



Reimagining the city : the impact of sport initiatives on tourists' images of urban destinations

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**Reimagining the city: The impact of
sport initiatives on tourists' images of
urban destinations**

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Collaborating Institution: The University of Sheffield

*In partial fulfilment of the requirements for
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Andrew Smith

Abstract

The contemporary city is notably image-conscious. Indeed, several commentators suggest that cities are consciously attempting to manufacture images and identities by manipulating a range of myths, traditions, lifestyles and urban cultures. The need to develop appealing city images is a particular concern for post-industrial cities attempting to acquire attractive reputations as tourist destinations. In an almost desperate search for imaging themes for this purpose, a growing number of cities have employed sport initiatives, involving events, event bids and the construction of new facilities. Despite the lack of evidence of, and associated explanations for, image effects, it is widely assumed that these initiatives do have the capacity to enhance the image of the city destination. The present study explores the validity of this assumption by evaluating the use and impacts of 'sport reimagining' in three UK cities - Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. Despite recognition of the multiple objectives of city reimagining in these cities, the primary aim of the study is to reveal how sport initiatives have influenced the images of potential tourists. Findings included in the study affirm that all three of the case-study cities have used sport events and sport stadia as vehicles for reimagining, with tourist images a particular concern. The study not only assesses whether such reimagining works, but explores how it might work.

The study is assisted by the development and use of a conceptual framework that surmises that sport reimagining can influence both the holistic images of cities and specific perceptions of sporting provision. The study employs this framework to evaluate the impacts of sport imaging by identifying the processes through which these impacts may be procured. Accordingly, the effects of the case study initiatives are assessed in reference to their propensity to engender denotative perceptions of impressive sport provision and their capacity to procure fresh metonymic images and positive connotations. This is achieved by using a combination of methods, including semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, to explore how sport reimagining has affected the images of potential tourists. As such the study addresses a weakness in the burgeoning place image literature which is dominated by attempts to deconstruct city reimagining, and where there is too little attention to its reception, consumption and

interpretation by target audiences. The study findings suggest that all three case study cities have developed strong sporting reputations and that sport initiatives do have the capacity to affect holistic city images because of their potency as metonyms and metaphors. However, despite widespread awareness of their implementation, the specific effects engendered by some case study initiatives appear rather limited. Furthermore, the study reveals certain problems that question the overall value of sport reimagining to the city destination.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Where we used to think of the city as a machine for working in, we now see it as an antique, a spectacle or even an image for living in. The city is no longer treated as an entity malleable for broad social ends, but as a collage of spaces and people, of ephemeral events and fragmentary contacts.

Harvey 1988:33

1.0 The research context

Various political, epistemological and economic shifts over the past forty years have precipitated different approaches to instigating urban renaissance. For instance, the property-led initiatives which dominated the 1980s can be distinguished clearly from the experimental period of the 1960s and 1970s (Oatley 1998). One identifiable shift in approaches to urban regeneration is the extension of the scope of the activities undertaken by municipal authorities. Whereas urban policy in previous decades focused exclusively on the provision of local services for resident populations, contemporary urban governance has been forced into a more entrepreneurial role. According to Harvey, 'the grim history of deindustrialisation and restructuring' has 'left most major cities in the advanced capitalist world with few options except to compete with each other, mainly as financial, consumption and entertainment centres' (Harvey 1989a:92). In this competitive environment, UK cities have utilised various urban products, themes and resources to vie for a share of limited external capital and employment. For example, several cities have highlighted their qualities as cultural centres (Griffiths 1995) or their locational advantages (Barke and Harrop 1994) to stimulate economic development. Others have highlighted historical events or even mythical and fictional associations to compete in a post-industrial 'symbolic' economy. However, evoking parallels with Athenian and Roman antecedents, several cities in the UK have attempted to use sport to demonstrate urban prestige and it is the analysis of these endeavours that provides the focus for this study.

1.1 Sport-led urban regeneration

According to Williams (1997), sport is becoming an increasingly popular vehicle for facilitating local economic development. In qualifying the use of the word 'sport', Williams states that his work focuses upon 'high profile spectator sport, or sport as display, not sport as play' (Williams 1997:74). This study adopts a similar perspective and the subsequent use of the term should be interpreted as a reference to this dimension. Following the example set by metropolitan areas in the USA, cities within the UK are attempting to use sport initiatives to stimulate urban renewal. These initiatives or strategies appear to be driven by a number of objectives, as illustrated in Figure 1.1.1

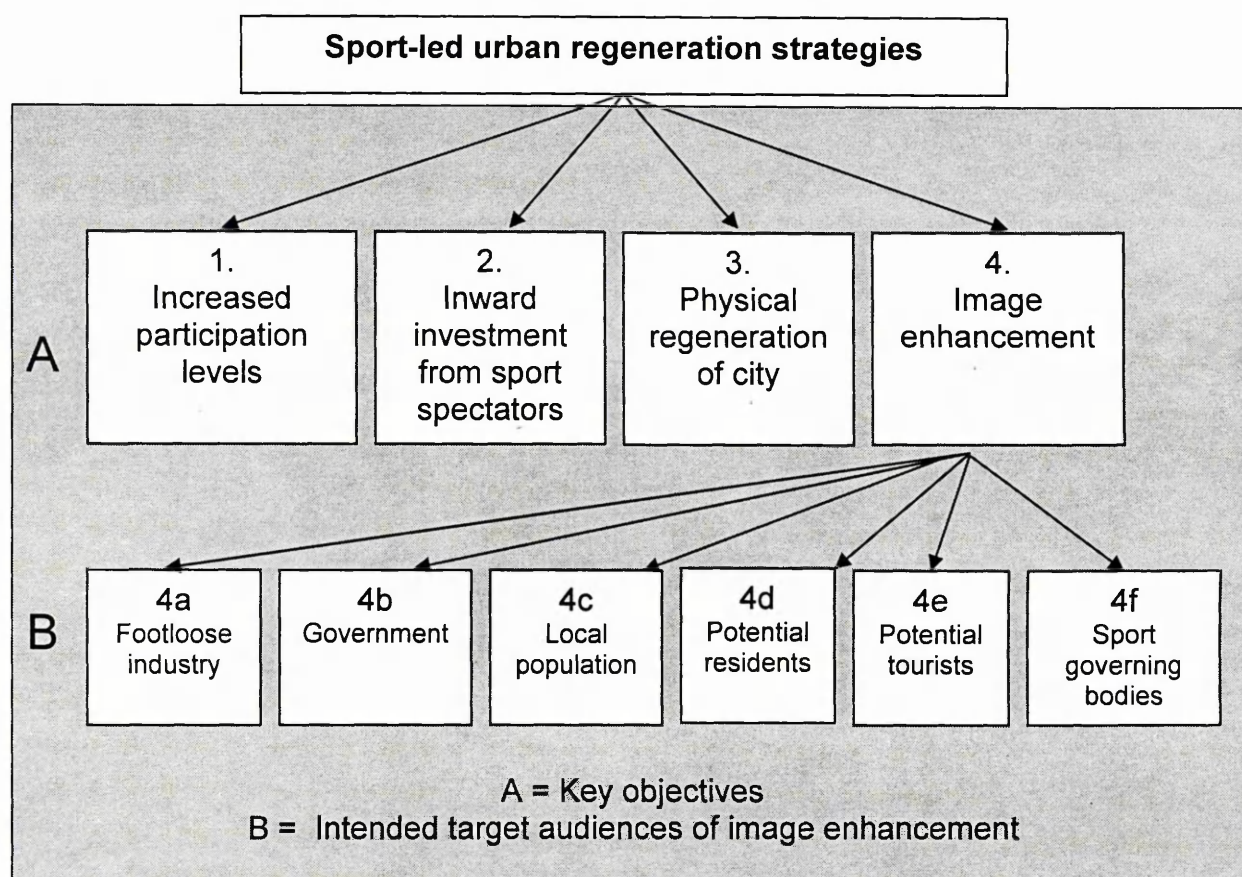


Figure 1.1.1 The objectives of sport-led urban regeneration strategies

This study focuses on one specific objective of sport-led urban regeneration - the enhancement of city image. The scope of the study can be defined further in that the images considered are those of potential urban tourists. Therefore while Figure 1.1.1 maps potential areas of inquiry regarding sport-led regeneration, the present study focuses exclusively on category 4e.

1.2 Sport reimagining

The use of sport to enhance city images is by no means an exclusively contemporary phenomenon. Reiss (1981) identifies Los Angeles as a city pursuing a sport-based image enhancement strategy in the early part of the Twentieth Century:

After World War I a handful of visionary movers and shakers decided to advance their city's reputation for the purpose of encouraging the expression of tourism, commerce and migration. The key to their plan was the construction of a huge outdoor sports facility where great sport spectacles and festivals would be staged.

(Reiss 1981:50).

Despite such precedents, since the mid-1980s, sport-led image enhancement has been embraced with a new intensity and purpose by a large number of 'Western' cities. Many of these cities have suffered greatly because of the reconfiguration of the international division of labour and the resultant decline of their manufacturing sectors. As a result, they have been forced into competition with one another to attract service-orientated growth industries. Alongside FIRE industries (finance, insurance and real-estate), one of the most frequently pursued sectors is tourism. Proponents of a visitor-orientated strategy often argue that tourism is a labour intensive industry that carries a low capital cost of job creation, spurs economic development, improves a city's built environment, and enhances leisure provision for residents (Shaw and Williams 1994). Whether this is a realistic interpretation is questionable, but nevertheless a large number of cities have adopted this philosophy to justify investment in tourism development and marketing.

Growing competition between cities and the contemporary influence of the media means that the success of city destinations is increasingly reliant on the image of the city. When considering urban tourism, image is particularly important because as Strauss (1961, c.f. Judd 1995:176) states, the sheer scale and diversity of cities means that they are 'inaccessible to the imagination' unless they are reduced and simplified into a meaningful form. In an attempt to influence perceptions of individual urban centres, city authorities and affiliated agencies often promote carefully selected images to further a city's tourism ambitions. A variety of terms are used to describe this process, including civic boosterism,

place marketing, geographical marketing, selling places and the term used in this study - city reimagining.

Although there are notable exceptions, the strategy of using sport events and prestige sport facilities to secure image reorientation has primarily been implemented by 'industrial' cities. These cities are the product of industrial development and as Law affirms, their industrial character and image is a barrier to the evolution of their tourist industry (Law 1993:2). The problem, as Hall notes, is that the word 'industry' and the identities and images that it evokes are highly problematic for the promotion of cities within the context of the post-industrial urban economy (Hall, T 1997). According to Hall it evokes 'a whole series of negative, unfashionable images' (Hall, T 1997:216). Consequently, these 'industrial' cities have attempted to develop associations with more positive concepts in order to attract capital and people in the present period of intensified urban competition (Harvey 1989a:92). For a number of cities, the result has been sport reimagining.

1.3 Key elements of sport reimagining.

Sport reimagining typically involves bidding for and staging major sporting events and constructing major sporting arenas needed to stage them (Loftman and Spirou 1996). This study focuses specially on the utilisation and impacts of **sport events, sport stadia and indoor arenas.**

Sport events are typical of what have been termed 'special' or 'hallmark' events by tourism researchers. These events are defined by Ritchie as major one-time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of the host location (Ritchie 1984:2). As this definition implies, special events are deemed important promotional tools that can be used to boost the image of the city destination. Sport events are viewed by many cities as particularly effective for this purpose, as they generate substantial media exposure. The ultimate example is the Olympic Games, an event so intrinsically associated with place promotion that Philo and Kearns (1993) describe it as the ultimate expression of place marketing. The importance of sport events to the contemporary city can be related to a wider cultural phenomenon, where it has been observed that cities have sought to become centres of consumption through the 'organisation of spectacle and theatricality' (Harvey 1989a:92). The importance of sport to

this emerging 'spectacular city' is outlined by Bourdieu, who states that 'it cannot be ignored that the so-called popular sports also function as spectacles' (1993:346). The desire to create spectacles is closely related to the contention that, rather than relying on the consumption of goods, it is valuable for cities to emphasise the consumption of experiences and pleasure, or what Harvey terms 'ephemeral services in consumption' (Harvey 1989a:285). Staging major sport events is seen not only as a means of generating such consumption, but as an important way of symbolising the transition of the industrial city towards this envisaged role.

In tandem with the staging of special events, the process of sport reimagining frequently involves the construction of new spaces of consumption. These are often centred around spectacular 'flagship' or 'prestige' projects which include **sport stadia and indoor arenas** (Smyth 1994, Loftman and Nevin 1996). These flagship developments are innovative, large-scale projects which provide a focal point and catalyst for tourists and media coverage (Barke and Harrop 1994). According to Harvey (1989a), the production of spectacular urban spaces provides cities with symbols of urban dynamism, enabling the city to exploit conspicuous consumption in a sea of spreading recession. Zukin views this process as a means of producing a vibrant symbolic economy from which a legible image can be abstracted, connecting the city to consumption rather than production (Zukin 1993:45). Sport-related developments are often justified by their supposed symbolic role, signifying transformation and enabling cities to shake off problematic historical legacies. Indeed, as Schimmel (1995) states, sport arenas are perceived by cities to be symbols of success as well as providing multi-functional visitor attractions.

1.4 The aims of the study

Specific research questions will be detailed at the end of chapter 3, once the key concepts have been introduced and discussed. However, it is appropriate here to outline the overall aims of the research, these being:

1. To investigate the use of sport reimagining in three case study cities;
2. To evaluate the impact of sport reimagining on potential tourists' images of three case study cities;
3. To evaluate the value of sport as a reimagining theme for city destinations.

Three case study cities have been selected as the focus for the study, with the intention being to evaluate the objectives and impact of sport reimagining in each. There are a number of reasons why three cities are used, most notably:

- To facilitate comparisons between different reimagining strategies (thus addressing aim 1 above).
- To allow comparisons to be made regarding the impact of different strategies on tourists' images of the cities (aim 2).
- To generate sufficient information to enable significant conclusions to be drawn concerning the overall strategy of sport reimagining (aim 3).

Each city is considered in detail and at one level each city is treated as an individual case study. However, findings are synthesised to develop overall conclusions concerning the use and value of sport reimagining. The cities chosen to provide the focus of the study are Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. These cities all have distinguished industrial histories and have each suffered from the restructuring of the global economy. They are also good examples of where regeneration has been undertaken to stimulate post-industrial revival, and, as Loftman and Nevin (1996) identify, sport is a prominent theme in the regeneration strategies pursued by all three cities. The cities were also selected as they exhibit an interesting blend of similarities and differences with respect to their adopted strategies. The study examines whether Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield's sport-led regeneration strategies were motivated by image considerations. More importantly, the study seeks to establish the effects of these strategies on the image of the city destination.

The three case study cities

This section introduces the three case studies and details their sport-led urban regeneration strategies. However, a more detailed analysis of the nature of the strategies and their envisaged effects, based on significant primary and secondary research, is detailed in chapter 5. Much of the study is based on a cross-sectional analysis of the images of potential tourists, thus only the initiatives implemented before the first stage of fieldwork was completed (July 1998) are considered in the study.

1.5 Birmingham

Birmingham's economy was devastated by the recessions of the late 1970s and 1980s, and it is estimated that 191,000 jobs were lost in the city between the years 1971 to 1987 (Loftman and Nevin 1996). To counter the effects of this 'crisis' and to diversify its economy, the city adopted an ambitious regeneration strategy that was typical of market driven approaches in the 1980s. One element of this strategy was an attempt to attract investment by transmitting a new international image to potential business and leisure tourists. These ambitions were supported by several major sport initiatives, including a bid to stage the 1992 Olympic Games, and the construction of the £51million National Indoor Arena. The city also staged a number of high profile sport events, including the Birmingham Super Prix, and various international sport fixtures. However, Birmingham's sport-led strategy has been implemented alongside other high profile regeneration and imaging initiatives - notably its attempt to gain renown as a centre for the arts, and as a conference and convention city. This study aims to clarify if and how Birmingham aimed to use sport as a vehicle for reimagining and whether any sport reimagining resulted in significant modifications to the city's image.

1.6 Manchester

The 20th Century decline of Manchester's traditional industries (textiles, engineering and steel) intensified during the 1970s and early 1980s. Taylor et al (1996) estimate that 207,000 manufacturing jobs were lost between 1972 and 1984 in the Greater Manchester region. The city's response has been to bolster the city's profile and competitiveness via several high profile schemes. Many of these initiatives have followed a sporting theme, including the bids for the 1996 and 2000 Olympics and the construction of associated facilities such as the National Cycling Centre (NCC) and the NYNEX Arena (now renamed the M.E.N Arena). Partly due to these initiatives, the city was awarded the 2002 Commonwealth Games that will be staged in the city between the 26th July and the 4th August 2002. The Games will utilise the NYNEX Arena, the NCC and the Greater Manchester Exhibition and Event Centre (G-Mex) as well as several new projects that were incomplete at the time the fieldwork for the present study was undertaken. The resources devoted to these initiatives emphasise Manchester's commitment to the use of sport as a means of securing local economic development. This study aims to ascertain

whether these initiatives were motivated by image concerns and the degree to which image benefits have subsequently been procured.

1.7 Sheffield

During the 1970s and 1980s, Sheffield's manufacturing base was eroded severely. Due mainly to problems experienced by the city's steel industries, Sheffield lost 60,000 jobs between 1978 and 1988 (Dabinett 1990 c.f. Loftman and Nevin 1996:1002). In response to the city's declining economic fortunes, the city authorities have used sport as a vehicle for local economic development, with this sport-led strategy being initiated, and dominated, by Sheffield's staging of the 1991 World Student Games (WSG).

Approximately £147 million of public money was spent on developing the facilities required to stage the WSG (Foley 1991). This investment resulted in the construction of the £51million Ponds Forge International Sports Centre which includes a Olympic standard swimming and diving pool, a leisure pool and a multi-functional indoor sports hall. It also provided Sheffield with a new £34million indoor arena located in the Don Valley - an area east of the city that has suffered environmental and social degradation because of the decline of the steel industry. This area also houses the £25 million Don Valley Stadium, a 25,000 capacity athletics stadium which now also stages other sport and leisure events. Since the Games, the city has attempted to use these facilities and its status as a 'National City of Sport' (conferred by the Sports Council) to promote the city to an external audience. The study investigates whether Sheffield's sport strategy was employed to address image concerns and the extent to which the city's tourist image has benefited from these initiatives.

1.8 Why is this research important?

The present study investigates the sport strategies adopted by the three cities and their impact on their images as tourist destinations. Although academic work has been published concerning sport-led urban regeneration (Loftman and Nevin 1996, Loftman and Spirou 1996, Williams 1997), there is little, if any, work which focuses on the impacts of these strategies on city images. Indeed, the majority of this work examines the economic impacts of sport strategies (see Baade and Dye 1988, Crompton 1998, Gratton et al 2000, Gratton and Taylor 2000), whilst other examples have considered the reactions and input

of local communities to sport-led local economic development (Roche 1998).

Frustratingly, a large proportion of this work refers in passing to the intangible benefits relating to city image, but fails to explore the extent of, and nature of, city image impacts. Given that image enhancement is often cited as a primary objective of sport-led strategies, there is a lack of evidence to substantiate image effects and an associated gap in the academic literature.

As well as furthering academic work in this field, the research is important in terms of assessing the effectiveness of expensive strategies - which are predominantly funded publicly. A significant period of time has passed since the initiatives were first implemented in all three cities and it is therefore valuable to investigate the impact of sport reimagining now that the initial 'hype' surrounding the high profile initiatives has dissipated. Urban authorities need information regarding the impact of sport-led regeneration strategies and the study aims to examine the benefits and limitations of existing approaches, as well as providing recommendations for cities wishing to implement sport reimagining in the future. The study also aims to advance understanding of the wider process of urban reimagining by using sport initiatives as an illustrative example.

1.9 The structure of the study

This introduction has located the research within the context of the contemporary 'urban crisis' in British cities. It has explained the focus of the study, detailed the general aims of the research and provided a brief introduction to the three case study cities. Chapter 2 contains a detailed literature review, which discusses the most important academic work published in disparate research fields, uniting ideas to develop a critical argument. Chapter 2 addresses ideas concerning the formation of images, their deliberate manipulation by civic authorities and the relationship between sport strategies and city image. Concepts and debates introduced in the literature review are developed in chapter 3 and combined with the author's own ideas to provide the theoretical framework used in this study. This chapter synthesises ideas from destination image research and communication studies to provide a conceptualisation through which sport reimagining can be better understood. This framework has assisted the development of a comprehensive methodology, which is detailed in chapter 4. The methodology chapter details the epistemological basis of the study and explains how the research has used semi-structured

interviews and questionnaires to ascertain the impact of sport reimagining on potential tourist's images of the three case study cities. Chapter 4 also includes a detailed critical analysis of previous image research methods, which allows the methods adopted in the present study to be justified fully.

Before it is possible to assess the success of the sport-led strategies in modifying city images, it is necessary to substantiate whether image enhancement was an explicit objective of the strategies adopted by Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield and this is the purpose of chapter 5. Chapter 5 explores the initiatives adopted in each city and employs primary and secondary research to explore the motivations and justifications that underpin sport-led regeneration. The theoretical position outlined in earlier chapters contends that image change resulting from specific imaging strategies will not occur unless the target audiences are aware of the messages being promoted. Hence, chapter 6 establishes the extent to which potential tourists are aware of the sport reimagining strategies adopted by Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. This investigation is based on prompted and unprompted enquiry and provides the basis for the subsequent analysis of any image modification. Reflecting the structure of the conceptual framework used in the study, this analysis of image modification is divided into two separate chapters (7 and 8). These two chapters both attempt to evaluate the impact of sport initiatives, but do so by examining different effects on different types of images. The impact of the sport initiatives on the images of the cities as sporting venues is the focus of chapter 7. Through the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, the intention here is to establish whether the cities have developed images as 'cities of sport' and the extent to which this is a result of deliberate sport reimagining. Rather than merely focusing on the literal meanings engendered by staging sport events and constructing new sport facilities, Chapter 8 investigates the symbolic impact of the initiatives on the image of the cities as a whole. This is achieved by establishing whether or not sport reimagining has procured fresh metonymic images and positive symbolic connotations. The findings of the study are synthesised in chapter 9, before the conclusions are discussed. In this final chapter, ideas introduced throughout the study, but particularly those in the literature review (chapter 2) and conceptual framework (chapter 3), are revisited to allow key findings to be related to significant city image issues.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

To contextualise and understand sport reimagining it is necessary to consider the concept of image itself, its application to place, as well as analysing how these places images are formed. It is also important to examine issues regarding deliberate attempts by cities to influence images and, more specifically the way in which sport initiatives have been utilised for this purpose. The following chapter provides a critical evaluation of existing work undertaken in these areas of study. A number of these ideas are then taken forward to provide the conceptual framework (chapter 3) for the present study.

2.1 Image

The term 'image' is derived from the Latin word *imitari*, which means to imitate (Barthes 1977). This derivation has strongly influenced traditional usage, as 'image' has been used commonly to refer to an artificial imitation or reconstruction of a scene or object in literature, art or film. However, as Raymond Williams (1976) points out, this traditional use of the term has been overtaken by the conception of image as perceived reputation or character. Reynolds (1965) agrees that the word image is often used as 'equivalent to reputation', but states that at the same time it is 'analogous to literary composition' (1965:70). The notion of image as a literature, language or rhetoric (Barthes 1977) further complicates attempts to define the meaning and use of the term. However, these different interpretations should not be deemed mutually exclusive. Image remains a representation or reconstruction of a person or object, whether that be a physical reconstruction or one which is predominantly discourse-based.

The congruence between interpretations which appear initially to be dichotomous is reinforced when the supposed characteristics of image are noted. For example, Boorstin (1962) notes that images are synthetic, believable, passive, vivid, simplified and

ambiguous. These characteristics are as relevant to a photograph as they are to a person's character or the linguistic representation of various phenomena. Therefore despite prevalent unease about its multifaceted usage, it should be recognised that 'image' is still a useful and illustrative generic term which can be used to encompass all of the interpretations outlined above. Boorstin's arguments emphasise this position, as his work discusses image from a marketing perspective, but continually cites the importance of what he terms the 'graphic revolution' in the creation, manipulation and dissemination of image (1962). This position emphasises the need to study visual images in tandem with those grounded in discourse. Boorstin's image characteristics are also useful in highlighting the inherent paradoxes involved when studying image. As Boorstin points out, an image must be synthetic, yet serves no purpose, and indeed, ceases to exist if it is not believable. According to Boorstin, images must be vivid and 'graspable' (1962:197), but they must be ambiguous enough to allow them to 'float somewhere between the imagination and the senses' (1962:198). Image is recognised as a complex phenomenon, yet at the same time one which is inherently simplistic, for as Boorstin states, by definition an image is simpler than the object it represents.

A recurring feature of recent discourse is the contention that image has become all-important in contemporary society. Baudrillard asserts that humans mainly live in a world of images, fantasy, unfulfilled desires and simulations removed from material reality (Baudrillard 1983). He suggests that the expansion of the imaginary and corresponding deflation of the real is a recent historical event marking a transition from industrial to consumer, or modern to postmodern society (Baudrillard 1983). In this contemporary era, the mass of reproduced images has supposedly 'gummed up' human capacities to distinguish between reality and fiction (Baudrillard c.f. Rojek and Turner 1993). This has supposedly made people prone to the big image - the 'spectacle' - where the masses become hostage to political manipulation. Here, the importance of the image is communicated at a level beyond individual consumption patterns (Baudrillard 1983), where image influences human existence and global cultures and is the vehicle allowing late capitalist society to function. Indeed, one of Baudrillard's central arguments is that we no longer consume products, but signs and images (Baudrillard 1983). Several authors, including Baudrillard (1988), Boorstin (1962) and Davis (1992) imply that this shift is most obvious in contemporary America, which they suggest now merely exists as a series of images, perpetuated and manipulated by the media. The contention is that reality has

somehow been transformed into a series of images which lack historical context, reference to a material signifier and which exist as a series of perpetual presents (Jameson c.f. Featherstone 1991).

According to Baudrillard and Jameson it is the new and central role which images perform in consumption which has pushed us towards a 'qualitatively new society in which the distinction between reality and image and everyday life becomes aestheticized, the simulational world of post modern culture' (Featherstone 1991:68). There are several implications of this alleged transformation. Because the profusion and proliferation of images cannot be stabilised into a system which correlates to fixed social divisions, we are supposedly seeing the 'end of the social as a significant reference point' (Featherstone 1991:83). One effect is the blurring of societal boundaries and, as a result, the supposed effacement of the distinction between high and mass culture (Jameson 1984:112). Alongside the death of the social, according to Baudrillard, the loss of the 'real' leads to increased nostalgia and a desperate search for authenticity (Featherstone 1991). In recognising the importance of these arguments to understanding the contemporary role of image, it should be acknowledged that these exaggerated viewpoints have been vehemently challenged by other commentators. For instance, Habermas considers that there remains the possibility of saving enlightened modernism from the fragmentary forces of imagery (c.f. Cloke et al 1991).

2.2 Place image and its formation

Despite the relevance of addressing contemporary sociological debates about the role of image in society, this study deals explicitly with place images, rather than with images in general. In 1947, J.K Wright wrote of the importance of the geographical imagination and the previously unexplored geographies of the mind (Phillips 1993). However, whilst scientists such as Tolman pioneered the exploration of environmental knowledge, it was not until Boulding's seminal text, 'The Image: Knowledge in Life and Society' (1961) that the importance of images of place began to be addressed properly. In place image research, the emphasis is not on investigating places as material entities but on how people perceive or imagine them. Pocock and Hudson (1978) demonstrate this perspective in their assertion that the most important landscape is the one in the mind - the imagined environment. Nevertheless, despite the fifty-year consensus regarding the importance of

studying the environment as it is perceived, rather than the environment as it is, there remains confusion regarding what should be included within the study of place image.

Manifestly reflecting the debates regarding different interpretations of image in general, in identifying interpretations of *place* image, there appears to be a clear distinction between commentators who view place image as a pictorial reconstruction, and those who see the term as exemplifying a set of perceived attributes. For example, Tuan (1975) asserts that image study should be restricted to the term's literal psychological definition of eidetic representation (Burgess 1978:3). This definition thus excludes verbal associations and more abstract representations from associated analysis and contradicts Burgess's own perspective, where the term image is used 'without confusion to characterise the verbal descriptions of individual experiences, feelings and attitudes towards environment[s]' (Burgess 1978:4).

Though differing interpretations of the concept of place image have been detailed, these perspectives are not necessarily contradictory. Rather it would appear that each perspective concentrates on the different ways in which images are formed of places. The above discussion implies that images may take very different forms or contain distinct elements because they are derived from different sources of information. It would therefore seem appropriate that to understand the concept of image more fully it is necessary to explore the ways in which images can be conceptualised, both in terms of dissecting place images into component parts and by attempting to classify different types of images held.

2.2.1 The importance of geographical proximity and familiarity

The way in which the concept of place image is addressed is often dependent on the locational proximity of the place under consideration. According to Goodey, place images can be classified into those relating to the personal space of the individual, those which refer to a median area where the individual may claim familiarity, and finally diffuse images of 'far places' (Goodey c.f. Burgess 1978:32). In this conceptualisation, Goodey emphasises that both proximity and familiarity may result in very different types of place image. This idea was developed further by Burgess (1978) who developed a scheme which 'differentiates between images of a given place on the basis of the experience and

hence the quality and quantity of information available to different groups of individuals' (Burgess 1978:32). This schema identifies three hypothetical images: stylised, structured and stereotyped. Individuals with personal knowledge of place are considered to hold more structured images, with inhabitants of that place expected to exhibit stylised images. Those without personal knowledge of the place would be more likely to exhibit stereotypical images of a place. Pocock and Hudson (1978) also feel it is necessary to create a subdivision of stereotypical images when considering images of the city. They assert that these stereotypes represent an oversimplified, mythological and even prejudicial way of perceiving the urban environment (Pocock and Hudson 1978). Burgess's analysis (1974) of perceptions of the city of Hull illustrates this contrast between the image of a place held by the resident population and those held by 'outsiders.' More specifically, this study suggests that residents' images are much more diverse, while the perceptions of outsiders are characterised by more stereotyped images. In the present study the focus is on these external vague or naive images of cities which are located outside a person's normal sphere of existence. Therefore it may be that this study will be dealing with what Burgess (1974) terms urban stereotypes. These images are partial representations formed in the main from secondary sources, especially the mass media, rather than from any direct experience of the city.

2.2.2 Perceptual theories relating to familiar environments

Images of immediate or familiar environments have attracted the interest of environmental psychologists. Within this field of study the work of Egon Brunswik (1956, 1959, 1966) is particularly valued, as he was one of the first to identify the presence and function of distinct environmental images. He proposed a 'lens' model, which conceptualised the process of image formation as the focusing of environmental stimuli through perceptual efforts into a simpler and more manageable form. The result of this process is an image, which environmental psychologists argue exists along two distinct dimensions. First, a meaning based 'propositional' storage of information involving meaningful words and associations (Bell et al 1996). Echtner and Ritchie (1991) term this sort of image a 'discursive' representation, which is useful in explaining this language-based form of city image. This type of image encompasses words, phrases and associations that are used to represent a place in a person's mind. The other place image dimension involves a mental reconfiguration depicting a real life environment, or 'analogue' representation as it is

termed within the discipline of environmental psychology (Bell et al 1996). The most convincing psychological position is that people's images of place comprise a combination of both these image types. For instance, though information about places may be stored in a propositional way, this information can be used to construct an image that may be characterised by an analogical representation (Bell et al 1996).

The study of perception in cognitive psychology attempts to explain how we become aware of information about our environment, how we process that information and how we give meaning to that information which eventually leads us to respond to it. This sort of research has obvious implications for assessing the formation of destination images. Much of the work within environmental psychology is characterised by 'bottom-up theories' which focuses on the information provided by the environment which in turn determines the environmental interpretation of the individual. In this type of research, it is argued that the environment provides information that largely determines the perceptual process. Brunswick's theory of perception, usually referred to as the lens model, is based on such an assumption (1956, 1959). Brunswick's theory states that individuals sample environmental cues and make probabilistic judgements about them which leads to a perceptual representation. Perhaps controversially, in such theories, the individual acts merely as a physiological organism which is prompted and guided by the environment that surrounds him. Other major theories have more in common with a 'top-down' theory. For example, Gregory (1966 c.f. Cassidy 1997) suggests that the perceptual process is analogous to the scientific process of generating and testing hypotheses. He argues that that an individual's previous experience stored in the memory is all important in the process because perception involves the higher level cognitive elements involved in thinking. From these higher levels, hypotheses are formulated which are then matched against environmental information. Through this process Gregory believes that perceptual images are generated that guide behaviour (c.f. Cassidy 1997).

Perhaps the most renowned school of thought in the field of environmental psychology is that developed by the Gestalt School. The principal argument of Gestalt psychology is that studying aspects of the external environment is irrelevant since it is the picture of that external environment that people have inside their head which motivates and directs them. Koffka (1935) described this internal or phenomic world as the behavioural environment because it was here that we would find the causes of behaviour. Clearly what we see is

often more than the sum of the physical or social elements that make up the external environment. An essential part of this process is the role of meaning. What makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts in psychology is generally the meaning given to the experience by the individual.

According to Cassidy (1997) there are three main conclusions that can be drawn from the theoretical debates which surround the discipline of environmental psychology. The first is that the environment provides information which is both necessary and important in the perceptual process. The second consists of the argument that the environment shapes our perceptual processes by determining the content of our perceptual memory. Finally, Cassidy (1997) argues that a person selects, interprets and gives meaning to the information received and constructs a 'phenomic' environment which then overrides the objective environment and determines behaviour.

2.2.3 Environmental perception: Planning perspectives

Located within the perceptual tradition of image research, perhaps the most famous conceptualisation of city image formation is that produced by Lynch (1960). According to Lynch, the contents of city images can be classified conveniently into five types of elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. These five elements were identified by Lynch as the dominant themes of residents' images of their own cities. Lynch recognised through his work that rather than a single, comprehensive image for the entire environment, there seems to be sets of images that overlap and interrelate to one another (Lynch 1960). According to Lynch, these images are arranged in a series of levels from an image at street level to the levels of neighbourhood, city or metropolitan region (Lynch 1960). The value of Lynch's model is that it gives an almost unique evaluation of the influences and importance of physical features in the landscape when considering place image. It illustrates the way in which images are formed on a variety of levels and emphasises the fact that our knowledge and interpretation of locations is based on analogical memories (mental images). However, we must not consider Lynch's model as a way of fully conceptualising the image formation process. What the conceptualisation does do very successfully is highlight and explain a major part of that process - the way in which we perceive and recall certain and selective components of the physical landscape. Despite this value, it should be noted that Lynch's work concerns people who experienced

the relevant physical environments on a regular basis. Therefore when using the work within a tourism context we must be careful not to assume his findings can be directly applied to naive or promoted images of place. Nevertheless, despite this fundamental difference the model constructed by Lynch does have great relevance for any analysis of the way in which people form images of cities.

2.2.4 Behavioural geography

Place perception is a fundamental part of the study of behavioural geography. Indeed, Ley considers environmental perception to be one of the three key empirical directions within behavioural geography (in Johnston et al 1994). The emphasis within this sub-discipline is the study of how humans understand and process information about the world in which we live. This emphasis is evident in research concerning 'mental maps', where researchers attempt to reconstruct psychological interpretations of places and place preferences (Gould and White 1974). Destination image research in tourism studies has relied heavily on behavioural geography, both for its conceptual ideas and the methods adopted (see chapter 4). However, though the use of place image research to inform destination image research appears to be a useful basis for the development of image studies in tourism, one can argue that it has actually hindered the appropriate development of tourist image study.

Behavioural geography and the psychological premises on which it is based focuses heavily on people's perception of their immediate surroundings. By definition tourism research is more concerned with perceptions of unfamiliar surroundings. It is therefore argued that in fact the study of destination image needs to supplement behavioural analysis with greater attention to societal influences, cultural landscapes (as well as physical ones), linguistic nuances, and the increasingly influential role of the media and advertising.

2.2.5 Theories related to images of 'median' and 'far' places

Appleyard's (1973) ideas regarding the way in which people form images of cities which they are not familiar with are particularly relevant to studies of destination image.

Appleyard argues that there are three main types of urban perception which dominate the city image formation process (1973). The first of these is a responsive reaction, where people react or 'respond' to imageable elements within the city. Appleyard also suggests that people view cities in terms of their operational roles via the selection of features and

functions that are perceived as able to satisfy certain personal goals or carry out certain tasks. Finally, he proposes an inferential processing of information about cities, where they are fitted into and compared with other cities within a generalisable system of environmental categories. Therefore, cities that are new to the observer are matched against this general code to form a perception or image of the urban environment. The value of Appleyard's work is that it is directly relevant to people who live outside the city and who may not have a very clear image of the urban environment. Therefore, although grounded in behavioural science and environmental psychology, it is of specific importance to the present study because it facilitates an understanding of the images of potential, rather than merely actual, tourists.

Though different forms of processing have been identified, the way in which information about far or median places is ordered, rationalised and moulded to produce meaningful place images has never been addressed satisfactorily by place image research. This is an area of study where ideas from psychology can be used to help us understand the processing of information about destinations. A common observation is that the human brain searches for coherence and balance in the information it receives (Font 1996). In a useful examination of the perceptual processes that relate to tourism and the perception of tourism destinations, Mayo and Jarvis (1981) apply four ideas from Gestalt psychology to assist the understanding of destination image formation. This application is explained in Table 2.2.1 below:

Psychological construct	Explanation	Tourism application
Similarity	One of the major stimulus factors of organisation. Similar things tend to be perceived as belonging to each other	People group destinations together in categories despite the fact that in many important ways they are all quite unique.
Proximity	A second we or Thing perce	Places near to each other are perceived similarly, despite striking differences.
Symmetry	Human and if necessary we will provide the missing elements required in order to achieve closure.	Applied to tourism advertising slogans where consumers are invited to complete the missing lines.
Context	Refers to the environment or setting of an object and often determines how that object will be perceived.	Travellers may not know very much about a particular destination, but will imply ideas and concepts from what the little they do know.

Table 2.2.1 *An application of psychological ideas to tourism image studies - compiled from Mayo and Jarvis (1981)*

Though some of these ideas illustrated in Table 2.2.1 give an indication as to the psychological processes that determine the way in which the human mind organises information, there are several problems with Mayo and Jarvis's ideas. Though proximity may be an important processual function, the examples given by Mayo and Jarvis (1981) are problematic in that the destinations cited are not only united by geographical propinquity but by common cultural and political histories. Therefore the reason Spain and Portugal may be perceived as being similar is more than simply a function of their geographical proximity. The example cited by the authors regarding the principle of symmetry is also rather unconvincing, and it would appear that there is little difference in Mayo and Jarvis's interpretation of the definition and application of symmetry and context – a criticism that can also be levelled at their ill-defined distinction between similarity and proximity. Therefore, rather than detailing four 'processes' that influence destination image formation, the authors merely provide two important observations. First, that the human mind tends to organise information into categories which can secrete important differences and result in stereotypical images. Second, that where detailed information is

Psychological construct	Explanation	Tourism application
Similarity	One of the major stimulus factors of organisation. Similar things tend to be perceived as belonging to each other.	People group destinations together in categories despite the fact that in many important ways they are all quite unique.
Proximity	A second stimulus factor by which we organise what we perceive. Things near each other tend to be perceived as belonging together.	Places near to each other are perceived similarly, despite striking differences.
Symmetry	Humans have a desire for symmetry and if necessary we will provide the missing elements required in order to achieve closure.	Applied to tourism advertising slogans where consumers are invited to complete the missing lines.
Context	Refers to the environment or setting of an object and often determines how that object will be perceived.	Travellers may not know very much about a particular destination, but will imply ideas and concepts from what the little they do know.

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not available to an individual, they will infer information and cultivate a more comprehensive image from the little they do know. This has direct links with the observations made by Appleyard (1973) noted above.

2.3 Conceptualising the components of destination image

In order to understand place images further, academics have suggested ways of subdividing the concept into image 'components' (Gartner 1996:457). The most frequently used conceptualisation involves dissecting images into two main components, a person's 'factual' knowledge about a place and their subjective evaluations of it. Numerous authors have utilised this conceptualisation, although the different elements are sometimes given different titles. For example, Walmsley and Young (1998) assert that images can be divided into two 'sorts' depending on 'whether the emphasis is on the perceptual or cognitive processing of environmental information or on the evaluations of places' (1998:65). The authors use the terms designative and evaluative to refer to these different types of image. The evaluative dimension has been comprehensively explored by Nasar (1998), who has completed an exhaustive study of the evaluative image of the city, where he interprets the evaluative image as relating to the 'likability' of the urban environment. Nasar considers the likability of a city to comprise 'the probability that an environment will evoke a strong and favourable response among the groups experiencing it' (Nasar 1998:3).

The most frequently cited manifestation of the objective/subjective conceptualisation is that used by Gartner (1996), who contends that images comprise of distinct 'cognitive' and 'affective' components. Based on preceding work by Boulding (1956), and Scott (1965 c.f. Gartner 1996:457), Gartner asserts that the cognitive component is that derived from a factual basis. This is a contentious classification, as the contention that any image, or part of an image is 'factual' is difficult to justify. The idea of a 'truthful' or 'factual' image would certainly be challenged by much image-related work, which tends to see place image as a highly interpretative phenomenon. Nevertheless, Gartner does provide an important justification for this awkward delineation of the cognitive component of images by stating that it is this image component that needs to be developed to generate destination awareness. According to Gartner, the affective component of image 'is related to motives in the sense that is how that person feels about the object under consideration' (1996:457). Thus Gartner appears to make a clear distinction between images of the

'known' attributes of a destination and those which relate to an individual's feelings. This latter reaction is determined by motives and is highly subjective. These two image 'components' reflect the designative and evaluative categorisations used by Walmsley and Young (1998).

Gartner's work deviates from comparable conceptualisations by introducing a third component (1996). The conative factor is the component concerned with action involving a decision whether or not to travel to the destination. Gartner implies that alongside known attributes and feelings about a place, images also include perceptions regarding propensity to visit certain locations. However, this conative component could be said to be a consequence of a place image rather than a constituent part of the concept. Confusingly Gartner himself appears to recognise this discrepancy, stating that 'the interrelationship of these components ultimately determines predisposition for visitation' (Gartner 1996:457). Despite the ambiguities of Gartner's conceptualisation, it identifies three specific areas that need to be addressed when researching images. First, it is necessary to establish a person's knowledge of a certain place and to ascertain the level of awareness relating to a certain destination. Second, it is important to reveal evaluations relating to a certain location. Finally, it has been observed that to put these observations into context, it is necessary to establish the relationship between the image of a destination and the propensity of an individual to visit it. These implications have all been incorporated into the design of the present study (see chapter 4).

2.3.1 Holistic and attribute-based images

Perhaps one of the most useful observations about the constitution of place images is noted by Echtner and Ritchie (1991), who have developed work by MacInnis and Price (1987) to argue that images are made up of holistic impressions alongside perceptions of individual attributes. Holistic components of images are those which sum up someone's total impressions of a place, while perceptions of individual attributes refer to isolated features and perceived qualities of a location which a person recalls in their mind. Implicit distinctions between 'holistic' and 'attribute' based impressions are also noticeable in other research (see Tuan 1974). For Pearce (1988) and Um and Crompton (1990) destination image exists as a holistic construct, an overall picture or stereotype which enables scenes and panoramas to be stored in the long term memory. These interpretations exclude

attribute-based perceptions, as image is conceived only as united whole. This view is also communicated by Reynolds (1965), who concludes that 'images are ordered wholes' (1965:75). Despite these comments, it would appear dangerous to ignore perceptions that may influence the success of a tourist destination simply because they are not included in part of a city's holistic image. Other authors have produced work concerning destination image which has focused on the specific attributes of places and the way in which they are perceived by visitors (Stabler 1988, Ashworth and Goodall 1988). Despite the apparent disagreements noted above, the present study aims to further develop Echtner and Ritchie's ideas concerning holistic and attribute-based images. Chapter 3 contains more detail about how these basic ideas have been used and synthesised with ideas from communications studies to produce a coherent framework for understanding how sport reimagining influences the different components of city images.

2.3.2 The identification and classification of image formation agents

Within destination image research, many authors have attempted to investigate the image formation process. Much of this work recognises that tourism, by definition, involves destinations away from a person's familiar environment, and therefore that direct experience of the destination is only one of a plethora of factors that may influence this process. The various influences cited by tourism researchers can be summarised under three main headings – promotional material, secondary experience (the opinions of others) and media output (Ross 1994, Font 1996). The basic assumption made by much destination image formation literature is that these three influences 'react' with personal or individual factors to produce a discernible image (Font 1996). Baloglu and McCleary (1999) adopt this conceptualisation in recognising that the image formation process is a result of the convergence of personal and stimulus factors. More sophisticated interpretations also indicate the importance of cultural or societal influences in determining perceived place images.

2.3.3 Personal factors

The psychological theories already detailed tend to see the formation of place images as being determined by neurological processes and not by the interests, experiences, values and motives of human beings. Similarly, behavioural theories are commonly accused of

disregarding the role of human awareness and human agency and neglecting an 'expansive view of what the human person is and can do' (Tuan c.f Johnston et al 1994:263). To some extent an antidote to these behavioural ideas is provided by isolated pieces of tourism research where personal factors, rather than generic psychological factors, are considered. Reassuringly, some commentators, including Font (1996), recognise 'personal factors' as comprising an important element of the image formation process. Indeed, alongside their analysis of stimulus factors, driven by generic psychological processes, Mayo and Jarvis (1981) also see 'personal factors' as an important part of the way places are perceived. They state that an individual's interests are important, suggesting that 'what people choose to perceive is very closely related to what we care about' (Mayo and Jarvis 1981:28). The authors also identify the importance of an individual's needs, expectations, personality and social class in determining their perceptions of destinations. Similar factors are identified by Stabler (1988:135) who treats the image formation process as a demand - supply equation, where optimum efficiency is reached when the two sides balance. The demand side is that derived from individual consumers and relevant personal factors that influence this 'demand side' of the image formation process allegedly include needs, motivations, perceptions, physical factors, status, social contact, cultural factors, intellectual capacity, creativity, the desire to escape routine, relaxation, preferences and experiences. According to Stabler, the destination image is produced when these personal factors meet the information emanating from the destination itself (1988).

This focus on the individual is justified by the subjectivity and variability of mental conceptions, perceptions and ideas about phenomena. According to Ashworth and Goodall (1988), a tourist's image of a destination is very much influenced by how that individual perceives the message being conveyed, and indeed what messages they have received in the first place. For example, tourists appear to vary in their sensitivity to information exposure (Ashworth and Goodall 1988), and it seems much depends on how inclined tourists are to use the information received. An individual's information receiving processes control the quality of the information taken in, and any messages, however clear their original formation, are likely to be distorted by perception. For instance, it would appear that the chances of information being taken in are greatest if the potential tourist already has a preference for the destination being marketed (Ashworth and Goodall 1988).

The idea that the image formation process is affected by existing perceptions is also proposed by Gartner (1993, 1996). Gartner contends that 'effective image change depends on an assessment of presently held tourism images' (Gartner 1993:207). In formulating an effective image enhancement strategy, it would seem valuable to know what images already exist of the destination, especially as people may tend to avoid contradictory information or what Gartner terms 'cognitive dissonance' (Gartner 1993:205). A similar argument is pursued by Mayo and Jarvis (1981), who assert that prospective tourists 'seek information that agrees with their beliefs and they try to ignore information that does not' (Mayo and Jarvis 1981:35). In terms of the factors affecting image formation, these theories appear to suggest that an individual's 'existing needs and desires' are an important part of the process (Ashworth and Voogd 1990:81). Pocock and Hudson (1978:19) cement this strong relationship between image and personal interests by defining image as 'the sum of direct sensory information as interpreted through the observer's value predispositions', implying that it is a person's own interests, motivations and values that help determine the form of their place images. Though these ideas relating to the use and processing of information are valuable additions to the literature, it should be recognised that as far as the author is aware, few of these theories have been vindicated by rigorous empirical research.

2.3.4 Classifying other image formation agents

As has been stated above, the main way in which authors have tried to understand how images of places are constructed in the minds of individuals, is by attempting to identify and conceptualise different image formation agents. Gunn (1972) was the first to attempt this task and asserted that images could be formed on an induced or organic level. Induced images are a function of the deliberate marketing and promotion efforts of a destination area, whereas organic images emanate from sources not directly associated with the destination. Gunn lists news reports, movies, articles and other supposedly unbiased information sources as those that present organic images of places (1972). Despite the frequent citation of Gunn's conceptualisation, it is difficult to justify whether a person's image of place is solely the result of promoted images or 'organic' images or vice versa. The application of Gunn's ideas to the creation and dissemination of images is also dubious in an era where the deliberate manipulation of both induced and organic images - through sophisticated PR activities or 'spin' - renders this distinction rather redundant.

Despite its limitations, Gunn's classification has been widely used within tourism research and other authors have built upon his ideas to enhance understanding of image formation. For instance, research has been completed to differentiate between different socio-demographic groups to determine if certain groups are influenced more strongly by particular components in the image formation process. Gitelson and Crompton (1984) find family groups tend to use induced images, while educated people are more likely to make use of destination specific literature. According to the authors, people over 60 are more inclined to rely on solicited organic information such as family and friends to influence their destination selection (Gitelson and Crompton 1984) .

Gunn (1988) and later Gartner (1993, 1996) have elaborated on the established categorisation of images (as being induced or organic) to produce a more complex conceptualisation that examines the range of influences on image formation. These models look at the different sources of tourism images, including the role of the media, tourism organisations, as well the role of first hand experience in forming destination image. Gunn's (1988) work in particular notes the prime importance of experience within the image formation process and includes this factor within a seven-phase image formation model. The importance placed on direct experience of destinations in work by Gunn and Phelps (1986) and Selby and Morgan (1996), reaffirms the argument made earlier, that theories emanating from environmental psychologists should be integrated more fully into destination image research.

2.3.5 Gartner's image formation agents

Perhaps the most detailed elaboration of Gunn's oft-cited ideas is provided by Gartner (1993, 1996, 1997), who has capitalised on Gunn's (1972, 1988) core ideas to produce a detailed conceptualisation of the different elements of the image formation process. Gartner has placed these elements into separate categories depending on who has produced the information about a certain location. These categories are summarised in Table 2.3.1:

Image change agent	Credibility	Market penetration
Overt Induced I <i>Traditional forms of advertising where the receiver is in no doubt as to who is promoting the particular destination. These include TV adverts, those in print media and more commonly tourist brochures. Although having the advantage of widespread coverage, these overt messages suffer from low credibility because of a high degree of scepticism in the population.</i>	Low/med	High
Overt Induced II <i>These image formation agents consist of those from organisations connected to the tourism industry but not directly associated with any particular destination. These bodies act as gatekeepers of information, but often the images presented are unrealistic as these bodies only pass on certain images to their clientele.</i>	Medium	Medium
Covert Induced I <i>This type of image formation is used to eliminate some of the credibility problems inherent in the Overt I category. This is usually achieved through the use of a second party, who ideally would be likeable and recognisable to promote the product.</i>	Low/medium	High
Covert Induced II <i>These images are designed so that the receiver is unaware of the direct involvement of the destination promoters. They usually take the form of apparently unbiased articles and reports of places by people with no obvious interest in the promotion of the destination. As a result credibility increases.</i>	Medium	Medium
Autonomous <i>This component of the image formation process consists of independently produced reports, articles, films and so on about locations. These usually fall into two categories, news and popular culture. This agent because of its high penetration and credibility can change the nature of a place's image in an unusually short period of time.</i>	High	Med/High
Unsolicited Organic <i>This involves unrequested information about a place from other people who have visited a place or believe they know what exists there. The person receiving the information does not ask for it and so the credibility factor though greater than for induced agents is only moderate.</i>	Medium	Low
Solicited Organic <i>This is requested information received from a knowledgeable and trusted source. This is what is normally considered as 'word of mouth' advertising.</i>	High	Low
Organic <i>This component involves that part of the process concerned with actual visitation, after which a new image is formed in the mind of the visitor.</i>	High	-

Table 2.3.1 Gartner's conceptualisation of image formation agents (from Gartner 1997)

The contents of Table 2.3.1 represent the different sources from which Gartner believes potential tourist's images of destinations are derived. His analysis is a useful attempt to illustrate the range of different sources from which images are formed. Both the value and problem with Gartner's conceptualisation is that he attaches indications as to the supposed influence of each of the categories. Gartner implies, perhaps controversially, that each category is homogeneous enough for its effects to be classified quite specifically. The author suggests that the influence of image formation agents depends on two main factors - credibility and penetration. These criteria result in perhaps the most important conclusion emanating from Gartner's work - the assertion that 'the autonomous image agent, because of its high credibility and high market penetration, may be the only agent capable of changing an area's image in a short period of time' (Gartner 1997:185).

Gartner (1996) has furthered his analysis by noting the chronology of the image formation process. According to Gartner, Overt Induced I sources of image formation are important in the early stages of the process, whilst Overt Induced II sources enter into the process at a later stage. Throughout the formative system, Solicited Organic sources are allegedly used and processed at the same rate. Researchers have also realised that place images generally change very slowly and to be effective 'induced' images must be a part of focused and long term strategies. Gartner suggests that to develop a successful image in the minds of travellers, a destination must consider the influence of related images at different spatial scales and must be aware of its current image before any modifications are attempted (Gartner 1997).

2.4 Image formation as a process of communication

One of the limitations of the tourism literature is that it fails to recognise explicitly that image formation can be understood as a process of communication. As Gartner's model (see Table 2.3.1) suggests, place images are derived from a number of sources, including direct experience, secondary experience and a diverse range of media coverage. Therefore, the image formation process consists of a series of communicative interactions between individuals and the environment, individuals and the media and between certain individuals. Gartner's model (Table 2.3.1) appears to view the communication of place images as a process, where the effect of the message is determined by who sent the message and the number of people it reached. In this sense it is typical of a number of

theories of communication which belong to the 'process' school of communication studies (Fiske 1990). This school views communication as encompassing the sequential transmission and reception of messages, and, accordingly it is possible to assess the limitations of Gartner's model by comparing it to other theories of communication and by exploring critiques of the 'process' school paradigm.

One of the earliest and most frequently cited interpretations of the communication process is that of Lasswell (1948) who suggested that to understand the process of mass communication, it was important to examine 'Who, says what, through which channel, to whom with what effect?' (Lasswell c.f. Fiske 1990:30). Lasswell's conceptualisation implies that each of the stated elements - source, content, medium and audience - will determine the effects of the information. In relation to this study we can state that the resultant 'effect' would be the influence on an individual's destination image. Gartner's categorisation of image formation agents is based on credibility (source) and penetration (audience) and therefore does not address the content and channel elements of Lasswell's model. Information comprising influential content, directed through an effective and appropriate channel may in some circumstances be more important than the supposed benefits of high audience penetration and high credibility, which Gartner feels determine the influence of image formation agents.

Despite the differences noted above, Gartner's model (Table 2.3.1) does share many of the characteristics of process school models. This model is not the only image formation theory that has parallels with this interpretation of the communication process. Font's very basic conceptualisation (1996:125) clearly denotes a linear process and includes the caveat 'message lost in the noise' at one stage of the model. This concept of 'noise' is a common feature in process school theories and can be traced back to Shannon and Weaver's model of communication (1949). As Font's (1996), and particularly Gartner's, model can be considered to be essentially grounded in the 'process' school, they must also be vulnerable to the criticisms of this linear approach to the study of communication. Theoreticians employing semiotic approaches would agree that communication is best understood not through an analysis of the transmission and reception of messages, but one which is based on how signs interact with receivers to produce meaning. In effect the emphasis is shifted to the content and context of communication and the way in which signs are 'read' (Fiske 1990:3). Semioticians assert that the formation of place images relies not simply on

factors such as source, content and channel. Instead the emphasis is on the way in which individuals use aspects of their shared cultural experience to produce meaning.

2.4.1 Semiology

Ferdinand de Saussure is widely acknowledged as the founder of modern semiology, 'a science that studies sign within society' (Saussure c.f. Echtner 1999:48). Subsequently various commentators have contributed to this 'science', perhaps most famously Roland Barthes, who developed Saussure's analysis of how signs operate, into a more rounded account of how signs interact with the cultural and personal experience of the user. Unlike the perspectives emanating from environmental psychology, semioticians view 'reality as a social construction, consisting of a system of signs' (Echtner 1999:49). The overall objective of semiotics is to uncover the recurring patterns in a particular sign system, so that the underlying structures of meaning can be revealed. Importantly, place images can be interpreted as the outcome of a complex process involving the production and interpretation of signs within a sign system. However, as Echtner (1999) affirms, while there has been considerable research concerning place image, these studies have rarely addressed sign systems in analyses of image formation.

One of the few contributions that does make the direct link between tourist destinations and semiology is that of Culler (1981). Culler notes the importance of semiotics in understanding how and why place images are formed by stating that 'all over the world, tourists are engaged in semiotic projects, reading cities, landscapes and cultures as sign systems' (Culler 1981:128). The importance of semiotics to the study of destination image is communicated explicitly by Dann, who asserts that 'nowhereis a semiotic perspective considered more appropriate than in the study of tourism imagery' (c.f. Morgan and Pritchard 1999:34). As the semiotic approach is directly concerned with how language produces meaning, it is perhaps when evaluating the role of the media in place image formation that it is most valuable. However, as the work of Culler (1981) and MacCannell (1999) eloquently illustrates, semiotics facilitates understanding of tourism processes in general and therefore it should not be consigned to this function.

2.4.2 An application of semiology

In a rare piece of research that deals with the way in which promoted place images are received by their potential audience, Burgess and Wood (1988) provide a semiotic analysis of London Docklands. Although this research addresses the reactions of potential residents and relocating businesses, rather than potential tourists, the methodology, approach and findings can be translated to a tourism context. Burgess and Wood examine promotional material produced by the Docklands authorities to analyse the effect that it had on these target audiences. A significant part of the research focuses on the way in which the promotional material incorporates certain 'signs' which are used to convey place meanings (Burgess and Wood 1988). Drawing on the work of Pierce (1931-58), Burgess and Wood categorise the signs within the promotional imagery into those which are iconic (visual representations closely resembling the referent e.g. landmarks), indexical (having a direct causal relationship with the referent) or symbolic (shifting or arbitrary meanings). Using these categories, the authors are able to identify the specific effects of different signifiers and the resultant signifying concepts that contribute to London Dockland's image. This analysis facilitates an understanding of how, rather than merely if, reimagining initiatives influence place images. The present study has similar objectives and aims to make use of ideas from semiology to further understand of the effects of sport reimagining.

Burgess and Wood's work provides valuable insights into the purpose and reception of promoted place imagery. Using the Piercian framework, the authors are able to pinpoint the different sorts of imagery used by the place promoted. For instance, within the category of 'iconic signs' the commercials connote London through representations of material landmarks - Nelson's Column, Tower Bridge and the River Thames. The indexical and symbolic signs encode both aural and visual associations and function primarily by drawing on referents from other sign systems. The basic findings of the research were that the promotional material did succeed in changing the negative attitudes to Docklands. This was achieved not through the promotion of the 'reality' of East London, but by inviting an audience to connote meanings about the changes taking place through associations with cultural referents, including TV programmes. Thus a new way of thinking of this area was developed through the transference of fantasies and myths from television, as nothing in the promotional material signified geographical or cultural

realities. It will be interesting in the present study to explore whether sport reimagining can procure similar effects through comparable mechanisms

A key factor in semiology (emphasised by Burgess and Wood 1988) is that the interpretation of signs is dependent on the shared understanding of the codes that determine the message. Codes are complicated patterns of associations that are common for a particular society at a particular time. These referent systems (involving shared cultural values and beliefs) result in images, ideas or feelings becoming communally, but arbitrarily, attached to certain objects or concepts. In terms of place images, 'images, ideas and feelings' are transferred out of other systems to the places concerned rather than actually originating in them (Williamson 1982 c.f. Burgess and Wood 1988:108). This highlights the importance of analysing the relationship between culture and place image as cultural systems appear to provide the formative basis of images.

2.5 Culture and place image

As Echtner (1999) recognises, semioticians are often criticised for their preoccupation with uncovering 'fixed' characteristics and structures. Though semiology has been defined as the study of 'signs in society' (Saussure 1916:16), there has always been a concentration on language and structures of meaning, with too little emphasis on the cultures within which these sign systems operate. Some authors, most notably Foucault, feel that semiology sanitises representations and imagery and divorces them from their frames of reference - the cultures in which they are produced (Morgan and Pritchard 1999). Thus issues of power, historical context and dynamism are neglected. Therefore it is also important to utilise approaches which are more sensitive to the cultural dimension of city image. The majority of existing work in this area has surrounded interpretations of visual images (iconography). However, the role of cultural discourse in shaping urban perceptions and urban landscapes has also begun to be considered.

Cultural perspectives are sometimes represented as allowing for deviation from the structuralist constraints of semiotics. However, realistically, much analysis of the importance of culture assumes that there are inherent cultural systems and values in society and therefore structures of culture that determine the manner in which images are produced and consumed. For example, Kroeber and Kleckholn (1952) argue that cultural systems

are both the products of action and conditioning elements of further action. This interpretation is also adopted by iconographic studies, where images are located at the social level 'rather than as private or cognitively constructed representations' (Phillips 1993:190). The intention of the next section is to analyse these cultural systems and to explore their influence on the way in which cities are imagined.

2.5.1 Cultural ideologies

Eyles and Pearce (1990) state that not only do we need to make sense of the world, but we need to understand how we make sense. In terms of place image this demands the identification of place image content, but also requires an understanding of the underlying processes and ideologies which helped to create these images. Although images are partial representations that accentuate certain features of the place under consideration, we must not underestimate the way in which these abbreviations reflect and support influential ideologies and attitudes in society. Eyles and Pearce (1990) state that, although images are usually grounded in some experience of reality, there is no reason why some images are termed positive and others negative. This demonstrates that to understand place image formation, we must consider the 'unconscious' influences of ideology (Heck 1980), alongside perceptual processes and functional attributes of places.

Though there are conflicting definitions of the meaning of ideology, the most useful definition is that which uses the term to refer to systems of beliefs which determine the production of meanings and ideas (Fiske 1990). It would appear that this system is fundamental to the production and reception of images. As Veron (c.f. Heck 1980:123) states 'ideologies are structures....which determine....the functioning of images and concepts'. Here, ideology is seen as a system of coding reality, thus facilitating the communication of messages through creating shared codes of meaning (Hall 1980, Fiske 1990). From this point of view, an 'ideology' may be defined as a system of semantic rules to generate meaningful messages and therefore, by implication, place images. It is therefore surprising that few accounts discuss place image within an ideological context. Marxists would argue that ideologies are determined by hegemonic cultures and therefore have little to do with individual ideas and practices. This argument is furthered by Hall (1980), who identifies how ideologies may actually influence the transmission of messages. Hall argues that messages and therefore images are 'decoded' in a number of

different ways depending on dominant hegemonic interpretations and the position of the individual in structural relations. If we are trying to understand the place image formation process, it is therefore necessary to attempt to unravel the ideological underpinnings of those images.

An example of work that considers explicitly the role of cultural ideologies in place image formation is detailed by Eyles and Pearce (1990), who use and modify work by Panofsky (1962), to clarify how and why certain places, landscapes and features produce specific images in the minds of the population. Eyles and Pearce's work locates place images within a cultural and ideological context, and therefore they not only try to elicit certain place images, but also ask why and how these images are formed within contemporary cultures. Using the steeltown of Hamilton (Canada) as a case study, Eyles and Pearce show that signs and symbols in the landscape, as well as overarching ideologies within society, influence the image formation process. Therefore Hamilton's physical landscape can only be understood and given meaning through the signs and symbols which link the city to the concepts of industry, production and decline. The resultant images are ultimately ascribed meaning by the dominant ideological interpretation (Hall 1980), where industrial cities are perceived to share 'negative' attributes such as social unrest, poverty, pollution and dereliction.

Using their broadly iconographic approach, Eyles and Pearce describe a simple model, to illustrate their findings. This model has three theoretical stages, which the authors believe constitute the basis for perceptions of a location. The first of these is a stage which involves the description and discovery of motifs, objects and content (Eyles and Pearce 1990). It is stated that it is very hard to remain at this stage, as description of form and content 'inexorably' leads to a consideration of subject matter and meaning. This next stage involves iconographic interpretation - a stage where motifs and meanings are connected with themes and concepts. A third, deeper level of analysis is put forward by Eyles and Pearce, based on previous work by Panofsky (1962). Panofsky terms this level 'synthesis', and this interpretative stage involves the apprehension of intrinsic meaning through the examination of underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, period, class or religion (Eyles and Pearce 1990). In identifying this stage of analysis, the authors implicitly recognise the importance of the ideological basis of city images. The aim of the present study is to explore city images on all these three levels,

not only exploring the content of images, but deconstructing them to reveal what the case study cities 'mean' to potential tourists and how these meanings are created via the utilisation of common ideological and cultural codes.

2.5.2 City images and cultural discourse

Though the central tenets of Gramscian or Marxist interpretations of ideology may differ in their emphasis, for Barthes and other cultural theorists, ideologies are fundamental in explaining the production of meanings. Language, communication and ideology are intrinsically linked and dominant ideologies not only direct arbitrary meanings, but discourse itself can actually form the basis for a system of beliefs, or ideology. This is demonstrated by the Althusserian position that ideology itself exists as a representation of the imaginary relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence (c.f. Heck 1980:122). Distinct from perspectives relating to the cognitive personal and psychological perception of the urban landscape, cultural analyses of place image emphasise the importance of mythic places, imaginary places, and places constructed through the production and manipulation of discourse. Studying the city as discourse allows us to understand influences on image that are usually 'taken for granted', to understand the power dynamics of image production and to appreciate the historical development and contexts of urban images.

The most obvious manifestation of discourse relating to the city, is the vast amount of literature that includes representations of urban environments. Although there may be 'a gulf between the living experience of the real city and the word-city of a poem or novel' (Pike 1996:245), neither is more legitimate, nor real than the other when considering perceptions of cities. Attempts to record the 'real image' of the city, as opposed to images based on societal or linguistic reconstructions, are futile. This is mainly because the response of the human imagination to the phenomenon of a city is intrinsically bound up with the interpretation of word 'city' itself. Any analysis of the image of the city is therefore incomplete without exploring the influence of historical interpretations, including representations communicated via the written word. However, an analysis of the image of the British industrial city (which is the focus here) must consider the much vaunted influence of a literary legacy which has tended to communicate negative representations. As Short (1991) explains, traditionally the industrial city has been associated with various

unfortunate phenomena, including crime, violence, disease, overcrowding, political extremism and poverty. Though anti-urbanism has dominated discourse throughout modern history, the contemporary image of the city is perhaps most obviously influenced by problematic representations originating from 19th Century Romanticism. More recently the negative image of the city has been reinforced by media reporting of problems in cities - particularly the 'inner city' (Campbell 1993).

2.5.3 City images, iconography and cultural landscapes

It is important to recognise that an understanding of place images can also be furthered through the analysis of a growing body of geographical literature regarding cultural landscapes. Recently this work has paid greater attention to non-material aspects of culture, deviating from its Sauerian beginnings to allow the examination of the role of beliefs, attitudes and expectations in shaping cultural transformations of physical environments (Doughty 1983 c.f Johnston et al 1994). This has led to the conclusion that landscapes exist as cultural images and cultural signifiers which reveal cultural attitudes and processes. This work has been led by cultural geographers who have increasingly focused on the city and 'questions about identity, meaning and imagination regarding how people respond to the urban experience' (McDowell 1994:152). The city is conceived of as a cultural landscape which is only produced through social and cultural practices. Therefore cultural practices not only influence the image of cities, but the idea of the city itself has been created through practices, representations and the meanings that are generated by human cultures. As Pike states, the city is, 'by any definition, a social image' (Pike 1996:246).

Accordingly, iconography locates images at the social level, rather than as a cognitively constructed representation. Though individuals may feel at the centre of their own experience, they are only able to see within paths and networks of socially constructed meaning (Bryson c.f. Phillips 1993). It is therefore impossible to examine city images without recognising the importance of iconographic representations, particularly representations via the media of film, television, sculpture and painting. Iconographic representations of urban environments in film have played an important role in determining contemporary images of the city. For example, according to Crang (1998) the city is as much an actor in cinematic productions as the characters themselves. The city is a

valuable tool for filmmakers because urban areas are inherently imbued with profound political, cultural and historical meanings, however, the film industry itself has itself helped to create and perpetuate these meanings. A good example is the way in which directors have continually communicated utopian and innovative interpretations of what the city may be like in the future as well as disseminating representations (and representations) of the cities of the past and present. Of particular relevance to this study is Gold's (1985) assertion that the cinema has perpetuated the intellectual bias against the city, reinforcing the view that cities are 'alienating' and 'hostile' (Gold 1985:125). By understanding the influences of film and other iconographic output, it is possible to unravel the nature of city images and the forces that underpin them.

2.5.4 Cultural approaches

The formation of images is therefore ultimately dependent on ideologies that determine the dominant readings of landscapes, iconography and discourse. Alongside individual perceptions and values, images are highly dependent on cultural structures that determine attitudes, beliefs and meanings in contemporary society. Therefore, to understand place image it is necessary to examine the way in which messages are 'read' or 'decoded'. However, as the next section of this chapter will illustrate, it is also necessary to understand the ways in which cultural intermediaries have attempted to influence this process by 'encoding' cities with various meanings, to render them more attractive to footloose investment, including tourist visitation.

2.6 City imaging strategies

Chon (1990:4) argues that 'an examination of the image formation process may help understand how a tourism promotion organisation can influence ...an individual's perception of a destination'. The preceding analysis has examined our understanding of the image formation process. The aim of this next section is therefore to identify how places, and more specifically cities, have deliberately attempted to influence city images. Conventional destination image research dictates that this inherently constitutes an analysis of the induced images of cities (Gunn 1972). However, it is argued that the organic/induced dichotomy is not a particularly helpful means of understanding city image, as many of the imaging strategies utilised by cities involve deliberate attempts to cultivate

positive media coverage as well as explicit conventional advertising methods. Therefore, contemporary reimagining entails the manipulation and utilisation of image formation agents which are both organic and induced.

2.6.1 'Imaging' and 'reimagining'

If destination image is a term used to refer to mental perceptions, impressions and ideas about a particular location, then 'imaging' or 'reimagining' is the process via which these images are deliberately altered and manipulated. The concepts of image and imaging are central to the functioning and perpetuation of capitalism in the modern western world. Marketing and advertising relies on the use of images and their development to create identities and demand for products in the marketplace. It could be said, however, that the tourism industry relies on images far more than any other to facilitate the successful sale of its product. As Fridgen (1984) argues, 'the image of vacation sitesis a powerful factor within the decision process' (Fridgen 1984:26). City imaging involves reducing the cityscape into an identifiable and consumable representation and is particularly important for the city destination because the diversity of the city destination is inaccessible to the imagination unless it is reduced and simplified into a recognisable image (Judd 1995). In the following discussion the concept of city imaging will be analysed, followed by analysis of the problems and issues regarding the reimagining of cities. Finally, the specific application of city reimagining to urban tourism will be considered. This section will provide a general review of existing research regarding city imaging, before a specific analysis of sport reimagining is undertaken in section 2.9.

2.6.2 The imaging of cities

Although place imaging is by no means a new concept, various commentators observe that in the last 20 years, municipal authorities in the developed world have initiated more vigorous, more extensive and, indeed, more expensive attempts to improve the images of their respective cities (Harvey 1989a, Kotler et al 1993, Bramwell and Rawding 1996, Loftman and Nevin 1996). As Hubbard (1996b) asserts, 'increasing budgets are being set aside for image construction and advertising', not only to extol the virtues of a city, but to 'reimage or reinvent' it (Hubbard 1996b:28). This process has usually involved the public sector, or a partnership of public and private sector agencies, developing a targeted place

marketing strategy aimed at attracting footloose businesses, white collar workers, and visitors to cities. As Ashworth and Voogd (1990) identify, marketeers and city authorities now conceive their city as a place 'product' that can be marketed and promoted to meet the needs of identified customers, in this context the urban tourist. Holcomb (1993) states that the primary purpose of this process is to construct a new image of the place to replace either vague or negative images previously held by current or potential investors and visitors. Projected place images are formed and then transmitted by city organisations via various channels of communication to the targeted audience. This image is not necessarily interpreted by the receiving population in the manner intended (Stabler 1988), but there is evidence to suggest that cities can improve their image and increase their potential for tourism (Selby and Morgan 1996).

Urban reimagining is a discourse grounded in neo-liberalism (Healey 1997) or new right capitalism (Philo and Kearns 1993) formed in reaction to the policies of the urban left (Griffiths 1995), where places are commodified and expected to compete in a market for a share of inward investment. The dominant rhetoric of this discourse – markets, competition, hierarchy, entrepreneurialism - has permeated the institutional context, prompting civic authorities to neglect their traditional managerialist functions (Harvey 1989b). As a result, critiques of urban reimagining strategies have emerged which question the ideological basis on which they are founded, their socially regressive consequences and their highly speculative effects (Griffiths 1998). Therefore, rather than assisting urban renewal, some commentators suggest that urban reimagining undermines and fragments efforts to regenerate urban areas (Healey (1997)).

One of the dangers of institutionalising the discourse of urban reimagining is that it becomes the accepted way of pursuing urban governance, steering, rather than reflecting policy and practice. For example, fuelled by exaggerated academic analysis, the discourse of urban reimagining has become dominated by over-simplistic, but seemingly unchallenged attestations, including the assumption that the future of cities requires developing a consumptive city rather than one based on production. This assumption is unhelpful for a number of reasons. First, it ignores the very important role that traditional 'productive' industries perform in contemporary cities. This can have manifest repercussions, for example Dabinett (1991 cf. Williams 1997) suggests that after the 1991 WSG Sheffield pursued a new a consumer services approach to economic revitalisation which resulted in a

failure to develop a coherent strategy for manufacturing. Second, it is unrepresentative of an urban economy where the growth of cultural industries has problematised notions of production and consumption. As Crewe and Beaverstock (1998:292) argue, 'to analytically sever cultural consumption from production actually destroys our capacity to understand the processes at work'.

The reasons why industrial cities have developed imaging strategies have been detailed in chapter 1. However, before specific examples of city imaging are detailed it is necessary to explain the cultural context in which intensive efforts to reimage cities have emerged.

2.6.3 City image - the cultural context

Harvey (1989a:285) notes two major shifts in the arena of consumption, which may point to the existence of a new stage of capitalism since the mid 1970s. The first of these involves the mobilisation of fashion and culture in mass markets as a means of accelerating consumption across a wide range of lifestyle activities, including new leisure and sporting habits (Harvey 1989a). A second trend is the shift away from consumption of 'goods' in favour of the consumption of services (Harvey 1989a). For the city, this means targeting the consumption of entertainment, events, happenings and distractions (Harvey 1989a). As Harvey argues, if there is a limit to the accumulation and turnover of physical goods, then it makes sense for capitalists to turn to the provision of opportunities for ephemeral consumption. Within an urban context these transformations are particularly important. Cities feeling the force of deindustrialisation have attempted to become entertainment centres, providing a mix of experiences, events and attractions for the urban tourist. The city, as it is often argued, becomes a 'spectacle' (Debord 1994).

In craving this role as an arena of spectacle and display, the city is coveting a return to its original role and function. As Tuan (1977) has asserted, the city has always drawn attention to itself - and achieved power and status - through 'the scale and solemnity of its rites and festivals' (Tuan 1977:173). Ancient capitals began as 'ritual centres of high import' and splendid architectural settings were required for the enactment of sacred dramas (Tuan 1977:173). Even when economic functions multiplied, the feeling for drama and display remained alongside the style of religious rites which branched into the secular sphere. Tuan states that the visibility of the 1970s city suffered from the lack of public

occasions to which the people are drawn and for which the halls and streets function as a supportive stage. Therefore, in searching for a coherent identity, the contemporary city has returned to its historic role. Just like the city-states of ancient times, or the new frontier settlements of North America, the city is once again trying to assert itself and gain maximum publicity, favour and eminence. The use of imagery is a crucial factor in this competitive struggle, and imaging the city as a place of spectacle, using festivals and events, is one way in which the post-industrial city is attempting to rebuild its identity and image and secure its future.

Alongside the staging of events and festivals, cities have also attempted to reassert themselves as centres of consumption by utilising the contemporary integrative cultural role of advertising. Advertising is no longer solely about the promotion of specific products and their attributes, but is increasingly aimed at manipulating tastes and desires via imagery that may or may not have anything to do with the product to be sold. The effects of advertising and promotion have been accentuated by mass TV ownership and satellite communication which makes it possible to experience a plethora of images from different places, collapsing the world's spaces into a series of images (Baudrillard 1983, Featherstone 1991). Thus images of cities have become readily accessible to people all over the world. It is in this context that we can better situate the striving of cities to forge a distinctive image and to create an atmosphere of place and tradition that will lure people to the city.

Image and place are therefore intrinsically linked in the contemporary era. Some commentators have taken this argument to the extreme and stated that we live in a world where image dominates to such degree that places both exist and are even experienced through images and representations. Places portrayed in a certain way, particularly if they have the capacity to attract tourists, may even begin to dress themselves up as the fantasy images prescribe (Harvey 1989a:301). Harvey (1989a) believes that representations of the city, in films, literature, music or deliberate advertising, may transform those images into 'material simulacra' in the form of built environments, events and spectacles, particularly if they have the capacity to attract tourists.

Cities have sought to capitalise on the dominance of image in society by projecting new and exciting images of their urban environments. Like images created for tangible

products, the ultimate aim is the manipulation of desires which will ultimately involve the purchase of the destination product. Therefore cities using advertising strategies, prestige projects and spectacles are simultaneously promoting their product by creating an attractive aura, creating interest and attempting to reshape what may be negative perceptions of the city. Hence, the city imaging process is both an attempt to sell specific products, such as museums, galleries, sporting events and heritage attractions, and the selling and marketing of the city as a holistic abstract phenomenon by offering attractive images of the city as an exciting, cosmopolitan centre of spectacle and display. This observation is developed further in chapter 3 and comprises an important part of the rationale for the conceptual framework employed by the present study.

The imaging of the city must be evaluated in terms of symbolic capital. The original use-value of the city may have been at least partly displaced by an abstract secondary use-value, which Baudrillard refers to as sign value (Baudrillard 1983). It has been hypothesised by deconstructionists such as Baudrillard, that the utility of a product or place - what it consists of and what it functions as - has become less important than the arbitrary or symbolic meanings that are derived from it and demonstrated by it. It is not about the object, but what the object signifies in a socio-cultural environment of shifting meanings. Therefore, as Harvey (1988) states 'where we used to think of the city as a machine for working in, we now see it as an antique, a spectacle or even an image for living in' (Harvey 1988:33). Baudrillard argues that Marx's analysis of commodity production is outdated because capitalism is now predominantly concerned with the production of signs, sign images and sign systems rather than with commodities themselves (Baudrillard 1983). Within this sign value system, image building becomes as important to the contemporary city as investment in physical landscapes. Therefore, when speaking of urban tourism, the construction of a palatable, interesting and stimulating image of a city may be as important as the construction of new attractions and facilities and the maintenance of the current tourism infrastructure. This idea that the image is as important as any objective reality is not a radically new one (see for example Hunt 1975). Gestalt environmental psychology in the 1920s and 1930s was based on the premise that the most important environment was the world that existed in the mind as opposed to the physical and social conditions. Therefore it can be confidently asserted that human behaviour has never depended on reality, but on what people perceive reality to consist of. However, what may distinguish the contemporary period, which some have termed an era of 'late-capitalism' or

'postmodernity', is the intense and concerted efforts made to manipulate interpretations of reality through the deliberate promotion of signs and images alongside the systematic manufacturing of motivations and desires.

