the world of sports. However, because this study focuses on expats living in Taiwan, banal nationalism is not a concept that they necessarily follow because they make a conscious effort in “wave-flagging” because they are overseas. This paper hopes to gain insight of what role sports plays in a person’s life living abroad by studying their motivations for watching.

1.2 Problem Discussion and Purpose of Study

Numerous studies have been done on the relationship of sports and the media, as the two are quite interchangeable. One research, for example, done by Aden and Titsworth (2010) found that sport teams are often selected by fans based on emotional affection to a particular place. ‘Place attachment’ suggests that sports fans feel such dedication to their sports teams of a preferred environment that it can be considered as a factor of symbolic and cultural attachment (Aden & Titsworth, 2012 p. 19). Additionally, sports watching have become part of a culture, one in which has several motivational factors. Co-viewing sports has become a major motivation for watching games because rooting for the same team enhances and intensifies the sports viewing experience (Earnheardt, Haridakis & Hugenberg, 2012 pg. 72). In the following chapter, place attachment, as well as other motivations for watching sports will be discussed in detail. Also, because a large part of sports in the media revolves around the controversy of gender—initiating a masculine quality—the study will look at whether past studies of ‘maleness’ in sports is still prevalent today.

Every nation has its own practice for sports watching and it could be interesting to study them individually as many aspects come to play within cultures. For the purpose of the study, Taiwan has been selected as the country of focus because sports watching is quite a popular activity to participate in, especially for the expat community. The aim of this study is to find a deeper understanding in the social conducts and behaviors of sports watching among foreigners in Taipei, Taiwan and how sport watching may have more purpose than just watching sports itself. The sport of rugby was selected to examine based on two reasons: (1) during the time of the study, there
was a rugby tournament going on (2) the sports pubs chosen mostly aired and advertised the rugby games.

Moreover, this study focuses on two locations in which sports watching on television takes place: public spaces and private spaces. In Taipei, most sports watching takes place in public settings, which are sports pubs. In private settings, the living room was where sports watching took place most often. Sports pubs, especially those that specialize in particular sports (for example rugby) has “provided opportunities for a far more public and community-based kind of long-distance support, as fans turn up supporting their teams, with or without club colours, creating a collective, social basis for support” (Hognestad, 2012: 39). This paper will examine how and in which ways watching sports is different in private and public settings.

1.3 Research Question

The following research questions are investigated to achieve the purpose of the study, which is to understand the sports watching culture among foreigners in Taipei — specifically in private homes and pubs. This paper aims to answer:

What social patterns and behaviors characterize the culture of watching rugby games from home or in sports pubs for foreigners living in Taipei?

Social patterns and behaviors during matches are important to analyze because those elements preview why a certain culture acts or does things the way that they do. We can see how social interaction with others are impacted by watching sports and how they may be different from when they aren’t watching sports games. By studying a group of sports fans, we can come up with similar social patterns they might share that create a “sports fan culture”. Additionally, this study is interested in looking at if sports fans watch sports for particular reasons such as relieving boredom, to socialize, to learn, etc. and why they might choose to participate in televised sports watching. Therefore, additional research questions were formed.
Why do rugby fans in Taipei watch televised games in private homes/sports pubs? What are the motivations for foreigners living in Taipei have for watching rugby games?

Ultimately, we want to ask the bigger question: As a foreigner living in Taipei, what role does watching sports on television play?

These research questions investigate rugby fans in Taipei on how and why they utilize different media outlets (such as the television) as a mode of watching games. The questions aid the research in finding out whether watching in private homes or sports pubs change the perspectives of sports to a foreign rugby fan living in Taipei. Motivations for watching a game can be determined through interviews because we can see what these sports fans expect in their environment.

1.4 Methodology

The following paragraph will briefly discuss the methods used for this study. A detailed description will be discussed in the Methodology section on page 20. By using an ethnographic approach of combining fieldwork and interviews, types of social patterns that emerge while watching rugby games in Taipei private homes or sports pubs will be recorded. The motivations behind using ethnography stems from the interactions that occur during a sports match—it is vital to study the behavior of sports fans because it is precisely the act of watching a sports game on television that constructs a ‘sports fan’ culture. In order to capture social behaviors and patterns in a pub, one must observe sports fans during a sports match to see if commonalities arise between them. Certain gestures or mannerisms that they exude frequently while watching a game can be addressed to see if they all share something unique to their sports watching culture. Although foreign sports fans living in Taipei are also known to follow other sports, such as baseball and basketball, rugby was chosen due to the timeframe of research and it was most popularly televised among the two sports pubs. Super Rugby games take place starting from February 26th 2016 continuing until August 2016 with the teams playing in a round robin format. The teams are separated into
four different conferences: Africa 1, Africa 2, Australia, and New Zealand. A final series will follow with the top teams of each tier.

There are three parts to this study: field observations in private settings, field studies in public settings, and lastly, interviews with a natural group regarding watching sports in a public domain vs a private domain. A group of middle class men in their late twenties to mid-thirties, as well as one female in her mid-twenties, were chosen for this study because they partake in watching rugby games on a weekly basis. They are all foreigners who live in Taiwan and their respective nationalities are: the male participants are from New Zealand and Australia. The female participate is from the United Kingdom. Comparing private settings to public settings, the field observations done in sports pubs were additionally studied in order to observe similarities between sports watching in public and private spaces.

**Field Studies Locations**

The pubs studied in this paper were “The Brass Monkey” and “On Tap”. Both are sports pubs that regularly airs rugby matches whenever games are being played. The field observations done in the public settings with the general public and the studied individuals were done in a sports pub that aired 2016 Super Rugby Championships. The Brass Monkey and On Tap were chosen because it was known to host live games and many foreigners living in Taipei frequent the bar. Prior to the study, live rugby games that aired in Taipei were researched, and the only two sports pubs that televised the games were the two mentioned sports pubs. Both the sports pubs are owned by expatriates, and the pub serves western food and drinks as well as having English speaking bartenders and waitresses/waiters.

The private field observations were taken from one particular rugby fan’s private home. The group members being studied watched games at the home of one of their homes, in four different instances. Each field study was done in the living room of this person’s home.
Materials Used and Interviews

The materials used during field observations (both in the private homes and public bars) were a notebook and pen so that relevant notes could be jotted down during the field observations.

Additionally, findings from previous research will initiate what to look for when conducting this study. Sports have been a big part of all nations throughout history, and Taiwan is not any different. Interviews will be semi-structured so that there will be prepared questions prior to going into the interview. To get a deeper insight on how and which ways watching sports differs within the private and public spaces, interviews were first conducted to the rugby fans to set observation categories. Knowing that they watch sports on a regular basis shows that they are in fact ‘fans’ whereas interviewing individuals at a bar could be quite problematic as they may not follow games enough to be considered a ‘fan’. As this study examines foreigners living in Taiwan, it is quite difficult to accurately differentiate the foreigners from the locals other than by physical attributes and languages spoken.

Individual interviews were piloted to the natural group rather than a group interview so that each individual could potentially bring new information. The first interviewee was chosen based on a social relationship—through personal contact. They were phoned and asked for permission to be studied and interviewed. In the interviews, these fans will be able to elaborate on the questions and express their attitudes and beliefs openly based on their own experience as a sports fan. The results of the interview and on-site observations will be analyzed and findings will be compared to the previous literature to see whether or not there are differences and similarities as well as new information that can be used to gain better understanding of the sports watching culture in two separate settings: public sports bars and private homes, both located in Taipei, Taiwan.
1.5 Structure of Study

Firstly, the paper will include theoretical framework done on the subject of sports and the media separated into four major categories: Televised Sports, Audience Effects of Mediated Sports, Motivations and Attitudes for Watching Sports, and Homosociality and Sports. Then, the methodology of this study will be defined as well as an analysis of results. Following, this paper will close with concluding remarks of this project.

II. Frame of Reference

2.1 Televised Sports and their Audience

There are several different media outlets that make up the conception of mediated sports: radio, magazines, and television, to name a few. However, this study focuses exclusively on televised sports—meaning broadcasted sports games that are shown on the television screen, which can include live event coverage or game reruns. The appeal of televised sports games allows for the audience to view and be part of a sports match without actually being present at the event. Additionally, watching sports matches on television also includes commentators that can help viewers stay on track and understand what is going on during the game. In fact, televised sports became an “expression of the commercialization of sport in its entertainment style, its emphasis on goals and spectacles and its construction of performers as celebrities. Sport and its audience are sold as commodities to advertisers—the high price of advertising slots during major sports events is based on the capacity of sport to reach millions of potential customers for any number of products” (Kennedy & Hills, 2009:4). Take the United States for example, broadcasting sports on the television and owning sporting rights has become a competition as revenue for particular sports is extremely high. For example, examining the sport of American football alone, since 1988, the National Football League (NFL) has generated over 17 billion dollars among four network broadcasters: ABC, CBS, Fox and ESPN (Burrito, 2006:101). Not only do these channels have ownership rights to NFL, but have become the major broadcasting
networks for most sports. Each of the four major cable channels relies heavily on sports broadcasting to occupy their schedules. In fact, sports leagues (such as the National Basketball Association in the U.S.) sign with particular channels to give networks ownership to the sporting rights in order to share revenue. These relationships teams have with network channels also build dependability of the audience because particular fans know that particular channels work with their preferred sports teams.

2.1.2 Audience Effects of Mediated Sports

Fans are considered producers as well as consumers in the world of sports. According to Crawford (2004), live sport venues are made possible by sports fans and “it is also the consumers of cultural products, such as sporting events, who help give these their meaning and social importance, through their conversations, patterns of consumption and social interaction” (3). Because sports are such a big part of every society, it is especially important to study the fans as they are the sole reason for the sports culture to flourish. However, what characteristics does a fan entail? One of the most significant differences between a fan and a typical consumer is that fans are knowledgeable of the product at hand as well as fully devoted to the product at hand—being a loyal and devoted consumer (Hills, 2002:11). For example, a devoted sports fan will know the rules, players, and statistics to their respected teams.

Mullins et.al (2007) had discussed in their academic work, the exceptionality of sports and how it holds a strong personal and emotional identification meaning that fans feel a sense of ‘us’, ‘we’, and ‘our’ when their favorites win (also known as the theory of Basking in Reflected Glory”) (18). To further reiterate, this theory, referred to by Hirt and Clarkson (2011) as its acronym: BIRGing, is “often exemplified in fans who feel intense pride in the accomplishments of their favorite sports team” (70). Regardless of what sport is played or followed, fans view their teams as a part of their identity. Fan identification is defined as “the personal commitment and emotional involvement customers have with a sport organization” (Milne & McDonald, 1999:16). Often, before fan identification is cultivated, place-attachment becomes a stimulus for sports
selection. As previously mentioned in the background chapter, place-attachment is the connectedness an individual has with a specific place (Altman & Low, 1992). Therefore, fan identification and place attachment go hand-in-hand—where emotional involvement helps create a sports fan’s identity through a specific place a sports team represents.

Similarly, the uses and gratifications theory can be put into perspective with the effects of mediated sports as well. In short, this theory “proceeds from the needs of users and the probable gratifications that they derive from media use” (Fourie, 2007 p. 297). For example, when someone watches sports on television because they think it is fun to do so, the uses and gratification theory would claim that the gratification of mediated sports for that individual was entertainment. Whatever gratification that comes with watching sports on television, audience involvement varies due to their motivations and the effects of mediated sports. For example, watching live football and hockey on television may bring other fulfillments such as feeling present at an event that takes place from a distance. Additionally, sports fans may find that they use the media to connect with other sports fans to create a sense of community. Many people may find that using the media for sport purposes is more rewarding than watching at the actual stadium. This is because “live sites also provide extended participatory and spectatorial options for those who are interested in the event but may lack the material means to purchase tickets, and might actually prefer to watch it outside the stadium, and, especially, for those—the majority of sport followers around the globe—who have no prospect of ‘being there’ live at the event” (Rowe & Baker, 2012: 301). Media and sport are so intertwined especially when it comes to broadcasting live game—it becomes larger than just sports. Rowe and Baker (2012) adds:

The importance of these virtual public spaces is that they establish the terrain for new sources of the self, and conceptions of social life more generally, through the process of reflexivity that accompanies a range of constantly developing and mutating media technologies” (306).
By using media to watch preferred sports events, users get much more than just watching a rugby game, it becomes part of who they are as a fan and they learn to adjust to the ever changing media world.

2.2 Motivations for Mediated Sports on Television

Like all types of media, mediated sports requires audiences to be motivated in order to for actual consumption. “‘Motivation’ is a concept that includes both cognitive and affective processes through which people establish, by drawing simultaneously on the other dimensions of reception, whether a given media message is worth their while” (Schrøder, 200 p. 17).

The television has undeniably been a mode of entertainment especially with sports programming. In Gantz’s (1981) study, four dimensions of motivations for watching sports emerged. Gantz’s study focuses primarily on the U.S. sports fans, and requires revision for the purpose of this study. His initial four dimensions will first be discussed, then a revised version will be later introduced. The Four levels are illustrated as follows:

   1) To Thrill in Victory
   2) To Let Loose
   3) To Learn
   4) To Pass Time

Sports fans have different motives and outcomes that develop through the act of watching sports and it is important to investigate what the sports fans gain from the experience. These four levels were among the most significant in Gantz’s study. In the following paragraph, each dimension is defined in detail.
2.2.1 Gantz’s Four Levels of Motivation

The first dimension is to *thrill in victory*. Gantz (1981) suggests that it has the most motivational importance when exploring TV sports viewing. In fact, there are three motivations that exist within this group: “I feel good when my team or player wins,” “to see who wins”, and “I enjoy rooting for a player or team” (268). Once again, this dimension overlaps with the emotional attachment a fan may have with a team—the theory of Basking in Reflected Glory in fan identification (Gantz, 1981: 268).

Second is *To Let Loose*, where the actual environment sports viewing takes place affects the sports fan. Often, places where sports are concerned allows for behavior that lets off steam—where drinking alcoholic beverages and building up excitement become standard among fans. Gantz found that this group was not as clear cut as the first group when it came to the motivations. To Let Loose seemed to be linked together with several factors: “it gives me an opportunity to have a few beers or drinks”, “to let off steam,” and “it gets me psyched” (Gantz, 1981: 268).

Thirdly was *To Learn*, where fans wanted to learn more about the sport and players. Other sports fans and sports announcers provided extra information that benefits in teaching new things (Gantz, 1981: 269).

Lastly was *To Pass Time*, where Gantz indicates “televised sports is at some times for some people a last resort when no other activity seems worthy of pursing” (1981 p. 270). Within the four dimensions, Gantz’s study showed most generally, those who watched sports on the television watched it *to thrill in victory* (Gantz, 1981 p. 270).

2.2.2 Levels of Fan Identification

Like Gantz’s study, the subsequent levels of identifications discussed in Milner and McDonald’s 1991 study also needs revision for this study, which will be presented in 2.2.2 Levels of Fan Identification in Mediated Sports. While there will be some simi-
larities, the changes done were so that it was applicable to the study. There are several levels of fan identification and each level is defined with certain characteristics and purposes. Milner & McDonald (1999) illustrates that fan identification can be divided into three palpable levels:

1) Low identification (social fans)

2) Medium identification (focused fans)

3) High identification (vested fans)

Milner & McDonald states that with Low Identification (Social Fans) are attracted to the entertainment factor of sports and have low emotional and financial commitment to teams. Rather than be emotionally invested to particular sports, social fans view sporting events for pleasure and relieving stress. Their loyalty to teams is quite superficial in the sense that they seek the enjoyment of the social interaction that follows with attending sports events. However, that is not to say that the level of identification cannot be modified as this level could “represent the introductory phase of a relationship that could grow and lead to a high level of involvement, including meeting players, attending a team function such as a team preview or draft party, or purchasing a season ticket plan” (Milner & Mcdonald:16).

In Medium Identification (Focused Fans), Milner & McDonald defines this level to “have an association with a sport or team based upon some attributes or elements found to be attractive” (16). This group particularly exemplifies the BIRGing theory where achievement and performance of the team influences their attraction to a team. Therefore, although this group of fans may seem personally invested in their team, there is a possibility that their loyalty is only momentary. To Focused Fans, their allegiance rests on the popularity and statistics of a team and “factors such as poor team performance and having a player traded could end the relationship” (Milner & McDonald:17).

Lastly, the High Identification (Vested Fans) has “the strongest, most loyal, and long-
est-term relationships a fan can have with a sport or team” (17). Unlike the Medium Identification, regardless of winning every game, fans alike are die-hard fans and their devotion remains unchanged independent to fads. They especially feel emotionally connected to a team and often refer to the team as a “we”, and the team becomes a part of their identity. Additionally, “while they will be attracted to the sport itself, their loyalty to their team, just like their loyalty to their community, is unwavering and long term”. Take for example, the term “I Bleed (Team Color 1) and (Team Color 2)”. Fans are so devoted to their teams that they feel as though the team colors are a part of who they are—indicating that even their blood signifies their loyalty to the team.

2.2.3 National Identification and Belonging

Consequently, regardless of the different level of fan identification, sport teams in one way or another, represent cultural beliefs and identities that allow fans to be a part of an exclusive community. National identity encourages the concept of separation, which sports media has so readily accentuated when broadcasting games two opposing national teams and can be “understood as a signifier of that nation’s identity. Certain sports become more associated with national identity than others” (Kennedy & Hills, 2009:5). When referring to sports, nations are frequently separated due to skill of certain sports. The expats living in Taipei are still closely tied with their home countries and even though their geographical location has changed, their national identity is still present while watching sports. Harris’s (2012) study indicates that the notion of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ that is constructed and represented by the media narratives as it “provides a pertinent arena for the further investigations highlighting the interplay of a range of identities” (46). Boyle and Haynes (2009) suggests that sports discourse constitutes and reinforces cultural identity as well as national identity as it performs as markers of individual and collective identity formations (152). National markers are exposed in several ways during international games such as flags, uniforms, team colors, and so forth. The sports arena is full of indicators that distinctly separate teams—fans will wave flags of their country and wear colors that coincide with the team’s uniform. Identity formations are a crucial aspect of studying the sports watching cul-
ture because there could be a link between certain behaviors and patterns practiced with how sports fans identify themselves. As different cultural and national characteristics acts as a basis for team selection and fan identification, there are several factors that motivate sports fans to watch the actual games.

2.3 Masculinity in Mediated Sports

Society has constructed images of sports to be a fundamental symbol of male hegemony where “sport is also historically a largely masculine domain, as are the pages which the British press devote to it” (Billig, 1995:119). The most noticeable gender differences are “the way that men’s sport dominates and women’s sports are sidelined”, which is a result of the gendering role in which mediated sports contributes to collective and personal identity formation (Kennedy & Hills, 2009 p. 4). The reason may be because of the message sports portrays—power and strength, common traits that embody masculinity among a range of cultures, “are celebrated in the media coverage of sport and operate to reaffirm the myths of male prowess” (Boyle & Haynes, 2009, p. 136). Through sports such as rugby, the aggression conveyed by athletes reiterates cultural stereotypes of maleness and contribute to the belief that being male necessitates strength. In fact, televised sports “can be seen to create a hierarchy of masculinity with forceful, powerful and competitive image of the male as the pinnacle of contemporary manhood” (Feasey, 2008, p. 99). Furthermore, in Deirdre Hynes’ *Jaysus is Janno a Bird?*, discussed masculinity in sports and why females found it difficult to participate in the throughout history.

“Sport has always been a domain where hyper-masculinity is encouraged and celebrated; a domain where muscle, strength, aggression and skill are dominant attributes. Female exclusion, oppression and domination focused on protecting women from physical exertion, injury, violence and vulgarity at the grounds essentially re-emphases the masculine domination of the game where women are made to fit into its constructs as defined by men” (Hynes, 2012: 202).
Masculinity is so deeply rooted in sports, even spectators are affected. In Gantz’s (1991) study, he examined gender and audience experiences with televised sports, finding that men were actively participated with the games. In contrast, women watched sports as a last resort (p. 240). Venues for watching sports, such as sports bars, also play into constructing a masculine environment— male fans are more often found at these places as “masculine performity of fans and the violence that sometimes erupts at these locations can again render women’s role within these as marginal (Boyle & Haynes, 2009 p. 295). Places where sports are concerned reinforce the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity (such as aggression and strength) that can contribute to why women are less likely to be members of the sports watching culture.

With that said, many researchers have suggested difference between male and female sports fans. In particular, Toffoletti & Mewett (2012) found that “female fans differ as much as men appear to in their ways of enacting and performing their support for their sports. There is no fixed way in which women enjoy sports” (p. 5). However, they often ‘masculinize’ themselves in behaviors in order to conform to the male hegemony of sports.

2.4 Operationalization of Literature Review

For the purpose of this study, the previously mentioned motivations for mediated sports and levels of fan identification will be included in the proceeding interviews. Several changes have been made in order for maximum results that can potentially help understand the Taiwanese sports culture for foreigners living in Taipei. Because both studies (Gantz’s 1981 and Milner & Macdonald’s 1999 study) are out of date and U.S. based, this study came up with revised motivations and levels of fan identification with aspects of the original. To study a group of expats living in a foreign country and finding a common ground such as sports with others in the same situation, can be important as they adapt to a new environment. The following is what deemed useful to make this study most effective in finding results.
2.4.1 Dimensions of Motivation in Mediated Sports

Based on the theoretical framework done in the field of mediated sports, motivations should include more than just the four that Gantz had initially included. Additional questions regarding national identity and socializing have been considered as they are an important part of the sports watching culture. The dimensions of motivations for this study are as follows:

Socializing – individuals that watch sports for social purposes, such as bonding with friends, partners, and family members. Sports pubs are often a place for sports fans to gather together to build a sense of community. Fans that watch televised sports events for socializing may go to sports pubs to connect with other fans and to be in an environment that brings people together. Strangers may also bond during sports watching.

Entertainment – this can range anywhere from relieving boredom, passing the time and watching simply because sports is ‘fun’.

To Thrill in Victory – this dimension is unchanged from Gantz’s study, where fans watch sports in order to feel good about their team winning.

To Learn – this dimension is also the same as Gantz, where the individual wants to learn more about a particular sport or player.

For Patriotism— Sports fans watch games for national pride. They watch televised games that their nation participates in. Because the fans are from another country, they find that patriotism is enhanced through sports.

To Support— although this category may be limited, supporting particular athletes may be a reason for sports fans to watch certain sports events on television.

The six dimensions of motivation listed above will be incorporated into the inter-
views.

2.4.2 Levels of Fan Identification in Mediated Sports

Similar to Milner & Macdonald’s (1999) study, there will be three levels in which will also be divided into low, medium and high levels of fan identification.

Low Identification – includes fans that watch sports for entertainment and socializing purposes. They are not entirely invested in sports teams and are not necessarily interested in team statistics, players or news. An example of low identification fans are fans that go sports pubs with friends to drink beers and enjoy socializing. The actual televised game is second priority to the sports watching event. They can even attend these events on a weekly basis, however, their interest in the games ensue only when physically watching the sports matches.