Baudrillard feels that the concentration upon signs and images has become so intense that a sense of concrete reality has been lost, leaving a floating mass of images and simulations which saturate the fabric of everyday life. Baudrillard refers to this as a hyperreality, a world in which the piling up of images results in a 'destabilised, aestheticized hallucination of reality' (Featherstone 1991:99). This is exemplified by the current preference for forms of leisure consumption where the emphasis is placed upon the consumption of experiences and pleasure in simulated environments. Within a tourism context these processes are usually illustrated through the example of theme parks, where the tourist can experience a mass of sights and sensations which are saturated with signs, images and simulations. However, the theory may equally be applied to the contemporary city (Samuel 1995) which communicates consumption and leisure as urban experiences. Within this context, cities that may be regarded as being impoverished in terms of traditional cultural capital are attempting to create new and simulated environments by utilising forms of popular culture which appear to be perceived as attractive and saleable (Featherstone 1991). A good example is the use of sporting themes by cities, which provides the focus for the present study. Such initiatives have occurred in an environment where popular and mass culture are supposedly regarded as more legitimate, the source of prestige and, where they are positioned further up the symbolic hierarchy (Featherstone 1991:106).

2.7 City imaging as a form of place marketing

The deliberate attempt to form and manipulate the image of a city is often represented as a rudimentary form of marketing (Holcomb 1993, Philo and Kearns 1993, Ashworth and Voogd 1990). Therefore in addition to reviewing debates from the critical social sciences, it is also important to apply ideas from relevant marketing literature to enhance our understanding of city reimagining. The essence of marketing centres on the notion of exchange and of meeting consumer needs through the use of research, market segmentation and targeting (Paddison 1993). The marketing of cities is aimed at raising the competitive position of the metropolis, attracting inward investment and ultimately improving the well being of its population. The promotion of geographical locations,

which has become an increasingly common phenomenon, has been termed place marketing because in effect it involves viewing a place as a commodity which must be marketed to increase the likelihood of a positive purchase decision. Ashworth and Voogd (1988) have stated that this concept of place marketing exists to 'maximise the efficient social and economic functioning of the area concerned in accordance with whatever goals have been established' (1988:68). The basic principle of marketing involves the configuration of a mix of pricing, promotional and distributional strategies to meet existing wants and needs of target user groups. However, in terms of designing a desirable product, rather than merely advancing promotional activities, the application of conventional marketing principles to cities is problematic.

2.7.1 City imaging and the manipulation of the place product

Paddison (1993) states that because cities are inflexible and often contain ageing infrastructure they are difficult to market effectively. In cities that have evolved 'naturally', as opposed to deliberately manufactured urban environments such as Walt Disney Theme Parks, it is difficult to manipulate product a to meet the demand and wants of tourists. However, the thoughts of several commentators, including Harvey (1989a) and Raban (1974) do not fit comfortably with Paddison's interpretation of the problematic application of marketing principles. Harvey (1989a) views cities as inherently flexible phenomena that, because of their highly symbolic nature are easily manipulated in the eyes of many. Harvey states that we mould them in our own images because cities, unlike small towns, are plastic by nature (1989a). These divergent perspectives result from the contrasting ways that commentators interpret the concept and the production of 'place'. Harvey, drawing on ideas developed by Lefebvre (1991) perceives the notion of place as something which is socially constructed and therefore easily manipulated (Harvey 1989a, 1994). Alternatively, Paddison's views imply a more conventional interpretation of the city as a physical or geographical entity. When considering city imaging it appears necessary to be aware of both these interpretations. Although cities are social constructs that cannot be understood merely in physical terms, it is also important to recognise that this imaginary city does have a physical manifestation, which also needs to be addressed.

The concept of the tourism product is a complex issue. Middleton (1994) conceptualises tourism products as a bundle of activities, services and benefits that constitute the entire

tourism experience. According to Middleton, this bundle consists of five components: destination attractions, destination facilities, accessibility, images and price. The interesting aspect of this conceptualisation is that the authors see image as constituting an important, but separately identifiable, component of the tourism product. Here, the image of a destination is not just viewed as a means of conveying information about the destination or its various attributes, but is actually considered to be part of the product itself. Other authors have also included image as an identifiable part of the product offered by the destination. Grabler (1997) and Oppermann (1996a) both include image as one of a separate series of attributes which they believe people consider before deciding whether or not to visit a particular destination. Therefore, rather than the aggregate of a series of attributes combining to form a destination's image, these authors imply that the image of the destination is an attribute of the city which is evaluated alongside other features. This questionable assertion can be linked to theories regarding the sophistication of the contemporary consumer whose familiarity with the world of advertising can result in product images being assessed in isolation from other attributes.

A more extreme position is taken by Armstrong (1999), who argues that the actual product and image are separately identifiable, but that the image has become much more important than the product. Armstrong states (1999:137) that in the contemporary world of advertising, the actual products 'matter less than the adverts that sell them. Attitude is everything. The product is nothing. Sometimes the product doesn't even exist....'. More convincing is the oft-cited assertion that tourist images and tourism products, rather than comprising somehow 'separate' entities are in fact becoming increasingly inseparable. This position epitomises the views of Goodwin who states that, 'in this hyperreal world, the selling of urban areas becomes part and parcel of an increasingly sophisticated commodification of everyday life, in which images and myths are relentlessly packaged until any distinction between the real and representation is effaced' (1993:146/7). This is particularly applicable to urban tourism, where it is futile to distinguish between the 'real' city and its 'imaginary' representation.

2.7.2 The city product and the representation of imageable landscapes

In a contemporary context where images supposedly dominate, cities such as Sydney, Australia rely on strong symbols like its Opera House to create a meaningful

representation of the urban landscape. Imaging, for psychologists is a way of 'processing and storing multisensory information in a working memory' (Echtner and Ritchie 1991:4). Therefore anything that can enhance this mental picturing should help to make a place more accessible to people's imagination. Accordingly, cities that find it easy to project a tourist image appear are often those with memorable cityscapes. The pre-eminent examples are perhaps the Manhattan skyline or the Eiffel Tower in Paris, both of which conjure up a whole series of mental associations with the city and its relevant qualities (Judd 1995, Tuan 1974). Cities all over the world attempt to emulate these examples by building flagship developments, hosting cultural and sporting events and developing logos and slogans so that they are associated in the minds of potential visitors with associated positive attributes.

According to Echtner and Ritchie (1991), one of the great incentives for highlighting symbolic, but highly specific areas of cities is that people build images based upon a few select impressions chosen from a mass of information. If this is the case, then by highlighting a selective part of the cityscape, or by promoting certain high profile attributes, cities can influence the impression people have of the entire city. Hence, the development of images, although essentially an imaginary concept, cannot be seen in isolation from alterations to the physical environment of the city. As Hubbard (1996b) has suggested, the city imaging process is seldom limited to the launching of a new advertising campaign and is often located alongside the creation of a new urban landscape. Indeed, Hubbard contends that the development of new urban spaces, frequently centred on flagship projects, has been an 'almost universal response' to de-industrialisation in UK and US cities (Hubbard 1996b:29).

2.7.3 The target audiences of reimagining

As has already been emphasised, place imaging is seen as a branch of commercial marketing, and one of the most important principles in marketing is that a product must be designed for, and effectively sold to, a specific market. Therefore to be considered in parallel with the 'principles' of marketing, the urban imaging process must involve the identification of potential customers of the place and an objective evaluation of their needs and preferences (Kotler et al 1993). However, an immediate contradiction is provided by Robinson (1999:137) who notes that, 'tourism in former industrial centres is

chiefly supply-led'. Therefore, although imaging may purport to be a form of place marketing, the vast majority of initiatives have more in common with 'selling places' (Philo and Kearns 1993) or, more specifically, 'selling the city' (Ashworth and Voogd 1990). In addition to some of the ideas noted in section 2.7.1, there are various other complications in attempting to apply marketing to places and destinations. One complexity is that projected images only form a small part of the way in which people build up impressions of a city. The exposure a large city may acquire in the media due to its multifunctional nature (Avraham 2000), means that marketing agencies cannot directly control the information transmitted to potential tourists in the same way that a company can control a one-dimensional brand message. Corporations fear negative media publicity, but the association of the city with negative news items is a common occurrence.

A further problem concerns the breadth of the audience to which city imaging is directed. The one-dimensional marketing of corporate brands results from the fact that the product is often aimed at a specific market segment. However, it appears that the 'success' of the 'postindustrial' city requires a broader appeal to attract the attention of the plethora of potential sources of inward investment. As Gary Cunningham of P&G has stated in analysing the marketing of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, 'you are looking for a multi-faceted message that can appeal to different audiences with a different agenda' (Guardian 19/1/98). Madsen identifies the predominant way in which industrial cities have tried to accomplish this difficult task. Using the example of Liverpool, Madsen suggests that this city has attempted to use and communicate a 'post-industrial business location image' (1992:636). This image supposedly involves all of the three important types of place image identified by Ashworth and Voogd (1990) - the entrepreneurial, residential and the tourist image. A similar argument is detailed by Bramwell and Rawding whose research indicates that urban areas tend to use 'big city images' (1996 :215). Whilst indicating distinct local characteristics, this approach can enable cities to communicate a specific identity whilst using more cosmopolitan imagery to appeal to a wider audience (Bramwell and Rawding 1996). Though this appears to contradict some of the central tenets of marketing theory, parallels can be drawn with ideas regarding the ideal corporate image. For example, Boorstin (1962) details the desire amongst corporations for 'neutral images', which because of their impartiality attract all but the marginal fringe groups.

2.7.4 Evaluating and maximising the effectiveness of place imaging

The evidence above suggests that a good way to critically analyse city imaging is to assess initiatives against alleged 'good practice' in place marketing. One facet of a well-constructed place marketing strategy is explicit attention to monitoring and evaluation (Zallocco 1989). However, although we have seen a massive expansion in the number of cities using city imaging and place marketing since the mid 1980s, there has been little research on the relative success of these imaging strategies in promoting and generating urban tourism. Nevertheless, Gartner (1997), Ashworth and Voogd (1990) and Kotler et al (1993) have all attempted to suggest ways in which places can maximise the efficacy of their imagery. The exact conclusions of this work are difficult to generalise, as often imaging is something very specific to a certain city's location, context and history. However it is possible to draw together some common findings.

One of the most important findings from the limited amount of this research is the recognition that the images projected by destination agencies are not the most important source of ideas about the destinations held by potential visitors (Stabler 1988). This finding confirms the need to consider how deliberate city imaging could be rendered more influential. In considering what may constitute good practice in urban reimagining, evidence suggests that imaging is dependent upon the ease of its recognition and its conformity to the predisposition of the recipient. Clarity and simplicity are also qualities perceived by Stabler (1988) as important. Furthermore, Ashworth and Goodall (1988) have stated that a minimum amount of dissonance with pre-existing prejudices is the best way in which an image can be successfully sold to potential visitors. That may be the case, but 'cognitive dissonance' (see also Reynolds 1965, Mayo and Jarvis 1981) provides awkward implications for cities with problematic images. To be imaged attractively they are fundamentally required to create dissonance with various existing prejudices to convince people that the urban environment is an attractive place to visit. This observation is particularly pertinent for post-industrial cities which provide the focus for the present study, as often these cities are attempting to disassociate themselves with negative, clichéd and limiting destination images. Despite this contradiction, Ashworth and Goodall (1988) also recognise the negative influence of cognitive dissonance in a conceptual model which hypothesises the possible outcomes of the imaging process. They argue that difficulties occur when promotional (or supply) images of cities do not

coincide with those of tourist (demand) images. A distorted image, whether caused by supply projection or demand perception can render that image ineffectual and detract from a city's ability to realise its tourism potential. The effectiveness of imaging in terms of its relation to existing perceptions is developed by Ashworth and Voogd (1990), who suggest that cities should seek to achieve a balance between various strategic directions. The authors consider that cities must find the optimum balance between honesty and hyperbole and decide the extent to which their imaging strategies address perceived weaknesses, rather than merely concentrating on known strengths. Finally, it is suggested that cities must consider the degree to which any promotion provides information, rather than simply comprising of persuasion (Ashworth and Voogd 1990).

In addition to these factors, research does appear to show that conflict between images projected by different destinations in the same proximity can result in a lack of reimagining success (Eyles and Pearce 1990, Hall and Hubbard 1996). This assertion emphasises that cities and city images cannot be viewed in isolation from their geographical context. Often a city's image will be as much affected by associations with adjacent urban areas or with images projected at different spatial scales, as by any attempt by that city to create its own identity and communicate it as an 'image'. Eyles and Pearce (1990) provide a good example of this point when they consider the attempts of Hamilton, Canada to re-orientate its image away from its steel-producing past. They state that the imaging process was continually affected, and indeed undermined, by the proximity of Toronto, a city with a global reputation for cultural and aesthetic quality. Hall and Hubbard (1996) also point to the importance of geographical factors when considering place image. They believe, quite justifiably, that care must be taken not to assume 'spatial autonomy with regard to place promotion' (Hall and Hubbard 1996:163). The authors go on to state that city images are influenced by those promoted by other cities, and by 'the identities they are ascribed by virtue of their location within external systems of cultural space' (Hall and Hubbard 1996:164). These observations indicate that when considering imaging strategies, geographical location and the heterogeneity of place images must be recognised if effective strategies are to be realised.

It should be noted that there is a relative paucity of empirical research regarding the effectiveness of urban reimagining to build on or to verify the theoretical ideas noted above. The research that has been completed concerning the deliberate transmission of images by

cities has stressed two particular concerns. First, a very large proportion of the publicity efforts of cities is only accessible to tourists after most of the fundamental choices about destination selection have been made (Ashworth and Goodall 1988, Dilley cf. Hughes 1998). In other words people are often only exposed to promotional imagery once they have demonstrated an interest in visiting a particular city. This is a problem for cities trying to attract new visitors to urban areas not usually associated with tourism, such as those which provide the focus of the present study. Work that has been done suggests that the effectiveness of transmission is very low and that the general public make little use of promotional literature and are largely unaware of developments that have gone on in major cities (Stabler 1988). Such conclusions render the challenge of reimagining even more daunting for the post-industrial city.

Overall, it is highly questionable as to whether coherent and integrated imaging strategies are being formulated by cities. Many cities do not have a well thought-out marketing plan or strategy and urban tourism and city marketing are often plagued by persistent political and organisational problems. Selby (1995:51) has stated that these include 'the number and diversity of organisations involved, the risk of contradictory activities, the problem of political accountability, the inflexibility of cities and an ambiguous attitude towards tourism in general.'

2.8 The content and implications of imaging strategies

Though the effectiveness of existing organisational frameworks and the adoption of sophisticated marketing techniques may influence the success and effects of urban reimagining, perhaps the most important consideration is the selection of an appropriate imaging theme. Cities have used a wide variety of themes to express a range of different qualities and aspirations. However, it could be argued that these strategies all share one common characteristic - their propensity to use themes which are perceived by municipal authorities to allow the acquisition of cultural or symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1984).

Cultural capital is a term usually used to refer to an individual's level of social status as acquired through their ability to make social distinctions (Johnston et al 1994). However cultural capital is also a collective resource (Zukin 1996), and therefore cities can also be considered to possess differing degrees of cultural capital. One way in which cities can

accumulate such capital is by presenting their strengths in a manner that allows them to generate notions of prestige, thus enhancing their status amongst an external audience.

Given that cultural capital is viewed as 'an accessory to social power' expressed through the tendency of city reimagining to appeal to 'the right sort of people' (Harvey 1989a), it is unsurprising that many cities have adopted imaging strategies involving themes normally associated with 'elite cultures' (Jenks 1993). In doing so, cities are appealing to those with high levels of cultural capital (Lim 1993), whilst simultaneously accumulating cultural capital for the city itself. The ultimate expression of reimagining via the use of an orthodox interpretation and presentation of elite culture was the strategy utilised by Glasgow in the late 1980s (Lim 1993, Paddison 1993, Boyle and Hughes 1991, Cosgrove and Campbell 1988). Using money from public and private sources, the City spent £50million on constructing improved facilities and staging 3,800 cultural events in the year that the city was designated European City of Culture (Boyle and Hughes 1991). However, Glasgow is by no means the only British city which has deliberately utilised 'high culture' in striving to generate cultural capital (Bramwell and Rawding 1996, Bianchini 1991). Swansea (City of Literature and Writing 1995), Manchester (City of Drama 1994) and Birmingham (City of Music 1992) have all pursued similar objectives (Bramwell and Rawding 1996).

There has been a noticeable shift in recent years, in that cities have apparently diversified the thematic content of their imaging to include concepts not normally associated with the acquisition of cultural capital. This may be the result of a wider process, whereby the distinction between high culture and other cultural forms has been eroded (Featherstone 1991). Interestingly, several commentators view this as being a function of the importance of image in contemporary society, which has allegedly undermined fixed meanings based on social hierarchies (Featherstone 1991). As a result, cultural forms not normally associated with social status have been employed alongside more traditional forms by cities in order to appeal to potential tourists. This is not largely because, as some of have suggested, the consumer has become more eclectic (Ffiefer c.f. Urry 1990), but because the new middle classes have become more eclectic, legitimating a wider range of cultural forms including 'popular music, fashion, design, holidays, sport, popular culture etc' (Featherstone 1991:91). This process has seemingly facilitated the use of reimagining themes such as sport in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield (Smith 2001),

popular music in Liverpool and Nashville (Madsen 1992, Johansson 1998) and retail consumerism in Leeds.

However, it is safe to assume that theories noting the blurring of cultural boundaries are overly exaggerated. It is therefore perhaps more accurate and more pertinent to associate the new eclecticism in urban reimagining with the rise in the 'symbolic economy' (Lash and Urry 1994) and the associated requirement to acquire symbolic rather than cultural capital (Scott 2001). According to Zukin, one of the key features of the new 'symbolic economy' is the production of a 'language of social identity' (Zukin 1997:45) or, in other words, a meaningful and communicable image. Bianchini confirms that cultural reimagining strategies are motivated by symbolic concerns, by arguing that 'cultural enlivenment can act as a powerful symbol of regeneration, of renewed energy and confidence' (Bianchini 1991). The desire to symbolise certain ideals and concepts is a central tenet of the symbolic urban economy. Realistically, some of the themes utilised by cities, such as sport, popular music and popular literature have a much larger capacity to generate symbolic associations, because of their media profile, than they do to generate distinctive social status. It is therefore perhaps most appropriate to understand reimagining in terms of the accumulation of symbolic, rather than cultural capital.

An understanding of reimagining in terms of the accumulation of symbolic capital also conveniently explains the increasing use of mythical and fictional figures by cities such as Nottingham (Robin Hood), Coventry (Lady Godiva) and Roslyn (Northern Exposure) (Hanna 1996). This use of the 'imaginary' can be associated with the development of an increasingly 'hyperreal' world. The search for the 'real' in a world dominated by the imaginary is also thought to be the reason for the apparent increased levels of nostalgia in contemporary society (Featherstone 1991, Baudrillard 1983). Ironically this demand for nostalgia, fuelled by paranoia about a world dominated by image, has fuelled reimagining which uses industrial heritage themes, for example initiatives adopted by Stoke-on Trent (Bramwell and Rawding 1996), Sunderland (Robinson 1999) and Flint (Judd 1995).

The diverse range of themes used in city reimagining strategies can therefore be understood partly through an understanding of the motives of the cultural intermediaries responsible for their design. Depending on the credence given to extreme interpretations of shifts in contemporary culture, these motives are determined by the desire to accumulate symbolic

cultural and/or cultural capital. However, it is easy to overestimate the prevalence of using more diverse cultural themes to represent cities. The example of Flint, Michigan, USA provides an insightful example illustrating why the majority of city reimagining is still based on culture defined in its traditional sense. Judd (1995) describes how this city failed in its attempts to reimage itself as a tourist destination using the diverse, eclectic, nostalgic and supposedly innovative theme of the motor car. The city developed a large visitor attraction (Autoworld), as well as various associated hotel complexes and shopping malls. The subsequent failure of this ambitious reimagining initiative was documented famously in the Michael Moore film 'Roger and Me' (1989). As well as incurring financial losses, Flint also managed to degrade its image further by generating negative publicity because of its spectacular failure. Therefore, although the use of 'high culture' is much maligned in academic critiques, it appears less susceptible to ridicule in the public sphere and is still prevalent in contemporary city reimagining strategies.

Although in extreme cases such as Flint, the signs of failure are all too obvious, in other instances, the value of reimagining initiatives is difficult to judge. Even when strategies do procure increased inward investment and tourism revenue, other more subtle effects may dilute their 'success' as catalysts of urban renaissance. Indeed, as we shall now illustrate, there are other, less obvious dilemmas associated with the process, that lead us to question the reimagining of cities and the manner in which it is conducted.

2.8.1 Problems associated with city imaging.

By adopting reimagining strategies involving the redevelopment of urban areas into cultural or leisure orientated zones, many cities are being driven by a vision of regeneration that is not entirely of their own invention (Boyle and Hughes 1991). It has been noted that this causes several problems, including controversy regarding the motives and biases underpinning urban reimagining (Bramwell and Rawding 1996, Harvey 1989a), the legitimacy, authenticity and egalitarianism of the strategies pursued (Boyle and Hughes 1991), and the resultant duplication and standardisation of urban representations and cityscapes (Harvey 1989a, Relph 1976). These concerns are addressed below.

Bramwell and Rawding (1996) among others have expressed concern that a city image operates at an underlying level 'as a subtle form of social and political socialisation'

(1996:217), designed by urban elites to convince residents, some of whom may be disadvantaged, that the city leaders are capable, innovative and forward-thinking public servants. This cynical, though worryingly justifiable, assertion is reaffirmed by Boyle (1997), who considers urban boosterism strategies to be; 'efforts made by an urban elite to refashion collective emotion and consciousness within cities in order to legitimate political projects which function primarily in their interests' (Boyle 1997:1975). Attempts to reconfigure a city's image through various place marketing activities are therefore considered by some commentators, including Boyle, to merely exist as 'urban propaganda projects' (Boyle 1997:1975) employed to hide the ineffectual organisation of a city's services.

City imaging has developed a problematic reputation (the image of imaging?) and at various junctures has been accused of causing problems such as gentrification (Fainstein and Gladstone 1997), the creation of bourgeois playgrounds (Harvey 1989a), the privatisation of public space in city centres and compromising urban democracy and accountability. In short, it leads us to question whether city imaging leads to the perpetuation of inequalities of wealth and power and the extent to which the process is driven by those groups more likely to gain from the city's new image and function. Lim (1993) is particularly concerned with the issue of who gains most from the imaging process. As has been identified above, because of the need to produce images conducive to inward investment, most projects tend to take the form of prestige cultural events or flagship developments. Such policies result in developments which can only be enjoyed by a select audience with a 'high level of economic and cultural capital' (Lim 1993:593). This has led to controversies not only regarding the equitable use of public money, but dissatisfaction relating to the way in which synthetic, sanitised and unrepresentative images are communicated of the city.

2.8.2 Representation or re-presentation?

According to Boyle and Hughes (1991), the representation of a city in a manner not necessarily reflected in resident's consciousness, but in new terms, and without public consultation, can cause difficulties. For examples, instances have been recorded where inhabitants of cities have openly objected to the reimagining of their city. One of the oft-cited examples of this scenario was Glasgow's successful bid to be 'European City of

Culture 1990', and its subsequent attempt to position itself as a centre of 'high culture' (Boyle and Hughes 1991). Working class organisations within the city felt aggrieved that the city was being portrayed in a way not 'sedimented down the years in Glaswegian consciousness - but in new terms without direct reference to any external reality' (Boyle and Hughes 1991:221). This issue is also linked to a number of other interesting debates, most notably the extent to which urban reimagining, which is often directed by autonomous and non-elected bodies, is democratic. Arguably, in the case of Glasgow, the lack of democratic consultation and community collaboration resulted in widespread suspicion of the City of Culture initiatives. This distrust resulted in the initiatives being accused of comprising a subversive political project to conveniently sanitise Glasgow's industrial and working class heritage.

The Glasgow example illustrates the mutual affinity between 'authenticity' and 'community involvement' in city reimagining, and prompts the need to consider the intrinsic differences between a city's 'identity' and its 'image'. Though these terms are often used interchangeably, Barke and Harrop suggest that 'identity is not the same thing as image' (1994:95). Barke and Harrop controversially consider that identity 'may be regarded as an objective thing: it is what the place is actually like', whereas image is 'how an organisation or place is perceived externally' (1994:95). Considering identity as an objective measure is problematic and contradicts some of the important arguments noted in the cultural analyses of image noted previously. However, though there are inherent problems with Barke and Harrop's definition, their argument encourages recognition of the utility of separating the way in which a city is internally and externally perceived. It therefore may be more pertinent to note that problems, such as those experienced by Glasgow, occur when a city's identity, as perceived by its residents, is not reflected in the image that is projected to an external audience.

Although Boyle and Hughes provide an informed review of the Glasgow controversy, three important points should be made regarding this case study which may add balance to their observations. The authors do not provide specific evidence to conclude that the majority of Glaswegians were opposed to the representation used in the infamous 1990 campaigns. In addition, although Glasgow's reinvention as a 'City of Culture' is regarded by some authors as problematic, in retrospect the city's strategy is generally considered to have been successful in its ambition to create a city image attractive to tourists. Though

the means by which this 'success' has been achieved can be questioned, it is hard to criticise the relevant authorities for attempting to weave a 'synthetic' new image for Glasgow. Industrial cities have underdeveloped tourism sectors and therefore if they do wish to obtain a share of an increasingly lucrative urban tourism market it is necessary to promote images that can replace negative or vague images of the cities. As Boorstin's account of image characteristics implies (1962, see section 2.1), realistically this may well involve some sort of 'invented' or 'synthetic' representation. As Barke and Harrop (1994) state, 'in the selling of places there has to be a distortion of reality or of identity' (1994:95).

Issues concerning the authenticity of tourism images and spaces are difficult to assess because they involve the construction and deconstruction of what is authentic, what constitutes reality and what is representative. One way of dealing with this authenticity issue is provided by Harvey (1994). Harvey argues that it is impossible to define any distinction between authentic and inauthentic and therefore he suggests that places should not be distinguished in terms of their falsity/genuineness, but only by the style in which they are imagined. Therefore, for Harvey, if a place is regarded by some in a legitimate and believable way, for them that perception and that place is authentic. If a person can relate to an image of a place and decode it, derive meaning from it and accept it into their system of understanding, then that place must be considered just as authentic as anywhere else. Accordingly, considering some cities as being authentic, whilst condemning other as inauthentic, is misguided. The example of Times Square, New York is useful to illustrate this argument (Harvey 1994). Times Square, when constructed in the late 19th Century was initially perceived as a gaudy, brash, consumerist and inauthentic creation. Indeed the development was even named after the New York Times that helped to fund its invention. However, the square is now seen by millions of New Yorkers as a symbolic and spiritual centre of the city, proving that falsity and genuineness are just perceptual constructs that can only be judged through the analysis of the perceptions of the observer. Therefore, in the present study, the 'authenticity' of sport as an urban reimagining theme can only be assessed through the analysis of people's interpretation of such initiatives.

2.8.3 Differentiation and distinctiveness

According to Lynch (1981) a sense of place is 'a coherent mental representation of time and space in which a person can recognise or recall a place as being distinct from other

places... a particular character of its own' (Lynch 1981:132). Lynch also comments that 'we take delight in physically distinctive, recognisable locales and attach our feelings and meanings to them' (1981:23). Why, then, has it been increasingly observed that places have begun to market themselves, regenerate themselves and redevelop themselves in a manner that appears to nullify the differences that Lynch believes make them so appealing? Philo and Kearns (1993) have identified this problem and discuss the phenomenon thus:

For places, the idea is not so much that they be genuinely different from one another but that they harness their surface differences in order to make themselves in a very real sense nothing but 'the same': to give themselves basically the same sort of attractive image - the same pleasant ensemble of motifs drained of anything controversial, with basically the same ambitions of sucking in capital so as to make the place in question 'richer' than the rest.

Philo and Kearns 1993:20

Correspondingly, one of the main conclusions of Judd's (1995) work is that, although the intention of much imaging is to project a distinct, identifiable image which will give a city a comparative advantage over its competitors, often the reality is the widespread serial reproduction of images and associated developments (Judd 1995). Harvey (1989a) also identifies image reproduction as an important issue, reinforcing the apparent paradox where cities strive to promote a distinctive image to potential tourists but in reality are failing to distinguish themselves from their competitors because of the use of similar approaches, themes and developments.

The question of distinctiveness appears to be a very critical issue. Are cities promoting new images and associated flagship developments as a means of establishing a unique place and an identity in the tourist marketplace? Or are they simply trying to provide the services, facilities and images that people expect in a contemporary urban tourism destination? Within the tourism literature, it would appear that most researchers contend that uniqueness and distinctiveness are crucial to a tourist destination's development strategy (Pearce 1988, MacCannell 1999, Fretter 1993). There is certainly evidence to suggest that it is the recognition of the power of distinctive environments, sites and settings which has underpinned the planning and design of tourism regions and places (Gunn 1988, Pearce and Fagence 1996). The city images potential tourists have in their minds are an

effective means of distinguishing between unfamiliar cities. If similar images are promoted by city destinations, then the value of those city images appears to be effaced. However, there is a counter argument, which may have particular resonance for urban tourism destinations. Contemporary fordist consumerism has been dominated by the consumption of standardised products, and when visiting cities people may want to be assured that typical features of modern cities are present. A more standardised image espousing common features and attributes may therefore have appeal.

2.8.4 City imaging and the development of urban tourism

Perhaps because of the contemporary urban emphasis on consumption and consumer services, tourism and leisure have been allocated an unjustifiably privileged position within the discourse of city reimagining. Tourism is an important urban phenomenon, indeed Peter Hall (1999) sees tourism as an essential function of the contemporary 'information city', including it alongside financial services, command and control functions and creative/cultural industries as key areas of informational activity (1999:174). However, Hall is talking here of the 'great' global cities and despite the important income stream it provides for some urban areas, it is mistaken to consider that tourism should be prioritised by all cities in the developed world. In industrial cities, the benefits of tourism are not easily dispersed amongst 'those suffering from the dislocation of the old' (Healey 1995:267). Therefore, although developing attractive destination images is a priority for some cities, it is not always the most appropriate direction for all. It is important for cities to recognise the potential of other economic sectors and to pursue more imaginative urban 'solutions'.

Tourism in cities is by no means a new phenomenon. Ever since urban areas have existed, people have travelled from outside them to sample the various services and environments they provide. However, the issue of urban tourism has received extended prominence since around the mid 1970s in Europe and North America because the role, nature and function of many urban areas has significantly altered. Law (1992a), like most other commentators, believes that the growth in the number of cities intensively promoting tourism since the 1970s is indeed a consequence of deindustrialisation. However, he also believes that it was the fact that the 'haemorrhaging' (Law 1992a) of manufacturing industry coincided with the growing realisation that tourism was a growth industry that

pushed tourism promotion to the fore for those interested in the maintenance and development of urban spaces. Harvey concurs and notes that cities have had to become 'spectacular spaces' to enable them to attract tourists (1989a). Many cities, such as London, Edinburgh and Paris have had tourism as an intrinsic part of their function for centuries and have therefore had to do little to promote themselves as attractive tourist destinations. However, in other cities traditionally based on manufacturing and heavy industry, tourism has only recently been recognised and selected as a means of urban renewal and expansion (Law 1993).

Studies of urban tourism which address the importance, implications and motives of city reimagining usually either adopt a political economy perspective approach or pursue a cultural approach (Fainstein and Gladstone 1997). Political economy approaches have often been associated with the concept of urban regeneration, where it has been noted that tourism initiatives in cities frequently have undesirable distributional effects (Fainstein and Gladstone 1997). Common themes that have been addressed in such analyses include gentrification, the low quality of employment and the controversial use of public money to provide facilities for non-residents. Cultural approaches, though also concerned with regeneration, have focused more heavily on some of the more subtle implications of city reimagining, such as the commodification of the city and issues regarding authenticity, consciousness, diversity and equality (Robinson 1999).

Despite the frequent citing of the inherent problems in pursuing urban tourism as a means of securing regeneration, commentators have noted some positive aspects of such a strategy. In cities, the flow of visitors is usually more consistent throughout the year, which appears to be in stark contrast to other forms of tourism (Law 1993). Nevertheless, most visitors spend one or only a few days in the city, much less than people on conventional holidays. Research indicates that cities attract people from all ages, although different activities have their own age and group profiles (Law 1993). The prime visitor markets for urban tourism are considered to be the business traveller, exhibition attendees, short break holiday makers and day trippers (Law 1992b). According to Law (1993), overall visitors to cities tend to be more affluent and therefore are higher spenders and they are primarily concerned with two main motivations - business and culture. Business tourism, incorporating conventions, conferences, seminars and the hotel trade, is a lucrative element and one which most cities are keen to develop further. Cultural tourism

is a problematic term, but is used in the literature to refer to a whole spectrum of motivations for visiting the city, from cinema, museum, theatre and sporting visits to shopping and visiting friends/relatives.

For Judd (1995), there are two principal components of an urban tourism strategy. First, 'the construction and projection of images attractive to tourists', and, second, 'investing in elaborate, costly infrastructure to support tourism (1995:175). It does appear that in the highly competitive world of urban tourism, it is vital that physical environments, facilities and infrastructure are developed that will enhance the appeal and experiences of a city's tourism product. New attractions have been built near existing provision or in newly created tourism quarters, for example Liverpool's Albert Dock. As Law (1992a) has stated, this district is often on the edge of the Central Business District or in a derelict zone. Judd (1995) believes the motivation behind the location of this area is often the fact that certain parts of the city are inhospitable to visitors in the eyes of tourism promoters because of urban decay or social problems. Therefore specialist areas are set aside as 'tourist reservations' (Judd 1995:186). This situation is particularly prevalent in the US, argues Judd, as cities such as Boston and Baltimore try to promote a tourist zone which is in stark contrast to the reality of the downtown areas of the cities. It is thought that this process is causing a distinct split between public and private space in these cities, with the residential zone separated from the more affluent tourism district. Reflecting concern at this polarisation, Madsen notes that such developments are resulting in what he terms 'islands of regeneration' (Madsen 1992:638)

Examples of urban destination reimagining strategies are abundant, but it is not until recently that commentators have begun to research and write about them. Bramwell and Rawding's (1996) work concerning British cities gives a particularly good account of industrial cities' attempts to reimage themselves, and it is useful for the purposes of the present study as it looks at the issue from a tourism perspective. In Britain it was in the 1980s that cities began to embark upon well publicised initiatives designed to improve the city destination images. These campaigns involved vigorous place marketing strategies, including slogans such as; Manchester - the Life and Soul of Britain; Birmingham - the Big Heart of England; and perhaps less convincingly, Bradford - a Surprising Place (Bramwell and Rawding 1996). The projection of new images for cities such as Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham and Sheffield have been reinforced by ambitious redevelopment

schemes involving the construction of conference facilities, museums, theatres, and most importantly in the context of the present study, the development of 'prestige' sports facilities (Hubbard 1996b, Loftman and Nevin 1996, Loftman and Spirou 1996, Paddison 1993). It is these attempts that provide the focus for the remainder of this literature review.

2.9 Sport-led regeneration and the image of the city

The subjects of sport, tourism and urban studies are usually treated as quite separate phenomena. They have individual academic departments, individual academic journals and are usually treated as separate spheres of activity (Glyptis 1991). However, it is becoming increasingly clear with developments over the past twenty years that the topics are by no means mutually exclusive. Indeed, sport, tourism and regeneration are inextricably linked through certain projects, popular participation and some aspects of practice. For example, the City of Barcelona used its staging of the 1992 Olympic Games as a means of regenerating urban infrastructure and derelict land and to 'launch its tourism strategy for the next century' (Stevens 1990 c.f. Glyptis 1991:179). There are many different issues and concepts involved in the linkages between sport, tourism and cities. Here the most important themes will be analysed to illustrate the various arguments put forward and to evaluate the extent of our understanding of the issues involved. Through such analysis, it is hoped that the links between sport, tourism and city image enhancement will become clear.

2.9.1 Sport-led urban development strategies

Sport-related strategies have been employed by cities to stimulate urban renewal. Usually, ambivalence by civic leaders means tourism has often been seen as a positive by-product of such facilities, while the primary purpose of the events and construction work has supposedly been to introduce new activities to declining cities in an attempt to reinvigorate derelict land and improve the physical fabric of the city. As Collins (1991) identifies, sport and leisure have been used in the UK as an active element in a wave of urban redevelopment since the 1970s. Various proposals have been introduced to urban areas to alleviate urban decline and to improve facilities for residents. These have included expanding leisure opportunities in inner cities, new indoor facilities for coastal towns and

the redevelopment of old industrial sites into leisure developments (Collins 1991). Over the last two decades cities as geographically and structurally diverse as Indianapolis, Barcelona, Lyon, Cardiff, Sydney and Osaka have used sport and leisure facilities to improve their urban environments, provide new employment opportunities and attract new forms of investment. The most common strategic initiatives have involved the construction of large multi-purpose indoor and outdoor arenas in derelict urban areas to improve leisure provision in the city, to create jobs and to enable the staging of major events and regular sporting fixtures. In many instances, including the case studies used in this study, the new or improved facilities have been a direct result of bids for large events and have subsequently been integrated into a redevelopment strategy aimed at improving the city's economy and image. As well as providing regeneration opportunities, Bramwell (1997a) states that in Sheffield the new facilities appear to have increased attendances of local people watching sport.

Urban sport initiatives have typically involved bidding for and staging major sporting events and constructing major sporting arenas within which to stage them (Loftman and Spirou 1996). These two main facets of urban sport reimagining are examined in more detail below, starting with the use of sport events as a means of destination image enhancement.

2.9.2 Sport events

If, as Hall (1992a) asserts, events are the image builders of modern tourism, then sport events should be considered as particularly important contributors to city reimagining. Perhaps the most well-known and prominent special events are those concerned with sport (Hall 1992a), and links between sports events, tourism and urban regeneration have been established for some time. Hall (1992a) points to the fact that the 1932 Olympics were designed to promote tourism and urban history is littered with endeavours to stage major one-off and/or regular programmes of sport events to present attractive images to external audiences.

There is also a strong association between major sporting events and urban tourism. The biggest events, such as the Olympics, Football's World Cup, American Football's Superbowl and Sailing's America's Cup, draw large international audiences to the host site. These 'mega-events' (Getz 1991) generate world-wide television exposure and ensure

visibility and the possibility of image enhancement. For example it is estimated that 50% of the world's population (c.3 billion) watched the 1990 Football World Cup (Collins 1991). The result is often increased levels of tourist visitation, both during and after the event. Burgan and Mules (1992) highlight the potential of sporting events for boosting tourism by citing Australian examples, including the 1982 Commonwealth Games which attracted 6,000 foreign visitors, the America's Cup (1986/7) which attracted 700,000 visitors and the World Exposition which attracted 427,000 tourists.

Despite the supposed benefits of sport events for urban areas, Hughes (1993) is cautious when evaluating their use as the basis for a city's tourism development. Hughes' concern is that the hosting of such events may disturb the normal development of tourism, with the possibility that they may be a distraction from the pursuit of a more fundamental development strategy that will ensure long term sustainable growth (Hughes 1993). Hall (1997a) is less critical, but still cautious about the use of sport events as a mean of reimagining the city. He suggests that scaled and planned events can 'revitalise, redevelop and reimage' destinations (Hall 1997a:85), but that because they serve only a narrow range of interests they may be a 'chimera' in the search for sustainable tourism development (Hall 1997a). The sustainability of sport events as a tourism initiative is also addressed by Bramwell (1997b), who argues that economic efficiency, environmental integrity and social equity must be achieved if an event is to be of value to a destination in the long term.

2.9.3 Sport facilities

It is important to recognise that alongside promotional campaigns and the staging of special events, the process of reimagining frequently involves the construction of new spaces of consumption, often centred on spectacular 'flagship' or 'prestige' projects (Smyth 1994, Loftman and Nevin 1996). Prestige projects are defined by Loftman and Spirou (1996:29) as 'pioneering or innovative, large scale projects which are primarily concerned with the harnessing and creation of economic growth ... and changing outside perceptions of business decision makers and/or potential visitors from outside the locality.' Therefore, like the staging of special events, these developments attract sport tourists into the city, but are ultimately seen to have a more fundamental impact in terms of projecting an image of transformation, enabling the post-industrial city to shake off 'the last traces of its 19th century self' (Westwood and Williams 1997). Indeed, as Schimmel (1995) states, sporting

arenas are often designed in a manner that will allow them to generate symbolic capital for a city through the communication of positive associations such as 'machismo' and 'vibrancy' (1995).

The development of sports stadia can therefore be seen as pro-growth prestige projects which have a significance beyond the staging of specific events. Sporting stadia and arenas have been employed by cities as important symbolic and economic apparatus and such endeavours have a lengthy history. As stated in chapter 1, Greek and Roman cities frequently used large sporting arenas to espouse notions of urban prestige (Favro 1996). Throughout the 20th Century cities have adopted a similar rationale to justify the construction of major sport stadia. For example, Hall (1992a) contends that US football stadiums such as the Orange Bowl (Miami) and the Cotton Bowl (Dallas) were principally built to help revive ailing cities during the great depression of the 1930s. Additionally, research by Lipsitz suggests that sports facility construction characterised the urban reimagining strategies of Houston, Los Angeles, St Louis and New York in the early 1960s (Lipsitz 1984). In contemporary America, such initiatives have become increasingly prevalent as stadia are frequently coveted for their alleged capacity to lure footloose capital into metropolitan regions. The structure of US sport, involving major sports franchises which can be moved from city to city, has meant that major sport facilities in the US have become particularly important to a city's economy and status. Despite distinct differences, in the UK the stadium is also becoming an essential component of the entrepreneurial city (Bale 1994).

The presence of major spectator arenas has obvious benefits for urban tourism destinations in that they can stage major regular and one-off events, drawing a significant amount of people into the city. However, their influence on urban tourism may extend well beyond this function. Bale (1989) feels that sports facilities can generate sufficient mystique to become tourist attractions in their own right. Berlin's Olympic Stadium, Old Trafford in Manchester and The All England Tennis Club in London are all major tourist attractions even when sports events are not taking place. Although Europe lacks the lucrative 'Halls of Fame' that have been developed in the US, tourism products have been introduced successfully at several sporting arenas, usually involving a combination of tours, cafes and museums. The most successful example is the stadium tour and museum at the Camp Nou

US\$215m from the 1984 Olympic Games and Barcelona (1992) used its recent staging of the Summer Olympiad to generate and showcase US\$8.3m worth of investment. This was used to develop roads, a new airport and waterfront and created 138,000 person years of work (Law 1994).

Loftman and Spirou (1996) indicate some general conclusions from the studies they have completed on cities in the UK and US that have utilised sport-led regeneration strategies (Table 2.9.2). The implications of these conclusions are that UK cities engaging in sport-led generation are pursuing a costly, risky and questionable strategic direction. However, despite the acknowledgement of image in their discussion, Loftman and Spirou do not attempt to include an analysis of the effects of the initiatives on the image of the cities concerned. This is a notable omission, particularly as image enhancement is often the prime incentive and motivation for cities pursuing sport-led regeneration.

• The promotion of sport as a tool of economic development is directly linked to international economic restructuring and resultant inter-city competition.
• Major questions have to be asked about the actual number and quality of jobs which are supported by initiatives after the construction phase.
• Concern over the methodological shortcomings of economic impact studies.
• Most facilities generate substantial financial losses.
• Not all cities can be successful in following this strategy.
• In the UK there is less economic imperative to adopt pro-growth policies focused on sport than in the US due to the absence of large scale business revenues, sale and hotel taxes and a franchise system.

Table 2.9.2 *Conclusions of Loftman and Spirou on the nature and impact of the development of sports facilities (Loftman and Spirou 1996).*

2.9.5 *The impact of sport-led strategies on tourist destination images*

Despite recognition of the prevalence and historical longevity of urban sport reimagining, there is only a small amount of research that has evaluated its impact and even less which has specifically investigated its effects on tourist images. As many commentators have recognised (Thorns 1997, Harvey 1989a, CM Hall 1997b), the explicit aim of a large proportion of city-imaging work is to enhance the way in which the city is perceived by

prospective urban tourists. The focus in this next section is on reimagining for this specific purpose.

Some of the most important research in this narrow field of study is provided by Ritchie (Ritchie and Smith 1991, Ritchie and Lyons 1990, Ritchie 1984). Ritchie's research regarding the city of Calgary, the host of the 1988 Winter Olympic Games, appears to show that sporting initiatives can influence destination image (Ritchie and Smith 1991). Hall confirms these findings (1997a) in stating that 'an improved image seems to be one of the most significant legacies of the Calgary 1988 Winter Games' (1997a:79). However, both Hall (1997a) and Ritchie and Smith (1991) note that although the destination image of the city has been enhanced by this particular event, this does not necessarily mean that more people would visit. This cynicism is countered by Bale (1989) who states that Calgary *has* experienced dramatically increased visitation levels since the 1988 Winter Games.

There are other instances where image enhancement as a result of sports events/facilities does seem to have had a significant long term impact on the success of urban tourism destinations. However, unlike the work of Ritchie and Smith (1991), most of the literature contains only anecdotal indications of success. Much of this work is based on winter sports destinations, such as St. Moritz, where the staging of major events against the backdrop of spectacular scenery has allegedly assisted in 'the creation of an 'international tourism Mecca' (Ritchie and Lyons 1990:23). The 1968 Games in Grenoble is also said to have had a major effect on the amount of tourists visiting this part of the Alps (Bale 1989). However, research into initiatives introduced by the authorities in Indianapolis, USA suggests that tourism imaging through sport is not a phenomenon confined to winter sports resorts. Schimmel (1995) describes how this US city used sport in an attempt to transform it into a white collar tourist centre. Realising the city's aesthetic limitations, public officials and private entrepreneurs collaborated to use sport as a foundation on which to base the city's growth strategy. The apparent result was a vastly improved image, although the city's underlying social problems remained largely unresolved (Schimmel 1995). This is not the only critical assessment of the impact of sport-related imaging strategies. The growing commercialisation of sport leads Jennings (1996) to the conclusion that image benefits of staging major sport events 'do not accrue to the host cities but rather to international political and commercial business interests' (c.f. Higham 1999:83).

Authors including Ritchie and Smith (1991) have indicated that municipal/tourism managers in a city must anticipate a certain (but as yet unknown) rate of image and awareness decay if steps are not taken to keep links between sport and the city visible. Ritchie and Smith also feel that the form and nature of the city will affect the city's image enhancement opportunities. For instance, a city like Los Angeles, which is already very well known, may experience very little increase in awareness or change in image due to the high degree of exposure it enjoys on a regular basis. These cities, unlike smaller tourist destinations have a multitude of different functions beside tourism and therefore images are formed of them from a variety of sources. Even for less well-known cities who do experience an increase in awareness and image (such as Calgary) 'it is not immediately obvious that this will translate into increased visitation levels, tourism receipts and/or other forms of economic development' (Ritchie and Smith 1991:9).

2.9.6 Why sport may be an effective agent of destination image change

Despite the long history of sport reimagining, if, and more specifically, how sport reimagining can result in image-related benefits, has rarely been evaluated. The lack of such work means that the author has had to apply general image literature to a sport context, to hypothesise how sport reimagining may procure city image enhancement. The following sections include ideas inspired by, and based on relevant literature, but which have been formulated by the author to explain why sport initiatives may be effective agents of city image change. The ideas focus on three alleged qualities of sport initiatives as image formation agents - their credibility, imageability and popularity. The aim in this section is to discuss these ideas and explain why they may assist the potency of sport reimagining. Alongside broader objectives, the intention in subsequent chapters is to assess the relevance of these ideas and to substantiate whether sport reimagining in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield utilises these alleged qualities. The conclusion to this study (chapter 9) returns to these ideas and evaluates their value and relevance to understanding the effectiveness of sport reimagining.

The 'credibility' of sport reimagining

To further understand how sport reimagining may influence place images, it is necessary to make links to the ideas noted previously regarding the formation of images. Gartner asserts that 'effective image change depends on an assessment of presently held tourism images' (Gartner 1993:207). In formulating an effective image enhancement strategy, it would therefore appear important to locate reimagining strategies within existing belief systems, especially as people may tend to avoid contradictory information or what Gartner terms 'cognitive dissonance' (Gartner 1993:205). Prospective tourists apparently 'seek information that agrees with their beliefs and they try to ignore information that does not' (Mayo and Jarvis 1981:35). Therefore, to be effective, it is important for reimagining strategies to evolve existing images, rather than to instigate an instantaneous revolution of the destination image. Indeed, it may be naive to think that potential tourists will accept hyperbolic imagery about industrial cities, proclaiming them to be attractive places to visit.

In the UK, 'industrial' cities have a long tradition of hosting regular and one-off sport events and have become intrinsically associated with high-profile teams and stadia. Holt (1989) identifies sport as an intrinsic urban function of the Victorian city, stating that in 1900 'every large city had its football, cricket or rugby ground, many had several large stadia' (1989:159). Karp and Yoels feel that this facet of urban culture has endured to the present day, arguing that 'sport is surely a pervasive feature of everyday urban life' (Karp and Yoels 1990:7). Therefore, there is nothing 'new' or revolutionary about associating prestige sport with these urban areas. However, by strengthening, renewing and developing these associations, cities can use 'major sporting activities...to project a high status image of the city via media coverage which may help attract visitors' (Law 1993:94).

Therefore, sport reimagining may be an attractive compromise for cities seeking to attract affluent consumers, whilst attempting to avoid the comprehensive desertion and suppression of local tradition and history. Emphasising sport as an imaging theme may be a less controversial means of representing the city than alternative concepts. Indeed, it may avoid the sort of controversy surrounding Glasgow's notorious imaging scheme, which involved its designation as European City of Culture 1990. Although sport

reimaging is also selective in terms of its representation of a city, it may be unjust to accuse it of 'sanitising the real working class culture and cultural history' (Boyle and Hughes 1991:225). There is little doubt that sport has played a fundamental role in the development and daily life of cities throughout the Twentieth Century. This may mean that sport is accepted as a more 'credible' representation of these cities. The congruence between image and identity may not only placate sensitive residents but may present a more 'believable' and therefore more effective image to a critical external audience.

The heightening of imaging credibility may also be facilitated by other characteristics of sport reimaging. Gartner suggests that 'autonomous' image formation agents are the most effective imaging vehicles, because of their high credibility and high market penetration (Gartner 1997:185). 'Autonomous' image formation agents are divided into two predominant sub-components - news and popular culture (Gartner 1997). This has implications for the efficacy of sport reimaging, as it is common for such initiatives to utilise these sources extensively. For instance, if people's images are dominated by autonomous news sources, then the contemporary exposure of sport events may enhance the efficacy of sport reimaging. Similarly, the importance of sport within popular culture means that urban sporting images are communicated constantly via features in print and broadcast media. In effect, the use of sport reimaging relies more on generating positive coverage in the media, than it does on traditional 'paid for' advertising techniques.

According to Gartner's conceptualisation, the efficacy of imaging is dependent on the credibility of the source and the extent to which messages penetrate popular consciousness. The apparent capacity of sport initiatives to use credible channels and reach large audiences therefore means that they have the potential to affect potential tourist's perceptions of cities.

The 'imageability' of sport reimaging

As has been mentioned previously (section 2.2.2), work within the field of environmental psychology can be very useful in terms of enhancing understanding of destination image formation. Research regarding the environmental psychology of sport-related phenomena is, perhaps unsurprisingly, an area of research which has received little attention. However, the work of Raitz (1987) is a valuable exception. Raitz considers the importance

of the environment to the way in which people experience a sport event, arguing that sport landscape elements are a principal factor in creating an acceptable level of gratification when spectating at, or participating in, sport. An important conclusion of Raitz's work is that people differentiate places through the recognition of distinctiveness. Raitz considers that a skyscraper or a cathedral may create a compelling sense of place through its 'sheer size, architectural qualities or its placement within a city' (Raitz 1987 p.5). The author believes that sport places exhibit these qualities and therefore the ability to create a sense of place, recognition and anticipation in the observer - producing a distinctive urban morphology. As well as providing a distinctive and gratifying element of the city's identity and structure, the sport place may also enhance the way in which people perceive the urban environment (Raitz 1987). This may be particularly prevalent if the sport takes place in a special context where the spectacle of natural or man-made beauty adds a distinctive aesthetic dimension to the ensemble (Raitz 1987).

The assertion that sport facilities provide a distinctive, recognisable and memorable feature of a contemporary city is reaffirmed by other commentators. Kurtzman and Zauhar (1997) suggest that sport and the stadium are symbolic of, and contribute to the life and personality of places. Bale (1989) states that in the US, cities do not feel that they are in the 'big league' unless they have a professional sports team and associated stadium. It would appear that sport events and the various arenas in which they are staged are a major function, feature and promotional tool of the contemporary city. On this basis, city reimagining based on this theme would therefore be justified in terms of its capability to enhance the image and profile of a metropolitan area.

There are, however, elements of Raitz's argument which are less convincing. Whilst stadia are undoubtedly a source for topophilia for the residents of cities and for the supporters of individuals and teams who perform there, it is questionable whether in the 21st Century new sport facilities do provide a unique identity for urban areas. Whitson and MacIntosh (1993:235) apply Harvey's argument regarding the serial reproduction of standardised urban regeneration projects, specifically to the development of new sport facilities. The authors conclude that sport-related initiatives are limited by the fact that they 'have only short-lived effects' in terms of tourist image benefits because 'world-class [facilities and events] comes more and more to mean simply the standards of facility and the kinds of entertainment that are expected anywhere by affluent international travellers' (Whitson and

MacIntosh (1993:236). Schimmel (1995) also recognises this point and highlights the paradox that whilst some regard the stadium as typical of the tendency towards placelessness, others assert that nothing is as intrinsically associated with place than a sports stadium. However the concern for cities adopting a sport-led strategy is that sport would appear to be more important as form of communicating and generating urban *identity* amongst its resident communities, rather than providing a distinctive means of announcing and developing an attractive city *image* to an external audience of potential tourists.

The popularity of sport reimagining

In addition to the importance of source credibility and distinctiveness, it is also recognised that an individual's 'existing needs and desires' are an important part of the image formation process (Ashworth and Voogd 1990:81). The perception of cities is very selective and what people choose to perceive is usually related closely to what they care about (Mayo and Jarvis 1981:28). Therefore, the popularity of sport may result in sport initiatives being more readily accepted into potential tourist's image of the city. As Whitson and MacIntosh (1993:236) state, the popularity of professional sport and of world events clearly extends beyond a small group of people. Figures show that in 1986, 11% of adults had visited a spectator sport event in the previous four weeks. It is estimated that by 1996 this figure had reached 13%, with a further 1% rise expected by the year 2002 (General Household Survey c.f. LIRC 1998). The figures relating to 'armchair' viewing further emphasise the potential exposure of sport reimagining. In 1996, 3.5 billion people watched the Atlanta Olympics - almost one third of the world's population (LIRC 1998). The capacity of the Olympic Games to interest a wide section of the population is highlighted by Law (1994) who states that 'even those who do not normally engage in or follow sport regularly find the spectacle a powerful draw' (Law 1994:223). However attracting mass television audiences is not something that is exclusive to the Olympiad. In the United States, the eight most watched television programmes are all sport events (LIRC 1998). Mullin et al (1993) imply that this popularity may have important implications for the efficacy of sport reimagining. As the authors identify, the marketer's goal is to create a balanced or consonant relationship between the image of the city and the consumer's self image so there is an overall consistency (Mullin et al 1993). Therefore, if a person has an interest in sport, the promotion of a city through this medium may be particularly effective.

This is not only because a person may want to visit the specific events/facilities at first hand, but because the image of the city and the person's self image are consonant. Each image reinforces the other so that a very positive relationship builds up between the prospective tourist and the city.

2.9.7 Final comments

This review of literature has attempted to introduce and discuss general and specific ideas to enhance understanding of sport reimagining. Through a broad analysis of image and image formation, via a discussion of city reimagining and finally a focused discussion relating to sport and sport reimagining, this chapter has aimed to provide a sound basis for the remainder of the study. It should be recognised that the aim has been to provide a general critique of relevant debates and their implications, rather than a direct discussion of sport reimagining in the case study cities. Significant primary and secondary research is needed to provide an informed examination of initiatives implemented in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. Therefore sport reimagining in these particular contexts in discussed at length in chapter 5, after the conceptual framework (chapter 3) and methodology (chapter 4) have been outlined. The intention in subsequent chapters is to build upon the ideas noted in this chapter to explore how sport reimagining influences city images. In order to do this it is necessary to try and conceptualise how sport reimagining may affect the image of the city destination. Hence, in the next chapter the intention is to deconstruct city images to develop a conceptual framework that will allow the study to systematically analyse the effects on different image components. Unfortunately, due to limitations of space, it is impossible to take forward all of the relevant ideas that have been reviewed in this chapter. However, several key ideas – particularly those relating to the structure and components of images - are developed further in chapter 3. Other issues raised in this chapter including the supposed distinctiveness, credibility and popularity of sport reimagining are also addressed in the remainder of the study. Though not all the concepts, ideas and debates included here can be developed further, it is hoped that their acknowledgement provides an illustrative theoretical context for subsequent discussions.

Chapter 3

Conceptual framework

Once wrenched away from its basic principle, sport can be pressed into the service of any end whatsoever: as a parade of prestige or of violence, it slips.....from play founded on competition and representation to circus-like play, play based on the pull of vertigo.

Baudrillard 1993:77

3.0 Introduction

The proliferation and circulation of images is now an integral part of the way in which the contemporary city can be understood. Cities are where social images are most prominently on display, where advertising and promotion are most intense and where the conspicuous act of consumption is most significant (Lyon 1995). As chapter 2 identified, urban authorities have reinforced this synthesis between image and the city through extensive imaging activities to promote their envisaged roles as consumption centres. Although the discussion in the preceding chapter confirmed that image enhancement is often an explicit objective of urban sport initiatives, it remains unclear *how* this sport reimagining induces city image impacts. This chapter aims to provide a framework that can facilitate an understanding of how sport initiatives influence the images of city destinations. As there is little existing work that directly addresses such concerns, it is necessary to apply general ideas concerning the structure and communication of place images to the characteristics of sport initiatives. The subsequent discussion attempts to conceptualise the structure and form of city images, so that any impact may be fully appreciated. This conceptualisation is grounded in some of the theoretical ideas introduced in the previous chapter. Section 2.3.1 revealed that a relevant and applicable definition of place image is offered by Echtner and Ritchie, who consider it to comprise of perceptions of individual attributes as well as more holistic impressions or mental pictures of a place (1991, 1993). This definition and Echtner and Ritchie's subsequent conceptualisation of destination

image (1991, 1993) is further developed in this chapter to provide the basis for the conceptual framework of the present study.

3.1 The structures of images and sport reimagining; towards a conceptual framework

The human mind tends to consider places with a unified wholeness that differentiates them from each other, and from the background from which they appear (Mayo and Jarvis 1981). However, individuals also construct images of the provision of specific attributes in a certain location. This combination of holistic impressions and specific attribute-based perceptions of places complies with Echtner and Ritchie's (1991, 1993) interpretation of destination image. Though not employed explicitly in city image research, compatible ideas are also apparent in studies which aim to conceptualise the place product. For example, Lawless (1993) makes the distinction between 'marketing the nuclear product of the city itself on one hand and its contributory parts on the other' (Lawless 1993:9). Though this argument is grounded in an analysis of the 'supply-side' of city imaging, Lawless implies that the city 'product' exists on two different levels. These 'nuclear' and 'contributory' levels can be equated with the holistic and attribute-based image components of Echtner and Ritchie's conceptualisation. Ashworth and Voogd exhibit a similar perspective in proposing that cities are 'both the product and the assemblage of products' (1990:7). This interpretation assists understanding of both the promotion of cities and the way in which they are imagined. More general analyses of the tourism product can also be linked to the distinction between the holistic image of the city and images of specific constituent parts. For example, Smith interprets the tourism product as something that exists on two distinct levels, at the specific level and at the total level - the complete experience (Smith 1994).

Despite their derivation from investigations with varying objectives, the positions cited above are united by the insinuation that places 'exist' on two broad levels. Places, and in particular, cities, can be consumed, imagined and promoted as holistic units, and as a series of specific products, functions or attributes. This multi-layered conceptualisation can assist our understanding of the impact of sport initiatives on

destination image. If city images are essentially a series of connected images which exist at different levels then to understand the impact of sport initiatives, it is necessary to recognise this image stratification and evaluate the impact at each of these levels.

3.2 Denotation, connotation and the stratified city image

Though the rudimentary conceptualisation outlined above purports to represent the different components present in city images, it does not explain how these components may be affected by imaging strategies and other external influences. The intention here is to develop this conceptualisation to enable it to explain the process of image change. In chapter 2 (section 2.4) it was suggested that the process of imaging could be understood as a process of communication. Therefore it is appropriate to draw upon ideas from communication studies to further our understanding of how imaging influences the components of city image identified above.

In applying the principles of communication theory, it is apparent that influences on the stratified city image can be equated to what Barthes describes as the 'two orders of signification', more commonly known as the processes of denotation and connotation (Barthes 1977, Fiske 1990). Watson and Hill (1984) define denotation, Barthes' first order of signification, as 'simply a process of identification' (1984:45). This definition broadly compares with those of Fiske, and indeed Hall, who interpret denotation as 'the common sense, obvious meaning of the sign' (Fiske 1990:85/86) and the 'literal meaning of a sign' (Hall 1980:132) respectively. However, as Hall recognises, defining denotation in this manner risks misrepresenting the concept as a 'literal transcription of reality' (Hall 1980:132). Denotation is still a 'code' and thus should not be considered to be a 'natural sign', despite the fact that the sign systems may seem 'fixed'.

Connotation involves the generation of 'wider meanings that are dependent on certain cultural associations' (Stevenson 1995:41). The use of the term connotation is somewhat problematic in that most authors use it to refer to associative meanings in general, whereas Barthes (1977) considers it to comprise only one element of his

‘second order of signification’. In the present study, connotation is considered to be the production of more abstract meanings generated through the interaction of messages with the ‘feelings or emotions of the user and the values of their culture’ (Fiske 1990:86). This definition is important as, unlike Stevenson's interpretation above, it implies that abstract and arbitrary meanings are both the result of individual processing of information and wider cultural influences. Barthes' notions of ‘connotation’ and ‘myth’ are acknowledged in this definition, and therefore in this study both phenomena are included under the umbrella term ‘connotation’.

Denotation and connotation have been largely ignored within place image research. However, Burgess (1978) recognises that place images can be understood through this conceptual frame:

Many places have special significances for individuals and larger groups of people. These significances may be denotative in the sense that place may be classed as a location, or that landscapes may be classified according to their use or utility. Additionally, places may have connotative meanings in the sense that they have metaphorical or symbolic value.

Burgess (1978:4)

By applying semiotic analyses to the stratified conceptualisation of the city image detailed in section 3.2, it is possible to identify how sport initiatives may come to enhance the image of post-industrial cities. Sport initiatives may denote ‘literal’ meanings that may enhance the perceived sporting qualities of a city, and therefore the city’s attribute-based image. They may also connote more abstract meanings that could influence the image of the city as a whole. This contention and its implications for the efficacy of sport reimagining is further explained below, taking each of the predominant processes in turn, beginning with denotative influences on the attribute-based image of the city.

3.3 The attribute-based component of city images

Echtner and Ritchie (1993) state that attribute-based images are the result of perceptions of individual destination features and can refer to a whole manner of different elements and functions of a place. The authors suggest that these could include a wide variety of different phenomena including climate, accommodation facilities, and the 'friendliness' of the people (Echtner and Ritchie 1991). In relation to the present study, attention is focused on the way the city is viewed as a 'sport-tourism' destination. Therefore the attribute-based images analysed here are perceptions of the provision of sport attractions, events, facilities and stadia in urban areas.

It is surmised that sport initiatives may influence the attribute-based image of a city as they communicate the presence of sporting facilities and events in a city. Sport reimagining may therefore enhance the image of a city for those potential tourists interested in sampling sport tourism products simply by denoting the presence of such provision. This parallels what Appleyard terms an 'operational' processing of information which comprises the recognition of 'goals, barriers, noxiants and other elements related to purposeful action' (Chein 1954 c.f. Appleyard 1973:109). Therefore, at this interpretative level, sport initiatives may affect the perceptions of those who see urban sport provision as a specific incentive (or disincentive) to actually visit a destination. The impact of any sport reimagining on the attribute-based image of the city may be particular to a specific segment of the tourist market who value sport as a function of the city. Therefore, to establish the impact of the sport initiatives on the attribute-based image of a city, it is necessary to consult the views of urban 'sport tourists' and therefore to consider the phenomenon of 'sport tourism' in an urban context.

3.3.1 Sport tourism

Despite the close links between sport and the city (Holt 1989, Karp and Yoels 1990, Gratton and Henry 2001, Bale 1993), sport tourism is not usually considered to be an urban phenomenon. However, partly because of the increased importance attached to events tourism, the importance of urban sport tourism as a participatory and spectator activity has received some belated attention in recent years. Sport tourism is defined by Delpy (1998) as ‘travel to participate in a sport activity, travel to observe sport and travel to visit a sport attraction’ (1998:23). This definition is supported by Standeven who considers sport tourism to encompass ‘travel for non-commercial reasons, to participate or observe sport activities away from the home range’ (Standeven 1998:40). However, it is argued here that sport tourism can involve a more diverse range of activities and may take one of five forms. These are outlined in Table 3.3.1 below:

1. Visit as spectator to sports event
2. Visit as a competitor
3. Visit as recreational user of facilities
4. Visit to look at/ tour facilities
5. Visit because of a general interest in location’s sporting links

Table 3.3.1 A conceptualisation of sport tourism

As Table 3.3.1 emphasises, sport tourism in the contemporary urban arena is wider in scope than merely comprising sport event spectators or participating in specific sport activities. Stadia, museums and other facilities have become attractions in their own right and ‘can bring into generally urban areas tourists who would not otherwise be there’ (Standeven 1998:44). The development of sport-based visitor attractions is predominantly a US phenomenon, although in the UK there are football museums in several cities, as well as the Wimbledon Tennis Museum, the Newmarket Horse Racing Museum and the British Golf Museum at St Andrews (Stevens and Wootton 1997). Various cities offer guided tours of stadia, although as Stevens and Wootton (1997:52) identify, few have the same level of sophistication expected from other forms of visitor attractions. Other cities have attempted to use historical sport

associations, topical sporting links, sporting peculiarities and celebrity connections as incentives to visit. Therefore, contemporary urban sports tourism has become a more diverse phenomenon, fuelled by the growth in the day visitor market, in special interest tourism, as well as in urban tourism marketing (Stevens and Wootton 1997). This new eclecticism has arguably resulted in the increased importance of developing an image as a 'city of sport' (Stevens and Morgan 1998). Although there is little existing research to substantiate this claim, it is reasonable to suppose that if a city has a very positive attribute-based image as a sport destination it will attract more sport tourists. However, it should be recognised, as Delpy (1998) identifies, that attracting sport tourists to urban areas depends on a number of other factors, including the wider cultural experience offered by a city, cost, proximity, and access to tickets.

In evaluating the effectiveness and viability of sport focused attribute-based imaging, it is necessary to consider two factors - the target audience that may be influenced by such initiatives and the importance attached to that attribute by that audience. It has been observed that the majority of city imaging strategies are aimed at the 'better off' (Bramwell and Rawding 1996), 'the right sort of people' (Harvey 1989a) or 'up market tourists' (Philo and Kearns 1993). Without a full appreciation of contemporary shifts in consumption trends and in the increasingly commodified and gentrified sport 'industry', this would appear to lessen the appropriateness of sport as an urban reimagining tool. Traditionally, sport in cities has been associated with the urban working classes (Holt 1989), hardly the image that would be deemed to attract the 'right sort of people' to cities. However, the increasing gentrification of sport and the corresponding confusion of hierarchical consumer tastes and interests amongst the 'petit bourgeoisie' (Bourdieu 1984), means that in the contemporary city, urban sport can attract affluent sectors of the tourist market. In previous eras, it would have been inherently contradictory to promote a city's sporting pedigree to complement more traditional forms of cultural capital. However, the contention here is that this is now an appropriate partnership, and one that can be effectively sold to a new market of more eclectic, affluent tourists whose tastes aren't confined to the cultural orthodoxy.

In qualifying the arguments above and in analysing attribute-based images generally, it is important to make some attempt to measure the importance of the attribute

concerned. Hence, in the present study, alongside analysing whether a city has developed an image as a sporting destination, it will be useful to consider whether prospective tourists regard this as a significant consideration in their purchase decision process. A city may be successful in generating favourable perceptions of its sporting pedigree, but this image is of little use if that attribute is not valued by prospective tourists. As has been stated, the focus within attribute-based imagery must be on those who are most responsive to the attribute under consideration. In this study this means ensuring that prospective tourists who are actively interested in spectating at sport events are included as research participants. Essentially, these tourists are the prime market for the initiatives and therefore their views are particularly pertinent.

Identifying and utilising denotation as an influence on destination image does raise some theoretical concerns. The contention that impressions can be solely based on perceptions of use-value devoid of any connotations is difficult to justify. As Hall states, there will be very few instances where signs signify only their literal meaning (1980). This is particularly the case when addressing sport, a concept which we have already stated is inherently saturated with symbols and images. Indeed, Rowe (1995) argues that sport is inherently reliant on image and symbols rather than on the production of use-valuable commodities per se. However, it is argued here that the terms denotation and connotation are useful exploratory categories of communication which enable the present study to deconstruct the effects of city reimagining. As Hall states, 'the terms denotation and connotation are merely useful analytical tools for distinguishing in particular contexts the different levels at which ideologies and discourses interact' (Hall 1980:133). Despite the blurred boundaries, there is a valid distinction between images enhanced by perceptions of sport initiatives as an attractive function of a city and those which are enhanced by associated abstract connotations. Appreciating this distinction allows the research to disentangle the imaging process to consider how sport initiatives affect city images. The present study needs to address these different interpretations, and therefore for analytical purposes it needs to make the problematic distinction between connotation and denotation. In doing so, the study recognises that although sport initiatives may denote the provision of sport, they will also inevitably procure more abstract and

arbitrary meanings. These connotations provide the focus for discussion in the next section.

3.4 The holistic component of city images

The sheer size and complexity of the city means that in order to make it legible and meaningful, the human mind reduces and simplifies information (Judd 1995). Often the result is a single holistic image that may consist of general associations or phrases which the respondent uses to represent the city, or mental pictures which are utilised for similar purposes. Holistic images appear to be particularly important when considering tourist's city images, perhaps more important than perceptions of individual products. As Law (1996) states, when visitors are asked why they want to visit London or Paris, a large proportion do not reply it is because of the Tower of London or the Louvre, but rather that they just want to go there (Law 1996:19). It is not always the specific operation, functions or attractions that generates interest in the city destination, but the image of the city as a whole. Tuan reaffirms the importance of devoting attention to holistic images by asserting that they should be studied independently from perceptions of specific attributes or districts of the city (Tuan 1977). Tuan asserts that people have a very clear image of their immediate neighbourhood and everyday environment, but beyond that the city is viewed more as a holistic construct in an abstract sense (1977). This 'level' of high abstraction involves the encapsulation of the immense complexity of the city through various phenomena not directly related to any measurable geographic reality. Therefore in analysing the effects of sport initiatives on city images it is necessary to appreciate the holistic impact they may have beyond their material function.

3.4.1 Identifying different forms of holistic image enhancement

To fully comprehend the processes via which sport reimagining affects holistic images of city destinations, it is necessary to divide holistic image enhancement into two distinct categories. First, a 'metonymic' impact where specific initiatives or themes are used by potential tourists to represent the city as a whole. Second, a more subtle metaphorical influence, where the imaging initiatives connote, infer or symbolise

values and associations which may become attached to the city as a result and thus influence how the city is imagined. These two categories of image modification will now be explained with ‘metonymic’ effects discussed in section 3.4.2 and ‘metaphorical’ or ‘symbolic’ influences outlined in section 3.4.3.

3.4.2 Sport initiatives, metonymy and holistic city images

Donald (1997) asserts that we are unable to contain the unbounded spread of large cities in an all-encompassing image, and hence we recall the city through metonymic images of memorable features (Donald 1997:181). Tuan concurs, stating that the construction of abstract or holistic images involves reducing the complexity of the urban area into simplified representations that encapsulate the whole city. Tuan cites monuments such as the Eiffel Tower, or silhouettes such as the famous skyline of New York, as being illustrative examples of this phenomenon (1977). Although they have been infrequently addressed in place image research, Laurier (1993) analyses the use of metonymic images, and he describes metonymic advertising as that which ‘uses a part to represent the whole’ (1993:269). This is the interpretation of metonymy used in the present study. Although these images may refer to specific features or functions of a city, they are holistic images because they involve the use of a specific feature, attribute or function of the urban environment to represent the city as a unified whole.

Though not described using the same terminology, some authors have addressed the importance of metonymy to tourism. Mayo and Jarvis (1981) argue that, despite the inherent complexity of destinations, tourists tend to perceive places in terms of a single object or ‘icon’ deemed appropriate to represent them. The authors suggest that this means that for many Switzerland ‘is’ the Alps and that Hawaii is often imagined as a beach (Mayo and Jarvis 1981). Similarly, MacCannell (1999) outlines how tourists use individual sights and their associated markers to represent destinations using the example of Paris. MacCannell’s ideas are illustrated in Figure 3.4.1.

[Sight → Marker] → Sight

Or

[Actual Eiffel Tower → Symbol of Tower] → Paris

Figure 3.4.1 Sight-marker-sight transformations (MacCannell 1999:132)

Applying MacCannell's principles regarding sight /marker /sight transformations (Figure 3.4.1), one way that sport reimagining may influence city images is through the transformation of associated sights (sport initiatives) and markers (representations of the sport initiatives) into symbols which encapsulate the city as a whole. MacCannell suggests that this broadly metonymic process does not involve simply cutting off a part to represent the whole, stating that 'care is exercised in the matter of what part of the whole is selected, the choice being limited to sights that are well-marked in their own right' (1999:131). Because of their media exposure, contemporary significance and popular acclaim, sport initiatives may provide such sights. Indeed, some commentators imply that the process of metonymy is specifically applicable to sporting icons. Karp and Yoels state that 'just as New York's skyline, San Francisco's Golden Gate bridge or the French Quarter in New Orleans both identify cities and become the source of people's identification with the city, so do sport teams' (1990:91). The present study aims to explore whether the sport stadia, facilities and events adopted by the three case study cities have provided influential metonyms.

The concept of 'imageability' may also help to explain the mechanisms through which certain urban phenomena develop metonymic qualities. This concept was first explored by Kevin Lynch and refers to the quality in a physical object that gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer (Lynch 1960).

Lynch's ideas can be linked to more recent debates, where it is observed that authorities have encouraged strategies that aestheticise or focus on the visual consumption of public space (Zukin 1998:825, see also Lash and Urry 1994). Sport stadia may have the capacity to become 'imageable' elements of the urban environment, as several commentators indicate that they provide providing 'potent

landscape features' (Stevens and Wootton 1997:52). Raitz (1987:5) states that sport stadia provide cities with buildings that are distinctive and which evoke a strong sense of place. This view is echoed by Bale (1993:3) who observes that 'it is the floodlights of the stadium, not the spire of the cathedral that more often than not act as urban landmarks and points of reference'. Accordingly, the development of new sport stadia may allow cities to develop new metonymic images.

Although metonymy is usually associated with fixed urban features, it is important to note that metonymy and metonymic imaging can involve the representation and perception of events and celebrities. If space is socially constructed and imagined, then there is no reason why less tangible phenomena cannot be used to represent the city as a whole. Interestingly Miller suggests that as we cannot imagine 'space' as such, we instead imagine an event or events taking place in those spaces (c.f. Donald 1997:181). Therefore when imagining cities, people may use certain memorable events that they can recall having taken place there, furthering the potential of sport as a reimagining vehicle. Like events, celebrity influences are commonly ignored within place image research. Some of the most 'imageable' celebrities are sport stars, some of whom have intrinsic associations with specific cities. Sport celebrities can have induced or organic effects on city images, depending on whether they have been deliberately utilised in place marketing. Some links between stars and cities are informal and incidental, whilst some celebrities are contractually hired by certain destinations to represent them. Notable examples include the golfer Colin Montgomery and his involvement in promoting 'Scotland - the brand' and the footballer Gary Neville's recent agreement to assist in the promotion of Maltese tourism. The popularity and exposure devoted to sport may mean that as well as sport facilities, sporting events and celebrities have the potential to become important metonyms for the city destination.

The use of metonyms and, more specially, sporting metonyms in holistic images may be particularly prevalent amongst prospective tourists who have little or no experience of a city. These individuals do not have enough experience of a city to create a 'mental map' (Gould and White 1974), and therefore they may use known features of the city to form an abstract holistic representation of the city. This process is

facilitated by the pervading influence of the media and its relationship with sport (Whitson 1998). As Stevens and Wootton (1997) observe, television coverage of national and international events has 'brought images of large scale, dramatic, often aesthetically memorable stadia into our living rooms' (1997:49). Media exposure allows audiences with no experience and little knowledge of a city to use sport to develop metonymic city representations and provides the 'markers' that MacCannell sees as central to creating meaningful symbols of destinations. However, this use of sporting icons may be more prevalent among those people with a significant interest in sport. This is because research appears to indicate that images are a product of an individual's existing needs and desires (Ashworth and Voogd 1990:81) and because what people choose to perceive is very closely related to what they care about (Mayo and Jarvis 1981).

3.4.3 Sport initiatives, symbolism and holistic city images.

Alongside possessing the capacity to become a representative component of city images, it is proposed that certain connotations generated by sport initiatives can influence holistic representations. Therefore, although holistic images held by potential tourists may not refer directly to sport or sport initiatives, they may be influenced significantly by certain connotations procured by sport reimagining. By their very nature, signs stand for something else and several commentators note that sport has often been used by cities to represent abstract notions such as machismo (Schimmel 1995), modernity (Nielsen 1995) and progress (Rowe 1995). However, the polysemy of meaning observed by Bakhtin means that sport and sport initiatives can signify very different things to different people, complicating the communication of these intended meanings to potential tourists. It is therefore important to undertake research that can allow tourists to communicate their individual interpretations of sport reimagining.

In discussions of semiology, there remains a distinction between those who retain the belief that we must acknowledge material reality to understand sign systems and those who contend that meanings and myths now obscure materiality or its functional denotations (Gottdiener 1995). If the former version is accepted then it is useful to

acknowledge Pierce's conceptualisation which involves the delineation of indexical signs that have a direct causal link with the referent, and symbolic signs that generate arbitrary meanings. Both indexical and symbolic signs involve connotation, and the work of Roland Barthes (1977), developed from Saussurian principles, is fundamental to understanding this phenomenon. Barthes contends that beyond the basic denotative interpretation of information, there exists a 'second order of signification', where the sign system of the first is inserted into the value system of 'the culture'. According to Barthes there are two main ways in which signs work in this system, which he terms connotation and myth (Watson and Hill 1989). Connotation involves subjective interpretations, where an individual's ideas, interests, values and experiences influence the meanings of the referent. In applying this concept to the present study, alongside denoting certain ideas from the sport initiatives, individuals will attach and form their own additional meanings after receiving this information. In the mind of an individual, and shaped by the values of the prevailing cultural context, sport initiatives may generate abstract meanings which are then attached to a city. These associations may be causally linked to the sport referent, or arbitrarily linked, indicating the consumption of indexical and symbolic signs respectively.