Medium Identification – this level of fan identification includes fans that are aware of different teams and are knowledgeable of their preferred leagues. These fans may follow teams regularly and own team merchandise. The wins and losses of a team may affect fans that have a medium level of identification momentarily. Watching every single game is not necessarily a priority, however, medium level fans may watch games alone without the company of others. Additionally, if the games cannot be watched broadcasted live, these fans may watch recaps on the missed games.

High Identification – these fans are devoted fans that if given the chance, would attend every game of their chosen teams in the actual stadium. These fans follow every move made by the sports teams including player trades, coach resignations, and so forth.

Every game that their sports teams participate in is watched, live if possible. Even with time differences, these fans will stay up to watch the games. The team losses and wins affects the mood of the sports fans tremendously.
III. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Method

The previous literature in the field of study has mainly focused on three sections: Fan Identification, Motivations for Watching Sports, and the Masculinity of Sports Watching. Research questions were designed in order to fulfill the purpose of the study:

What social patterns and behaviors characterize the rugby watching culture in Taipei (Both in Private homes and Sports Pubs)?

What are the motivations and attitudes foreigners living in Taiwan have for watching rugby games?

What role do watching sports on television fill for foreigners living in Taipei?

After the formation of the literature review in the previous chapters, an ethnographic approach to studying foreign rugby fans living in Taipei deemed most appropriate because this study will help determine whether or not sports plays a significant part of their lives living abroad. The chosen research method is conducted in three separate parts: Interviews of natural group, Private homes field observation and public sports pub field observations.

3.2 Ethnography

In culture studies, ethnography is regularly used as it includes telling the story of a group of people in a local context, focusing on “the predictable, daily patterns of human thought and behavior” (Fetterman, 2010, p. 1). We are able to learn about people and their cultures by describing and discovering tools they use in order to construct social identity. A key characteristic of an ethnographic study is fieldwork—where being present in the field is essential and it is important to assimilate to the setting that will be observed and try to adapt to the local lifestyle. The tasks at hand is to “ask seemingly stupid but insightful questions, and to write down what is seen and
heard” (Fetterman, 2010 p.9). For this study, observations will be noted on nonverbal and verbal cues that transpire during a rugby game. The field observations done on rugby games will portray watching from a private venue with the chosen group of individuals in a natural setting. The public space observations will be done while watching rugby games aired in sports pubs. However, interviews will first be given to the natural group for private settings with prescribed observation categories. By analyzing theories from previous scholars, those findings perform as indicators in future research as problems from initial work can be addressed. Ethnographic research “has been concerned with producing descriptions and explanations of particular phenomena, or with developing theories, rather than with testing existing hypotheses” (Hammerseley & Atkinson, 2007 p. 21). For the purpose of the study the aim is to provide understanding of behaviors and social patterns that may occur within a sports match in Taipei and how distinctions between watching in a public setting or private setting may occur. Therefore, certain factors, such as fan identification and motivations, may influence the research and provide key findings. This study will compose of two methods in ethnography: interviews and field observations. However, it will be divided into three separate sections: Interview with a chosen group of football fans in private settings, field observations in a private setting, and lastly, field observations in public spaces such as a sports pub. The combination of methods is necessary because interviews narrow down what the researchers should be looking for while taking field notes. It can be anticipated that some observations will correspond with interview responses as well as present new findings that may not have been addressed in the interviews.

3.2.1 Interviews

The first task in this ethnographic study is to interview expatriates who are regular rugby fans living in Taipei. This meant that the participants must engage in at least one game a week. When studying in homes, rugby fans must participate generally with the same group of people every match. Because of the individuals’ schedules, the
group members may vary and those who attend on rare occasions will not be included in the study.

The first participant was chosen through a social relationship. One of the members the four member group was an acquaintance and was contacted face to face, as I had previous knowledge that he was an avid rugby fan. The rest of the participants were chosen due to the fact that the initial member was part of a group that regularly watched Super Rugby games. This particular natural group was chosen so that it maps out their sports viewing habits. The positive aspect of this approach was that the participants had some knowledge of who I was that allowed them to be more comfortable and relaxed answering throughout the interview.

The structure and themes of the interviews will be based on the purpose of the study and previous literature. They will be brief, but focused on three separate themes. The first theme is to use Milne & McDonald’s (1999) study and determine what level out of the three levels these sports fans believe they are: Low Identification, Medium Identification, and High Identification. However, instead of using the original levels of identification, for the interviews, this study used its own contribution of levels, which were discussed in the previous section. The proposed levels are first discussed with the interviewees to find out if one out of the three levels were relevant to the interviewees fan identification.

The second theme that the interviews will be structured around is the motivations behind watching rugby games. Like the fan identification, the different dimensions of motivations will be introduced to the participants to see which out of the six motivation dimensions they believed the reasons behind watching sports on TV were. Additionally, co-viewing and self-esteem will also be briefly discussed within the interviews. The six dimensions used will also be the edited version of the original Gantz study. They can be found in the appendix section of this paper.
The third and final theme that the interviews included is gender differences among the selected rugby fans. Interviews include questions that help define what masculine behaviors are when watching a rugby game—and investigating whether or not women conform to the male hegemony of sports. By conducting interviews that form around these three themes, this study investigates whether or not sports fans in Taipei have certain perceptions of themselves during televised sports games and if their perceptions coincide with their actions. The interview questions can be found in appendix 1.

3.2.2 Field Observations

After the interviews are conducted with the specified group of rugby fans, field observations will serve as a follow-up method to help indicate differences and similarities to what the participants said and what they did. The first part of the field observations will be done in a private setting—meaning the private living room of the homes of the participating rugby fans. Finding the setting in which the observations will take place is important as ‘they are constituted and maintained through cultural definition and social strategies” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007 p. 32). Behaviors and social patterns emerge as boundaries are set and upheld by the individuals who are part of that culture. In addition to private homes, the second part of the fieldwork will be done in specialized sports pubs that rugby games in Taipei. It would be interesting to see differences and similarities in behaviors and attitudes of foreign rugby fans living in Taipei and how they contribute to the sports watching culture.

3.3 Data Collection

The data collection was conducted in April/March 2016 during the Super Rugby Championships. The group of rugby fans living in Taiwan that were chosen for this study ranged from the ages 24-33. The group consisted of four people - all considered themselves ‘rugby fans’ and they watched rugby games whenever tournaments took place. They would rarely miss their chosen team’s games and even stream on their
mobile phones if they were not at home or at a sports pub. The interviewees were chosen based on their geographical location and through a social relationship—the first rugby fan was initially contacted because they were an acquainted friend and from there on, new members were suggested. Individual interviews with each of the members were conducted in private homes. The rugby fans in this natural group were raised and born in their respected countries: Three from New Zealand and one from England. All participants moved to Taipei within the last five years, and spoke fluent English. Therefore, interviews were held in English. The attributes that the participants had were required were that they watched sports on a regular basis (meaning 1-2 times a week) and were rooting for a specific rugby team during the Super Rugby Championships.

The interviews that were held were semi-structured, however, were open for any additional knowledge they found to be helpful for this study. Semi-structured interviews encompassed general themes with predetermined questions that pertained to the theoretical framework given in the previous chapter. Before the interviews were conducted, it was crucial to inform the respondents that they were encouraged to speak openly and answer based on their own experiences and that they were not confined to the questions given. Furthermore, by encouraging open-ended questions, the responses will not be forced or controlled. The advantage of this type of qualitative interview is that new information can be recognized and further studied. The purpose of the semi-structured questions in this study was that it created a starting off point to answers and is relevant to the framework within this study.

Once the questions were prepared and the participants were reached, the interviews were conducted face-to-face in their private homes or in coffee shops. By interviewing the respondents face-to-face, it was possible to use facial expressions and body language in order to better understand their answers. Some of the interviews were done in coffee shops in order to accommodate the respondents’ schedule. Coffee
shops served beneficial because of the casual atmosphere it entails, and people did not feel the pressure or seriousness of a formal interview—the background noise and slight distractions made conversation friendlier.

There are also disadvantages to face-to-face interviews as the possibility that the respondents might feel uncomfortable and inclined to answer the way they believe they should. The coffee shop, although not as personally familiar, was just as constructive as having the interviews at home as the length of interview were quite similar and there were other patrons around. Each interview was recorded to have more accurate empirical data when transcribing. Recording was done with the audio device on the cell phone. By having a voice-recording, any information that needed a second inquiry could be easily accessible. In addition to voice recording, a notebook and pen were brought to each interview so that major themes and new information that deemed important for the study could be written down. The interviews lasted approximately 20-25 minutes each as they were brief but focused on specific themes. During transcription, the written interviews did not include any filler words such as “um”, “like” or pauses because it was unnecessary to the data.

The people who were interviewed are all rugby fans who participate in watching televised rugby games in their private homes as well as in sports bars. They each follow a specific team participating in the championships and watches an average of two games per week. They also come together as a group to watch the games on a weekly basis. They are also educated in the sport of rugby (they are also rugby players themselves) so that they are able to provide appropriate information. The sample selection consisted of four members, Vicki, Ting, Fershad, and Trent. Ting, a 31 year old international school teacher, was the initial interviewee for this study. He was contacted due to previous knowledge that he was a big rugby ‘fan’. Of the four members, Ting is the member that initiates the weekly meetings and decides where the games will be watched. Games are watched most often in his living room. Vicki, a 24 year old girl
from Chesire. She moved to Taipei for studies a year ago. Fershad is a 28 year old who works in marketing. Trent is 33 years old research analyst who watches sports on television 4-5 times a week.

Field observations were attained during live games. Schedules of the matches were found on the Super Rugby website (www.sanzarrugby.com). Field observations took place during the matches in Round 2, 3, 4, and 5 (all together there were 17 rounds until the final) and in total, 6 matches in pubs were observed. To make sure that field observations were taken in the most natural setting possible, notes with a pen and paper were taken in the far corner of the bar overlooking the entire sports bar. By sitting there, I was able to face all the patrons as well as the big screen television. Food and drinks were always ordered so that I could blend into the crowd. At every game, the four members of the rugby fan group were in attendance, however, I did not sit with them and tried to be as discreet as possible so that sports fans were in their most natural settings. I did not take any photos due to the privacy of the people watching the game, however, I did describe the observations in my notebook, which I brought to all the games. At the start of each game, I would jot down how many people were in attendance (by the end of the night the number either decreased or increased due to the fact that patrons came and left as they pleased) and I would jot down how often people cheered, raised their voices, or engaged in physical interactions with others. Each game was in the public settings would have notes that had a visual representation of the room layout to be able to separate the patrons in a more organized manner. By doing so, the gestures and interactions can be jotted down according to where the sports fans were sitting in the bar. An example is included in the appendix. For the private setting, because there were only four of participants, names were listed and their actions were written next to their names.

The field studies done in private homes differed from the sports pubs because the participants were aware that I was with them taking notes. Private setting observations were taken four separate times. As the participants sat around the television screen, I
sat behind them watching the game as well, but behind them so that I was able to observe them without being in their field of vision.

### IV. Results / Analysis

The results section will be separated into three sections: result of interviews, result of field observations in private homes, and result of field observations in public sports bars.

#### 4.1.1 Interviews (Natural Group – Private Setting)

“Watching Super Rugby can get really intense, so it’s nice to share the same excitement with other people - you get more into the game.”

- Ting (31)

Before piloting the interviews, respondents were asked whether they preferred to be anonymous or if their names could be included in the paper. Because none of the respondents had any requests for anonymity, actual names will be used throughout the report however, last names will be omitted.

Four rugby fans in Taipei were chosen to be studied to understand certain behaviors and attitudes that may occur within a rugby match and ultimately, to see how there may be distinctions between watching games in a private or public setting. Interviews were first conducted in order to see if this particular group of rugby fans recognizes their behaviors while watching a rugby game or if their answers are different from what actually takes place.
After conducting the interviews, a common belief among the natural group was that each believed that watching sports meant much more than just finding the scores of rugby matches. For example in Fershad (28),

Interviewer: Ok and why would you say you watch sports?
Fershad: Good question, I have no idea to be honest! Haha I think sporting life is deeply ingrained into the Australian psyche and we just grow up surrounded by it back there. From there…you kind of just start following it as you grow older…it gives you something to talk about on a Monday morning at work. I mean… it’s a fantastic, unscripted form of drama and it’s also just a great way to get some mates together and chill.

In addition, the four rugby fans find that they follow their own home teams rather than Taiwanese teams. Watching sports had always been something that they had partook before moving to Taiwan. Where they grew up affected which teams they followed. Changing their geographic location did not change their preference with teams. In the interview when asked what team they supported, Ting had said:

“Highlanders are the Super Rugby team which originated from Otago, the region I grew up in New Zealand. All Blacks is the national rugby team so these two are my obvious choices.”

Vicki (24) added,

“I follow a lot of my national teams, and then a couple of club rugby teams in the UK. I don’t really follow any Taiwan teams, but that’s more because the popular sports in Taiwan I am not as interested in….like for example…baseball, football, and so on,”

Like Ting and Vicki, Fershad had also stated that he followed a specific team because of where he grew up. This was “mainly because I have a personal connection to the
area the teams represent. The Bulldogs are the team of my local area back home in Australia, and I’ve followed them pretty much since the day my family moved there!”

Another similarity that the four rugby fans seemed to share was that they generally preferred to watch the games with others, specifically big games and events. For example, if it was a tournament final championship game they would rather watch with friends than alone. With that said, Trent (33) found that there are social aspects to sports and that is a great tool to meet people. He said,

“I think the most important thing is that sports watching can be a very good way to make friends in Taiwan, especially when you’ve just arrived in town. Even those who don’t play sports can join teams socially, and a major social activity will be watching games. Online telecasts are making it a lot easier to watch legitimately these days as well.” Sports, to these individuals, go beyond just an experience, but it is a way of life. It had been deeply fixed in how they live their lives.

Playing the actual sport that they watched also made watching sports in Taiwan a more gratifying pastime because the people also watching are able to discuss plays and calls that the referees make. To clarify, Fershad had mentioned, “other than soccer [football], I think if you’re watching sport in Taiwan then you’re normally watching with people who know about the sport, the teams, the players, so the participation and banter during games is terrific. In other places you get some people who are just there for the social event”.

Another commonality that the interviewees encountered was that they believed themselves to have a high priority to watching sports on television. They are well educated on their chosen teams and the stats that they had during the league or season, and
they watch regularly. However, they prefer to watch with others rather than alone. They considered themselves medium to high regarding the three levels of fan identifications.

Another interesting detail that was detected was that all of the rugby fans believed that during the matches, they did not physically interact with people watching the game with them. Depending on the result of the game, Ting said that the only interaction he would partake in was “the congratulatory/commiseration handshakes and celebratory high-fives” at the end of the game. To add, “probably hug close friends if their team just won a really important game” Vicki said. So what we can expect from field observations, is that during games, the participants would not engage in physical contact until after the game.

In regards to gender and sports, majority (3 out of the 4) members said that they do watch sports with females, but usually only if they were athletes themselves. Interestingly, when it comes to watching female athletes none of the participants watched Taiwanese female athletes. An explanation as to why this may be is because “in Australia, most girls know how to play some kind of team sport like netball, basketball, tennis, hockey and stuff, however I don’t think that very many Taiwanese girls would be able to play at least one sport well. Although this also goes for boys, but you tend to see more boys out playing sports like basketball, baseball or soccer compared to girls. I think there’s possibly some kind of stereotype that girls don’t need to play sports at all, or that they’re not encouraged to do so, they would only do so if they wanted to themselves” (Trent). To further elaborate, Ting noticed that the “proportion of Taiwanese females that play sports is lower than that of males. This could be a cultural factor and/or individual preference. I don't think there are many professional female sports in Taiwan. I think as long as there are no professional sports leagues in both sexes, there won’t be too many athletes of either sex in Taiwan. In New Zealand, there are various sports that females can play, that I know of. These include, netball, rugby, touch, field hockey, swimming, cricket, soccer/football, softball and whatever.”

Based on the answers the rugby fans have provided, it could be assumed that cultural
differences affected the lack of female athletes, thus, the participants did not have as much opportunity to watch Taiwanese female sports in relation to watching female athletes from their own home countries. Vicki, the only female in the group of rugby fans, also found that in Taiwan, playing sports as a female was not something that happened often. She said, “I really don’t see many women that into sport … interested in sport in Taiwan and I think my colleagues…male and female…found it sort of weird that I would do so much sport & exercise related things whether watching or playing.” Both male and female participants found that generally, sports in Taiwan was not a popular activity for females to engage. Therefore it can explain the lack of female sports on television in Taiwan and the rugby fans don’t particularly watch them.

Lastly, another common answer that arose from the interviews was that the participants liked have a consistent flow of information regarding their teams and players. All rugby fans followed their favorite players and teams on social media outlets (for example Twitter, Instagram and Facebook). This goes to show that sports to these particular rugby fans do not just end at watching games and finding results, They like to be updated with the teams on a daily basis/ when their teams are not playing.

4.1.2 Field Observations (Private Setting)

For the purpose of the study, three separate field observations of rugby games in private homes (with the selected natural group) were structured around the same measures: nonverbal cues such as hand gestures and physical touch, and verbal cues such as yelling and conversation. During the three televised live rugby games, two major themes were established due to cue observations:

1. Ritualistic and Structured Behavior

2. Movie Theater Audience
Ritualistic and Structured Behavior

Prior to the game, the interview answers compiled by the group indicated that the rugby fans did not believe that they followed a specific ritual before watching a sports game. When asked, Fershad had answered that he was “not too superstitious in general”. However, not knowingly, the four rugby fans did in fact follow some sort of habit before watching games and it was noted through all three field observations. First of all, before every game started, they would sit in the same seats for all games watched together. It was like an unknown rule and even if one of the members were late, that seat would be saved for them. Another interesting fact realized, was that before the game, every one of the participants would go on their mobile phones and look at other teams’ stats and the results of previous games. Discussions would arise on predictions on the game being watched. They would discuss how players on their chosen teams played in previous games.

Another “ritual” that was acquired through observations, was that every member of the group had several beers prepared and always had a beer in hand throughout the game. They also brought the same exact chips or snacks for every meeting/game that they watched together.

Movie Theater Audience

Although the rugby game was watched in a private home, the natural group behaved in a manner that was very similar to viewing habits of movie theater patrons. For many movie goers, Meers & Biltereyst’s study, they find that the act of going to the movies is habitual and occurs on a weekly basis. In addition, “it was an ‘out of home’ social event as well as an extension of home life” (2012:136). Although the living room was considered ‘home’ for one of the individuals (Ting), it was still very much like a movie going experience because every one of the rugby fans in this group was
able to shout at the screen and feed off of each other’s energy during the game. Like the interview answers, the group believed that they did not really interact physically with others during games. The observations showed that that in fact, was true, however, it was apparent that being together affected their interactions with the game. Like a movie theater audience, when others are laughing or making comments, people tend to follow the crowd and do the same. Hence, the same was with this particular rugby fan group. Once one of them made some sort of comment or outburst, the others imitated. They would immediately go into some sort of discussion about the play and during the replay or pause in the game, they would have remarks such as “wow did you see how he stepped and just crushed him?” (Trent). Social physical interactions occurred less frequently, almost never—such as high fiving each other—however, like a movie theater, the thought that you are watching outside your own home, and experiencing the same live show with others, it encourages more of a media interaction and creates a more intense rugby watching experience (shouting at the screen, sitting up straighter when there was a close call). Similar to a movie theater experience, there is certain etiquette that is recognized within rugby watching in private homes. The use of mobile phones in movie theaters are prohibited (or discouraged), and the rugby fans follow a similar, but not as extreme etiquette. Phones are not asked to be put on silent at the beginning of the showing; however some of them do happen to remove the volume during a game. While it is acceptable to check mobile phones for the rugby group, it didn't happen often as when they were not watching the game (during half time or at the beginning of the game). This sort of formal etiquette is very similar to the movie theater experience where it is important to maintain manners as other people are also watching the same screening.

4.1.3 Field Observations (Public Setting)

In Taipei, there are particular pubs that specialize in airing live sports games that are usually being played in foreign tournaments. They rarely air local games, which may account for why so few participants go. It acts as a hub for expatriates to watch games other than U.S baseball or U.S. basketball. In Taipei, it is incredibly difficult unless
you have paid for cable with specific channels to watch sports other than those two. The sports pub that the field observations took place was The Brass Monkey and On Tap. The Brass Monkey is run by foreign businessmen who thought that Taiwan lacked places where foreigners could come together and embrace watching sports. The Brass Monkey is run by an Australian man who himself plays rugby, and is an avid rugby fan. There are a lot of Australian rugby team memorabilia hung on the wall and rugby games are almost always aired live on the big screen whenever there is a tournament going on. On Tap, owned by a British expatriate, usually airs European football, however, because they have two floors, one floor of the pub was dedicated to rugby games. During the time of field observations, both pubs had Super Rugby aired on their largest television screen.

Prior to the field observations, due to the fact that the owner of the pub was a friend, I had discussed with him that I would be taking notes for this study. The reason behind this was so that he was aware of why I was there with a notebook and making observations of the patrons.

In total, 6 observations were done in a public setting (4 at the Brass Monkey, and 2 at OnTap). The reason there were more done at the Brass Monkey was because On Tap did not air Super Rugby games every week. Most of the observations taken were quite similar to one another. The first field observation was taken on the evening of April 9th 2016, at around 18.00 Taipei time, with about 40 minutes before the kickoff to the Highlanders vs Reds game. I took a friend along to The Brass Monkey and found the most discreet seating at the bar in the back of the room, opposite of the large screen so that observations could be taken fully facing the rugby fans. Already, most of the tables are taken, with several fans in Highlander and Red Jerseys. Those wearing jerseys sat relatively close to one another and were at the tables closest to the tv screen. The language spoken between these patrons are English, and so there were no language barriers when taking field observations.
There were about 20 fans already, ranging from ages 20-60. Because of the age restriction, no one under 18 was allowed to enter the bar. The largest age group that was in the bar was about mid-thirties. There were about 5 females in the bar all of which seemed to just finish some sort of sporting event (such as practice) as they were all in workout clothing, but it was evident that the space or watching rugby games was male dominated. However, later in the night, more and more females came into the bar, not necessarily to watch the game as they had their backs to the screen or faced the bar.

Everyone in the bar had some sort of alcoholic beverage and as the game started, several rugby watchers clinked their beer glasses with the people surrounding them as if to welcome the game. It was apparent that before the game started, rugby watching and drinking a beer goes hand in hand. Before the game started, there was a lot of conversation going on between the rugby fans and excitement heard from the tone of their voices. There were a lot of laughter and chants right before the kickoff.