The second of the two ways in which Barthes contends that images work in the second order of signification is via 'myth'. Deviating from the colloquial use of the term, Barthes (1977:165) contends that 'myth' relates closely to what Durkheimian sociologists would term 'collective representation'. Barthes suggests that communities develop and rely on ways of thinking about certain objects and concepts to facilitate meaning. Therefore at the heart of myth is ideology, usually interpreted as the value systems of the cultural elites. Powerful myths are produced when material objects become less important than the connotations they evoke and it is the exaggeration of this process that has led Baudrillard to question whether a material reality exists in a society dominated by ideologically loaded myths. To understand the impact of sport reimagining it is necessary to explore the contemporary 'myths' which surround the concept of sport. Interestingly, Barthes himself appears to consider sport to be a mythological concept in stating that 'a mythology is not only written discourse, but also photography, cinema, reporting, *sport*, shows, publicity' (Barthes 1972:110 c.f. Hague and Mercer 1998 *my italics*). Similarly, Rowe considers that sport as a

cultural form, 'carries with it a bundle of myths' (1995:138). This study will attempt to unravel these myths and narratives and ascertain the implications for cities employing sport as a reimagining theme.

3.4.4 Sport and symbolism

It is important to analyse the symbolic qualities of sport, in order to understand the arbitrary meanings generated by this reimagining theme. Sport events and facilities, like other consumer commodities, may have developed the capacity to take up a wide range of imagistic and symbolic associations which overlay their initial use-value (Featherstone 1991). Whitson (1998) implies that sport has developed this capacity, in recognising that sport has been incorporated into a 'postmodern economy of signs' (Lash and Urry 1994 c.f. Whitson 1998:68). In this 'new' economy, the construction of symbolic meanings is crucial to the success of many products, including those connected with sport. According to Whitson, this not only refers to sport products, such as trainers and equipment, but also to experiential products, such as NBA Basketball or the Olympic Games. In either case, 'it is the product name and the symbolic associations it carries that attract new consumers and establish its value as a commodity sign' (Whitson 1998:68). This connection between sport and the supposed image-dominated (post?) modern era is beginning to be acknowledged.

Sport appears to have become a symbol for a variety of abstract concepts that cities may desire to become associated with, as well as some that they may not. For example, it is argued that sport has come to symbolise national identity (Blain et al 1993), new era advancement (Rowe 1995) and violence (Baudrillard 1993). Rowe argues that sport's attractive capacity to generate symbolic meanings is derived from 'the repetitive assertion of sport's values such as universalism, transcendence, heroism, competitiveness, individual motivation and teamship' (Rowe 1995:138). This may explain the reasoning behind the increasing use of sport as a reimagining theme, especially if it is possible for these values to be transferred to place images. Though there is little evidence to justify his assertion, Raitz (1997) is confident that sport does have the capacity to influence perceptions of cities via symbolic associations. According to Raitz, the sport venue may become a symbol of imagined

ideals, for example 'the pastoral in the midst of a gritty city' (Raitz 1987:7).

However, it would appear that many post-industrial cities use sport to symbolise rejuvenation and the 'transcendence of the old' (Rowe 1995:137) and to 'popularise sometimes obscure notions of progress' (Rowe 1995:138). The present study seeks to establish whether these meanings are encoded in, and decoded from, the sport initiatives implemented by Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield.

Though the symbolic capacity of sport is much vaunted, it is possible to identify threats to the communicative power of this reimagining theme. Sport may have become a victim of its own success, as the wide array of symbolic uses of sport may actually be harming its efficacy as a potent sign. The fact that 'sport can be pressed into the service of any end whatsoever' (Baudrillard 1993:77) may be gradually eroding the significance of the concept, as its multiple use dilutes and confuses its meaning. Baudrillard implies that the use of sport for diverse ends is facilitated by, but also results in, sport being 'wrenched away from its original principle' (Baudrillard 1993:77). This cyclical process endangers the meaningful use of sport to communicate coherent values and ideas. Though the success of sport reimagining would appear to reside in the ability to produce arbitrary meanings, if the relationship between the referent and the signifier/signified becomes indiscriminate then sport may become devoid of meaningful connotations.

3.4.5 Sport and the symbolic economy

The symbolic capacity of sport noted above suggests that sport initiatives can be used to enhance the 'symbolic economy' of post-industrial cities (Scott 2001). As has been stated, the symbolic importance of sport can be located within a cultural arena where consumption is symbolic and not simply or predominantly functional (Lash and Urry 1994:277). This observation is of particular relevance to cities competing for tourist trade as it has been noted that the 'symbolic economy of cultural meaning and representations implies real economic power' (Zukin 1996:44). Therefore a city developing sport initiatives is not only producing new spaces, products and functions but producing valuable new symbols. These symbols do not merely provide memorable visual elements as noted above, but through their cultural content can

transmit important messages to prospective tourists. As Zukin (1996) suggests, the development of a symbolic economy within a city aids the circulation of images that influence climates of opinion and mentalities. This may enable post-industrial cities to address enduring perceptions of decline and develop attractive images. Therefore, the study proposes that sport initiatives can be an important part of the development of an urban symbolic economy.

The value of sport to the urban symbolic economy has arguably been increased by shifts in contemporary culture. Post-industrial cities have moved towards becoming centres of consumption, play and entertainment which are 'saturated with signs and images to the extent that anything can become represented, thematised and made an object of interest' (Featherstone 1991:101). As Featherstone implies in his use of the term 'anything', the reimagining vehicles via which cities have attempted to generate symbolic or cultural capital have become increasingly diversified. According to some commentators, post-industrial cities have enhanced their status, not simply because of links with the high arts, but also because of their association with mass or popular cultures. Because of the alleged collapse of the social, popular cultures, including sport, are regarded as 'more legitimate and the source of prestige and further up the symbolic hierarchy' (Featherstone 1991:106). This suggests that sport reimagining can also provide sources of symbolic capital for city destinations. Furthermore, some authors suggest that associations with sport may allow cities to accumulate cultural capital and secure prestigious reputations. Raitz's argument that 'the sport place may come to symbolise higher values or tastes' (Raitz 1987:7) appears to support the view that sport can confer 'prestige' and, importantly, reconciles sport's 'prestigiousness' with the location in which it is performed. Though not making any specific connections with place, Baudrillard also argues that sport is used 'as a parade of prestige' (1993:77 c.f. Redhead 1997:42). Though the blurring of social boundaries should not be exaggerated, observed cultural shifts do appear to vindicate the use of sport reimagining to enhance holistic images. The implication is that in the contemporary cultural context, cities are able to transcend perceptions of low cultural capital by utilising sport as a means of transmitting notions of 'prestige' to potential tourists.

3.5 Summary of conceptual framework

Figure 3.5.1 represents a simplified version of the conceptual framework outlined in this chapter. The framework consists of an amalgamation of ideas from communications and destination image theory. Fundamentally, the framework emphasises that potential tourists must first be aware of sport initiatives for them to have any discernible effects. The basic principle is that once this information is received, it is processed in different ways. On a denotative level, information is interpreted in its most literal form and interested receivers (potential sport tourists) may process this information in an operational manner. Additionally, connotations may be derived from information about sport initiatives, which may enhance images held by potential tourists in general. This order of signification is more complex in that sport or individual sport initiatives may be employed by potential tourists to represent the city as a whole (metonymy), or those initiatives may symbolise other values which are then attached to the city. Hypothetical examples are included in Fig 3.5.1 to illustrate the imaging potential of sport initiatives. The intention in the remainder of the present study is to address whether such effects have been procured by the initiatives implemented in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield.

Information	Urban Sport initiatives		
Exposure to information	Awareness of initiatives		
Order of signification	Denotation	Connotation	
Interpretative mechanism	Operational	Metonymic	Symbolic
Hypothetical example	<i>City develops a reputation as having an impressive range of sport tourism facilities</i>	<i>New stadium is used to represent the city as a whole in people's minds.</i>	<i>Sport initiatives engender perceptions that the city is exciting, modern or impressive</i>
Image component affected	Attribute-based image	Holistic image	
Audience affected	Sport tourists	General urban tourists	

Figure 3.5.1 A simplified representation of the conceptual framework

3.6 The value of the conceptual framework

The overriding tone of this chapter has been very positive, perhaps a little overly so. Essentially, this is because the conceptual framework detailed here identifies the *potential* influence of sport reimagining, rather than comprising an objective assessment of its actual effects. This chapter has suggested that this potential exists because of the characteristics of sport reimagining (and their affinity to the structure of city images), the processes that influence this structure, as well as the favourable contemporary cultural context. The present study asserts that both the holistic image of the city and the attribute-based image of the city must be considered to evaluate fully the impact of sport reimagining strategies. A city may have a very poor holistic image, which has not been influenced significantly by the initiatives, but it may have developed an image as a destination offering an impressive sport tourism product and vice versa. Therefore, in order to evaluate comprehensively the effects of sport reimagining it is necessary to recognise the importance of attribute-based images of the city as well as analysing the way in which the city is viewed as a whole.

Alongside suggesting the potential effects of sport reimagining, the conceptualisation has also identified the processes that may procure these impacts. The study contends that sport initiatives may influence destination image through denotation and connotation. Imaging strategies denote certain characteristics via the literal interpretation of their use-value. Imaging may also procure fresh metonymic images for cities lacking identifiable markers. Additionally, reimagining may generate meanings through the intentional or unintentional decoding of connotative, mythical or symbolic values. The recognition of connotative imaging may allow the research to appreciate the fluidity of the meanings generated by sport initiatives. It is contended that the denotative or functional image of sport is more stable, predictable and subject to less active transformation than images which exist at the connotative level. Therefore, though there will always be dominant, individual and variant readings of sport, and although denotative images are not outside shifting ideologies or codes, the literal meaning of sport is more 'fixed'. However, the concept of sport may be more

polysemic at a connotative level. This proposition is exemplified by the prevalent use of sport to communicate a plethora of different values and concepts.

3.7 The utilisation of the conceptual framework

In taking the conceptual framework forward, it is important to make a few important observations. Before it is possible to investigate the influence of sport initiatives on the different components of destination image, the envisaged impacts of initiatives must be clarified. It would be unfair to judge the 'success' of reimagining if this was not an explicit intention of the case study cities. Even if such intentions are confirmed, this analysis will enable an examination of how this image change was to be effected and what form it was meant to take. Furthermore, as Figure 3.5.1 emphasises, it is also fair to assume that if potential tourists are unaware of the sport reimagining initiatives in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield, then their impact on perceptions of these cities will be negligible. As this study utilises theories relating to the process of communication, if no discernible communicative interaction has occurred between the city and the tourist, it will be difficult to justify analysing the impact on city images. Once the envisaged impacts and the levels of awareness of Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield's initiatives have been established, it is necessary to identify the impact of the initiatives on both perceptions of the city as a sporting venue and more holistic images. Therefore based on these observations and the implications of Figure 3.5.1, this study intends to address the following research questions:

1. What city image impacts were envisaged by the relevant authorities in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield when urban sport initiatives were planned and implemented?
2. To what extent are potential tourists aware of the sport initiatives that have been implemented in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield in recent years?

3. How have the sport initiatives implemented in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield affected the attribute-based images of these cities as sport tourism destinations?
4. How have the sport initiatives implemented in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield affected the holistic images of these cities as urban tourism destinations?

In outlining these research questions, it is important to clarify the relationship between these questions and the research aims detailed in chapter 1 (section 1.4). The four questions above identify a more specific line of enquiry which can help to achieve these broader aims. The first aim of the study; to investigate the use of sport reimagining in three case study cities, is addressed most specifically by research question 1. The use of reimagining is explored by attempting to ascertain the importance of image considerations in sport-led strategies and by exploring the envisaged outcomes. The second aim; to evaluate the impact of sport reimagining on potential tourist's images of three case study cities, directly relates to research questions 2, 3 and 4 above. The conceptual framework developed in this chapter has allowed the study to divide this second aim into more specific questions that can substantiate the overall impacts of sport reimagining on city images. The careful consideration of these three research questions (2, 3 and 4 above) should also allow sport reimagining to be more generally evaluated, thus addressing the more generic third aim; to evaluate the value of sport as a reimagining theme for city destinations.

This conceptual framework and the research questions it has spawned allows related, but different effects of reimagining to be addressed and facilitates an understanding of how these effects are procured. Most importantly, this conceptual framework provides specific implications for the development of an appropriate methodology that can be used to evaluate the impact of sport reimagining. This methodology and its relationship with the conceptual framework is outlined in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter details the methods used to ascertain the effects of sport reimagining. It is guided by the principles outlined in the conceptual framework and has been developed through the examination of previous techniques used to research place images. The initial sections of this chapter explore the assumptions and approaches underpinning the research methods. A general outline of the research methods is then provided, with specific reference made to the design of the sampling framework and the research instruments utilised in the study. It should be noted that a large amount of the practical research details are included in relevant appendices, which are referred to clearly in these sections. The chapter concludes with a critique of the methodology, which includes a discussion of the limitations of the techniques and approach employed.

4.1 Approaches to image research

Over the past century, philosophical approaches in the social sciences have undergone a number of major shifts and realignments. Despite these shifts a significant proportion of contemporary research is still located within the 'positivist orthodoxy' (Hughes 1990). This work is grounded in a particular conception of natural science which stresses observation as the route towards an objective knowledge of an external and 'real' world independent of the observer. Positivist approaches purport to generate information that provides valid and reliable access to facts about the social and physical world. Alternative themes place emphasis on how the social world is created by, and through, the meanings that human beings use to make sense of the world around them. Therefore interpretivist or interactionist approaches view research participants as experiencing subjects who actively construct their worlds

(Silverman 1993). However, despite the continued prominence of positivism and the emergence of more interpretative approaches (hermeneutics, humanism, phenomenology) some authors have deliberately rejected the 'claims of privilege' by all these epistemological domains (Dear 1988:268). Postmodern approaches question the supposed rationality of academic discourse and therefore one of their main contributions has been the destabilisation of the authority of other research traditions. Postmodern approaches, most notably deconstruction, are typified by their unnerving relativism and therefore though illustrating some of the inherent weaknesses of established research approaches, are of minimal use to practising researchers.

Despite the apparent polarisation of research epistemologies into positivist and non-positivist approaches, some place image researchers have seemingly broken free from the positivist/humanist dichotomy and pursued appropriate compromises. This reconciled position characterises the approach taken by the present study. However, to justify and contextualise the methodology adopted by the present study, the following section aims to review the epistemological basis of existing place image research, beginning with a review of positivist approaches.

4.1.1 Positivist approaches

A significant proportion of positivist place image research is allied with the field of study commonly termed 'behavioural geography'. This idiom is slightly misleading, as behavioural geography is not necessarily behaviourist in approach. Indeed, this sub-discipline of human geography formed in response to frustration at the deterministic nature of quantitative models developed in geographical study. The pioneers of behavioural geography adopted the perspective that 'the pattern of human phenomena on the earth's surface was best understood by examining the thought, knowledge and decisions that influence the location and distribution of those phenomena' (Kitchin et al 1997:557). The importance of this tradition to the study of place images is highlighted by Phillips (1993), who states that 'behavioural geographers invented the geographic image as a form of mental image' (Phillips 1993:181). The central tenets of behavioural geography are that: people have environmental images, that those images can be identified accurately by researchers,

and that there is a strong relationship between environmental images and actual behaviour (Johnston et al 1994:157). To address this brief, research within this field has focused on the perceptions of environments (see Lowenthal 1967), the construction of mental maps (Gould and White 1974), and the spatial preferences people display in utilising certain places and not others (Cloke et al 1991). Accordingly, these objectives and concerns have provided the basis for a large proportion of research into tourist images.

Behavioural geography has been dominated by a positivist philosophy, as illustrated by the application of statistical techniques to direct findings and conclusions. The overriding objective of the majority of such work is to find general patterns amongst large quantities of data from which laws and theories can be constructed. Criticisms of behavioural geography are usually founded on perceptions that much of this work subscribes to versions of behaviourism (Cloke et al 1991:67) and its stimulus-response theory of human behaviour, where the reactions and perceptions of humans are pre-determined by existing environmental conditions. For the growing humanist movement within contemporary social enquiry, this limited and supposedly 'de-humanising' approach is difficult to accept.

Despite recent criticism and its resultant academic isolation, behavioural geography remains an important influence on spatial investigation in general, and place image research in particular. Johnston (1997:172) asserts that 'substantial progress' has been made within this sub-discipline through the publishing of a substantial volume of work during the 1980s. Aitken (1991:179) reaffirms this view and states that a 'profusion' of recent publications suggests that perceptual and behavioural geography has 'come of age' as a mature research enterprise. The increased reflexivity of its positivist philosophical underpinnings in recent years has certainly contributed to this supposed renaissance. According to Golledge and Stimson (1987:9) there has been an attempt to reject the positivist evaluation of value and fact, while retaining the benefits of producing research based on verified results and which searches for generalisations. Golledge and Rushton (1984) justify the retention of a positivist stance by asserting that behavioural geography can move research away from a narrow

perspective of perceptions of space - a veiled criticism of more interpretative approaches - towards a general understanding of spatial perceptions.

4.1.2 Alternative approaches

According to Cloke et al (1991), humanist studies of places were prompted by the neglect of people in spatial science and its mere partial treatment in the behavioural school outlined above. Humanist approaches allow research to move beyond stimulus-response models of behavioural geography and recognise that places and spaces are socially constructed (Lefebvre 1991). People do have a creative input into their perceptual processes and spatial behaviour, and therefore there needs to be an appreciation of this in place image studies. Humanists do not consider place images to be a direct function of the physical landscape, as cities and other human landscapes are themselves thought to be created by knowledgeable human agents operating within a social context (Dear 1988). This humanist philosophy is exemplified by the work of Relph, who states that, 'I do not seek to describe places in detail, nor to develop theories or models or abstractions....[M]y concern is with the various ways in which places manifest themselves in our experiences or consciousness of the lived-world' (1976:6/7). Rather than trying to conceptualise human perceptions and predict behaviour, Relph affirms his desire to illustrate how individuals interpret places and to understand what they 'mean' to the individuals who come into contact with them. Therefore, humanists such as Relph are not inherently concerned with the 'real' world and how physical landscapes are perceived, but are more concerned with the way in which places are imagined by individuals. However, humanist approaches do not preclude the development of over-arching theories or conceptualisations. As Cloke et al (1991) recognise, one of the key objectives of the humanist approach is to uncover the 'nitty-gritty' of everyday people-place relations, whether this be through the realm of highly personal and subjective geographies, utilising in-depth interviews with individuals, or through more 'generalisable' approaches.

One of the most productive outlets for the analysis of these people-place relationships is the sub-discipline of social geography, which in recent times, has become closely linked to cultural geography. One of the most appealing and important aspects of this

fusion has been the 'hermeneutic revival', where 'social geography re-emerges as an exploration of understanding to offer an interpretation of human experience in its social and spatial setting' (Jackson and Smith 1984:20). This new 'cultural geography' is not that of the influential Chicago School (e.g. Kniffen, Sauer), but that which approaches culture as a series of signs and symbols which convey meaning. Therefore geographical studies of place images have diversified from a limited behavioural perspective to one that addresses different representations of space and the way in which these representations are created and interpreted. Images, signs and symbols are recognised to convey meanings, and it has become common to envisage reality as consisting of social objects whose meanings arise from the behaviours that people direct towards them (Jackson and Smith 1984:81). This has resulted in methodological dilemmas, including the recognition that it is impossible for researchers to interpret cultural phenomena in the same way that meanings are generated by the people sustaining that culture. This 'crisis of representation' has been a major concern in ethnographic approaches (Johnston et al 1994).

Cultural approaches to the analysis of place and space developed by human geographers are not as prevalent in tourism studies. This is unfortunate, as tourism inherently concerns meanings and values which are both taken for granted and socially constructed (Squire 1994). Indeed, Squire (1994:5) argues that landscapes are only consumed as tourist destinations 'through meanings ascribed to them by visitors and promotional agencies.' Apart from the work of Relph (1976), there have been few attempts by humanistic or social/cultural geographers to grapple in an interpretative way with the meanings of tourism and tourist experiences (Squire 1994:5). Much of the geographical work that has been undertaken concerning tourism does not devote enough attention to the 'social', to the extent that Hughes (1991:266) believes that geographical studies of tourism should be labelled 'pre-social'. The challenge for this study is to enhance an approach grounded in behavioural geography by applying perspectives inspired by humanist and socio-cultural approaches. As Squire (1994:11) asserts 'at the interface between human geography and tourism research, there are various opportunities to integrate social and cultural studies'.

Humanist geographers tend to distinguish between 'a scientific, rational view of spaceand an idea of space as something that is experienced or imagined' (McDowell 1994:153). However, such positions are adopted not only by humanists, but also by Marxists such as Lefebvre (1991). Approaches attuned to Marx's early writings, including Lefebvre's have much in common with humanism, due to their proximity to Kantian and Hegelian philosophies (Gottdiener 1995, Johnston et al 1994). Rather than treating the mental world of image and imagination as separate from an objective assessment of the physical environment, Lefebvre argues that the two can be combined effectively through an appreciation of the social production of space. Marxist geographers side with humanists in rejecting positivist analyses of spatial patterns to generate universal 'laws', favouring the analysis of social patterns which differ across societies. However, orthodox Marxist enquiry asserts that understanding place and place images involves looking beyond the conscious beliefs and actions of human agents, to expose underlying forces.

Marxist approaches are often derided by humanists who have portrayed them as forms of structuralism. Though Marxist approaches have obtained a prominent position in geographical studies, studies that focus on linguistic structures are more common in place-image research than those which concentrate on socio-economic structures. If, as Phillips (1993) argues, we must appreciate the 'language of images' to understand place images, then it is important to consider language as a fundamental structure that determines the representation of places. An application of this philosophical position to the study of place image is the pursuit of semiotic analyses. As Fiske states, 'semiotics is a form of structuralism for it argues that we cannot know the world on its own terms, but only through the conceptual and linguistic structures of our culture' (1990:115). Therefore, epistemologically, the 'aims of semiotics are to identify the codes and recurring patterns in a particular sign system and to understand how they are used to construct and communicate meaning' (Echtner 1999:50). This is in direct opposition to the position adopted by positivist or empiricist research, which advocates studying the meanings and patterns that already exist in the world (Fiske 1990). This approach has been adopted by Burgess and Wood (1988), who adopt a semiotic approach to consider the effects of place marketing. However, as Echtner (1999) identifies, 'semiotic research in all areas of tourism remains to be explored'

(1999:55). More specifically, Echtner argues that 'while there has been considerable research concerning destination image these studies do not specifically address the use of sign systems in advertising to convey images to potential tourists' (1999:53). As the inclusion of concepts such as denotation, connotation, metonymy and symbolism in the conceptual framework emphasises (see chapter 3), one of the aims of the present study is to address this deficiency.

For sociologists, symbolic communication is usually addressed by the sub-field of symbolic interactionism. Unlike semiotic approaches, which see sign systems as broad structures, symbolic interactionism can incorporate the subjectivity of individual interpretations. However, there is a problem in applying this approach to place image studies as it assumes an intentional desire to communicate. The arguments concerning autonomous images contained in chapter 2 (Gartner 1996, 1997) stress that some of the most important image formation agents concern unintentional and non-directed communication. As Eco observes, semiotics is a more comprehensive approach in that it does not restrict itself either to language or to the process of communication (c.f. Gottdiener 1995). However, both approaches are often criticised by cultural theorists for their failure to address the contexts in which signs are produced and consumed. Gottdiener feels that by adopting a socio-semiotic approach research can incorporate 'exo-semiotic' processes such as economics and politics that are ignored by both semiotics and by symbolic interaction (Gottdiener 1995). Socio-semiotics involves interpreting signs as phenomena which can capture the 'articulation of universes of meaning and the material word' (Gottdiener 1995:25). Hence, this approach rejects the deconstructivist critiques of semiotics, which negate the role of the material, and assert that we should understand images as merely operating as second order signs or myths, divorced from material objects and their functional denotations. This 'free play of signifiers' (Gottdiener 1995: 24) is rejected by socio-semiotics which sees meaning as partly constrained by the presence of the material world itself. The conceptual framework outlined in the preceding chapter reflects many facets of a socio-semiotic approach and this epistemological position has influenced the methods adopted by the present study. Individual perceptions and interpretations of place are not only considered by this study to be influenced by the nature of the physical environment, they are also considered to be the result of an

individual's own interpretation and their 'creation' of those environments constrained within, and transforming, existing cultural and linguistic structures.

4.1.3 The approach of the present study

Tourism is a spatial field of study. As Smith and Mitchell assert, tourism is 'an activity that focuses on human spatial behaviour and spatial organisation. It is neither innovative nor uncommon to approach tourism issues from a geographical perspective' (1990:50). However, there is a lack of tourism analysis that utilises the extensive and expanding amount of research regarding representation and interpretation of place and space. The intention in this research is to unite this perspective with more traditional approaches to place image linked to the behavioural school of geography. The present study has been influenced by progressive behavioural geography, or as it is sometimes termed, 'analytical behavioural geography' (Golledge and Stimson 1987, Johnston 1997, Cloke et al 1991). According to Aitken (1991), this analytical version has developed beyond the restricted positivist base of its precedents, and it no longer adheres to the tenets of value-free, passive, reductionist and objective research (Couclelis and Golledge 1983, c.f. Aitken 1991:180). Aitken feels that humanist and behavioural approaches are not mutually exclusive, a realisation that is part of a wider process where positivist and alternative perspectives have converged. However, there remains a clear impasse between this neo-behavioural perspective and 'rich' interpretative or 'imaginative' geographies (Gregory 1994). Gregory recognises that 'imaginative geographies are indeed different from the mental maps and images recovered by our own disciplinary traditions that have been concerned with behavioural geographies and environmental perceptions' (Gregory 1994:474). The key difference is that in interpretative or imaginative approaches there is more exploration into the way in which places are represented as well as there being a more comprehensive acknowledgement of the historical influence of ideologies and cultures from which images of place are derived. The present study is influenced by interpretative geography in that it attempts to explore the meanings generated by city reimagining. For example, the intention is to elicit city images from potential tourists in an unfettered manner and to try and examine the meanings generated by associating cities with sport. However, in

determining the effects of imaging on specific perceptions of the city the approach employed draws more heavily on socio-semiotics and analytical behavioural geography. The socio-semiotic approach is already evident in the conceptual framework (chapter 3) which addresses ideas such as denotation, connotation and symbolism and this framework is used to structure the results chapters. However, these approaches are used in combination with some traditional positivist image research techniques which are derived from behavioural geography. It is therefore difficult to summarise succinctly the approach taken by the present study. The difficulty is compounded by the subject matter under consideration. Variant philosophical positions are often the result of divergent attitudes to whether it is appropriate to separate subject and object in research enquiry. However, the primary consideration in this thesis is to explore tourists' city images and therefore there is little need to attempt to understand the material world as it exists independently of the observer (if, indeed such understanding is possible).

The implications of this multi-faceted approach in terms of the formation of an appropriate methodology will be examined in the rest of this chapter. However, it is first necessary to examine in more depth the methods employed by place image researchers and their influences on the methods employed in this study.

4.2 Research method

4.2.1 The foundations of place image research methods

Before the specific method adopted by this study is detailed, it is pertinent to examine how other researchers have attempted to 'measure' place images. Despite the pioneering work of Boulding (1961), the methods employed by Kevin Lynch are perhaps the most enduring influence on contemporary place image research (Pearce and Fagence 1996). Lynch's work inspired a plethora of different image studies, which directly employed his techniques (Gould and White 1974, Goodey 1974, Francescato and Mebane 1973), while others exhibit a less obvious, but significant testament to his influence. The most obvious legacy of Lynch's work is the technique of sketch mapping, a procedure which Lynch used extensively in his publication 'The

Image of the City' (1960). However, asking users of the city to draw images of the urban landscape is not considered an appropriate method for the present study. Unlike Lynch's city residents, naive potential tourists do not necessarily have the knowledge of a city destination to communicate places images in this manner. The technique illustrates the spatial awareness, memory and orientation of city residents rather than the way in which unfamiliar cities are imagined by tourists.

4.2.2 Structured approaches to explore destination image

Destination image researchers have frequently employed the techniques developed by Lynch and behavioural geographers. Conceptual models derived from behavioural geography have strongly influenced the study of destination images and their effects on tourist behaviour. A good example is the use of 'choice' models, which propose that decisions are made from perceived choice sets, and which have been used by tourism analysts such as Kent (c.f. Ashworth and Voogd 1990) to model the tourist decision making process. These studies have typically involved highly structured methods such as questionnaires, employing likert or semantic differential rating scales to generate numerical representations of destination images. The popularity of these techniques has been inspired by advancements in technology, which allow responses to be coded easily and analysed using statistical techniques such as factor analysis and multiple regression analysis. Other factors add to the effectiveness of using structured questionnaires to analyse destination images. For example, many respondents find it hard to communicate their images of a destination verbally and questionnaires also relieve problems caused by those who are reluctant to, or incapable of, sketching images.

The present study is based on the premise that place image consists of perceptions of individual attributes as well as more holistic impressions or mental pictures of a place (see chapter 3). According to Echtner and Ritchie (1993), structured techniques are the most effective means of eliciting the attribute component of destination image. This is because they force the respondent to think about product image in terms of the attributes specified by the questions, scales or categories used in such research. In this study, a structured method will be used to analyse the attribute-based images of the three case study cities. However, these methods are the subject of much criticism, and therefore it is necessary to identify potential problems and suggest how they may be countered in this study.

One problem with structured methods is that, although respondents may give valid indications of impressions of different attributes, it is often unclear which of these qualities people feel most strongly about (Crompton 1979). Some attribute-based

images are more important than others and it is vital that this can be explored by research instruments. Accordingly, this study adopts an approach advocated by Goodrich (1978) in that it includes an 'evaluative' dimension via the utilisation of a Fishbein-type choice model. This method assumes that an individual's attitude toward an object is a function of the amount of valued attributes that the individual perceives the object to have and the importance of those attributes to the individual (Goodrich 1978:9). Oppermann (1996a) adopts this approach to analyse images of convention cities. Respondents in Oppermann's study were given a list of 15 attributes and asked to indicate the importance of each to their destination selection process, with responses measured on a seven point likert scale. The respondents then rated thirty cities on the basis of the same fifteen attributes. By multiplying the importance given to a certain attribute by the performance of the destination with respect to that attribute, Oppermann identified the major image strengths and weaknesses of the convention city images (1996a). This was achieved primarily by considering the importance of certain attribute-based images, as well as their form and nature. This technique has influenced the method of the present study, as people's perceptions of the sport tourism product offered in cities has been measured, alongside the importance of such perceptions to each individual participant.

The evaluative approach detailed above has emerged as a popular analytical tool in a variety of academic fields, including tourism, where it is often referred to as 'importance-performance analysis' (Vaske et al 1996). Vaske et al state that importance-performance analysis can be improved by identifying different segments of respondents, as problems arise when not all users share the same importance attitudes (1996). If results from a homogeneous group of respondents are analysed, then 'misleading or suboptimal results' may be produced (Vaske et al 1996:236). Therefore in this study, those who share an active interest in sport have been separated from those who do not. Used in this manner, importance-performance analysis can be an effective way of utilising data from structured techniques by negating the observed deficiency of a lack of an evaluative dimension.

A further problem with structured instruments to elicit destination images is that the attributes listed may not necessarily be those which are most salient to the respondent.

In many cases, the attribute lists are constructed by the researcher, which may result in the images elicited bearing little or no relation to the images held. This problem can be alleviated through the use of techniques such as importance-performance analysis (see above), but also by adopting a more comprehensive approach to the development of attribute scales. For instance, a content analysis can be conducted of advertising brochures which may reveal constructs that are relevant to a specific destination. However, to produce scales which contain attributes that are salient to tourists, researchers have conducted preliminary primary and secondary research. For example, Echtner and Ritchie (1993) employed 12 focus groups, a pre-test, as well as using a panel of independent judges and a comprehensive literature review, to produce a list of 35 salient attributes.

The present study does not aim to complete a comprehensive review of the attribute-based images of each city, but is concerned merely with substantiating the attribute-based image of a city's sport provision. However, alongside sport provision, other attributes have also been included to provide a context for this analysis and these have been generated through a detailed review of reimagining literature produced by the case study cities (BCVB 1998, Marketing Manchester 1998 and Destination Sheffield 1998). To provide the focused attribute-based analysis required in the present study, structured methods offer an effective, insightful and efficient research option. Problems arise in research with wider objectives, when attempts are made to aggregate attribute 'scores' in order to represent the image of the city as a whole. Even if the attributes measured are those which are most relevant to the respondents, and if a large number of scales are used (Echtner and Ritchie [1993] use 35 attributes, Crompton [1979] uses 42 semantic differential scales), there is still little or no guarantee that aggregating the results will reflect the holistic images held by the respondents. Applying Gestalt psychological principles, and in accordance with the conceptual framework in chapter 3, this is because the holistic image is greater than simply the sum of individual attribute-based images. An aggregated analysis will not be attempted in this study as the separate use of more flexible methods enables holistic image to be adjudged in a more appropriate manner.

A further method of countering criticisms regarding the constraints of a pre-determined scaled criterion is to allow images to be communicated freely, albeit within a structured instrument. An example of this approach is included in the research of Burgess (1978) which involved participants writing down whatever came into their head when presented with different place names. This approach has also been used to ascertain naive images of Canada and Canadian cities (Ritchie and Smith 1991) and perceptions of Montana (Reilly 1990). This genre of research is valuable because it allows respondents to communicate images on their own terms, but in a manner that facilitates efficient analysis, thus allowing large sample sizes to be obtained. This technique has been incorporated into the present study as it allows metonymic images of cities to be elicited. Nevertheless, the free elicitation of constructs does not reveal the true complexity of destination images, and therefore complementary interpretative methods are also employed by the present study.

Within tourism research, structured techniques are the most frequently used methods of image elicitation. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) specify that, of the fifteen prominent pieces of image research published between 1975 and 1990, only one (Reilly 1990) employed an alternative approach. This author attempted a similar exercise, incorporating some of the newer place image publications (Selby and Morgan 1996, Selby 1995, Ritchie and Smith 1991, Oppermann 1996 a and b, Mackay and Fesenmaier 1997, Choi et al 1999, Echtner and Ritchie 1993, Fakeye and Crompton 1991, Bagolu and Brinberg 1997, Dann 1996, Ross 1994, Dadgostar and Isolato 1992, Reilly 1990, van Limburg 1998), as well as the most important image publications published in previous decades (Gartner 1989, Goodrich 1978, Burgess, 1974, 1978, Crompton 1979, Hunt 1975). The sheer number of publications illustrates that image has received significant attention in recent years. However, the vast majority of this work has used structured, traditional image elicitation techniques founded on positivist epistemologies - reaffirming Echtner and Ritchie's previous findings (1991). Furthermore, Echtner and Ritchie consider Reilly's (1990) research technique to be commendably unstructured, but this study analyses findings in a positivist manner and therefore it is not really valid to categorise this work as essentially qualitative. This is illustrative of a number of image studies which supposedly utilise more flexible and less structured approaches, but which tend to avoid using 'qualitative' methods and

analysis as the primary basis for research findings. However, despite the continued prevalence of conventional structured approaches to image elicitation and analysis, there is evidence of more diversified approaches and methods, such the use of open-ended questions (Echtner and Ritchie 1993, Selby and Morgan 1996, Burgess 1978) and focus groups (MacKay and Fesenmaier 1997, Echtner and Ritchie 1993).

4.2.3 More flexible methods

As Dann (1996:42) states, there are grounds for believing that structured methods, largely reliant on a neo-positivist epistemology, cannot fully capture the dynamics and richness of destination image. Troubled by problems concerning reductionism, the generation of appropriate scales/questions and the different interpretation of standardised questions, researchers such as Dann have promoted humanist approaches, advocating the need to 'reintroduce the subject, to bring the tourist back into their investigations' (Dann 1996:43). In tourism studies in general, and in the study of destination image in particular, research has tended to restrict the analysis of tourists' own interpretations of places on their own terms. The methodological techniques adopted by Dann procure responses which are 'generated internally and independently from within the subject', and, as such, they are more likely to provide a detailed and valuable insight into the way in which certain destinations are imagined (1996). In research that employs a flexible and broadly 'qualitative' method, Dann (1996) uses in-depth interviews to explore images of the Caribbean, facilitating the elicitation and analysis of facets of destination image inaccessible to structured methodologies. These include internalised mental pictures, motivations, meanings and subjective reality - a phenomena 'which is often much more than the analytical constructs used to describe it' (Dann 1996:52).

In human geography, flexible and innovative research approaches have become more common, although it should be stated that the focus of these studies has been the production and proliferation of imagery rather than its interpretation. There are only limited examples of the use of flexible methodologies in demand-side image research. An example is Burgess and Wood's (1988) analysis of the impact of a newspaper and television advertising campaign instigated by the London Docklands Development

Corporation. The method employed by Burgess and Wood involved distributing stimulus material and inviting participants to 'talk freely about the content, presentation and impact of the campaign' (Burgess and Wood 1988:98). This allowed the research to consider the decoding of signs contained within the campaigns, exploring the semiotics of place marketing and its implications for the image of the Docklands area.

Aside from the refreshing semiotic approach and the associated innovative method, Burgess and Wood's (1988) research deserves further attention as it attempts to determine the influence of a specific place imaging strategy. The isolation of image impacts resulting from specific strategies, initiatives or incidents is notoriously difficult. Accordingly, there is little work which attempts to evaluate the impact of sport initiatives on place images, despite the existence of literature which addresses the relationship between sport initiatives and city image (see Schimmel 1995, Loftman and Spirou 1996, Whitson and Macintosh 1993). To illustrate the effects of reimagining strategies, it is useful to employ a longitudinal approach, comparing images held before and after a specific event. This is the value of Ritchie and Smith's evaluation of the 1988 Winter Olympiad which assessed its effects in terms of 'increased awareness and enhanced image for the host region' (Ritchie and Smith 1991:3). Ritchie and Smith's study involved a comprehensive, albeit rudimentary, methodology involving 22 collaborating institutions who each completed 100 interviews by telephone with individuals selected at random from local directories. This process was repeated in 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989, producing a longitudinal study covering the pre- and post- Games period. Data was collected regarding general images of Canada, unaided and prompted awareness of Canadian provinces and cities, free form images of 5 Canadian cities and awareness of previous and future Olympic Games sites. This attempt to measure image change through the longitudinal measurement of place awareness and place image assumes that changes will automatically be a result of the Games, rather than other possible influences. Hence, the limitations of Ritchie and Smith's method highlights the problem of separating out the effects of certain initiatives from other influences in an increasingly media driven and information rich society. The admirable use of a longitudinal approach by Ritchie and Smith does not resolve this dilemma.

One of the case study cities in this study has explicitly recognised the difficulties in assessing image change resulting from specific initiatives. The WSG Economic Impact Study (Sheffield City Council 1990a) acknowledges that, although the city aimed to use the Games to enhance the image of the city, 'there are considerable difficulties in assessing changes in image' (1990a:79). The study states that these difficulties are compounded by two additional factors. First, at the time the WSG strategy was implemented there were a 'significant number of projects currently contributing to the regeneration of Sheffield's economy and the change in its image' (Sheffield City Council 1990a:79), problematising the evaluation of the Game's specific effects and reiterating the problems noted above. The second stated problem is 'the fact that the facilities are still under construction and have therefore still to make their impact' (Sheffield City Council 1990a:79). This problem is automatically resolved by the timing of the present study. It is ten years since the facilities were opened and this means that the present study can assess the long-term image impacts and not merely the immediate post-Games effects.

The techniques used by Ritchie and Smith (1991) have influenced the method adopted by the present study, particularly the prompted and unaided awareness testing. Unfortunately, the longitudinal approach was not considered to be appropriate. The strategies of each city considered were initiated at different times and have been implemented over a significant period of time. Therefore the intention of the present study is to identify the long-term impact of these strategies, using a cross sectional approach. A significant period of time has now elapsed since the height of the strategies adopted by the three cities concerned, and the study aims to compare the objectives of the initiatives (detailed in chapter 5) with the images currently held by potential tourists to evaluate the 'success' of urban sport reimagining.

4.3 Implications of the conceptual framework for the development of an appropriate research method

The research questions detailed at the end of chapter 3 highlight the need to examine whether sporting initiatives have influenced the holistic and attribute-based images of

Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) have used a similar conceptualisation and state that in order to capture all the components of destination image, a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies should be used (Echtner and Ritchie 1991:11). Furthermore, in their specific utilisation of previous theoretical recommendations (1993), Echtner and Ritchie state that the primary objectives in designing a system of measurement are to develop a series of open ended questions that capture the holistic components of destination image and to produce a reliable and valid set of scales to measure attribute-based components of destination image. This would appear to be an effective means of evaluating the image of a destination. Structured techniques can be used to measure denotative images and assist in the identification of metonymic impacts, where sport is used to represent the city as a whole. Flexible techniques allow the symbolic impacts resulting from the connotations and associations attached to the initiatives implemented to be analysed. This explicit appreciation of linguistic and semiotic concepts emphasises the eclectic approach adopted by this study. The study also exhibits a progressive approach to behavioural geography by interviewing prospective tourists, allowing them to communicate freely their images of a city and their perceptions of image change.

4.4 Key components of the methodology adopted

The method adopted by this study contains 3 main components, which are illustrated in Fig 4.4.1.

Component	Research method utilised	Research participants addressed by the method
Method 1	Communication with relevant municipal stakeholders and analysis of secondary data including policy documents and archived media coverage.	City representatives
Method 2	A structured questionnaire survey.	i) A representative sample of potential tourists in three strategically located areas in England. ii) A sample of sport tourists at five different sport events.
Method 3	Semi-structured interviews	A representative sample of potential tourists in three strategically located areas in England.

Figure 4.4.1 *A synopsis of the research methods used in the present study*

These three methods were specifically chosen to address the research questions included at the end of chapter 3. The relationship between the research questions and the research methods is presented in Fig 4.4.2 below

Research questions	Exploratory research method(s)
1. What were the impacts on city image envisaged by Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield when implementing urban sport initiatives?	Method 1
2. Are potential tourists aware of the sport initiatives that have been implemented in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield in recent years?	Methods 2 and 3
3. How have the sport initiatives implemented in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield affected the attribute-based images of these cities as sport tourism destinations?	Method 2 + Supporting evidence from Method 3
4. How have the sport initiatives implemented in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield affected the holistic images of these cities as urban tourism destinations?	Method 3 + Supporting evidence from Method 2

Figure 4.4.2 *The relationship between the research questions and research methods*

4.4.1 Research method 1

The present study is primarily focused on the *effects* of sport reimagining and therefore the remainder of this chapter predominantly aims to outline and justify the methods adopted to explore this dimension of the study. However, the present study also aims to contextualise these effects with an analysis of the extent to which image

considerations were apparent in the sport-led strategies of Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. Primary and secondary research was undertaken to explore the nature of the strategies themselves and the extent whether they should be considered sport reimagining initiatives, rather than simply examples of sport-based urban regeneration. The methods employed for this purpose involved the consideration of official documentation, academic literature, archived media coverage, in addition to personal communication with City Council representatives. For reasons of efficiency, this part of the study predominantly utilised information obtained from official reports, the minutes of meetings and relevant media coverage. However, where information was not available or where there was a lack of clarity regarding a city's motives and initiatives, appropriate Council representatives were approached and questioned. With respect to Birmingham's initiatives, further explanation was required and so two senior City Council representatives – the Senior Tourism Analyst and the Principal Officer (Sport) were questioned to ascertain certain clarifications. These officials were chosen as it was felt that they could address the specific areas where clarification was needed – the extent to which sport was intended as a deliberate reimagining vehicle and the extent to which this was directed towards tourists. There was also a requirement to question someone who was involved in Birmingham's initial attempts to utilise sport as a vehicle for urban renaissance. Conveniently, The Principal Officer- Sport (Richard Callicott) was also heavily involved at the onset of Birmingham's sport initiatives in the mid-1980s and was part of the team that attempted to attract the Olympic Games to Birmingham (see Callicott et al 1988). Mr Callicott was therefore approached to participate in the research as it was felt that he could provide a useful source of topical and retrospective information.

Apart from communication with Birmingham representatives, no other primary research was required to supplement information about Manchester and Sheffield. Therefore, it should be noted that the analysis of the intentions of these cities in chapter 5 is based entirely on detailed documentary evidence. Documentary resources were obtained via detailed searches of archived local and national media coverage and from requests for information from relevant stakeholders and institutions. The information collected, supplemented by personal communication with Birmingham representatives allows research question 1 to be addressed.

4.4.2 Research methods 2 and 3

To address the effects of sport reimagining, and therefore to satisfy the demands of research questions 2,3 and 4, two main research instruments were developed. First, a structured instrument was designed to explore attribute-based perceptions of the case study cities' sporting links and sport provision. This instrument was also used to analyse attribute-based images of other urban products to provide a contextual analysis. In addition, the structured instrument allows the prompted awareness of certain initiatives to be ascertained. Second, semi-structured interviews have been used to explore the holistic images of the cities. This method explores the extent to which sport initiatives are used as metonyms to represent the city as a whole and facilitates an exploration of meanings and connotations generated by sport initiatives and their influence on the holistic image of the city. The interviews also provide a means of exploring unprompted awareness of the sport initiatives implemented.

The combination of research methods outlined above facilitates the exploration of image and image change. As Eyles states, 'one way in which the researcher can try to get to grips with the complexity of the social world is by adopting a multiple research strategy' (Eyles 1988:4). The use of such a strategy in exploring the concept of image is championed by McDougall and Fry, who contend that in image research '[when] two methods are used together, the results provide a relatively comprehensive and complete picture' (McDougall and Fry 1974:61). However, unlike much research that employs a combination of different methods, this study does not merely attempt to utilise a multi-method approach to enable a process of triangulation. Indeed, the main motivation for the use of a mixed method is to enable the study to target specific components of destination image, thus providing a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of sport initiatives. However, limited triangulation is possible because both research instruments elicit limited impressions of both holistic and attribute-based images.

4.5 Whose images? The development of a sampling framework

Before the specific details about the design and the administration of research methods 2 and 3 are outlined in section 4.6, it is necessary to explain who participated in these aspects of the study and how they were selected. To assist this explanation, a comprehensive review of previous sampling techniques is provided, with indications given as to how these precedents influenced the design of the approach adopted by the present study.

4.5.1 The sampling frameworks of other destination image research

Destination image research can be divided into that which examines the views of tourists who are at the destination under consideration (e.g. Ross 1994, Choi et al 1999, Dann 1996), that which examines the views of potential tourists away from the destination (e.g. Hunt 1975, Gartner 1989, Dadgostar and Isolato 1992) and research that considers both (Selby and Morgan 1996, Selby 1995, Fakeye and Crompton 1991, Burgess 1978). Although the sampling design of any research must depend on individual study objectives, it is important to examine the images of tourists who decide not to visit a particular destination, rather than merely focusing on those who do. According to conventional theories of tourism demand, this requires an analysis of potential demand, rather than simply concentrating on effective demand. The images of potential tourists are pivotal in the present study, particularly as it focuses on the images of cities traditionally associated with industrial production. Selby argues that 'a major issue facing cities attempting to develop tourism is that negative stereotypes exist amongst non-visitors, and it is important to know who these are and how their images differ from those of actual visitors' (1995:54). Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield are examples of such cities, and therefore this study has considered the views of potential tourists, rather than actual tourists.

Despite its crucial importance, targeting potential tourists problematises the identification of research participants. In previous studies with similar objectives, participants have been selected from geographical areas that are either randomly chosen (Hunt 1975, Gartner 1989) or systematically selected (Burgess 1978, Dadgostar and Isolato 1992, Selby 1995, Selby and Morgan 1996). In systematic approaches, researchers have either chosen specific catchment areas or tourism

destinations that are similar in nature to the destination under consideration. The latter option provides a sample of respondents who are 'potential tourists' because they have already made the decision to visit a similar destination. For example, Selby, in researching Liverpool's image, conducted research in Manchester, Bristol and Portsmouth, which he considers to be 'comparable destinations' (Selby 1995:54). However, this approach fails to acknowledge that people with 'negative stereotypes' of Liverpool, may also be prejudiced against other large cities traditionally associated with maritime and other manufacturing industries, such as Manchester, Bristol and Portsmouth. Therefore Selby's study neglects a large proportion of 'potential tourists' who do not currently visit cities such as Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol or Portsmouth. Exploring the perceptions deterring visitation amongst this group of potential consumers is an important facet of city image research. Therefore, it is more appropriate to obtain research participants from appropriate catchment areas outside city destinations and this is the technique utilised in the present study.

The difficulties in systematically selecting such catchment areas are emphasised by the lack of coherence in previous studies of destination image. Indeed, in many instances, research has failed to provide adequate justifications for the choice of locations. This is exemplified by the work of Grabler (1997), Goodrich (1978), Ritchie and Smith (1991), who either did not have a systematic justification for participant selection or chose not to detail it in their publications. Hunt (1975) does explain his sampling framework in stating that his 'test markets' were selected from five geographical subdivisions of the US which 'represented the origins of most past non-resident visitors' to the states whose images were being examined (1975:2). Other justifications are directed by specific research objectives, such as Dadgostar and Isolato's examination of US city images held by near-home tourists living in small communities. Accordingly, the researchers sampled 30 communities with a population less than 10,000 which were within 200km of the city destination. The smaller size of England means that most cities are accessible to the vast majority of the population even for day visits. However, according to conventional definitions of tourism, to qualify as a tourist, one must spend at least one night at the destination. Therefore in the present study, sample sites a considerable distance away from each

city under consideration were selected. This allowed the study to focus on tourists who would be likely to undertake an overnight, rather than merely a day visit.

Burgess's (1978) examination of the image of the city of Hull provides an isolated precedent to assist the design of a systematic sample of UK residents. Although Burgess's research is not focused on tourist images, it exemplifies the difficulties involved in identifying specific sample sites through which external city images can be investigated. Burgess selected 27 sample sites that were designated by identifying axes emanating from Hull which corresponded to the eight points of a compass. Sites were subsequently chosen by marking off points that fell at 40, 80, 160, 240 and 320 km from the city along these axes. This complicated procedure exemplifies the inherent difficulties in systematically identifying residential sites at which respondent's images can be identified.

4.5.2 Selecting individual participants

Once residential sites have been selected at which to conduct image studies, researchers have also found it difficult to justify the identification of individual participants within selected catchment areas. Most research has involved randomly selecting respondents from an area's population. This random sampling is often justified by researchers who argue that generating large samples can counter the inherent weaknesses of this technique. For example, Ritchie and Smith (1991) contacted 2200 participants selected randomly from 12 different countries. However, as May states, 'a large, poor quality sample, which does not reflect the population's characteristics, will be less accurate than a smaller one that does' (1997:86). A large proportion of research (Burgess 1974, Balgolu and Brinberg 1997, Echtner and Ritchie 1993, Crompton 1979) has paid little attention to the representativeness of the participants by using groups of students as convenience samples. This has obvious methodological deficiencies, which are in part recognised by the authors in question. As Crompton states, the 'use of a student sample was an important limitation of the study, for clearly, their image may not be representative of that held by other representative travellers' (Crompton 1979:19).

Few researchers have attempted to obtain a representative sample of potential tourists, or if they have done so, they have failed to make it clear when detailing their sampling procedure. This may be partly due to the difficulties in comprehending exactly what the sample should be representative of, and therefore who should be included within a representative sample of 'potential tourists'. Due to the prevalence and diversity of urban tourism activities, the only representative sample of potential urban tourists is a representative sample of the population as a whole. This is recognised implicitly by other destination image research. For example, techniques such as the random sampling of households (van Limburg 1998), phone directories (Gartner 1989) and electoral registers (Burgess 1978) have been used to obtain a sample of potential tourists. However, despite the proliferation of random sampling in destination image research, there is a conspicuous lack of studies that use a more sophisticated sampling framework. MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997) use a quota sampling procedure, but only include the variables age and gender, excluding the socio-economic status of respondents. The vast majority of destination image research has failed even to manage this limited degree of representativeness. Random samples may produce significant biases in terms of age, gender and socio-economic status that could significantly influence research findings. If these sampling frameworks were further modified to produce a truly representative sample of the population studied, then the sampling procedures adopted would be more justifiable, resulting in an increased confidence in the results obtained. This principal has guided the design of the sampling framework used in the present study.

4.5.3 The sampling framework used in this study

In formulating an appropriate sample for the present study, specific criteria needed to be satisfied. This criteria has been generated by the objectives of the study and through the critical analysis of previous sampling techniques. In short, the study aimed to examine the views of:

- Potential tourists, rather than actual tourists visiting certain locations.
- Potential tourists at their place of residence.
- Potential 'sport tourists' as well as potential 'urban tourists'.

- Potential tourists who, according to the geographical location of their place of residence, may engage in a weekend leisure visit to Birmingham, Manchester or Sheffield involving an overnight stay.
- A representative sample of the English population in terms of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the participants.

It was impossible to use simple random sampling due to the large number of potential tourists who fit the above criteria. As May points out, when a sampling frame involves a large population, researchers 'need to find a method that would obviate the need to randomly select from all these people'(1997:86). Therefore, in this study a combination of multi-stage sampling and quota sampling has been used. Multi-stage sampling is an extension of cluster sampling, which Robson identifies as 'particularly useful when a population is widely dispersed and large, requiring a great deal of effort and travel to get the survey information' (Robson 1993:139). Thus multi-stage sampling is appropriate for this study and has been combined with a quota sampling procedure in order to gain a representative sample. This detailed and complicated procedure has produced a sample in accordance with the criteria listed above and is detailed at length in appendix i.

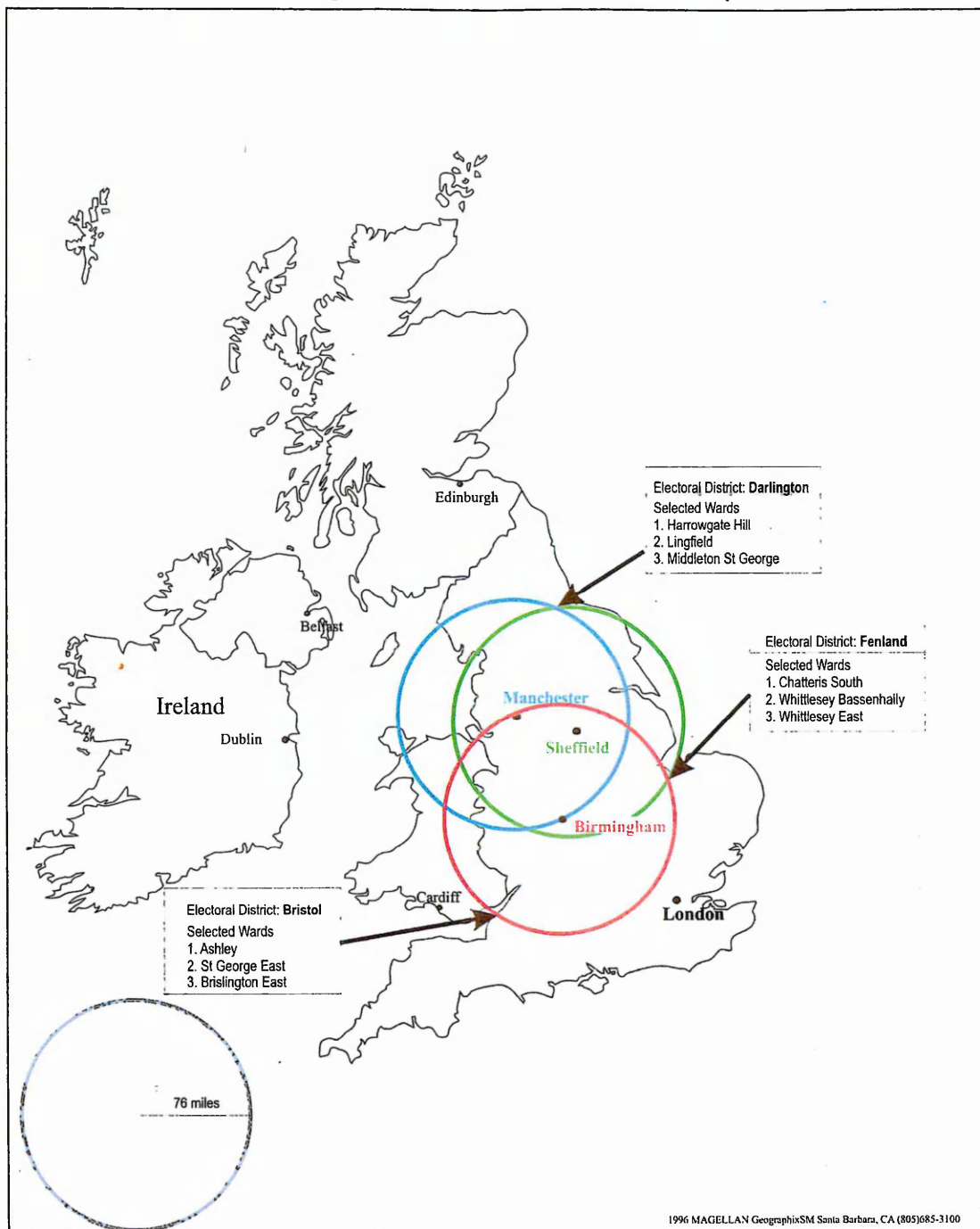
The multi-stage sampling involved systematically selecting three districts which exhibited different geographical characteristics and which were of an appropriate distance from the three case study cities (see Fig 4.5.1). By consulting existing research on demand for short breaks, (Bailey 1989), the study selected three catchment areas which were at least 75 miles from each of the three case study cities (see appendix i and Fig 4.5.1). One urban district, one rural district and one area exhibiting both rural and urban zones were selected, preventing biases resulting from the characteristics of participant's place of residence (see Fig 4.5.1). Three defined electoral districts were designated using this procedure and within each of these districts, three wards were systematically chosen on the basis of their differing socio-economic characteristics. In each of these wards, respondents were randomly identified from electoral registers to fill quotas which had been constructed via census data regarding the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the English population. When participants had been identified, questionnaires were distributed

and interviews conducted in different locations around the UK. Once quotas were filled, no more participants exhibiting those characteristics were included in the sample. To complete unfilled quotas, respondents exhibiting the salient characteristics were sought to complete questionnaires or to participate in interviews to produce a representative sample of the English population. The areas in which this sampling procedure was undertaken are highlighted in Table 4.5.1 and illustrated by Fig 4.5.1.

Electoral district	Structured questionnaires	Semi-structured interviews	Electoral wards
Bristol	60	18	Ashley
			St George East
			Brislington East
Darlington	60	18	Harrowgate Hill
			Lingfield
			Middleton St George
Fenland	60	18	Chatteris South
			Whittlesey Bassenhally
			Whittlesey East
TOTAL	180	54	

Table 4.5.1 *The number and place of residence of potential tourists who participated in the study.*

Figure 4.5.1 Diagram illustrating the rationale for the selection of sample sites



After the completion of pilot studies for both the questionnaires (research method 2) and the semi-structured interviews (research method 3), appropriate target sample sizes were set. These sample sizes, which are exhibited in Table 4.5.1 were predominantly determined by resources available and the constraints provided by the desire to generate a representative sample.

4.5.4 The structured questionnaire: Research participants

The characteristics of the sample who completed the structured questionnaires in comparison to the general characteristics of the adult English population are detailed in appendix r. A total of 180 respondents were included in this element of the research, 60 from each of the three districts used in the study. A detailed account of how these participants were selected can be found in appendix i. Through the use of systematic quota sampling procedures, a representative sample has been obtained with regard to age and gender. With respect to the socio-economic position of respondents, a sample has been obtained which is broadly representative of the English population. However, considerable difficulties were experienced in terms of generating responses from enough retired and unemployed participants. It was difficult to access these groups and even when potential respondents were found, individuals were frequently unwilling or unable to participate in the study. In all three electoral districts it was only possible to obtain 6 out of the intended 7 economically inactive participants, and as a result the sample obtained does not exactly match the quota requirements. The socio-economic characteristics of the participants in this study are illustrated in appendix r and compared to the national statistics.

4.5.5 The sport spectators

As well as distributing the questionnaire to potential tourists at their place of residence, the study also aimed to ascertain the views of potential sport tourists. Structured questionnaires were distributed at five sport events in England, so that the views of one of the most important target markets of sport-led reimagining could be analysed. The criteria for selecting these events are detailed in appendix j and

permission was sought from the venues (see appendix p). The events that were chosen via this process are shown in appendix u.

A profile of the sample obtained from these five events is illustrated in appendix s. Notable sample characteristics include the male dominance (74.7%), the large proportion of people aged 30-49 (48%) and the over-representation of managers at the expense of retired people. There was no specific intention to obtain a representative sample of the English population, although the study did aim to recruit participants who were broadly representative of sport tourists. Delpy (1998:25) states that 'the average profile of a sport tourist is ...a physically active, college educated, relatively affluent 18-44 year old'. This is reflected in the sample obtained, although it should be recognised that this study considers the images of spectator sport tourists, rather than people who travel to participate in sport activities.

4.5.6 The semi-structured interviewees: Research participants

The interviewees were selected from the same wards as those participating in the structured questionnaires. A total of 54 participants were interviewed, in nine locations from three electoral districts. A representative sample of participants was obtained, despite the difficulties caused by the large number of refusals. The full list of participants can be viewed in appendix k and a detailed explanation of the procedure through which participants were selected is included in appendix i. The characteristics of respondents and comparisons with the characteristics of the English adult population are detailed in appendix t.

4.6 The design and administration of the research instruments

4.6.1 Research method 2: The structured questionnaire

The main objective of research method 2 was to elicit attribute-based images of the three city destinations and to evaluate the influence of sport reimagining initiatives. As Echtner and Ritchie (1993) advocate, structured techniques involving surveys of potential tourists are a useful and justifiable means of exploring attribute-based

images. In this study, a questionnaire has been used to evaluate the attribute-based images of Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield as sport destinations, and the intention here is to explain and justify the administration and design of this research instrument.

4.6.2 The administration of the structured questionnaire

May (1997:89) states that 'data collection in surveys is mainly through three types of questionnaire: the mail or self-complete questionnaire, the telephone survey and the face to face interview schedule.' All three of these survey techniques have been used in structured methodologies developed to evaluate destination image. After careful consideration of these alternatives for the present study, a form of self-completion questionnaire was used. This method was chosen as the delay between the distribution and collection of questionnaires provided respondents with sufficient time to reflect on their images of the three cities and their attitudes to the questions posed. As May (1997:90) states, one of main strengths of self-completion questionnaires is the fact that 'people can take their own time to fill in the questionnaire and consider their responses' (1997:90). The self-completion questionnaire has other significant advantages that rendered it appropriate for the present study. As May (1997) argues, this method provides people with a medium for the anonymous expression of ideas and opinions, something considered to be relevant to the study of place images. The importance of anonymity was emphasised during the fieldwork when concerns were expressed that negative opinions about cities might offend the researcher, particularly if the participant knew the researcher was based in one of the three cities under consideration. In addition, the standardisation of questions and the lack of inconsistencies resulting from interviewer variation enhances the reliability of the responses.

Unlike many self-completion questionnaires, the research instrument used in this study was not designed as a mail survey. Mail surveys tend to procure low response rates and unrepresentative samples, and can result in problems relating to the misunderstanding and inappropriate completion of the research instrument (Robson 1993). The aim in this study was to counter these criticisms by incorporating some of

the more personalised characteristics of other survey techniques - such as face to face interviewing and telephone surveys - into the research instrument. This involved distributing questionnaires personally using the following procedure. First, the researcher asked whether the pre-identified respondent was at home. If that was the case, the researcher proceeded to explain the purposes of the research and asked if the individual would be prepared to participate. If a positive response was forthcoming, the researcher informed the participant that a return visit would be made to collect the completed questionnaire. If the questionnaire was not ready at this return visit, or if the respondent was not at home, verbal and written reminders were distributed. To assist this process, a covering letter was included with the questionnaire (appendix o) to reinforce the instructions detailed verbally. As May (1997:89) suggests, covering letters are also useful to explain the purpose of the questionnaire and to stress the anonymity of responses.

The personal dimension of the questionnaire's administration had several advantages that distinguished it from conventional self-completion surveys. Fink (1995:87) states that when dealing with mail surveys it is not uncommon to achieve a response rate as low as 20% for a first mailing. However, the interaction with the potential respondent in this study allowed those who were unwilling to participate to be identified and substitutes sought. Therefore, in effect, the response rate was 100% in that the target number of replies desired was achieved. For those who stated their willingness to complete the questionnaire, but then exhibited subsequent apathy, the use of multiple collection dates also provided ideal opportunities to remind participants to complete the questionnaire.

As May (1997) states, one of the problems with traditional self-completion questionnaires is that once the questionnaire is sent out, 'the researcher has little control over the completion of the survey' (1997:89). The personal distribution/collection helped to alleviate this lack of control. For example, the collection times were used to ensure that the questionnaire had been filled out properly and to answer any questions from participants about the research instrument. This addressed the dilemma encountered by many mail surveys concerning the handling of questionnaires that are not filled out correctly (Robson 1993). The

personal relationship with participants and the immediate monitoring of the returns also assisted the attainment of a representative sample as, when required, respondents could be asked key questions regarding their demographic and socio-economic status before participation was sought. This attends to the problem noted by May (1997) that when using self completion questionnaires you often 'cannot check on the bias of the final sample' (May 1997:90). The personal communication with target respondents also prevented the common problem associated with mail surveys where a different member of a household fills in a questionnaire despite it being addressed to another resident at that address.

The personal distribution and collection of questionnaires was very time consuming and constituted a demanding logistical exercise. The time and resources needed to conduct such an exercise in several different locations restricted the amount of responses that could be collected. A mail survey would certainly have meant the generation of a larger sample size, although it is questionable whether a representative sample could have been obtained using postal distribution. The efficiency of the process was assisted by the completion of a pilot study, and the changes made to the procedures as a result of this pilot study are detailed in appendix f.

4.6.3 The administration of the structured questionnaire to sport tourists

As well as distributing the questionnaire to potential tourists at their place of residence, the study also aimed to ascertain the views of potential sport tourists. The questionnaire was administered at a number of sport events around the country, so that the views of one of the most important target markets of sport-led reimagining could be analysed. This objective meant designing a completely different system for distributing and collecting the questionnaires. The intention was to approach sport tourists at certain events and dispense questionnaires attached to a clipboard. The respondent was then given an appropriate amount of time, depending on the nature and duration of the event, to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then collected and inspected to ensure it had been filled in correctly. A rudimentary sampling system was used and there was no specific intention to generate a representative sample (see appendix j). This made the operation a lot easier to

manage than the procedures outlined earlier. However, as this operation differed from the one described above and because the questionnaire had a number of minor modifications for this sample (see design considerations below), it was also necessary to complete a pilot study at a sport event. The details of this study and the resultant changes to the administrative procedure are detailed in appendix g.

4.6.4 The design of the structured questionnaire

The design of the questionnaire was determined by the information that was required by the study and guided by suggestions concerning good practice in research methods literature. Its formulation was assisted by recommendations engendered by the pilot study, the details of which are recorded in appendix f. A detailed review of the justification for the design of the final questionnaire, including the rationale for the design of individual questions, is detailed in appendix c.

The format of the questionnaire was designed carefully. Questions were ordered in a systematic and sequential manner that aimed to minimise the number of respondents who were deterred from completing the questionnaire. For example, at the beginning of the questionnaire, straightforward, 'factual' questions are included. The more difficult questions, requiring greater deliberation on the part of the respondent, were situated toward the middle of the questionnaire. As Robson (1993) has suggested, general questions should precede more specific ones and this recommendation influenced the design of this research instrument. The intention was to ask respondents about general areas of interest (experience of the city, conative images) before exploring some more specific issues concerning the concept of the city as a sporting destination. This format also prevented unrepresentative contamination of initial unfettered images with sporting elements. To assist this objective, the questionnaire contained clear instructions that the questions should be answered in the order that they appeared in the questionnaire (see appendix a). Wherever possible the phrasing and layout of the questions was standardised to cause minimal confusion. To avoid bias resulting from the consistent placement of a city at the end of the list of three cities, the position of each city has been rotated in different questionnaires. However, their order in each individual question is standardised to avoid causing

confusion for the respondent (see appendix a). The questionnaire for the sport sample is identical to that administered to other respondents apart from the addition of two additional questions and the need to obtain details about place of residence. The justification for these amendments is included at the end of appendix c.

4.6.5 The analysis and use of quantitative research data

Responses to the questionnaire have been coded and entered into the SPSS for Windows programme, allowing appropriate statistical tests to be performed. However, the responses to question 5, where participants were required to provide three words to represent each city, were recorded in Excel spreadsheets to allow associated words to be corroborated, sorted and analysed. These words were sorted into thematic categories that were formed retrospectively once the information had been collected. The categories were individually constructed for each city, although the broad comparability of the words collected meant that similar category names were used to organise words elicited in relation to all three cities. The citation of individual words and the number of words in each thematic grouping was recorded and used in collaboration with the information gathered from the semi-structured interviews (see section 4.6.9).

The information gathered from specific questions has been used to address the research questions. For example, questions 10 and 11 have been used to identify the prompted awareness of the sport initiatives, and questions 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12 have been used to evaluate the attribute-based images of cities as sport destinations. Questions 3, 4 and 5 have been used to enhance the understanding of the holistic image of the cities, something primarily explored by research method 3. The other questions have been used to analyse results with respect to variables perceived to be of potential importance, including previous experience of the city (questions 1 and 2), interest in sport (13) and socio-demographics ('other details' section).

4.6.6 Research method 3: The semi-structured interviews

The objective of research method 3 was to elicit holistic images of the three city destinations and to assess the influence of sport reimagining initiatives on these images. To obtain the required information, various methodological alternatives were considered. In social science research, the idea of interviewing groups of people together rather than individually has become increasingly popular. As Morgan states 'The hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group' (Morgan 1988 c.f. Flick 1998:122). However, this study was specifically interested in eliciting individual holistic images from potential tourists, rather than those stimulated by group discussions involving people with different interests and degrees of experience. Other possible qualitative methods available to the researcher include participant observation, where 'the researcher gathers information by being an actual participant with the subjects being studied' (Veal 1992:95). If the research had involved actual tourists visiting the cities, this approach may have been possible and indeed may have produced some very interesting results. However, as the research dealt with potential tourists, there was little for the researcher to participate in, as the intention was to interview respondents at their place of residence.

Semi-structured interviewing was considered to be the most appropriate research method for evaluating the holistic images of potential tourists. In such approaches, 'questions are normally specified, but the interviewer is more free to probe beyond the answers' (May 1997:111). These type of interviews allow respondents to answer questions on their own terms, something that is often restricted in a structured interview or questionnaire survey. A conventional semi-structured interview was used involving a standardised schedule with the use of associated prompts. This makes the technique used in this study very different from 'focused interviews' (Flick 1998, May 1997), which are essentially unstructured, informal and unstandardised (May 1997:112). The focused interview was not employed in the present study because many participants were unfamiliar with the three cities under consideration. If the study aimed to elicit the images of familiar environments, then a detailed, informal discussion would have been more appropriate. However, the pilot study confirmed that interviewees needed prompts and specific questions to allow discussion of unfamiliar cities to ensue. The use of a standardised structure and

format also allowed the information collected to be compared, sorted and analysed in a more efficient manner.

4.6.7 The administration of the semi-structured interviews

Once target interviewees had been identified (see appendix i), they were asked if they would like to participate in the research. If refusals or absence was encountered, the procedures set out in appendix l were followed. Permission was sought to conduct the interview inside the participant's home and to record the interview on to audio tape. During the interview, the wording of questions and prompts was standardised wherever possible to allow for the comparability of responses.

4.6.8 The design of the interview schedule.

The specific design of the interview schedule is best explained via reference to the instrument itself (appendix d) and through the detailed justification for its design (appendix e). As Robson (1993:238) advocates, the schedule includes introductory comments in the form of a verbatim script, a list of key questions under topic headings, a set of associated prompts and closing comments. The design of the schedule was directed by three main objectives, which are exhibited in Fig 4.6.1 below:

The objectives of the semi-structured interviews
1. To elicit general holistic images of the cities.
2. To explore the links between sport and the cities.
3. To explore the meanings and behaviour engendered by associating sport with the city.

Figure 4.6.1 *The objectives of the semi-structured interviews*

To address objective 1 (see Fig 4.6.1 above), the schedule aimed to explore whether potential tourists knew of any features or aspects of the destination (cognitive image component), their attitudes and opinions of the city as a tourist destination (evaluative image component) and whether people would actually like to visit the destination under consideration (conative image component). A specific aim of the interview was to note the inclusion of sport initiatives as metonymic elements of holistic impressions. Interviews addressed the visual component of destination image by asking potential tourists if they had mental pictures of the cities in their minds and by asking them to describe those images. As Nasar (1998:25) contends, city image 'represents a psychological construct' that contains two components; 'visual aspects of city form and human evaluative responses' (1998:25). This visual aspect is an important and often neglected aspect of destination image and the specific intention was to examine whether sport initiatives are used as metonymic representations of the city. To achieve objective 2, respondents were prompted to discuss links between the cities and sport and to consider whether these links had become stronger or weaker in recent years. Objective three was addressed explicitly by asking respondents about whether and why they thought associations with sport were a positive or negative aspect of cities and whether and how sport initiatives would affect their perceptions of a city and their propensity to visit it.

The use of three cities in the schedule meant that individual cities were examined independently whilst enabling the efficacy of sport reimagining in general to be assessed. Therefore, although comparisons were made in interviews, the intention was not to elicit comparative images, unless these were the images which were most salient to, and indicative of, those held by the respondent. This desire to assess images in a manner that allowed comparison, but which did not enforce it, is reflected strongly in the design of the interview schedule. Each participant was asked a series of questions on one city, before being asked a similar set of questions concerning the remaining two case study cities. Earlier designs of the schedule dealt with an issue or question in turn and asked the respondent to answer with respect to each of the three cities. The schedule was redesigned to avoid repetitive questioning which seemed mentally tiring for the respondent and also quite confusing, with people being asked to

continually switch their attentions from their impressions of one city to their impressions of another. It was envisaged that this style of questioning would lead to more considered responses and be less demanding for the respondent. However, a potential problem with the redesign of the schedule was that each city would be dealt with in strict sequence and if this order was standardised, one city would be considered in more depth because it was consistently addressed by participants first. Indeed, research by Driscoll et al (1994) suggests that the order in which destinations are presented to respondents can significantly affect the nature of responses. The order in which the cities were presented to participants was therefore rotated after each interview so that each city was given equitable prominence in the overall research instrument.

The sequencing of the questions has also been designed to minimise the contamination of unprompted images and to result in a logical progression through the schedule. The initial questions dealt with general images and impressions before images of the city as a tourism destination were elicited. However, so that these original, unfettered images are not contaminated unfairly by the subsequent direct sporting questions, the sporting element was saved until the end of the interview. Each city was dealt with in turn, before the issue of sport was explicitly mentioned by the interviewer. This sequencing allowed the inclusion or non-inclusion of sport elements in responses to general image questions to form significant observations in their own right. Therefore the sequencing of the questions provided a logical and uncomplicated schedule for the respondent but one which validated the responses given.

4.6.9 The analysis and use of qualitative research data

The semi-structured interviews were recorded on tape and were later transcribed by the researcher. The transcripts were then reviewed and analysed in a systematic manner. Several alternative means of qualitative data analysis were explored, including the use of computerised data analysis software. However, the fact that the interviews were relatively short and contained a consistent structure meant that this means of analysis was deemed inappropriate. Instead, a manual sorting of responses

was employed, inspired by the suggestions of Mason (1994). Mason (1994) suggests that in analysing qualitative data it is useful to use two different types of analytical categories: descriptive and conceptual. Mason suggests that descriptive categories consist 'simply of a list of the key substantive topics' in which the researcher is interested (1994:91). Conceptual categories are aimed at 'teasing out across the board in our qualitative data set, aspects ...relevant to our research questions'(Mason 1994:91). These conceptual categories are those which are 'grounded in theoretical perspectives' which the researcher brings to the study (Mason 1994:91). This approach has strongly influenced the procedures employed by the present study. The theories and ideas highlighted in the conceptual framework (chapter 3) and literature review (chapter 2) have been used to provide conceptual categories through which the interviews will be analysed. In addition, categories that emerged from the interviews themselves were also created and recorded during the analysis of the interview transcripts. The conceptual and descriptive categories used in this study were largely directed by the need to address the research questions and are detailed in Figures 4.6.1 and 4.6.2 below:

Conceptual categories

- Holistic images of city destinations and inclusion of sport in those images;
- Change in holistic images and influence of sport in procuring image change;
- Connotations and symbolic associations generated by sport initiatives;
- Connotations and symbolic associations generated by sport initiatives with reference to specific case study cities;
- Cognitive/evaluative/conative images of cities;
- Metonymic use of sport initiatives in visual and verbal images;
- Mention of issues regarding the differentiating and distinguishing capacities of sport initiatives;
- Mention of issues regarding the credibility of sport reimagining.

Figure 4.6.2 *The conceptual categories used in the qualitative data analysis*

Descriptive categories

- Awareness of sport initiatives;
- Unprompted mention of sport in images of cities;
- Prompted mention of links between the cities and sport;
- Mention of where information about sport initiatives was obtained from;
- Attitudes towards urban sport initiatives;
- Past/future influence of sport initiatives on travel behaviour;
- Knowledge of specific features of city destinations.

Figure 4.6.3 *The descriptive categories used in the qualitative data analysis*

The qualitative data was analysed and information relating to the conceptual and descriptive categories indicated in Figures 4.6.2. and 4.6.3 was highlighted and evaluated. The efficiency of this process was enhanced through the inclusion of specific questions to ensure that participants addressed the most specific issues. Indeed, some of the interview questions related specifically to the categories above. For example, in exploring whether sport initiatives had become metonymic elements of holistic images, answers to questions 2, 7 and 12 were of specific use (see appendix d). However, the rest of the transcripts also provided useful illustrations of the use or non-use of sporting metonyms to represent the city as a whole, and this was also recorded. A similar process was undertaken for the descriptive categories. For example, in terms of identifying awareness of the initiatives, questions 22 and 23 were of direct relevance (see appendix d). However comments made throughout the interview also provided useful evidence of awareness of different initiatives and it was important to combine this information to allow a comprehensive analysis of the data to be undertaken.

Observations were recorded from this data analysis process and were then linked back to the overall research questions. The qualitative data was primarily used to identify the impact of sport initiatives on the holistic image of the city, but was also used to assess the awareness of sport initiatives and to supplement the analysis of the extent to

which the initiatives had contributed to the attribute-based image of the city as a sporting destination.

4.7 Linking the quantitative and qualitative research

The methodology of the present study has been principally designed to reflect and explore the conceptualisation outlined in chapter 3, regarding attribute-based and holistic image enhancement. The structured self-completion questionnaire has been used predominantly to measure the impact of sport events on the attribute-based sporting image of the city. The flexible, semi-structured interviews have been used primarily to examine the impact of sport reimagining on the holistic image of the city. However, despite this concentration, to a certain extent, each instrument has been used to examine both these forms of image development and both have been used to ascertain awareness of the sport initiatives. For example, though it is argued in this study that structured instruments are the most effective means of eliciting attribute based images, it is useful to support this structured analysis with evidence provided from qualitative based research. Therefore questions 19-24 in the semi-structured interview schedule are also aimed at exploring the images of cities as sporting venues. It is less justifiable to reverse this situation and use structured techniques to examine holistic images. However, the opportunity has been taken to introduce open-ended techniques into the structured questionnaire, despite Robson's (1993) advice that this should be avoided as it reduces the efficiency of the coding process. The word association technique has allowed the structured instrument to support the qualitative holistic image research, albeit in a rudimentary fashion. Therefore, although different research instruments have been developed to focus on different aspects of destination image, in several instances the research instruments have been used in unison to explore these different components.