Once the game started, the conversation in the room significantly went down in volume and eyes were on the screen rather than on mobile phones or each other. Some of the gentlemen in jerseys began to hoot as their team ran onto the field. Throughout the game, as side steps and spectacular tackles were made, rugby fans had closed fists to their mouths or raised in the air. Whenever a team scored, the environment became quite vocal as people cheered and clapped. It was interesting to note that as the game went on, the more alcoholic beverages were consumed, and the more physical interaction took place. For example, there were a group of rugby fans who sat in a group of four individuals. At the beginning of the match, there were less likely to interact with each other physically just clap to themselves or hold their beers. As more tries were scored, they seemed to adjust to each others excitement and more high-fives were given. The physical action grew as a group, rather than just one individual initiating. The older patrons sitting by the bar engaged in a less exaggerated way—they would
just clap instead of rising from their chairs. Another note, was that initially people were sitting in their own groups but as they rose to get drinks or during halftime, rugby fans switched seats or joined with other groups. It was noticeable that interacted with one another although they did not arrive together. The environment seemed very social and inclusive.

V. Analysis of Findings

5.1 Social Patterns and Behaviors of Watching Rugby in Private Settings

“I don’t really follow a specific team for Super Rugby. My national team doesn’t play. So I guess you can say I’m just following the results for the games so when we do watch…you know… I am aware of what’s going on.”

Unlike Vicki, the other three rugby fans follow a certain team within Super Rugby and have followed them prior to moving to Taipei. Even though their teams are not the same, they still come together once a week to watch the games together. However, at least one of four group member’s teams must be playing during the arranged viewing. In regards to Mullins et.al (2007)’s study, strong personal and emotional identification does not really apply to the group’s decision to watch the game as they do not necessarily follow the same teams. They will still watch a match even if their teams are not playing—meaning that it is not a prerequisite to watching rugby.

From the observations of the natural group, the social patterns and behaviors that was discovered was that sports watching was similar to the movie theater experience. As mentioned in the previous discussion, before the main event (in this case the rugby game) discussions regarding possible outcomes of the match take place before kick-off. Any conversations to each other during the game were unusual. Any questions regarding play would be done in a lower voice as if to respect their peers. However,
without intention, if there were wrong plays or scores tried, there would be more commentating but not necessarily back and forth banter. Their physical movements were very limited and as all participants answered in their interview, they do not really engage in physical contact with one another. Regardless of being in a private space, their social behavior was a lot more restrained than those who were in public settings, such as the bar. Seats were unknowingly assigned and other media use was discouraged within the group. Meers & Biltereyst’s study in correlation to movie theater audiences certainly applies to this group because the act of watching rugby games is a social event that could have been done at home. Similar to watching a movie at a theater, the motivations for watching sports according to the group was unanimously for entertainment and to support. Fershad explained that watching sports was for enjoyment saying, “most of the time though I’m watching it for entertainment, especially when my team’s aren’t playing, or to support my teams during the games.” In terms of this particular social group, entertainment and to support are in accordance, however, it depends on what game is being watched. To clarify, if the team that they follow is on, then support would be higher on the scale. If their team is not playing, then the motivation would lean towards entertainment.

5.2 Social Patterns and Behaviors of Watching Rugby in Public Settings

In contrast, for public viewing, some of the rugby fans wore their team’s jersey and they chanted player’s names and were a lot more vocal about their teams. They were usually the ones sitting closest to the big screen TVs. In all 6 times I had taken observations, the patrons sitting closest to the large screen were the fans that seemed most engaged with the game. They did seem to connect more on a personal level and a lot of their emotions were identified with their teams success or defeat. They would be very vocal to one another and to the television screen, discussing players and skill. Interaction was a lot more expressive than those in private settings. Hand gestures such as clapping and clenching of the fists were most commonly made by the rugby
watchers. When tries were scored, there were several instances where the fans would cover their face with their hands in disappointment. Those standing in the back of the bar seemed less inclined to have physical gestures but they still turned towards the screen. They were frequently preoccupied in conversations but when the rugby fans watching closer to the screens would shout and start indicating an exciting play, people would be much more engaged and even join in on vocal outbursts. It was interesting to see that the majority of the rugby fans in the room were less invested in the game and those who seemed more involved sat closest to the television screen.

In public settings, vocal interaction was much more intense than those in private settings. When looking at the private group in a public setting, their behaviors of gestures and being vocal during games were definitely enhanced by the group. Being in the same group but in a public setting did not change their attitudes significantly.

Discussions that were going on with the participants closest to the television screen took place more about the game and sometimes people would argue with a passionate sense of national pride. One patron said in particular:

“This game is going in our favor, man. Our team just has to work on defense and we’ll be solid!” (patron rooting for Highlanders during the April 9th game).

It showed that his sense of national identity was exercised through his use of the words “we and us”. In the private setting, when conversations about teams would arise, the group would not generally use those words, instead just refer to the team’s names.
Some other social patterns and behaviors that arose from the sports pub was that a lot of rugby fans seemed to physically interact with one another. Rugby watchers that were rooting for the same team would raise their glasses to each other, and occasionally high five the people surrounding them. It was interesting to note, that through observations, the local Taiwanese groups that were in the pub at the time of the game, were there to dine rather than watch the game. It was clear that this game was targeted towards a specific group of people—in this case, people who followed foreign rugby games.

Another distinction that was made between the living room and the bar was that cell phone etiquette was not enforced at the bar whereas in the private setting, cellphone use was at a minimum. At the bar, even though the rugby fans were very enthusiastic and engaged with the television screen, people freely used their cellphones, especially during moments break. At the bar, people are not confined to their seats, but instead were able to walk to the bar and sit, move to another table, etc. There was a lot more freedom to move about. At the private home, moving around meant that it may disturb the others simply because of the size of the location.

5.3 Similarities between Private and Public Settings

The similarities that the private and public viewing has is that the uses and gratification theory can be applied to both settings. A sense of coming together, whether in a group of 4 or a loose group of 30 rugby fans, rugby fans alike found that they could could gain some sort of fulfillment through the use of media. More specifically, both private and public settings really creates an environment that encourages socialization by a common denominator: in this case, watching rugby. After the match, in Ting’s home, even after the game is over, the four participants stayed for an hour or so later
to just share some beers and stories. In the same way, at the sports bar, people continued to stay for much longer to discuss about the game that had just been watched.

Another notable observance that was noticed during the three times that I did field observations at the sports pub was that there were a lot of the same people who attended all the games that I had observed (the games were selected prior to the field observations based on convenient times of the game). To see these rugby fans enter a domain where people not only share the same hobby and interest as them, but also living circumstances. In a country like Taiwan, where Mandarin is the most spoken language, it can be hard for foreigners to really socialize and engage in conversation. Also, watching teams from their home country allows the sports viewers to have a sense of belonging in a country where they are not local. It’s a place for people to really come together and socialize. Sports watching is not just the act of watching sports, but how they make friends and enjoy themselves. This ties in with the four interviewees having said that they preferred watching sports via media outlet at pubs. The sports pub acts as a space where inclusion is presumable and Ting had revealed “I would like to watch it at the pub as the atmosphere would be great”. Having other peers who understand the game and are passionate about the teams playing, enhances participation because fans respond to each other’s enthusiasm. Thus, sports pubs create a cooperative and stimulating atmosphere.

To further add, in the interviews, Trent had said that a common etiquette while watching televised sports match is not to “be a bad loser obviously, and respect other teams’ fans during their national anthems”. It was quite clear that the unspoken etiquette that Trent had mentioned was demonstrated from the onset of the games during public setting observations. Members cheering for opposing teams did not make distinct separateness in teams. Although national pride is still relevant, (people wearing team jerseys or clothing with the national flag, saying ‘we, us, our’ when describing their national team), rugby fans alike did not engage in negative commentary towards their
opposing team fans. While the fans did in fact portray characteristics of a High Identification fan based on Milner & McDonald’s study, meaning they knew everything about the team stats, players, abilities, etc.), they rugby watchers did not let it affect their commitment to socializing — sometimes with the opposing team fans. Similar to the private setting members who said that watching sports is a priority in their every-day lives, it can be assumed that other foreign sports watching goers prioritize watching games because it not only applied for simply watching games, but to make friends.

VI. Conclusion and Discussion

6.1 Discussion of Study

To summarize, the sports watching culture of foreigners living in Taipei is a very particular group to study. Foreigners in this case, are individuals who have moved to Taiwan from another country and associate themselves with a nationality that is not Taiwanese. The relationship between these foreign fans and the settings in which sports viewership takes place and why certain individuals watch sports games was this study’s initial interest. It focused on examining foreigners in Taipei watching sports in both private settings and public settings and aiming to find any significant patterns or behaviors that may occur. Previous research indicated that sports creates a space for people to interact and build a community based on one specific common interest: sports. Also Aden and Titsworth’s (2010) place attachment theory found that sports fans alike found a sense of attachment (culturally and symbolically). With place attachment, foreigners can feel a connection with their home countries while living abroad. This study seemed to support that theory with it’s results.

By interviewing a natural group of rugby fans and taking field observations in a private setting and also in a public space (sports bar), several themes have transpired.
First, in both public and private settings, foreign rugby fans did not follow Taiwan teams. To some, this is where ‘place attachment’ also could explain why these rugby fans choose to watch specific games. It creates a space where people from the same nationality can feel a sense of belonging outside of their home country. Those fans that associate themselves as having a high identification level of fandom. They will watch every game that their team plays and will know everything from stats, to player bio, etc.

Another finding was that public and private settings differed in social behaviors — public being more vocal and interactive with others, while private embodying a movie theater etiquette. The social etiquette of not really talking during the game and limiting cell phone use as well as getting up from the television screen of private settings was quite a big difference from public setting etiquette. There seemed to be a an unspoken respect towards opposing teams in both private and public spaces. There seemed to be no trash talking, and verbal interaction with the television and others were directed purely on the game. Watching the game in a sports pub, fans regardless of their team preference came together as a collective whole, rather than two separate teams.

Previous theories and research have indicated that sports watching is an incredibly male dominate environment. This study further supported that theory especially because the games being watched was a male rugby tournament. The data collected from the interviews proved that at least in the instance of Taiwan, female sports is rarely celebrated let alone aired on television. Not only did the game only have males, the viewers at the sports pub consisted also mostly of males. While there were female patrons taking part in watching the rugby games but there were very few of them and those there to watch the games did not watch the full length so it was difficult to get enough observations. Other female patrons seemed to be going for their own social regards. Considering Vicki, as the only female sports fan in the group, she watched
games even though no teams from her home country played, which disputes previous research done on ‘place attachment’. Although she follows her home team and considers herself a rugby fan, however, watching her team play is not necessarily as important as the factor of watching sports with others. It seems as though watching sports was much more for social reasons and belonging to a social group, rather than for feel attachment to her home country. For future studies, it could be interesting to look into a different sport where female presence is not scarce (for example the olympics) and study if the female sports watching culture is any different from the male rugby watching culture. Studies established that masculinity dominates the sports culture and it was not much different in Taiwan.

A question that did arise after this study began was whether or not there were any variations between the selected group in the private setting and if they were in a public setting. To make more distinctions, this study examined whether the lack of vocal and physical interaction is circumstantial or if it is just individualistic. It was surprising to note that the natural group’s main motivation to watch the game was socializing, but differing from public settings, their verbal and physical cues did not seem particularly more frequent by watching with others aside from their own group.

What we found in this study was that there is a difference in what role sports plays within expatriates in Taipei compared to sports fans done in previous studies. Although there are individuals who find themselves always watching games where their home team is playing, even those who didn’t have a team playing came to watch. While previous studies looked at how patriotism impacted why people watched sports, we can see that for expatriates it was not as much of a motivation to watch as it was more about belonging to a community. Gantz’s 1981 level of motivations study suggested that the biggest motivation to watch sports was to thrill in victory. After studying the expatriate community however, this study showed that watching sports was less about having their team win, rather to come together and socialize. That can
not be said for everyone who watches sports in Taipei as a foreigner, but majority of them do show (through their behaviors during games) that the score of the game was less important than being in social environment. This study further supports Mullin, Hardy and Sutton’s 2007 study where sports builds dependence of social facilitation—the need to socialize becomes a priority as an expatriate and watching sports facilitates interacting with others.

6.2 Future Studies

Upon completing this study, several elements were identified as areas to consider for future studies. While field studies in public settings were unaffected by me being there, private settings were controlled to a certain extent because the sports fans were aware that I was taking notes. It could have affected how the sports fans behaved and if they were at any point uncomfortable with me being there, that could change the results. The first observations made with the private setting did not have as much data collected in comparison to the following four field observations. This could be because my attendance was not in their usual routine. However, once the initial first day novelty wore off, the participants were much more relaxed and showed more signs of physical expressiveness. For future studies, field observations in private spaces could be done with a video recording (with their permission). They would still know I was there, but the lack of physical presence may make them less aware of being observed. With the interviews, the responses that were taken indicated that the least amount of additional information came from answering the questions that had a predetermined answer.

Overall, what we can take from this study is that the results further supports previous research done regardless of circumstances (fans living in a foreign country). Based on our interviews and field studies, the motivation behind watching sports games builds from the desire for a social experience. Vocal interactions are encouraged by being with other fans and being in public spaces allow for more physical interactions. However, unlike local participants who may have other ways to connect to the location,
foreigners seem to use the concept of watching sports as a bolster to maintain social interaction. Those who are not sports fans (field observations noted they did to see to be completely involved in the game airing) will even go to the bar on regularly basis to watch the games purely for social reasons. The need to socialize seem to be equal to watching the sport itself and can be taken from the interviewees putting watching sports high on their list of priorities.
References


APPENDIX I - Interview Questions

1. How often do you participate in sports watching events?
2. Do you prefer to watch mediatized sports at home or at pubs?
3. What sports do you regularly watch on television?
4. Do you follow specific teams? If so, are any of them Taiwanese?
5. Why do you follow your chosen team?
6. Are there specific channels you watch in order to watch sports games?
7. Why do you watch sports?
8. What are the motivations for watching?
   • entertainment (relieve boredom)
   • socialize (to bond with friends or others)
   • to thrill in victory (to see your team win feels good)
   • to learn (about sports)
   • to support (someone you know or admire is playing a match)
9. Do you watch Taiwanese (or your country's) female athletes?
10. Do you think there are gender differences or inequalities amongst female and male athletes in Taiwan? How does it compare to female athletes in your respected countries
11. Do you watch sports with females?
12. Of the three levels of fan identifications, what do you rate yourself?
   • Low (for entertainment and/or socializing purposes; fans aren’t necessarily invested in team statistics. Watch because friends are)
   • Medium (are aware of different team stats as well as their own. Have team merchandise and watch regularly, but usually only with others. Not a necessity to watch the games)
   • High (wins and losses affects your mood tremendously. Watch every game and will schedule days on games in advance. Will watch alone.
13. Do you associate yourself with your home countries sports teams more than Taiwanese sports teams?
14. How are sports in Taiwan? How do they compare to your home country's sports?
15. Do you follow any sports teams or athletes in particular? (social media: twitter, instagram, etc.)
16. What makes sports watching different in Taiwan than from any other city?
17. How do you think you behave when you watch sports?
18. Are there any rituals you practice before/during/after games?
19. Do you think you are vocal when you watch sports?
20. Do you partake in any physical interactions with people you watch games with?
21. Are there particular etiquettes or unwritten rules you have to follow while watching a televised sports match?
22. Do you prefer to watch alone or with others?
23. Do you think sports in Taiwan embody masculinity?
24. Is watching sports a priority for you?
25. Is there anything else you would like to add that you think is important to the sports watching culture in Taiwan amongst foreigners?
Appendix II - Interviews

*Filler words (such as uh and um) and repeated words were omitted because it is easier to note and did not affect the findings in any way.

Interview 1 - VICKI
Age: 24 (Date - 20.03.16, Time – 15.06)

Interviewer: Hi my name is Ayaka, and I am writing a paper for sports media at Stockholm University. I was wondering if I could interview you about sports watching culture in Taipei as a foreigner. Is that okay?

Vicki: Yes, of course.

Interviewer: Thank you. So, let’s begin. First question…

How often do you participate in sports watching events?

Vicki: Probably once, maybe even twice a week. Depends on what sports are on, what time of day and how busy I am. But I usually watch some sort of sport at the weekend or listen to radio coverage.

Interviewer: Do you prefer to watch sports via media outlet at home or at pubs? Like sports bars. What sports do you regularly watch on television?

Vicki: I prefer to watch televised games at pubs or bars but I would very rarely go on my own, so if I had no one to drag along with me then I would just watch at home. Also, I mainly watch rugby on TV, but I end up watching a lot of tennis when the opens are on. If it a big event like the Olympics I end up watching a lot of that too.

Interviewer: You watch Super Rugby on a weekly basis though right?

Vicki: Yep.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you follow specific teams? If so…are any of them from Taiwan?

Vicki: Yes I follow a lot of my national teams, and then a couple of club rugby teams in the UK. I don’t really follow any Taiwan teams, but that’s more because the popular sports in Taiwan I am not as interested in like baseball, football, etc. I keep an eye on the national team scores (but not religiously), like during the Baseball WC I kept an eye on how the Taiwan team was doing, but more due to the fact the rest of nation was and it was a talking point.

Interviewer: What Super Rugby team do you follow?

Vicki: Highlanders are the Super Rugby team which originated from Otago, the region I grew up in New Zealand. All Blacks is the national rugby team so these two are my obvious choices.

Interviewer: Of course. That makes sense. So why do you follow the teams you specified?

Vicki: My national rugby team because its where I’m from. Then my club rugby team because it’s based near where I initially grew up. Same with the English football team I half-heartedly follow, and my family supported this team too.
Interviewer: That’s nice. Nice to have those childhood memories.

Vicki: Definitely. That is why I follow the teams that… I… follow.

Interviewer: It’s a good thing to share that in common. So, where do you watch the games. I mean, are there specific channels you watch in order to watch them?

Vicki: Not really, whichever channel the sports are on. If I am home I usually stream the games online because I don’t have the channels on my TV. Sky Sports, Super Sports, Sentanta.

Interviewer: So, you have to stream most your channels if you’re not watching it at a bar right.

Vicki: Yeah pretty much.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank goodness for streaming. You play rugby yourself right?

Vicki: Yes I play in a league here.

Interviewer: Are you good at playing?

Vicki: Compared to the girls here, yeah I guess because they’re pretty small…

Interviewer: Haha yeah being small doesn’t make it easier for people.

Vicki: (chuckle)

Interviewer: Ok so the next question has five options… from… from A to E.

Ok… so… What are your motivations for watching… watching football?

a. Entertainment. i.e. relieve boredom

b. Socialize. Like… to bond with friends and stuff.

c. to thrill in victory, which is to see your team win feels… really good.

d. to learn… like… about sports or maybe players.

e. to support. Like. Uh, someone you know or admire is playing a match

Vicki: All of the above. If I’m bored and there is sport on TV I would normally watch it and or have it on in the background. But also for the social side/ following my team and just enjoyment, I quite like watching teams battle out hard for victory as a competitive person myself.

Interviewer: Would you say you watched Taiwanese or your country’s female athletes?

Vicki: I can’t say I’ve watched any Taiwanese female athletes. I do watch my own country’s female athletes, but coverage is not as readily available. It has got better over the last few years and they are televising more female sports, following their successes at certain world events. More sports that attract more females like netball, hockey, gymnastics, aren’t seen as ‘national’ sports so they aren’t as beneficial to televise… don’t create as much financial benefit.

Interviewer: Yeah female sports don’t seem to be televised as male sports. With that said, Do you think there are gender differences or inequalities amongst female and male athletes in Taiwan? How does it compare to female athletes in your respected countries?
Vicki:

I can’t say I know much about how female and male athletes are treated in Taiwan, but I can imagine, there are since in Taiwan I am not really aware of many female sports teams or athletes. In the UK, there are gender difference and inequalities…I think it’s a hard thing to shift and they will never be quite on the same level as men… but they are slowly starting to treat female athletes with the same rights and rewards as men. For example after the last Women’s Rugby World Cup, the RFU started to sign female players to full-time contracts with the union, which meant they weren’t having to balance their part-time work commitments with their commitments to the national team. There has definitely been a huge focus on getting more females…you know…who may be more self-conscious of taking part in sports…into sport environments with the This Girl Can campaign.

Interviewer:

Thank you for the informative answer. That really is interesting to see how the gender differences really are so drastic. It’s nice to know people are trying to make changes.

Vicki: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you watch sports with other females?

Vicki: Yeah. I watch with other female athletes. Like my rugby team.

Interviewer: Interesting. Its good that you have them to watch it with you. So of the three levels of fan identifications, what do you rate yourself? Low…for entertainment and or socializing purposes; fans aren’t necessarily invested in team statistics. Watch because friends are… Medium…are aware of different team stats as well as their own. Have team merchandise and watch regularly, but usually only with others. Not a necessity to watch the games…or High..wins and losses affects your mood tremendously. Watch every game and will schedule days on games in advance. You will watch alone.

Vicki: High. I may not quite watch every game, but I do try if I can. Or record it. If I have watched my team to a really good win..especially as the underdogs. I feel like revel in it for a good few days!

Interviewer: Haha. Do you associate yourself with your home countries sports teams more than Taiwanese sports teams?

Vicki: Yes.

Interviewer: How are sports in Taiwan? How do they compare to your home country's sports?

Vicki: I have to say Taiwan sports are different to my home country. I have always been told baseball is the national sport and we hardly have any baseball in the
UK. You see 100s of baseball teams out on the riverside at the weekend practicing whereas out at the parks etc. in the UK people would have a football or rugby ball.

Interviewer: Do you follow any sports teams or athletes in particular? (social media: twitter, instagram, etc.)

Vicki: Yeah I follow quite a few teams and athletes on Twitter and Instagram. It’s quite interesting to see the daily grind of a professional athlete compared to a recreational one.

Interviewer: Yeah I feel like it’s very easy to keep a tab with the media outlets these days… So what makes sports watching different in Taiwan than from any other city?

Vicki: I don’t really find sport watching much different in Taiwan, maybe more friendly as I’m watching with people from all the world, who enjoy watching the game as neutrals.

Interviewer: I see…That’s very interesting. Neutrals…How do you think you behave when you watch sports?

Vicki: Depending on whether a team I support is playing or not it varies. When it's a team I support; very vocal, rather animated, and I probably swear a lot more than I usually do. If I’m just watching a game, I get vocal and animated but not to the same level. I think I am a good sport and I praise any decent play whatever the team. I can probably come across as a little bit aggressive too but in just what I shout at the TV rather than actions…

Interviewer: Haha. There’s nothing wrong with a little excitement. Would you say…are there any rituals you practice before/during/after games?

Vicki: Before watching games not really. But I always seem to feel the morning of a game I know what the result is going to be.

Interviewer: So you are pretty vocal when you watch sports?

Vicki: Definitely. But I like to think I tone it down a bit when I am watching in public!!!!

Interviewer: Do you partake in any physical interactions with people you watch games with?

Vicki: I usually shake hands with people whose team has just won or lost. Probably hug close friends if their team have just won a really important game…

Interviewer: Are there particular etiquettes or unwritten rules you have to follow while watching a televised sports match?

Vicki: No. Although I would never say/think, ‘this game is in the bag’ as I think it would be a ‘curse of the commentator’ type thing.

Interviewer: Do you prefer to watch alone or with others?
Interviewer: I see… ok we’re going to move onto masculinity in sports. Do you think sports in Taiwan embody masculinity?