4.8 Methodological critique

The research methodology in this study has been justified through its links with previous research, and because of its relationship with the conceptual framework outlined in chapter 3. However, despite its overall success, the approach and method

employed did exhibit some limitations and weaknesses which are outlined in this section.

4.8.1 The research approach

The study utilises a broad-based methodology which means that many of the criticisms of specific approaches are countered. The approach employed by the present study involves tenets of traditional behavioural geography in that it uses structured questionnaires to elicit place images. Ley (1981) criticises behavioural geography for its failure to deal adequately with the realm of human consciousness. However, this study complements conventional methods through the use of semi-structured interviews that explore the complexities of social structures and the subjective feelings of individuals. Ley also states (in Johnston et al 1994:32) that behavioural geography approaches can be accused of creating 'quasi laboratory conditions' because of the formalised and structured nature of the methods employed. According to Ley, this effectively means the effective removal of the contexts in which 'decisions are made and where actions originate', and from which meaning is derived (Ley in Johnston et al 1994:32). While to some extent this criticism can be levelled at the present study, when exploring tourist destination images it is difficult to identify a 'context' where more ethnographic or participatory research could have been undertaken. The 'quasi-laboratory' used in this study was relevant to the context of the research in that information was elicited from participants in their own homes, which in the case of potential tourists, is presumably where 'decisions are made and where actions originate' (Ley in Johnston et al 1994:32).

The use of qualitative approaches in the present study has been advocated as a means of addressing some of the criticisms that accompany positivist approaches to place image research. However, it should be noted that although this element of the research was designed to allow meanings, emotions and feelings of individuals to be explored, several problems were encountered. Participants found it difficult to discuss at length cities and concepts about which they knew very little. Although the research was interested in eliciting these naive, poorly developed, and even prejudiced impressions, respondents were noticeably reticent to communicate information that

they perceived to be ill-informed. This sometimes led to rather shorter, structured and formalised interviews which perhaps did not explore the feelings and emotions of the participants in the manner intended. The fact that a large number of participants had no vested interest in the subjects under consideration further reduced the likelihood that they would 'open -up' and discuss their beliefs, feelings and interpretations at length. The participants in this research were randomly selected and therefore many did not have any interest in cities, sport or tourism and when such apathy was encountered, it was difficult to generate rapport with individuals. This made the interviewer's role more difficult and the unfortunate result was less detail, less involvement and less insight into the feelings, emotions and beliefs of the research participants.

4.8.2 The research methods

Many of the problems regarding the research methods used in this study were resolved through the piloting of the research instruments. Nevertheless, some problems were experienced which may affect the reliability of the research findings and these are detailed in this section.

As the study involves statistical analysis, one of the main limitations of the sample frame used is its size. A relatively small number of people completed the structured questionnaire (225), which makes it more difficult to justify the use of statistical techniques. In this study, resources were devoted to achieving a representative sample, rather than a large unrepresentative one. Increasing the size of this representative sample would have taken considerably more time and resources, as the larger the sample, the more difficult it was to fill certain quotas. Obtaining the representative sample of participants was a very arduous and resource intensive process and this vindicated the decision to restrict the sample size.

It should also be noted that, although the sampling procedures were largely successful, there were several minor discrepancies. These mainly resulted from the difficulties in securing a representative sample in terms of occupation, as the quotas were filled appropriately with respect to age and sex. The main problem with the sampling frame related to the fact that the sample was meant to be representative according to three specific criteria - age, gender and occupation. Towards the end of the research process, this meant that it was often necessary to acquire participants with very specific characteristics to enable quotas to be met. For example, it may have been necessary to locate a person who was female, aged 18-29 who was economically inactive, to finalise the fulfilment of all three elements of the quota sampling frame. This complicated procedure highlights the difficulties experienced in obtaining a representative sample.

Aside from obtaining representative respondent characteristics, several other difficulties were experienced in terms of accessing the research participants.

Respondents were identified using electoral registers and these were often found to be out of date. Compounding this problem, targeted respondents were frequently not at home, either at the first visit, or when the researcher returned to collect questionnaires. In addition, a significant number of refusals were encountered. Refusal rates were particularly high when recruiting semi-structured interviewees, mainly because the interviews required the researcher to enter the homes of participants and record an interview that could last from between 20-60 minutes. The combined effects meant that initial lists of participants generated from electoral registers bore little or no relation to the final lists of interviewees from which information was gathered. Anticipating these problems, a series of 'rules' were developed to provide consistency in dealing with refusals, or absence (appendix 1). The large number of refusals made it more difficult to target participants to fill quotas. However, potentially it could also have skewed the research findings if certain groups were less inclined to participate. When administering both research instruments, the reasons for refusal were recorded to ensure that sample biases were not being generated. Reassuringly, the vast majority of refusals were because of lack of time or simple apathy. The only reasons for refusal that may have biased the sample were the small number of people who felt that they did not know enough about the cities and several who stated that they were 'too old' to participate. It was also noted that a large number of the apathetic refusals were from young people. These latter two observations added to the difficulty of obtaining a representative sample. Although there was no specific intention to generate a racially representative sample, there was also a notable reticence amongst the black and Asian communities to participate. This was mainly due to language difficulties, and has resulted in a sample unrepresentative of the multi-racial nature of contemporary English society.

Further limitations result from the data used to formulate the sample frame. These quotas were derived from Census data recorded in 1991, as this was the most recent available. Once published, the 2001 Census data may reveal different characteristics of the adult English population, further limiting the supposed representativeness of the sample obtained. It should also be recognised that, even though the results are obtained from three systematically selected and distinct areas of the country, it is difficult to justify stating that the findings truly represent the views of potential

tourists to Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield as a whole. A greater range of sample sites would have been chosen if sufficient time and resources had been available and this would have enhanced the reliability of the study findings. The research was conducted in different areas at different times and this also may have contaminated the findings of the study. The research aimed to limit the time period in which the fieldwork was undertaken and as a result all fieldwork was completed in the period 9th July - 22nd November 1998. However, as destination images continually evolve, images could have been influenced by different media stories during this period. For example, it was noted that after Prince Charles visited the city of Sheffield and made references to the Full Monty film, the film was cited more readily in subsequent interviews/questionnaire responses.

Few problems were experienced regarding the design of the research instruments, mainly because of the pilot studies that were undertaken and the associated amendments made prior to their administration. Some respondents expressed concern that the questions were of no specific interest or relevance to them. This contributed to the problem noted above, whereby the participant's responses to prompts in the interviews were generally not as detailed as was envisaged. A further problem was that the standardised format involving discussions about three cities in turn meant that in the latter stages of the interview, participants tended to pre-empt subsequent questions to hasten the interview.

Perhaps the major limitation of the method adopted is that, although successful techniques have been designed and used to measure place image, the primary aim of the study is to consider whether reimagining has resulted in desirable image change. The method adopted is an appropriate, though indirect way of ascertaining this information as the effects of sport initiatives have had to be extrapolated from the images elicited. The approach adopted here allows awareness of the initiatives to be evaluated and examines image effects by looking at whether and how these initiatives have influenced the current images held by potential tourists. Isolated parts of each of the research instruments deal directly with image change and the effects of sport initiatives, but other observations have been made through less direct indicators. The alternative was a longitudinal approach, but this was considered inappropriate due to

the desire to look at the initiatives adopted by different cities, the significant time period over which initiatives have been implemented in the three cities, and the fact that even when such an approach is taken, it is difficult to separate out the causes of image change. As a result, a cross sectional approach has been undertaken, where images are unravelled to evaluate the influence of sport initiatives. This results in generating a large amount of information, only some of which provides evidence of the effects of sport reimagining. As a result, the techniques utilised constituted an illustrative, though rather inefficient and indirect method of assessing image change.

4.9 Final comments

The conceptualisation of image into attribute and holistic images has enabled the research to develop different research instruments that can focus on these different components. This enables the study to address exactly how and why sport reimagining may have influenced city images. The subsequent sections of the thesis will outline the results derived from these research activities, guided specifically by the research questions (see section 3.6), and more generally by the requirement to address the overall study aims (section 1.4). Though the preceding methodological discussion has focused heavily on justifying and explaining the complex procedures employed to ascertain the effects of sport reimagining, it should be highlighted that research has been undertaken concerning the pursuit of sport reimagining by the case study cities (see section 4.4.1). Therefore, an immediate concern is to provide further information about the initiatives adopted by Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield and to ascertain whether image change was a primary consideration in the strategies. This will allow the research to subsequently consider the effects of the initiatives and to compare them with those that were envisaged. The analysis of findings relating to this element of the research provides the focus for the next chapter of the study.

Chapter 5

The case study sport initiatives and their envisaged image impacts

5.0 Introduction

This thesis is primarily concerned with the impact of sport initiatives on city images and chapters 6, 7 and 8 deal exclusively with this principal focus. However, to provide a context for this analysis, primary and secondary research was undertaken to explore the initiatives pursued by the three case study cities and to ascertain their envisaged impacts. This chapter presents the findings of this research and, in doing so, aims to substantiate the extent to which these projects were motivated by city image objectives. More specifically, this section of the study will indicate the degree to which the manipulation of 'tourist' images constituted a significant consideration. This chapter also attempts to explore *how* cities thought that they could use sport as a vehicle for image change. To facilitate this discussion, the ensuing analysis will make explicit use of the conceptual framework outlined in chapter 3. Once the proposed impact of the initiatives has been determined, attempts will be made in subsequent chapters to compare these findings with the effects observed in potential tourists.

5.1 Birmingham

5.1.1 *Birmingham's sport initiatives*

The sport initiatives adopted in Birmingham have supplemented an existing sporting provision and a notable history of sporting innovation - the world's first game of lawn tennis was played in the city (1865) and the city's major football team, Aston Villa, were founder members of the first football league. Recent additions and improvements to Birmingham's sporting infrastructure, therefore appear to be

attempts to strengthen an existing reputation, rather than comprising efforts to present a 'new' image of the city. The foundations of Birmingham's contemporary sport-based strategy can be traced back to the city's bid to stage the 1992 Olympic Games. In 1985 the City was successful in securing the British nomination to compete for the right to stage the XXVth Olympiad. A year later, the IOC announced that the 1992 Games would be staged in Barcelona, with Birmingham placed a disappointing fifth out of the six cities competing to host the event. Despite this spectacular defeat, Dennis Howell stated the day after the bid failed that 'the achievements of Birmingham had been considerable' (Birmingham Evening Post 18/10/86).

To maintain the momentum generated by the bidding process, Birmingham City Council sought to host a variety of major national and international sport events in the ensuing years after the Olympic bid. One of the most notable and unusual manifestations of this commitment was the decision to host an annual 'Super Prix' motor race through the city's streets. The city also refurbished the Alexander (athletics) Stadium. However, perhaps the most prominent and significant monument to the Olympic bid was the National Indoor Arena (NIA), which was initially conceived as an integral part of the 1992 Games. Despite the subsequent failure of this bid, the City Council was attracted to the idea of new indoor sports venue and the Arena became a focal part of the city centre urban renewal project involving the International Convention Centre and Brindley Place. The NIA, costing a total £51million, constituted a major investment by Birmingham City Council and formed the centrepiece of the city's new sports strategy (Birmingham City Council 1991). The Sports Council contributed £3million and £23 million was raised through the sale of adjoining Council-owned land. The remainder of the cost was provided by the City Council, mainly generated via the NEC loan stock issue (Smyth 1994). Although it has hosted numerous non-sporting events, the NIA has been designed and promoted as a sporting venue. The NIA can accommodate 13,000 spectators and was designed by HOK Sports Facilities Group as a flexible sporting facility - its adaptability is emphasised by the inclusion of the first demountable six lane 200m athletics track (Smyth 1994).

5.1.2 *Holistic image enhancement*

There is significant evidence that Birmingham aimed to use the sport initiatives outlined above as a means of enhancing the city's image as a whole. Indeed, image considerations appeared to an important objective of, and motivation for, the Olympic bid. For example, the leader of Birmingham City Council (Dick Knowles), stated at the time of the bid, that the decision to vie for the Olympic Games had been a significant step forward for Birmingham which could now be seen by the rest of the world as Britain's premier city (Birmingham Evening Post 13/7/95:35). Councillor Bore of Birmingham City Council confirmed this position, stating that 'our bid for the Olympics not only gave the city more publicity than we could ever have dreamed of, but also made us all realise just what was going on and what potential we had' (Jones c.f. Loftman and Nevin 1996:999). Alongside these views of relevant public servants, the local media also appeared to recognise the image-related rationale underpinning the Olympic bid and some of the associated sport initiatives. The Birmingham Mail (16/7/85) reported that, 'The Olympic Games bid must be seen in conjunction with the proposed Convention Centre and the motor race and they follow on from the great success of the NEC. They are each part of the strategy of projecting the city on the international scene.'

There is also evidence that the NIA was developed as a flagship project aimed at enhancing Birmingham's holistic image. However, the NIA's capacity as a vehicle for image enhancement has been restricted by the lack of attention to user requirements and doubts surrounding its competitive advantage over Sheffield's comparable Arena (Smyth 1994). In the period since Smyth's critique, the NIA's competitiveness has been further challenged by the development of other indoor arenas, most notably in Manchester. Furthermore, the imaging potential of the NIA may be constrained by its rather unimaginative architectural style. According to several commentators, the exterior design of flagship projects can influence their capacity to infiltrate perceptual processes, especially if they result in memorable additions to a city's skyline (Lynch 1960). However, the perception is that the NIA, as well as being deficient in terms of

its internal specifications, is externally uninspiring, with Smyth (1994:181) describing it unflatteringly as 'a bulky building'.

Though the evidence above does seem to demonstrate the explicit intention to use the sport initiatives to change Birmingham's holistic image, there is little evidence that demonstrates how the city envisaged this being achieved. To clarify the position, the Principal Officer (Sport) of the Birmingham City Council, Richard Callicott, was asked how he felt sport could enhance the image of Birmingham as a whole. According to Callicott, the mere association of sport with the city can generate positive feelings, such as excitement. Callicott (Personal Communication 1999) also states that sport initiatives can become effective agents of image change, provoking associations with 'dynamism, excitement, internationalism, athleticism' and a 'warm welcome'. These proposed connotations give us a basic indication of how the city expected to experience holistic image enhancement via sport initiatives. The connotations can also be equated with the proposed conceptual framework developed in chapter 3, in that Callicott clearly displays his faith in the symbolic capacity of urban sport initiatives. Though Birmingham used to be reticent about images linked to sport because of the associations with football violence in the 1980s, it would appear that Euro 96 provided a turning point. According to Susan O'Shea, the city's Principal Tourism Analyst, this tournament, as well as generating substantial revenue, was 'great for the city's image and reputation' because of the publicity, atmosphere, crowds and excitement that were generated (Personal Communication 1999). Ms O'Shea sees the tournament as a turning point because, for the first time, sport, appeared to complement and develop the city's cultural promotion, rather than contradict it (Personal Communication 1999).

5.1.3 Attribute-based image as a sport venue

Alongside holistic image objectives, significant emphasis also seems to have been placed on the potential of the initiatives to develop Birmingham's image as a 'sport city'. For example, alongside holistic image ambitions, the Olympic bid was conceived as an attempt to enhance the attribute-based image of the city as a venue for sport. In a press release (3/2/86) the President of the Birmingham bid, Dennis Howell

MP, stated that securing the British nomination for the 1992 Olympiad had confirmed Birmingham 'as the nation's leading sports city' (Birmingham Olympics '92 1986:2). Subsequently, even after the disappointment of the bid's spectacular failure, Howell stated that the bid had 'put Birmingham into the first division of international sport cities' (Birmingham Evening Post 18/10/86). This emerging ambition to be a 'city of sport' was reaffirmed by comments of the bid's chairman, Councillor Ken Barton, who stated that in the post-bid period an even more vigorous and dynamic campaign would be initiated to make Birmingham a centre for world sporting events (Birmingham Evening Post 18/10/86). Like the Olympic bid, the NIA appeared to have dual objectives in terms of image effects, by providing a means of 'promoting the city generally and as a sports venue' (Smyth 1994:182). These envisaged effects reflect the proposed impact of sport initiatives detailed in chapter 3. Similarly, it would appear that a major objective of the Super Prix was to further the city's image as a sporting city. Despite its much publicised demise, five years after its inauguration the chairman of the Motor Racing Working Party, Councillor Ken Barton (Birmingham City Council) announced that 'the Super Prix has given a high powered boost to the City's sporting image' (Birmingham City Council 1990:no page numbers).

5.1.4 A unified and coherent sport reimagining strategy?

Though there is strong evidence to suggest that individual sport initiatives in Birmingham were motivated by image considerations, there remains doubt as to whether the city mobilised a unified, planned and coherent sport reimagining strategy. Concurrently, the City Council was promoting itself as a centre for the arts and as a business tourism venue (Smyth 1994), which questions the commitment of the Council to sport as a catalyst for regeneration and reimagining. To investigate further, the Principal Officer (Sport) of the City Council and an important member of the Olympic bid team, Richard Callicott, was questioned. Mr Callicott believes that the staging of major events at the NIA, Alexander Stadium and the NEC comprise the major sport initiatives adopted by Birmingham as a means of local economic development over the past ten years. When asked whether these sport initiatives constituted a planned and coherent strategy for local development with sport as the

focus, Mr Callicott replied; 'They were not. However, as we have been successful, the policy has followed our initiatives' (Personal Communication 1999). Callicott's views suggest that Birmingham developed fragmented individual projects that were united retrospectively to produce a sport strategy. This strategy was based on the perceived success of the events programme, involving the effective use of the NIA, Alexander Stadium and NEC, rather than constituting a successful pre-planned strategy. Though confirming the initial lack of strategic planning, Mr Callicott does not necessarily agree that this illustrated a lack of commitment to sport reimagining during the last ten years, citing the £51million NIA investment to support his case (Personal Communication 1999). Devoting funds to a project may illustrate a commitment to sport-led regeneration, but it does not necessarily demonstrate effective strategic planning. Smyth (1994:194) criticises both the planning and the funding of the NIA, in articulating that 'the NIA did not have a coherent strategy behind it and sufficient funding was not present'.

Birmingham City Council's strategies relating to the arts and to business tourism certainly appear to be more rigorously planned reimagining initiatives than those concerning sport. However, Callicott states that sport should not be considered to be inferior to these vehicles for reimagining, asserting that 'I believe sport, if managed properly can be as big an influence as you want it to be, certainly comparable to arts, culture and commerce (Personal Communication 1999)'. Interestingly, Callicott suggests that, rather than constituting separate reimagining tools, these different themes can be integrated to work towards a common purpose. For instance, he believes that sport has enabled Birmingham to develop an 'international image' that 'has brought increased arts and cultural investment' (Personal Communication 1999). Callicott justifies the potential synthesis between sport and other reimagining themes through his assertion that, in order to have a successful sport tourism sector, it is also necessary to provide additional images and services to attract and satisfy visitors. According to Callicott, arts and culture and a vibrant entertainment sector are vital to cater for the increased amount visitors generated by sport reimagining (Personal Communication 1999).

Callicott's remarks concerning Birmingham's retrospective sport strategy is reaffirmed by official documentation produced by Birmingham City Council. The first evidence of a planned and coherent sport-based strategy is the document 'Sports Development in Birmingham - A Strategy for the Nineties', published in 1991. This strategy aimed to use sport as a means of local economic development, but was formulated a significant period of time after the decisions were taken to bid for the 1992 Olympic Games and to construct the NIA. Although Callicott's attestations imply that the City Council had ideas about the envisaged image effects that may have accrued from the sport initiatives, at the time of their implementation the initiatives were not part of a planned and coherent reimagining policy.

In contrast to these rudimentary initial approaches, the city council's recent commitment to sport as a tool for regeneration and reimagining is unquestionable. In 1999 the Council became the first Local Authority to produce a unified 'Policy for Sport', adopted across all City Council departments including Leisure, Education and Economic Development. One of strategic aims listed in this document is to 'promote the programmes, events and initiatives that have gained Birmingham the status of a National City of Sport under the collective identity of Sport Birmingham' (Birmingham City Council 1999a:11). The Policy for Sport reaffirms ambitions communicated at the time of the Olympic bid, to promote Birmingham as a sporting city and to develop an image as a sporting venue. This is emphasised by the adoption of the new city 'brand' - 'Sport Birmingham' - and by Councillor Clarke's, (Chair of the City's Leisure Committee) comments that 'as host to many world, European and national sports events, the City has ..earned much respect ...Our aspiration is to retain its reputation and add to it' (Birmingham City Council 1999b:1). This desire to enhance Birmingham's attribute-based image is further exemplified by the various sport accolades that the city has successfully bid for, and which it has subsequently used in promotional literature. Birmingham, was 'European City of Sport for All' in 1991 and four years later, the city was awarded the status 'National City of Sport' by the Sport Council.

5.1.5 Sport reimagining and tourism

Alongside investigating the links between Birmingham's sport initiatives and city reimagining, it is possible to focus the discussion further and analyse whether the city deliberately used sport as a means of enhancing *tourist* images. According to Richard Callicott, sport is 'increasingly important' to Birmingham's tourism development strategy (Personal Communication 1999). This is exhibited in Birmingham's current tourism strategy, where the obligatory SWOT analysis cites one of Birmingham's strengths as being its 'sports infrastructure and events' (Birmingham City Council 1998:no page numbers). In other sections of the Plan, it is emphasised that, 'As UK City of Sport, Birmingham has played host to more than 60 World and European championships in the last five years' (Birmingham City Council 1998:no page numbers). Furthermore, one of the major objectives of Birmingham's plan is to 'promote and challenge the image and perceptions of the City' (Birmingham City Council 1998:no page numbers). There is evidence from the plan that the identification of sport as an important strength has been related to this objective of image enhancement. For example, the action points relating to this objective include to 'Develop and maintain linkages with regional and national media on the image and perceptions of Birmingham - utilise the major events' (Birmingham City Council 1998:no page numbers). Despite this documentary evidence, it is still unclear whether Birmingham has pursued a committed strategy to using sport to enhance its image as a tourist destination.

To explore this issue further, Susan O'Shea, Principal Tourism Analyst of Birmingham City Council, was interviewed. The overriding message that came across in the interview was that sport is viewed as an important part of a wider events strategy encompassing arts, leisure and heritage considerations. According to O'Shea, Birmingham regards these events as having important benefits for the city in terms of both image and tourism receipts. In relation to image benefits, O'Shea believes that as well as establishing the city as an important sporting venue, sport events enhance the city's holistic image by attracting tourists who would otherwise not have visited the city (Personal Communication 1999). She believes that these visitors return with improved perceptions because they will have encountered a welcoming place, a quality visitor experience and a friendly city. According to O'Shea this should help to redress the negative images of Birmingham that persist outside the West Midlands.

This is a view echoed by Richard Callicott (Principal Officer - Sport BCC), who states that sport events enhance city images by prompting people to come into the city to view the improvements that have been made to Birmingham. As Callicott states, 'The more people that come, the more people we can show our city off to' (Personal Communication 1999).

In analysing who comprises the intended target audiences of sport reimagining, it is interesting to note that images appear to be aimed at sport administrators as well as potential sport tourists. As Callicott states; 'The better the image, the more likely events would come and tourists would visit, bringing investment' (Personal Communication 1999). Therefore although there is a stated desire to use the sport imagery to attract tourists, it has also been developed to attract the attention of sport's governing bodies. This is exemplified by Callicott's statement that one of the main envisaged benefits of sport reimagining in Birmingham was to create an image that would 'demonstrate we could adapt and provide a plethora of different settings which met sport's needs' (Personal Communication 1999).

5.1.6 Indications of success

Birmingham City Council has used sport initiatives - initially in a largely ad hoc manner, but lately in more planned fashion - to enhance the image of the city destination. The main objective of the latter part of the present study (chapters 6, 7 and 8) is to provide empirical evidence to suggest whether or not image change has been procured. Before this is attempted, it is interesting to assess whether other academic commentators, and importantly Council representatives, adjudge the sport initiatives to have influenced Birmingham's image. Amongst academic commentators there is an acknowledgement of the success of Birmingham's reimagining in general, although it must be recognised that the sporting initiatives only constitute one element of Birmingham's supposed 'renaissance'. One author, Lister, claims that 'The transformation in barely a few years of Birmingham's image from cultural wasteland to England's most dynamic concentration of cultural activity outside of London is a remarkable story of local authority commitment and imagination. The achievements have put the city on the international stage' (1991 c.f. Loftman and Nevin 1996:999).

Richard Callicott considers this alleged success to have been partly a function of sport initiatives. In assessing how important sport has been to the reorientation of Birmingham's image over the past ten years Callicott articulates - 'I'm biased, but it has helped enormously' (Personal Communication 1999). Callicott believes that Birmingham is now perceived as an attractive destination for would-be sport tourists, contending that among this group the City 'is popular judging from our own and independent market research - particularly as it has its own airport, motorway network and mainline intercity route to London' (Personal Communication 1999). In terms of quantifiable evidence for image benefits resulting from the sport initiatives, Callicott cites increased business at Birmingham International Airport, and the vast increase in the number of hotels built in the area over recent years. O'Shea, Birmingham's Tourism Analyst, is more reticent to provide evidence, stating that 'there is no real work which could indicate a quantified answer' (Personal Communication 1999). The results detailed in chapters 6, 7 and 8 should help to address this lack of evidence.

Quantitative evidence of image change is certainly difficult to find, which partly vindicates the objectives of the present study. However, there are some important observations that can be made from Birmingham's latest Visitor Survey (Birmingham City Council 1997). One of the most obvious findings of this research was the very high number of repeat visits, which amongst the domestic overnight market, comprised 84.5% of all visits (Birmingham City Council 1997). This would appear to support the assertion of the Council representatives (above) that once people have experienced the city, they are more likely to have a more positive impression of it. It is also interesting to note that over half (53.8%) of visitors rated the sporting events as 'good', although there was a demand by visitors for more sport centres/swimming pools (Birmingham City Council 1997). In terms of leisure provision it was also noted that better marketing was needed, indicating that although facilities were generally appreciated they need to be publicised more.

5.1.7 Summary

Birmingham has used sport initiatives in an attempt to enhance its image, with potential tourists providing an important target market for this imaging activity.

Birmingham's strategy has been dominated by two specific initiatives, the bid for the 1992 Olympiad and the project it spawned - the National Indoor Arena. However, there is little evidence to suggest that when these initiatives were adopted they were part of a coherent sport-led regeneration or reimagining plan. Nevertheless, from 1991, the City Council realised that these initiatives provided the basis for a sport-led urban strategy. This has culminated in the latest planning document - the Policy for Sport (Birmingham City Council 1999a). Therefore in subsequent chapters it is necessary to analyse people's awareness of the NIA and the Olympic bid, as well as evaluating their impact on the image of the city. The evidence indicates that an attempt has been made to develop Birmingham's image as a sporting venue, as well as the image of Birmingham as a whole. In chapters 7 and 8 the study will examine the perceptions of sport tourists and potential tourists in general to indicate whether these efforts have been successful.

5.2 Manchester

5.2.1 Manchester's sport initiatives

According to Loftman and Nevin (1996:1008), Manchester's aspirations to become an 'international centre of sport and leisure' became apparent in 1986 when the city competed with Sheffield for the UK candidacy for the 1991 World Student Games. Subsequently, Manchester's sport-led regeneration has been dominated by attempts to bring the Olympic Games to the city. Alongside the publicity generated by the bidding procedure, the bids have spawned other prestige sport initiatives. These facilities and the Olympic plans have also presented Manchester with the opportunity to stage the forthcoming 2002 Commonwealth Games.

5.2.2 Manchester's Olympic Strategy

In September 1993, Manchester's second successive bid for the Olympic Games failed, when the Millennium Games were awarded to Sydney. This marked the end of an eight-year period during which the city, led by the efforts of Bob Scott, had become embroiled in a complicated national and international bidding process for the world's

most prestigious sporting occasion (Cochrane et al 1996). The intention here is not to detail the intricacies of this bidding process, but to establish the degree to which image considerations were implicit in the rationale behind the bid and the projects it spawned. However, it is necessary to provide a brief introduction in order to understand the nature and implications of the strategy. Importantly, the Olympic bids involved a pioneering coalition of interests, embracing the private sector, local government and central government (Law 1994). Despite the rhetoric surrounding the bid championing the role of the private sector, Cochrane et al (1996) are correct to point out that 'it was fundamentally orientated towards the generation of grants from the government' (1996:1331). Indeed, the incumbent Conservative Government provided substantial finances to support the Olympic strategy, although there are conflicting reports detailing exactly how much money was donated. The Financial Times states that Manchester was given government grants amounting to £80 million (Financial Times 1/6/95 c.f. Cochrane et al 1996), Loftman and Nevin put the figure at £75 million (1996:1008), whereas Law (1994) asserts that £75 million was initially committed, with the possibility of a further £40 million to complete the work started (Law 1994:226). This unprecedented support provided the basis for a bid in the year 2000 that was well presented, government backed and which was therefore perceived as more credible than other contemporary British bids (e.g. Birmingham 1992, Manchester 1996). This financial support also had important implications for the construction of new sporting infrastructure in the city. As Law (1994:226) states, 'Because of its [Manchester's] bid the government has given the city extra funds towards the purchase of land, preparatory works and the construction of two facilities, the velodrome and the arena.' The financial commitment of the government allowed some of the Olympic facilities to be constructed despite the ultimate 'failure' of the application to host the Games. These funds were not dependent on the success of the bid, although they were donated in the belief that they would enhance significantly the likelihood of a positive outcome.

5.2.3 The Olympic Strategy and image enhancement

It has almost become a cliché to assert that the Olympic Games is an important vehicle for city image enhancement. Philo and Kearns (1993) assert that the Olympics

is the ultimate expression of place-marketing and this is exemplified in the present study which examines the supposed image benefits of an *unsuccessful* Olympic bid. There is certainly evidence that city image was an important driving force behind Manchester's bids. This is exemplified by the work of Cochrane et al (1996), who assert that 'the Games were, therefore, always understood by the bidders as a means of driving change in - and improving the image of - Manchester and most certainly not as an end in themselves' (Cochrane et al 1996:1330). Moreover, the views of the Councillors and bid leaders suggest that image enhancement was not only a motivation for the Olympic bids, but was the primary driving force behind them. Indeed, Cochrane et al (1996) infer that the Olympic bids were deliberate attempts to redirect central government funding towards the reimagining of Manchester.

In exploring the nature of the desired image impact, there is confusion as relevant evidence confuses image enhancement with increasing the awareness and the profile of the city. Certainly, raising awareness of Manchester is widely viewed as the primary effect of the 2000 Olympic bid (Law 1994). Law alleges that the bid enabled the city to gain what he terms 'visibility' (Law 1994). This objective is reaffirmed by the City Council who state that 'Many aspects of the city's daily life in the fields of entertainment, sport and media carry the City's name throughout the world. This process is being continued and extended by the regeneration associated with Manchester Olympic bid' (Manchester City Council 1993:12 c.f. Loftman and Nevin 1996:1009).

Rather than merely comprising profile and awareness effects, image enhancement involves changing perceptions of a city and reorienting the way in which a city is imagined. However, alongside evidence of profile development motives, there is also support for the argument that Manchester adopted the Olympic strategy for imaging purposes. Cochrane et al quote a Manchester City Council member who stated that the bid 'will be good for the city's image' (1996:1326). More detail regarding the kind of image development desired was provided by some of the prominent public figures involved in the bids. A key proponent of the bids, Bobby Charlton, stated during the build-up to the 2000 bid that Manchester's external image was 'Dour.....you knowall those mills and smoke and soot' but Charlton thought that the bid could remedy

the situation; 'it's certainly not like that any more and we want to show people' (Guardian 6/9/93). Bob Scott, the principal bid campaigner, reaffirms this interpretation of the role of the Olympic bid. Scott insisted that by associating the City with the Olympics Games, 'the old image of Manchester would simply evaporate' (c.f. Law 1994:343). This comment exemplifies the belief that the Olympic Games bid could enhance the image of Manchester as a whole. However, unlike Birmingham's bid, there was little mention of the Games enhancing the city's attribute-based image as a sport venue.

5.2.4 Manchester's Olympic bids - coherent imaging strategy or fortunate opportunism?

It is unclear whether the Manchester thought that merely bidding for, rather than necessarily staging, the Olympic Games would ensure image enhancement. Many comments and quotes justifying the design and implementation of the Olympic strategy in terms of the image benefits were made before it became clear that the Olympics would not be coming to Manchester. There remains the suspicion that the supposed image benefits resulting from the bidding process per se, have been largely fortuitous, coincidental and unplanned. Cochrane et al (1996:1322) argue, that 'significant benefits were to flow from the less tangible legacy of the bidding process, measured in terms of a positive image'. However, by merely entering this process, the city was by no means guaranteed the status of 'glorious loser' it is later widely acknowledged to have acquired. Academic and media commentary suggests that the contemporary high profile and competitive nature of the bidding process means that, using the old sporting adage, it would appear that merely taking part, rather than necessarily winning, really does count (Cochrane et al 1996). This would appear to be borne out by Manchester's experience.

With hindsight, it is easy to espouse the value of the bidding process for Manchester's image, but there is evidence that if the initial ridicule surrounding the city's bid had endured, bidding for the Olympics could have exacerbated Manchester's alleged image problems. Rather than guaranteeing image enhancement, the bid could have reinforced Manchester's deficiencies to a large external audience. Manchester

countered this problem, in part, by promoting the Olympic bids as a national bid, rather than a bid merely by the city itself. If this alleged concentration on the national was representative of the content and objectives of the bid, this must question the potential benefits that could be accrued at the city scale. However, in reality this orientation towards the national scale was a smokescreen to convince the IOC, and particularly a benevolent government, of the legitimacy and value of the Manchester bid. In reality, the application to host the Games simply constituted an initiative to benefit Manchester, with the city the sole recipient of any image rewards, as well as any negative image effects.

Retrospective reviews of media coverage suggest that the potential for such negativity was very real. During the bidding process, Manchester was subjected to a substantial degree of scepticism about the city's ability to attract the Games. A typical example is given below:

It is July 27 1996. The crowd in the huge stadium is hushed; the flame is lit; the games of the XXVI Olympiad are about to begin. In which of the world's great cities are we? Are we in Athens, where the modern Olympics began exactly 100 years before? Or Atlanta, Belgrade, Melbourne or Toronto?. Or are we perchance on the banks of the Manchester Ship Canal, just upwind of the Davyhulme Sewage works hard by Barton Locks where the sludge boat used to dock at a spot with the charismatic name of Dumplington?.....And then there is the fact that Manchester is well dear old Manchester.....IOC members are still unlikely to be won over by tours of Higher Crumpsall, Droylsden in the drizzle and the pavement cafes of Bury New Rd.

The Guardian 29/12/89

Comments such as those above were typical of the attitude towards the 1996 bid and were accompanied by light-hearted, but potentially damaging, accounts surmising that if the event were to be staged in Manchester 'The Olympic flame will be ignited by a petrol bomb thrown by a native of the city' and that the events would include a modern pentathlon comprising 'mugging, breaking and entering, flashing, joy-riding and arson' (appendix y). However, by the time Manchester's 2000 bid was rejected by the IOC, perceptions had seemingly altered. Manchester's elongated Olympic candidacy, involving eight years of bidding activity, meant that the media had been

given time to get used to the idea of a Manchester Olympiad. Combined with the reality rather than the promise of new investment and facilities, this resulted in the widespread assumption that Manchester had emerged triumphantly from the bidding process (Law 1994). One objective of the present study is to explore and provide empirical evidence to assess the validity of such assumptions.

5.2.5 The Olympic legacy

The bids for the Olympic Games, despite being ultimately unsuccessful have altered Manchester's physical landscape, in that they have directly spawned two 'prestige' projects in the city. The first and largest of these is the Arena located by the city's Victoria Railway Station. The idea for an indoor arena in Manchester was originally conceived in 1989 when Victoria Railway Station was identified as a potential development site for an office development and a small indoor sports centre (Manchester City Council 1996). However, the initial concept was developed when the Arena was apportioned £35 million from the government grant awarded to the city as part of the Olympic bidding process. A further £35 million was contributed via other central and local government grants and from funds provided by Bovis North and Vector Investments (Manchester City Council 1996). The Arena was opened in July 1995 and accommodates 19,500 people, making it Europe's largest multi-purpose indoor entertainment and sport facility.

The Arena has made an important contribution to the city's sporting pedigree in that it has been responsible for introducing two sports relatively new to Manchester - basketball and ice hockey - via the resident Manchester Giants and Manchester Storm franchises. Though the centrality of the centre and its excellent transport links are appreciated, the centre has not been immune to criticism. For example, Deyan Sudjic, after questioning the architectural pedigree of some of Manchester's proposed Olympic buildings, states 'The Victoria Arena, also under construction next to the city's Victoria Station is not much more impressive' (Guardian 6/9/93). As has been argued in previous sections, architectural design may influence city image by providing 'imageable' elements of the urban environment (Lynch 1960). Therefore the maligned and supposedly unimaginative design may well reduce the arena's

capacity to infiltrate the tourist imagination. As has been explained previously, the success of prestige projects in infiltrating perceptions of cities relies on them becoming significant landmarks (Lynch 1960). It would certainly appear that Manchester hoped that the projects spawned by the Olympic bid would become important landmarks for the city. This is exemplified by the City Council statement that the new Victoria Arena constitutes 'One of Manchester's newest 21st century landmarks' (Manchester City Council 1996:43).

Alongside the Victoria Arena, the Olympic bid has resulted in one other facility operational at the time the fieldwork for the present study was completed - the National Cycling Centre (NCC) or as it is commonly known, Manchester Velodrome. The Velodrome was developed as a joint venture between the Sports Council, Manchester City Council and the British Cycling Federation and opened in September 1994 as the first part of the proposed Sportcity project at Eastlands (see appendix w). It was funded by various Government grants totalling £9.5 million but is owned by the City Council and run by Manchester Velodrome Ltd. The centre itself houses a 250m cycling track, but also comprises a multi-functional sport facility with a seating capacity of 3,500. The Velodrome has hosted the 1996 World Cycling Championships, the World Sports Acrobatics Championships as well as various national and international cycling meetings.

Despite the centre providing unrestricted viewing for spectators, like the Victoria Arena, the design of the NCC has been chastised for its conservative architectural style. A particularly critical piece appeared in the Guardian at the time of its construction, stating that the Velodrome comprises 'a rather less distinguished building that bears too many traces of the fact that it has been designed by an ill assorted team of architects and specialist consultants' (Guardian 6/9/93). Like the Victoria Arena this may restrict its potential to act as an 'imageable' element of the urban environment.

5.2.6 The Commonwealth Games

The development of the NCC and the Eastlands site is directly linked to Manchester's successful bid to stage the 2002 Commonwealth Games. The Games will run from the 26th July to 4th August 2002 and will involve the participation of more than 5,000 athletes from 71 countries. Further details of the Games and the proposed associated facilities are detailed in appendix x. It should be noted that subsequent analysis of the Games in the present study is confined to an evaluation of impacts procured by early publicity in the period from the announcement that the bid had been successful (1995) to the time that fieldwork was undertaken (1998).

It is interesting to examine the image-related motivations underpinning the Commonwealth Games bid, particularly as they illustrate Manchester's use of sport to enhance the different components of destination image. The rhetoric espoused by the City Council and associated Games agencies makes continual reference to the benefits of staging the Games in terms of enhancing Manchester's image. This is illustrated by the quotes included in Tables 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 which highlight the relevance of applying Echtner and Ritchie's (1991, 1993) theory that images of destinations include perceptions of specific certain attributes, and/or impressions of the location as a whole. Accordingly, the evidence in the tables below has been separated into that which extols envisaged attribute image benefits, enhancing the image of Manchester as a sporting destination (Table 5.2.1), and that which states that the event will enhance the holistic image of the city (Table 5.2.2). This categorisation reflects the conceptual framework utilised by the present study (see chapter 3).

Envisaged Attribute-Image Enhancement	
Evidence	Source
With the construction of the Manchester Swimming Complex underway we are guaranteed not only a first class venue...but one that will offer the city a prestigious venue for the 2002 Games, as well as enhancing our sporting infrastructure and adding further to Manchester's status as a sporting city	Councillor Richard Leese, leader of MCC c.f. Manchester 2002 Ltd (1998:1)
Together with other world class sporting events that the city will host over the next few years, [The Commonwealth Games] will truly put Manchester on the international sporting map	Manchester City Council 1996:81
The decision, announced on 3rd November to award the Commonwealth Games to Manchester in 2002, confirmed the renaissance of Manchester, both as a city of sport and a city of business.	Manchester City Council 1996:83
There can be few other regions in the world to match Greater Manchester for sporting prowess and achievement. Soccer, rugby, cricket, cycling, athletics and soon to host the prestigious 2002 Commonwealth Games	Marketing Manchester 1998:no page numbers
Manchester's reputation as a sporting capital has been enhanced still further since the city won the bid to host the XVII Commonwealth Games in 2002.	Manchester City Council (Undated-B)
The vote that makes Manchester England's candidate to stage the 2002 Commonwealth Games puts the city firmly on track to become Britain's northern sporting capital.	Guardian 3/2/94

Table 5.2.1 Evidence linking Manchester's Commonwealth Games strategy with attribute-based image enhancement

Envisaged Holistic Image Enhancement	
Evidence	Source
Despite an impressive history of innovation, the world's first industrial city has done little, until the early 1980s to shake off its industrial image. The Olympic and Commonwealth bids have changed all that.	Manchester City Council 1996:83
As well as an opportunity to develop world-class sport facilities, the biggest multi-sport event ever held in this country will also provide a boost for the region's identity.	Manchester 2002 Ltd 1998:6
The Commonwealth Games presents a real and very rare opportunity for England, Manchester and the NW to project a new and vibrant image based on the reality of resurgent urban centres, and wide ranging regional attractions, rather than the perceived declining industrial landscape.	Legacy 2002 Co-ordination Unit (undated): no page numbers
The huge investment in sport and cultural facilities, the winning of the bid to host the 2002 Commonwealth Games have all contributed towards Manchester's global reputation.	Manchester City Council 1998 (Undated -B)
There would be significant unmeasurable benefits from hosting the Games. These include the potential to attract new inward investment as a result of Manchester's enhanced image.	Manchester 2002 Ltd 1995:no pages
The Commonwealth Games will not only be a major sporting event which will be enjoyed by millions throughout the world, but the Games will also showcase both Manchester and Britain providing a lasting image.	T Blair c.f. Manchester 2002 Ltd 1998:3

Table 5.2.2 *Evidence linking Manchester's Commonwealth Games strategy with holistic image enhancement*

The evidence in Tables 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 suggests that one of the main motivations underpinning Manchester's 2002 Commonwealth Games strategy is image enhancement. Furthermore, the contents of Tables 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 suggest that the intention is to use the Games to develop both Manchester's holistic and attribute-based image. Table 5.2.1 suggests that Manchester does have ambitions to gain

repute as a sporting city and that sport reimagining is employed to achieve this objective. The implications of Table 5.2.2 are that Manchester sees sport reimagining as having the potential to shake off problematic industrial images with those that are 'new' and 'vibrant'. These connotations are mentioned in documents produced by the organisation responsible for the legacy of the Games (Legacy 2002 Co-ordination Unit undated:no page numbers) and the recent bid to the SRB Challenge Fund (Manchester 2002 Ltd & The 2002 NW Partnership Undated:12). Though it is dubious how 'new' associations with sport are to the city of Manchester, it will be interesting in subsequent chapters to consider the extent to which sport initiatives are interpreted as connoting 'newness' and 'vibrancy' and whether they can indeed eclipse enduring perceptions with industrial decline.

In contrast to the hyperbole promoted by the City Council and Commonwealth Games agencies above, there is concern among some commentators that the Games' relatively limited stature may not provide the most effective platform for image enhancement. Though it is too early to judge at the present time, precedents indicate that the image benefits resulting from the Commonwealth Games may be diluted by the perception of the Games as being significantly inferior to other large scale events, particularly the Olympics. For example, Cochrane et al (1996), state that 'Although Manchester will host the Commonwealth Games in 2002, this is a very poor consolation prize' (1996:1333). There is also concern that, like the World Student Games in Sheffield, the media, rather than espousing the many positive aspects of staging the Games, already appears to be concentrating on alleged financial difficulties. This is exemplified by recent headlines such as 'Manchester Seeks Cash For Games' (Guardian 3/2/99) and Cash Plea As City Faces Loss On Games' (Guardian 15/3/99). However, despite this negativity, some would argue that Manchester has already benefited from the successful Commonwealth Games bid, in that it enabled the city to assert its dominance over other rival cities. As Taylor et al affirm 'There was evidence of some despair in Sheffield in February 1994 when Manchester beat Sheffield, quite easily, in the process of selection of a UK city to bid for the Commonwealth Games' (Taylor et al 1996:79).

5.2.7 The intended recipients of sport reimagining

The evidence outlined above suggests both the Olympic bids and the projects they have spawned can be legitimately considered reimagining strategies. In identifying the target markets for this reimagining, there appears to have been a concerted effort to court the business sector. Law states that as a result of Manchester's Olympic strategy, the City rose nine places to eighth in an annual survey asking European businessmen to rank different cities according to their attractiveness as business locations (Law 1994:230). In addition to attracting footloose industries, Cochrane et al (1996) suggest that the Olympic strategy appeared to be mobilised, at least in part, to promote a new and impressive image of local government. Therefore, the imagery promoted also appears to have been aimed internally at the residents of the city. Indeed, Cochrane et al state that an objective of the strategy appears to have been to instigate a process where 'old images of municipal welfarist (bureaucratic) politics were replaced by those of a dynamic and charismatic (entrepreneurial) business leadership' (1996:1321). This concurs with Harvey's assertion that civic boosterism activities are synonymous with the shift from managerialist to entrepreneurial urban governance (1989b).

Despite targeting businesses and residents, there are indications that Manchester has adopted a sport-led strategy to address tourist images of the city. This includes developing Manchester's reputation as a sport destination to attract sport tourists. As Hughes (1993:161) identifies, the new Olympic facilities such as the Velodrome and the new Arena 'offer the prospect of sports tourism' as they 'could be tourist attractions in their own right' (1993:161). However, as Hughes rightly points out, though sport tourism will obviously be beneficial for the city, ensuring tourism makes a significant contribution to Manchester's regeneration depends on developing extensive long-term tourist flows.

In the Commonwealth Games Bid Document (Commonwealth Games Bid Ltd 1995), the benefits for Manchester's tourist image are very clearly stated. This document states that one of the main benefits of staging the Games will be the 'Potential to

attract new inward investment as a result of Manchester's enhanced image' (1995:no page numbers). This inward investment is to be obtained from 'enhanced visitor numbers and spending resulting from increased awareness of Manchester' (Commonwealth Games Bid Ltd 1995:no page numbers). Therefore the organisers of the Games presume and expect the Games to enhance external perceptions of Manchester, with the city's image as a tourist destination given explicit consideration. This is further emphasised in the SRB application document, which states that the Games will 'transmit a new and vibrant image' which will 'link with and support trade, inward investment and tourism strategies' (Manchester 2002 Ltd and The 2002 NW Partnership Undated:12). Therefore, image objectives are once again linked explicitly to potential tourism benefits. In summing up the potential legacy of the Games, the NW partnership states that they expect to achieve: 'Increased awareness of the NW, its commercial, cultural, sporting and tourism products' (Manchester 2002 Ltd and The 2002 NW Partnership Undated:21). This reaffirms Manchester's commitment to enhancing the image of the constituent parts of the tourism product, as well as enhancing holistic images of the city.

5.2.8 Indications of success

Although there appears to have been little research that attempts to assess empirically the image benefits of Manchester's Olympic strategy, commentators have made assumptions about the success of the initiatives as vehicles of reimagining. Cochrane et al (1996) assert that the Olympics in Manchester has been a key aspect of the city's place marketing and that the Olympic strategy has resulted in Manchester becoming 'Britain's great success story in Europe's place-marketing games' (1996:1321). This attestation reflects a general feeling that Manchester has managed to enhance its image via the Olympic strategy. The tone of Law's summary of the Millennium Olympic Games bid is very positive in terms of the image benefits generated, concluding that that the 'championing of Manchester via the Olympic bid has been near inspirational' (1994:230). Unsurprisingly, the city itself obviously asserts that the Olympic strategy has been a success in terms of image enhancement. In 1995 (Commonwealth Games Bid Ltd 1995:no page numbers), Commonwealth Games Bid Ltd stated;

Manchester's international profile has been boosted immeasurably over recent years by its bids to host the 1996, 2000 Olympics and the 2002 Commonwealth Games. Independent analysis showed that in 1993 the city was receiving ten times more attention from the world's press than any other UK regional city.

The overriding purpose of subsequent sections of this thesis is to assess whether this exposure has resulted in image benefits that can be justified empirically.

5.2.9 Summary

In examining the strategy implemented in Manchester, it is possible to conclude that image considerations have been an important motivation for, and justification of, the sport initiatives adopted. It is appropriate to interpret Manchester's initiatives as an attempt to enhance the image of the city as a whole and as means of developing the city's sporting reputation. These two objectives are intrinsically related, for as Hughes affirms, Manchester's Olympic initiatives may have increased the city's share of the sport tourism market, as well as encouraging 'a flow of tourists unconnected directly with the Olympics' (1993:160). Realistically, in addition to the development of a sporting image, and to justify the expense incurred, Manchester's sport strategy needs to result in a more general enhancement of the city's image.

Manchester's initiatives may have procured this wide-ranging impact because of the symbolic power of the Olympic Games. The city provides a fascinating case-study as the focus of the strategy and the catalyst for the development of individual initiatives was an unsuccessful bid. Although Manchester's association with the Olympic Games has a tangible legacy in the facilities that were developed as part of the bid, any significant holistic image enhancement resulting from the Olympic strategy would seem to require consumers to associate the city with an event that never took place there. Cochrane et al consider that Manchester may have been successful because its 'Olympic strategy was both populist and popular' and because it has 'been able to mobilise both capital and people around glossy images of success' (1996:1321). The promotional imagery stimulated by the Olympic strategy, may therefore have generated enough symbolic capital for the city to engender wide-ranging effects.

However, ultimately the success of Manchester's reimagining depends on the congruence between the encoding and decoding of the sport initiatives. Manchester's Olympic strategy is saturated in imagery relating to the return of the city to its former role as a prominent world-leader. The intention appears to be to evoke connotations of progression and ambition and the extent to which this message is interpreted in this manner will be evaluated in chapter 8 of the present study.

5.3 Sheffield

5.3.1 Sheffield's sport initiatives

Sheffield's strategy, like those adopted by Birmingham and Manchester has centred on one specific mega-event. However, unlike Manchester and Birmingham, the event that formed the focus of Sheffield's sport strategy, the biennial World Student Games (WSG), actually took place. Sheffield was successful in securing the British nomination for the 1991 Games, beating among others, Manchester, and during 1986-7 the city bid successfully to stage the event. This successful bid was seen as 'the crowning glory in the campaign to boost the national and international image of Sheffield' (ABCC 1989 c.f. Loftman and Nevin 1996:1003), emphasising the importance of image justification for this strategic initiative. Despite problems financing the £147 million needed to develop various new sport facilities, in July 1991 Sheffield hosted the WSG. This sport mega-event consisted of eleven different sports, lasted 12 days, and involved 7,000 competitors from 130 nations in sixty different sport venues located in Sheffield and surrounding areas. The WSG and the facilities it spawned constituted a major investment by Sheffield City Council, who aimed to utilise the Games as a sport-led approach to the city's revitalisation. Specific details of these new facilities are detailed below. The argument articulated here is that the city expected a return from its investment in terms of city image enhancement.

5.3.2 *The WSG facilities*

Although numerous improvements were made to Sheffield's sporting infrastructure, three main facilities were developed to stage the WSG - Sheffield Arena, Ponds Forge International Sports Centre and the Don Valley Stadium. An introduction to these new facilities is given below, before their envisaged effects on Sheffield's image are considered.

Sheffield Arena, which opened in 1991, was built at a cost of £34 million and is located in the Don Valley, an area that suffered markedly as a result of the decline of Sheffield's steel industry. The Arena constituted an essential part of the infrastructure for the 1991 WSG, and has since been used to stage a number of national and international sport events, as well as a variety of concerts, exhibitions, shows and conventions. The Arena can seat 12,000 spectators and in 1994, paid admissions for events totalled 880,000 (Heeley 1995). The presence of in-situ ice floor has enabled ice hockey to flourish in the city, predominantly in the form of the highly successful Sheffield Steelers ice hockey team.

The distinctive Don Valley Stadium is situated close to Sheffield Arena in the East of the City. The centrepiece of the World Student Games, this 25,000 capacity stadium cost £25 million to build, and has a distinctive architectural style, dominated by white stretched membrane covering the stands and a tubular steel structure. The cost of the stadium was largely met by Sheffield City Council, although a £4.75m grant was awarded by central government (Loftman and Nevin 1996). The original intention was to attract one or both of the city's football teams to the Don Valley, but this has not materialised. Instead the Don Valley stadium became the home of Sheffield Eagles Rugby League Football Club, who had previously been forced to play their games outside the city boundaries. The new surroundings provided a crucial impetus for the club, who prior to the move had been unsuccessful and little known. The stadium boasts an eight-lane 400m athletics track and in addition to hosting the WSG, has staged prestigious annual IAAF Grand Prix meetings.

Unlike the Arena and the Don Valley Stadium, Ponds Forge International Sports Centre was developed in Sheffield city centre. As its name implies, the complex was built on the site of a former industrial works. The £51 million Centre includes a Olympic standard swimming and diving pool, a leisure pool and a multi-functional indoor sports hall. Since its use as a venue for the 1991 WSG swimming events, the Centre has hosted several prestigious international swimming meetings, including the 1996 World Swimming Masters and the 1993 European Swimming Championships. The indoor arena provided at Ponds Forge has also provided a base for Sheffield's basketball club, the Sheffield Sharks.

5.3.3 Sheffield's sport reimagining: A deliberate and co-ordinated strategy?

In 1989, a joint paper between the Council Departments of Employment and Economic Development, Recreation and the City Treasury set out a strategy for the development of Sheffield as a centre for sport and leisure. Therefore post-1989, Sheffield has explicitly championed sport as a means of urban renewal and civic boosterism. In Birmingham and Manchester, the new sport facilities can be analysed as separate entities from the events, which spawned them. In Sheffield, the new facilities (detailed above) were all opened between September 1990 and June 1991, culminating in the World Student Games held in July of that year. Therefore, although the initiatives in Birmingham and Manchester were integrated, the Sheffield sport projects should be considered to be an unified project. Indeed, the planning for the WSG stated that 'the facilities are integrally linked with the Universiade and their image and identity will be associated with the Games for years to come' (Sheffield City Council 1990b:Addendum).

5.3.4 The World Student Games strategy and image enhancement

There is much evidence that the World Student Games strategy constituted an attempt by the City Council to promote a deliberately conceived representation of the city, in order to enhance its external image. However, in attempting to articulate city image motives, it is noticeable that interpretations of what actually constitutes city image are not entirely consistent. In some instances the term image appears to be used

simultaneously to refer to profile raising and genuine image enhancement. In the case of Sheffield's sport initiatives there certainly appears to have been a desire to enhance external awareness of the city. The Games were an attempt to give the city a new profile, which would supposedly be achieved 'through the world-wide exposure which the Games will ensure' (Universiade GB Ltd undated:12). Statements by Peter Price, the deputy leader of Sheffield City Council confirmed that there existed an expectation that the Games would provide much needed exposure. Prior to the Games, Price admitted that 'We were desperately looking for something to set Sheffield back on the international map' (Observer 26/3/89). However, supplementing this profiling objective was the specified ambition to change perceptions of the city as a whole. This dual objective is confirmed by a document stating that the WSG was justified in terms of improving the city's international image and exposure' (SCC 1990:13 c.f. Loftman and Nevin 1996:1003). This envisaged holistic image enhancement is discussed below.

5.3.5 Holistic image enhancement

The 1991 WSG should be interpreted largely as a place marketing initiative, as it aimed to enhance the holistic image of the city. According to Goodwin, the WSG involved the 'deliberate strategy of leisure led regeneration working not through the employment potential of the Games themselves, but via the enhanced image of the city that they would present' (Goodwin 1993:154). This interpretation is confirmed by evidence from the WSG Economic Impact Studies produced by Sheffield City Council. One of these reports completed before the Games stated that 'One of the expected desirable effects of the World Student Games programme is the contribution that such a major sporting event and the building of the facilities will have on the effort to create a new image of the city' (Sheffield City Council 1989). Therefore the City Council 'expected' both the WSG itself and the new facilities to promote a 'new' image of Sheffield. The expectation that the sport facilities - as well as merely the WSG itself- would result in image enhancement is confirmed by further evidence. In a subsequent edition of the Economic Impact Study, Sheffield City Council states that these new facilities would contribute economical and social benefits including 'improving the name and image of the city' (Sheffield City Council 1990a:4).

Bramwell reaffirms these holistic image intentions by stating that; 'it was hoped the Games event itself would prompt favourable media interest, promote positive images of Sheffield and be a symbol of the city's regeneration' (1997a:170). However, Bramwell suggests that these objectives were not fully articulated and that the City Council did not know how the envisaged holistic image enhancement would be procured. Despite the lack of formal acknowledgement, much of the rhetoric surrounding the WSG strategy implies that the City Council felt the WSG could promote Sheffield as a progressive, ambitious city. Local media coverage at the time appears to confirm this envisaged symbolic role, for example one article stated, 'If you spend a few hours walking around the new [sports] sites you will find it hard not to be impressed by the level of commitment and progress. The city has a whole new image to it, changing from a city of the past to a city of the future' (Sheffield City Press 20/11/89). An article in the Yorkshire Post interpreted the WSG in a similar manner, asserting that 'The bid to stage the WSG in Sheffield was a bold, imaginative and daring strike to lift a crippled steel city from the ashes of industrial decay and propel it towards a new future' (Yorkshire Post 5/6/90a). This supposed capacity to communicate notions of renaissance, progress and ambition is a recurring interpretation of the wider role of the WSG initiatives.

The apparent desire to use the Games itself to connote a new era for the city is reflected in official rhetoric surrounding the supposed impacts of the Games and the associated new facilities. Bradley quotes the Head of the Planning Strategy (Sheffield City Council) as remarking that the Don Valley Stadium 'rising on the site of a former steel works in the emerging East End park is a symbol of Sheffield's strategy to harness the growth in leisure to combat industrial decline' (Bradley 1990:8, c.f. Goodwin 1993:154). Therefore the new sport facilities appear to have been conceived, in part, as symbols, encoded with the intention of representing Sheffield's renaissance. The conceptual framework employed by the present study suggests that holistic images can be procured not only through these symbolic connotations, but via metonymic processes. The intention to use the sport initiatives as metonymic symbols of the city is perhaps best illustrated by the statements made by representatives of Sheffield City Council's Regeneration Committee. These Council members stressed

the pertinence of the images presented by the old and new Don Valley, comparing the former corridors of blazing steel with the lights of the new athletics stadium (Goodwin 1993:154). The considerable evidence linking the WSG initiatives with holistic image enhancement, whether it be through symbolic or metonymic imagery, is summarised in Table 5.3.1.

Envisaged Holistic Image Enhancement	
Evidence	Source
The Games still has the potential to be a great boost for our city, for its economy, for its image nationally and internationally and for the future quality of life for Sheffield citizens (Norman Adsetts)	Sheffield Partnership Ltd
Long after the Student Games are over, the world class venues we are providing will enable us to attract major sporting events, with all the benefits that will bring to the city and its image (Peter Price Deputy Leader Sheffield City Council, chairman GB Universiade).	The Times (8/2/90)
The city has a whole new image to it, changing from a city of the past to a city of the future'	Sheffield City Press (20/11/89)
Tourists who will be attracted by ...the enhanced reputation which the city will gain through the worldwide exposure which the Games will ensure.	Universiade GB Ltd (undated):12
There are 3 other areas to which the facilities will contribute economical and social benefits 3) Improving the name and image of the city	Sheffield City Council (1990a:4)
One of the expected desirable effects of the World Student Games programme is the contribution that such a major sporting event and the building of the facilities will have on the effort to create a new image of the city	Sheffield City Council (1989:18)
The wider benefits of the Games and facilities includes the enhancement of the city's image	Sheffield City Council (1993:35)

Table 5.3.1 Evidence linking Sheffield's WSG strategy with holistic image enhancement

5.3.6 *Attribute-based image as a sporting venue*

The evidence outlined above suggests that the WSG strategy was an attempt to boost the image of Sheffield in general. However, as in Birmingham, there is evidence that Sheffield also aimed to enhance its image and reputation more specifically, as a sporting city. Peter Price, deputy leader of the City Council and chairman of Universiade, stated during the preparations for the Games that he wanted to make Sheffield into Britain's city of sport, an ambition that persists to the present day. This is best illustrated by the city's use of the appellation 'National City of Sport' on advertisements, promotional literature and merchandise. The Sports Council bestowed this accolade on the city, and in its promotional literature the city makes continual references to the fact that it was the first city to be awarded this status. Reassuringly, in 1996, research funded by the City Council revealed that residents welcomed this use of this accolade as a means of representing the city (Destination Sheffield and Sheffield Events Unit 1996). Amongst residents asked to select their preferred city marketing slogan from five suggested, the most popular was 'the city of sport' (24.4%), suggesting the city's image and identity may be reassuringly congruent. However, Sheffield's attitude to its sporting image is exemplified by a strange mix of cynicism and defensiveness. This latter attitude is summed up by a recent article in a local newspaper entitled 'retaining its hard-earned title' where it is stated that 'the city's top sporting position remains unchallenged because we have all the facilities' (Sheffield Telegraph 16/4/99:6). Whatever the views of its own residents, the city authorities have committed themselves to promoting Sheffield as a sport venue to the sport world. In the wake of the WSG, the city has used its new facilities to stage an annual calendar of major sport events. It is apparent that the city has made a concerted effort to gain renown as a sporting venue. Accordingly, a summary of the evidence linking the WSG initiatives with attribute-based image enhancement is summarised in Table 5.3.2.

Envisaged Attribute-Image Enhancement	
Evidence	Source
The World Student Games will also provide Sheffield with an important new product (to go alongside its famous steel and cutlery reputation) as it becomes a premier sporting venue. (Barrie E Smith President Sheffield Chamber of Commerce)	Letter to The Times 17/1/91
With the city being established as a national and international venue for sport, and with its range of high quality leisure opportunities, the city will be established as a leading destination attraction.	Pickering Torkildsen Consultancy Report c.f Price (1991:6)
The most important single factor in the future marketing of Sheffield as a sports city is the mounting of a successful Universiade.	Dr John Heeley Director of Tourism c.f. Price (1991)
Key images to be projected: Sheffield as the City of Sport	Destination Sheffield Limited (1995:19)
The city would be a world leader in terms of sporting facilities and international sporting events (Derek Casey Director of National Services, Sports Council)	Yorkshire Post (5/6/90b)
The facilities give the city the chance to secure a place on the international sporting map.	The Times (11/9/90)
We want to make Sheffield into Britain's city of sport (Peter Price Deputy Leader Sheffield City Council, chairman GB Universiade).	The Times (8/2/90)

Table 5.3.2 Evidence linking Sheffield's WSG strategy with attribute-based image enhancement

5.3.7 Problems that may detract from image enhancement

City image considerations were very important in the design of, and justifications for Sheffield's sport-led strategy. However, commentators have recognised two major problems concerning the Games that may have adversely affected these imaging objectives. First, though 'it was hoped the Games event itself would prompt favourable media interest, promote positive images' (Bramwell 1997a:170), it could be argued that much of the media coverage of the event was at best sceptical and at worst critical and negative. Unfortunately, the city's protracted financial problems in the period prior to the Games proved to be the media focus in the period leading up to the Games with headlines such as 'Fund Launched To Save Games From Disaster' (Daily Telegraph 24/4/90), 'Student Games Organisers Admit Mistakes' (Times 31/1/90), 'Sheffield Appears To Have Little Hope Of Balancing The Books', and 'Sheffield Counts The Cost' (Daily Telegraph 3/1/91), typical of the coverage. Such negativity can not have assisted Sheffield City Council's intention to use the WSG to develop Sheffield's image.

The second problem relates to a widespread perception that the World Student Games did not possess the status, particularly in the UK, to provide a vehicle for image enhancement. The most damaging aspect of this attitude was the reluctance of television companies to broadcast coverage of the Games, exacerbating public apathy and ignorance of the WSG. Though limited coverage was transmitted on local and satellite television, these broadcasts did not generate the envisaged revenues or exposure. The Games organisers had relied on significant funds being generated from the sales of rights and advertising. However, more importantly, the failure to secure broadcasting agreements meant that Sheffield did not experience the widespread TV exposure needed to facilitate the desired image effects. Therefore Sheffield's sport reimagining has been restricted by the limited media exposure generated at the time of the Games and because much of the coverage that was forthcoming tended to focus on the financial implications of staging the event and constructing the new facilities.

5.3.8 Sporting initiatives and tourist images

Although it would appear that Sheffield's WSG strategy was motivated by image considerations, it is important to ascertain the target audience of this imagery. From the evidence provided by the City Council and associated WSG organisations, it would appear that the intention was to influence the perceptions held by the general public as well as promoting the city as a sporting venue to attract the attention of sport spectators and administrators. This attitude is illustrated by the pre-Games statement by the City Council that 'there is an awareness in the sporting and media world of the WSG facilities and it is expected that this will extend to the general public' (Sheffield City Council 1989:20). The Games organisers did extol specific intentions to enhance tourist images of the city and Sheffield appears to have placed more emphasis on tourism in its sport reimagining than Birmingham and Manchester. The organisation with the responsibility for developing tourism in Sheffield in the post-Games period was Destination Sheffield Limited. This public/private sector partnership was actually formed as a result of the WSG and its stated mission was to generate and develop sustainable visitor business for Sheffield by creating positive images and attitudes in order to increase the wealth of the city (Destination Sheffield 1995). Destination Sheffield Ltd attempted to meet these image related objectives by capitalising specifically on the WSG sport initiatives.

In 1989, to enable the tourism potential of the Games to be assessed, the City Council employed the services of a consultancy firm, Coopers and Lybrand. The conclusion of their report states that 'the outstanding sporting facilities under construction must be viewed as a prime vehicle in future tourism development and in establishing a more contemporary image for the city, both nationally and internationally' (Coopers and Lybrand 1989 c.f. Sheffield City Council 1990b:70). Indeed, the mere fact that the city commissioned a tourism analysis confirms the fact that the Council expected tourism benefits to accrue from the WSG strategy. These envisaged benefits are also articulated in the Pre-Games Economic Impact Study (Sheffield City Council 1990a). The event itself was obviously expected to attract visitors, but the new facilities were also earmarked to play an important role in Sheffield's new-found interest in tourism.

The Council report states that 'the new sports/leisure and cultural facilities are expected to make an important contribution to the development of the tourism industry in Sheffield' (Sheffield City Council 1990a). This objective was reaffirmed in a statement in June of 1990 which stated that 'the facilities themselves are accorded a key role in the overall development of tourism in Sheffield' (Sheffield City Council 1990b:addendum). Though the attraction of sport spectators to the WSG and subsequent events were considered to be important, the Council clearly envisaged that there would be 'wider tourism benefits through the provision of a critical mass of attractions' (Sheffield City Council 1990b). These statements were based on the results of a report produced by consultants appointed under the Joint Development Initiative with the ETB. Projections for visitors and infrastructure impacts of the new facilities were prepared, emphasising the fact that tourism was considered to be an important part of the WSG strategy.

In the immediate aftermath of the Games, the tourism benefits were once again articulated. The Council reports (without any tangible justification) that 'in addition to the direct impact of visitors, the Games has acted as a catalyst for the wider development of tourism in the city' (Sheffield City Council 1993:36). The City Council construes these tourism benefits as resulting from the increased potential to attract event spectators and from the promotional opportunities provided by the new initiatives. Indeed, the City Council reaffirms their faith in the promotional capacity of the sport initiatives by stating that 'the event [WSG] and the facilities are being used extensively in marketing the city' (1993:36). Therefore after the Games the Council reaffirmed their desire to use the WSG as a means of generating and promoting urban tourism. However, despite the apparent commitment to tourism and tourist images, Bramwell suggests that 'there was no clear view of how the World Student Games facilities could help the city's tourism industry' (1993:17). As Bramwell recognises, during the planning of the WSG and in the immediate aftermath of the Games, there was no strategic plan that outlined 'specific objectives and precise mechanisms' that would ensure tourism benefits (1997a:170). The lack of strategic and comprehensive planning for tourism leads Bramwell to conclude that the World Student Games provided tourism products for the city which arose 'from opportunism rather than strategic tourism planning' (Bramwell 1993:18).

Although a considerable period of time has now elapsed since the staging of the WSG, the use of the sport initiatives as vehicles for tourism development in Sheffield has continued throughout the 1990s. Recent proposals for the utilisation of the WSG initiatives certainly appear to be more comprehensive and planned than their antecedents. For example, Destination Sheffield's city promotion and tourism marketing strategy (1995) employs an 'events led' approach where city events are used as a focus for attracting visitors and promoting the city. Sports events appear to dominate this strategy, with the 1997 Grand Prix Athletics, Euro 96 football and the 1996 World Swimming Masters used as examples of the new provision of short break packages for spectators. The city's latest wider tourism strategy (1995) also exemplifies the WSG sport facilities as a tourist attractions and promotional tools. One of the two broad strategic objectives in this plan comprises 'those related to improvements in the city's image' (Destination Sheffield 1995:13). Sport is apportioned a major role in securing this image enhancement. The plan identifies four assets that are to be given particular prominence in the city and tourism promotion. The first of these is 'The new sport and leisure facilities, such as the Arena, Ponds Forge and Don Valley Stadium.' (Destination Sheffield 1995:15). Therefore Sheffield's current tourism strategy aims to use the facilities associated with the WSG to promote tourism within the city. This commitment to sport-based tourism promotion is reaffirmed by the statement later in the Strategy where 'Sheffield as the City of Sport' is among the 'key images to be promoted' (Destination Sheffield 1995:19). In promotional material, Sheffield is presented to tourists via four main themes, 'city in a country setting', 'centre of learning', 'leisure capital' and 'National City of Sport'. This latter theme is based on the promise that Sheffield is home to 'Britain's best array of international sports venues and a thriving sport infrastructure' (Destination Sheffield 1998:2). Therefore the intention to use the sport facilities constructed in the early 1990s for the WSG to promote tourism in the city has been realised. However, it remains unclear the extent to which they have been successful in promoting Sheffield as a sport tourism city and, more generally, as an attractive urban destination.

5.3.9 *Indications of success*

According to Sheffield City Council, the success of the Games and the new facilities in changing the image of Sheffield 'will in the long term show in how far their projected visitor attraction and spin-off benefits materialise' (Sheffield City Council 1990a:80). According to this rudimentary rationale, one way of indicating the success of the sport initiatives as vehicles for tourist image enhancement, is to analyse the number of visitors attracted to the sport facilities and to the events that have been staged at these new venues. A report outlining the economic impact of sport events in Sheffield from 1990-97 illustrates that the city has attracted a great number of visitors to the city via sport-related activities (Kronos 1997). This research claims that 495,000 additional visits have been made to Sheffield for sport events since 1990, not including the WSG itself, generating additional expenditure of £26.4m in the city's economy (Kronos 1997:2). These figures are based on the impact of the 300 sport events that have been staged in Sheffield since the appointment of a Major Events Organiser in 1990. Therefore, through its new-found capacity to stage and attract major sport events, Sheffield has brought a significant number of extra visitors in to the city. However, these numbers do not necessarily indicate the circulation of more positive images among potential tourists. This is particularly pertinent when addressing special events, as visitors may have come to a city for an occasion regardless of their perceptions of the host city.

Although the author is unaware of research that addresses the external perceptions of potential tourists who may never have been to Sheffield, research based on visitor images elicited at the destination does exist (Destination Sheffield and Sheffield Events Unit 1996). In this research, carried out in a period during which the city hosted two major sport events (Euro 96 and the World Swimming Masters), it is apparent that the city is perceived very favourably in terms of its attribute-based image as a sporting venue. In the study, 92.8% rated Ponds Forge Swimming Complex as good or very good for visitors, while 91.1% perceived Sheffield Arena in the same manner (Destination Sheffield and Sheffield Events Unit 1996:20). Furthermore, 91.1% agreed or agreed strongly that the major sport facilities had made Sheffield a

much more attractive place for visitors, with 84.4% holding the same view with regard to the city's provision of major sport events (Destination Sheffield and Sheffield Events Unit 1996:22). The report interprets these results as evidence that 'Sheffield's investment in new sports facilities and sport event programmes has improved the city's image as a tourist destination' (Destination Sheffield and Sheffield Events Unit 1996). However, as the research recognises, the participants in this research had already decided to visit Sheffield and so were 'probably relatively likely to view it positively' (Destination Sheffield and Sheffield Events Unit 1996:2). Accordingly, images of Sheffield and its sporting attributes may be exaggerated somewhat. The present study will overcome these problems by questioning respondents away from the city of Sheffield. A final observation from the visitor study commissioned by Destination Sheffield and Sheffield Events Unit, is that among visitors who were experiencing the city for the first time, a large proportion (65.6%) indicated they now had more positive images of Sheffield as a result of their visit (1996). This finding may have implications for the success of sport-based reimagining. Sport events may provide the impetus for first time visitors to come to Sheffield who, according to this research leave with improved images. The result is indirect image enhancement prompted by the sport initiatives but not entirely driven by them.

More tenuous evidence of success is provided by the WSG Economic Impact Study (Sheffield City Council 1993) which assumes tentatively that the imaging objectives of the WSG had been achieved two years after the Games. This is best exemplified by the statement that, 'The wider benefits of the Games and facilities includes the enhancement of the city's image' (Sheffield City Council 1993:35). However, no evidence is given to substantiate this statement and the present study attempts to address this deficiency. Further identification of resultant imaging/marketing success was perhaps prematurely announced by the City Council even before the WSG had been staged. The City Council in 1990 reported that, 'within Britain, Sheffield's profile has already been raised by media coverage of the Universiade preparations' (Sheffield City Council 1990a:48).

In terms of image enhancement, one of the benefits of sport events and facilities is that they can generate exposure and publicity in the media. The popularity and exposure devoted to sport suggests that imaging based on a sporting theme can generate favourable media coverage, without resorting to overt advertising and promotional activities. Rather than comprising attempted image enhancement based on the manipulation of 'induced images' (Gunn 1988), sport imaging may enable cities to develop potential tourist's organic city images. Gartner (1993) sees such 'autonomous' agents of image change as particularly effective and sport reimagining in Sheffield would appear to have resulted in the generation of such agents. Table 5.3.3 below, illustrates the number of times Sheffield was in the national newspapers in March/April of the year 1995 (Clippability 1995 c.f. Heeley 1995:6). As can be seen, sport is the primary mechanism for generating 'real' news about Sheffield and therefore at this particular time can be said to have been its most potent autonomous image formation agent. Whether the imagery has been accepted by the consumers of this news is yet to be acknowledged. However, the indications are that for potential tourists it was the most widespread source of information about Sheffield and therefore constitutes a theme most likely to have influenced organic images of the city.

Theme	Positive Mentions
Sport	1,084
Entertainment/Arts	569
Economy	304
Business/Industry	307
Education	141
Health	126
Politics	106
Crime/Law	262

Table 5.3.3 *The number of times and the reasons why Sheffield appeared in the news in March/April of the year 1995 (Clippability 1995 c.f. Heeley 1995:6).*

Summary

As several commentators acknowledge, preparations for Sheffield's World Student Games did not follow normative procedures (Roche 1992, Bramwell 1997a). In the same way that Birmingham's sporting strategy followed the implementation of initiatives (rather than vice versa), Sheffield's strategy evolved retrospectively (Bramwell 1997a). Despite the initial lack of detailed plans, there is enough evidence to suggest that the city did expect the WSG and the new facilities to enhance the image of Sheffield and to provide an important impetus for the city's tourism industry. Nevertheless, exactly how this was to be achieved was not clearly articulated in the planning of the strategy. In recent years sport has remained Sheffield's most prominent vehicle for city imaging. This focus has been supported by more coherent and comprehensive strategic planning, locating the new sport facilities and event programmes within comprehensive tourism and city promotion strategies. In considering Sheffield's attempts to use sport as a vehicle for image enhancement, it is again useful to apply the conceptual framework outlined in chapter 3. It would appear that sport initiatives have been used in Sheffield to enhance visitor's perceptions of the city as a sport tourism destination. It will therefore be interesting to note the way in which the city is now perceived as a sporting venue (see chapter 7). However, there is also evidence that the initiatives are envisaged as contributing to way in which the destination is presented and perceived as a general city destination. Certainly, the WSG strategy has been used to present a conceived space encoded in imagery. The initiatives implemented were employed to symbolise Sheffield's progression, renaissance and to transcend traditional industrial representations of the city. Therefore the present study will also examine whether the general public have decoded these attempts to influence holistic images in the manner intended (chapter 8).

5.4 Overall Summary

The preceding analysis confirms that each of the three case study cities have adopted sport-led strategies as vehicles for reimagining. Each has attempted to alter the way in

which they are perceived by potential investors, including tourists, by presenting new spectacles and urban spaces saturated with imagery. Furthermore, the apparent employment of events that never actually happened for reimagining purposes has been observed. Such activities add credence to the views of some social commentators who note the contemporary prevalence and dominance of symbols and myths over meanings derived from material signifiers (see section 2.1). However, though it is valid to consider both the symbolic and tangible initiatives detailed in this chapter as reimagining strategies, the evidence provided in this chapter suggests that generally they were not coherent, unified strategic initiatives resulting from a meticulous planning process. In Birmingham and Sheffield the sport strategies have evolved retrospectively, with subsequent strategic planning employed to enable existing facilities and events to be capitalised upon as tourism development opportunities. In Manchester, the legacy of failed event bids has provided the basis for reimagining that due to its inherent complexity and fortuity cannot be considered as the result of a deliberately planned process. However, though exactly how image change was to be achieved may not have been articulated at the inauguration of the sport initiatives, image considerations were always an intended objective of strategies employed in all three cities.

Despite the lack of clarity regarding how image change was to be procured, there is evidence from all three cities that the intention was to enhance the image of the city generally, and as a sport venue. These speculative intentions affirm the value of the conceptual framework outlined in chapter 3 where destination images were considered to comprise holistic and attribute-based components (Echtner and Ritchie 1991, 1993). It is contended that cities have used sport to present a conceived holistic representation of the city and to manipulate attribute-based images of the city as a sporting destination. Taking this latter assertion first, it is apparent that Birmingham, Sheffield - and to a lesser extent, Manchester - have all aimed to develop reputations specifically as sporting venues. The sport strategies implemented in each city are therefore intended, in part at least, as a means of exhibiting and developing images as 'cities of sport'. However, the evidence collected from all three cities also indicates that Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield have implemented sport strategies to present conceived holistic city images. Despite the lack of research and evidence to

justify such activities, city authorities have espoused sport initiatives as a means of changing the way in which the city as a whole is perceived externally. In the remainder of this study, the aim is to determine whether these attempts have been successful. However, before this attempted it is first necessary to evaluate awareness of the urban sport initiatives. As stated in chapter 3, the success of reimagining strategies in influencing attribute-based and holistic images is dependent on the target audiences first being aware of the initiatives. The next chapter of the study therefore attempts to ascertain the awareness levels of potential tourists with reference to the initiatives adopted in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield.