Vicki: Yes, I really don’t see many women that into sport/interested in sport in Taiwan and I think my colleagues…male and female…found it sort of weird that I would do so much sport & exercise related things…whether watching or playing.

Interviewer: Is watching sports a priority for you?

Vicki: I wouldn’t say watching is a priority. But following sports in one sense or another is…

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to add that you think is important to the sports watching culture in Taiwan amongst foreigners?

Vicki: Not really, not anything that I can think of at the moment.

Interviewer: Okay thank you very much for your participation.

Interview II- Fershad
Age: 28 ( Date - 25.03.16, Time - 20.57)

Interviewer: Hi my name is Ayaka, and I am writing a paper for sports media at Stockholm University. I was wondering if I could interview you about sports watching culture in Taipei as a foreigner. Is that okay?

Fershad: Yes. Go ahead.

Interviewer: How often do you participate in sports watching?

Fershad: Since I moved back to Taipei City at least four times a week, at least one being outside.

Interviewer: I see…Do you prefer to watch mediatized sports at home or at pubs?

Fershad: If it’s a big event like Australia versus New Zealand in the Rugby I like to watch at a pub.

Interviewer: What sports do you regularly watch on television?

Fershad: To be honest I stream most of my sport online using different paid and free services for different sports. It’s easier than watching on TV, and also means I can watch at work. Except when I’m watching with others. Then I watch on TV.

Interviewer: The internet is so convenient…Do you follow specific teams? If so, are any of them Taiwanese?

Fershad: I follow too many teams! Depends on the sports but Australia in the Rugby, India in the Cricket, Sydney Swans in the Aussie Rules, Canterbury-
Bankstown Bulldogs in the Rugby League … the list goes on.

Interviewer: Haha…It sure does! So why do you follow your chosen team?

Fershad: Mainly because I have a personal connection to the area the teams represent. The Bulldogs are the team of my local area back home in Australia, and I’ve followed them pretty much since the day my family moved there!

Interviewer: Are there specific channels you watch in order to watch sports games?

Fershad: I use some online paid services such as Setanta or Premier League Pass to watch sports. I don’t actually have a TV connection at home, everything I watch in online.

Interviewer: So maybe that’s why you all watch the game at Ting’s…hahaha

Fershad: Yeah hahaha that’s exactly it.

Interviewer: So, this may be broad but why do you watch sports?

Fershad: Good question, I have no idea to be honest! Haha I think sporting life is deeply ingrained into the Australian psyche and we just grow up surrounded by it back there. From there you kind of just start following it as you grow older, it gives you something to talk about on a Monday morning at work, it’s a fantastic, unscripted form of drama and it’s also just a great way to get some mates together and chill.

Interviewer: Okay…and what are the motivations for watching? Here are the options: entertainment (relieve boredom) socialize (to bond with friends or others) to thrill in victory (to see your team win feels good) to learn (about sports) to support (someone you know or admire is playing a match) please choose one…

Fershad: I watch Touch online to learn for sure. Most of the time though I’m watching it for entertainment, especially when my team’s aren’t playing, or to support my teams during the games. But socializing is probably the top reason.

Interviewer: It is a nice way to bond thats for sure. Do you watch Taiwanese…or your country’s female athletes?

Fershad: Recently I’ve been watching the Australian Women’s National Soccer TeamThe Matildas… a fair bit. They’re pretty good, and the games they played at the recent World Cup weren’t too bad.

Interviewer: Do you think there are gender differences or inequalities amongst female and male athletes in Taiwan? How does it compare to female athletes in your respected countries?

Fershad: I’m not sure what it’s like at a high-level in Taiwan. At the grassroots level I sometimes feel like females are reluctant to participate seriously in sport, and that some simply take part just to be “seen” wearing some sporty gear and striking a pose in a selfie. In Australia there are definitely
inequalities between male & female sports, especially in terms of pay. In
the last year some sports, Aussie Rules, Soccer and Cricket especially,
have started serious women’s leagues in the aim to professionalize their
female athletes. That said, there’s still a long way to go…

Interviewer: I think that’s very true. It does seem to be far from equal. Do you watch
sports with females?

Fershad: Yeah sure. There’s normally some of the Lady Baboons down at the pub
when there’s a game on, so we do watch with them.

Interviewer: The Lady baboons being the female rugby team. So, of the three levels of
fan identifications, what do you rate yourself?

Low ..for entertainment and/or socializing purposes; fans aren’t
necessarily invested in team statistics. Watch because friends are
Medium..are aware of different team stats as well as their own. Have
team merchandise and watch regularly, but usually only with
others. Not a necessity to watch the games
High ..wins and losses affects your mood tremendously. Watch every
game and will schedule days on games in advance. Will
watch alone.

Fershad: Medium.

Interviewer: Do you associate yourself with your home countries sports teams more t
than Taiwanese sports teams?

Fershad: Yep for sure. I barely know any Taiwanese teams.

Interviewer: Interesting…So how are sports in Taiwan? How do they compare to your
home country’s sports?

Fershad: Sports is fundamental to the Aussie way of life, so there’s really no com-
parison.

Interviewer: Do you follow any sports teams or athletes in particular? for example you
know, social media: twitter, instagram, etc….

Fershad: I follow a few teams on Instagram & Facebook, but I don’t really engage
with them.

Interviewer: I see.. What makes sports watching different in Taiwan than from any oth-
er city.

Fershad: Other than soccer, I think if you’re watching sport in Taiwan then you’re
normally watching with people who know about the sport, the teams, the
players, so the participation and banter during games is terrific. In other
places you get some people who are just there for the “social event”.

Interviewer: How do you think you behave when you watch sports?

Fershad: Yeah of course. There’s no place anywhere for hooligans.
Interviewer: So you do behave..haha Are there any rituals you practice before/during/after games?

Fershad: Not really. I’m not too superstitious in general.

Interviewer: That’s good to hear. I know a lot of people are. Do you think you are vocal when you watch sports?

Fershad: From time to time yeah. Especially if it’s near the finals, or a close game involving my team.

Interviewer: Do you partake in any physical interactions with people you watch games with?

Fershad: Besides drinking and having a chat, nothing else.

Interviewer: Drinking and watching sports seem to coincide.

Fershad: Always.

Interviewer: Are there particular etiquettes or unwritten rules you have to follow while watching a televised sports match?

Fershad: Not really. Depends who’s around but sometimes you need to watch your language.

Interviewer: Like children.

Fershad: Yes definitely children.

Interviewer: I’m sorry we’re almost done. Do you prefer to watch alone or with others?

Fershad: I prefer watch with others if its a big game.

Interviewer: Do you think sports in Taiwan embody masculinity?

Fershad: Not really. Macho sports such as Rugby aren’t very popular here.

Interviewer: Is watching sports a priority for you?

Fershad: Sometimes it can get in the way of having a life unfortunately yeah.

Interviewer: That’s okay. It’s a fun hobby to have. Thank you for your participation we have completed our interview.

**Interview III - Ting**

**Age: 31 (Date - 28.03.16, Time - 10.20)**

Interviewer: Hi my name is Ayaka, and I am writing a paper for sports media at Stockholm University. I was wondering if I could interview you about sports watching culture in Taipei as a foreigner. Is that okay?

Ting: Yup. Hello Ayaka. My name is Ting.
Interviewer: Haha, Hello Ting. Let’s Begin. How often do you participate in sports watching?

Ting: I would usually watch rugby when the southern hemisphere season is on. There are usually two or three nights of rugby on and if I can, I would like to watch at least one night a week.

Interviewer: So Rugby keeps you pretty busy, huh.

Ting: Yes. I like to watch it.

Interviewer: So, would you say..Do you prefer to watch it at home or at pubs?

Ting: Depends on the occasion and the game. If it is Super Rugby competition involving local derbies and my team is playing, I would like to head to a pub with friends to watch it, provided it is on a Saturday afternoon or evening. Same with internationals, if the All Blacks are playing our rivals …which is…Australia and South Africa…I would like to watch it at the pub as the atmosphere would be great. Other games which are less important and are on Friday evenings or Sundays, I would watch them at home. Watching Super Rugby can get really intense, so it’s nice to share the same excitement with other people - you get more into the game.

Interviewer: Yeah it’s nice that you can watch games live here in Taiwan. I would think it was difficult to. Are there particular pubs you like to watch the game?

Ting: The Brass is pretty much the only places that aires it. That’s why I always go.

Interviewer: It’s nice to be able to go someplace knowing that the games are on! If not at a pub, do you regularly watch it on television?

Ting: The subscription for watching rugby on television had expired, or the carrier do not show them anymore, so now I don’t get to watch sports regularly on television.

Interviewer: Ahh I see. So other modes of watching sports huh. So, in terms of following specific teams… Do you follow any in particular? Are any of them Taiwanese?

Ting: For Super Rugby, I support the Highlanders. For the international team, I support New Zealand All Blacks (rugby union), and New Zealand Kiwis. They are in the rugby union. For cricket, it would be the New Zealand Blackcaps. None of them are Taiwanese though as they don’t have a professional rugby team.

Interviewers: So because Taiwan doesn’t have a professional team you don’t follow. Do you think you would follow them if they did have one?

Ting: Probably not. I just don’t see them being very good.

Interviewers: Haha. So why do you follow your other teams then?
Ting: Highlanders are the Super Rugby team which originated from Otago, the region I grew up in New Zealand. All Blacks is the national rugby team so these two are my obvious choices.

Interviewer: So why would you say you watch sports? Because a team is good, or because it relates to where you grew up? Or another reason?

Ting: I enjoy playing rugby while growing up and I enjoy watching the sport as it is a fast-pace and entertaining game with not many stoppages which means a full 15 a-side game takes only 80 – 90 minutes to watch.

Interviewer: So a reason you like watching sports is because it’s fast paced. Interesting. It does make it a lot more exciting. What would you say are the motivations for watching other than that it is fast paced?

Here are the options:
entertainment (relieve boredom)
socialize (to bond with friends or others)
to thrill in victory (to see your team win feels good)
to learn (about sports)
to support (someone you know or admire is playing a match)

Ting: All.

Interviewer: Haha okay. That narrows it down a bit. Care to tell me which one you relate most to?

Ting: Probably to support the team. But socializing is also a big part of watching it on television at a bar.

Interviewer: Would you say you watch female athletes as well?

Ting: No, there is not much coverage of female rugby games.

Interviewer: Noting that…Do you think there are gender differences or inequalities amongst female and male athletes in Taiwan? How does it compare to female athletes in your respected countries?

Ting: I’m not 100% sure, but from what I can see, the proportion of Taiwanese females that play sports is lower than that of males. This could…could be a cultural factor and …or…individual preference. I don’t think there are many professional female sports in Taiwan either. There are men’s basketball and baseball that I know of and there might be others. I think as long as there are no professional sports leagues in both sexes, there won’t be too many athletes of either sex in Taiwan. In New Zealand, there are various sports that females can play, that I know of. These include, netball, rugby, touch, field hockey, swimming, cricket, soccer/football, softball or whatever. Although not many of these sports are professional sports, but they are accessible to the public.

Interviewer: With that said, would you say you watch sports with females?
Ting: Do you mean watch them with females or watch females play sports?

Interviewer: I meant the latter…but why don’t you go ahead and answer both.

Ting: In Taiwan, I have only watched girls play touch or rugby live. I have not watched much female sports on television.

Interviewer: I see. So watching women play sports is not necessarily something you like to do. Okay…the next question…Of the three levels of fan identifications, what do you rate yourself?