Chapter 6

Potential tourists' awareness of urban sport initiatives

6.0 Introduction

This section of the study assesses the extent to which prospective visitors are aware of the sport initiatives implemented in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. It is argued that to allow sport projects to develop the capacity to influence city images, potential tourists must first be aware of their existence. Therefore, the following discussion attempts to establish the proportion of potential tourists questioned who know about the sport initiatives implemented in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. This analysis is divided into two main parts; the first section deals with potential tourist's awareness of sport facilities, whilst the second section concerns awareness of recent events or event bids. Throughout the analysis, certain segments of the research participants are isolated to establish whether it is only potential sport tourists who are aware of the recent developments in the three cities, or whether a more general audience appreciates them.

The analysis in this chapter enables the study to directly address research question 2: 'To what extent are potential tourists aware of the sport initiatives that have been implemented in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield in recent years?'

Furthermore the attention to different samples should allow consideration of whether sport initiatives have the capacity to influence holistic images of cities, or whether their influence is limited to enhancing attribute-based perceptions of urban areas as sport tourism venues. This should provide the basis for the examination of research questions 3 and 4 (see section 3.7) in subsequent chapters.

6.1 Methodological resume

Before relevant findings are detailed it is necessary to provide a brief resume of the research methods used to explore awareness levels exhibited by potential tourists. To provide information about initiative awareness, respondents to the questionnaire(s) from both the representative and the sport spectators sample were asked whether they had heard of twenty sport facilities - five from each of the three case study cities and five others (see appendices a and b). One of the products cited, the 'Mersey Skydome', was fictitious and was included to identify the prevalence of inaccurate responses. Established sport tourism products were also included to provide an important comparative dimension. In addition to investigations into the awareness of sport facilities, the same respondents were required to indicate their awareness of five different sport event/event bids. Once again, a 'phoney' option was included to provide an indication of the reliability of the responses. To supplement this prompted analysis of the questionnaire respondents, each of the semi-structured interviewees was asked if they could name any sport facilities that had been constructed by Birmingham, Manchester or Sheffield in recent years. They were also asked if they could recall any sport events that has been bid for by, or staged in, the case study cities. Therefore the subsequent analysis aims to ascertain awareness levels of sport events and facilities, by exploring prompted and unprompted acknowledgement of recent initiatives. The analysis of this part of the study commences with a discussion of prompted and unprompted awareness of sport facilities (sections 6.2 and 6.3 respectively). This is followed by an examination of the prompted and unprompted awareness of sport events and event bids (sections 6.4 and 6.5), and the chapter concludes with an overall summary of findings (section 6.6).

6.2 Prompted awareness of sport facilities

6.2.1 Awareness levels of the representative sample

Facility	Percent of respondents aware of facility	Facility	Percent of respondents aware of facility
1. Wembley	98	12. London Arena	46
2. Old Trafford Football	92	13. GMEX	36
3. Old Trafford Cricket	89	14. *Don Valley	34
4. NEC	86	15. *Nynex	33
5. Hillsborough	85	16. National Watersports	25
6. *NIA	81	17. *Velodrome	27
7. Edgbaston	76	18. Alexander	15
8. Villa Park	68	19. *Ponds Forge	08
9. Gateshead International	65	20. Ski Village	07
10. *Sheffield Arena	54	21. <i>Mersey Skydome</i>	04
<i>Facilities in Italics</i> = fictitious products used to test accuracy of responses			
* = Facility developed in the past decade - these provide the focus of the study.			

Table 6.2.1 *The prompted awareness of sport facilities exhibited by the representative sample*

Table 6.2.1 illustrates the awareness levels of different sport tourism facilities in UK cities exhibited by the representative sample. The contents of Table 6.2.1 indicate that amongst these potential tourists, Wembley is the sport tourism product with which people are most familiar (98%). However, other facilities are similarly well known. For example over 90% of the sample are aware of the Old Trafford football stadium in Manchester. These flagship facilities provide the benchmarks against which awareness of the recently developed sport facilities in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield can be judged. Of the six new facilities included in the investigation, the National Indoor Arena (NIA) in Birmingham exhibits the highest levels of awareness with 81% of respondents indicating they have heard of this facility. This is a very high figure, particularly considering that this indoor arena, which only opened in

1991, is more widely known than Villa Park, an established football stadium in the city. The renown of the NIA, added to the 86% of the sample who are aware of the NEC (opened 1976), means that Birmingham boasts the two most widely known of facilities constructed in recent times. The indoor arenas in Sheffield and Manchester are not as widely known as the NIA and NEC. Awareness levels of Sheffield Arena (54%) are higher than for the NYNEX (now M.E.N.) Arena (33%), but neither is acknowledged to the same extent as the NIA. However, these figures still suggest that these facilities are known by a significant proportion of potential tourists. Other facilities in Sheffield and Manchester are less widely acknowledged. The Don Valley Stadium is known by 34% of respondents, whilst 27% are aware of Manchester's Velodrome. The Ponds Forge International Sports Centre exhibits an awareness level of only 8% amongst the representative sample. Overall, it is clear to see that established sport facilities are better known than more recent additions. However, the success of the NIA and NEC shows that newly constructed facilities can gain widespread public renown in a relatively short period of time. The results suggest that new sports facilities can provide high profile tourism products, a contention reaffirmed by the evidence relating to Gateshead International Stadium in Table 6.2.1. This stadium was constructed in the 1970s, but its existence is now acknowledged by 65% of the representative sample.

6.2.2 Participatory products and spectator venues

From Table 6.2.1, it is apparent that awareness levels of facilities that have an important participatory function, such as the Sheffield Ski Village, Manchester Velodrome, National Watersports Centre and the Ponds Forge Complex, are lower than for those facilities where the emphasis is on spectator sport. This is important when considering the capacity of sport facilities to influence the image of city destinations. Though it would appear desirable to supplement, or indeed combine, the provision of spectator sport stadia with facilities that can be used by the general public and tourists, the evidence from Table 6.2.1 suggests that the imaging potential of participatory products may be limited. Certainly, large spectator stadia that stage the most popular sports are those which are most prominent. The difficulty for participatory products is that they cannot command the same degree of incidental

media exposure as these venues and therefore rely more heavily on conventional advertising to secure profile. To develop and maintain an image as a sport tourism destination, cities require sport facilities that have the capacity to stage major events. Furthermore, the results in Table 6.2.1 suggest that certain types of spectator sport are most prominent. The most widely known facilities are associated with football and cricket, whereas athletics stadia and swimming arenas fare less impressively. To provide maximum publicity and recognition, sport facilities therefore not only need to be large spectator sport stadia, they need to host the most popular and the most publicised sports.

The results of this initial analysis of the representative sample suggest implications regarding the capacity of the products to influence city images. Of the newer facilities, the NIA (81%) and Sheffield Arena (54%) are well known enough to suggest that they may have influenced the perceptions of a large number of potential tourists. However, the limited appreciation of the presence of Ponds Forge (8%) means that its holistic image effects are likely to be minimal. It is also necessary to point out that 4% of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they were aware of the fictitious product included - the Mersey Skydome. This is a small figure and therefore there is no reason to question the reliability of the vast majority of the results. However, to reduce the faint possibility that respondents may have exaggerated their awareness in this prompted inquiry, an analysis of unprompted, free-response awareness has also been undertaken (see section 6.3).

6.2.3 Investigating the impact of place of residence on awareness levels

To provide further explanation of the results identified above, it is also possible to analyse the influence of place of residence on awareness levels. Table 6.2.2 illustrates the mean awareness levels of respondents in the three electoral districts sampled in the study - Fenland, Darlington and Bristol. To examine whether differences exist between the three sample sites, a one-way analysis of variance has been undertaken using the SPSS programme. This test is good way of comparing the means of three defined groups of respondents. The contents of Table 6.2.2 display the mean scores for each sport facility attributed to each sample site. In Table 6.2.2, the F ratio is the

between group's mean square divided by the within-group's mean square and the probability associated with F is given in the column marked 'F Prob'. If this probability of F is a figure less than 0.05, we can be confident that there is a significant difference between the groups being compared.

Facility	Bristol	Fenland	Darl	F ratio	F Prob	Scheffe test
Old Trafford Football	0.93	0.95	0.88	1.0013	0.3695	No groups sig dif
Old Trafford Cricket	0.92	0.90	0.85	0.7250	0.4858	No groups sig dif
NEC	0.88	0.88	0.82	0.7369	0.4800	No groups sig dif
Hillsborough	0.83	0.88	0.83	0.3873	0.6795	No groups sig dif
Edgbaston	0.83	0.77	0.67	2.3066	0.1026	No groups sig dif
*NIA	0.87	0.83	0.72	2.4001	0.0937	No groups sig dif
Villa Park	0.67	0.80	0.58	3.3812	0.0362✓	Group 2 different from 3
*Sheffield Arena	0.42	0.52	0.70	5.2004	0.0064✓	Group 1 different from 3
GMEX	0.32	0.30	0.47	2.2086	0.1129	No groups sig dif
*Don Valley	0.18	0.38	0.47	5.9103	0.0033✓	Group 1 different from 3
*Nynex	0.30	0.27	0.43	2.1143	0.1238	No groups sig dif
*Velodrome	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.0276	0.9728	No groups sig dif
Alexander	0.15	0.17	0.13	0.1287	0.8793	No groups sig dif
*Ponds Forge	0.05	0.07	0.13	1.5277	0.2199	No groups sig dif
Ski Village	0.02	0.13	0.07	3.1230	0.0465✓	Group 1 different from 2
* = Facility developed in the past decade - these provide the focus of the study.						
✓ = a value that is significant at a confidence level of 95%						

Table 6.2.2 *The relationship between place of residence and awareness of sport facilities with reference to the representative sample*

With reference to the analysis illustrated in Table 6.2.2, the null hypothesis is that there is no difference between the three residential districts, indicating that the data comes from the same population. The acceptance of the alternative hypothesis would suggest that there is a difference between the three groups because the variance of the means is larger than the error variance. The results in Table 6.2.2 indicate that for 15 of the 19 products, the null hypothesis should be accepted. This shows that in the

majority of cases, differences are not revealed, and therefore in these instances, awareness is not related to the place of residence of respondents. However, Table 6.2.2 does indicate that the alternative hypothesis should be accepted in relation to four sport tourism facilities. Two of these are recent initiatives implemented in Sheffield - the Don Valley Stadium and Sheffield Arena.

Although analysis of variance can point to differences between the means of three (or more) groups of respondents, it does not provide information concerning where those differences occur. In order to locate these differences, a 'Scheffe post hoc' test has been employed. Where two groups are significantly different at the 0.05 level, this test has been undertaken. The results of this analysis are illustrated in the final column where an indication is given as to which groups differ significantly. The Scheffe test indicates that respondents in Darlington are significantly more aware of the Don Valley Stadium than those residing in Bristol. The pattern is repeated again in reference to Sheffield Arena which is known by a much higher proportion (70%) of residents of Darlington, than it is by Bristolians (42%). This pattern can probably be best explained by the fact that Sheffield is significantly nearer to Darlington than it is to Bristol. It should be acknowledged that, although all three sites are located at least 76 miles from any of the sample sites, some are nearer to the cities than others (see Fig 4.5.1). The study was designed so that two cities would be equi-distant from a sample chosen site. This meant that one sampling point was always further away from one of the cities - in this case the fact Bristol is significantly further away from Sheffield than Fenland or Darlington appears to have resulted in the awareness variance.

Sheffield's new facilities have not been acknowledged to the same degree in the sample area which is furthest from the city of Sheffield. This implies that the sphere of influence of the Don Valley Stadium and Sheffield Arena is more limited than other newer facilities such as the NIA which is appreciated more consistently across all three sample sites. Among the more established facilities, Villa Park is better known by Fenland residents, than Darlington residents. Again, this difference coincides with the fact that Fenland is much nearer to Birmingham than Darlington. It also coincides with the fact that Birmingham - Darlington is one of the extreme

distances used in the study (see above). In relation to these specific results, geographical propinquity would appear to have played a significant part in determining awareness levels. However, as 15 of 19 products analysed exhibit no significant differences in Table 6.2.2, the majority of initiatives appear to have transcended geographical distances to produce awareness levels that are consistent across the country.

6.2.4 Prompted awareness of sport tourists

The sport spectator sample provides an important target market for the new sport facilities and therefore it is also important to note the degree to which they are aware of the recent developments in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. The awareness levels of the sport spectator sample are illustrated in Table 6.2.3.

Sport facility	Percent of tourists aware of facility	Sport facility	Percent of tourists aware of facility
1. Old Trafford Football	100	11. GMEX	68
2. Wembley	100	12. *Don Valley	67
3. NEC	97	13. London Arena	65
4. Edgbaston	96	14. *Nynex	57
5. Hillsborough	95	15. National Watersports	40
6. Old Trafford Cricket	95	16. *Velodrome	35
7. Villa Park	91	17. Alexander	25
8. Gateshead International	84	18. *Ponds Forge	20
9. *NIA	81	19. <i>Mersey Skydome</i>	8
10. *Sheffield Arena	71	20. Ski Village	7
<i>Facilities in Italics</i> = fictitious products used to test accuracy of responses			
* = Facility developed in the past decade - these provide the focus of the study.			

Table 6.2.3 Awareness levels exhibited by the sport spectator sample

The contents of Table 6.2.3 demonstrate that awareness of established football and cricket stadia is very high amongst the sport spectator sample. All such products included in the study are recognised by at least 90% of sport spectators and Wembley and Old Trafford football grounds are known by all these respondents. The most widely recognised new facility is the NIA which is acknowledged by 81% of the sample, followed by Sheffield's Arena and Don Valley Stadium, which are both known by more than two thirds of those questioned. Though the new facilities in Manchester - the Nynex Arena and Velodrome - are known by a lower proportion of sport spectators (57% and 35% of the sport spectator sample respectively), a large number of people are still aware of their existence. The Ponds Forge Complex is once again the new sport initiative that is least acknowledged, and is only recognised by one fifth of the sport spectators questioned.

6.2.5 Comparing the awareness levels of the sport spectator sample and the representative sample

To identify whether the new initiatives are appreciated differently by sport tourists and the general public, it is necessary to compare the awareness levels of the sport spectator sample and the representative sample. This analysis should assist the study by identifying which facilities are appreciated generally as against those where awareness is restricted specifically to sport spectators. The awareness levels of the different sample groups are illustrated in Table 6.2.4 and the results of t-tests employed to identify significant differences between mean awareness levels (<0.05) are also exhibited in this table.

Facility	Sport spectator sample (n=75)	Representative (n=180)	t-test
Old Trafford Football	1.00	0.92	0.000✓
Wembley	1.00	0.98	0.045✓
NEC	0.97	0.86	0.001✓
Edgbaston	0.96	0.76	0.000✓
Hillsborough	0.95	0.85	0.010✓
Old Trafford Cricket	0.95	0.89	0.102
Villa Park	0.91	0.68	0.000✓
Gateshead International	0.84	0.65	0.001✓
*NIA	0.81	0.81	0.886
*Sheffield Arena	0.71	0.54	0.013✓
GMEX	0.68	0.36	0.000✓
*Don Valley	0.67	0.34	0.000✓
London Arena	0.65	0.46	0.005✓
*Nynex	0.57	0.33	0.001✓
National Watersports	0.40	0.25	0.024✓
*Velodrome	0.35	0.27	0.251
Alexander	0.25	0.15	0.073
*Ponds Forge	0.20	0.08	0.024✓
<i>Mersey Skydome</i>	0.08	0.04	0.313
Ski Village	0.07	0.07	0.875
✓ = a t-value that is significant at a confidence level of 95%.			
* = a sport project developed over the past ten years			
<i>Italics</i> = a fictitious sport tourism product			

Table 6.2.4 A direct comparison between the mean awareness levels of sport facilities demonstrated by the sport spectator sample and the representative sample

Table 6.2.4 illustrates that the sport spectator sample exhibit consistently higher levels of awareness than the representative sample. The null hypothesis of the t tests is that there is no difference between the mean awareness levels of the sport spectator sample

and those relating to the representative sample. The alternative hypothesis is that significant differences do exist. In 15 of the 19 (legitimate) sport facilities included in the study, the alternative hypothesis has been accepted. There are several notable examples of facilities that are much better known by the potential sport tourists, including some recently developed facilities. For instance 67% of sport tourists are aware of the Don Valley Stadium, compared to 34% of the representative sample. This would suggest that, although Don Valley Stadium has influenced the perceptions of a significant proportion of the population as a whole, it is much more widely known amongst the sport spectator sample. Similarly, 57% of sport tourists are aware of the Nynex Arena, as against 33% of the representative segment. Another recently constructed facility - Sheffield Arena - is known by 71% of the sport spectator sample, compared to the 54% aware of its existence among the representative sample. Therefore for these new products, awareness is much higher among the sport spectator sample, although they are still acknowledged by a respectable proportion of the representative sample. This suggests that these facilities have a greater capacity to affect sport tourist's city images. However, there is still a strong likelihood that they will influence the images of a wider section of the population.

It is perhaps also interesting and relevant to look at the four sport facilities where awareness levels between sport tourists and the representative sample are not statistically significant (see Table 6.2.4). One of these facilities is the NIA, which exhibits an awareness level of 81% in relation to both the sport tourist and the representative samples – indicating universal acknowledgement. Observations from the semi-structured interviews reveal that this is probably a result of the exposure given to the NIA through its staging of large events, which in some cases have not been necessarily sport-related. For instance, in recent years the NIA has hosted the ITV programme *Gladiators*, which is more associated with light entertainment than sporting endeavour, and which appears to have broadened awareness of the Arena. The widespread penetration of the NIA is further exemplified by its acknowledgement by respondents with different levels of experience of Birmingham, and by the fact that more women than men are aware of its existence. The NIA has not only become one of the most well known sporting facilities among those interested in sport, but like Wembley, Old Trafford and the NEC, it is widely appreciated by the population as a

whole. Therefore, like these more established facilities, the NIA is a prominent and visible urban feature, increasing the likelihood that it has influenced Birmingham's holistic image.

6.3 Unprompted awareness of prestige sport facilities

Though the results from the prompted analysis give an in-depth appreciation of awareness levels relating to sport facilities, the technique used has some limitations. For example, though recognition is identified, it is not always clear whether being aware of a named facility actually means that potential tourists have that initiative at the forefront of their minds. Although the minimal acknowledgement of the 'phoney' answer would suggest otherwise, there is also the danger that respondents may exaggerate their awareness of initiatives in prompted inquiries. Consequently, the prompted analysis has been complemented by an unprompted method, where a smaller representative sample of potential tourists was asked if they could name any sport facilities recently developed in the three cities. It became clear during the interviews that potential tourists found it difficult to recall the names of new sport facilities, although many had an idea that new facilities had been built. In general, the very limited awareness of facilities in all three cities problematises the argument that flagship sport initiatives can significantly influence city images. The responses have been divided into two main categories. First, where the name of the facility and the city in which it is located was specifically identified (Table 6.3.1), and second, where new facilities have been identified, but where the specific name or nature of those facilities could not be recalled (Table 6.3.2).

Name of Sport facility	Number of interview participants mentioning this facility
NEC	5
Don Valley Stadium	4
NIA	3
GMex	3
NYNEX	2
Ponds Forge	2
Manchester Velodrome	2
Old Trafford improvements	1
Hillsborough improvements	1
Sheffield Arena	1
Birmingham National Stadium	1

Table 6.3.1 *Specific unprompted recall of recently adopted sport facilities by interview participants*

Table 6.3.1 illustrates the number of participants mentioning specific named facilities, out of the 54 interviewees that participated in this part of the study. The most frequently cited facility was the NEC in Birmingham which opened in 1976. Of the new facilities, the Don Valley Stadium in Sheffield was recalled by the most participants. This contradicts the findings of the prompted analysis, where potential tourists were more aware of the NIA and Sheffield Arena than the Don Valley Stadium. This could be because potential tourists did not consider these venues to be sport facilities and therefore may not have considered the NIA and Sheffield Arena as valid responses to the question posed in the interviews. However, despite this possible discrepancy, the overriding conclusion that can be drawn from this part of the study is that unprompted awareness levels of new sport facilities in the three cities is low. Though, as indicated in the prompted awareness section, potential tourists may have heard of some of these facilities, they are largely unable to recall them without prompting. These ‘flagship’ schemes are therefore not at the front of people's thinking about the three cities, challenging the notion that that they have had a significant influence on city images.

6.3.1 Less specific unprompted recall of facilities

Category of response	No. of participants citing category 2 responses
Olympic facilities in Manchester	8
Olympic facilities in Birmingham	2
WSG facilities in Sheffield	1

Table 6.3.2 *Less specific unprompted recall of facilities*

A number of participants indicated that they knew facilities had been developed as part of preparations for major sport events, although they were unable to name them. This type of response has been recorded in Table 6.3.2. These responses suggest that awareness of new sport facilities is actually driven largely by high profile events. As can be seen in Table 6.3.2 the most common responses related to perception that Manchester had built some unspecified facilities as part of their bids for the Olympic Games. Therefore when asked whether they were aware of new sport facilities being built in any of the cities in the past ten years, several answers echoed the views of participant 48 below:

'Well I am sure that they have done things in Manchester with the Olympic bid, I think they have built some facilities to do with that, but other than that I am not really sure.'

Participant 48

As the comments of participant 48 exemplify, many of the responses were characterised by an inferential processing of information, where a knowledge and awareness of bids has led to the belief that new sport facilities had been developed. As subsequent sections reveal, a large number of people were aware of Manchester's Olympic bids and a large number of interview participants equated this bid with the construction of new facilities, even though they could provide no specific names of facilities. Participant 2 provided a quote illustrative of this type of response.

' Well I know Manchester have tried to bid for the Olympics and I don't know whether through that they have built new stadiums to cater for that or whether they were considering that would be what they would have to do if they won it. I would imagine they would have to have some infrastructure in place, so I would think Manchester would have built some facilities and improved their sport facilities over the last ten years.'

Participant 2

A large number of interviewees speculated that Manchester had built new sport facilities because of the Olympic bids, rather than actually knowing such facilities had been developed. Therefore, this tenuous awareness appears to be more an extension of the awareness of the Olympic bids, rather than exemplifying a specific awareness of new sport facilities in Manchester. This 'inferential' awareness of new facilities was repeated with respect to Birmingham and Sheffield, albeit less frequently. Although this can be interpreted positively, several interviews emphasised that there remains confusion as to whether facilities were built or not:

'They were going to build one [a stadium] for the Olympic Games, but I am not sure whether that proceeded or not. Did it? I don't know. I can't remember, I do know that they were going to build a super stadium in Manchester, but I don't know whether they went ahead [with it] when they lost the chance to stage the Olympic Games, I don't know what happened to that'.

Participant 52

Understandable confusion appears to be evident regarding which 'Olympic' facilities were built and which were not. As a result, facilities that emanated from the Olympic bidding process are under-appreciated - as emphasised by the unprompted awareness of the NYNEX Arena and Manchester Velodrome (see Table 6.3.1)

When participants were aware of certain new sport facilities, it was interesting to note the confusion surrounding some of their actual names. The most obvious example of the uncertainty exhibited by the participants was the tendency to confuse new indoor

facilities in Birmingham and Manchester with each other. The GMex and NYNEX Arenas in Manchester and the NIA and NEC in Birmingham have names that appear to have caused the most perplexity amongst potential tourists. For example one participant talked of the NIREX centre in Manchester while others mentioned the NAI in Birmingham. Others actively avoided using the official names of these centres because they were afraid that they would misquote these acronyms.

6.4 Prompted awareness of events and event bids

As well as analysing potential tourist's awareness of certain sport facilities constructed recently, it is also necessary to examine awareness of sport events/event bids. The methods used for this section of the study are identical to those utilised in section 6.2 and 6.3 to examine awareness of sport facilities. Five examples of events/event bids are considered in this analysis (see appendices a and b). One of these events is fictitious (Birmingham 2001) and was included to judge the reliability of responses obtained.

6.4.1 The representative sample

Event/Event bid	<i>Proportion (in %) of the representative sample who cited the event/event bid in the prompted analysis of awareness</i>
Manchester Olympic bids	74
Birmingham Olympic bids	52
Manchester 2002	37
Sheffield WSG 1991	28
Birmingham 2001	05

Table 6.4.1 *The prompted awareness of recent sport events and event bids exhibited by the representative sample*

Table 6.4.1 illustrates the prompted awareness levels of the representative sample and it clearly demonstrates that a large proportion of these respondents (74%) are aware of Manchester's Olympic Games bids, despite their ultimate 'failure'. The acknowledgement of Olympic applications is further exemplified by the prevalent recognition of Birmingham's unsuccessful bid for the 1992 Games which exhibited the second highest awareness levels (52%). Philo and Kearns (1993) have labelled the Olympics as the ultimate expression of place marketing and from these results the faith placed in the Olympic Games as vehicle for place marketing appears justified. This is demonstrated by the apparent prominence of unsuccessful bids. Ironically, events that have actually taken place, or that will take place in the near future, are less well known. Thirty-seven percent of the representative sample are aware that the 2002 Commonwealth Games will be held in Manchester. Furthermore, seven years after it took place, 28% of this sample are aware that the 1991 World Student Games took place in Sheffield. Despite the lower figures, these awareness levels pertaining to an event that was staged seven years prior to the fieldwork enquiry (the WSG), and to an event that was still four years away when respondents were questioned (Manchester 2002), should not be underestimated.

Five per cent of the representative sample indicated that they had heard of the fictitious event included in this part of the analysis (Birmingham 2001 World Athletics Championships). This is a relatively small amount, though again it illustrates that caution should be exercised in interpreting the results. It is interesting to note that in the previous analysis relating to awareness of sport tourism facilities, a similar proportion of respondents (4%) selected the fictitious sport facility - the Mersey Skydome. Accordingly, it would appear that around 5% of the responses to questions concerning awareness are consistently inaccurate. It is therefore useful to note that in addition to normal sampling and probability error, the results of this analysis of initiative awareness are accurate to c. +/- 5%. However, this degree of reliability merely relates to the respondents who are known to have provided inaccurate responses. Other respondents not selecting Birmingham 2001, may also have under/over exaggerated their awareness of the events listed below. Despite

these limitations, the validity of the analysis is reinforced by the fact that subsequent examination will be made of unprompted responses (section 6.5).

It is also pertinent to note whether respondents residing in different sample districts exhibit different awareness levels of sport events/event bids. To illustrate whether differences exist in awareness levels between the sample groups in Bristol, Fenland and Darlington, a one-way analysis of variance has been conducted. The results are shown in Table 6.4.2. This SPSS procedure produces F ratios for each of the events/event bids above. The F-ratio is the between-groups mean square divided by the within-groups mean square. The probability associated with F is given in the penultimate column and a figure less than 0.05 in this column indicates a significant difference at a confidence level of 95%.

Event/Event bid	Brist	Fen	Darl	F ratio	F Prob	Scheffe test
Birmingham Olympics	0.58	0.62	0.37	4.5827	0.0115✓	Group 2 different from 3
Manchester Olympics	0.70	0.70	0.82	1.4096	0.2470	No groups sig dif
Manchester 2002	0.37	0.27	0.48	3.0722	0.0488✓	Group 2 different from 3
Sheffield 1991 WSG	0.22	0.27	0.35	1.3547	0.2607	No groups sig dif
✓ = a value that is significant at a confidence level of 95%						

Table 6.4.2 Awareness levels of sport events and event bids exhibited by the representative sample in different regions of the UK including ANOVA analysis

The null hypothesis of the analysis illustrated by the contents of Table 6.4.2 is that the three sample sites come from a common population. The alternative hypothesis is that there are significant differences between the mean awareness levels of respondents in the three different sample sites. Table 6.4.2 indicates that the alternative hypothesis should be accepted in reference to two events/event bids. Place of residence is related to awareness levels of Birmingham's Olympic bid and Manchester's forthcoming Commonwealth Games. A 'post hoc Scheffe test' has been undertaken to confirm where these differences lie and in both instances there are significant differences between the awareness levels of respondents in Fenland and Darlington (see final column of Table 6.4.2). Fenland residents are more likely to know that Birmingham

applied to host the 1992 Olympics than respondents questioned in Darlington, whilst Darlington residents exhibit much greater awareness levels of Manchester's forthcoming role as host to the 2002 Commonwealth Games than Fenland residents. Both these noted differences appear to relate to geographic distance, as Darlington is closer to Manchester than Fenland and Birmingham is located closer to Fenland than Darlington. However, the general lack of significant differences indicates that the awareness levels exhibited here are reflected uniformly throughout the three regions under consideration. This is especially pertinent with regard to Manchester's Olympic bid. Although awareness of the bids is greater in Darlington - reaffirming the link with distance - high awareness levels are recorded in all three sample sites. These results are replicated in the results relating to Sheffield's bid (Table 6.4.2). The north-south divide is evident again as awareness is much higher in Darlington than Bristol or Fenland. However, these differences do not produce a significant anova value. It should also be emphasised that though awareness levels of Sheffield are statistically consistent across all three sample sites, they are consistently low. In qualifying this observation, it should be noted that the WSG was in 1991 and eight years had passed between the event and the data collection. The different time periods that have elapsed since each event was bid for, or staged, means that care needs to be exercised when making direct comparisons.

6.4.2 The sport spectator sample

Event/Event bid	Proportion (in %) of the sport spectator sample who cited the event/event bid in the prompted analysis of awareness
Manchester Olympic bids	0.87
Birmingham Olympic bids	0.52
Sheffield WSG 1991	0.49
Manchester 2002	0.47
Birmingham 2001	0.04

Table 6.4.3 *The prompted awareness of recent sport events and event bids exhibited by the sport spectator sample*

Table 6.4.3 emphasises that Manchester's Olympic bids have captured the attention of sport spectators, as 87% of those questioned at sport events were aware of the bids. Approximately half of the sport spectators questioned were aware of the other three legitimate events and event bids. In Table 6.4.4 below, the awareness levels of the sport spectator sample and the representative sample have been compared. This enables the study to address whether it is predominantly sport spectators who are aware of these events/event bids, or whether they are acknowledged by a wider section of the potential tourists. This analysis is supplemented with independent sample t-tests used to compare the mean awareness levels elicited from these two segments. The null hypothesis of this analysis is that there are no differences between the mean awareness levels of the two samples. The alternative hypothesis is that differences do exist between the awareness levels exhibited by the sport spectator sample and those of the representative sample. With respect to two of the products - Manchester's Olympic bids and Sheffield's WSG - the alternative hypothesis should be accepted. The t-tests indicate that the null hypothesis should be accepted in relation to Birmingham's Olympic bid and Manchester's Commonwealth Games.

Event/Event bid	Sport spectator sample	Representative Sample	t-test
Manchester Olympic bids	0.87	0.74	0.014✓
Birmingham Olympic bids	0.52	0.52	0.974
Sheffield WSG 1991	0.49	0.28	0.002✓
Manchester 2002	0.47	0.37	0.169
Birmingham 2001	0.04	0.05	0.732
✓ = a value that is significant at a confidence level of 95%			

Table 6.4.4 *A comparison of sport event/event bid awareness levels between the sport spectator sample and representative sample*

Therefore, as with the sport facilities analysed above, there is evidence that there are significant differences between the awareness levels exhibited by sport enthusiasts and those exhibited by a representative sample of the UK population. Perhaps the most obvious examples of such differences can be seen with respect to the awareness of Sheffield's WSG. Fifty percent of the sport spectator sample acknowledge the staging of this event, compared to only 28% of the representative sample. This indicates that although the WSG may have had a widespread impact on sport enthusiasts, its influence on the general population is likely to be more limited. Though significant differences exist between the two samples with respect to Manchester's Olympic bids, the high proportion of both who are aware of the bids means that these initiatives may well have had an important impact on the perceptions of both sport spectators and the population as a whole. Indeed, almost three quarters of the representative sample are aware of Manchester's efforts to bring the Olympics to the city. This indicates a significant capacity to affect holistic images as well as the attribute-based images of sport tourists. Although these results could indicate the pre-eminence of Manchester's bids over Sheffield WSG, it should again be recognised that the WSG was staged before Manchester's high profile bid for the 2000 Olympic Games reached its climax and therefore the differing levels of awareness 'decay' should be acknowledged.

With regard to the analysis of sport facilities, in the vast majority of instances (15/19), significant differences were observed between the sport spectator sample and the representative sample. In the present analysis, only half of the legitimate events/event bids exhibit such significant differences. The widespread acknowledgement of events/event bids is emphasised by the Birmingham Olympic bid, which produces equal awareness levels amongst both segments. This is despite the fact that it would be reasonable to expect to find differences between these two distinct segments. The lack of such a distinction implies that large scale event bids are able to influence simultaneously both sport tourists and potential city tourists in general. This argument is backed up with evidence in addition to the results relating to Manchester's Olympic bids. The evidence relating to the Commonwealth Games in 2002 also demonstrates that 47% of the sport spectator sample are aware that this event will take place, but a not too dissimilar proportion (37%) of the representative sample are similarly informed. The null hypothesis has been accepted for this particular event, confirming the lack of a significant difference between the sport spectator sample and the representative sample.

The exception to the proposition that events exhibit similarly high awareness levels in relation to both samples is provided by Sheffield's WSG. This event is acknowledged by nearly half of the sport spectator sample, but only by 28% of the representative sample. Therefore, this event is not acknowledged by potential tourists in general and its effects are therefore likely to be confined largely to potential sport tourists. This result is most probably a reflection of the relative obscurity of this event compared to the more widely known Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games. In fact the results illustrate that in terms of generating awareness amongst the general population it would appear more effective to bid for the most prestigious events rather than actually stage an event of lesser renown.

6.5 Unprompted awareness of events and event bids

One of the most important observations from the unprompted analysis of events/event bids is the apparent confusion that exists among potential tourists. A large number of interviewees became perplexed when trying to remember which city hosted, or

attempted to host certain events. Participants often found it difficult to pinpoint the correct location of certain events, or when they knew a city had bid for, or staged an event, were unable to recall the exact name of the event with conviction. Therefore, to interpret the varied responses, they have been grouped into four different categories:

The first category includes responses where interviewees named specific cities that they knew had bid for, or staged specific events. This kind of response is obviously the most encouraging for the cities concerned and is most likely to be translated into some form of city image modification. Many of the responses relating to Manchester's Olympic bid were of this nature, reaffirming the bids as initiatives that a large number of potential tourists were aware of. Manchester's Olympic bids were the only initiatives that generated such prevalent acknowledgement, although as Table 6.5.1 indicates, Birmingham's Olympic and Manchester's Commonwealth Games bid were all mentioned by at least 5 participants. The second category of responses comprises those where participants knew a city had bid for or staged a major event, but where they could not remember, or were unsure, which event it was. An example of this type of response is illustrated by the views of participant 54 who stated 'Wasn't there some sort of thing that happened in Manchester?' Similarly, participant 29 stated 'Manchester went for something didn't it?' These responses indicate that these potential tourists may have been influenced by a degree of acknowledgement of event strategies, but were unable to recall the specific nature of the initiatives. Though a more convincing appreciation would probably be more significant in terms of providing the basis for image enhancement, the fact that a specific city is identified means that a respondent's city image may have been affected to some degree. The largest number of category 2 responses were made in reference to Manchester, reaffirming that the image of this city is most likely to have been influenced by sport initiatives.

The third category includes confused responses where participants were aware that an unspecified city staged or bid for a specified event. Therefore some interviewees were aware that Olympic bids had been submitted, or that a UK city has staged the Commonwealth Games, but were unsure which cities were involved. Participant 30

epitomised this standpoint, stating, 'There was something to do with the Olympic Games, but I can't remember off hand, I can't remember which city it was either'. This category of response threatens the imaging potential of sport events for cities engaging in such activities. Though it may be advantageous for cities to be associated with events, here potential tourists are unable to recall the name of the city involved. As a result there is little possibility of image enhancement occurring. The fourth and final response category includes very confused responses where participants were aware of unspecified events being staged in unspecified cities. Therefore a small number of interviewees shared similar awareness levels to participant 40 who stated 'I think one or two of them bid for something, the world cup, or the Olympics, but I can't remember which one and I can't remember what it was.'

Event/event bid	No. of participants mentioning this event/bid
Manchester Olympic bids	25
Manchester Commonwealth Games	7
Birmingham Olympics	7
Sheffield World Student Games	5
Birmingham Super Prix	3
Manchester World cup bids	3
Birmingham World cup bids	2
Birmingham Commonwealth Games	2
National Stadium bid	2
Birmingham athletics	1
Birmingham NIA Events	1
Sheffield Paraplegic Games	1
Euro 96 - all three cities	1

Table 6.4.4 *A comparison between the sport event/event bid awareness levels of the sport spectator sample and representative sample*

Table 6.5.1 contains the number of category one responses associated with particular individual event initiatives. Manchester's Olympic bids were the only events that generated a large number of category 1 responses with twenty-five participants mentioning the city's bids when asked to name sport event or event bids associated with Birmingham, Manchester or Sheffield in recent years. The city's Commonwealth Games bid also generated a significant number of category 1 responses, indicating that the city has been the most successful of the three in generating awareness of major sport events. It perhaps should be recognised that Manchester's initiatives are the most recent of those considered. However, the fact that nearly half of the participants mentioned Manchester's Olympic aspirations compared to 7 who mentioned Birmingham's Olympic bid and 5 who identified Sheffield's staging of the WSG, appears to indicate that this awareness is more than a simply a result of chronological variances. The results relating to Sheffield's WSG show limited awareness of an event that has actually taken place. The three initiatives that exhibited the highest awareness levels of potential tourists are all events that did not happen, or have not happened yet. This is an interesting observation and confirms that in the contemporary era high profile event bids can be as effective as hosting perhaps less prestigious events. Of the other events/bids that were mentioned, it is interesting to note that three participants mentioned the Super Prix staged in Birmingham, even though this was discontinued in 1990.

6.5.1 Associated comments from interviewees regarding awareness of sport events/event bids

The gentle mocking of Manchester's Olympic aspirations in the media (documented in the previous chapter) was also reflected in some of the comments elicited in the unprompted awareness analysis. Participant 23 answered a question about their awareness of events/event bids in cities by remarking 'well Manchester, obviously, with the Olympic Games next to the sewerage works (laughs)'. A number of participants implied that Sheffield was an even less appropriate location for prestigious sport events. After detailing event bids by Birmingham and Manchester, participant 21 stated pointedly that 'certainly I don't think Sheffield got a look in

somehow'. Participant 38 communicated a similar viewpoint, acknowledging the Olympic connections in Birmingham and Manchester, but adding the mischievous adjoinder 'did Sheffield even put a bid in (laughs)'.

This part of the study has illustrated that Manchester's various event bids exhibit impressive awareness levels and this observation is reaffirmed by various comments made by participants. Participant 42 typified the views of many interviewees in stating that; 'Manchester bid for the Olympics last time around, they always seem to be involved in some continuous battle to get something, whether it be the world cup, the Commonwealth games or the Olympics'.

As can be seen from the two quotes below, this view of Manchester's preoccupation with event bidding was shared by other participants:

'Well, Manchester has been bidding for the Olympics and the Commonwealth Games. Manchester seems to go in for everything'.

Participant 4

'I think Manchester bid for the world cup and I think it had a go for the Olympics, they seem to be trying to get everything but they don't seem to be getting much joy'.

Participant 41

Despite the widespread recognition of Manchester's bids, the emphasis on the associations with failure (illustrated by participant 41 above) should be of concern to the city. Although Manchester's failed Olympic bids are generally perceived to have generated positive benefits for the city (see section 5.2.8), it may not be wholly positive to reinforce perceptions that the city is persistently trying, but constantly failing to attract high profile events.

6.5.2 How potential tourists became aware of the sport initiatives

Alongside ascertaining awareness of initiatives, participants acknowledging events/event bids were also asked how they had heard about them. Only two interviewees indicated that their knowledge had largely derived from personal experiences, highlighting the importance of secondary sources of information. One of the most important categories of secondary image formation agents noted by Gartner is that of autonomous agents, which consists of independently produced reports, documentaries, movies and news articles (Gartner 1993:201). According to Gartner the perceived high credibility and penetration of these sources means that the messages transmitted are more likely to be accepted (Gartner 1993, 1996). Therefore it is interesting to note that almost every participant indicated that their information came from the media, with most participants emphasising two main sources, television and newspapers. Indeed, a large number of interviewees mentioned that they had learned of the sport initiatives via television news. Therefore, although awareness levels of sport initiatives is not as high as would be desired by the three cities, those people who have heard of the events appear to have gleaned the relevant information from autonomous image formation agents. Using Gartner's logic (1996, 1997), those people who have been exposed to information from news sources connecting cities with sport initiatives may be more receptive to this information. If participants were aware of imaging initiatives via less credible sources such as commercial advertising, then the effects of that awareness on city image may be less pronounced. Therefore one of the most positive aspects of sport initiatives, is the potential to facilitate the transition from mere awareness of messages to discernible image enhancement via credibly perceived news sources.

6.5.3 An alternative Olympic spectacle?

It is possible to explore issues regarding the source of information about sport events/event bids via further reference to the most oft cited initiative, Manchester's Olympic bids. The vast majority of potential tourists who were aware of Manchester's Olympic bids indicated that they had learnt about them from various news items on

the TV. However, Participant 49 emphasised the important role that TV coverage had played, not only in providing information, but through its contribution to creating a spectacle through which the event bid would be remembered.

Interviewer: *How did you hear about the event bid?*

Participant 49: *Well, when it was being bid for, I kept seeing it on the TV and I watched the decision when the bidding thing came to a head, they had the crowds on the TV and they had cameras in Manchester and Sydney and ... I watched it on the TV when it all came out, because of Manchester's bid for it I imagine, BBC seemed to have a lot on.*

Figure 6.5.1 *Interview excerpt demonstrating the role of TV coverage in generating event awareness*

Other participants also indicated that their memories of the Olympics were influenced by the announcement of the result. When asked where they had heard about Manchester's Olympic bid, participant 8 stated 'I watched it on the TV, I actually watched it while they were waiting for the result to come through'. Therefore, despite Manchester's failure to secure the Games, it could be argued that an Olympic spectacle was staged in the city after all. Indeed, it is clear from the quotes above that, though the IOC announcement signalled that Manchester would not be staging the Olympic event, the decision itself became a memorable event. The contents of Figure 6.5.1 further emphasise the role of the media in generating awareness of the bids, and this role was also evident in the views of several other participants. For example, participant 43 stated that they had heard of the city's Olympic bid 'through the news' and thought that 'it was very well publicised through the news'. These comments perhaps illustrate why Manchester's initiative has become the most widely known of those considered in this study.

6.6 Summary of findings

The results regarding awareness levels are difficult to interpret because it is hard to judge what constitutes impressive and unimpressive levels of awareness. The examination of a series of initiatives has added a comparative dimension, but as each was instigated at different times, it is not always possible to isolate prominent, high profile initiatives, from those which simply display greater recognition because less time has elapsed since their inception. In addition, the rigorous use of both prompted and unprompted methods, rather than triangulating observations, has resulted in some discrepancy between the findings revealed by these different methods of inquiry. For example, though a large number of potential tourists recognised facilities and events when they were presented directly to them, Manchester's Olympic bid was one of the only initiatives potential tourists could recall freely when prompts were not supplied.

Despite these uncertainties, it is clear that recent sport events and event bids are acknowledged by a large number of potential tourists, indicating that sport events and event bids do have the potential to influence city images. The results indicate that it is the unsuccessful Olympics bids, particularly those of Manchester, which have the most potential to influence tourist images. Though at first appearing less impressive, other results demonstrate that Birmingham and Sheffield have developed some widely acknowledged sport-related products. Birmingham's Olympic bid is still widely acknowledged by potential tourists, further highlighting the power and influence of the Olympic Games. Furthermore, of the new facilities, Birmingham's NIA is known by the largest proportion of potential tourists. This initiative is also widely appreciated across both samples and, interestingly, is acknowledged by a greater number of women than men. However, perhaps disconcertingly for cities employing sport initiatives, it would appear that the success of this initiative in generating publicity may be due to its multiple use as an entertainment venue. Though Sheffield's initiatives generally display lower awareness levels, there is strong evidence that amongst a seemingly more interested and informed sport market, new facilities in Sheffield are more widely known. For example, though Sheffield's Don Valley Stadium has often been criticised for its relative sporting anonymity, over two

thirds of the sport spectator sample are aware of its existence. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this finding is demonstrative of a wider observation that there is greater acknowledgement of sport initiatives amongst the sport spectator sample than amongst the representative sample. However, these differing awareness levels should not be misinterpreted. There is still a widespread recognition of sport facilities and events by the representative sample and therefore the majority of the case study initiatives have the potential to influence both attribute-based images of sport tourists and the holistic images of potential tourists.

The positive recognition of sport events and event bids amongst both samples is somewhat compromised by the finding that potential tourists find it hard to distinguish between coveted events. Evident confusion between World Cups, European, Student and Commonwealth Games may dilute the imaging impacts of these events and may obstruct the future potential of sport event bids as vehicles for image enhancement. Nevertheless, the study findings emphasise that events are perhaps more widely acknowledged than facilities. Indeed, in all three cities the high profile facilities that have been developed are recognised mainly via their association with a particular event or event bid. The key factor underpinning acknowledgement of sport initiatives is media exposure, particularly television and newspaper coverage. Therefore, the renown of Manchester's Olympic bid appears to be based on the significant amount of national coverage of the bids.

The nation-wide appreciation of sport initiatives and the observed importance of national media exposure is further demonstrated by the observation that geographical proximity does not appear to have influenced the awareness levels displayed by the majority of sport facilities. As such, a large number of the new facilities in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield appear to transcend regional spheres of influence. This observation is less relevant in relation to events and event bids, where acknowledgement of Birmingham's Olympic bid and the forthcoming 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester does appear to be affected by geographical propinquity. Nevertheless, the prevalent national recognition of Manchester's Olympic bid and the less impressive, but regionally consistent, levels of awareness of

Sheffield's WSG demonstrates the national penetration of information about sport events and event bids.

6.6.1 Implications for the remainder of the study

The study surmises that for sport initiatives to develop the capacity to influence city images, potential consumers must first be aware of the initiatives implemented. The results of this section do not illustrate whether city images have been affected, but instead provide evidence of whether sport initiatives have the potential to affect the images of Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. Only through awareness of the initiatives can any influence, positive or negative, accrue. This chapter has shown that there is some awareness of all the sport initiatives among potential tourists to Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. Therefore all the initiatives possess some capacity to influence city images. However, study findings emphasise that some initiatives, such as the NIA and the Manchester Olympic bids, are widely acknowledged by a large number of potential tourists. Accordingly, these initiatives have the potential to influence a larger proportion of the potential urban tourism market. Other initiatives such as the Ponds Forge Complex and Manchester Velodrome are only known by a small group of potential tourists and therefore, though this specific group of people may have been influenced greatly, the effects on the city's image are likely to be confined to specialist audiences. Though this chapter has established that some facilities and events/event bids have the capacity to influence larger numbers of potential tourists, the challenge in the remainder of the study is to examine if and how city images have been affected by these initiatives.

Chapter 7

The impact of sport reimagining on the attribute-based image of the city destination

7.0 Introduction

Echtner and Ritchie (1993:3) contend that a destination image consists of internal representations of individual features or attributes, in addition to more holistic impressions of a place. This chapter focuses on perceptions of one particular attribute of the city destination - its provision of spectator sport tourism products. The aim is to establish whether Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield are perceived to be attractive sport tourism destinations and the extent to which these reputations are attributable to the recent sport initiatives. Bale (1989) states that little research has been undertaken to examine 'the degree of congruence between the sports images people have of places and the sporting reality' (1989:118). The 'reality' is that Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield have invested considerable sums in strengthening existing links with sport and therefore this chapter aims to assess whether these initiatives have resulted in enhanced sport images. The first section addresses the image of the cities as 'sporting capitals'. This is followed by a more specific analysis of perceptions of individual sport tourism products. Also, included is an analysis of how the 'sporting' images of these cities compare with other attribute-based images of different urban tourism products. The chapter is concluded by a section which aims to contextualise sporting images of the city by examining their worth to cities attempting to cultivate reputations as 'cities of sport'. Throughout these sections, attempts are made to isolate the effects of specific reimagining initiatives employed by Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield.

7.1 Sporting capitals

In addition to coveting general image enhancement (see chapter 8), a significant number of contemporary cities are seeking to develop reputations as 'sporting capitals'. For example, Kurtzman (2001) notes that Perth has marketed itself as the 'City of Sporting Events', whilst Lake Placid has attempted to position itself as the 'Winter Sports Capital of the United States' to attract tourists (Kurtzman 2001:19). This phenomenon is definitely most prevalent in the United States, where urban sporting reputations appear to be most valued. An illustrative example is the annual competition run by the prestigious sports journal 'The Sporting News', where cities compete for the accolade 'Best Sports City'. Cities are ranked according to several criteria including the present sport climate, overall fan fervour, abundance of teams and stadium quality (The Sporting News 2001). The 2001 'title' was awarded to New York and the city's Mayor (Guilani) accepted the accolade by stating that 'this prestigious award from The Sporting News solidifies our position as the sport capital of the world' (NYC Sports Commission 2001:1). This 'position' appears to be one coveted by numerous other cities, including the cities at the focus of the present study. Indeed, chapter 5 included evidence that the implementation of new sport initiatives in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield was motivated by a desire to cultivate images as sporting capitals. This is evidenced through an analysis of the rhetoric surrounding these initiatives. For example, Dennis Howell MP, stated that the securing of the British nomination for the 1992 Olympic Games confirmed Birmingham 'as the nation's leading sports city' (Birmingham Olympics '92 1986). Manchester's recent Commonwealth Games bid appears to have been motivated by similar objectives with the bid justified in terms of 'adding further to Manchester's status as a sporting city' (Manchester 2002 Ltd 1998:1). The latest version of Sheffield's tourism strategy also confirms Sheffield's desire to be viewed as a sporting capital, by stating that that a 'key image to be projected' is 'Sheffield as a City of Sport' (Destination Sheffield 1995:20). Furthermore, Birmingham and Sheffield have conspicuously flaunted their recent elevation to 'National City of Sport' status. If the 'Best Sports City' award exemplifies the contemporary obsession with conspicuous urban sporting prowess in

the US, then the Sport Council's decision to earmark certain cities as 'National Cities of Sport' demonstrates the prevalence of such concerns in the UK.

7.1.1 Evaluating images of 'sporting capitals'

An initial concern in this chapter is to consider whether Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield have been successful in developing prestigious sporting reputations. To further this analysis, perceptions of the case study cities have been compared to those of other cities in the United Kingdom. To facilitate this area of investigation, respondents were asked to identify which three UK cities outside London they most closely associated with sport. The results relating to the sample of sport spectators are illustrated in Table 7.1.1 below.

Sport spectator sample

City	Percent selecting that city as one they closely associate with sport	City	Percent selecting that city as one they closely associate with sport
Manchester	74.7	Cardiff	8.0
Liverpool	54.7	Nottingham	8.0
Newcastle	45.3	Sunderland	6.7
Gateshead	21.3	Bristol	5.3
Birmingham	18.7	Bath	4.0
Glasgow	14.7	Leicester	2.7
Edinburgh	13.3	Southampton	0.0
Sheffield	12.0	Bradford	0.0
Leeds	10.7	Hull	0.0

Table 7.1.1 Table showing sporting capitals as perceived by the sport spectator sample

The views of the sport spectator sample are considered first as sport tourists provide a key target audience for sporting imagery. A large majority of this sample (74.75%) regard Manchester as a city that they closely associate with sport and, excluding London, Manchester can claim to be the country's sporting capital. Liverpool (54.7%)

and Newcastle (45.3%) are also associated closely associated with sport by a substantial proportion of the sport spectator sample. In reference to Birmingham and Sheffield the sporting links are significantly weaker than those exhibited by Manchester. However, both cities have succeeded in developing sporting associations superior to those exhibited by other prominent cities such as Leeds, Cardiff and Nottingham.

Representative sample

City	Percent selecting that city as one they closely associate with sport	City	Percent selecting that city as one they closely associate with sport
Manchester	73.9	Bristol	8.3
Liverpool	60.0	Sunderland	6.1
Newcastle	34.4	Bath	5.6
Gateshead	29.4	Glasgow	3.9
Birmingham	16.1	Southampton	2.8
Leeds	15.0	Leicester	1.1
Sheffield	12.8	Bradford	0
Edinburgh	10.6	Hull	0
Cardiff	10.0		
Nottingham	8.3	Don't know	1.66

Table 7.1.2 *Sporting capitals as perceived by the representative sample*

Although this chapter focuses on the attribute-based images of sport tourists, it is also interesting to note the results pertaining to the representative sample. As can be seen from Table 7.1.2, the results are not dissimilar to those exhibited by the sport spectators (Table 7.1.1). Once again, Manchester is the city that the majority of respondents most closely associate with sport. Therefore Manchester is perceived by potential tourists as the UK's premier sporting city outside London by both the sport spectator sample and the representative sample. Liverpool also exhibits a strong sporting reputation amongst the representative sample, with 62% selecting it as a city they closely associate with sport. The other sixteen cities exhibit much less prevalent sporting images. However, a substantial proportion of the respondents did select two

cities in the North East - Newcastle and Gateshead. Gateshead is perceived by 29.4% of the representative sample and by 21.3% of the sport spectator sample as one of the UK's 'sporting capitals'. This puts it 'ahead' of Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds and Bristol in the rankings of sport cities based on the results in both Table 7.1.1 and Table 7.1.2. The recognition of Gateshead as a city associated with sport has wider implications for this study as it too implemented an aggressive sport-based regeneration strategy in the 1970s. The Gateshead results appear to illustrate that cities can manipulate the way in which they are imagined as sport places. Gateshead's strategy is well established and even allowing for recent efforts to maintain the city's sporting reputation, (most recently the successful bid to win one of the Rugby League Franchises), these results do illustrate that it may take time for a city's sporting reputation to become widely acknowledged. However, once established, there appears to be sustained image benefits for cities pursuing sport-based strategies.

7.1.2 Supplementary qualitative analysis

In the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to name the city in the UK (excluding London) that they most closely associated with sport. The responses to this question can be used to complement the findings illustrated in Table 7.1.1 and 7.1.2. The vast majority of participants in the semi-structured interviews stated that they considered Manchester to be the provincial city that they most closely associated with sport. Twenty-four participants¹ selected Manchester as the UK's provincial sporting capital, reaffirming the reputation established by the preceding statistical analysis. In comparison, only two participants (5 and 7) definitively selected Birmingham as the city they most closely associated with sport and only one conferred this status on Sheffield. However, the analysis of interview responses also revealed that a substantial proportion of the 54 participants - including some who expressed an interest in sport - were unable, unwilling or reticent to select any cities for such an accolade. For some, this was because they felt that they were unable to distinguish between the sporting reputations of cities. For example, one participant stated;

¹ 1, 2, 4, 8 11, 12, 14, 16, 21, 22, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 39, 41, 43, 46, 48 52, 53 and 54

'To be honest I can't really think of a city that stands out, I have never really thought of any city as being more closely associated with sport, I mean they are all much of a muchness really, they all have a football club, a rugby ground, some of the larger ones have cricket grounds, there's not a lot in it really'

Participant 50

Another stated:

'I can't think of any sports capital in Britain, no. It flashes through your mind, all these places, Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, umm but there is not one that is the centre of sport as far as I'm concerned, well they are all centre for sports, but have nothing which says it is a centre of sport'

Participant 9

Participant 45 also shared this view, stating

'I don't really think of any city and think oh yes that's a sporting city and that one isn't, I mean sport goes on in all of them'.

The perceived redundancy of sport as a means of distinguishing between cities has implications for the capacity of sport initiatives to provide a differentiated image, especially with many commentators pointing to the role of reimagining in furthering placelessness (Harvey 1989, Relph 1976 see chapter 2). It certainly problematises Foley's assertion that sport initiatives such as those implemented by Sheffield should enable cities to stand out from the clamour of towns and cities claiming to be different (Foley 1991).

In qualifying this important observation, it should be remembered that a significant number of the interviewees did select Manchester as a city with a particularly distinctive sporting reputation. A more fundamental concern for cities engaging in sport reimagining was not necessarily the difficulty exhibited in choosing between cities, but the apparent awkwardness displayed by interview participants in associating

any city with sport. The number of respondents communicating such a position represents a significant body of opinion, as evidenced by the quotes in Fig 7.1.1 below:

Ohh, well Manchester has got its football, but I wouldn't say that its a sporting capital, I couldn't really tell you a city that was (Participant 49)

Closely associated with sport. I don't think I would pick any city to be honest, I mean it is not something I have really ever thought about (Participant 42)

I don't really think I associate any city with sport Why Do You Say That? Well it's not something that you think about, I mean some cities you associate with, I don't know, say music - I mean when you think of Vienna you think of music, but I don't honestly associate any city with sport - where do they have the tennis - its in London somewhere isn't it? I don't really know. (Participant 40)

To be honest I have never thought of any town or city as being a sporting city.
(Participant 28)

Umm, I just don't associate any city with sport, I don't I'm afraid. (Participant 17)

Figure 7.1.1 Interview excerpts displaying observed difficulties with the concept of a city of sport

Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield all covet renown as sporting cities, but the evidence illustrated in Fig 7.1.1 suggests that a lot of people simply do not really associate any city with sport. The relationship between urban areas and sporting endeavour may be justifiable through reference to its role in historical and contemporary urbanism (Karp and Yoels 1990), but that does not mean it is a meaningful relationship for potential tourists and therefore an effective urban reimagining theme. One of the propositions put forward in chapter 2 was the suggestion that because sport and the city are intrinsically linked, uniting these concepts may lead to more credible, recognisable and comprehensible urban reimagining strategies (section

2.9). However, the comments in Fig 7.1.1 suggest that ‘cities of sport’ or ‘sporting cities’ are something quite alien to a number of potential tourists. Part of the reason for this may be that sport is a rather vague term that encompasses a broad range of practices and experiences. This was illustrated in the views of one participant who, when asked which city they most closely associated with sport, replied:

‘Umm, (long pause) I don’t know. It depends what sport you are talking about really, doesn’t it? No, not one that cover all sports’

Participant 15

Similarly, participant 16 stated:

‘It is difficult, it depends on which sport you are thinking about’.

These comments suggest that sport may be too nebulous a term to use in reimagining, something that has perhaps resulted from its appropriation for different purposes and its resultant multiple meanings (see Baudrillard 1993 and chapter 3). However, in some cases the reticence to select a sporting capital is more easily explained by a lack of interest or knowledge about sport. This explanation was relevant to one participant, who answered:

‘Pass, I wouldn’t know. There’s not one I associate with sport’

Participant 36

This comment implies that it was sporting naivety that led to the difficulty in identifying a city of sport, rather than any intrinsic problem with uniting these abstract concepts. However, there were enough instances of cognitive difficulties with the concept of ‘sporting city’, even amongst sport enthusiasts, to concern cities who have devoted considerable resources in attempts to cultivate such perceptions.

7.1.3 Overall Summary

In implementing extensive sport reimagining strategies, Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield have stated that they aspire to gain renown as sporting cities (see chapter 5). Reassuringly, the study findings illustrate that all three cities are among the top six or seven UK cities in terms of their associations with sport. However, it is apparent that Birmingham and Sheffield do not possess sporting associations to match those of Gateshead, Liverpool, Newcastle and particularly Manchester. It is a concern that the recent strategies of Birmingham and Sheffield have not propelled these cities into the top five UK cities in terms of urban sporting reputations. Nevertheless, the cities can claim limited success in procuring sporting reputations that are more widely acknowledged than those of rival cities such as Nottingham, Bristol, Cardiff and, with respect to the important sport spectator sample, Leeds. These cities, particularly Leeds (Bramham 1998) and Cardiff (Stevens and Morgan 1998), have also implemented sport reimagining strategies and their relative lack of renown as sporting cities must be of some consolation to Birmingham and Sheffield. Manchester's sport initiatives appear to be justified by the sporting reputation of the city across both sport tourist segments and the wider population. However, from the results above, it is impossible to suggest the degree to which these sporting reputations are a result of recent sport initiatives. It is therefore necessary not only to examine which cities exhibit sporting reputations, but what prompted respondents to select cities as being closely associated with sport.

7.2 Accounting for the selection of sporting cities

The following analysis provides indicators that may account for the sporting reputations detailed above. The structured research instrument (see appendices a and b) contained one question that elicited justifications for sport-based city images explicitly. This question asked respondents to justify their observations about the cities that they had previously stated that they closely associate with sport. Respondents were asked to select one of the given options, or to use the space to add

justifications of their own. The results of this enquiry are the initial concern in this section.

7.2.1 Sport spectator sample

Factor	Number of respondents selecting this factor	Percent of respondents selecting this factor
Major football teams	59	78.67
Sport stadia	50	66.67
Other sport teams	27	36.00
Historical connections	21	28.00
New facilities	18	24.00
One-off events	16	21.33
Regular events	11	14.67
Olympic Games bids	11	14.67
Public facilities	6	8.00
Other	5	6.67

Table 7.2.1 *The justifications given by the sport spectator sample for selecting cities as being closely associated with sport*

The results referring to the sport spectator sample in Table 7.2.1 indicate that the presence of football teams (78.67%) and sport stadia (66.67%) are of particular importance in procuring sporting reputations for cities. However, the sport spectators do not consider Olympic Games bids to be very important in their selection of sporting cities (14.67%). In the context of the present study, this is an important finding, although it should be recognised that amongst the representative sample, nearly a third of respondents have selected Olympic bids as one of the most important factors (Table 7.2.2). Though the general public may be influenced by the popular and populist strategy of bidding for an Olympic Games (Cochrane et al 1996), it would appear that the important sport spectator sample are not particularly impressed by the bid's contribution to a city's sporting status. Indeed, the sport spectators are not influenced heavily by any of the factors relating directly to the implementation of recent initiatives. However, it should be recognised that the provision of new stadia

and arenas in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield has facilitated the formation of new sporting teams in non-traditional sports such as basketball and ice hockey. This could be construed as assisting the development of major sport teams - regarded as an important factor by 36% of the sport spectator sample (Table 7.2.1).

7.2.2 Representative sample

Factor	Number of respondents selecting that factor	Percent of respondents selecting this factor
Major Football teams	141	78.33
Sport stadia	110	61.11
Olympic Games bids	63	35.00
Other sport teams	53	29.44
One-off events	46	25.56
Public facilities	34	18.89
Regular events	31	17.22
Historical connections	27	15.00
New facilities	24	13.33
Other	8	4.44

Table 7.2.2 *The justifications given by representative sample for selecting cities as being closely associated with sport*

These results in Table 7.2.2 indicate that the two most important factors in determining the representative sample's selection of sporting cities are the presence of major football teams (78.33%) and sport stadia (61.11%) in a city. Other factors appear to be much less influential. In many ways, these results indicate why such a large proportion of respondents have selected Manchester as a sporting city. Certainly, it is difficult to imagine a city that has more obvious prestigious links with major football teams. In evaluating the effects of recently developed facilities, it should be recognised that recent stadium developments may have contributed to perceptions regarding sport stadia. However, it is possible to evaluate the importance of recent initiatives more directly by directing specific attention to the results

concerning 'Olympic Games bids', 'New facilities' and 'One-off events'. New facilities do not appear to be particularly influential, with only 13.33% identifying this as an important factor. 'One-off events' is selected as important by a sizeable proportion of respondents (25.56%), but only the option 'Olympic Games bid' is ranked amongst the most important factors (35%). However, this factor is considered far less important than the presence of major football teams and the provision of major sport stadia.

7.3 Supplementary statistical analysis

As the present study relies on cross sectional, rather than longitudinal data it is very difficult to isolate the exact influence of specific initiatives on urban sporting images. An innovative system of analysis has been devised which can help to explore this influence, although it cannot purport to isolate their exact impact. The aim is to substantiate whether people who are aware of new initiatives are more likely to select a city as one they closely associate with sport. Spearman's rho analysis has been used to explore this relationship, primarily because of the nature of the variables. The data relating to initiative awareness and associations with sport is expressed by ordinal variables and as Bryman and Cramer (1997) state, 'when examining pairs of ordinal variables, rho should be employed' (1997:185). The null hypothesis of these tests is that there is no relationship between the awareness of the new sport initiatives and the sporting image of a city. If the null hypothesis is accepted, the potency of the initiatives as vehicles for image enhancement would be severely challenged, as it would imply that these images are not related to people's awareness of the new initiatives. If sporting images do not differ between those who have heard of a new initiative and those who haven't, the impact of this new facility on the sporting image of a city is likely to be insignificant. The alternative hypothesis is that a relationship between awareness of recent initiatives and attribute-based image does exist. If the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the relationship is one where awareness leads to enhanced images, then this can be used as a positive indication of the impact of the sport initiatives. However, the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis does not automatically suggest that the initiatives themselves have caused image change. Both sample sets have been analysed and the results are illustrated below, commencing

with results relating to the sport spectator sample. To explore the relationships further, qualitative evidence is also used, but only with reference to the representative sample, as qualitative data was only obtained from a representative sample of potential tourists. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that a significant number of interview participants were active sport tourists and this allows consideration of the views of individuals who are regular sport spectators.

7.3.1 Sport spectator sample

Sport spectator sample

Birmingham	Birmingham sport city
Olympic bid	Spearman's rho
Correlation coefficient	0.049
Sig 2 tailed	0.674
N	75
NIA	
Correlation coefficient	0.054
Sig 2 tailed	0.646
N	75

Table 7.3.1 Results of Spearman's rho tests exploring the relationship between the awareness of Birmingham's recent sport initiatives and perceptions of the city as a sporting city (sport spectator sample). Significant relationships at a sig. level <0.05 are marked by ✓ and at a sig. level <0.01 by ✓✓.

The relationships between the awareness of Birmingham's recent sport initiatives and perceptions of the city as a sporting city are weak and statistically insignificant (sig >0.05, see Table 7.3.1). This suggests that these two initiatives are not instrumental in engendering perceptions of Birmingham as a 'sporting capital'. Just over 80% of both those who selected Birmingham and those who didn't, have heard of the NIA, demonstrating that this is not a crucial determinant in respondent's selection criteria. Similarly an awareness of Birmingham's Olympic bid does not appear to be related to people's choice of Birmingham as a city closely associated with sport.

Sport spectator sample

Manchester	Manchester sport city
	Spearman's rho
Olympic bids	
Correlation coefficient	0.132
Sig 2 tailed	0.255
N	75
Commonwealth Games	
Correlation coefficient	-0.008
Sig 2 tailed	0.944
N	75
Manchester Velodrome	
Correlation coefficient	0.167
Sig 2 tailed	0.153
N	75
Nynex Arena	
Correlation coefficient	0.241✓
Sig 2 tailed	0.037
N	75

Table 7.3.2 Results of Spearman's rho tests exploring the relationship between the awareness of Manchester's recent sport initiatives and perceptions of the city as a sporting city (sport spectator sample). Significant relationships at a sig. level <0.05 are marked by ✓ and at a sig. level <0.01 by ✓✓.

With regard to the Manchester results in Table 7.3.2, one significant relationship (<0.05) is apparent. There is a relationship between sport spectator's perceptions of Manchester as a sporting city and an awareness of the Nynex Arena in the city. Over 64% of those who selected Manchester as one of the UK's premier sporting cities were aware of the Nynex Arena, whereas amongst those who did not only 36.8% were

aware of this new facility. No other significant relationships are present. This suggests that apart from the Nynex Arena, Manchester's reputation as a sporting city amongst sport spectators is influenced primarily by factors other than the recently implemented initiatives.

Sport spectator sample

Sheffield	Sheffield Sport City
	Spearman's rho
Sheffield Arena	
Correlation coefficient	0.058
Sig 2 tailed	0.623
N	75
Ponds Forge	
Correlation coefficient	0.226
Sig 2 tailed	0.052
N	75
Sheffield WSG	
Correlation coefficient	0.128
Sig 2 tailed	0.274
N	75
Don Valley Stadium	
Correlation coefficient	0.087
Sig 2 tailed	0.458
N	75

Table 7.3.3 Results of Spearman's rho tests exploring the relationship between the awareness of Sheffield's recent sport initiatives and perceptions of the city as a sporting city (sport spectator sample). Significant relationships at a sig. level <0.05 are marked by ✓ and at a sig. level <0.01 by ✓✓.

With reference to Sheffield, no statistically significant relationships are present (Table 7.3.3). This suggests that amongst sport spectators the city's sporting reputation is not related to an awareness of Sheffield's new sport initiatives.

7.3.2 Representative sample

The results relating to the representative sample have also been analysed to explore relationships between awareness levels and sporting images amongst potential tourists in general. These statistical tests are complemented by the inclusion of qualitative evidence that helps to explain the mechanisms that underpin the identification of cities perceived to be closely associated with sport.

Birmingham

Representative sample

Birmingham	Birmingham sport city
	Spearman's rho
Olympic bid	
Correlation coefficient	0.086
Sig 2 tailed	0.249
N	180
NIA	
Correlation coefficient	0.139
Sig 2 tailed	0.063
N	180

Table 7.3.4 Results of Spearman's rho tests exploring the relationship between the awareness of Birmingham's recent sport initiatives and perceptions of the city as a sporting city (representative sample). Significant relationships at a sig. level <0.05 are marked by ✓ and at a sig. level <0.01 by ✓✓.

There are no statistically significant relationships (<0.05) between the awareness of Birmingham's recent sport initiatives and the perception of Birmingham as a sporting city (Table 7.3.4). This is despite the fact that over 93% of those who selected Birmingham as a city they closely associated with sport had heard of the NIA. The semi-structured interviews revealed that only two participants felt that they considered

Birmingham to be the city they most closely associated with sport. The views of these participants, illustrated in Fig 7.3.1 below, highlight the importance of the NEC, other unnamed venues and the eclectic range of sport available in the city in engendering this perception.

*I think it would be Birmingham, **Why Do You Say That?** Because of the venues, because of the NEC basically. (Participant 7)*

I think you have got to go for Birmingham actually, I think their sporting facilities, they offer a more extensive selection of sports, if you talk of Liverpool you talk of two football clubs, Sheffield is two football teams and cricket, but Birmingham with its NEC and various aspects it has more to offer than any other. (Participant 25)

Figure 7.3.1 Interview excerpts justifying the selection of Birmingham as the UK city most closely associated with sport.

In the responses to the structured questionnaire, every member of the representative sample who selected Birmingham as a city they closely associate with sport had heard of the NEC, whereas awareness levels of those who did not were 83%. This would appear to reaffirm the existence of a relationship between the NEC and the sporting reputation of Birmingham.

Manchester

Representative sample

Manchester	Manchester sport city
	Spearman's rho
Olympic bids	
Correlation coefficient	0.013
Sig 2 tailed	0.859
N	180
Commonwealth Games	
Correlation coefficient	-0.003
Sig 2 tailed	0.963
N	180
Manchester Velodrome	
Correlation coefficient	0.115
Sig 2 tailed	0.125
N	180
Nynex Arena	
Correlation coefficient	0.107
Sig 2 tailed	0.154
N	180

Table 7.3.5 Results of Spearman's rho tests exploring the relationship between the awareness of Manchester's recent sport initiatives and perceptions of the city as a sporting city (representative sample). Significant relationships at a sig. level <0.05 are marked by ✓ and at a sig. level <0.01 by ✓✓.

Table 7.3.5 illustrates that with respect to the representative sample, awareness levels of recent sport initiatives are unrelated to perceptions of Manchester as a sporting capital. As was revealed in earlier analysis, Manchester is perceived by a large

proportion of potential tourists as a sporting city. A total of 132 potential tourists selected Manchester as a city they closely associate with sport, but this group did not exhibit significantly higher awareness levels of the new initiatives than those who did not consider the city in such a manner. It would therefore appear that Manchester's sporting reputation is not based primarily on potential tourist's awareness of recent initiatives. This is confirmed by referring to evidence from the semi-structured interviews, which reveal that the primary reason potential tourists see Manchester as sporting city is because of football associations. This was a commonly held view epitomised by the dialogue in Fig 7.3.2 below:

Interviewer: Which city in the UK outside London do you most closely associate with sport?

Participant 22: *Manchester*

Interviewer: *Why Do You Say That?*

Participant 22: *Because of the football, just that.*

Figure 7.3.2 Interview excerpt concerning justifications for Manchester's sporting reputation

It should be recognised that the statistical analysis (Table 7.3.5) suggests no significant relationship between people's awareness of the Olympic Games bids and their perceptions of Manchester. However, confusingly, interviews with a representative sample of potential tourists reveal that the Olympic Games bids have contributed to perceptions of Manchester as sporting city. Indeed, one participant combined both the football and the Olympic links to justify their observation that Manchester was the city they most closely associate with sport.

I would say Manchester to be honest with you, again that is simply because of the football club, and I suppose the Olympic thing helped, because I think they went ahead anyway and developed a few things, building things for that bid, as a result of that bid, so Manchester I would say.

Participant 43

Several participants identified the Olympic bid as the main reason they had identified Manchester as the city they most closely associated with sport. The comments illustrated below would appear to confirm the findings illustrated in Table 7.3.2 that the representative sample have been influenced by the bids.

I suppose it has to be Manchester, they are the up and coming city, the ambitious city, the one trying to get the Olympic Games. They want to get the northern Wembley. So Manchester. (Participant 8)

It's got to be Manchester, Why Do You Say That? Just because they are bidding for the Olympics and the Commonwealth Games so they obviously have a good enough infrastructure to cope with those events. There is obviously something in place already for them to put in a bid. Just putting in a bid, I mean you don't put in a bid lightly, you don't want to put in a bid and build everything from new I know Australia is building a lot of new facilities and so did Malaysia, but generally they have got a reasonable infrastructure already in place. In Manchester they must have stadiums that can cater for some of the sports... to be able to handle an Olympic Games or Commonwealth Games you need to have pretty good running tracks and a velodrome stuff like that, indoor facilities. Therefore Manchester must have pretty good facilities. (Participant 2)

Manchester because of that Olympic bid. (Participant 27)

Figure 7.3.3 Interview excerpts concerning justifications for Manchester's sporting reputation

In addition to the responses detailed above, one participant appeared to have been almost subconsciously affected by the publicity surrounding the Olympic bid in stating

'I don't know, maybe Manchester, wasn't there some sort of Games there?'

Participant 29

This comment further highlights the influence of the Games, but also alludes to an interesting phenomenon, whereby the hype surrounding the Games actually engenders

perceptions that the Olympic Games actually happened. Participant 12's views could also be construed as reaffirming this phenomenon, in that they justified their perceptions of the city's sporting status by citing 'the Olympics', as a key factor, rather than the Olympic bids. However, participant 48 communicated an alternate perspective, stating that the sporting image of the city would have been enhanced *if* the bid had been successful (see Fig 7.3.4 below):

Interviewer: Which city in the UK outside London do you most closely associate with sport?

Participant 48: Manchester

Interviewer: Why Do You Say That?

Participant 48: Simply because of the football and the passion the city seems to have for all kinds of sport, obviously getting the Olympics would have helped, but I would say Manchester

Figure 7.3.4 Interview excerpt concerning justifications for Manchester's sporting reputation

Overall the qualitative analysis relating to the selection of Manchester as a sporting capital, reaffirms the central reason for this status – the city's association with football. However the interview transcripts also suggest that the Olympic Games bids have had an important impact.

Sheffield

Representative sample

Sheffield	Sheffield Sport City
	Spearman's rho
Sheffield Arena	
Correlation coefficient	0.216✓✓
Sig 2 tailed	0.004
N	180
Ponds Forge	
Correlation coefficient	0.186✓
Sig 2 tailed	0.013
N	180
Sheffield WSG	
Correlation coefficient	0.208✓✓
Sig 2 tailed	0.005
N	180
Don Valley Stadium	
Correlation coefficient	0.178✓
Sig 2 tailed	0.017
N	180

Table 7.3.6 Results of Spearman's rho tests exploring the relationship between the awareness of Sheffield's recent sport initiatives and perceptions of the city as a sporting city (representative sample). Significant relationships at a sig. level <0.05 are marked by ✓ and at a sig. level <0.01 by ✓✓.

In contrast to the results from other cities, it would appear that with regard to the representative sample, an awareness of the new initiatives is strongly related to perceptions that Sheffield is closely associated with sport. The results (Table 7.3.6) show that very strong and statistically significant relationships exist between an

awareness of both Sheffield Arena and the World Student Games, and perceptions of Sheffield as a sporting city (sig <0.01). Table 7.3.6 also illustrates that relationships concerning both Ponds Forge and The Don Valley Stadium and perceptions of Sheffield's sporting reputation are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. Comparing the specific awareness levels of those who consider Sheffield to be one of the UK's premier sporting cities, and those who don't, further emphasises these findings. For example, whilst over 52% of those selecting Sheffield as a sporting city had heard of the WSG, only 24% of those failing to award Sheffield this status were aware that Sheffield staged this event. When investigated further, all the significant relationships above reveal significantly higher awareness levels amongst those who consider Sheffield to be closely associated with sport. To check the validity of these findings, more established products were analysed to see if it was merely an awareness of recent sport initiatives that was related to perceptions of the city or whether other sporting connections played a role. No significant relationships were observed regarding the awareness of Hillsborough and Sheffield Ski Village and Sheffield's status as a sport city, suggesting that these initiatives have not had a significant impact on those aware of their existence. This further confirms the potency of the new initiatives in 'driving' Sheffield's sporting image.

This finding suggests that Sheffield's rather undeveloped reputation as a city of sport amongst the general public is the result of a lack of awareness, rather than the impotency, of the recent initiatives. Despite the apparent influence of the recent initiatives, it should be remembered that only one participant in the semi-structured interviews felt that Sheffield was the nation's premier sporting city (participant 6). Ironically, this selection was justified by the city's established links with snooker which seem set to be severed if, as is expected, the World Championship is moved from Sheffield because of the capacity constraints of its traditional home – Sheffield's Crucible Theatre.

7.4 Perceived links between the cities and sport

To explore the sporting images of the individual cities further, interview participants were asked explicitly about the links between sport and each individual case study city, and whether these links had changed in recent years. This permitted an examination of each of the case study cities' perceived sporting associations, even if a city had not been selected as the one that interviewees most closely associated with sport. This analysis can be used to explore if and why potential tourists feel that a city doesn't have a strong sporting image, as well as why they think certain cities do. The extent to which recent initiatives were used to justify these observations and perceptions of image is examined explicitly.

7.4.1 Birmingham

Connections between sport and the city of Birmingham were not made readily by potential tourists. This attitude was further illustrated by several comments in the interviews that explicitly renounced Birmingham's sporting status (see Fig 7.4.1.1 below):

I don't really think of Birmingham as a sporting city (Participant 21)

I think there other cities which are more interested in sport than Birmingham is, I can't remember them doing an awful lot to do with sport. (Participant 39)

Not that I know of, it is not something I immediately associate Birmingham with. (Participant 42)

No, apart from football and they are not really very strong on that are they? Umm, no I can't really say I link Birmingham with sport, not with sport in general anyway. (Participant 8)

Figure 7.4.1.1 Interview excerpts distancing Birmingham from sporting associations

One interviewee felt that this lack of an intrinsic association resulted from a lack of publicity regarding Birmingham's sporting image, stating;

'There is certainly a strong sporting profile of running and as the city as a venue for participating in sport, but certainly not a current, headline grabbing link between sport and the city

Participant 28

For another participant, this lack of a 'headline grabbing link' appears to result from the lack of a high profile stadium (see Fig 7.4.1.2 below):

Interviewer: *Do you think there are strong links between Birmingham and sport*

Participant 11: *No*

Interviewer: *Why do you say that?*

Participant 11: *Because I can't think of a sporting stadium or anything like that that I know of. I mean your next question will probably be about Manchester, aren't you, but I know there is Old Trafford and Maine Rd there, I don't know anything about sport, but I can name you the sporting stadiums in Manchester, but I can't name any in Birmingham.*

Figure 7.4.1.2 *Interview excerpt explaining Birmingham's lack of obvious sporting associations*

These comments reveal the importance of visible high profile sport stadia which Nielsen (1995) feels provide an important 'framework for the outward representation of the city' (Nielsen 1995:21). The comments highlighted in Fig 7.4.1.2 suggest that Birmingham's unsuccessful bid to be the location for a new National Stadium could have provided an important boost for the city's sport-related image. The participants who stated that the city did possess strong sporting links felt that these were mainly the result of established football, cricket and athletics connections, rather than recent initiatives. One participant did explicitly mention the NIA in justifying sporting associations and several others pointed to the influence of the NEC and its role in nurturing and hosting sports such as basketball and ice hockey. However, when asked about image change, participants were more likely to acknowledge the influence of recent initiatives. Four participants mentioned the NIA in justifying why they thought

the links between Birmingham and sport had been strengthened and four interviewees mentioned the positive influence of the Olympic bid. One response implied that the Olympics might have helped to improve images of sports provision in the city (see Fig 7.4.1.3 below):

Interviewer: Do you think these links [between Birmingham and sport] have become stronger or weaker over the past ten years?