Low ..for entertainment and/or socializing purposes; fans aren’t necessarily invested in team statistics. Watch because friends are
Medium..are aware of different team stats as well as their own. Have team merchandise and watch regularly, but usually only with others. Not a necessity to watch the games
High ..wins and losses affects your mood tremendously. Watch every game and will schedule days on games in advance. Will watch alone.

Ting: Medium. Although I am not 100% sure about the stats part…

Interviewer: No problem. You had said you don’t really connect with Taiwanese sports…So how are sports in Taiwan? How do they compare to your home country’s sports?

Ting: As mentioned before, there are some professional sports here. Unfortunately basketball and baseball are not necessarily the sports I would watch. I have seen other sports in passing, soccer, running, triathlon, marathon etc, although it feels like they are not too big on team sports or contact sports.

Interviewer: Yeah it must be a big change from full on contact sports as being your national sport …versus Taiwanese who are more into sports…say for example baseball. Do you follow any sports teams or athletes to keep in touch with your home teams?

Ting: All Blacks and Highlanders on Social Media.

Interviewer: What kind of social media platforms do you follow them on?

Ting: Facebook and Instagram mostly.

Interviewer: Those two definitely help keep in touch don’t they?

Ting: They sure do. It’s super helpful.

Interviewer: What makes watching sports in Taiwan different from watching it in any other city?

Ting: Maybe the atmosphere, although I have lived in Taipei for 5 plus years and in Asia for 9 plus years, I almost forget what it is like to watch sports in New Zealand.

Interviewer: How do you think you behave when you watch sports?
Ting: Usually, but after a few beverages, I can get either rowdy, or somber, which is directly correlated to the result.

Interviewer: So it’s a bit results driven eh? Are there any rituals you practice before/ during/ after games?

Ting: Not really.

Interviewer: I notice that people yell a lot. Do you think you are vocal when you watch sports?

Ting: Yes, a little banter does not hurt. Then there is the congratulatory/commiseration handshakes and celebratory high-fives, depending on the result.

Interviewer: With that said...Are there particular etiquettes or unwritten rules you have to follow while watching a televised sports match??

Ting: As a New Zealander, we tend to support the All Blacks and anyone that is playing against Australia. Otherwise, common courtesy goes a long way.

Interviewer: Ahh the New Zealand vs Australia. What is it about countries that are close to each other. Bigger rivals. haha

Ting: Always like that don’t you think.

Interviewer: Would you say that watching sports is a priority for you?

Ting: Yes, when I can arrange my schedule around the big games, I would.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to add that you think is important to the sports watching culture in Taiwan amongst foreigners?

Ting: Nope not on the top of my head haha.

Interviewer: Well, thank you so much for your help. It was very interesting.

Interview IV - Trent

Age: 33 (Date - 28.03.16, Time – 15.39)

Interviewer: Hi my name is Ayaka, and I am writing a paper for sports media at Stockholm University. I was wondering if I could interview you about sports watching culture in Taipei as a foreigner. Would that be possible for you?

Trent: Yeah. Sounds good.

Interviewer: How often would you say you participate in sports watching events?

Trent: Probably 4 to 5 times a week.

Interviewer: Oh wow that’s quite a lot. You are quite the sports watcher aren’t you?
Trent: Haha…Yeah I most definitely am.

Interviewer: Do you prefer to watch mediatised sports at home or at pubs? What sports do you regularly watch on television?

Trent: I prefer to watch at pubs, but often watch at home simply because it costs a lot of money to watch every game at the pub. In a perfect world I would love to be in the bar for every game. It’s also hard with timings living in Taiwan, Australia and New Zealand sports start around midday, so it’s not always convenient to go to a bar. Likewise, European and South African sports start after midnight so it’s a late night if I do go to the pub and often results in a wasted day the next day.

Interviewer: Basically if money was not an issue you’d prefer to go. So what is it about watching games at a pub that you prefer? Couldn’t you just have friends over your house?

Trent: I think the most important thing is that sports watching can be a very good way to make friends in Taiwan, especially when you’ve just arrived in town. Even those who don’t play sports can join teams socially, and a major social activity will be watching games. Online telecasts are making it a lot easier to watch legitimately these days as well.

Interviewer: It seems like there are a lot of foreigners in the sports pubs and there is always a ton of socializing especially after the games. That’s nice that sports brings everyone together. Even if they are rooting for other teams, people are quite friendly. Do you follow specific teams? If so, are any of them Taiwanese?

Trent: Yeah. Doesn’t matter what team you root for. People are all super friendly and social. Oh yeah…I follow Melbourne Storm for the rugby league. New Zealand Warriors for Rugby league as well. Rugby Union I follow Melbourne Rebels…Want more?

Interviewer: Yes please continue.


Interviewer: Why would you say you follow your said teams?

Trent: Usually because they are from Melbourne…My home city.

Interviewer: So you follow your home team. Are there specific channels you can watch in order to posted on your home team games?

Trent: Setanta Sports, rugby pass which is online and sky sports.

Interviewer: So socializing seems like a big part of watching sports as you mentioned. what are your specific motivations for watching? Entertainment…or Relieve boredom. or socializing as we’ve mentioned to be with friends or others. To thrill in victory …which means you like…to see your team win feels good. or to learn or to support…someone you know or admire is playing a match.
Trent: Socializing but next up is probably entertainment I guess.

Interviewer: Would you say you watch Taiwanese …or your country’s female athletes?

Trent: Not really. It’s difficult enough to access my country’s men’s sports matches, let alone female.

Interviewer: So it’s difficult to find female sports games to watch. It doesn’t seem like pubs ever air them huh. Do you think there are gender differences or in equalities amongst female and male athletes in Taiwan? How does it compare to female athletes in your respected countries?

Trent: I feel like there are less females in Taiwan who are sports-oriented or have developed skills which enable them to pick up sports easily. In Australia, most girls know how to play some kind of team sport like netball, basketball, tennis, hockey and stuff, however I don’t think that very many Taiwanese girls would be able to play at least one sport well. Although this also goes for boys, but you tend to see more boys out playing sports like basketball, baseball or soccer compared to girls. I think there’s possibly some kind of stereotype that girls don’t need to play sports at all, or that they’re not encouraged to do so, they would only do so if they wanted to themselves.

Interviewer: So do you ever watch sports games with females then?

Trent: Not particularly.

Interviewer: Of the three levels of fan identifications, what do you rate yourself? Low for entertainment and or socializing purposes…fans aren’t necessarily invested in team statistics. Watch because friends are…or maybe Medium…which means you are aware of different team stats as well as their own. Have team merchandise and watch regularly, but usually only with others. Not a necessity to watch the games…lastly…High where wins and losses affects your mood tremendously. Watch every game and will schedule days on games in advance. and you will watch games alone.

Trent: hahaha…High. Most definitely.

Interviewer: Do you associate yourself with your home countries sports teams more than Taiwanese sports teams?

Trent: Yes. It’s usually because of a sense of national pride. When you live away from home, sport is a good way to show your connection to home, and also it’s usually a good way to socialize with other like minded people living away from home. I don’t follow Taiwanese sports mainly because the major Taiwanese international teams are for sports which I’m not really interested in…like baseball, soccer, basketball, badminton and so forth.

Interviewer: Yeah most definitely. Being far from home is always hard. Sports can help to make you feel more connected. How are the sports in Taiwan though? How do they compare to your home country’s sports?

Trent: How do they compare to your home country’s sports? Taiwan’s sports tend to be more influenced by the United States…like basketball and baseball. Whereas…Aussies… Australian sports are more European influenced.

Trent: Yeah definitely. haha

Interviewer: Do you follow any sports teams or athletes in particular? like on social media…like twitter, instagram or facebook.

Trent: Tim Cahill, Socceroos, Melbourne Storm and Hawthorn Hawks.

Interviewer: So…sports…in Taiwan..what makes sports watching different in Taiwan than from any other city?

Trent: As mentioned, a lot of foreigners go to watch games purely to socialize. It’s one of the most social ways to get to meet people as a foreigner. Sports wise.. In Taiwan you really need to make an effort to watch a game, as foreign sports other than basketball and baseball are rarely shown on cable. So you need to either purchase an online subscription or go to a bar. Taipei is particularly difficult as there are very few bars open during the day when sports from Australia and NZ are broadcast, therefore you need to make sure that the bar is open and will be showing the game. Also, there is competition from European football fans in the evenings, which conflict with the broadcast of European and African rugby games. Football usually gets priority because there are more local fans turning up to watch Man U, Liverpool, Chelsea ….and yeah.

Interviewer: Since it’s such a social thing. How do you think you behave when you watch sports?

Trent: I tend to drink a lot, especially when it’s at the pub with friends or teammates.

Interviewer: Are there any rituals you practice before or after or during games?

Trent: Not really a ritual, but I like to participate in tipping …or fantasy competitions with friends. It makes me more interested in the game as a whole, and do more research about upcoming games and teams. It’s also good because it give me an interest in matches between teams which I would not ordinarily support or have an interest in.

Interviewer: Do you think you are vocal during matches then?

Trent: Only if it’s a particularly important game and there is a large crowd watching, I wouldn’t …I wouldn’t be unnecessarily vocal in a quiet bar with only a few people…if you get what I mean.

Interviewer: Yes I do. That sounds a bit awkward if you did…wouldn’t you say… haha

Trent: hahaha for sure thats why I wouldn’t be. But in a pub I guess I’ll shout if other people are and if its loud.

Interviewer: Are there particular etiquettes or unwritten rules you have to follow while watching a televised sports match?
Trent: Don’t be a bad loser obviously, and respect other teams’ fans during things like national anthems.

Interviewer: Overall, would you say you like to watch sports games alone or with others?

Trent: At a pub, definitely with others as I don’t really like sitting in a bar by myself. But sometimes I like to watch games alone in order to not get distracted chatting, however the result is usually that I spend most of the game chatting on my cellphone and don’t really concentrate on the game.

Interviewer: So it’s dependent on where and what game then? One you need to concentrate you watch alone?

Trent: Yeah. Something like that.

Interviewer: There are never that many women who watch the games it seems. Do you think sports in Taiwan embody masculinity?

Trent: No. Mainly because the Taiwanese do not really participate in contact sports. The first reaction I get from Taiwanese when I say I play rugby is that it’s “so violent” and “easy to get injured”, however many countries have rugby as a major national sport and don’t have a population riddled with injuries. I think the problem lies in the fact that Taiwanese parents wouldn’t approve of their children playing sports such as rugby from a young age for fear of injury, however this is exactly the time when they would learn how to play the game properly and learn techniques to prevent injuries.

Interviewer: Yeah I get that Taiwanese are not that into sports in general. There aren’t a lot of local participants in the pubs.

Trent: There rarely are any.

Interviewer: Is watching sports a priority for you?

Trent: Yes, especially if my team is playing. I will schedule time to watch games, or if I can’t watch a game live, I will schedule a time to watch the replay, and stay off social media in order to not know the result until I’ve watched the replay.

Interviewer: That must be difficult to stay away from social media! Is there anything else you would like to add that you think is important to the sports watching culture in Taiwan amongst foreigners?

Trent: As I’ve mentioned above you need to be quite dedicated in order to watch sports in Taiwan, both because of game times and available media outlets to watch. It would be worse if I were a fan of US sports, which would be televised in the early hours of the morning in Taiwan. I think the most important thing is that sports watching can be a very good way to make friends in Taiwan, especially when you’ve just arrived in town. Even those who don’t play sports can join teams socially, and a major social activity will be watching games. Online telecasts are making it a lot easier to watch legitimately these days as well.
Appendix III- Example Field Observation Notes

TV SCREEN

High Five- III
Shout in Favor - I
Table 1

High Five- III III
Shout in Favor - III III
Table 2

Claping - III III
III
III
Table 3

Table 1

Table 2

Table 3