Participant 10: Didn't they try for the Olympic Games was it? Obviously going for it, they must want to improve the facilities and increase awareness of sport in the city, but they didn't quite get it. You don't go for the Olympics unless you have the sports facilities there or are prepared to improve them, so the links must be pretty strong and have got stronger

Figure 7.4.1.3 Interview excerpt inferring sports provision from Birmingham's Olympic bid

However, this link was questioned by the views of another participant, who felt unsure whether the Games had actually procured any tangible changes in Birmingham's sporting provision:

'I mean they have been going in for these Games, but whether that has made the links with sport stronger I don't know, I mean they seem to be wanting to be seen to be associated with those sort of things, but whether it has made any difference in terms of the amount of sport that goes on in the city I don't know

Participant 45

This attitude reveals a degree of scepticism about the sport initiatives, implying that the city may have merely tried to be 'seen' to develop a sporting image rather than making a genuine commitment to sport. Such cynicism may affect the 'credibility' of sport initiatives, which was proposed in chapter 2 (section 2.9) as one of the potential benefits of sport reimaging vis a vis other reimaging themes. Overall, the initiatives appear to have made only a minimal impact on a small number of participants, supporting the observations made previously that the NIA and the Olympic bid have actually made only a modest contribution to Birmingham's image as a sporting city.

7.4.2 Manchester

The vast majority of participants felt that there were very strong links between Manchester and sport, with a substantial proportion citing the city's links with football to qualify this perception. Indeed, there was evidence that footballing associations dominate at the expense of other sporting images, questioning whether Manchester has developed an image as a city of sport, or whether it has simply gained renown as a city of football. An example of this evidence is cited in Fig 7.4.2.1 below:

Interviewer: Do you think there are strong links between Manchester and sport?

Participant 26: Well yes, because of Manchester United...I think its probably one of the main attractions of the city isn't it, for people to go up there. I think its got more of a football image than an image connected to other sports.

Figure 7.4.2.1 Interview excerpt demonstrating the use of football to justify Manchester's sporting links.

However, despite this concern, there were enough participants who communicated Manchester's links with sport in general to assert that the city has developed a reputation both as a footballing city and a sporting city. The way in which connections with sport were made almost suggests that this is an implicit or sub-conscious association. For example one respondent stated:

'I don't know what it is - it just sounds right, I mean I suppose there is the football but its more than that, but I can't really say that's why, I just think of sport when I think Manchester'

Participant 45

The Olympic Games bids appear to have been influential in engendering this relationship, with nine participants citing the bids in qualifying their assertion that the city exhibits strong sporting links. Individual products such as the Nynex Arena (mentioned by 1 participant) and Velodrome (mentioned by 2) were not as oft-cited, although one participant did exhibit a remarkable knowledge of a range of recent developments (see Fig 7.4.2.2 below):

Interviewer: *Do you think there are strong links between Manchester and sport?*

Participant 5: *Well Manchester, well I mentioned the thing about the Olympic Games which they tried to get. I know they have got the Commonwealth Games. They are building a big sports centre there and from what I have heard Manchester City are actually trying to leave Maine Rd and go and play there - 70,000 seater I believe. They have got the Velodrome in Manchester up in Manchester as well, the National Cycling centre or something isn't it. What's the other place they have got up there. They have got a big sports place as well - what do you call it, the Nynex Centre, which is an indoor basketball and ice hockey place which has been sponsored by the equivalent of Telewest - a telecommunication, cable company. Obviously United have developed their ground. Took my grandsons to look at that last week, wonderful isn't it? You look up at it and think wow.*

Figure 7.4.2.2 *Interview excerpt demonstrating one participant's citation of recent initiatives to justify Manchester's sporting links.*

The above comments could be attributed to the high profile nature of Manchester's initiatives but really are probably more a result of this participant's familiarity with the city because of a vocation that involves a substantial amount of travelling. One participant questioned the profile of Manchester's sporting links and in doing so proved to be the only interviewee who did not feel there were strong links between Manchester and sport (see Fig 7.4.2.3).

Interviewer: *Do you think there are strong links between Manchester and sport?*

Participant 15: *Its also the football that would steer that*

Interviewer: *Do you think these links have become stronger or weaker over the past ten years?*

Participant 15: *I have no impression of that, but then I have no particular interest in sport, I am not a football supporter of any club, so it would have to be something that I hear a lot about in the media, it would have to be a clearer than clear message in order to be allow me to be able to pick it up and know, I think Birmingham has made that message clear, but I don't think Manchester have and I certainly don't think that Sheffield has.*

Figure 7.4.2.3 *Interview excerpt concerning perceptions that Manchester is not linked with sport*

The views of this participant (see Fig 7.4.2.3) indicate that images of sporting links are linked to personal interest. However, they contradict other findings as Manchester was generally considered to be a city where media coverage has helped secure positive links with sport. Furthermore, in the rest of the interviews, both those who expressed an interest in sport and those who did not, appeared to consider Manchester as a sporting city. Generally, interview participants thought that these links had been strengthened in recent years. Six participants cited the Games bids in qualifying this viewpoint, pointing once again to the influence of this initiative in generating associations with sport. Although the new facilities were not mentioned as frequently, there was evidence that the bids had generated inferences in the minds of potential tourists that the city now boasted a range of impressive new sport facilities. The dialogue cited in Fig 7.4.2.4 below is illustrative of such inferences, which were also observed with respect to Birmingham's Olympic bid:

Interviewer: *Do you think these links [between Manchester and sport] have become stronger or weaker over the past ten years?*

Participant 8: *Yes, stronger*

Interviewer: *Why do you say that?*

Participant 8: *Because of the bids, they will have all of the facilities there for all of the sports, which must make the links stronger.*

Figure 7.4.2.4 Interview excerpt displaying inferences generated by Manchester's Olympic bids

Evidence from the interview transcripts also reveals a prevalent positive attitude to Manchester's attempts to stage prestigious sport events. There was a general feeling that the city's attempts to secure the Olympic Games were admirable and there was little evidence of the cynicism that pervaded initial media coverage of the bids (see chapter 5). The dialogue below illustrates the enthusiasm for Manchester's efforts (Fig 7.4.2.5):

Interviewer: *Do you think these links [between Manchester and sport] have become stronger or weaker over the past ten years?*

Participant 38: *Stronger I would think*

Interviewer: *Why do you say that?*

Participant 38: *Because of the Olympics I think, I think they want this new arena in Manchester, I think they deserve it to be honest.*

Figure 7.4.2.5 Interview excerpt demonstrating a reaction to Manchester's Olympic bids.

Similarly, participant 8 communicated a very positive attitude towards the bids:

I know they tried anyway to get the Olympic Games, they didn't get it, but I think they are trying again next time, but a good thing for Manchester isn't it? Good luck to them.

Participant 8

However, the appreciation of the wider motives behind the initiatives may actually temper their capacity to enhance Manchester's sporting reputation. This appreciation

is exemplified by the comments below (see Fig 7.4.9), which illustrates that some participants felt that the city's attempts to bring the Olympic Games to Manchester should not be understood simply in terms of sporting ambitions.

Interviewer: *Do you think there are strong links between Manchester and sport?*

Participant 18: *Well I know they bid for the Olympics, that's the only link I think of, they were every keen for that, now whether they were keen to have it for sporting reasons, or for other reasons is probably another question*

Figure 7.4.2.6 Interview excerpt demonstrating cynicism regarding Manchester's Olympic bid

Although such comments do not exhibit any negativity towards Manchester's initiatives, there is the possibility that the recognition of strategic intentions could engender the sort of cynicism exhibited by participant 3. When asked whether there were strong links between Manchester and sport this participant answered;

'Well I think people think there are because they put in for the Olympics'

Participant 3

This comment appears to question the authenticity of the city's sporting links, a feeling that could be further amplified by an awareness that Manchester was deliberately attempting to strengthen associations with sport.

Evidence from the interviews suggests that increased coverage of sport in the media has strengthened links between cities and sport. Furthermore, specific comments suggest that Manchester has managed to infiltrate a significant proportion of this increased exposure. In attempting to qualify their observation that Manchester had become more closely linked with sport, participant 19 stated;

'Manchester seems to be always in the news, I think that is the point, you read more about them , you hear more about them'.

This view was shared by another participant, who when asked whether links between Manchester and sport had become stronger or weaker over the past ten years replied:

'Probably stronger, I think sport seems to be getting a lot of coverage on the TV and in the papers and Manchester is somewhere you hear about a lot'

Participant 29

As Goodwin (1993) states, the contemporary city is conscious of the need to promote itself through mass media coverage of sport and the coverage devoted to Manchester United, and to a lesser extent the Olympic bids, appears to suggest that Manchester has managed to generate such exposure. This has resulted in a strong, albeit rather inadvertently procured, urban sporting image.

7.4.3 Sheffield

As was observed with regard to the city of Birmingham, there was disagreement amongst interview participants about the links between Sheffield and sport. A significant number felt the city did not possess strong links, a viewpoint exemplified by the views of participant 39:

Interviewer: Do you think there are strong links between the city of Sheffield and sport

Participant 39: Ummm, not really, nothing I can sort of say yes I think of them being associated with that sport. I mean you think of Edinburgh for athletics, Sunderland and Middlesbrough for football, but I can't put my finger on anything for Sheffield, nothing I can say yes I would say that is what Sheffield is about

Figure 7.4.3.1 Interview excerpt demonstrating the view that Sheffield is not associated with sport

Those that did associate the city with sport commonly cited the footballing tradition in the city, reaffirming this as the primary means via which UK cities and sport are conjoined in the minds of potential tourists. The recent initiatives were only mentioned by a very small number of interview participants in detailing prominent sporting associations. One mentioned the 'new running track' and another 'the paraplegic Olympics', whilst only one mention of the World Student Games was recorded in this part of the interview. Unfortunately this mention was accompanied

by the observation that the event 'proved to be a bit of a disaster' (participant 24). This rather negative addendum suggests that the negative media coverage of the WSG in the national media has infiltrated the perceptions of this potential tourist. The most overtly positive mention of the influence of recent initiatives was made by one participant who felt that although Sheffield's sporting associations were limited to ice hockey, this association was an attractive one (see Fig 7.4.3.2):

Interviewer: Do you think there are strong links between the city of Sheffield and sport?

Participant 49: *Not really, just the ice hockey again, which I used to be heavily into. They have a good ice hockey team in Sheffield in the arena. I was talking to a friend of mine, a work colleague actually, who supports Sheffield and he said that the whole atmosphere and ambience of going to watch ice hockey in Sheffield is brilliant, because the whole community gets into it, whereas years ago, before they built the arena, it was nothing, Sheffield just had an ice hockey team and that was it, it wasn't this big thing, and all of a sudden it has got into Gladiator style, because they do the filming there in Sheffield for that don't they. All this jumping about singing and that, it is good for the atmosphere, it is ridiculous like, but people seem to enjoy it.*

Figure 7.4.3.2 Interview excerpt addressing ice hockey's contribution to Sheffield's sporting links

Despite the confusion expressed regarding the host venue for the Gladiators TV programme (it is actually filmed at the NIA, Birmingham), Fig 7.4.3.2 shows how sport initiatives can contribute to developing positive experiences for tourists visiting a city. The excerpt also illustrates the importance of solicited and unsolicited information from peers highlighted by Gartner (1996), and the importance of creating spectacles to the development of positive urban sporting reputations. In this instance, it is not the physical form of the stadium, the prestige attached to an event or media coverage which has influenced on Sheffield's image, but the actual experience of engaging with an event. The Arena obviously assists this experience, but the imageable element of the sport product is not primarily the engagement with the landscape of the sport event (as proposed by Raitz 1987), but the atmosphere of the event itself. Figure 7.4.3.2 shows that the fervour, atmosphere and spectacle created by certain sport events can have an important effect on sporting images of the city,

despite the difficulties in communicating these qualities to potential tourists. It also shows the importance of indoor arenas and stadia in stimulating interest in sports such as ice hockey, in certain circumstances enabling the formation of new teams. This suggests that to understand the influence of these initiatives on city images, it is important to recognise the indirect influence of the provision of urban sporting arenas.

A larger proportion of participants mentioned the new initiatives when asked whether they thought that Sheffield's links with sport had become stronger or weaker over the past ten years. Two participants mentioned the influence of the WSG in strengthening these links and several also mentioned the fortified links with athletics. Ponds Forge was mentioned by one participant who clearly felt that the WSG and associated initiatives had strengthened the city's sport associations (see Fig 7.4.3.3).

Participant 52: Yes, it had the....I mean it has done a lot to promote itself and get a lot of events there.

Interviewer: Do you think these links have become stronger or weaker over the past ten years?

Participant 52: Stronger

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

Participant 52: They have built lots of new facilities, that they have put in.

Interviewer: Like what?

Participant 52: The things they put in for the Student Games, they have got a big new swimming area now - Ponds Forge, is it Ponds Forge, that is all I know basically

Figure 7.4.3.3 Interview excerpt citing justifications for Sheffield's sporting links

A further vindication of the WSG strategy can be found in the comments of one participant who felt that because 'those in high places' in the world of sport had deemed Sheffield worthy of recognition, this confirmed the city's sporting prowess. Participant 34 stated:

'Obviously as it has been chosen as a place of sporting excellence I would certainly say yes there are strong links there now'

This highlights an interesting dynamic where the conferment of sporting status by sport organisations actually results in enhanced perceptions of the city's image as city of sport. Therefore accolades such as the National City of Sport not only reflect a city's sporting provision but can also help to generate awareness and enhance perceptions of those qualities. However, comments from potential tourists exemplifying an appreciation of Sheffield's WSG legacy were rare. Moreover, not all the responses which did mention the WSG had positive implications for Sheffield's image. When asked whether the links between Sheffield and sport had become stronger or weaker, participant 28 answered:

'I know they had the Games, but I'm not really sure whether that has strengthened sport in the city and certainly hasn't made me think of Sheffield more as a sporty place'

Participant 28

This rather damning verdict casts doubts over the potency of the WSG initiatives a vehicle for sport imaging. Indeed, it would appear that some of the more established sporting links are as, if not more, effective in engendering sporting associations. For example many participants mentioned the links between the city and snooker. Of particular concern were those participants who felt that the city's links with sport had actually been weakened over recent years. Certainly, one participant clearly felt Sheffield had failed to capitalise on the growing importance of sport in the contemporary era (se Fig 7.4.3.4):

Interviewer: *Do you think these links have become stronger or weaker over the past ten years?*

Participant 4: *For me, I would say weaker*

Interviewer: *Why do you say that?*

Participant 41: *Because I don't really think they have a reputation for sport and so they haven't really capitalised. I mean sport has become much bigger and much more important in the last few years and I don't think Sheffield has really capitalised on that.*

Figure 7.4.3.4 *Interview excerpt addressing justifications for Sheffield's weakened sporting links*

Some felt that this meant the city had fallen behind in the urban race to gain sporting renown (see Fig 7.4.3.5):

Interviewer: *Do you think these links between Sheffield and sport have become stronger or weaker over the past ten years?*

Participant 32: *Weaker*

Interviewer: *Why do you say that?*

Participant 32: *Because you don't hear people talking about Sheffield, its all Manchester, more Manchester and Manchester Utd*

Figure 7.4.3.5 *Interview excerpt addressing justifications for Sheffield's weakened sporting links*

Overall, the observations made by interviewees emphasise that Sheffield's sporting image is still relatively undeveloped, and that the initiatives implemented have only influenced the sporting images of a minimal number of potential tourists. The results of the previous chapter and the previous statistical analysis suggests that this is primarily the result of low awareness levels. However, this section has revealed that the success of these initiatives in cultivating positive sporting connections has been restricted by a some degree of impotency, largely the result of the overbearing influence of Manchester's dominant image which is based on more popular and more prominent associations.

7.4.4 General observations

As well as observing the impact of the initiatives in each city, it is possible to use the semi-structured interviews to make some general observations about the formation of urban sporting images. The interviews revealed the importance of football in generating these images and many responses almost automatically equated sport with football. For example when asked whether there were strong links between Birmingham and sport, one participant replied;

'No, they haven't got a premier side have they?

Participant 10

Football themes are not a key component of recent initiatives implemented by Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. These links already exist and are perpetuated by the current strength of the sport in the UK. However, the dominance of football does appear to be overshadowing attempts to associate these cities with sport. This appears to suggest that municipal authorities and the initiatives they implement are not particularly influential in determining sporting images, questioning the value of their continued involvement in such objectives. This is further emphasised by evidence from the interviews that sporting links are not based primarily on the provision of sport events and facilities in a city, but on the performance of high profile sporting teams. As one participant stated:

'I think success tends to breed strong links'

Participant 10

This view was communicated by several participants and is typified by the implicit criteria for strong sporting links exhibited in the views of participant 2:

Interviewer: *Do you think there are strong links between Sheffield and sport?*

Participant 2: *Ummm,, not so strong really, I don't think they are ever mentioned that much, I mean on a stag night once, we met some blokes that were Sheffield Wednesday supporters and one of the questions we asked them was what have you ever won and they had a job telling us, they said they'd been in the final of the league cup or something and I can't remember Sheffield having that much to do with sport, I means is it Sheffield Steelers or something? I don't follow Ice Hockey, but I can't say that Sheffield have done that much or won that much in the world of sport.*

Figure 7.4.4.1 *Interview excerpt demonstrating the importance of success and football to urban sporting images*

The observed importance of 'success' renders the role of the municipal authorities in manipulating sporting image even more problematic. Other evidence provided by the semi-structured interviews further questions the influence of deliberate attempts to influence sporting images. The vast majority of interviewees felt that links between the case study cities and sport had become stronger over the past ten years. However, the responses revealed that this was not perceived to be a result of the deliberate efforts of these cities, but simply because interviewees felt that sport had become a more popular, prominent and powerful force. The feeling was that this had then permeated through all aspects of society, with the strengthening of urban sporting links merely one result. Cities are turning to sport because of its popularity, media exposure and prominence in contemporary society, but though this may make sport an attractive imaging theme, it also means sporting reputations are difficult to manipulate. Mass exposure and growing demand means that urban sporting associations are communicated constantly in diverse ways by a range of different media. Therefore cities trying to direct a sporting image of a city are impeded, and, by apparently ignoring the sporting images of the city that already exist, risk rendering 'official' images redundant. In chapter 2 it was hypothesised that one of the advantages of sport reimagining is that it utilises 'autonomous image formation agents' that are more credible and penetrative (Gartner 1993, 1996). However, it would appear that this is also a disadvantage, as it is difficult to control these agents and the messages they disseminate. Football dominates the images of potential tourists, and

the apparent reluctance of cities to adopt this theme, whether because of political reasons or fears about negative connotations, means that sport reimagining strategies are constantly competing for attention rather than coveting it.

7.5 Images of specific sports products in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield

To further explore the sporting attribute-based city images, it is useful to look beyond general associations with sport to examine images of specific products. For the purposes of this study, perceptions of three such products have been examined as they epitomise the initiatives introduced in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. These three urban features are the provision of sport events, sport stadia and indoor arenas. The first of these attributes is important as sport events comprise the conventional product consumed by the urban sport tourist. However, the actual venues in which these events are staged are also important and comprise a significant component of the sport tourism product. This is particularly pertinent in considering the growing demand for stadium tours and associated sport-related museums/exhibitions (Stevens and Wootton 1997). Even in relation to traditional spectator sport, the stadium in which an event is staged is very important. Raitz (1987) affirms this stance, stating that 'sports fans.....are drawn as much by their anticipation of interacting with the place of an event as with the event itself' (Raitz 1987:5). The provision of indoor arenas would appear to be similarly important, as these facilities are used regularly by ice hockey and basketball teams, as well as for a whole host of different one-off sporting competitions (e.g. Davis Cup tennis and indoor athletics at the NIA, Birmingham). Mullin et al confirm the importance of analysing perceptions of specific attributes that make up the overall sports product in stating that 'consumer's develop [sport] product images based upon their perceptions of the product's attributes' (1993: 268). Mullin et al's views further advocate the analysis of perceptions of stadia and indoor arenas via their assertion that 'the image and location of a facility are extremely important factors in the success of the sport product' (1993:146).

The degree to which a city is perceived to provide these sport tourism products is examined below. The results are based primarily on responses to the structured questionnaire but are supplemented, where appropriate, by observations from the semi-structured interviews. Of specific concern to this section are responses to question 7 (see appendices a and b) where respondents were asked to allocate each city a rating to represent their perceptions of the provision of specific sport products. To allow urban sport products to be contextualised, respondents were also asked to rate other tourism products commonly used in urban reimagining. The choice of these comparative attributes was determined by a content analysis of urban tourism promotional literature produced by the three case study cities' tourism marketing bureaux (BCVB 1998, Marketing Manchester 1998, Destination Sheffield 1998). Recurring themes were noted and the products selected were deemed to represent other attributes that have been used to promote these cities to potential tourists. However, the list of products was not meant to be an exhaustive list of urban tourism attributes, but merely a means of comparing perceptions of sport-related products with products also used to assist the reimagining of the city destination.

If respondents felt unable to judge a specific product in one of the cities, they were asked to write DK (Don't Know) in the relevant space. This ensured that only those ratings where people felt confident enough to provide images were included in the study. It is therefore interesting to note the extent to which this 'Don't Know' option was utilised, as it gives us an impression of the 'prominence' of certain urban products in unfamiliar cities. A detailed analysis is undertaken of the images that have been elicited, including an assessment of the degree to which recent sport initiatives have contributed to the sporting images of the cities. The section concludes with an analysis of the importance of experience of a city in determining respondent's sporting attribute-based images.

7.5.1 The sport spectator sample

Urban product	N	Mean	St Dev
Birmingham Indoor Arenas	55	4.29	0.98
Manchester Sport Stadia	61	4.25	0.91
Manchester Sport Events	57	4.19	0.99
Birmingham Shows/Concerts	54	4.04	0.99
Manchester Shopping Facilities	58	3.88	0.94
Manchester Indoor Arenas	48	3.85	1.09
Birmingham Sport Events	61	3.84	1
Manchester Shows/Concerts	52	3.83	1
Sheffield Shopping Facilities	57	3.82	0.95
Birmingham Shopping Facilities	56	3.8	1.02
Sheffield Sport Stadia	59	3.71	0.89
Sheffield Sport Events	54	3.67	1.08
Manchester Theatres/Concert Halls	51	3.63	1.04
Birmingham Sport Stadia	61	3.57	1.13
Sheffield Indoor Arenas	45	3.49	1.12
Birmingham Theatres/Concert Halls	50	3.44	0.95
Manchester Art Galleries	35	3.29	1.27
Sheffield Shows/Concerts	46	3.22	1.03
Sheffield Theatres/Concert Halls	42	3.1	0.98
Birmingham Cultural Festivals	34	3	1.13
Manchester Cultural Festivals	35	2.89	1.08
Manchester Waterfront Developments	33	2.88	1.47
Manchester Museums/Heritage Sites	43	2.84	1.13
Birmingham Museums/Heritage Sites	43	2.84	0.95
Sheffield Museums/Heritage Sites	41	2.83	0.83
Birmingham Art Galleries	33	2.76	1
Birmingham Waterfront Developments	33	2.52	1.52
Sheffield Art Galleries	28	2.5	0.92
Sheffield Cultural Festivals	32	2.44	0.84
Sheffield Waterfront Developments	25	1.72	0.94

Table 7.5.1 The mean attribute-based image ratings of the sport spectator sample

The mean attribute-based image scores of products with reference the sport spectator sample are displayed in Table 7.5.1, along with the associated standard deviation. It is useful to note that in this part of the study, respondents allocating a city a rating of 5 denotes perceptions of an ‘excellent’ provision of that product, 4 represents ‘good’ provision, 3 ‘average provision’, 2 ‘poor’ provision and a rating of 1 denotes ‘very poor’ provision’ (see appendix a). The contents of Table 7.5.1 indicate that the provision of sport-related products in Birmingham and Manchester is perceived more favourably than Sheffield’s provision. However, the mean image scores elicited from this group of sport spectators are consistently high, indicating that the sport spectators are generally impressed with the sport products offered in all three cities. These positive images are important, especially as it is sport spectators whom cities presumably hope to impress with their sporting reputations. Birmingham’s indoor arenas (mean image rating 4.29), and Manchester’s provision of sport stadia (4.25) and sport events (4.19) are perceived particularly favourably. All three of these facilities are attributed mean image scores of over 4, indicating very positive images. The lowest rating of any of the sport products is attributed to Sheffield’s provision of indoor arenas, a product that exhibits a mean image rating of 3.49. In general, the sport products are perceived more favourably than the provision of other attributes addressed in the study. Indeed, they are regarded more favourably than all three cities’ provision of museums/heritage sites, art galleries, waterfronts and cultural festivals. Only the provision of shopping facilities and shows/concerts is perceived as positively as sport products. The only potential problem with these consistently favourable perceptions is that not one of these cities appears to be distinguishing themselves significantly from the others. However, the seemingly narrow range of responses may be a little misleading as it must be remembered that a five point likert scale has been used. Therefore, though differences between the mean responses may appear small, they should be considered quite significant. Birmingham’s arenas and Manchester’s sport events and stadia exhibit mean ratings at least 0.34 higher than the next most highly rated product (Manchester Arenas 3.85) and this should be considered as constituting a significant difference. As a result, these three products should be regarded as being perceived significantly more favourably than other sport tourism products in the cities included in the research.

7.5.2 The representative sample

Urban product	N	Mean	St Dev
Birmingham Indoor Arenas	112	4.2	0.93
Sheffield Shopping Facilities	112	4.04	0.99
Manchester Sport Stadia	118	4.03	0.86
Manchester Shopping Facilities	121	3.98	0.93
Manchester Sport Events	112	3.97	0.94
Birmingham Shows/Concerts	118	3.97	0.93
Birmingham Shopping Facilities	126	3.93	0.9
Manchester Shows/Concerts	112	3.83	0.99
Birmingham Sport Events	109	3.71	0.93
Birmingham Sport Stadia	114	3.69	0.95
Manchester Indoor Arenas	93	3.69	1.02
Sheffield Sport Events	94	3.67	1.13
Sheffield Sport Stadia	104	3.66	1
Birmingham Theatres/Concert Halls	107	3.64	0.93
Manchester Theatres/Concert Halls	104	3.6	0.91
Sheffield Indoor Arenas	86	3.45	1.18
Sheffield Shows/Concerts	92	3.38	1.04
Birmingham Cultural Festivals	75	3.37	0.98
Manchester Museums/Heritage Sites	98	3.24	1.03
Manchester Art Galleries	76	3.22	1
Sheffield Theatres/Concert Halls	85	3.14	1.03
Manchester Cultural Festivals	71	3.13	1.01
Birmingham Art Galleries	79	3.05	1.13
Manchester Waterfront Developments	67	3.01	1.16
Birmingham Museums/Heritage Sites	98	2.98	0.99
Sheffield Cultural Festivals	61	2.72	1.11
Sheffield Museums/Heritage Sites	83	2.69	0.97
Sheffield Art Galleries	64	2.67	0.98
Birmingham Waterfront Developments	59	2.54	1.19
Sheffield Waterfront Developments	50	2.08	1.03

Table 7.5.2 The mean attribute-based image ratings of the sport spectator sample

Before the mean ratings exhibited by this sample are analysed, it is important to note the figure in the first column of Table 7.5.2 indicating how many respondents were able to provide an attribute-based image rating for each product. Despite the large number of people who were obviously reticent to judge many of the urban features under consideration, it would appear that in the majority of cases, respondents were willing and able to assess *sporting* products. Of the ten urban products that received the highest response rates in terms of numerate responses, five were sport tourism products - Manchester's stadia (118 respondents), Birmingham's stadia (114), Birmingham's indoor arenas (112), Manchester's sport events (112), and Birmingham's sport events (109). This confirms the capacity of urban sport products to communicate themselves to a general audience and achieve prominence in the urban tourism marketplace. These results are particularly impressive when the relative inexperience of these potential tourists is taken into consideration. Indeed, in the present study, of the potential tourists who participated, 35% had never been to Birmingham, 44.4% had never visited Manchester and 62.2% had no experience of Sheffield. The fact that a large proportion of these potential tourists felt willing and able to attribute Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield a rating for their provision of sport events and stadia is therefore testament to the communicative power of these sport products.

Birmingham's indoor arenas exhibit the most positive image of the attributes addressed here, with an average rating attributed of 4.2. As has already been established, a large proportion of the sample are aware of the NIA and NEC and these two facilities may have contributed to this positive image. Two other products have also been attributed image ratings above a mean score of 4, indicating that provision of those features is considered very favourably. Sheffield's shopping facilities are clearly appreciated by this sample (mean 4.04), as is Manchester's provision of stadia (4.03). It is also interesting to note that in measuring the dispersion of these mean scores, Manchester's stadia exhibits the least deviation from the mean (0.86). This relatively low deviation confirms that the city's stadia are consistently regarded very positively by potential tourists. Manchester's sporting image is also reaffirmed by positive perceptions of the city's provision of sport events which are attributed a mean

of 3.97. All the other sport product images measured reveal mean ratings of between 3.45 and 3.71, indicating that these facilities are consistently rated highly.

Nevertheless, in comparing the results for the three cities, it is justifiable to note that Sheffield's provision of sport tourism products is regarded less favourably than that of Birmingham and Manchester. In a ranked list of sporting products, Sheffield products occupy three of the bottom four positions. However, it should also be noted that although Sheffield's products are rated less highly than those in Birmingham and Manchester, Sheffield's provision of sport events and stadia is rated much more highly than other products in the city also used as reimagining themes. This suggests that despite their modest success as vehicles for attribute-based image enhancement, they have been more successful in generating positive product perceptions than the equivalent use of waterfront developments, cultural festivals, art galleries, museums/heritage sites and shows/concerts.

7.5.3 Summary

The results of this analysis of attribute-based images are very similar across the different samples surveyed. There is a general consensus that all three cities are attractive destinations in relation to their provision of shopping facilities and the staging of shows/concerts. However, and more importantly for the present study, there would appear to be a consensus that all three cities also provide an attractive range of sport tourism products. Birmingham has developed a strong image as a city boasting impressive indoor arenas, while perhaps more importantly Manchester is renowned for its stadia and staging of sport events. Sheffield's image as a sporting destination would appear to lag behind that of Manchester and Birmingham when the representative sample is examined. However, as the above analysis demonstrates, sport spectators regard its provision of stadia as more impressive than in Birmingham, though still some way behind that of Manchester.

7.6 The influence of new initiatives on attribute-based images

The following analysis aims to explore the impact of the recent sport initiatives on the attribute-based images revealed in section 7.5. A system of analysis similar to that employed in section 7.3 has been used which can help to explore the impact of the initiatives. The aim is to substantiate whether a relationship exists between an awareness of specific initiatives and the attribute-based images relating to urban provision of sport stadia, indoor arenas and sport events. Statistical tests, including bivariate correlation and independent samples t-tests, have been employed for this purpose. The null hypothesis of these tests is that there is no relationship between the awareness of the new sport initiatives and attribute-based images of the city. If the null hypothesis is accepted, the potency of the initiatives as vehicles for attribute-based image enhancement would be challenged as it would imply that these images are not dependent on people's awareness of the new initiatives. The alternative hypothesis is that a relationship between awareness of recent initiatives and attribute-based images does exist. If the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the relationship is one where awareness leads to enhanced images, then this can be used as an indication of the positive impact of the sport initiatives. The Tables below demonstrate the findings of this analysis. Each sample set is taken in turn starting with the sport spectator sample and both the results of the spearman's rho test and the comparison of means are illustrated.

7.6.1 Sport spectator sample

Sport spectator sample

Birmingham	Sport Stadia	Sport events	Indoor Arenas
Olympic bid			
Correlation coefficient	0.028	-0.66	-0.104
Sig 2 tailed	0.830	0.614	0.449
N	61	61	55
NIA			
Correlation coefficient	-0.054	0.052	0.057
Sig 2 tailed	0.680	0.689	0.678
N	61	61	55

Table 7.6.1a Results of Spearman's rho biaviate correlation analysis of the relationship between awareness of recent initiatives and Birmingham's attribute-based image as a sport destination (sport spectator sample). Significant relationships at a sig. level <0.05 are marked by ✓ and at a sig. level <0.01 by ✓✓.

Sport spectator sample

Birmingham	Sport Stadia	Sport events	Indoor Arenas
Olympic bid			
Aware	3.60	3.79	4.26
Unaware	3.54	3.89	4.32
NIA			
Aware	3.54	3.86	4.29
Unaware	3.73	3.73	4.29

Table 7.6.1b Mean attribute ratings of those aware and unaware of Birmingham's sport initiatives (sport spectator sample). Significant differences (t value < 0.05) are in bold type.

No significant relationships have been revealed by the analysis in Table 7.6.1a above, suggesting that there is no relationship between the awareness of Birmingham's initiatives and perceptions of the city's sport tourism products. Table 7.6.1b demonstrates that images of Birmingham's indoor arenas are very positive amongst those who are aware of Birmingham's Olympic bid (mean 4.26) and those who are not, (4.32) suggesting these perceptions have little to do with the bid itself. More surprisingly, images of the city's indoor arena provision do not appear to be related to an awareness of the NIA. This again points to the dominant influence of the NEC in engendering positive impressions of this attribute. Independent sample t-tests reveal that there are no significant differences in the mean ratings of Birmingham's sport attributes between those who had heard of the NIA and the Olympic bid and those who had not.

Sport spectator sample

Manchester	Sport stadia	Sport events	Indoor Arenas
Olympic bids			
Correlation coefficient	0.137	0.201	-0.015
Sig 2 tailed	0.293	0.133	0.917
N	61	57	48
Commonwealth Games			
Correlation coefficient	0.049	0.110	0.072
Sig 2 tailed	0.709	0.416	0.625
N	61	57	48
Manchester Velodrome			
Correlation coefficient	0.110	0.038	0.311✓✓
Sig 2 tailed	0.399	0.779	0.031
N	61	57	48
Nynex Arena			
Correlation coefficient	0.430	0.380	0.133
Sig 2 tailed	0.002	0.008	0.374
N	48	48	57

Table 7.6.2a Results of Spearman's rho bivariate correlation analysis of the relationship between awareness of recent initiatives and Manchester's attribute-based image as a sport destination (sport spectator sample). Significant relationships at a sig. level <0.05 are marked by ✓ and at a sig. level <0.01 by ✓✓.

Sport spectator sample

Manchester	Sport stadia	Sport events	Indoor Arenas
Olympic bids			
Aware	4.27	4.23	3.84
Unaware	4.00	3.75	4.00
Commonwealth Games			
Aware	4.26	4.31	3.88
Unaware	4.23	4.07	3.83
Velodrome			
Aware	4.32	4.27	4.26
Unaware	4.21	4.14	3.59
Nynex			
Aware	4.24	4.19	4.29
Unaware	4.26	3.19	4.05

Table 7.6.2b Mean attribute ratings of those aware and unaware of Manchester's sport initiatives (sport spectator sample). Significant differences (t value < 0.05) are in bold type.

The results of the bivariate correlation of data elicited from the sport spectators concerning Manchester reveal one significant relationship (see Table 7.6.2a above). It appears that an awareness of Manchester's Velodrome is related strongly to perceptions of the city's provision of indoor arenas. The mean rating allocated to the city's arena provision by those who are aware of the Velodrome is 4.26, compared to the mean rating of 3.59 elicited from those unaware of this new facility located at Eastlands, Manchester (see Table 7.6.2b). An independent t-test reveals this to be a significant difference at a significance level of < 0.05 . No other significant relationships, or significant differences in mean images were observed. This suggests that Manchester's image as a city with an impressive provision of sport events and

stadia - revealed by preceding analysis - is the result of factors other than the recent sport initiatives.

Sport spectator sample

Sheffield	Sport stadia	Sport events	Indoor Arenas
Sheffield Arena			
Correlation coefficient	-0.112	-0.085	0.167
Sig 2 tailed	0.398	0.542	0.272
N	59	54	45
Ponds Forge			
Correlation coefficient	0.333✓✓	0.265	0.144
Sig 2 tailed	0.010	0.052	0.347
N	59	54	45
Sheffield WSG			
Correlation coefficient	0.327✓	0.248	0.145
Sig 2 tailed	0.011	0.070	0.341
N	59	54	45
Don Valley Stadium			
Correlation coefficient	-0.044	-0.086	-0.079
Sig 2 tailed	0.738	0.534	0.604
N	59	54	45

Table 7.6.3a Results of Spearman's rho bivariate correlation analysis of the relationship between awareness of recent initiatives and Sheffield's attribute-based image as a sport destination (sport spectator sample). Significant relationships at a sig. level <0.05 are marked by ✓ and at a sig. level <0.01 by ✓✓.

Sport spectator sample

Sheffield	Sport stadia	Sport events	Indoor Arenas
Sheffield Arena			
Aware	3.65	3.60	3.58
Unaware	3.88	3.86	3.11
Ponds Forge			
Aware	4.21	4.07	3.69
Unaware	3.56	3.51	3.41
Sheffield WSG			
Aware	3.94	3.84	3.61
Unaware	3.38	3.41	3.29
Don Valley Stadium			
Aware	3.69	3.62	3.43
Unaware	3.79	3.83	3.70

Table 7.6.3b Mean attribute ratings of those aware and unaware of Sheffield's sport initiatives (sport spectator sample). Significant differences (t value < 0.05) are in bold type.

Table 7.6.3a illustrates that with regard to the sport spectator sample, very strong relationships exist between an awareness of Ponds Forge and the WSG, and the image of the city's provision of sport stadia. Sheffield's stadia were attributed a mean rating of 3.94 by those who were aware of the city's staging of the 1991 WSG, with those unaware of this event allocating this attribute a rating of 3.38 (see Table 7.6.3b). The difference between these means is revealed as statistically significant by an independent samples t-test (< 0.05). The difference in the mean ratings of Sheffield's provision of stadia attributed by those aware of Ponds Forge is also significantly higher than those who are not aware of this city centre initiative (< 0.05). Perceptions of the city's stadia are therefore directly related to knowledge of these facilities. No

other significant relationships have been revealed and no other significant differences in means are revealed by independent samples t-tests.

7.6.2 Representative sample

Representative sample

Birmingham	Sport Stadia	Sport events	Indoor Arenas
Olympic bid			
Correlation coefficient	0.049	-0.40	0.059
Sig 2 tailed	0.605	0.683	0.540
N	114	109	112
NIA			
Correlation coefficient	-0.029	-0.018	0.058
Sig 2 tailed	0.759	0.850	0.545
N	114	109	112

Table 7.6.4a Results of Spearman's rho bivariate correlation analysis of the relationship between awareness of recent initiatives and Birmingham's attribute-based image as a sport destination (representative sample). Significant relationships at a sig. level <0.05 are marked by ✓ and at a sig. level <0.01 by ✓✓.

Representative sample

Birmingham	Sport Stadia	Sport events	Indoor Arenas
Olympic bid			
Aware	3.61	3.79	4.26
Unaware	3.54	3.89	4.32
NIA			
Aware	3.68	4.22	3.71
Unaware	3.77	4.00	3.64

Table 7.6.4b Mean attribute ratings of those aware and unaware of Birmingham's sport initiatives (representative sample). Significant differences (t value < 0.05) are in bold type.

The results in Table 7.6.4a above show that no significant relationships exist between the awareness of Birmingham's sport initiatives and attribute-based perceptions of the city's sporting products. This is further illustrated by the insignificant difference between the mean attribute ratings of those who are, and those who are not, aware of Birmingham's Olympic bid. Although the image of Birmingham's indoor arenas is more positive amongst those who are aware of the NIA (4.22), than those who are not (4.00), this difference does not produce a statistically significant t -value (see Table 7.6.4b). The results indicate that the new initiatives have not had a significant influence on the sport related attribute-based images of Birmingham.

Representative sample

Manchester	Sport stadia	Sport events	Indoor Arenas
Olympic bids			
Correlation coefficient	0.013	0.083	0.156
Sig 2 tailed	0.887	0.382	0.137
N	118	112	93
Commonwealth Games			
Correlation coefficient	0.258✓	0.137	0.219✓
Sig 2 tailed	0.005	0.148	0.035
N	118	112	93
Manchester Velodrome			
Correlation coefficient	0.166	0.205✓	0.344✓✓
Sig 2 tailed	0.072	0.030	0.001
N	118	112	93
Nynex Arena			
Correlation coefficient	0.290✓✓	0.112	0.371✓✓
Sig 2 tailed	0.001	0.240	0.000
N	118	112	93

Table 7.6.5a Results of Spearman's rho bivariate correlation analysis of the relationship between awareness of recent initiatives and Manchester's attribute-based image as a sport destination (representative sample). Significant relationships at a sig. level <0.05 are marked by ✓ and at a sig. level <0.01 by ✓✓.

Representative sample

Manchester	Sport stadia	Sport events	Indoor Arenas
Olympic bids			
Aware	4.03	4.01	3.76
Unaware	4.03	3.84	3.42
Commonwealth Games			
Aware	4.28	4.09	3.89
Unaware	3.87	3.89	3.54
Velodrome			
Aware	4.21	4.23	4.16
Unaware	3.95	3.84	3.44
Nynex			
Aware	4.29	4.12	4.06
Unaware	3.84	3.85	3.35

Table 7.6.5b Mean attribute ratings of those aware and unaware of Manchester's sport initiatives (representative sample). Significant differences (t value < 0.05) are in bold type.

The Manchester results in Table 7.6.5a above suggest that an awareness of a number of recent initiatives implemented by the city is strongly linked to enhanced perceptions of the city's sport provision. The strongest relationship is that between an awareness of the Nynex Arena and the image of the city's provision of indoor arenas. An awareness of the Commonwealth Games bid and Manchester Velodrome also appears to be related to this image (see Table 7.6.5a). In addition, awareness of the impending Commonwealth Games is also related significantly to perceptions of the city's provision of sport stadia. The other significant relationships revealed are those between an awareness of Manchester Velodrome and perceptions of city's provision of sport events and the awareness of the Nynex Area and perceptions of city's

provision of sport stadia (see Table 7.6.5a). These results appear to illustrate the potency of the Velodrome, Nynex Arena and the Commonwealth Games bid as initiatives that are significantly related to perceptions of the city's attribute-based image. This is confirmed by the analysis in Table 7.6.5b illustrating the differences between the mean ratings of Manchester's sport attributes exhibited by those aware and unaware of these initiatives. The mean image of Manchester's stadia provision is 4.28 amongst those aware that the Commonwealth Games is coming to Manchester in 2002, compared to 3.87 amongst those unaware of the forthcoming event. This difference is confirmed as statistically significant (<0.05) by an independent samples t-test (see Table 7.6.5b). Though a relationship exists between the awareness of the Commonwealth Games bid and perceptions of Manchester's provision of indoor arenas, a significant difference in mean ratings has not been observed (<0.05). Of those aware of Manchester Velodrome, the mean ratings of the city's provision of indoor arenas and sport stadia are very high, 4.15 and 4.23 respectively, compared to the mean ratings of 3.44 and 3.83 exhibited by those unaware of the Velodrome (see Table 7.6.5b). These differences produce statistically significant values of t (<0.05). Significant differences in means also exist with respect to the Nynex Arena, the awareness of which appears to be strongly related to perceptions of the city's indoor arenas and sport stadia (see Table 7.6.5b).

Representative sample

Sheffield	Sport stadia	Sport events	Indoor Arenas
Sheffield Arena			
Correlation coefficient	0.131	0.099	0.173
Sig 2 tailed	0.186	0.344	0.110
N	104	94	86
Ponds Forge			
Correlation coefficient	0.223✓	0.214✓	0.168
Sig 2 tailed	0.023	0.038	0.123
N	104	94	86
Sheffield WSG			
Correlation coefficient	0.205✓	0.147	-0.050
Sig 2 tailed	0.037	0.157	0.648
N	104	94	86
Don Valley Stadium			
Correlation coefficient	0.253✓✓	0.271✓✓	0.188
Sig 2 tailed	0.010	0.008	0.084
N	104	94	86

Table 7.6.6a Results of Spearman's rho bivariate correlation analysis of the relationship between awareness of recent initiatives and Sheffield's attribute-based image as a sport destination (representative sample). Significant relationships at a sig. level <0.05 are marked by ✓ and at a sig. level <0.01 by ✓✓.

Representative sample

Sheffield	Sport stadia	Sport events	Indoor Arenas
Sheffield Arena			
Aware	3.76	3.74	3.62
Unaware	3.48	3.53	3.16
Ponds Forge			
Aware	4.25	4.22	3.91
Unaware	3.58	3.61	3.39
Sheffield WSG			
Aware	3.91	3.89	3.38
Unaware	3.50	3.53	3.50
Don Valley Stadium			
Aware	3.44	4.00	3.71
Unaware	3.44	3.39	3.25

Table 7.6.6b Mean attribute ratings of those aware and unaware of Sheffield's sport initiatives (representative sample). Significant differences (t value < 0.05) are in bold type.

From the results illustrated in Table 7.6.6a above it would appear that an awareness of Ponds Forge International Sport Centre and the Don Valley Stadium is related to the image of Sheffield as a sport events venue. Significant relationships exist between an awareness of Ponds Forge and Don Valley and the image of the city's provision of sport events and sports stadia (see Table 7.6.6a). The other significant relationship revealed is that between an awareness of the WSG and the city's provision of sport events (see Table 7.6.6a). Overall, the results illustrate that the image of the city as a sporting venue is very much related to an awareness of Sheffield's recent initiatives. These findings are reaffirmed by independent sample t-tests conducted to explore whether significant differences exist between the mean attribute ratings of those aware

and those unaware of the facilities (see Table 7.6.6b). Those aware of the Don Valley Stadium allocate mean ratings of 4.00 and 3.94 respectively to represent Sheffield's provision of sport events and stadia, compared to the mean ratings of 3.39 and 3.44 exhibited by those unaware of this distinctive new stadium. These differences produce statistically significant values of t (<0.05). Significant differences in mean ratings are also exhibited by those aware and unaware of Ponds Forge (see Table 7.6.6b). The mean ratings of those aware of this swimming complex relating to Sheffield's provision of stadia is 4.25 compared to 3.58 amongst those who have not heard of this facility. Again these differences produce statistically significant t -values (<0.05). The noted relationship between Ponds Forge and Sheffield's provision of sport events does not produce a significant value of t (<0.05). The only other significant difference in means is exhibited by those unaware and aware of Sheffield's staging of the WSG (see Table 7.6.6b). Awareness of this initiative is related to perceptions of Sheffield's stadia provision and this is confirmed by a mean rating of 3.91 allocated by those aware of the Games compared to that of 3.50 allocated by those unaware of the 1991 event.

7.6.3 Overall summary

To clarify the results from this section, the Tables below (7.6.7 and 7.6.8) have been included which illustrate the relationships that have been found to be statistically significant at a probability level $>95\%$.

Sport spectator sample

Awareness of:	Images of:	Rho sig <0.05	T sig <0.05
Manchester Velodrome	Manchester's provision of indoor arenas	✓	✓
Ponds Forge	Sheffield's provision of sport stadia	✓	✓
Sheffield WSG	Sheffield's provision of sport stadia	✓	✓

Table 7.6.7 Summary of significant statistical findings (<0.05) – sport spectator sample

Representative sample

Awareness of:	Images of:	Rho sig <0.05	T sig <0.05
Manchester Comm Games	Manchester's provision of sport stadia	✓	✓
Nynex Arena	Manchester's provision of sport stadia	✓	✓
Manchester Velodrome	Manchester's provision of sport stadia		✓
Manchester Velodrome	Manchester's provision of sport events	✓	✓
Manchester Comm Games	Manchester's provision of indoor arenas	✓	
Manchester Velodrome	Manchester's provision of indoor arenas	✓	✓
Nynex Arena	Manchester's provision of indoor arenas	✓	
Ponds Forge	Sheffield's provision of sport stadia	✓	✓
World Student Games	Sheffield's provision of sport stadia	✓	✓
Don Valley Stadium	Sheffield's provision of sport stadia	✓	✓
Ponds Forge	Sheffield's provision of sport events	✓	
Don Valley Stadium	Sheffield's provision of sport events	✓	✓

Table 7.6.8 Summary of significant statistical findings (<0.05) – representative sample

The results exhibited in the preceding analysis and summarised in Tables 7.6.7 and 7.6.8 highlight an important paradox. It would appear that the attribute-based images of the sport spectators have largely been unaffected by the new initiatives in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. The only significant relationships that have been revealed are those between an awareness of Ponds Forge and the WSG and perceptions of Sheffield's stadia, and an awareness of Manchester Velodrome and perceptions of Manchester's provision of indoor arenas. In other instances attribute-based images do not differ significantly between those who have heard and those who have not heard of the new initiatives. Birmingham's initiatives appear to be particularly impotent. Awareness of the NIA or the Olympic bid is not related to attribute-based images with regard to the sport spectator sample or the representative sample. This suggests that these initiatives have little to do with attribute-based perceptions of the city's provision of sport events, stadia and indoor arenas. However, amongst the representative sample, and in reference to the cities of Manchester and Sheffield, relationships and differences in mean ratings were revealed in a large number of instances. This suggests that with respect to the representative sample, the

sport initiatives are related to enhanced perceptions of sport tourism provision. Ideally, these initiatives would influence the sport spectators, rather than this general sample of potential tourists as sport enthusiasts provide the main target audience for this imagery. However, the sport spectators, more attuned to the city's existing and established sport provision, appear to be largely unaffected by the new initiatives.

7.7 Does it really matter? The importance of developing sporting images

Observations regarding the sporting image of Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield as sport destinations have been considered in previous sections. The question here is whether such images are actually of 'value' to contemporary cities. To justify the cultivation of certain attribute-based images it is necessary to analyse how important these products are to potential urban tourists, with particular reference to the importance attached to sport tourism products. Essentially this means a shift from studying cognitive or evaluative images, to the consideration of conative images or those that relate directly to behaviour (Gartner 1993, 1996). For the purposes of this enquiry, sport tourism products were once again subdivided into the three categories - indoor arenas, more general stadia and sport events. Respondents were asked to rate these different products with reference to their importance to the decision whether or not to visit a city for a weekend leisure break. A rating of 4 indicates that a product was 'of great importance', a rating of 3 denotes products 'of moderate importance', a 2 suggests a product was 'of little importance, with the allocation of a 1 indicating that a particular product was 'of no importance' (see appendices a and b). To contextualise the findings regarding sport tourism products, other urban products commonly used in reimagining strategies were included in the analysis.

7.7.1 Importance ratings of the sport spectator sample

Urban tourism product	Mean importance rating
Sport Events	3.27
Shows/Concerts	3.23
Shopping Facilities	3.13
Sport Stadia	3.03
Theatres/Concert halls	3.03
Museums/Heritage Sites	2.99
Waterfront Developments	2.66
Art Galleries	2.66
Cultural Festivals	2.64
Indoor Arenas	2.52

Table 7.7.1 Importance ratings exhibited by the sport spectator sample

The views of the sport spectator sample (Table 7.7.1) highlight that for this segment of the tourist market, sport events are of particular importance to their consumption of urban tourism. This sample attributed the provision of sport events a mean rating of 3.27, the highest of any of the attributes measured in this study. However, the contents of Table 7.7.1 show that sporting products are not considered important per se, as the provision of indoor arenas is considered to be the least important of the ten attributes with a mean rating of 2.52. The provision of sport stadia was considered as more important (3.03), although for this sample not as important as the provision of shows/concerts and shopping facilities. These results indicate that in terms of attracting sport tourists to a city, the provision of sport events and sport stadia is particularly important.

7.7.2 Importance ratings of the representative sample

Urban tourism product	Mean importance rating
Shopping Facilities	3.5
Shows/Concerts	3.27
Theatres/Concert halls	3.12
Waterfront Developments	2.73
Museums	2.94
Cultural Events	2.68
Sport Events	2.61
Indoor Arena	2.55
Art Galleries	2.49
Sport Stadia	2.42

Table 7.7.2 *Importance ratings exhibited by the representative sample*

Table 7.7.2 illustrates the mean responses of the representative sample. The urban product which was considered to be of most importance to this group of respondents was the provision of 'shopping facilities' which exhibits a mean of exactly 3.5. Shows/Concerts and Theatres/Concert Halls both generated mean 'importance' ratings of over 3.0, which means on average they are considered to be at least of moderate importance to potential tourists. Sport events (2.61), indoor arenas (2.55) and stadia (2.42) were among the four urban features with lower importance ratings, although the scale employed suggests that they are more than 'of little importance' in engendering visits to city destinations. Nevertheless, there is a clear difference between the importance ratings attributed to sport-related products in Table 7.7.2 and those exhibited by the sport spectator sample (Table 7.7.1). Therefore, although in section 7.5 Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield were found to have strong attribute-based images as providers of sport tourism products among the representative sample, the evidence here suggests that this may be of lesser significance to the conative images of this group of potential tourists.

7.7.3 Supportive evidence from the semi-structured interviews

To add further depth to this analysis and to explore the potential of sporting images to attract tourists to the city destination, it is also useful to consider the comments made by potential tourists in the semi-structured interviews. It should be noted that these views were elicited from a representative sample of potential tourists. A dominant theme in these interviews was that for the large majority of participants, just because a city demonstrated a strong sporting reputation it would not necessarily influence their propensity to visit that urban destination. This confirms the statistical findings cited previously (Table 7.7.2), which revealed that the provision of sporting products is of relatively little importance to the representative sample. However, there were members of this group who expressed a specific interest in sport and stated that such images would affect their tourist behaviour. It is therefore interesting to analyse the comments of these individuals to discover how and why sport images may result in the increased likelihood of visitation.

One of the key themes that emerges from the responses of individuals is that sport tourism is dependent on the attractiveness of specific events held in a city. Predominantly, it is the nature of the sport event itself, rather than attribute-based image of the city as a sporting destination that seems to determine urban sport tourism behaviour. This is emphasised by the views of participant 34 who stated:

'For me it would be the event that got me there in the first place, and having got there then I would be tempted to have a look and see what facilities they have got'.

This finding suggests that an urban sporting reputation matters less than a city's ability to attract popular events. It would appear that possessing a strong sporting image may not actually attract tourists to a city, but that once tourists have already chosen to visit a city then the provision of sport events may actually add to the critical mass of attractions that could enhance the visitor experience. This view was exhibited by participant 38 who stated:

'I mean if we were in a city and something was on like in Manchester if we could go and see the football, then we may go, if we were there it would add to the range of attractions. We wouldn't go for the sport, but it would add to the range of attractions'.

The most troubling evidence for cities engaging in sport reimagining was the apparent apathy of those who were interested in sport, many of whom did not feel that a strong sporting image would influence their tourist behaviour. Participant 5 was a person very interested in sport, with a very good knowledge of recent initiatives, particularly in Manchester. However, this participant clearly did not feel that these initiatives would stimulate him to visit a particular location, stating;

'If I am going away and visiting a place, for a holiday or weekend break, I don't go for sport, I go to relax, so it wouldn't make any difference for me, even though I am a sporty person. I travel around the country a lot with my job anyway and it is always nice to see good, new sporting facilities, I think it is great, but it is not going to influence where I spend my leisure time (participant 5).

This viewpoint demonstrates the perception that leisure time could be spent more productively and that sport is considered more a part of everyday existence than a tourism experience enjoyed during valuable time off work. This stance was also alluded to in other responses which suggested that sporting provision may affect urban tourism behaviour, but only if the city in question were close enough to the participant's place of residence, implying that only day visitation would be considered. Urban sport tourism in the UK is dominated by such visits, and the challenge for cities appears to be to convince sport tourists it has enough attractions - related and unrelated to sport - to justify a longer stay. The findings confirm Bramwell's (1993) observation that it is notoriously difficult to prompt sport spectators to stay overnight in the city.

One of the few respondents who indicated that a sporting image would directly influence their propensity to visit a city for a longer period of time was participant 7 who stated that:

'Well I think that if we knew, especially having two teenage sons, if we knew that a city had facilities, if we were going to stay there for a week for example, we would definitely be more attracted to a city we knew has good facilities because both of our sons are interested in sport'.

This positive reaction suggests that cities with strong sporting images may be considered above those that do not, creating a form of competitive advantage. However, such a viewpoint was rather rare and was actually less frequently cited than those who stated that a sporting image would actually decrease the chances of visitation. Participant 16 stated that the provision of sport events and new facilities would put them off because of perceptions that visits to such a city would be inconvenienced by the crowds and troublesome parking. Therefore it would appear that the representative sample are largely unimpressed by a sport-related images. Those who were interested in sport indicated that it is the specific event that would attract them to a city rather than a general image of it as a city of sport.

7.7.4 Importance – performance analysis

In addition to analysing the importance of particular urban tourism products and the degree to which certain attributes are perceived to be present in cities, it is possible to combine these observations and produce what are termed importance-performance analyses (Vaske et al 1996, Oppermann 1996a). Importance-performance analysis allows the importance individuals attach to a given set of attributes, plus how well a specific destination performs with respect to those attributes, to be considered in unison. In the present analysis of the attribute-based image of city destinations, it can provide an important added dimension in establishing the possible implications of the perceptions of potential tourists. According to Oppermann (1996a), the resultant rating provides an indication as to the 'attractiveness' of certain tourism products and destinations. However, unlike Oppermann's work the present study does not consider

it valid to combine scores for different attributes to produce an overall destination attractiveness rating. Each urban product is considered independently. The intention is to carry out importance performance analyses of Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield, with specific reference to the way in which sport tourism products are regarded by potential tourists. However, to provide a comparative context, other attributes will also be assessed.

Rather than analysing the IP ratings of the sport spectator and representative sample, as has been the norm in preceding analysis, this section divides all those that were questioned into those who frequently or very frequently attend sport events and those that stated that they do not. This change in emphasis is due to a requirement to use specific segments when utilising an importance-performance approach. As Vaske et al (1996) state: 'For situations involving homogenous visitors (e.g. similar motivations for visiting) this simple intuitive approach is one useful strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of the service delivery. Problems arise, however, when not all users share the same importance attitudes' (1996:228). It has therefore been necessary to segment the representative group of potential tourists and the sport spectator sample according to their propensity to attend sport events.

There are several different approaches to IP analysis. As Oppermann asserts, more common than the mathematical approach to IP analysis is its use as graphical technique in the form of an importance performance matrix (Oppermann 1996a:180). This approach involves mapping the importance and performance ratings for each attribute onto a matrix and then dividing this matrix into four quadrants. Although this division is a subjective process determined by the researcher, it is common to use benchmarks such as the mean importance and performance ratings ascertained (Oppermann 1996a). This is the approach taken in the present study. Therefore, Figures 7.7.1 and 7.7.2 are divided into four quadrants, the parameters of which are determined by the mean importance and performance ratings exhibited by the relevant sample groups. Each resultant quadrant illustrates the way attributes located in that section are perceived by potential tourists and suggests important implications for marketing those attributes. The results of this analysis are illustrated in Figures 7.7.1 and 7.7.2.

Figure 7.7.1 I-P analysis - frequent sport spectators

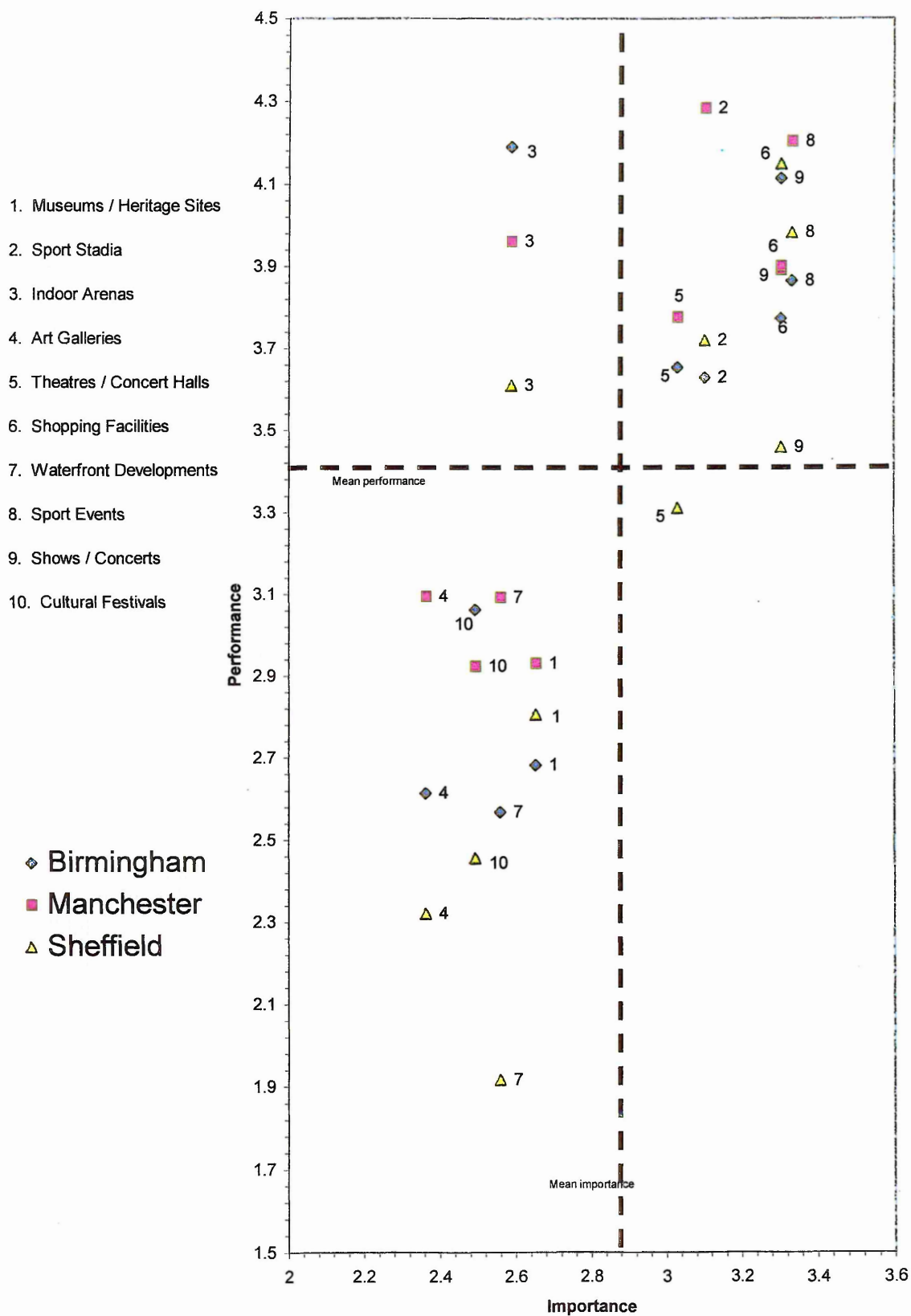


Figure 7.7.2 I-P analysis - infrequent sport spectators

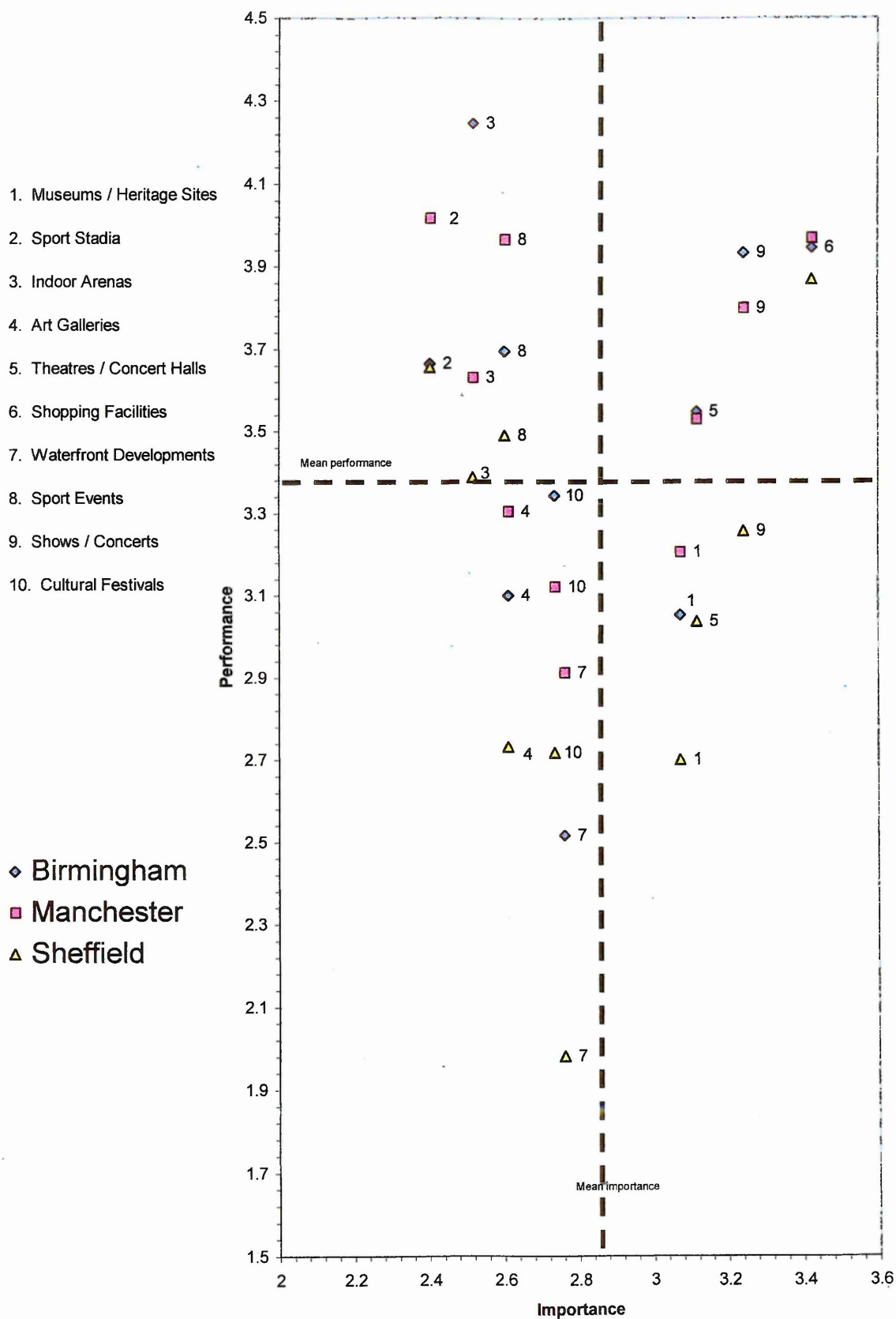


Figure 7.7.1 illustrates an importance-performance analysis with respect to those respondents who indicated that they frequently or very frequently attend sport events. Five products are located in the upper-right quadrant suggesting that these are highly important products that have a high performance. Oppermann (1996a) considers products within this quadrant as major strengths of the destination which it should emphasise in promotional efforts (1996a:180). The sport stadia provision and the provision of sport events in all three case studies are contained within this quarter. The provision of sport events in Manchester is considered by this sample to be the most attractive urban tourism product of those measured. Manchester's stadia are also regarded as a very attractive product, outperforming those in Birmingham and Sheffield. These results illustrate that all three cities have developed attractive images relating to their provision of sport events and sport stadia. The provision of indoor arenas in all three cities is located in the upper-left quadrant, indicating high performers that are of low importance. Oppermann states that since these attributes are of lower importance 'the destination should not invest too much effort in highlighting or improving these minor strengths' (1996a:180). This suggests that although the events that these arenas may stage are attractive tourism products for this sample, the facilities themselves are not considered to be attractive products, even if they are perceived to be present in Sheffield, Manchester and (particularly) Birmingham. Attributes in the lower-right quadrant are the major weaknesses of the destination, where performance with respect to important products is low. No sporting products are contained within this quadrant. The results show that spectator sport tourism products in all three cities are attractive urban tourism products for this target market.

Figure 7.7.2 illustrates that sport products are not seen as particularly attractive urban tourism products by those who do not frequently attend sport events. The sporting products of all three cities are located in the upper-left quadrant, indicating that they are high performers that are of low importance. This confirms earlier findings suggesting that Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield have developed sport-related attribute-based images amongst potential tourists, but that these images may be of little use in directly increasing tourist visitation from the representative sample. Martilla and James identify products in the upper left quadrant as an area of 'possible

overkill' (c.f. Oppermann 1996a:180) and this may be a pertinent assessment of sport reimagining, particularly as the present study has shown that potential tourists appear to be affected by this reimagining more than those with a specific interest in sport. Analysis such as that illustrated in Figure 7.7.2 suggests that this is resulting in positive images of products that do not really matter to urban tourists in general. It is interesting to note that Fig 7.7.2 indicates that it is the museums in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield which are located in the critical lower-right quadrant. It is products placed in this quadrant, which also includes Sheffield's provision of Theatres/Concert Halls and Shows/Concerts, where major improvements are required in order to improve a city's capacity to attract more tourists. These results indicate that the city destinations would benefit from ensuring that messages about sport are targeted specifically at sport tourists, whilst the city concentrates on improving perceptions of other attributes to attract urban tourists in general.

7.8 Overall summary

A series of results have been detailed in the preceding sections and the intention here is to provide an overall review and draw some conclusions about the effects of the sport initiatives on images of Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield as sport destinations. Results indicate that sporting images are very strong among potential sport tourists, as well as among a wider sample of potential urban tourists. However, though the Olympic Games bid, and to a lesser extent the other initiatives developed in Manchester, have contributed to these perceptions, this image is largely the result of connections with football. Indeed, statistical tests revealed that the Olympic bid might not have had a significant influence on perceptions of Manchester's sporting provision. Sport spectators indicated that such initiatives did not influence their selection of the cities they most closely associated with sport. However, members of the representative sample are more impressed, as exhibited in both the quantitative and qualitative analyses. This appears to support Law's (1994) assertion regarding the Olympic Games that; 'Even those who do not normally engage in, or follow sport regularly find the sporting spectacle a powerful draw' (Law 1994:223). Qualitative evidence also reveals that bids can generate inferences that a city has more impressive sporting infrastructure. Of the other initiatives which Manchester has developed as a

result of its Olympic bids, each exhibits evidence that they have enhanced Manchester's attribute-based image as a sporting venue, particularly amongst the representative sample. However, once again these initiatives are overshadowed by the influence of football and more established sporting associations. This supports Kitchen's argument that Manchester is 'indelibly linked with Manchester United Football Club' (1997:221).

Birmingham's attribute-based image as a sporting city is considerably less developed than Manchester's. This image does not appear to have been influenced by either of the two major initiatives adopted by the city, the NIA and the Olympic bid. Therefore Dennis Howell's promise that the 1992 Olympic Games bid would confirm Birmingham 'as the nation's leading sports city' is not supported by the evidence in this chapter (Birmingham Olympics '92 1986). Similarly, Smyth's proposition that one of positive legacies of the NIA is that it has 'lent credibility as a flagship to the city as a centre for sport' (1994:182) is also rather tenuous. Birmingham has developed a reputation as a city with notable provision of indoor arenas, but this seems to be mainly the result of the influence of the NEC. However, the observed influence of this established venue means that the NIA may become more influential in forthcoming years.

Sheffield's sporting image is stronger than many competing UK cities, but remains largely unspectacular, and is eclipsed by neighbouring Manchester. Certainly Darke's claim that that the Games 'could elevate Sheffield into the mainstream of international sports locations' has not been validated convincingly (1992:no page numbers). Indeed, ten years after the WSG the city still struggles for recognition as a renowned *national* sporting city. However, an awareness of Sheffield's facilities does seem to have influenced perceptions of the city's sporting image amongst potential tourists. Respondents who are aware of these initiatives tend to have more positive impressions of the city's sport provision of sport tourism products and also are more likely to select the city as one that they most closely associate with sport. Therefore furthering Sheffield's sporting status amongst potential tourists does not require new sporting connections, but greater awareness of those that already exist.

However, amongst the key target market – sport spectators – acknowledgement of recent initiatives does not appear to enhance the city's standing as a 'city of sport'. It is perhaps rather ironic that Sheffield and Birmingham have been awarded National City of Sport status, whereas the three cities most closely associated with sport, Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle have not. The selection of these cities as 'sporting capitals' by both sample sets again emphasises the prevailing influence of football. Whilst Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield's attempts to utilise a diverse range of sporting themes is admirable in terms of lifting the profile of different sports, that does not mean that this produces an effective urban reimagining strategy.

One conclusion that can be drawn from the preceding analysis is that the sport images of Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield are primarily the result of factors other than the recent initiatives at the focus of the present study. The influence of football-related associations in Manchester emphasises this conclusion, although the influence of snooker in Sheffield and cricket in Birmingham should not be discounted. This implies that Higham (1999) is right to argue that 'it is perhaps necessary to develop a greater understanding of the tourism development potential of existing sporting events and competitions' (1999:89). Attempts to generate new associations with sport in the three cities have few connections with existing images, which may have contributed to their relatively minor impact on sporting images observed in this study. As Kitchen states in reference to Manchester's reimagining, 'it is not about the images that cities want to promote of themselves, it is also about the images that already exist' (1997:221). In attempting to develop urban sporting images, cities need to be more aware of existing perceptions. Informed decisions can then be made regarding the extent to which established associations should be emphasised or new ones created. The relationship between football and reimagining appears to be perversely undeveloped. The results in this chapter support Johnstone et al's assertion that urban-based professional football clubs are an important component of place images (2000:211). Johnstone et al champion the need for further research which addresses 'how Premiership clubs might support civic boosterism and place marketing initiatives' (Johnstone et al 2000:211). This is not central to the objectives of this study, although it is hoped that the results in this chapter have aided an understanding of the importance of such sporting links to city destination images. There is

insufficient space here to suggest implications for the use of football in place marketing. However, it is certainly argued that there needs to be an end to the political pettiness that Kitchin (1997) implies has prevented cities such as Manchester capitalising on footballing associations. Kitchen suggests that one of the reasons for the failure to incorporate Manchester United into city imaging is the fact that the club is located outside the city's civic boundary.

The results in this chapter also indicate that cities need to clarify the rationale behind cultivating images as cities of sport. Beyond the symbolic function, addressed in the subsequent chapter, it would appear that the use-value of such images is highly questionable. In chapter 3 it was proposed that cities may want to develop sport-based images to denote the provision of sport tourism products to potential sport tourists. Chapter 5 revealed evidence that suggested that the enhancement of sporting reputations was a motivation for pursuing some of the initiatives. To some extent this objective has been vindicated by the observation that sport spectators consider the provision of sport products to be particularly important in their decision whether or not to visit a city for a weekend leisure break. However despite such findings, it appears that the new sport initiatives have actually played only a minimal role in enhancing perceptions of sporting products in the city and the sporting image of the city in general. This discerning target market appreciates the sporting images of Birmingham, Sheffield and particularly Manchester, but appears unimpressed by the new initiatives in these cities. Paradoxically, the initiatives have had the greatest influence on the representative sample of potential tourists. Unfortunately the views expressed in the semi-structured interviews suggest that this impact is unlikely to result in direct tourism benefits for the cities. It is therefore pertinent to question the rationale behind ambitions to gain renown as sporting capitals. Urban spectator sport tourism appears to be most notably influenced by specific events which are deemed worthy of visitation and such events are only tenuously related to the sporting images of cities. This questions the role of sporting images in generating urban sports tourism. These observations lead to the conclusion that the success of sporting images and therefore sport reimagining relies heavily on potential tourists interpreting sporting cities beyond their literal or denotative meaning. The extent to which the initiatives

can perform this symbolic function and influence holistic city images is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 8

The impact of sport reimagining on the holistic image of the city destination

8.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to establish whether sport reimagining can change the holistic images of cities and, if so, how any change is procured. As such it directly addresses research question 4 (see section 3.7). The chapter is divided into two main parts, reflecting the conceptual framework outlined in chapter 3. The first part analyses the metonymic effects of sport reimagining, by examining the extent to which sport is used by potential tourists to represent each case study city as a whole (sections 8.1-8.4). The second is concerned with a more subtle means of image change, via symbolism, or what Barthes (1973) terms the second order of signification (sections 8.5-8.8). An overall summary of chapter findings is detailed in section 8.9.

8.1 Metonymic holistic image development

The concept of the holistic image of a city is inextricably linked to the Gestalt approach to psychology, which is based on the assumption that 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts' (Cassidy 1997:15). Applying Gestalt principles to the study of place image, Mayo and Jarvis assert that 'many people tend to perceive [places] in terms of a single object that represents them' (Mayo and Jarvis 1981:26). This theory implies that individual's images of places may include individual concepts or objects that are used to represent that city as a whole. These images are regarded as 'metonymic' images by authors such as Laurier (1993), who describes metonymic advertising as that which 'uses a part to represent the whole' (1993:269). To explore metonymy, this study has analysed the holistic images of potential tourists to examine the extent to which concepts or objects developed as part of sport reimagining strategies are used by potential tourists to represent cities. The holistic images of Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield have been analysed using data from two sources. These sources are outlined in sections 8.1.1 and 8.1.2 below:

8.1.1. The word analysis

The word analysis focuses on responses to question 5 of the structured questionnaire (see appendices a & b and justification for design in appendix c). This question required respondents to write down three separate words that they felt best represented a particular city. The responses elicited suggest that sporting concepts do have the potential to become metonymic images of cities. Of the 1450 words elicited from the respondents in the research process 11% were sport related (not including Don't Know responses). However, not all these sporting metonyms are derived from recent initiatives and amalgamating the results from the 3 cities hides some interesting observations. Therefore findings are presented by considering each city in turn and attempts are made to isolate the influence of sport reimagining strategies.

8.1.2. The analysis of semi-structured interviews

The second source of information about holistic metonymic images was the semi-structured interviews. The first section of these interviews aimed to elicit the holistic images of the three cities, without the interviewer referring specifically to the subject of sport. Therefore, these images have been analysed to reveal any sporting content used as metonyms, enabling the research to establish the extent to which sporting concepts are used in holistic impressions of the three cities.

8.2 Sport and metonymic representations of Birmingham

8.2.1 The word analysis

Of the three cities under consideration, the fewest respondents used sport-related words to represent the city of Birmingham. Table 8.2.1 shows that of the 346 words elicited from the representative sample, 16 (4.16%) were sport-related (excluding Don't Know responses). Seven of the responses used the concept of sport in general, with another seven utilising football and a further two employing golf and cricket as metonymic images of Birmingham. This relatively infrequent use of sporting metonyms suggests that the recent sport initiatives have had little impact on the holistic images of the representative

sample in terms of metonymic images. Comparable results are illustrated through the analysis of metonyms elicited from the sport sample (table 8.2.1). Of the 163 words elicited from this group of respondents, 12 are sport-related. Again, these words refer mainly to sport in general, although there are a number of football and cricket references. Fewer respondents displayed sporting metonymic images of Birmingham than in relation to the cities of Sheffield and Manchester. Though a number of respondents did use sport in general to represent the city, there is no evidence within this specific analysis to link holistic images specifically to the recent sporting initiatives. The categories of words used to represent the city of Birmingham are detailed in table 8.2.1 below:

BIRMINGHAM

REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE		SPORT SAMPLE	
Word	NO.	Word	NO.
Non sport landmarks	49	Negative	34
Dirty/Unattractive	39	Non sport landmarks	14
Busy	37	Sport	12
Spectacular	31	Big	11
Industrial associations	25	Crowded	9
Shopping	25	Dynamic	9
Sport	16	Commercial	7
Big	15	Exhibitions	7
Traffic	15	Busy	5
Nice	13	Cosmopolitan	5
Unsafe	11	Traffic	5
Multi-cultural	11	Dull	4
Exhibitions	8	Friendly	4
Buildings	7	Local identity	4
Boring	6	Progressive	4
Geographical position	6	Attractive	3
Well known	5	Industrial	3
Curry	4	Personal	3
Personal associations	4	Central	2
Poverty	4	Ethnic	2
Transformation	4	Isolated	2
Associated concepts	3	Old fashioned	2
Local culture	3	Sprawling	2
OK	3	Urban	2
Others ¹	2	Others ²	8
TOTAL WORDS	346	TOTAL WORDS	163
Don't know	194	Don't know	62
TOTAL (180x3)	540	TOTAL (75x3)	225

Table 8.2.1 Words used by potential tourists to represent the city of Birmingham

8.2.2 Analysis of the semi-structured interviews

References to football were the most common sport-related phenomena mentioned in the semi-structured interviews. Both major football grounds in Birmingham (Villa Park and St

¹ Tourism, Power

⁴ Crossroads Facilities, Heartless, Musical, Noisy, Overpowering, Unsafe, Waterfront development

Andrew's) were mentioned by a number of participants when asked to outline any features or aspects of the city that they were aware of. Similarly, several participants also made references to the cricket ground and the Belfry. This indicates that these are memorable landmarks and therefore imageable elements of Birmingham's cityscape. However, the NEC was much more commonly used as a metonym for Birmingham than any of these facilities. Fifteen different participants cited the NEC in detailing their holistic image of Birmingham. Though not essentially a sporting venue, the frequent references to the NEC show that an aesthetically uninspiring indoor arena located on the edge of a city can become an important part of the tourist image of the city.

8.2.3 The impact of recent initiatives

In examining the metonymic use of sport in city holistic images, it is important to assess the impact of recent sporting initiatives. In Birmingham, the premier sport-related flagship project is the National Indoor Arena (NIA). Though interviewees did not include references to this facility as often as they mentioned the NEC, there is evidence that this relatively new facility has infiltrated the way in which the city is perceived as a whole. Four interviewees mentioned the NIA when discussing their general holistic image of the city - two when asked to describe the picture of the city that they had in their mind. These responses are illustrated below in Fig 8.2.1:

Interviewer: Do you have a picture of Birmingham in your mind?

Participant 12: Yes, because I went there last year, I stayed there for two days.

Interviewer: Can you describe it to me?

Participant 12: I think of the Arena, where they have Gladiators.

Interviewer: Do you have a picture of Birmingham in your mind?

Participant 51: That whole complex of buildings, I think its quite near the indoor arena and then we wandered round and saw there's a lot of waterfront development and little cafes and bistros and there was the Hyatt Hotel opposite, with this fantastic lift which went up and down the outside and there was lots of new building going on.

Figure 8.2.1 Interview excerpts demonstrating the use of the NIA as a metonymic image of Birmingham

The dialogue in Fig 8.2.1 suggests that the NIA has the capacity to become an important metonymic image of the city. Participant 12 uses the NIA to represent the city as a whole and this confirms the use of the Arena as a metonym for the city. The influence of the NIA is less prevalent in Participant 51's visual metonymic image of Birmingham which involves a series of buildings, of which the NIA is merely one. The views of participant 51 highlight the value of placing imageable buildings next to one another, inviting potential tourists to use this melange of buildings as a metonym for the city. Later in the interview, participant 12, stated that;

'When I see Birmingham in my mind, I see that ITV programme, Gladiators, I think ohh Birmingham yes, Gladiators, in the arena, its lovely, a massive place. I like the stream , the water, you can cross a little bridge over the canal, even take a canal ride

Participant 12

This quote demonstrates that the NIA benefits from its location in a newly renovated area of the city, where the surrounding environment enhances its external appearance.

Participant 12 and one other interviewee mentioned the NIA through references to its role as the venue for the popular television programme 'Gladiators', emphasising the importance of the media in securing a place for new sport initiatives in the tourist imagination. In these instances 'Gladiators' provides an important marker for the Arena, which enhances its symbolic capacity and generates meaning for the individual.

Aside from physical facilities, the present study also seeks to understand the effects of events and event bids. Only two participants specifically mentioned sport events in detailing their holistic images of the city. No interviewees mentioned the city's Olympic bids in the unprompted section of the interviews, suggesting that this bid has had little impact on Birmingham's holistic image. However, in a question relating to another city, one participant did indicate that they recognised Birmingham's attempts to attract sport events, and felt that they had contributed to the enhancement of the city's image:

'Whereas Birmingham over the past five years you do hear things, like a few years ago they put in a bid for the sports events to happen there'

Participant 15

Other recollections of recent sporting events in Birmingham were not always as positive. When asked about their visual image of the city, one interviewee gave the following response:

'Well, the only thing that I see when I think of Birmingham is some motor race that they have round the middle of the city, round the BullRing or something, but it looked like a concrete monstrosity from the 1960s and 1970s, it didn't enhance the way in which I viewed the city, that's for sure'

Participant 16

Therefore, although as Miller (c.f. Donald 1997) observes, events can provide important metonymic images, these representations do not always generate positive associations and meanings. Thus far metonymic images have almost been treated as automatically being of benefit to a cities, providing recognition and markers for cities in a competitive urban tourism market. This interpretation is not borne out in the views of participant 16 (above). The comments of participant 16 also highlight two additional considerations. First, despite the inherent simplicity of metonymic images they also embody significant meanings and appraisals concerning the urban environment. Second, sport can play a role in sport in procuring metonymic images, but this role may not simply involve the direct use sporting phenomena, but also the communication of metonymic images of other parts of city. A comparable example would be the strong visual image of Barcelona that was communicated by the diving events at the 1992 Olympic Games. In these instances, sport events can provide vehicles for metonymic image development, but it is not always the sporting phenomena that form the resultant metonymic image.

8.3 Sport and metonymic representations of Manchester

8.3.1 The word analysis

Respondents most frequently used sporting metonyms to represent the city of Manchester. As illustrated in table 8.3.1, 67 of the 341 words used to embody holistic impressions of Manchester by the representative sample were sport-related (20%). Consequently, sport constitutes the largest thematic category of those formed, highlighting the importance of

sporting metonyms to Manchester's holistic image. Despite noting the general importance of sport to the city's image as a whole, it is also necessary to look within this category and analyse the specific nature of these sport-related words. Of the 67 sport-related responses, 73% concerned football whilst only 6 responses connected the city to sport in general (see table 8.3.1). Three respondents stated that the word 'Olympics' represented their image of the city as a whole. The results from the sport spectator sample take a similar form. For this sample of respondents, sport again constitutes the largest category of responses (27 of 157). Once more, football references dominate, and only four respondents used the concept of sport in general to represent Manchester (see table 8.3.1).

Whilst these results indicate that sport can become an important part of a city's holistic image, they also indicate that the associated impact of recent sport reimagining has been negligible. In their analysis of urban regeneration in British cities, Loftman and Nevin (1996) discuss Manchester under the heading 'From Textiles to Olympic City'. Whilst sport does seem to have replaced industry as the most common mode of imagining Manchester as a whole, it appears that Manchester's holistic image is dominated by associations with football - directed by the recent success of Manchester United - rather than by Olympic associations. These results reflect the views of Kitchen (1997:221), formerly Head of Planning at Manchester City Council, who asserts that 'Manchester is indelibly linked with Manchester United Football Club'. The types of words used to represent the city of Manchester by both samples surveyed in the present study can be seen in table 8.3.1:

MANCHESTER

REPRESESENTATIVE SAMPLE		SPORT SAMPLE	
THEME	No.	THEME	No.
Sport	67	Sport	27
Spectacular	30	Exciting	23
Dirty/Unattractive	20	Rough	10
Non sport landmarks	19	Rain	9
Busy	19	Busy	8
Associated concepts	18	Unattractive	7
Shopping	18	Clubs	7
Industrial associations	17	Non sport landmarks	7
Nice	16	Music	6
Night clubs	14	Large	5
Unsafe	14	Shopping	5
Transformation	13	Friendly	4
TV	12	Industry	4
Weather	9	Dislike	3
Boring	8	Attractive	3
Big	8	Fashion	2
History	7	Regeneration	2
Music	5	Congested	2
Poverty	4	Congested	2
Geographical position	3	Bomb	2
Well known	2	Coronation St	2
Personal associations	2	Urban	2
Buildings	2	Others ³	15
Multi-cultural	2		
Traffic	2		
OK	2		
Others ⁴	8		
TOTAL WORDS	341	TOTAL WORDS	157
Don't know	199	Don't know	68
	540		225

Table 8.3.1 Words used by potential tourists to represent the city of Manchester

³ Ordinary, Shows, Unfriendly, Multi-cultural, Ignorant, Poor, Architecture, Inexpensive, Down market, Confusing, Anonymous, Students, inner city, Home, Uninteresting.

⁴ Distant, Inner city, Education, Stigma, Solid, Scenery, tourism, expensive

8.3.2 Analysis of the semi-structured interviews

The results elicited from the semi-structured interviews reflect the metonymic influences revealed by the word analysis. All mentions of sport-related phenomena in the first section of these interviews (that is before sport was explicitly mentioned by the interviewer), were recorded. Manchester generated by far the most unprompted mentions of sport compared to the other case study cities, but once again, football-related references dominated. The semi-structured interviews began with the question, 'What comes to mind when you think of the city of Manchester?' In response to this question, twenty-three interviewees mentioned something linked to football in general, or Manchester United in particular. These responses were typified by a quote from participant 15 (see Figure 8.3.1):

Interviewer: *What comes to mind when you think of the city of Manchester?*

Participant 15: *Football, that is about it, no, that is the only thing I associate with Manchester, the only image I have of the city - football.*

Figure 8.3.1 Interview excerpt illustrating the influence of football on Manchester's holistic image

Therefore for participant 15 and many others, football dominates the holistic image of the city. Alongside immediate associations, consideration was given to pictorial images that interviewees used to mentally visualise the city. Correspondingly, an analysis of these representations reveals the prevalent use of football as a metonymic image of the city. Two participants stated that their visual image of the city was a depiction of the Old Trafford football ground. No other sporting landmarks in the city were used in this metonymic manner. The 'imageability' of this football stadium was also emphasised by the inclusion of Old Trafford in many participant's cognitive images of the city. When asked to reveal aspects or features that they knew existed in the city, 12 participants mentioned the football stadium. Furthermore, football was also considered to be an important aspect of their behavioural or conative image of the city (Gartner 1996). Several interviewees mentioned the football club as a fundamental reason for visiting the city, a viewpoint neatly encapsulated by participant 43:

'I mean most people who go there want to go down to the football club, just to say they have been and seen it, even if they are not actually supporters. The club is bigger than the city now, well basically the club is the city'

Participant 43

In addition to its conative implications, the communication of this viewpoint suggests that a problem with symbolic representations identified by MacCannell (1999) appears to have been averted. MacCannell notes that there is a possibility that tourists perceive metonymic images only as a symbol of a destination and therefore 'unworthy in itself of his attention' (1999:112). MacCannell feels that this results from the object losing its own markers in becoming a marker for something else, therefore rendering it incomplete 'in itself' as an attraction. However, the metonymic capacity of Manchester United does not appear to have affected the attractiveness of the football club as an urban tourism attraction. Indeed, the comment that people want to go 'just to say they have seen it' implies that this attraction still possesses strong markers, which are deemed as important as the sight itself. The comment that the club 'is the city' explicitly emphasises the role of Manchester United in providing an important metonym for the city of Manchester.

8.3.3 The impact of recent initiatives

Only fifteen of the interview participants interviewed made no explicit reference to sport when detailing their holistic image of Manchester. Despite the prevalence of references to football, other sporting elements of the city were also evident in interviewees' holistic images. For example several participants mentioned the cricket ground and the staging of Test Match Cricket in Manchester. It is, however, important to examine specifically the influence of recent initiatives. In the word analysis, the influence of recent initiatives was not apparent, but several interviewees did make reference to the Olympic bids when detailing their holistic image of the city. When asked to describe the picture of Manchester present in their mind, one interviewee (participant 2) indicated that the new facilities including the 'new Olympic area at one end' was an important part of their visual image of the city. This was the only occasion when recent sport initiatives were used specifically to form a revised metonymic image of the city. However, the recent sport initiatives were mentioned by around 10% of participants in detailing their holistic images, predominantly when answering questions regarding how Manchester has changed in recent years.

Therefore although the new initiatives may have limited metonymic capabilities, they do appear to have provided important symbols of image change.

8.4 Sport and metonymic representations of Sheffield

8.4.1 The word analysis

Of the 306 words concerning Sheffield elicited from the representative sample, 29 (9%) were sport-related (see table 8.4.1). Therefore, whilst sport is less prevalent in metonymic images of Sheffield compared to Manchester (20%), it is still a very important instrument for imagining the city for a significant number of respondents. Indeed, after the words were sorted into categories (see table 8.4.1), sport emerges as the second most popular theme, behind only the city's industrial links which characterised 26% of the responses obtained. This suggests that although sport is used by potential tourists to represent Sheffield, metonymic images of the city are still dominated by the city's past and present industrial affiliations. It should also be recognised that Sheffield generated the largest number of 'don't know' responses (table 8.4.1). Reilly states that 'the lack of a well articulated image is reflected by inability to respond with descriptions' (1990:22). If this interpretation of 'don't know' answers is accepted, this suggests that one of Sheffield's main problems is the lack of a strong metonymic image. To a significant extent, sport has provided the means by which some potential tourists have been able to fill this image void.

Of the 29 sport-related words elicited from the representative sample, a significant proportion (13) were references to football, with only six words related to sport in general (see table 8.4.1). This is perhaps disappointing, as in recent years Sheffield has promoted itself as a 'National City of Sport', rather than through the promotion of specific sporting connections. Only three words elicited can be directly traced to the sporting initiatives implemented over the past ten years. One participant demonstrated the potential metonymic value of Ponds Forge in suggesting that this facility embodied their image of the city as whole, whilst another employed Sheffield Arena in a similar manner. Pertinently, one participant felt that the city could be summed up by the word(s), 'new sport', perhaps illustrating that the city's sporting initiatives have been appreciated by some potential tourists. Interestingly, the word 'Olympics' was used by one respondent to represent Sheffield, despite the city having no obvious Olympic connections. This

response therefore appears to confirm the observation made previously (chapter 6), that individuals are often confused by the proliferation of cities engaging in different event bids. Such confusion may detract from the overall effectiveness of sport as a vehicle for reimagining.

Words were also elicited from the sample of sport spectators. Table 8.4.1 indicates that compared to the representative sample, a smaller proportion (8%) of these respondents used sport-related words to represent the city. Once again, sporting metonyms were eclipsed by industrial associations after these responses were sorted into relevant categories. The full list of responses to the word analysis can be seen in table 8.4.1.

SHEFFIELD

REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE		SPORT SAMPLE	
THEME	No	THEME	No
Industrial associations	81	Industrial	33
Sport	29	Unattractive	12
Nice	29	Sport	11
Dirty/Unattractive	25	Film	7
Shopping	24	Positive	7
Transformation	15	Progressive	6
Busy	11	Shopping	5
Associated concepts	14	Hills	5
Spectacular	9	Friendly	5
Non sport landmarks	9	Trams	4
Geographical position	9	Exciting	4
Rurality	9	Decline	4
History	7	Congested	4
Traffic	5	Non sport landmarks	4
Poverty	4	Boring	3
Full Monty	4	Clubs	2
Boring	3	Unfriendly	2
OK	3	City	2
Distant	3	Position	2
Multi cultural	3	Others ⁵	15
Big	2		
Compact	2		
Unsafe	2		
Music	2		
Others ⁶	2		
 TOTAL WORDS	 306	 TOTAL WORDS	 137
Don't know	234	Don't know	88
TOTAL (180x3)	540	TOTAL (75x3)	225

Table 8.4.1 Words used by potential tourists to represent the city of Sheffield

⁵ Large, Prosperous, Fragmented ,Sprawling, Strength, Rainy, History, Socialist, Varied, Art Galleries, Undeveloped, Pubs, Anonymous, Gritty, Traffic

⁶ City, Strength

8.4.2 Analysis of the semi-structured interviews.

A significant number of potential tourists referred to sport when outlining their holistic images of Sheffield in the semi-structured interviews. Reaffirming findings observed with respect to Birmingham, and particularly those relating to Manchester, the most common references were to the city's footballing pedigree. Indeed, the two recurring images of the city were of the city's steel industry and its two football clubs. In terms of references that could be attributed to the new sporting initiatives, several interviewees mentioned the World Student Games, whilst others mentioned the new swimming complex, athletics track and indoor arena. In all, nine of the participants made some mention of the recent sporting initiatives in expressing their image of the city as a whole. It should be remembered that when interviewees were asked to describe their holistic images of the city they were at no time prompted to mention sport or sporting links. Hence, nine interviewees mentioning the new sport facilities or the Student Games constitutes a significant appreciation of Sheffield's sport reimagining. These mentions included somewhat vague references to the 'Student Games' (participant 34, 50), the 'Games for the young' (participant 28) the city's 'big sports centre' (participant 5), the Arena (participant 49) or 'good sporting arena' (participant 52), 'swimming pool' (participant 33) a 'big running track' (participant 37) and the 'athletics stadium which I have seen on TV few times' (participant 53). As was established in relation to Manchester, a large number of these references to the sporting initiatives were forthcoming when participants were asked whether the city had become a more or less attractive place to visit over the past ten years. Despite this prevalence of citations, in answers to questions asking participants explicitly for their *visual* images, no participants mentioned the recent sport initiatives. Furthermore, only one participant (49) mentioned a recent initiative in detailing immediate associations with Sheffield. This suggests that the new initiatives have not procured a revised metonymic image of the city.

An interesting aspect of references to the Sheffield's sporting initiatives were the differences relating to the geographical residence of interviewees. The vast majority of references to the new facilities and the WSG came from participants residing in the Darlington wards, with some emanating from the Cambridgeshire wards, whereas no specific references were made to the initiatives by participants from the wards located in and around Bristol. As Bristol is the sampling area located furthest from Sheffield, it may

be that that geographical distance is an important factor influencing the holistic penetration of sport reimagining. This finding supports the observations of Hunt, who asserts that 'distance from a region may be an important ingredient in image formation' (Hunt 1971 c.f. Crompton 1979:18).

Overall, Sheffield's holistic image does appear to have been influenced by the sport initiatives, with a significant proportion of the participants quoting recent sport initiatives when detailing their holistic images. These results should not be overstated as Sheffield's holistic image - particularly its metonymic image - remains dominated by industrial associations. Despite this enduring theme, there was evidence from the interviews that participants were receptive to attempts to forge a new image and role for the city. The views of participant 10 when asked about the city of Sheffield provide an illustrative example:

*'Is that where the Crucible is? Yes, that is something else that springs to mind .
From that point of view it has become more noticeable, you know another aspect to
the city itself, its not just about knives and forks perhaps, it is more of a leisure
orientated place perhaps? More of a leisure industry.'*

Participant 10

8.5 Symbolic holistic image change via connotation

As the research questions detailed at the end of chapter 3 highlight, a key premise of the present study is that sport reimagining may influence city images in different ways, via different interpretative levels. The impact of the initiatives on the sporting reputation of the three cities has been analysed in chapter 7 and the preceding discussion in this chapter has analysed the use of individual concepts to form holistic representations. Therefore, thus far, the study has merely dealt with *denotation*, the common-sense, obvious meaning of the sign or object Fiske (1990), and *metonymy*, the use of a part to represent the whole. Obviously messages transmitted to potential tourists by reimagining strategies can be interpreted in a more abstract sense, creating added layers of meaning. The remainder of this chapter examines if and how sport reimagining can result in image change with reference to this 'second order of signification' (Barthes 1977). The intention is to analyse the way in which sport might influence city image through its capacity to engender

connotations and symbolic meanings. At this level, potential tourists may interpret information beyond its obvious meaning so that a concept or object stands for something else. As Echtner argues 'a symbol refers to its designate only by arbitrary social agreement' (1999:49). For example, although the Statue of Liberty may provide a metonymic image symbolising New York, Echtner feels this signifier also engenders meanings such as freedom, and the American way of life which can then also be transferred to the city. According to Barthes, every object of use becomes encoded with its social function, in addition to its material function, rendering the object itself unimportant compared to the image and how it operates as a condensation point for some ideology (Gottdiener 1995). Therefore though sport facilities and sport events are material objects which have specific functions, they also signify wider meanings and values within specific societal contexts through prevailing cultural codes. The process of urban reimagining can be assisted through the transference of these meanings and values to city images.

The specific aim here is to investigate the meanings, myths and connotations generated by a city's association with sport by examining the semi-structured interview transcripts. Whilst relevant excerpts from all sections of these interviews have been analysed for this purpose, two questions were included specifically in the schedule to explore connotation and the answers to these questions form a large part of the analysis. Responses are examined to discover whether there is a common interpretation of sport beyond its literal and obvious meaning. As Burgess and Wood (1988) assert, the interpretation of signs is dependent on a shared understanding of codes that structure messages. In our analysis the intention is to try and reveal whether a shared code of understanding exists and, if so what meanings are generated within, and indeed by, that code. The next two sections of the study (8.6 and 8.7) assess whether sport reimagining has the capacity to generate positive connotations for cities generally. These sections examine interpretations of the links between sport and the city (8.6) and whether/how sport can change the way in which cities are imagined as unified wholes (8.7). The subsequent section (8.8) evaluates evidence related specifically to each of the three case study cities. The analysis concludes with a discussion concerning the relationships between the second order interpretations of potential tourists and the intended effects envisaged by the cities themselves (as detailed in chapter 5).

8.6 The connotations generated by associating cities with sport

Question 25 in the semi-structured interviews asked whether strong sporting associations were a positive or negative association for a city (see appendix d). Of the 54 participants interviewed, 49 stated that they thought that sport was a positive association. The study has tried to establish whether these generally positive responses are based on a shared interpretation of sport within the context of the research. Therefore it was important to ask participants to qualify their generally positive evaluation of urban sporting associations. Responses to this enquiry followed several key themes and table 8.6.1 lists the justifications elicited, in rank order, starting with the theme that was most commonly mentioned. The explanations are divided into those which can be considered to be represent indexical or symbolic signs, or, in other words, whether they are causally or symbolically linked to the deliberate coupling of sport and the city.

Rank	Justification	Number of interviewees mentioning this theme	Relevant semiotic typology
1.	Brings economic prosperity (industry/money /visitors)	15	Indexical
2.	Gives a city profile/identity	13	Indexical
3.	Good for youngsters /social inclusion	6	Indexical
4.	Provides important facilities	5	Indexical
5.	Health	4	Indexical
6.	Pride	4	Symbolic
7.	It just is	3	Symbolic
8.	Encourages participation	3	Indexical
9.	Lively/interesting	2	Symbolic
10.	Personal like	2	Symbolic
11	General popularity	1	Symbolic

Table 8.6.1 Justifications given for considering sport to be a positive association for cities

The most common justification communicated to supplement positive responses was that sport generates much needed inward investment. Participants seemed acutely aware of

cities' requirement to seek alternative sources of revenue to offset the impact of declining manufacturing industries. Table 8.6.1 shows that a significant number commonly argued that sport was a positive concept for a city to be associated with because of the economic benefits procured. Similarly, a number of participants who mentioned the importance of sport as an alternative source of income also believed that sport has a 'high profile' and therefore was a positive association for cities. As participant 20 asserted:

'It makes the city stand out, you know if their football teams or boxers or whatever do well, the city is spoke of more and you know more about it'.

Table 8.6.1 illustrates that participants appreciate the rationale behind sport reimagining. This concurs with Lash and Urry's assertions that that contemporary consumers are less taken in by the illusions of marketing than was once the case and have become skilled at interpreting images (1994:277). However, one might ask whether this transparency is problematic for cities engaging in sport reimagining. If potential tourists know why cities want to use sport as an imaging, is this perhaps reducing its effectiveness? City strategists would be probably prefer it if the majority of potential tourists simply associated sport with health, or if it generated perceptions that a city was lively or interesting. However, these connotations were only mentioned by a relatively small proportion of participants and are easily eclipsed by associations with inward investment and publicity generation. The danger is that because potential tourists know why cities are using sport reimagining, they may be more cynical about the promoted messages and therefore be less likely to accept the images as representative of a city's 'real' character. An alternative position would be to state that participants appeared to appreciate the effort that cities were making to regenerate their landscapes and economies and that this awareness may actually improve perceptions of these cities.

Although sport in an urban context generated positive connotations for the vast majority of interviewees, for several others, it had the opposite effect. The most common justification for a negative attitude towards sport was the inconvenience or the violence associated with certain sporting events. Participant 28 summed up the justifications for the generation of negative associations in stating that:

'The negative is when you know what has to be built to accommodate people at venues, the arena, car parks, people have to be moved away. There is also the menace that is associated with sport fans, that's the negative.'

This viewpoint reflects the argument of Nielsen (1995) who suggests that, although the relationship between sport and the city is inherently about 'control', paradoxically it is also characterised by 'despair, conflict and chaos, as we know from the hooliganism of the stadium and the traffic chaos of the stadium parking lot' (Nielsen (1995:26). Replicating Nielsen's remarks, urban sport conjured up images of hooliganism and traffic chaos for participant 14 who stated:

Oh, there was some press coverage last night on the world cup possibly coming to England and them building a stadium in the suburbs here and really people were not very keen. It would depend on the sport. I mean football, I would be really personally against having it anywhere near my backyard, I don't like the thuggery involved, umm, the Olympics I think that it is a lot of money for a short event, I'm not sure, I have very mixed feelings. When they are playing rugby in Bristol, it causes horrific jams all around when they are playing, it does give the city a profile, but there are plenty of other ways of doing that.

Participant 14

Football hooliganism which escalated in the 1970s and 1980s may therefore still be an obstacle to overcome in securing positive connotations from sport-related imagery. Whether or not the situation has actually improved (or merely been displaced) is controversial. As Redhead (1997) argues, until the mid 1980s football hooliganism was constantly profiled in media culture. However, over recent years 'the narratives began to change in such a profound way that the notion of the disappearance of soccer hooliganism became commonplace' (Redhead 1997:10). Despite the views of participant 14, the shift away from this narrative appears to be generally reflected in the views of the potential tourists. For example, one participant stated:

'I mean you can go now and there is not much hassle, it has improved an awful lot. I think it [sport] is positive thing, it encourages families to go there and watch it, its good to introduce youngsters to these sports, get them interested'.

Participant 37

Others also appeared to be confident that violence and hooliganism was gradually disappearing, which actually meant that sport could now be perceived as a positive phenomenon:

'Not so much these days, but people do still think about football hooligans, but they have more or less got on top of it in this country, so I think it is overall a positive thing.'

Participant 5

If the research been completed several years earlier, the connotations generated by linking sport with the city may have been very different. Even now some participants made immediate connections between sport, violence and safety concerns. However the present study supports the view that contemporary British society is a more appropriate context within which to utilise sport and, more specially football, as a reimagining tool. This appears to be appreciated by some of the cities employing sport reimagining. Indeed, comments by Birmingham's Principal Tourism Analyst (see section 5.1.1), suggest that the post Euro '96 attitude to football has enabled sport to be more readily employed as an urban reimagining theme (Personal Communication 1999).

8.6.1 Shared meanings or individual perceptions?

Some of the more interesting justifications for regarding sport as a positive concept included those where sport was related to an individual's own personal interests and values. As Fiske (1990) states, the process of connotation 'describes the interaction that occurs when the sign meets the feelings or emotions of the user' (1990:86). Therefore, an important area for consideration is how potential tourists relate the idea of linking sport and the city to their own beliefs, motives and values. When asked whether sport was a

positive or negative association for cities, participant 2 answered 'it depends if you like sport'. Although there may well be some shared general positive meanings associated with sport, the views of this participant suggest that connotations are individually generated as well as being engendered by the values of a certain culture. Some individuals who were clearly interested in sport therefore used their own individual preferences to justify their positive attitude to sport. An example is given below in Fig 8.6.1:

Interviewer: *Do you think that strong sporting associations are a positive or negative aspect of cities?*

Participant 2: *Oh positive, definitely*

Interviewer: *Why do you say that?*

Participant 2: *Well I am sports minded so I would always think that way*

Figure 8.6.1 Interview excerpt where individual preferences were used to justify positive attitudes to sport and the city.

Other interviewees were equally abrupt, and similarly used their individual beliefs to justify their attitude towards sport in general. Take for instance the dialogue in Fig 8.6.2 below:

Interviewer: *Do you think that strong sporting associations are a positive or negative aspect of cities?*

Participant 37: *Negative for me*

Interviewer: *Why do you say that?*

Participant 37: *Because I hate it*

Figure 8.6.2 Interview excerpt where individual preferences were used to justify negative attitudes to sport and the city.

Here, the individual's strongly held perceptions about sport have resulted in an interpretation of sport that is not congruent with prevailing (positive) societal beliefs. Interestingly, in the interviews there were instances where these two forces, the values of the culture and the feelings of the individual, were communicated simultaneously. This generated complex and ambiguous interpretations of sport that appeared almost

contradictory. For example, when asked to communicate their feelings about linking sport and the city, participant 40 stated:

'It's hard to say sport is not positive, I mean it is obviously a good thing for the people who live there and sport is a positive thing in general I suppose, but for me I am quite neutral about it, because I am not interested in it.'

Participant 40

Therefore amongst some individuals there appears to be an acceptance of the wider positive interpretation of urban sporting links, but these are tempered by an individual apathy or personal dislike. In determining the connotations generated by sport it is important to look at both these dimensions.

The results show that despite certain individual motives, fears and reticence, linking sport and the city is generally perceived positively within contemporary British culture. This is a very important observation in assessing the potential effectiveness of sport reimagining. However, as some of the interviews illustrated, participants were often unsure where this belief came from. Certainly, a number of participants were unable to use their own personal interests to justify their positive attitude towards sport, as exemplified by the comment below:

'I don't know, it just is, really, for some reason it just feels quite positive even though I don't like sport, you still have to say it is a positive thing for a city to be associated with'.

Participant 34

As the comments of participant 34 demonstrate, in the majority of the cases examined, individuals motives appear to be eclipsed by the overriding acceptance of the dominant shared meaning. This has important implications for sport reimagining. Even in the minds of people who do not express an individual interest in sport, sport reimagining appears to generate positive connotations, although not as strongly positive compared to those people who also expressed a positive personal interpretation. The implications of this conclusion for sport reimagining are very positive - it suggests that sport can generate positive connotations amongst a wide range of different people of different ages and with different

interests. Therefore it would appear that with regard to the second order of signification, sporting imagery has the capacity to enhance city images in a positive manner.

8.7 Sport and city image change

To assist the process of establishing the connotations that sport reimagining can generate, the study also aimed to examine if and how sport initiatives can actually change holistic images of cities. This objective was achieved primarily through the analysis of responses to a section of the semi-structured interviews that specifically asked participants about sport initiatives and holistic image change. Research participants were asked whether their impressions of a city would change if it were to stage a major sporting event or construct prestige sport facilities. Interestingly the majority of interviewees indicated that their views about a city would be altered.

The main perceived effect of the suggested sporting initiatives for a large proportion of participants was that they would be more aware of a city as a result. Of course, this is not quite the same as sport initiatives changing the content of city images (see discussion in chapter 5). For a significant number of participants, the effects of sport reimagining are merely confined to the enhanced awareness of the city's existence. More encouragingly, some participants felt that this enhanced profile resulted in greater interest in a city, although they were not necessarily more inclined to think about it positively. For example, one participant stated:

'When the Olympics are on you usually see a bit of the city itself and that makes you more interested, so maybe, I mean it doesn't change the way you think about it, it just makes you more interested in it'

Participant 45

These findings can be illuminated with reference to theoretical work concerning destination image based on the theory of choice sets. Such theories propose that tourists subconsciously select potential places to visit using perceived sets of destinations and sport reimagining may actually enable a city to transcend the barriers between these sets. According to advocates of this approach to image study such as Bird (1989 c.f. Ashworth and Voogd 1990), potential tourists may not include a destination in their objective choice

set because opportunities are not known due to information constraints. Positions akin to those of participant 45 (above) suggest that in the decision maker's mind, a city may move from being simply one of a range opportunities available to an individual, to the objective choice set because of the implementation of sport initiatives. Therefore, even this enhanced interest in, and awareness of, a city - rather than actual image enhancement - can help improve a city's long term standing as a tourist destination.

Alongside increased awareness, there were indications that holistic images could be enhanced by the implementation of sport initiatives. One of the most frequently expressed views was that cities implementing sport initiatives were, 'ambitious', 'progressive' and 'pro-active' in attempting to revive their fortunes. Participant 5 epitomised this stance, asserting that the implementation of sport initiatives:

'Makes me think that its an exciting place, with a bit of spark, a bit of ambition and a bit more interesting than other places'

Participant 5

This stance was also adopted by another interviewee who stated that the implementation of sport initiatives in a city would make them 'think it is a bit more progressive' (Participant 17). For a small number of participants, the implementation of large-scale sport initiatives also inferred that other aspects of the city would have also been subject to improvement, thus producing a more attractive urban destination. The excerpt below illustrates these inferences:

'It means that cities are trying to do something for the city, bids for thing like the Olympics involves more than just sports stadia, it makes cities look at the whole infrastructure and the services they are providing. So yes, they must have looked at all aspects of the city, how it looks, what the city is providing, so it probably makes me think of it in a more positive way.'

Participant 19

The interpretation of sport initiatives as implying that a city was effectively managed was demonstrated by the views of several interviewees. Many commentators have noted that alongside the external impacts, one motive for reimagining is the desire of local authorities

to enhance their standing within the local area (Boyle 1997). The discussion in Chapter 2 identified place promotion as both involving attempts to develop internal perceptions of governmental competence and efforts to improve external perceptions. The evidence here suggests a distorted version of this theory, where external perceptions of urban governance are improved. For example, participant 26 felt that the implementation of sport initiatives suggested to them that the city must have;

'a very young outlook on their council.....so its probably a city where you're getting new industries coming in, lots of interesting new things going on, where its going to build up more and where there is a lot of interest in the city building up'.

This interpretation was echoed by participant 27 who, when asked whether sport initiatives affected their view of a city, stated:

'Yes, because it is trying to do something isn't it. It is making an effort, it is trying to improve itself'.

Similarly, other interviewees felt that sport initiatives symbolised the onset of urban regeneration. Participant 38 stated that:

'Our cities have gone through a bad stage, they are better now, they have improved and things like sport and building new things has played a big part in that improvement'.

From these observations it is possible to make some rudimentary conclusions which reinforce observations made earlier in this chapter. First, several participants seeming to be making the causal link between sport initiatives and improvements to the city. Therefore, by acting as an indexical sign, sport reimagining demonstrates to some potential tourists that the city is progressive and ambitious. This directs us to a second point; that potential tourists appear to have an acute appreciation of the motives underpinning the initiatives. Although in the majority of instances this appears to be a positive phenomenon, there must be a danger that an awareness that cities are deliberately trying to manipulate their image and attractiveness to tourists may detrimentally affect the capacity of those strategies to procure the desired image change.

Another commonly expressed connotation generated by sport initiatives was the perception that they somehow made the city more interesting (Participants, 5, 26, 39, 45, 49). To assist the study in achieving its aims, participants were prompted to try and explain this interpretation. The piece of dialogue in Fig 8.7.1 below represents one explanation, where sport apparently procures heightened interest in a city because of the bright, colourful, new features that a city may gain as a result of sport initiatives.

Interviewer: Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?

Participant 49: Yes I think it does, I think it's a profile thing again, let's say in Sheffield if there was a major event happening I would be interested in going to Sheffield and more interested in the city generally and people would make more of an effort to go to Sheffield and see what the city has to offer, well I know I would.

Interviewer: Why would you be more interested in the city?

Participant 49: Because of its new buildings, I mean Sheffield is quite an old city and has a lot of old buildings, the new things are new, bright. I mean when I think of Aberdeen I think of granite. Aberdeen is the granite city and everything is made up of grey granite and it is grey. I think these cities need things that are new and bright, it's a psychological attraction, if you have got somewhere that is boring, dull, grey, you need something that is bright, colourful and new, yes, and high profile and sport can give that to a city.

Figure 8.7.1 Interview excerpt demonstrating one interpretation of urban sport initiatives

Although mentioned less frequently, participants also demonstrated a number of other ways sport reimagining may influence the holistic images of cities. Several interviewees thought that sport initiatives generated a feeling 'that you think that city has the edge over other cities' (participant 20). Another felt that sport could enhance the fashionability of a city: 'Yes, if there is a big event held there people are going to think it is a cool place to go' (participant 29). Others indicated that sport added an extra dimension to a city (participant 24) or that sport initiatives generated feelings that a city would be a more exciting place (participant 5).

Several participants indicated in different parts of the interviews that they thought that a big and impressive sport stadium evoked images that the city itself was also big and impressive. In the initial part of the interviews (establishing holistic images of the three cities) these sorts of connections first became apparent. For example Participant 2 in communicating his impressions of Manchester stated that:

I know it is a large city, I mean I have been to Old Trafford before to see a football match and I know that is large and it sort of typifies the whole city, gives you a general feel of the whole city. I mean the stadium is big compared with other stadiums and so is the city – it reflects the size of the city. You get the impression from that of it being large.

Participant 2

In a later section of the interview, which intended to identify the connotations generated by sport initiatives, another participant expressed a similar view. This interpretation is detailed in Fig 8.7.2 below:

Interviewer: *Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?*

Participant 41: *I think so, I mean if a city has got a big stadium, you think it is a big city and it is an important city. If Darlington built a massive new sport stadium, I think people would start to notice it more and think it was more important than they do now*

Figure 8.7.2 Interview excerpt demonstrating the connotations engendered by sport stadia

The use of a stadium to emphasise the size, power and influence of cities has been well documented by Schimmel (1995) and Raitz (1987). Indeed precedents can be observed in ancient civilisations where sporting arenas were important status symbols for urban areas (see Tuan 1977, Favro 1996). It is therefore interesting that the influence of stadia appears to be as relevant today. Some participants drew upon a local example, unconnected to the three case studies in order to illustrate this view. For example participant 42 referred to the city of Gateshead to explain how and why sport initiatives affected his image of cities:

I mean before Gateshead built their stadium, I didn't know a lot about Gateshead, if they didn't have that stadium I wouldn't think a lot of the city, but now I have quite a positive impression of it, really just because of the development of that stadium.

Participant 42

The Gateshead example is particularly relevant here, as this city's initiatives pre-empted the strategies adopted in the three case study cities. Facing similar economic problems, the city attempted to instigate a renaissance based on the financial and image benefits they believed a major sporting venue and associated events programme could accrue. It is therefore not surprising that a number of the Darlington-based interview participants referred to the city in the interviews. Although few specific references were made to Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield in comments regarding the influence of stadium development, it is reassuring for these cities to note that the symbolic qualities of stadia in general were apparent in interview responses.

Some comments in the interviews revealed the importance of the visual impact of sport initiatives on place image, an aspect of image analysis that is commonly ignored. Interestingly, Gateshead (again) and other North East locations were used by participants to illustrate their responses. Two interviewees both felt that sport events in the North East had enabled them to generate sophisticated visual images of these places. These perspectives are detailed in Figures 8.7.3 and 8.7.4 below:

Interviewer: Does it [sport] change the way which you think about a city?

Participant 19: Yeah, I think it can because umm there is always the asociated tableau's of these places and you get to see these places you wouldn't normally see, you get to see everything in one go. If you have an event .. the Great North Run, Gateshead, that sort of thing it obviously pushes pictures of the place to the fore in your mind , you can see that area and you can imagine what that area is like.

Figure 8.7.3 Interview excerpt demonstrating the visual effects of sport initiatives

Comparable opinions were expressed by participant 38, who used examples from events staged in and around Newcastle to illustrate the impact of sport initiatives on their visual images of cities. This is illustrated by the dialogue in Fig 8.7.4 below:

Interviewer: Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?

Participant 38: Yes I think it does make a difference. I mean I always remember a place through an occasion, I think about places because of things I have done there or things I have been to and sport is a good example, people remember a city in conjunction with that sporting occasion. I mean if you go to Newcastle and watch the road race that is how you remember the city, because of the special occasion and the way it is portrayed, the same with the tall ships, you remember it and you will always remember that version of the city, the image of the city becomes what you saw there and then

Figure 8.7.4 Interview excerpt demonstrating the visual effects of sport initiatives

Environmental psychologists believe that enactive images are important in terms of storing perceptions of objects and places (Appleyard 1973). However, this means of information storage appears to have specific relevance for sport events. People attending memorable sport events appear to store associated memories, which become important aspects of their city images and through this mechanism, sport events have the capacity to affect holistic images of cities. There is also evidence from the interviews which suggests that merely watching sport events on television, rather than actually attending them in person, can induce similar effects. The views of participant 19 (above) emphasise this, but other interviewees also made this connection. For instance, participant 43 felt that; 'it [a sport event] takes you to that city in your mind when you are watching some of these things'. With regard to the televising of city-based events, participant 37 found it refreshing to see some positive aspects of cities on the television rather than what he termed tactfully, the more 'colourful parts'.

One less positive aspect of the results for the case study cities was sporadic evidence that was congruent with the theory of cognitive dissonance, an idea that is an important part of destination image formation theory (see chapter 2). The central proposition of this theory is that people tend to avoid contradictory or 'dissonant information' (Mayo and Jarvis 1981:35). Commentators who accept this theory believe that 'people seek information that agrees with their beliefs and they try to ignore information that does not' (Mayo and Jarvis 1981:35). The views of Participant 50 are useful in addressing the relevance of this

assertion for sport reimagining. In response to being asked whether their image of a city would change if sport initiatives were adopted, they replied:

'It can do, but it depends if you already know the city. I mean if I don't know anything about a place then if they hold some event there I may think oh yes, that looks like a good venue and my impression of it will be better. But if it is Sheffield or Birmingham or somewhere then I am not going to change the way I think about it because I already know about what it is like'.

Participant 50

Images of cities already exist before reimagining strategies are implemented and therefore sport reimagining is most effective when it can add to existing perceptions rather than introducing entirely new ideas. A Kitchen argues, urban reimagining 'is not just about the images that cities want to promote of themselves. It is also about the images that already exist' (1997:221). It may be naive to expect potential tourists to accept hyperbolic imagery about industrial cities proclaiming them to be attractive places to visit. However, UK cities such as Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield have a long tradition of hosting sport events and they are intrinsically associated with high-profile teams and stadia. In prior sections of this study (chapter 7 and of preceding sections of the present chapter) it has been established that a large proportion of UK residents associate sport with the three case study cities, particularly Manchester. Hence, there is nothing particularly revolutionary about associating prestige sport with these urban areas. This may help to alleviate problems pertaining to the inertia of city images, due to cognitive dissonance. However, people have their own existing frames of reference and if the images projected by sport reimagining prove dissonant then messages may be rejected. This appears to have been the case with respect to participant 50, whose views are expressed above.

8.7.1 The importance of individual values

The views of the vast majority of the participants regarding the effects of sport reimagining were broadly positive. However, it is important to note that one interviewee indicated that the implementation of sport initiatives in a city would generate negative feelings. Participant 36 stated that they would 'think of it more negatively' if a city were to implement sport initiatives. This solitary negative response appears to validate the

observation made in the previous section that a shared consensus exists where 'sport' and 'the city' is considered to be a positive coalition despite deviant personal preferences. Although there was only one participant who exhibited a negative attitude towards sport reimagining, there were several who communicated neutral or apathetic responses. The vast majority of these responses were from individuals who had little or no interest in sport. Again, this emphasises the importance of an individual's beliefs, preferences and motivations in determining the interpretation of messages communicated via sport reimagining. Examples of where participants linked their lack of interest in sport to an indication that sport reimagining would have little effect on their city images are detailed in Figure 8.7.5 below.

Interviewer: Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?

Participant 40: Not really, no

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

Participant 40: Well I am not really interested in sport and so I wouldn't take any notice to be honest, so it wouldn't really affect me.

Interviewer: Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?

Participant 48: Does it affect the way I view the city?

Interviewer: Yes, Does it change your impressions of it?

Participant 48: Not really, but I suppose that if you were really into sport then it would, personally I think my views would be different if a city invested in a new theatre or concert hall, but the fact that it has got this sport stuff doesn't really affect me, though I suppose you hear about it more.

Interviewer: *Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?*

Participant 3: *No*

Interviewer: *Why not?*

Participant 3: *Because if I want to go to a city, I am not interest in what sport facilities they have got, it makes you more aware of it but it doesn't make me think about it more positively, not with regards to visiting it anyway, I mean I don't think I have got to go there because it has got wonderful sports facilities. I only want to go there if they have got wonderful old Elizabethan houses.*

Interviewer: *Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?*

Participant 13: *Umm, not really, it doesn't mean anything to me because I don't follow sport*

Interviewer: *Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?*

Participant 21: *Not really, it doesn't affect my aspect, I mean I am not into sport really, although I am in sports kit, I am not into sport that much.*

Figure 8.7.5 *Interview excerpts detailing neutral or apathetic responses to sport initiatives*

However, the importance of the apparent shared positive meanings meant that some interviewees - who stated they were not interested in sport - did actually state that their holistic image of a city may change as a result of the implementation of sport initiatives. An example of this perspective is recorded in Figure 8.7.6 below:

Interviewer: Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?

Participant 43: Probably makes it more attractive, especially if it is a big event and it attracts lots of publicity, it makes it more attractive. I suppose it takes you to that city in your mind when you are watching some of these things, you hear about it all the time and I suppose that makes you think of it more positively, I mean it has an effect on everyone, I mean I am not even a follower of sport or anything, but it is there all around you, its every day and you can't avoid it. It is a positive thing and therefore it must give out positive feelings to people about a city.

Figure 8.7.6 Interview excerpt demonstrating personal indifference, but communal appreciation, of sport initiatives.

The most interesting aspect of the dialogue in Fig 8.7.6 is the phrase 'I mean it has an effect on everyone'. This is obviously merely the view of one participant, but its articulation has far-reaching implications for sport reimagining. The ability to generate positive connotations among non-sport enthusiasts, as well as sport followers, significantly increases the penetration and therefore the impact of urban reimagining using sport.

It would appear that to be successful, sport reimagining relies on the symbolic qualities of sport. Reassuringly for Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield, many research participants seem to display dominant readings of the sport symbols and demonstrate an appreciation of a shared code of understanding, that means sport is often interpreted in the manner cities envisaged. However, amongst the interviewees there were several 'rationalists' who looked beyond the symbolism and the hype surrounding sport reimagining. One participant who was asked the question 'Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?', replied:

'No, not at all, you can't judge a place because of what they do, like for sport you can't judge the place on that at all. You can't put a city down because they don't do sport. But there's probably leisure centres which do all different sports, so at least that would keep youngsters out of trouble. If there weren't any sports there would be more trouble around there. Cities that have strengthened like links with sport, that's a good thing, a good idea actually, but no, you can't judge a city on it.'

Participant 33

This perspective was shared by another interviewee, who stated:

'For me personally, it doesn't really affect my view..... Just because a city wants to stage a sport event doesn't make you think it is suddenly a great city'

Participant 53

Therefore, although the research has found that in general, potential tourists do appear to 'decode' sport reimagining in the manner intended (a 'dominant reading' Hall 1980), there are a number of individuals who have looked more objectively at the message being transmitted. Fortunately for cities engaging in sport reimagining these people appear to be in the minority.

8.7.2 Conative images

In the preceding discussion, mention is made of the 'rationality' of some of the responses obtained. This objectivity was also observed in other answers which, rather than considering the symbolic significance of sport initiatives, concentrated on the specific impact they would have on their chances of visiting a city and their perceived enjoyment of it. These 'conative' evaluations included a mixture of positive and negative comments. A significant number of individuals immediately stated that the implementation of sport initiatives in a city would change their image of it, because they would think the city would now possess new attractions that they would like to sample. Examples of these answers are provided in Figure 8.7.7.

Interviewer: *Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?*

Participant 2: *Yes, definitely, I do, I mean I would like to think that I could go to a place for a weekend and do some sport, whether it be to play golf or to watch an event, having the opportunity to do so makes it a more attractive place to visit. I wouldn't necessarily go there, well I would if there were a golf course because that is the game I play the most, I definitely would think that if there was the opportunity to see an event that was there or close by, it would attract me to that city. Like when I went to Manchester, the last two times I went, the first time I went on a cricket tour, the second time I went to see Manchester Utd play my team, so sport has attracted me both times to the city.*

Interviewer: *Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?*

Participant 11: *Yes, I think so, because if there was an event in Sheffield that I wanted to go and see, there was a big stadium and there as a concert in Sheffield that I wanted to go and see or something like that then I would be persuaded to go to Sheffield and my view of Sheffield would be different to what I told you.*

Interviewer: *Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?*

Participant 34: *For me personally yes, being asomeone with strong links with sport.. Would certainly think so yes, I might actually be more inclined to go there you know if they had more of that type of thing, providing they are pulling in good shows, I would certainly be more tempted to go there than I would be otherwise.*

Figure 8.7.7 *Interview excerpts detailing behavioural responses to sport initiatives*

The responses illustrated in Figure 8.7.7 emphasise that, although some participants did allude to the symbolic qualities of sport, a large number merely saw the sport initiatives in terms of their effect on the actual physical and aesthetic qualities of the cities. The

questions were phrased in an ambiguous manner that was not meant to lead participants one way or the other. With this in mind, it is perhaps surprising that so many interviewees did actually refer to symbolic effects. This emphasises that sport does appear to possess symbolic qualities and can transmit positive messages through adding layers of meaning, thus prompting changes to the holistic image of the city.

8.7.3 Limitations

The majority of the results above were generated by placing participants in a hypothetical position and asking what they would think if they had heard that a city had developed sport facilities and/or sought to stage major sport events. Therefore, although the results do appear to be very positive, this hypothetical scenario has excluded some very important factors. First, we have assumed that participants would have heard of these initiatives, when in fact results in chapter 6 illustrate that a large proportion of people are not aware of many components of sport reimagining strategies. The perils of this assumption are exemplified by the thoughts of participant 42 who, when asked whether sport reimagining would change the way in which he thought about a city stated, 'I think it does if I know about it, but you have to know it is going on' (Participant 42). The hypothetical nature of the questioning also removed the impact of 'noise' which would normally affect the interpretation of a message. Though participants may have indicated that their image would be changed by sport reimagining, prior knowledge of a specific city and the existence of other (possibly contradictory) messages transmitted at the same time may nullify the stated impact. This was acknowledged by participant 50 who stated that sport initiatives could change his perceptions 'but it depends if you already know the city'. Therefore it is important to try and isolate findings that relate specifically to the three case study cities. This is prime concern in the next section of this chapter.

8.8 Sport and symbolism: results relating to individual cities

A large proportion of the interview participants stated that their images of Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield had changed over the past ten years. This section aims to establish whether meanings generated by sport initiatives are responsible for this image change. This has been achieved predominantly through analysing the parts of the interview schedule where participants were asked whether they thought each of the cities

had become a more or less attractive place to visit over the past ten years. It is important to remember that at this point in the interview schedule no specific mention of sport had been made by the interviewer. Therefore any references to sport should indicate where sport has been particularly instrumental in engineering holistic image modification.

8.8.1 Birmingham

None of the participants mentioned recently implemented sport initiatives when justifying why their image of Birmingham had changed over the past ten years. This indicates that the construction of the NIA and various sport event bids pursued by the city have had a negligible direct impact in enhancing holistic images of Birmingham. Although in other parts of the semi-structured interview, participants did mention recent sport initiatives in detailing their image of the city, they were not mentioned when interviewees attempted to explain if and why their image of Birmingham had changed. It is therefore very difficult to substantiate whether or not the connotations generated by sport initiatives in general, noted in the previous section, can be applied to Birmingham. However, the lack of evidence suggests that they are not applicable.

8.8.2 Manchester

Of those interviewed, five participants used references to sport to justify perceptions that their image of Manchester had changed. All of these interviewees indicated that their impression of Manchester had improved over the past ten years and that the city's sport initiatives had been fundamental in generating these perceptions. The most positive response came from Participant 2 where the influence of sport event bids was clearly evident:

For me it always seems to be a city that is going places. I don't know what it is, there always seems to be things being built, there is the new Olympic area at one end, they are building a new athletics stadium, they are going for the Commonwealth Games, they were going for the Olympics and so I think it is quite a thriving city. So I get an impression of it as fairly modern, fairly up to date.

Participant 2

For this individual, the city's event bids appear to have engendered feelings that the city has become a more 'modern' city, which is 'thriving'. The fact that the city was not given the honour of staging the Olympics and has yet to stage the Commonwealth Games does not seem to matter - the mere association with these events has produced positive meanings. Conversely, other participants indicated that their impression of Manchester would improve if the city had actually staged the events. Participant 37, clearly oblivious to the fact that Manchester had by this time been awarded the 2002 Commonwealth Games, stated that:

The thing that would make Manchester would be if they got the Commonwealth Games or even better the Olympic Games which they have been trying very hard to get. I mean if they got one of those I'm sure that would make Manchester.

Participant 37

Though the connotations generated here are less straightforward, this participant does appear to be suggesting that the reputation of the city as a whole would be enhanced by hosting major sport events. Other potential tourists were more specific about the impacts of event bids and indicated that their image of Manchester had improved because of the associated physical regeneration. The two quotes below, elicited from different interviewees exemplify this interpretation.

Well I know they have been trying to clean it up a lot and there were lots of areas which were knocked down in readiness for the Olympic Games, which they never got, but now they are having the Commonwealth Games aren't they in four years time, so presumably all that area has been flattened, because it was an old run down area anyway. Presumably all that is going to be built up with all sorts of different things

Participant 5

I would have thought it has become more attractive, they have got to if they want people to visit. Didn't they put in for the Olympic thing? So I mean they must have improved it to get people interested in that.

Participant 35

It is difficult to relate the above quotes to Barthes' theories of the second order of signification (1977). This is partly because, as Fiske notes; 'Barthes's ideas of the symbolic are less systematically developed than those of connotation' (Fiske 1990:91). Instead it is useful to apply the ideas of Peirce, which have been utilised by Burgess and Wood (1988) in their analysis of the production and readings of signs connected to London's Docklands. According to Peircian theory, signs may be iconic, in that they provide visual representations that bear a resemblance to the referent. Alternatively they may be symbolic, where meanings have an arbitrary relationship with the referent (Burgess and Wood 1988:108). We have seen the production of these symbolic signs already in this chapter with the attachment of concepts such as excitement and modernity to sport initiatives. However, the connection of sport initiatives with physical regeneration provides evidence of the presence of indexical signs, which have 'a direct causal relationship with the referent' (Burgess and Wood 1988:108). As physical regeneration is causally linked to Manchester's initiatives, and indeed is something that has been caused by the initiatives, the above quotes are examples of the production of indexical signs. In one sense this regeneration is merely perceived and therefore is inherently fused with some degree of symbolism. However, in these instances, the signifier (the sport initiatives) and signified (physical regeneration) are causally, rather than arbitrarily linked. Therefore, although this chapter set out to identify the symbolic meanings generated by the sport initiatives, it is important to note that in the case of Manchester, important positive indexical signs have also been produced.

One other participant also used sport to justify their improved image of Manchester. This participant felt that recent publicity surrounding the city underpinned their more positive impressions of the city.

They have spent a lot of money making it attractive etc and well, I don't know really, but they are always in the news you know, trying to host something aren't they, like Manchester 2000 or something.

Participant 21

In the case of Manchester, holistic image change does appear to have been assisted by the city's various sport initiatives. Though links with the previous sections are difficult because participants were not always clear why they felt more positively about the city, it

has been possible to observe that some potential tourist's images have been influenced by the connotations generated by the sport initiatives. The consensus amongst these individuals was that the initiatives have made the Manchester a more attractive city destination.

8.8.3 Sheffield

Two participants used sport initiatives to support their perception that Sheffield has become a more attractive place to visit over the past ten years. Partly reflecting the connotations generated by Manchester's initiatives, participant 37 felt that the sport initiatives implied that the city was more 'modern' and suggested that it was making strenuous efforts to improve itself (see Figure 8.7.8):

Interviewer: Do you think Sheffield has become a more or less attractive place to visit over the past ten years?

Participant 37: I have seen it on the television and for the little I have seen I would say it is becoming more attractive all the time

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

Participant 37: Its just about trying to be more modern, they are trying hard to modernise things there. They are building a running track, that must attract a lot of people. That shows they are trying hard to do something to make the city better.

Figure 8.7.8 Interview excerpt citing the role of sport initiatives in procuring holistic image change

Amongst the most common meanings generated by implementing sport initiatives in cities revealed in section 8.6, were connotations of ambition and progression. The dialogue above suggests that these perceptions are relevant to sport initiatives implemented in Sheffield as well as sport initiatives in general. The only other participant who mentioned the sport initiatives in a similar vein felt that they epitomised the new investment that had been put into the city. The views of this participant are illustrated in Figure 8.7.9.

Interviewer: *Do you think Sheffield has become a more or less attractive place to visit over the past ten years?*

Participant 52: *I would say a lot more attractive*

Interviewer: *Why do you say that?*

Participant 52: *Just because of the investment that has gone in there and the new facilities that have been put in there*

Interviewer: *What specifically?*

Participant 52: *Its got a good sporting arena no, which it didn't have a few years ago, its got the tramway and they have spent a lot of money in the city centre developing things*

Figure 8.7.9 *Interview excerpt citing the role of sport initiatives in procuring holistic image change*

In addition to participants 37 and 52, two other interviewees cited Sheffield's new sport facilities as examples of efforts to improve the city. However these answers were also tinged with some negative connotations as both these participants alluded to the negative publicity which surrounded the WSG. Therefore, although the sport initiatives may have become part of potential tourist's holistic images, the images that have been procured have not always been entirely positive. For example, one participant, when asked whether the city had become a more or less attractive place to visit over the past ten years, answered:

'I think it has had its problems, probably more than most and it is still recovering. I mean I think they have tried several things to try and get it going again, they put some trams in, built that terrible shopping centre and didn't they have the Student Games there a few years ago, which wasn't a great success. To be honest I don't think much has changed really.'

Participant 50

Much of the negative publicity around the time when the World Student Games were staged (1991) concerned the financial problems experienced by Sheffield (see chapter 5). However, this media coverage does not appear to have resulted in prevalent negative perceptions. Indeed, apart from participant 50 (above), only one other interviewee emphasised the financial implications of the city's sport-led strategy, stating that:

'It [Sheffield] seems to be quite go-ahead in terms of its attitude to things and trying things like the tram systems, and that side of it, although these things did cost them a lot of money - things like Ponds Forge and places like that cost a lot of money.'

Participant 52

Therefore it is important to emphasise that negative comments regarding the WSG initiatives were only communicated by a minority of the interviewees. Indeed, one participant stated that they felt that the Student Games 'seemed to go quite well' (Participant 34). However, even the negativity of one potential tourist regarding an event which should have been a very positive initiative for Sheffield emphasises that any unhelpful publicity can distort the communication of an intended image to potential tourists. This is acknowledged by participant 38 who, when asked whether sport facilities/events in general changed their impression of a city, stated:

'I mean it can work the other way, if an event is not staged very well then you would think hang on I am not coming back here again'.

Cities attempting to publicise themselves via high profile events must be aware that if the event and the information about an event is not properly managed, the effects on city image could be detrimental.

8.9 Conclusions

The results of the above analysis indicate that sport has the potential and the capacity to influence holistic images, both directly through the development of sporting metonyms, and indirectly via the meanings generated by city - sport associations. Sport is an important facet of city images, as exemplified by the results relating to Manchester, and to a lesser extent, Sheffield. Holistic impressions of Manchester have become infused with sporting imagery, predominantly because of the notoriety of Manchester United Football Club. However, the results from the study of metonymic images, where it was revealed that potential tourists made only limited references to recent sport initiatives, suggests that the major influence of sport is confined to the enduring impact of established sporting links. The results of subsequent symbolic analyses illustrate that a majority of the participants do think that if they heard that a city had implemented sport initiatives their

image of that city would be enhanced. This appears to be the result of three dominant effects that sport initiatives induce. First, a heightened awareness, meaning that potential tourists appear to take more 'notice' of a city. Second, via the production of indexical signs signifying progression, regeneration and ambition. Finally, the apparent capacity of sport initiatives to engender feelings that a city is more 'interesting'. These positive second order readings of sport reimagining have been enabled by the positive meanings attached to the concept of 'sport' in contemporary English culture. As Burgess and Gold (1985:108) state, 'the interpretation of signs is dependent on the shared understanding of the codes which structure the message'. Despite diverse individual motives and attitudes concerning sport, it would appear that there is shared cultural understanding of the meaning of sport. This allows sport reimagining to generate consistently positive meanings among potential tourists, generating the capacity to enhance holistic city images.

To conclude this chapter, findings have been related to the specific intentions of sport reimagining which were established in chapter 5. In chapter 5 the views of a representative from the city of Birmingham, Richard Callicott were detailed. Mr Callicott stated that sport can generate positive connotations enabling sporting initiatives to become effective agents of image change. He asserted that sport initiatives in Birmingham provoked associations with 'dynamism, excitement, internationalism, athleticism' and a 'warm welcome' (Personal Communication 1999). The results from the general investigation of the symbolic qualities of sport initiatives did suggest that perceptions of excitement and dynamism could have been generated by Birmingham's initiatives. However, the lack of specific evidence relating to Birmingham suggests that the city has largely failed to generate such connotations. Certainly, there was no evidence that sport initiatives generated feelings of internationalism or athleticism amongst potential tourists. In addition, there were no responses which suggested that sport could engender 'welcoming' perceptions of Birmingham.

In reference to the city of Manchester, the following statement by Manchester City Council epitomises how the city has tried to use sport initiatives to enhance the city's holistic image:

Despite an impressive history of innovation, the world's first industrial city has done little, until the early 1980s to shake off its industrial image. The Olympic and Commonwealth bids have changed all that

Manchester City Council 1996:83

A more recent announcement highlights the specific aims of the strategies adopted (in this case with reference to the Commonwealth Games bid) in terms of the intended influence on Manchester's image.

To project a new and vibrant image based on the reality of resurgent urban centres, and wide ranging regional attractions, rather than the perceived declining industrial landscape

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Encouragingly, the results of this chapter show that potential tourists are more likely to use sport-related phenomena, rather than industrial associations, to symbolise Manchester. Of the words used to represent the city collected from the representative sample, 20% were sport-related while only 5% were industry-related. However, the extent to which this is due to the recent initiatives is debatable. The evidence from the word analysis suggests that established sporting connections have been more instrumental in generating Manchester's sporting metonyms. However the analysis of connotations and the second order meanings provides evidence that the sport initiatives adopted by Manchester may have steered the city towards its envisaged holistic image. Approximately 9% of the representative sample indicated that the city was an 'exciting' place (see table 8.3.1). A further 4% exhibited metonymic images pertaining to the transformation and regeneration perceived to have taken place in Manchester. The findings of this section of the study indicate that sport initiatives can engender these meanings through arbitrary associations and causal links. Therefore it is possible that recent sport initiatives have influenced the holistic image of Manchester both directly and indirectly. The evidence relating to perceptions of image change show that Manchester's event bids have had an impact on the city's holistic image.

Much of the rhetoric surrounding the Sheffield's sport reimagining strategy was based on the premise that it could promote the city as a progressive, ambitious place. To a certain

degree the results from this chapter vindicate the city authorities' assertion that the Games and subsequent sport initiatives could enhance the city's image in this manner. A number of participants used the new sport facilities to symbolise the city's regeneration and as evidence for the progressive way in which this objective has been pursued. Despite this, the city's holistic image is still dominated by industrial associations and therefore if the city wished to move on from being 'a city of the past' as evidence in chapter 5 suggests, this has not yet been achieved. However, following the constant negative publicity surrounding the financial implications of the sport-led strategy adopted by Sheffield, we may have expected the image related impact of the sport initiatives to be of questionable value to the city. This has not proved to be the case. Indeed a surprisingly large number of potential tourists mentioned the facilities in detailing positive holistic images. Bradley (c.f. Goodwin 1993) quotes the Head of the Planning Strategy (Sheffield City Council) as remarking that the Don Valley Stadium 'rising on the site of a former steel works in the emerging East End park is a symbol of Sheffield's strategy to harness the growth in leisure to combat industrial decline' (Bradley 1990:8, c.f. Goodwin 1993:154). This ambitious rhetoric has been modestly vindicated by the results in this chapter in that a number of participants did actually mention the athletics stadium in justifying their improved images of the city. The potential tourists appeared to use this and other aspects of the sport initiatives as symbols of the city's general improvement over recent years. Therefore sport reimagining can influence Sheffield's holistic image - the city just needs to extend isolated instances where the envisaged effects have been realised, to influence the images of a wider section of the population.

Chapter 9

Synthesis and conclusions

9.0 Introduction

The preceding chapters have revealed findings relating to individual case study cities and concerning the concept of sport reimagining in general. The aim in this final chapter is to synthesise these observations and summarise their implications for Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield and other city destinations. This will be achieved by returning to the broad aims of the study and to the key issues identified in chapters 2 and 3. The first section of the ensuing discussion refers specifically to the three individual case studies. The study findings are then considered in relation to some of the key issues identified in the literature review, including the imageability, credibility, communication and serial reproduction of sport reimagining. Additionally, further themes that emerged from the present study are discussed, including the thematic and physical integration of sport reimagining initiatives and their capacity to stimulate sport tourism. The limitations of the study are then discussed, with specific attention devoted to the limitations of the conceptual framework. The chapter, and therefore the thesis, concludes with a discussion of the value of the study and suggestions for future academic research.

9.1 Synthesis and summary of findings for individual cities

Each of the preceding four chapters has directly addressed the research questions detailed at the end of chapter 3. Each chapter relates specifically to one of these research questions and therefore there is no need to return to these questions explicitly in this conclusion. Instead, the intention in this final chapter is to revisit the broad aims of the study. In the introduction to the thesis (section 2.1), it was stated that the aims of the study were:

1. To investigate the use of sport reimagining in three case study cities.
2. To evaluate the impact of sport reimagining on potential tourists' images of the three case study cities.
3. To evaluate the value of sport as a reimagining theme for the city destination

This section (9.1) will address the first two of the aims cited above, by discussing them in relation to each of the case study cities. The third aim, regarding the value of sport as a reimagining theme, is addressed in section 9.2.

9.1.1 The use and impact of sport reimagining in Birmingham

Of the three case-study cities, Birmingham's sport reimagining strategy was the least focused and least coherent. Indeed, confusion regarding the objectives of the sport initiatives resulted in the need to seek clarification from two civic representatives. These discussions revealed that the city's major initiatives – the NIA and Olympic bid - were not planned as a coherent strategy to further economic and tourist development through sport. However, Richard Callicott of Birmingham City Council confirmed that retrospectively the city has used sport strategically to present a more attractive image to an external audience (Personal Communication 1999). Although the envisaged outcomes were somewhat ill-defined, this study provides evidence that Birmingham wanted to strengthen its sporting reputation and aimed to create a new 'international' image for the city. The study reveals that a large number of potential tourists have heard of Birmingham's Olympic bid and the development of the NIA. Indeed, a large proportion of both the representative sample and the sport spectator sample are conscious of both these initiatives, illustrating their prevalent prominence. However, the actual impact of the NIA and the Olympic bid on the city's image, though evident, is unspectacular. A number of potential tourists and potential sport tourists consider Birmingham to be a sporting city, but these perceptions do not appear to be derived from an awareness of these specific initiatives. Indeed, statistical tests have found no relationship between an awareness of these initiatives and Birmingham's sporting image. The NIA was perceived to have strengthened the

city's links with sport by a number of interview participants, but Smyth's (1994:182) (unsubstantiated) assertion that the NIA 'has lent credibility as a flagship to the city as a centre for sport' appears to be an exaggeration. Birmingham has developed a good reputation for its provision of indoor arenas, but the study findings indicate that this is primarily due to the influence of the NEC.

More encouragingly, the NIA was one of the only initiatives that influenced the metonymic images of potential tourists, an effect which has been facilitated by positive perceptions of the newly refurbished city centre in which it is located. However, the influence of the Olympic bid appears to have been tempered by subsequent bids for the Olympics and other international sport events by other UK cities, which has confused some participants. Certainly, Manchester's Olympic bids are recognised more widely and appear to have procured more significant image impacts. This has rather overshadowed Birmingham's attempt to secure the 1992 Games. Furthermore, Birmingham's initiatives do not appear to have generated the connotations of 'dynamism, excitement, internationalism and athleticism,' envisaged by Callicott (Personal Communication 1999), and the recent initiatives were not cited by any participants in explaining why their holistic perceptions of Birmingham had changed. The initiatives were mentioned as cognitive elements of holistic images, but again this does not appear to have been translated into image enhancement, though their inclusion suggests that knowledge and awareness of the city may have improved as a result. Overall, the study findings suggest that, in spite of their widespread acknowledgement, the NIA and Olympic bid have exerted only limited effects on both Birmingham's attribute-based image and holistic image.

Despite the rather restricted success of the initiatives implemented thus far, the recent publication of a 'Policy for Sport' (Birmingham City Council 1999a) emphasises Birmingham's continued commitment to enhancing its sporting reputation. In contrast to some of the initiatives outlined in this study, the main focus of this strategy is the involvement of local people, improving their quality of life and tackling inequality, in addition to securing the city's economic future (Birmingham City Council 1999a:10). This equates with Haughton and While's (1999) observation that urban authorities have begun to recognise that 'entrepreneurial agendas should not be allowed to dominate local decision making and that issues of social justice,

community participation and environmental protection should be balanced with the imperative of inter-urban competition' (1999:9). Nevertheless, Birmingham still appears to be intent on pursuing high profile links with sport to assist its image. For example, the continued confusion surrounding the future of the Wembley Stadium project has prompted Birmingham to resubmit a bid to house a National Stadium close to the NEC and the city's international airport.

9.1.2 The use and impact of sport reimagining in Manchester

Akin to those in Birmingham, Manchester's sport initiatives have emerged as a strategy, rather than comprising the manifestation of an intended policy. The momentum generated by the Olympic bid and the finance acquired from central government meant that the city's Olympic aspirations evolved into a sport-led regeneration and reimagining strategy. This strategy has involved a number of tangible sporting developments in addition to successful and unsuccessful event bids. Documentary evidence suggests that these initiatives were implemented to develop Manchester's sporting reputation and to symbolise the city's transformation by replacing vague and negative perceptions of the city as a whole. The study found that a large proportion of potential tourists are aware of Manchester's Olympic bids, although they are less conscious of the associated initiatives implemented in the city. Both the sport spectator sample (87%) and the representative sample (74%) exhibit high awareness levels of the bids, which provides a good foundation for image enhancement. The Velodrome and Nynex Arena are acknowledged by sport enthusiasts, but have not infiltrated the consciousness of the representative sample. However, the study findings indicate that Manchester has developed a strong image as a city of sport amongst potential sport tourists and the general public. Recent initiatives have influenced this image, but paradoxically their effects have been most noticeable amongst the representative sample. In the interviews, the Olympic bid was observed to be particularly influential in engendering these perceptions, and appears to procure perceptions that the city has impressive sport facilities. Despite the modest success of the initiatives in engendering positive perceptions of the city's associations with sport, Manchester's sporting image is dominated by, and largely the result of, the city's links with football.

Although some participants intimated that Manchester has become a 'serial' bidder for events, the interviews revealed that Manchester's attempts to attract major events were generally regarded favourably by potential tourists. In assessing the holistic impact of the initiatives, sport was used by a large proportion of the respondents as a metonym for the city, but again these images were dominated by footballing references. Indeed, the recent initiatives were not used by any of the interview participants in either their immediate associations with the city or their visual images of the city. Nevertheless, several participants who felt that Manchester's image had improved indicated that such perceptions had been partly engendered by the recent sport initiatives. Interestingly, these symbolic effects were predominantly causally, rather than arbitrarily linked to the sport initiatives, in that participants inferred that the Commonwealth and Olympic bids had resulted in the physical regeneration of the city. Therefore, using a Piercian framework (Fiske 1990), indexical signs appear to have been more important than symbolic signs in generating enhanced holistic images of this city. In addition to holistic impacts, Manchester is also perceived as the UK's premier sporting city outside London. The initiative most influential in generating awareness, attribute-based image enhancement and holistic image has been the city's attempts to attract the Olympic Games to the North West.

Manchester's use of high profile sport initiatives continues apace with the forthcoming 2002 Commonwealth Games plus the associated development of the SportCity site at Eastlands and the new swimming pool complex (see appendices w and x). This study is timely in that facilities such as the Nynex Arena and the Velodrome may in the future come to be associated more with the Commonwealth Games rather than with the Olympic bids that stimulated their construction. These Olympic bids have had a positive influence on Manchester's image and there is a danger that if the Commonwealth Games are unsuccessful, the long-term benefits of the 'failed' bids may be compromised. The great advantage of merely mounting high profile bids, rather than actually staging high profile events, is that the risks of negative image effects are lessened significantly. This contention is reflected in Higham's (1999) argument that 'hosts cities stand to lose more than they can gain in terms of destination image' (1999:84). Higham's pessimism is perhaps justified by an analysis of early media coverage of the Commonwealth Games, which has focused exclusively on their negative financial implications (for example see Guardian

15/3/1999). Unless Manchester can radically redirect the media agenda, the city may ultimately realise that when competing to stage major sport events, it may be merely the taking part, rather than winning that really counts.

9.1.3 The use and impact of sport reimagining in Sheffield

Sheffield's World Student Games (WSG) strategy has been denounced for its deficient planning procedures (Bramwell 1997a), the lack of public consultation (Roche 1994) and the financial burden it bequeathed. Initial concern and enduring criticism has usually been countered by references to the strategy's potential for procuring city image enhancement. Indeed, an economic impact study published after the Games asserted, without substantiation, that: 'The wider benefits of the Games and facilities includes the enhancement of the city's image' (Sheffield City Council 1993:35). The present study aimed to avoid concentrating merely on the image effects of the WSG, by focusing additionally on the impacts of the wider sport-led strategy that the event inspired. However, if its success ultimately resided in delivering significant long-term image benefits, then the findings of this study have failed to vindicate the WSG strategy. Though this study only addresses the image effects relating to just one of a series of target audiences (see Fig 1.1), with respect to potential tourists, the strategy has only delivered modest image enhancement. This is largely a result of the limited awareness levels of the WSG and some of the affiliated facilities. Only 8% of the representative sample and 20% of the sport spectators had heard of the Ponds Forge complex, which rather limits the imaging capacity of this 'prestige project'. Similarly, when prompted, only 28% of the representative sample knew that the city had staged the 1991 World Student Games and only 5 interview participants recalled the WSG when asked to name any events that had been bid for, or staged by the city in the past ten years. However, as awareness levels were ascertained seven years after this event was staged and the WSG facilities were opened, perhaps Sheffield's strategy should not be interpreted too negatively.

Frustratingly for Sheffield, where awareness was exhibited, the initiatives do appear to have resulted in enhanced perceptions of the city's provision of sport stadia, (amongst the sport spectator sample), and the provision of sport facilities in the city (amongst the representative sample). Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews

revealed that several participants felt that the initiatives have strengthened the links between the city and sport. Despite such perceptions, potential tourists remain divided about these links and, as such, Sheffield's standing as a 'city of sport' is rather overshadowed by neighbouring Manchester's sporting reputation. Therefore with reference to the range of different indicators of 'success' employed by the present study, Sheffield's WSG initiatives have only partially accomplished attribute-based image enhancement. This partial success also epitomises the overall assessment of the holistic image findings. The analysis of Sheffield's holistic image revealed that resultant metonymic impacts were negligible, although the WSG initiatives were cited in qualifying perceptions of general image improvement. Despite some comments that made explicit reference to the 'problems' associated with the WSG strategy, those who were aware of the initiatives were impressed by the new facilities and felt that they symbolised a modern city that was progressive and ambitious.

The results indicate that Sheffield needs to focus on generating increased awareness of its new sport facilities, rather than investing further to enhance its image via sport. This study has shown that sport initiatives can influence destination image, but awareness of some of Sheffield's initiatives is too limited to procure widespread image enhancement. The interviews also revealed Sheffield's positive links with snooker, ice-hockey and athletics and therefore the loss of the annual Grand Prix athletics meeting, the uncertainty surrounding the future of the Sheffield Steelers, and the threat to relocate the World Snooker Championships, is a concern for those responsible for Sheffield's image. As Higham (1999) suggests, it is important for cities 'to develop a greater understanding of the tourism development potential of existing/regular sport events and competitions' (1999:89). Accordingly, in Sheffield, successful links need to be reinforced and fully exploited before further resources are devoted to engendering new links. Furthermore, the findings of this study illustrate that sport facilities need high profile links with popular and successful sport teams and regular exposure on television to develop significant imaging capacity. Unfortunately, the recent merger and relocation of the successful Sheffield Eagles rugby league franchise may increase the relative anonymity of Don Valley Stadium. If Sheffield genuinely wishes to use its sport facilities as vehicles for reimagining then it must attempt to enhance the profile of this Stadium and Ponds Forge.

With regard to Sheffield's current strategic direction, it is noticeable that the signs entering the city proclaiming it to be a 'National City of Sport' have been quietly removed. Negative publicity regarding the financial implications of the WSG still pervades the local press and the new incumbents of the Town Hall appear reticent to endorse sport initiatives associated with, and partly responsible for the removal of, the previous administration. As such, it remains to be seen whether Sheffield will instil new life into its sport reimagining strategy, last revisited with the attempt to attract the UK Sports Institute to the city. However, in the latest 'Masterplan' for the city centre (Sheffield One undated: 9), sport is one of five main key themes to be stressed, indicating that Sheffield has not give up its ambition to be a 'City of Sport'.

9.2 The value of sport reimagining

In addition to findings relating to specific cities, the study also aimed: 'To evaluate the value of sport as a reimagining theme for the city destination' (aim no. 3 see section 1.4). The purpose of this section is to clarify the study findings that relate specifically to this aim.

Although there is a significant amount of variance between individual cities and individual initiatives, there is considerable evidence that sport reimagining has several characteristics which makes it a useful and valuable theme for city image development. The remarkable prominence of sport facilities and sport events amongst potential tourists emphasises can be an effective promotional vehicle for cities. Furthermore, sport initiatives do appear to have the capacity to influence city images in a variety of different ways. In several instances sport initiatives have demonstrably influenced the sporting reputations of cities and the pervading positive interpretation of urban associations with sport means that symbolic effects are also evident. Despite these positive findings, issues problematising the value of sport as a reimagining theme also became apparent during the research process. Many of these issues are raised below, in an analysis structured around the characteristics which it was surmised gave sport an advantage over other reimagining themes.

In chapter 2 (sections 2.9.5 – 2.9.7), several ideas were introduced which purported to explain why sport may be an effective imaging theme for cities to adopt. The study

surmised that the credibility, imageability and popularity of sport initiatives added to their potency as vehicles for urban reimagining. It is therefore appropriate here to assess the extent to which the initiatives analysed in this study exhibit these qualities and to use this investigation to evaluate the value of sport reimagining to city destinations. This analysis will be qualified by using study findings to critically evaluate the relevance and applicability of these supposed qualities to substantiate whether they represent valid justifications for pursuing sport reimagining. Once again, this should allow the study to assess the value of sport as a reimagining theme for the city destination.

9.2.1 The credibility of sport initiatives

In chapter 2, it was proposed that sport initiatives provided 'credible' city reimagining instruments because information is communicated via cogent sources and because they allow city images to evolve, rather than imposing revolutionary 'new' images. These separate qualities are discussed below, beginning with an evaluation of the notion that the value of sport as a reimagining theme is enhanced because images are communicated via credible and penetrative 'autonomous image formation agents' (Gartner 1993, 1996).

9.2.2 The credibility of sport reimagining I: Sport initiatives as autonomous image formation agents

Autonomous image formation agents are those which are not directly controlled by a tourist destination. According to Gartner, this supposedly increases their perceived credibility and therefore enhances the likelihood that messages will be accepted (Gartner 1993, 1996, 1997). Findings from this study indicate that most participants had heard of sport initiatives via the coverage of events by independently produced print and broadcast media. This would appear to confirm that Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield have capitalised upon autonomous image agents which should have increased the credibility of their sport reimagining. Manchester has been particularly successful in procuring credible coverage with a number of participants sharing the view of participant 29 who stated that 'I think sport seems to be getting a lot of coverage on the TV and in the papers and Manchester is somewhere you hear

about a lot' (Participant 29). The Olympic bid attracted a number of comments about its media coverage – in particular the spectacle created when the host city of the 2000 Games was announced to an expectant audience outside the City's Town Hall. Similarly, Birmingham's NIA attracted comments because of its use as a venue for the TV programme *Gladiators*. Such links illustrate the importance of high profile media exposure to assist the imaging capacity of sport initiatives. The study findings suggest that sport's media coverage enables sport reimagining to penetrate a wide audience. This was exemplified by the views of Participant 43 who stated that 'I mean it [sport] has an effect on everyone, I mean I am not a follower of sport or anything, but it's there all around you, it's every day and you can't avoid it'.

Despite confirming the communication of reimagining via autonomous image agents, it is clear that even when awareness of the initiatives was generated this did not automatically translate into image enhancement. The apparent impotency of some of the sport initiatives suggests that the credibility of its source and the penetration of a message are not the only factors which determine the formation of images, reaffirming the critique of Gartner's image formation model detailed in section 2.4.3. The plethora of autonomous image formation agents in contemporary society means that there are a number of independently produced information sources which reach a large audience but which have little impact on destination image. As Burgess and Wood (1988) indicate, capturing the public, or tourist imagination requires distinctive messages that derive meaning from associations with contemporary culture. There are initiatives examined by the present study which appear to possess the qualities required to communicate such messages. For example, the apparent awareness and imaging capacity of the NIA and Manchester's Olympic bids is not merely based on the credibility and the penetration of the messages transmitted to potential tourists, but on their association with two 'meaningful' cultural references – the Olympics and *Gladiators*.

Even if Gartner is correct to assume that autonomous agents are the most influential contributors to image formation, this does not mean that these agents are necessarily the most appropriate mechanisms for municipal authorities to realise their imaging objectives. Despite the increasing sophistication of contemporary PR activities, the disadvantage of these autonomous agents is that cities are unable to control the

emphasis of the messages communicated. Relying on independently produced agents may project credible and penetrative sporting images, but they may not be necessarily those which a city wishes to stress. This is something which was observed in the present study. The obvious example is Manchester's football links, which are also communicated via credible sources, and which obviate the city's other sporting associations, including the forthcoming Commonwealth Games, the Nynex Arena and the new Velodrome. The study findings also indicate that the relationship between city image and sport is influenced significantly by the success of resident sports teams, communicated via autonomous agents. This observation epitomises the relative powerlessness of municipal authorities in determining sport images, as sporting success is beyond their immediate control. Or is it? Until the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, the fortunes of flagship football teams such as Steau Bucharest were determined largely by government intervention, allowing authoritative images of state and capital to be communicated to the Romanian population and the rest of Europe. Arguably such involvement continues to the present day where the dominance of Real Madrid in world football is facilitated by the tacit involvement of a benevolent urban government keen to exploit the imaging benefits provided by a successful Madrid side.

The observed importance of sporting success and the need to 'control' autonomous image agents – demonstrated by the contemporary significance of 'spin' - may alter the relationship between cities and sport. Increasing intervention in sport by urban governments is something that Euchner alludes to in his rather damning critique of the relationship between the city, sport and tourism (1999). Euchner (1999) asserts that one solution to the sport reimagining problems experienced by US cities is to challenge the sports industry with competition. The author suggests that if cities want to maximise the rewards of sport initiatives, they need to become more actively involved in the functioning of sport – setting up rival leagues and forcing existing leagues to create new teams and franchises. Certainly, if the obsession with the image benefits of sport continues apace, then the involvement of urban government not only in the politics and provision of sport, but also in its competitive outcomes, is increasingly likely. If sporting success is an important catalyst of image enhancement, then urban governments may increasingly realise that investing in athletes, players and coaches

may be a more efficient use of public resources than simply building new stadia or attempting to attract events and existing franchises.

9.2.3 The credibility of sport reimagining II: The evolutionary qualities of sport reimagining

In chapter 2 (section 2.9.5) it was also surmised that credibility of sport reimagining is heightened because of the way it encourages the development of existing city images. According to several commentators, to be effective, imaging strategies should evolve from current images held, rather than instigating an instantaneous revolution of the destination image (Gartner 1997, Mayo and Jarvis 1981). It was proposed that because cities like Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield all boast traditions of hosting high profile sport events, stadia and teams, there would be nothing revolutionary about using sport to represent these urban areas. This would add to the efficacy of sport reimagining by ensuring continuity, a minimum of cognitive dissonance and therefore image credibility. This study reveals that a large proportion of potential tourists do associate the cities with sport and that these links are mainly based upon established sporting associations - seemingly confirming the validity of this initial proposition. However, the study has not necessarily indicated that this increases the efficacy of sport reimagining. Indeed, the results detailed in chapter 7 suggest that in a large number of instances established sporting links have overshadowed recent initiatives - reducing their image effects. This discontinuity is further exaggerated because the new initiatives have not usually capitalised on existing sporting images, but have actually employed more diverse themes and sports unconnected to dominant associations with football and, to a lesser extent, cricket. Therefore, although the general theme of the initiatives – sport - does not result in cognitive dissonance, there is dissonance between different sub-themes.

The existing links between a city and certain sports, and the subsequent promotion of the same city using different sporting links appears rather perplexing. Though cities have attempted to promote their sporting reputations, these imaging strategies have paid little attention to established images of sport that existed before the initiatives were implemented and which endure to the present day. Rather than constituting a natural extension of destination image, this could be interpreted as a rather inefficient

diversification. It could also be argued that if cities such as Manchester already have such strong links with sport, which have been procured independently of municipal authorities, is there any point in these authorities devoting resources to reinforcing them?

An examination of the politics and power dimension of city reimagining may help to explain the observed dissonance between induced and organic sporting images. In an analogy with 19th Century Paris, Kearns notes that Haussman's spatial strategy exhibited a clear cultural agenda stating that 'the centre was sanitised, industry expelled, the working classes following to the north-east of the city' (Kearns 1993:94). This was an attempt to use spatial transformation and spatial representation to achieve political objectives. The reimagining of Glasgow was similarly accused of employing grand reimagining and regeneration schemes to mask a new political agenda (Boyle and Hughes 1991). Though it would be an exaggeration to assert that sport reimagining in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield was underpinned by similar motives, there is certainly evidence that initiatives have been driven by power relations that may not benefit all groups in the city. As Philo and Kearns state, place marketing is often a 'conscious and deliberate manipulation of culture in an effort to enhance the appeal and interest of places ...to up-market tourists' (1993:3). The outcome of a process involving cultural elites designing initiatives to appeal to other cultural elites is unlikely to result in unbiased reimagining strategies. Though sport in the city has long been the habitus of the urban working classes (Holt 1989), urban culture and its presentation has always been the 'active project of the urban bourgeoisie' (Philo and Kearns 1993:13). The recent appropriation of sport by municipal authorities as a reimagining theme reflects the 'hijacking' of urban sport in general by cultural elites. Sport has become increasingly gentrified, commercialised and sanitised and it is this manifestation that is being used to reimage the city to potential tourists. In this sense, sport reimagining does reflect the values of the middle classes and neglects the interests of others. The result is glossy images of new stadia and world events, obscuring the traditional sporting qualities of northern cities and the locations in which they are experienced. The reasons for this notable omission of traditional urban sport in contemporary reimagining can be partly explained by an analysis of power relations. As Laurier contends, 'there is nothing more useless to a city-seller than a working class city that is still working class' (Laurier 1993:276).

A further concern for cities is that although the majority of research participants did not deem the use of sport tenuous or contradictory, a significant number did find the idea of a 'sporting city' or a 'city of sport' difficult to comprehend. For some this was a result of a lack of interest in, and knowledge of sport, but for others it was because that they simply did not think that any city was intrinsically associated with sport. Although Gratton et al (1996:25) assert that the alleged success of its sport-led strategy 'has given Sheffield an added confidence to grasp the city of sport concept', it would appear that some potential tourists have not 'grasped' this concept with the same ease. This further problematises the surmised notion that sport is an effective reimagining theme because of the existing congruent relationship between sport and the city. Furthermore, the supposed credibility of sport as a reimagining vehicle was challenged by the acute awareness that cities were deliberately trying to strengthen links with sport in order to realise economic objectives. In some instances, this awareness engendered a certain cynicism, where participants felt that cities were trying to be 'seen' to be interested in sport, rather than being inherently blessed with sporting qualities. Therefore, although the perceived authenticity of sport reimagining was largely unchallenged, there were instances where sport initiatives were deemed to be somewhat 'engineered'. Participants were very aware of the challenges faced by post-industrial cities and appreciated why cities were trying to use sport to secure their future prosperity. These efforts were usually perceived positively, indeed many of the interviewees felt these efforts compared very favourably with the efforts of their own local authorities. However, the intrinsic awareness of the intentions of sport reimagining renders the notion that new sport initiatives are a natural extension of existing sporting images, rather than a deliberately manufactured association, rather problematic.

9.2.4 The imageability of sport initiatives

A further quality of sport reimagining closely associated to its alleged 'media-friendliness' was outlined in section 2.9.6, where it was surmised that sport initiatives were inherently 'imageable' elements of the urban environment. It was proposed that this quality could enable new facilities and events to enhance visual urban images and help develop positive metonymic representations for cities. Despite the prevalent

awareness of recent sport initiatives, there was only limited direct inclusion of facilities and events in holistic city images. For example, the study findings in chapter 8 indicate that few of the new initiatives have become city metonyms - a key indicator of 'imageability'. This is partly the result of the continued use of enduring metonyms, such as the use of industrial associations to represent the city of Sheffield. However, a significant proportion of potential tourists were unable to provide any metonyms for the three cities, indicating that the impotency of sporting initiatives is not merely a result of a proliferation of existing metonyms. Other sporting associations were employed by a large number of research participants as metonymic images, implying that there is no fundamental obstacle to the use of new initiatives for this purpose. This suggests that the specific sport initiatives in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield are not particularly 'imageable', rather than providing evidence of an inherent limitation of sport as a reimagining theme. More specifically, the study found that events and event bids in the three case study cities were rather impotent metonymic imaging vehicles. For example, the problem with Manchester's Olympic bids was that, although the announcement of the result was recalled as a memorable image, and though others cited the bids in detailing images of the city and in perceptions of image change, they were not used by potential tourists to represent the city as whole. Similarly, no respondents used the WSG as a metonym for Sheffield, although some of the affiliated sport facilities were used in this manner. The NIA was also used as a metonym for the city of Birmingham, suggesting that sport facilities are more important than events in engendering sport-related metonyms representing the city as a whole. Indeed, when events and event bids were used to demonstrate holistic image change, it was the facilities they engendered or the regeneration they stimulated that was referred to.

Sport events were deemed to be imageable by some research participants, despite the apparent impotency of those associated with Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. Participants in Darlington indicated that Newcastle was a city that had staged events capable of influencing their holistic images of the city. These participants cited the 'tall ships' event and the 'road race' (Great North Run) as procuring memorable metonymic images. Participant 38 stated that 'I always remember a place through an occasion. I think about places because the things I have done there or things I have been to and sport is a good example'. This evidence suggests that Miller's assertion

that we do not imagine space, we imagine events happening in those spaces (Miller c.f. Donald 1997) can be applied to sport reimagining. Indeed, from the evidence available, it would appear that it is the nature of the events staged in the case study cities, rather than the intrinsic impotency of events in general, that has restricted their influence on holistic images.

The study findings suggest that cities need to consider more distinctive architectural designs to increase the imageability of sport facilities. The NIA, NYNEX Arena and the Manchester Velodrome have all been criticised for their rather bland appearance and are overshadowed by more imageable contemporary urban landmarks. It may be unrealistic to develop sport initiatives as distinctive as Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (Plaza 2000), but there are examples of indoor arenas which are distinctive and which have been praised for their architectural quality. Examples include Isozaki's Palau Sant Jordi in Barcelona (Hughes 1992) and the Bercy Stadium in Paris. However, architectural pedigree is no guarantee of success and it should be noted that there is a growing realisation that the development of prestige projects is a questionable response to urban malaise, however eye-catching they may prove to be. In addition to existing critiques of prestige projects (see Griffiths 1998), this study questions whether some of the sport initiatives examined in this study even deserve this designation. Prestige is usually interpreted as honourable recognition which is bestowed on to other people or places, rather than self-realised (Riley 1995). Therefore it is potential urban tourists and cultural commentators, rather than municipal governments, who decide which initiatives are 'prestige projects'. Previous studies of prestigiousness have focused on the importance of geographical inaccessibility, rarity, and social exclusivity in engendering such perceptions (Riley 1995). The Olympic Games is a prestigious event because securing the rights to stage it is notoriously difficult (social exclusivity). However, new stadia, indoor arenas and other sport events, are not geographically inaccessible, exclusive or unique and do not require large amounts of cultural capital to appreciate them. Therefore their classification as 'prestige projects' should be challenged.

9.2.5 *The popularity of sport reimagining*

The final quality that may contribute to the potency of sport initiatives as agents of image change, is the popularity of sport in contemporary society (see section 2.9.8). It was argued that, if the formation of images is dependent on the values, interests and motives of potential tourists, the use of a popular theme could enhance the efficacy of sport reimagining. Evidence from chapter 6 appears to confirm this proposition, as Manchester's Olympic Games bids and Birmingham's NIA were confirmed as initiatives that have entered the consciousness of a wide section of the population. Though awareness of other new facilities is less impressive, the results illustrate that sporting phenomena can capture the attention of a large number of potential tourists. Amongst the representative sample, sport provision was not found to be an important influence on urban tourism behaviour - but this does not mean that sport in general was regarded unfavourably by potential tourists. Findings cited in chapter 8 reveal a general positive regard for urban sporting links, regardless of the stated personal disinterest in sport communicated by a large proportion of the interview participants. These findings slightly contradict the proposition put forward in section 2.9.8, as they suggest that it is not sport's popularity that increases its efficacy as an imaging vehicle, but rather its penetration of, and its shared meaning in, contemporary culture. The penetration of sport was demonstrated by the general feeling amongst interview participants that sport had become a more important and more prominent phenomenon in recent years. In relation to its cultural value, a large proportion of the representative sample indicated they were not really interested in sport, but that they still were influenced by it. For example, participant 45 qualified their perception that sport was a positive association for cities by stating 'it just feels positive, even though I don't really like sport, you still have to say it is a positive thing for a city to be associated with.' Such views led to the observation in chapter 8, that there was a general acceptance of the positive meaning of sport, despite individual differences in levels of interest and specific interpretations. Therefore, though sport may not be popular amongst the majority of potential tourists (thus problematising the validity of the original proposition), its positive meaning in contemporary culture and its exposure in contemporary society does assist its potency as an imaging theme.

9.3 Other key issues and emergent themes

The preceding discussion in section 9.2 suggests that although the 'imageability' of sport initiatives should be questioned, sport reimagining is congruent with existing urban images, is assisted by its routine modes of communication, and benefits from the positive meanings attached to sport in contemporary society. Therefore, sport reimagining can be closely aligned with the surmised qualities that supposedly assist effective image development. However, the research undertaken has revealed the problematic nature of some of these qualities, which suggests that meeting this criterion cannot be used in isolation as a reliable indicator of the efficacy of sport as a reimagining theme. Indeed, most of the negativity in section 9.2 was the result of problems noted with the 'criteria' used to adjudge its efficacy. This obviously has negative ramifications for the overall value of sport reimagining, as these qualities were initially proposed as the reasons why sport could be an effective imaging vehicle. Nevertheless, it is important to look beyond these characteristics to address further issues identified in the literature review and other salient themes that became apparent during the research process. The analysis of these emergent themes enables the value of sport reimagining to city destinations (aim 3) to be considered further.

9.3.1 Differentiation/proliferation/confusion?

A recurring theme within the burgeoning place marketing literature is that place imaging should present the distinctive advantages of a city (Kotler et al 1993, Fretter 1993). For example, Kotler et al (1993) states that an effective place image must espouse unique characteristics of a destination so that it can develop a distinctive identity in the minds of potential tourists. Unfortunately, contradictory positions are forwarded in relevant literature whereby sport is either a fundamental contributor to the process of urban standardisation (Harvey 1989a, Whitson and Macintosh 1993), or where sport is a rare exception to the 'extraordinarily standardised' tourist strategies adopted by other cities (Judd 1995:17). Regardless of wider debates regarding the production of standardised citiscapes, this study contends that the serial use of similar strategies reduces the efficacy of sport reimagining. Indeed, one of the clearest findings of the study is that potential tourists are confused by the proliferation of sport initiatives and by the sheer number of cities implementing them. For example, in

several instances interview participants were confused as to which reimagining initiatives were implemented in each city. This was apparent with respect to event bids, with participants confusing Olympic bids with World Cup bids, European Games with Commonwealth Games, and even Student Games with Olympic Games. Participants could not remember which cities had bid for which event, and this was not simply a function of their sporting naivety. Indeed, participants who exhibited a keen interest in, and good knowledge of sport demonstrated and expressed confusion. Some of this perplexity can be traced to the general perception that the case study cities were perennial event bidders. This view was expressed in reference to Manchester more than any other city, and was typified by the perception that 'they always seem to be involved in some continuous battle to get something' (participant 42). Though this proactive stance was perceived as admirable by some of the participants, it does appear to be causing confusion and may result in the dilution of the positive image effects derived from the city's Olympic bids. Cities need to be more discerning about the events that they bid for, removing confusion and perhaps reducing the danger of engendering perceptions that they are 'desperate' in their attempts to attract events.

Similar confusion was apparent with regard to the development of new sport facilities. This problem was exacerbated by the profusion of acronyms in the case study cities such as the NYNEX Arena (now M.E.N Arena), GMex and NCC in Manchester and the NIA, ICC, NEC in Birmingham. Participants were often unable to distinguish between these acronyms. In some instances facilities were incorrectly named and in others, participants avoided naming a venue to avoid embarrassing mistakes. However, the confusion regarding new sport facilities is not simply a function of the use of unimaginative acronyms as sport enthusiasts rarely recalled the correct names of the Ponds Forge Complex or the Don Valley Stadium in Sheffield. Added to the plethora of stadia that already exist, it appears difficult for new facilities to differentiate themselves, reducing their efficacy as vehicles for urban reimagining.

Though a number of commentators see the stadium as a distinctive urban landmark (Bale 1989, Raitz 1987), others see it as an expression of modernist reproduction in contemporary cities. For example, Nielsen (1995) states that the stadium can be viewed a 'placeless site' where the objective is 'disregard for local and regional

differences' (1995:24). The study findings suggest that with regard to tourist images the latter interpretation is more representative than the former. Though a large number of stadia are well known by potential tourists, there were only isolated instances where stadia appeared to produce a distinctive and identifiable urban space. Certain individual stadia did stand out, most notably Old Trafford which one respondent certainly felt provided the city with a memorable feature: 'Obviously [Manchester] United have developed their ground. Took my grandsons to look at that last week, wonderful isn't it? You look up at it and think wow' (Participant 5). Eclipsing distinctiveness and differentiation, perhaps the most significant contribution made by stadia to urban imagery is the symbolic representation of status and size. In the study several participants alluded to the fact that having a big and impressive stadium implied that the host city is also big and impressive. However, it should be noted that these metaphorical representations of magnitude were not something directly associated with any of the sport facilities recently developed in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield.

The value of sport as a differentiating theme is further problematised by the observed feeling amongst some potential tourists that sport provision was a feature of all cities, rather than a distinctive element of some. One participant exemplified this view when attempting to identify a city they associated with sport; 'I mean they [cities] are all much of a muchness really, they all have a football club, a rugby ground, some of the larger ones have cricket grounds...there's not a lot in it really (Participant 50). Such comments support Whitson and MacIntosh's (1993) contention that flagship sport initiatives merely enable cities to achieve the standards of provision expected in modern cities, rather than actually providing a vehicle of differentiation. Though Manchester does exhibit distinctive sporting qualities, it is hard for cities in the contemporary era to utilise sport to procure and communicate distinctive qualities. This is emphasised by the oft-cited example of Indianapolis (Schimmel 1995, Euchner 1999). Indianapolis is usually championed as the most successful example of sport reimagining, but it is interesting to note that Euchner attributes this alleged success to the city's 'early commitment to the sports strategy' (1999:228). The serial reproduction of sport initiatives and the increased expectations of urban sport provision since Indianapolis's pioneering strategy means that the use of sport images to differentiate cities is becoming more and more difficult.

In balancing this perspective, it could be argued that merely providing the expected standards of urban sports provision is still important for a city's image, particularly if the failure to do so means that a city is somewhat 'left behind'. However, the rhetoric surrounding the case study initiatives (see chapter 5) does not suggest Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield were trying to match benchmark projects or emulate principal cities. Instead, it appears that initiatives were justified by their intention to provide distinction and differentiation, objectives that are not vindicated by the findings detailed in this study.

9.3.2 Sport reimagining and sport tourism: a problematic relationship

Though chapters 7 and 8 revealed that a certain degree of positive image modification has been achieved as a result of the urban sport initiatives addressed in this study, this does not necessarily mean that increased tourism revenues will inevitably follow. One of the central tenets of the conceptual framework (see chapter 3) was that sport reimagining can denote enhanced sport provision thus attracting sport tourists. This assertion is rendered somewhat problematic as the study findings suggest that a city's sporting reputation is not an important factor in determining the consumption patterns of this segment of the tourist market. Evidence from both the consumers and producers of sport reimagining appears to indicate that urban sport tourism is almost exclusively activated by the provision of attractive events, rather than via the sporting images of cities. At present, developing an attractive sporting image merely appears to assist urban sports tourism in an indirect manner, impressing event organisers and sport administrators, and therefore securing events of sufficient quality to attract visitors from outside the city. This is recognised by Richard Callicott of BCC, who states that the intended impact of sport initiatives in Birmingham was to 'demonstrate that we could adapt and provide a plethora of different settings which met sport's needs' (Personal Communication 1999). However, aside from attracting specific events, there is little evidence that urban sporting reputations directly influence tourists to visit particular cities.

In the UK, the concept of urban sport tourism is relatively undeveloped and is perceived predominantly as comprising the staging of regular and one-off sport

events. The notion of a city that boasts a diverse range of sporting products including events, participatory activities, museums, tours, stadia, themed areas and halls of fame is something that has yet to be fully exploited by cities and fully understood by potential tourists. Until extensive and coherent provision is realised, it is perhaps naïve to think that an image as a 'city of sport' will attract sport tourists.

Cities attempting to forge identities as sporting capitals need to consider how they intend to attract the attention of potential tourists who are interested in sport. None of the case study cities have really managed to develop sufficient provision to attract tourists who specifically want to engage in sport tourism activities beyond merely visiting for specific events. The challenge for cities may be to make more use of their sporting reputations, by providing a critical mass of sport-related attractions which may generate sport tourism beyond merely event tourism. Hinch and Higham (2001) use the term tourism sports, which they consider to be 'sport as a secondary activity whilst travelling' (2001:48). Encouragingly, evidence from the interviews suggests that the development of 'tourism sports' may be a feasible and attractive objective for the three cities. This was indicated by views such as participant who stated that 'I think the reason you choose to go [to cities] are for other reasons, but I suppose it's a bonus if when you get there, or before you go you realise that there are some good sport facilities or some event on'(participant 41). This view was also emphasised by the statement of participant 38 below:

'We wouldn't go for the football, I mean if we were in a city and something was on like in Manchester, if we could go and see the football then we may go if we were there it would add to the range of attractions. We wouldn't go for the sport, but it would add to the range of attractions.'

However, the comments of participant 38 also highlight a problem with the provision of 'tourism sports'. Although sport may prove to be an attractive city product, the majority of tickets for major events are pre-sold to season ticket holders, precluding 'opportunistic' tourist engagement. As such, tourists are usually unable to watch the most popular sporting events staged in UK and US cities (Euchner 1999).

Furthermore, the recent sport initiatives implemented in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield do not necessarily improve the provision of tourism sports because they

were not initiated within a cohesive framework where tourism was an explicit objective. Callicott agrees and states that prestige sport facilities can influence the image of a city tourist destination, but in a veiled criticism of existing attempts states, 'there is no point in building facilities that are not already identified as having a use and suitable for the purpose' (Personal Communication 1999). A vision of how to use initiatives to generate sport tourism was certainly lacking in the initiatives included in this study. This is an important observation, particularly as Fretter (1993) suggests that an essential element of successful place marketing is 'a clear understanding of what you want to achieve' (1993:165). Birmingham and Manchester appear to have inadvertently initiated sporting strategies as a result of opportunistic Olympic bids. This study found that Birmingham did not have a coherent and planned strategy at the onset of its recent sport initiatives, with an official that was involved throughout the process admitting that the 'policy followed the initiatives' (Personal Communication with R Callicott 1999). This situation was replicated some years later in Sheffield where urban sporting policy was prepared retrospectively once initiatives had already been implemented. In all three cities, it was never made clear how the development of a sporting image could actually be used to pursue tourism objectives. The envisaged sport tourism outcomes, or indeed tourism sports outcomes, were particularly underdeveloped.

The findings of this study suggest that even if opportunities had been extensively explored, it would have been difficult to justify the initiatives through the sport tourism stimulated by an enhanced sporting reputation. This adds further weight to recent critiques where urban sport tourism initiatives have been derided by US commentators such as Euchner (1999), who assert that the benefits for cities are often exaggerated. Euchner states that large sport events discourage tourist activity that would have otherwise have occurred (1999), displacing demand and negating associated benefits. This phenomenon was highlighted by views expressed in the present study. One interview participant stated 'you would avoid going to a city if you knew there was a specific game or convention taking place' (participant 28). Similarly, a large number of other participants also mentioned the 'menace' of sport initiatives in increasing instances of violence or traffic chaos. The displacement of demand due to sport is particularly relevant to the UK context as tourism unrelated to sport may actually be more lucrative. The small size of the UK means that, unlike in

the US, sport tourism does not result in a large proportion of lucrative overnight city visits. This was emphasised by the views of one interview participant who stated that they would be more likely to visit a city with improved sport provision, but only if it were within easy reach.

Euchner (1999) and Higham (2000) challenge the supposed benefits for cities of hosting one-off sport events and these concerns are emphasised by the results presented in the present study. Cities and sports organisations need to consider the opportunities offered by collaborative efforts to stage events, spreading the risks and the benefits amongst two or more cities. The forthcoming Commonwealth Games provides a perfect example. Whilst Sheffield's 50m Olympic sized swimming pool and associated diving complex is still criticised for its limited community benefits and considerable expense, a mere 40 miles away Manchester is developing its own 50m Olympic sized swimming pool and associated diving complex. There is no reason why the expensive new facilities in Sheffield (and indeed Birmingham) could not have hosted some of the Commonwealth events, substantially reducing the financial risks of staging the Games. However, the perceived need to compete and enduring political manoeuvring prevents such collaboration from occurring. In many ways this situation symbolises the inherent problems with contemporary entrepreneurial approaches to urban planning and development. Competing with other areas based on imaginary boundaries between metropolitan areas instead of integrating functions and co-ordinating responses makes little sense. The farcical nature of this approach is emphasised by Kitchen's allegation that the failure of Manchester to capitalise on the imaging opportunities of Manchester Utd FC is because the club is located outside the city's legislative boundary (Kitchen 1997).

9.3.3 Physical integration

For Euchner (1999), the key to successful urban sports provision involves escaping the competitive urge to build expensive infrastructure, instead developing a ‘nest of accessible sporting events and activities which feed into other tourists attractions and economic activities’(1999:232). This concept of integration is important. The tendency to locate sport developments at peripheral city locations (exhibited in P Hall’s (1999) archetypal forms of the late 20th Century city), may allow more space and the reclamation of brownfield sites, but does little to physically integrate sport with the other tourism functions of the city. The lack of integration means that even if tourists are attracted to visit these facilities they often do not visit the city itself. This is exemplified by the quote from the semi-structured interview below:

Interviewer: *What comes to mind when you think of the city of Birmingham?*

Participant 38: *‘I think of the....NEC , yes I have been through it – been far as the train station, I have been to the NEC, but never actually to the town centre.*

Figure 9.3.1 *Interview excerpt demonstrating the importance of physical integration*

Dialogue with participant 9 also demonstrated that sport tourism and urban tourism are not always consumed simultaneously:

Interviewer: *Do the events have an effect on how you view the city?*

Participant 9: *No. It wouldn't - say like for the motorshow, you drive up to the event and drive straight back afterwards, you have had enough, same as a football match or any sport, people don't spend any time there, now if people are going to Birmingham to see Birmingham that is a different thing altogether*

Figure 9.3.2 *Interview excerpt demonstrating the perceived difference between urban tourism and urban sport tourism*

The problem identified here is not restricted to Birmingham. The new sport initiatives at the Eastlands site in Manchester and those located in the Don Valley in Sheffield

are located on the edge of these cities, which may restrict the revenue generated in the city centre. Communication with both Callicott and O'Shea of Birmingham City Council, revealed that they thought sport enhanced the image of Birmingham as a tourist destination by attracting people to the city for sport events who would then return with more favourable perceptions (Personal Communication 1999). The development of facilities where contact with city centres is discouraged obstructs this envisaged mechanism for image enhancement. The implementation of peripheral sport initiatives further limits their imaging capacity as it results in a disassociation from the city in which they are located. This is illustrated by the views of participant 9 above and those of participant 10 who stated that 'I have been to the NEC, but that's not really Birmingham is it'.

9.3.4 Thematic integration

Integration is an important issue, and one that is not limited merely to the physical location of new facilities. Though there is insufficient space to consider it fully here, it is important to consider how sport reimagining synthesises with other reimagining themes that have been pursued concurrently by the three case study cities. Multiple thematic messages may not only cause confusion, but may actually result in contradictory imaging, discouraging potential tourists. Cities promoting strong images as 'sporting cities', may be precluding or restricting the development of other images. Just as individuals may find it difficult to communicate multiple images, cities may find it difficult to convey eclectic representations. Williamson (1986 cf. Peter Jackson 1993) discusses the image dilemmas faced by contemporary women thus:

When I rummage through my clothes in the morning I am not merely faced with a choice of what to wear. I am faced with a choice of images: the difference between a smart suit and a pair of overalls, a leather skirt and a cotton dress, is not just one of fabric and style, but one of identity. You know perfectly well that you will be seen differently for the whole day depending on what you put on; you will appear as a particular kind of woman with one particular identity which excludes others. The black leather skirt rather rules out girlish innocence, oily overalls tend to exclude sophistication, ditto smart suit and radical feminism. Often I have wished I could put them all on together, or appear in every possible outfit, just to say, how dare you think any one of these is me. But also, see, I can be all of them.

Williamson 1986:91 cf. Peter Jackson 1993:21

Just as Williamson is 'faced with a choice of images', contemporary cities are seemingly compelled to 'select' an image to disseminate to a critical tourist market. Williamson feels she is being judged according to her image selection, and similarly the urban image chosen results in a city being viewed differently by different audiences. By selecting an image as a sporting city, a city could be selecting one particular identity which (in Williamson's words) 'excludes others'. In a sense, the displacement of tourism demand due to sport activities mentioned previously could be replicated in reference to sporting images. Such images may enhance the perceptions of some, but may discourage others. Like Williamson, the city may wish to 'appear simultaneously in every possible outfit' in order to demonstrate that it is a multi-faceted tourist destination. Whilst Williamson appears to concede that it is impossible for individuals to communicate simultaneous images, is this a beneficial and realisable objective for the contemporary city?

The ideas of Bourdieu (1984) regarding taste imply that the use of sport alongside other imaging themes associated with 'higher' cultural forms may be problematic. Bourdieu asserts that consumers (and therefore tourists), can be classified according to their cultural capital, with each social class possessing a 'habitus' - 'the system of classification which operates below the level of individual consciousness and which is inscribed within people's orientating practices, bodily dispositions and tastes and

distastes' (Urry 1990:88). According to Bourdieu, those with high volumes of cultural capital have a taste for 'left bank galleries, avant-garde festivals, Les tempes modernes, foreign languages, chess, flea markets, Bach and mountains' (cf. Featherstone 1991:88). Perhaps controversially, Bourdieu suggests that those low in cultural capital have a taste for '*football*, potatoes, ordinary red wine, *watching sports*, public dances' (cf Featherstone 1991:88 my italics). This may mean that utilising sport reimagining and high cultural reimagining may actually send conflicting messages to potential tourists about the 'cultural capital' that can be accumulated and exhibited by consuming the city destination. Indiscriminate promotion as a city of sport may be incompatible with imaging involving different or 'higher' cultural tastes, diluting, contradicting or confusing potential tourists.

In contrast to these ideas, more recent cultural theory suggests that consumers have become more eclectic and that cultural distinctions have been effaced, implying that sport and other reimagining initiatives can be coherently 'multi-sold' to potential tourists. This eclectic 'post tourist' is supposedly 'freed from the constraints of high culture on the one hand, and the untrammelled pursuit of the pleasure principle' (Urry 1990:100). Therefore contradicting the position noted above, cities may be able to communicate a diverse range of images because of the reflexivity of the contemporary tourist, who 'knows that they are a tourist and that tourism is a game, or rather a whole series of games with multiple texts and no single, authentic tourist experience' (Urry 1990:100).

The resolution of these conflicting ideas has important implications for cities and the use of sport reimagining. Though detailed research into this area is beyond the remit of the present study, it is possible to draw some rudimentary conclusions from the research that has been undertaken. In reference to the representative sample of potential tourists, those who indicated that they frequently attended sport events, considered museums/heritage sites, theatres/concert halls, art galleries and cultural festivals as much less important reasons to visit a city, than those who indicated they did not frequently attend sport events. An independent samples t-test reveals that the mean importance rating elicited from frequent sport spectators regarding museums/heritage sites and cultural festivals is significantly lower than non-frequent spectators (significance level <0.05). To explore further, the sample was also divided

into those who consider sport to be of great importance in their decision whether or not to visit a city and those who do not. Similar results were revealed and again the sport enthusiasts considered museums/galleries to be significantly less important than non-enthusiasts (<0.05). Within the interviews there was also evidence of this distinction between sport enthusiasts and those exhibiting an interest in high culture. In discussing their consumption of urban tourism, participant 21 stated 'I'm going for the historical content, the arty content more than the sporting facilities'. Similarly, when asked whether sport reimagining would affect their likelihood of visiting a city, participant 35 stated 'me personally, no, if it was a good museum of that nature then yes, but sport no, no it wouldn't'. This rudimentary analysis suggests that there is a distinction between the tastes of those actively interested in sport and those who are not. This means that imaging as a city of sport may appeal to a distinct population who would not be simultaneously impressed with other imaging initiatives involving 'high culture'. Cross contamination of imaging through inadequate targeting of specific groups may therefore cause image dilution, contradiction or confusion.

Birmingham is a good example of a city where the use of multiple imaging themes may have influenced the success of sport reimagining. The findings of this study suggest that the initiatives in Birmingham have been high profile, but have not engendered significant image change. It is possible that the effects of sport initiatives may have been reduced by the plethora of prestige projects and reimagining themes adopted by the city. Indeed, Smyth (1994:180) bemoans the multitude of prestige projects implemented in the city and observes that Birmingham has used a 'tripartite thrust' of business tourism, arts and sports to promote the city. This simultaneous use of sport and arts could have engendered confusing or contradictory messages. Further evidence from Fretter, former Head of Marketing at Birmingham City Council EDU, supports this interpretation (Fretter 1993). Fretter, suggests that Birmingham's use of a range of reimagining themes from 'tourism to lifestyle and culture, sport and economic development' has resulted in 'too many images and messages being put across' (Fretter 1993:173).

Craik's (1997) views appear to relate both the physical and the thematic integration of urban tourism provision:

Sites and sights are increasingly used for mixed purposes and diverse groups of users. While this is an attractive from a democratic and economic point of view.....there is a risk of creating a diffuse image of a site that fails to capture the interests of intended target groups. For sites such as cultural centres, galleries and museums, the trend creates mixed pressures which make it difficult to determine the appropriate product mix and marketing strategy.

Craik 1997:125/126

Though this study advocates the use of integrating sport provision within other urban tourist products, cities need to consider the different users of this melange of attractions to enable a coherent image to be communicated. If attribute-based image enhancement as a sport venue is considered to be a key objective, then cities must pursue complementary initiatives if other tourist markets are also coveted. With reference to holistic image enhancement, this study has demonstrated that sport is generally perceived as a positive phenomenon. However the observations made here suggest that cities need to consider how sport combines with other images that the cities communicate to form an integrated reimagining strategy. Sheffield, Birmingham and Manchester have all demonstrated their enthusiasm for promoting their arts and heritage provision alongside sporting images. Cities need to consider whether such amalgams are appropriate or whether certain images need to be restricted to specific target audiences. To reconcile the views of those who advocate the presence of a new eclecticism in tourist behaviour, (which may vindicate the use of multiple themes), an examination of the tastes of one particular group of consumers may be necessary. A better understanding of the supposed 'new middle classes' may actually facilitate an awareness of how cities can use different imaging themes based on both popular and high cultural forms. This new middle class may constitute the 'right sort of people' that commentators feel are the target audience for city imaging, whilst evidence suggests that this social group may also exhibit the eclectic tastes required to permit the use of sport reimagining alongside the representation 'higher' cultural forms.

9.4 Limitations

Just as urban representations can be questioned because of their silences and omissions (T Hall 1997), the primary limitations of the present study pertain to that which is not addressed, rather than any inherent problems with what has been included. Though this study has examined the imaging motives of the case study cities and the effects of sport initiatives on the city images, there is a conspicuous absence of discussions regarding the pervading influence of politics and power. As Short et al (1993) identify, city reimagining and regeneration initiatives are both a demonstration and consequence of political power - 'an attempt to reinforce or contest the social and political meaning of the city' (Short et al 1993:210). Throughout history schemes to improve cities, such as the development of the Ringstrasse in Vienna (Schorske 1981) and Hausmann's redevelopment of Paris (Gregory 1994), have been motivated by political ends, and it would be naïve to consider sport reimagining in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield as any different. There is insufficient space here to develop an analysis of the political motives of sport imaging; however, it is possible to provide a brief illustration of how the dynamics of politics and power may have influenced the findings of this study.

This study reveals that, of the recent initiatives, Manchester's Olympic bids have had the most significant influence on city image. One of the main reasons these bids were so 'successful' in procuring image effects was because of the credibility and capital generated by the successful attempts to secure Central Government endorsement. Tye and Williams (1994) speculate that this support and therefore the 'climate of optimism' it created, was motivated by the incumbent government's attempts to cultivate public opinion in the run-up to the 1992 General Election (1994:91). Whereas Manchester was allocated over £70million of central money, Sheffield was left to fund its own initiatives, which culminated in the financial problems that blighted media coverage of the World Student Games. In many ways the differing fortunes of these two initiatives have been determined by the politicised, and rather unequal distribution, of funds.

Related to the omission of political considerations in the study has been the notable lack of attention to the relationship between city images and social classifications. Although information was recorded regarding the occupation, age and gender of questionnaire respondents and interview participants, due to limitations of space, findings were not related to these characteristics. Such an analysis would have assisted the study in isolating the specific impacts of initiatives and would have allowed a greater appreciation of the key target audiences for sport reimagining. A more innovative classification system could also have facilitated an analysis of the attitudes of the new middle classes, who it is surmised may form an eclectic, reflexive and suitably lucrative audience for sport reimagining.

The methodological limitations of the study are recorded in chapter 5 and there is little need to repeat them here. However, the subsequent analysis of results suggested some important modifications to the study approach. In detailing the methodological implications of the framework, the study intended to follow Echtner and Ritchie's (1993) recommendation that structured techniques should be used to measure attribute-based images, with unstructured techniques employed to measure holistic images. However, in the analysis of the results it was recognised that the semi-structured interviews could significantly enhance the examination of attribute-based images by providing important justifications for perceptions elicited. Similarly structured methods assisted the analysis of holistic image, particularly in providing a mechanism for the elicitation of metonymic images. This deviation from the stated intentions reveals a limitation of the envisaged method. Though it is perhaps more efficient to use Echtner and Ritchie's (1993) recommendations, the most valuable approach involves combining different methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of the different elements of destination image.

9.4.1 Limitations of the conceptual framework.

The present study includes a conceptualisation surmising the effects of sport initiatives on city images and this framework has subsequently been used to structure an analysis of the production and consumption of sport reimagining. The framework was flexible enough to allow a useful analysis of sport reimagining regardless of whether or not it was an 'accurate' conceptualisation of destination image and its

formation. However, it is useful to reflect on its use and to evaluate whether it constitutes a useful framework within which to study destination image. This critique adds to the observations already articulated in chapter 3 concerning the potential problems with the conceptual framework,

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the conceptualisation is the contention that imaging engenders denotative images which merely refer to the literal meaning of the imaging theme. Though the framework acknowledges that meaning is unlikely to be restricted to this interpretation, it still contends that denotation and literal meanings need to be addressed. For Baudrillard and other deconstructionists, every object or theme only operates as a second or higher order sign function of mythical proportions which renders material objects and their functional denotations irrelevant (Gottdiener 1995). This position implies that there is little point in trying to identify denotative meanings. In rejecting this contention, the present study recognises that separating the effects of denotation and connotation is inherently problematic, and is pursued merely for analytical purposes. The study aligns with the position of socio-semiotics in arguing that 'systems of signification are multileveled structures that contain denotative signs and in addition the particular cultural codes that ascribe social values to them, or the connotative ideologies of culture'(Gottdiener 1995:25). A belief in the importance of the material object and therefore denotation and indexical signs (including metonyms) distinguishes this study from the 'idealist' theories of deconstructionism.

Interestingly, the contention that signified meanings retain links with the signifier is vindicated by the observations in the study. Evaluations of the associations between sport and the city were typically characterised by indexical significations, where sport was deemed to be important because of its capacity to generate economic benefits, increase awareness of a city, encourage participation and because of its benefits for the health of city residents. Sport's denotative or indexical meanings were more apparent than the myths that supposedly surround it (Rowe 1995). This vindicates Gottdiener's acknowledgement that there are constraints to meaning, rather than a 'free play of signifiers', which most notably include 'the presence of the material world itself' (Gottdiener 1995:24). Deconstructionists would not accept that it is relevant to consider that signifiers are causally linked to signified concepts. However,

the findings outlined here suggest that in an urban context potential tourists do interpret the signifier 'sport' as conveying meanings that can be linked to the material reality of sport and the known causal effects of that signifier.

Alongside critiques based on the interpretation of semiotics used within the study, it is recognised that by adopting a semiotic framework, the conceptualisation is susceptible to the limitations of semiotic approaches in general. According to Morgan and Pritchard (1999), these include a failure to acknowledge the dynamism of language and the 'inability to fully incorporate issues of knowledge, power and historical specificity into its analysis of meaning' (Morgan and Pritchard 1999:34). Such limitations are reaffirmed by the relative dearth of such considerations in the present study, and perhaps partly explains why political processes have been rather peripheralised.

The conceptual framework resulted in research questions that have subsequently been used to frame the rest of the study. One of these research questions is based on the assumption that awareness of initiatives is required in order to facilitate discernible image effects. However, it could be argued that subsequent measurement of the conscious awareness of initiatives ignores the rather problematic notion of 'subliminal perception', where people 'can be influenced by stimuli of which they are not aware' (Severin and Tankard 1988:66). Subliminal perception is that which takes place below the 'threshold of awareness' and therefore it could be argued that potential tourists may have been influenced by sport initiatives even if they stated that they were not explicitly 'aware' of their existence. Despite some studies that illustrate that people can respond to a stimulus below this threshold of awareness, subliminal perception remains a controversial notion and one that was not considered to be worthy of attention in this particular study. Indeed, even if subliminal perception is possible, it is likely that messages will not change perceptions because of their low impact (Klass 1958 c.f. Severin and Tankard 1992:66).

9.5 The value of the study

The media, municipal authorities and academic commentators often glibly refer to local economic development initiatives as providing effective vehicles for city image

enhancement. Though this may indeed be the case, few attempts have been made to suggest if, how and why this image enhancement is procured. This study has attempted to address this situation by looking at what city images consist of, and how their structure may be affected by sport reimagining strategies. This has been achieved by conceptualising the different components of the city tourism product and by identifying how reimagining strategies may influence these image components. This conceptualisation has then been used to examine the effects of specific strategies adopted in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield.

By addressing the important considerations above, the study also tackles some research areas where discernible imbalances of attention have been noted. Though the amount of research concerning images has grown considerably over recent years, images of states or countries has been the main focus, 'while city images have been ignored' (Oppermann 1996a:13). As well as furthering understanding of city images, city reimagining, and, more specifically, sport reimagining, the study has attempted to unite a disparate set of academic texts that have important implications for the study of place image. This has included amalgamating approaches within tourism studies, work within the field of media/cultural studies and the ideas of cultural and behavioural geographers. In utilising this literature, the study has emphasised that there are important links to be made and lessons to be learnt from work that has been seemingly ignored in contemporary image analysis. Though they might not like to admit it, the work of cultural theorists and cultural geographers has important parallels with that of behavioural geographers and quantitative tourism researchers. Hopefully, this study is more than merely an eclectic mix of ideas and approaches, but an illustration that studies of meaning and materiality, perception and imagination, and psychology and iconography are not mutually exclusive.

At present the dominant paradigm for studying place image is that of iconographic cultural geography which primarily involves analysing the 'ways in which landscapes have been represented, whether in written texts, art, maps or topographical surveys' (McDowell 1994:162). The problem with this approach is that the interpretation of the cultural landscape is primarily the interpretation of the academic author. As Gottdiener identifies, meanings are not best discovered 'through the logocentric textual analysis of some independent observer', but through analysing

‘both the producers of culture and the consumers of culture’(1995:29). This study attempts such an approach to city reimagining analysis and in doing so also addresses the limitations of existing research noted by Jackson and Thrift (1995). In a paper considering geographical studies of consumption, the authors note that despite the burgeoning literature on local authorities’ attempts at selling places, ‘often such analyses engage in a critical deconstruction of advertising material with too little attention to the diverse circumstances of its actual consumption’ (Jackson and Thrift 1995:223-224). Several other commentators have also suggested that existing research assumes the consumption of place and space can simply be ‘read off ‘ from understandings of production (Crewe and Beaverstock 1998). The focus in this study, despite some consideration of the motives of image-makers, has been on this ‘consumption’ of reimagining. However, unlike other attempts to ‘decode’ images, this study has not relied simply on the interpretations of supposed experts. Like Laurier (1993), this study appreciates the theoretical contributions of Barthes and cultural geographers, but finds the ‘demystification’ of images by academics which almost seek to rewrite them as academic texts as inherently unnecessary. As Laurier advocates, in examining advertising or reimagining of any sort, research needs to ask how ‘readvertising’ works where consumers of reimagining are considered to be critical users rather than passive absorbers of reimagining initiatives (1993:271).

The research methods employed and the critical reflection on their use has also contributed to an enhanced understanding of how best to explore image, image change and the effects of specific imaging initiatives. Innovative administration techniques, alongside useful analytical mechanisms means that the study has made a contribution to the progression of image research methods. To employ research methods that avoid egocentric personal ‘decoding’ of images or texts, Gottdiener (1995) advises that this entails ‘the study of printed documents, historical accounts and, in some case, personal interviews’ (1995:31). This has been the approach adopted in the present study, where a mix of documentary evidence, communication with civic representatives and potential tourists, alongside traditional research techniques such as questionnaires, have been utilised to explore the production, but primarily the consumption of sport reimagining.

Information	Urban Sport initiatives		
Exposure to information	Awareness of initiatives		
Order of signification	Denotation	Connotation	
Interpretative mechanism	Operational	Metonymic	Symbolic
Hypothetical example	<i>City develops a reputation as having an impressive range of sport tourism facilities</i>	<i>New stadium is used to represent the city as a whole in people's minds.</i>	<i>Sport initiatives engender perceptions that the city is exciting, modern or impressive</i>
Image component affected	Attribute-based image	Holistic image	
Audience affected	Sport tourists	General urban tourists	

Figure 9.5.1 A simplified representation of the conceptual framework

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the present study has been the development of an operational conceptual framework (restated in Fig 9.5.1). Though this conceptualisation has been formulated to represent and explore the effects of sport reimagining, there is no reason why it cannot be utilised to evaluate the effects of other reimagining initiatives in a range of destinations. The combination of existing destination image ideas and those from communication studies, allows the different interpretative levels of image change to be understood. The framework recognises the importance of symbolism and allows further understanding of the effects of holistic image change by dividing it into that which is procured by metonymy and that which is obtained via metaphors and connotations. However, in a contemporary academic area overly dominated by attention to the symbolic realm, it also recognises the important influence that literal, denotative meanings that can have on conative images of destinations. The study has illustrated how this conceptualisation can be utilised in the field and how it can be used to formulate effective research instruments. The framework has been used to represent the structure of images and explain how they can be changed. It is argued that it provides a valuable analytical and practical conceptualisation and one that provides a balanced, but innovative interpretation of the effects of reimagining initiatives on destination image formation.

9.6 Recommendations for further research

The intention in this section is to briefly outline areas of study which could further enhance the study of city images and urban tourism. Although the representations of cities has been discussed at length in recent debates, the tourism dimension of contemporary urban imagery is too often ignored. Tourism is peripheralised in debates concerning the reconfiguration of cityscapes and associated imagery, and tourist implications and interpretations have rarely been addressed. Further research is required to attend to the relationship between tourism and urban representation and this research needs to concentrate on how tourist consumption affects city images as well as how city images influence tourist consumption. Additionally, there is a need for studies regarding the influence of specific imaging initiatives on the tourist image of the city, the importance of media representations of city destinations and the role of city myths in stimulating urban tourism. There is also a requirement for exploration into the significance of the increasing use of forms of popular culture in 'official' city imaging. This requires further understanding of issues regarding taste, prestige and how urban tourism experiences allow tourists and the city itself to accumulate and demonstrate cultural capital. This should allow research to address the implications of reimagining strategies and urban representations that communicate multiple and potentially contradictory themes.

In tourism studies, attention needs to be diverted from often fruitless attempts to 'model' the image formation process, which add little to an established field of environmental psychology and behavioural geography. The challenge for destination image research is to recognise and build upon the value of this work, rather than attempting to emulate it. Tourism studies needs to develop a balanced image research agenda, assuring it avoids the extreme and limited quantitative approaches of human geography which characterised much place image work in the 1970s, whilst avoiding the rather pretentious and conceited constitution of recent interpretative analyses. As Crewe and Beaverstock argue, 'it is to the combined analysis of material processes and symbolic representations that we must look in our search for understanding about the production and reproduction of place-based meanings' (1998:290). In tourism analyses there has perhaps been too much focus on the material at the expense of the

symbolic, whilst recent cultural/sociological debates have perhaps neglected the material in favour of symbolic analyses.

Although as King (1997:2) states, the city has become the 'happy hunting ground of cultural connoisseurs of all kinds in the humanities', a large proportion of this research is heavily focused upon analyses of urban California and addresses repetitive themes. To explore the meanings in, and of, the contemporary city, the application of semiotic approaches, typical of the present study, have perhaps too often been overlooked. In sociology, symbolic interactionism has been widely adopted to further understanding symbolic communication, but Gottdiener's (1995) persuasive suggestions regarding the value of socio-semiotics deserve recognition. Drawing upon Eco's ideas, this approach can address the failures of both semiotics and symbolic interactionism in addressing cultural, political and economic contexts as well as the processes of language and communication. Socio-semiotics also recognises that any cultural object is both an object of use in a social system and a component in a system of signification. This balanced perspective addresses the recommendations above. Although Echtner (1999) is right to promote further semiotic research in tourism, this study advocates the pursuit of socio-semiotic approaches to advance understanding of the meanings underpinning tourism destinations and experiences.

As indicated in section 9.5, the process of place image consumption needs greater attention, not instead of analyses of its production, but alongside it. Furthermore, biographies of place image need to be created to increase understanding of the historical processes central to the present interpretation of urban environments, and to understand the variety of influences on city images. Favro's publication 'The Urban Image of Augustan Rome' (1996) is a good example of how an historical analysis can further understanding of the image of contemporary cities. Within studies of urban tourism, historical accounts are rare and addressing this void would enhance city destination image research. The study of images in tourism studies would also be assisted though a greater appreciation of the importance of film, musical and literary representations of the city destination. Though such analysis has begun to be addressed within cultural geography, tourist interpretations and tourism implications remain largely unexplored.

9.7 Final comments

Despite the often critical interpretation of sport-led regeneration schemes in this study, it should be recognised that there is evidence that the schemes adopted by Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield have produced some discernible image effects. Furthermore, in qualifying negative evaluations of the 'success' of sport-led regeneration, it should be remembered that this study has merely looked at one aspect of these initiatives – the effect on potential tourist's images of the city destination. Although the present study has confirmed that altering the perceptions of potential tourists was an important objective of the case study initiatives (see chapter 5), potential tourists are merely one of six target audiences for sport reimagining (see Fig 1.1). Furthermore, reimagining itself is merely one of several broad objectives for pursuing sport-led regeneration. If the present study had focused on the effects of sport-led strategies on physical regeneration, direct inward investment or participation levels in sport, then the resulting critique may have been very different.

Despite conceding that the present study has only analysed one aspect of urban reimagining, during the completion of this study the frailties, contradictions and imprudence associated with this approach to urban regeneration have become increasingly apparent. Though this study has shown that sport reimagining can affect the image of city destinations, this does not necessarily justify its value as a vehicle for urban renaissance. Indeed, the concentration on reimagining in this study reflects the preoccupation of contemporary cities with this approach to urban renewal, rather than its qualities as regenerative mechanism. An initial concern is that even if reimagining the city destination achieves its immediate aim (image change), it doesn't necessarily accomplish its ultimate objective - urban regeneration. Indeed, even if the images of city destinations are enhanced by urban reimagining, and even if this results in increased numbers of tourists (a big 'if'), this does not guarantee 'success'. Supply-side injections of capital and subsidy into physical transformation, prestige projects and mega-events do not necessarily 'trickledown' and result in dispersed benefits for urban residents. As Healey (1995) states, the experiences of cities in the 1990s has revealed the 'fallacies' of this mode of urban regeneration (1995:267). Though image remains an important concern for cities, there are ways of improving

external perceptions that do not involve high-risk initiatives with questionable community benefits. One lesson to be learned from Manchester's Olympic bid, is that publicity, attention and profile can be realised by ambitious public relations initiatives, rather than by expensive 'prestige' projects. It is also recognised that images, like cities themselves, could be modified incrementally from within, rather than through the imposition of large 'flagship' schemes.

There are signs that reimagining and 'top-down' urban planning and regeneration strategies are being superseded by a new discourse based on the realisation that economic diversification, social and physical regeneration - and even image enhancement - can be achieved through an approach where smaller scale individual initiatives combine to produce discernible effects. However, as Haughton and While (1999:9) recognise, the pressure to engage in competitive entrepreneurial approaches is likely to remain a strong feature of policy frameworks. Moreover, despite the supposed balancing of entrepreneurial objectives with those relating to social justice, community participation and environmental protection (Haughton and While 1999), it is doubtful whether the prevalence of urban rebranding strategies, such as sport reimagining is declining. Symbolic regimes still pervade urban governance and because of sport's symbolic potential (Henry and Paramio-Sancines 1999), there is little chance that we will see an end, or even an interruption, to the urban tradition of using sport to manipulate city images. As Henry and Paramio-Sancines suggest, sport and sport policies are likely to play an 'increasingly significant part of the activities of urban regimes in de-industrialising contexts' (1999:602).

Research Into Opinions About British Cities

Your opinions are sought as part of a research study examining opinions about British cities. Your answers to the questions below will be very helpful for this research. Please follow the instructions carefully and answer every question. Please complete the questions in the order that they appear in the questionnaire. All replies will be treated confidentially. Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

1) For each city listed below, please tick one box [✓] to indicate the last time you visited it.

	Within the last year	1-4 years ago	5-9 years ago	10 or more years ago	Have never visited	Don't know
Manchester	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Sheffield	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Birmingham	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

2) For each city listed below, please tick one box [✓] to indicate approximately how many times you have ever visited it.

	Have never visited	1-2 times	3-9 times	10-24 times	25 or more times	Don't Know
Manchester	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Sheffield	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Birmingham	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

3) For each city listed below, please tick one box [✓] to indicate the degree to which you would like to visit it for a weekend leisure break.

	Very much like to visit	Like to visit	Neither like nor not like to visit	Not like to visit	Very much not like to visit	Don't Know
Manchester	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Sheffield	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Birmingham	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

4) For **each city** listed below, please tick one box [✓] to indicate the extent to which you think it has become a more or less attractive place to visit for a weekend leisure break over the past ten years.

	A much more attractive place to visit	A more attractive place to visit	Neither more attractive nor less attractive place to visit	A less attractive place to visit	A much less attractive place to visit	Don't know
Manchester	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Sheffield	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Birmingham	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

5) For **each city** listed below, please choose **three** separate words which you think best represent it by writing them in the spaces provided.

Please fill in all the boxes, even if you have not visited the cities or do not know them very well. Your impressions are still important. If you have absolutely no idea, please write DK (don't know) in the relevant box(es).

Please do not leave any blank spaces.

	WORD 1	WORD 2	WORD 3
Manchester			
Sheffield			
Birmingham			

6) For **each feature** of a large city listed below, please tick [✓] the relevant box to indicate how important the provision of that feature is likely to be in your decision to visit a particular city for a weekend leisure break.

Feature	Of great importance	Of moderate importance	Of little importance	Of no importance	Don't know
Museums / heritage sites	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Sport stadia	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Indoor arenas	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Art galleries	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Theatres / concert halls	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Shopping facilities	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Waterfront developments	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Sport events	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Shows / concerts	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Cultural festivals	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

7) For **each city** listed below, please indicate how well you think it provides the following features by writing a number between **1 and 5** in each of the boxes below.

1 means the city has very poor provision of that feature and 5 means the city has very good provision.

Please fill in **all** the boxes, even if you have not visited the cities or do not know them very well. Your impressions are still important. If you have absolutely no idea, please write DK (don't know) in the relevant box.

1 = very poor provision	2 = poor provision	3 = average provision	4 = good provision	5 = very good provision	DK = don't know
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Please do not leave any blank spaces.

	Manchester (rate 1-5)	Sheffield (rate 1-5)	Birmingham (rate 1-5)
Museums / heritage sites			
Sport stadia			
Indoor arenas			
Art galleries			
Theatres / concert halls			
Shopping facilities			
Waterfront developments			
Sport events			
Shows / concerts			
Cultural festivals			

8) From the list below please tick [✓] the **three** cities which you most closely associate with sport.

Bath	[]	Gateshead	[]	Manchester	[]
Birmingham	[]	Glasgow	[]	Newcastle	[]
Bradford	[]	Hull	[]	Nottingham	[]
Bristol	[]	Leeds	[]	Sheffield	[]
Cardiff	[]	Leicester	[]	Southampton	[]
Edinburgh	[]	Liverpool	[]	Sunderland	[]

9) From the factors listed below, please tick **three** boxes [✓] to indicate the three factors which were most important in your choice of cities in the previous question (Question 8).

Major spectator sport stadia	[]	Olympic Games bids	[]
Major one-off events	[]	Historical sporting connections	[]
Major football teams	[]	Sports facilities for public use	[]
Other major sporting teams (excluding football)	[]	A year round programme of events	[]
Recently constructed facilities	[]	OTHER (Please state)	[]

.....

10) From the list below, please tick [✓] the sport facilities that you have heard of.

Wembley Stadium, London	[]	Alexander Stadium, Birmingham	[]
Don Valley Stadium, Sheffield	[]	Ponds Forge International Sports Centre, Sheffield	[]
The National Indoor Arena, Birmingham	[]	Old Trafford Football Ground, Manchester	[]
The Mersey Skydome, Liverpool	[]	Gateshead International Stadium, Gateshead	[]
The Nynex Arena, Manchester	[]	Manchester Velodrome, Manchester	[]
Edgbaston Cricket Ground, Birmingham	[]	Villa Park Football Ground, Birmingham	[]
Sheffield Arena, Sheffield	[]	National Watersports Centre, Nottingham	[]
Old Trafford Cricket Ground, Manchester	[]	Hillsborough Football Ground, Sheffield	[]
Sheffield Ski Village, Sheffield	[]	National Exhibition Centre (NEC), Birmingham	[]
London Arena, London	[]	GMEX Centre, Manchester	[]

11) Are you aware of the fact that.....(please answer yes or no by ticking [✓] the relevant box)

	YES	NO
Birmingham bid to stage the 1992 Olympic Games?	[]	[]
Birmingham will be staging the 2001 World Athletics Championships?	[]	[]
Manchester bid to stage the 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games?	[]	[]
Manchester will be staging the 2002 Commonwealth Games?	[]	[]
Sheffield staged the 1991 World Student Games?	[]	[]

12) From the options listed below, please tick one box [✓] to indicate how the construction of major sport facilities and the staging of major sport events in a city will affect the likelihood of you visiting it in the near future

Much more likely to visit	More likely to visit	No more likely nor less likely to visit	Less likely to visit	Much less likely to visit	Don't Know
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

13) From the options listed below, please tick one box [✓] to indicate how often you attend sport events.

Very frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Very occasionally	Never	Don't know
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

OTHER DETAILS

Sex Male [] Female []

Age 18-29 [] 30-49 [] 50-69 [] 70 and over []

Has the head of the household been in paid employment over the past ten years?

Yes [] Go to Question A below

No [] Go to Question B below

A) Please state the most recent **occupation** of the head of the household.

.....

B) Is the head of the household retired? Yes [] No []

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE

Research Into Opinions About British Cities

Your opinions are sought as part of a research study examining opinions about British cities. Your answers to the questions below will be very helpful for this research. Please follow the instructions carefully and answer every question. Please answer the questions in the order that they appear in the questionnaire. All replies will be treated confidentially. Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

1) For **each city** listed below, please tick one box [✓] to indicate the last time you visited it.

	Within the last year	1-4 years ago	5-9 years ago	10 or more years ago	Have never visited	Don't know
Manchester	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Sheffield	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Birmingham	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

2) For **each city** listed below, please tick one box [✓] to indicate approximately how many times you have ever visited it.

	Have never visited	1-2 times	3-9 times	9-25 times	25 or more times	Don't Know
Manchester	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Sheffield	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Birmingham	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

3) For **each city** listed below, please tick one box [✓] to indicate the degree to which you would like to visit it for a weekend leisure break.

	Very much like to visit	Like to visit	Neither like nor not like to visit	Not like to visit	Very much not like to visit	Don't Know
Manchester	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Sheffield	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Birmingham	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

4) For **each city** listed below, please tick one box [✓] to indicate the extent to which you think it has become a more or less attractive place to visit for a weekend leisure break over the past ten years.

	A much more attractive place to visit	A more attractive place to visit	Neither more attractive nor less attractive place to visit	A less attractive place to visit	A much less attractive place to visit	Don't know
Manchester	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Sheffield	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Birmingham	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

5) For **each city** listed below, please choose **three** separate words which you think best represent it by writing them in the spaces provided.

Please fill in all the boxes, even if you have not visited the cities or do not know them very well. Your impressions are still important. If you have absolutely no idea, please write DK (don't know) in the relevant box(es).

Please do not leave any blank spaces

	WORD 1	WORD 2	WORD 3
Manchester			
Sheffield			
Birmingham			

6) For **each feature** of a large city listed below, please tick [✓] the relevant box to indicate how important the provision of that feature is likely to be in your decision to visit a particular city for a weekend leisure break.

Feature	Of great importance	Of moderate importance	Of little importance	Of no importance	Don't know
Museums / heritage sites	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Sport stadia	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Indoor arenas	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Art galleries	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Theatres / concert halls	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Shopping facilities	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Waterfront developments	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Sport events	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Shows / concerts	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Cultural festivals	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

7) For **each city** listed below, please indicate how well you think it provides the following features by writing a number between **1 and 5** in each of the boxes below.

1 means the city has very poor provision of that feature and 5 means the city has very good provision.

Please fill in **all** the boxes, even if you have not visited the cities or do not know them very well. Your impressions are still important. If you have absolutely no idea, please write DK (don't know) in the relevant box.

1 = very poor provision	2 = poor provision	3 = average provision	4 = good provision	5 = very good provision	DK = don't know
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Please do not leave any blank spaces

	Manchester (rate 1-5)	Sheffield (rate 1-5)	Birmingham (rate 1-5)
Museums / heritage sites			
Sport stadia			
Indoor arenas			
Art galleries			
Theatres / concert halls			
Shopping facilities			
Waterfront developments			
Sport events			
Shows / concerts			
Cultural festivals			

8) From the list below please tick [✓] the **three** cities which you most closely associate with sport.

Bath	[]	Gateshead	[]	Manchester	[]
Birmingham	[]	Glasgow	[]	Newcastle	[]
Bradford	[]	Hull	[]	Nottingham	[]
Bristol	[]	Leeds	[]	Sheffield	[]
Cardiff	[]	Leicester	[]	Southampton	[]
Edinburgh	[]	Liverpool	[]	Sunderland	[]

9) From the factors listed below, please tick **three** boxes [✓] to indicate the three factors which were most important in your choice of cities in the previous question (Question 8).

Major spectator sport stadia	[]	Olympic Games bids	[]
Major one-off events	[]	Historical sporting connections	[]
Major football teams	[]	Sports facilities for public use	[]
Other major sporting teams (excluding football)	[]	A year round programme of events	[]
Recently constructed facilities	[]	OTHER (Please state)	[]

.....

10) From the list below, please tick [✓] the **three** cities outside London which in your opinion offer the most in terms of the provision of spectator sport stadia.

Bath	[]	Gateshead	[]	Manchester	[]
Birmingham	[]	Glasgow	[]	Newcastle	[]
Bradford	[]	Hull	[]	Nottingham	[]
Bristol	[]	Leeds	[]	Sheffield	[]
Cardiff	[]	Leicester	[]	Southampton	[]
Edinburgh	[]	Liverpool	[]	Sunderland	[]

11) From the list below please tick [✓] the **three** cities outside London which in your opinion offer the most in terms of staging major sporting events.

Bath	[]	Gateshead	[]	Manchester	[]
Birmingham	[]	Glasgow	[]	Newcastle	[]
Bradford	[]	Hull	[]	Nottingham	[]
Bristol	[]	Leeds	[]	Sheffield	[]
Cardiff	[]	Leicester	[]	Southampton	[]
Edinburgh	[]	Liverpool	[]	Sunderland	[]

12) From the list below, please tick [✓] the sport facilities that you have heard of.

Wembley Stadium, London	[]	Alexander Stadium, Birmingham	[]
Don Valley Stadium, Sheffield	[]	Ponds Forge International Sports Centre, Sheffield	[]
The National Indoor Arena, Birmingham	[]	Old Trafford Football Ground, Manchester	[]
The Mersey Skydome, Liverpool	[]	Gateshead International Stadium, Gateshead	[]
The Nynex Arena Manchester	[]	Manchester Velodrome, Manchester	[]
Edgbaston Cricket Ground, Birmingham	[]	Villa Park Football Ground, Birmingham	[]
Sheffield Arena, Sheffield	[]	National Watersports Centre, Nottingham	[]
Old Trafford Cricket Ground, Manchester	[]	Hillsborough Football Ground, Sheffield	[]
Sheffield Ski Village, Sheffield	[]	National Exhibition Centre (NEC), Birmingham	[]
London Arena, London	[]	GMEX Centre, Manchester	[]

13) Are you aware of the fact that.....(please answer yes or no by ticking [✓] the relevant box)

	YES	NO
Birmingham bid to stage the 1992 Olympic Games?	[]	[]
Birmingham will be staging the 2001 World Athletics Championships?	[]	[]
Manchester bid to stage the 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games?	[]	[]
Manchester will be staging the 2002 Commonwealth Games?	[]	[]
Sheffield staged the 1991 World Student Games?	[]	[]

14) From the options listed below, please tick one box [✓] to indicate how the construction of major sport facilities and the staging of major sport events in a city will affect the likelihood of you visiting it in the near future

Much more likely to visit	More likely to visit	No more likely nor less likely to visit	Less likely to visit	Much less likely to visit	Don't Know
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

15) From the options listed below, please tick one box [✓] to indicate how often you attend sport events.

Very frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Very Occasionally	Never	Don't know
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

OTHER DETAILS

Sex Male ☐ Female ☐

Age 18-29 ☐ 30-49 ☐ 50-69 ☐ 70 and over ☐

Hometown (please state)

Has the head of the household been in paid employment over the past ten years?

Yes ☐ Go to Question A below

No ☐ Go to Question B below

A) Please state the most recent **occupation** of the head of the household.

.....

B) Is the head of the household retired? Yes ☐ No ☐

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE

Individual question design

Question 1 introduces the respondent to the three case study cities and aims to establish the approximate time of their last visit to each city. Combined with the answer to the next question, this is meant to provide an illustration of people's relative experience of the three cities. The question is phrased in a simple manner. Emphasis is given to 'each city' to highlight the fact that the question has to be answered for each of the destinations. The respondent is shown, through the depiction of a ticked box, exactly how to answer the question, minimising the chance of an incorrectly filled out questionnaire. The different response categories have been carefully and deliberately chosen. For instance the boundaries of the categories have been selected in a way that allows the maximum of detail and significance, while minimising the confusion and time of deliberation for the respondent. Therefore, the categories are broad enough to minimise the number of people who will have to spend a long period of time trying to remember exactly when the last time they visited was, while being narrow enough to provide a meaningful representation of that person's most recent experience of the city in question. The exact boundaries have been chosen in a way that reflects the overall objectives of the research. For example, the improvements in the built environment and the deliberate development of sporting connections with cities is something that has happened in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield, predominantly over the last ten years. The response category boundaries try to reflect this, with people being asked to focus on whether their experience has been in the last year, 1-4 years ago, 5-9 years ago, or whether it has been ten or more years since they have visited. These categories can be correlated with certain developments in the cities over that period of time to see if there is a correlation between having experience of the city when certain developments were present and certain images of that destination. As well as these categories, a 'have never visited' response category is made available. Finally it was necessary to include a 'Don't know' category as a means of legitimising the information obtained. If people with no idea when the last time they visited were forced to guess, this would have significantly affected the overall validity of the information obtained. Therefore, although it may have proven to be an easy 'get-out' for the uncommitted respondent, it is necessary to include a 'don't know' response category.

Question 2 is similar in form and purpose to Question 1. To provide a comprehensive illustration of someone's experience of a destination it was necessary to know the number of times they had ever visited, as well as the last time a visit was undertaken. The form and wording of the question was kept as similar as possible to the preceding one so as to minimise confusion. For the same reason the cities were kept in the same order and the question was formatted in the same way. Again, the key to the design of this question was the distinction between the various response categories and the boundaries between them. The effectiveness of the question relied on achieving a balance between giving enough response categories to enhance the depth of the information obtained, while retaining few enough so as not to deter or confuse the respondent. The same number of possible responses were provided as in the previous question. Six response categories were included in total, with two consisting of 'never visited' and 'don't know'. The other four were meant to distinguish between the visitor who has seldom visited (1-2 times), the occasional visitor (3-9 times), the frequent visitor (10-24 times) and the regular visitor (25 or more times). The visitor with over 25 visits was deemed to have enough experience so that any further visits would not significantly alter their images. However, even for this regular visitor, a key factor may be the last time they have visited, a point which was established by Question 1. The aim of the opening two questions was to build up a portfolio of the relative experience of the respondents so that these 'types' of potential tourists can be compared with their perceptions of the three cities in order to attempt to establish any correlations between the experience held by a potential tourist and a certain image of the three cities in question.

Question 3 follows the standardised format, design and phrasing established by the two opening questions. Here people's conative images of a destination were measured - the extent to which they would like to visit that location. The basic aim was to establish whether people felt positively or negatively about visiting the three cities. To remove any ambiguities and to produce a clear question, the phrase 'for a weekend leisure break' was added. It was necessary to be specific about the type of visit being asked about to remove confusion and to ensure that the question delivers valuable and valid conclusions about people's desire to visit the three cities. It was therefore deciphered from the marketing literature available from the three cities that one of the main target markets for the three cities was the weekend break market, basing short stays in the city around main major attractions and events. Cities are particularly trying to use sport to entice people to stay in

the city for a weekend or short break. As the research is concerned with the way in which sport attractions and events may contribute to enhancing the image of the city as a tourist attraction, it seems appropriate that the question here should have concentrated on this key market. The weekend leisure break is crucial to a successful urban tourism industry because it involves additional expenditure in the city itself, rather than solely at specific attractions. The answer to Question 3 should provide significant indications as to the success of marketing initiatives in producing an attractive image of the city for this key market. One of the other main considerations when designing this question was the specific wording of the scales involved. It was decided that in order to maintain standardisation throughout the questionnaire, a likert scale similar in format and design to the ones used previously should be adopted. This approach has numerous advantages. By tying people to specific named responses the arbitrariness of other techniques is avoided. As Robson (1993:256) has stated 'it is still distressingly common to see attitude scales cobbled together by assembling an arbitrary group of statements which sound as if they would be relevant, with similar 'off the top of the head' ratings assigned to different answers, and a simple addition of these ratings to obtain some mystical 'attitude score'. A likert-type approach as exemplified here, ensured that identical responses related to the same basic attitude. Having fixed alternative expressions such as the ones here meant that people were directly relating their answer to an agreed alternative rather than to an arbitrary point between scales. This was deemed preferable to the conventional semantic differential scaling approach. Items in a likert scale can also look interesting to respondents and people often enjoy completing a scale of this kind. Often the difficulty with the approach used here is the accurate balancing of the scales. In order to analyse the information using sophisticated quantitative techniques, it was necessary to give each of the responses given a 'score'(e.g. would very much like to visit scores 5). To enable valid and meaningful interpretation of this data, the scales have to be perfectly balanced. In this question, this resulted in wording which may at first appear a little awkward. For instance, the perfect neutral statement (which had to be present to avoid confusion with 'don't know' responses) had to be phrased 'neither like nor not like to visit'. This phrase makes perfect sense and is perfectly balanced but doesn't exactly roll off the tongue. The don't know option was again used to ensure that those who really do not feel they have anything to offer aren't forced into a response which may affect the overall validity of the more legitimate responses. A six point scale has been chosen because it is felt this gives the respondent enough options so as to allow them to illustrate their opinions, but not too many

so that they become confused and frustrated by a series of overly pedantic response categories.

Question 4 once more followed the established format and layout of the previous three questions, which allowed the respondent to become quickly familiar with the task put in front of them. The phrasing was kept as consistent as possible as well, with the 'for each city listed below' opening and the 'weekend leisure break' statement retained. The new parts of the question which the respondent had to concentrate on related to the concept of change over the past ten years. A similar likert type scale has been developed, which again contains a six point scale, including the now familiar neutral response and obligatory 'don't know' response option. Again, care was taken to ensure that the scale was perfectly balanced, with the quite awkward 'very much like-like-neutral-not like-very much not like' scale of the last question replaced with the more comprehensible 'much more attractive-more attractive-neutral-less attractive-much less attractive' likert scale. Again it was felt that tying people to these statements makes their answers much more legitimate and comparable than if they were asked to give a numeral or visual rating between two semantic extremes. It also gives the advantage of enabling subsequent written analysis to refer to a certain figure as representing an actual attitude or opinion rather than a meaningless point between two extremes. This makes any results more comprehensible and easier to draw meaningful conclusions from. The grid format was again adopted, with the cities placed in the same order to minimise confusion. Research by Driscoll et al (1994) suggests that this grid style format is an ideal alternative to the traditional format of likert scales or graphic positioning scales. The difference between this grid style and more orthodox styles is that the grid format gives the opportunity for evaluation with direct reference to other destinations.

Question 5 is the first departure from the established format and style of questioning developed in the four preceding questions. This question is fundamental for the research and so was placed near the centre of the questionnaire, enabling the respondent to be gently coaxed into the questionnaire without being put off by early questions which are quite difficult to deal with. This style of questioning has been explored and utilised by Reilly (1990), who concluded that the technique of asking for three associated words from potential tourists was an effective and simple means of revealing people's image

dimensions. Reilly believed that the technique was suited to mail surveys (1990:25) although it can also be used in personal interviews and telephone surveys. This research values Reilly's comments on, and development of, this technique, but attempts to utilise 'word association' in a different manner that reduces the deficiencies of Reilly's approach. The main advantage of the technique is that it reveals, in a simple and manageable form, place images and image dimensions which are significant to the respondent, rather than those which are predetermined by the researcher. This is an admirable attempt to reduce the predetermination problems associated with structured likert or semantic differential scaling techniques, while retaining those technique's potential for meaningful and comprehensive quantitative analysis. However, Reilly is in effect introducing his own image parameters because of his concentration on descriptive adjectives for tourism image assessment. Reilly may be revealing these descriptive adjectives in an unprompted and unstructured way, but his analysis cannot be said to be revealing the true and salient image dimensions held by potential tourists because his technique explicitly asks for three words that best *describe* a certain destination. After a certain amount of deliberation it was decided that in this research the word *describe* would be replaced with *represent*. The question therefore read 'which three words best represent X'. Although it is impossible to remove all predetermined parameters from image elicitation (all answers are in some way determined by the phrasing questions), it is felt that the replacement of 'describe' with 'represent' is a significant improvement to a technique which purports to allow the free elicitation of images whilst allowing simple analysis. The purpose of this question was to reveal metonymic images of the cities and by using the word 'represent', rather than simply 'describe' it people had more freedom to use the words that sum up their image of a city destination.

In the wording and basic design of the question there was little point in forcing respondents who had no idea about the destination in question to make up three words. This would have affected the overall validity of the responses. However, people with the faintest image of a destination should be invited to make a contribution as these vague images may be just as relevant and interesting as more informed representations. People were therefore encouraged to answer, but reassured that if they had absolutely no idea they could answer 'don't know' in one or more of the available boxes. Even this don't know response may be illustrative of the nature of destination images held. Reilly (1990) who uses a similar technique to the one adopted here asserts that such a technique 'provides a

mechanism for determining where there is a lack of image by recording those instances where respondents are unable to provide a descriptor' (Reilly 1990:22).

In the specific phrasing of the question, the 'for each city' opening statement was retained to minimise confusion and reduce the trepidation of completing a relatively difficult question. Respondents are then asked to provide three words even if they don't know the city very well. Finally it is explained that if they have no idea they can answer don't know. Again, for purposes of consistency, standardisation and minimal confusion the question is set out in a very similar style to previous ones, with the cities ordered in the same sequence down the left hand side of the page.

This unusual style of question has many advantages which make it an ideal means of eliciting free response images in a structured way through the medium of a self-completion questionnaire. Many of these advantages are outlined by Reilly in his 1990 paper. They include the fact that data collection and analysis are relatively simple and inexpensive compared with other image elicitation techniques. It is also recognised by Reilly that the image dimensions revealed are those that are salient to the respondent rather than those imposed by the researcher. One of the only disadvantages noted by Reilly is the fact that 'unless data are collected on competitive destinations there is no way to construct comparative image profiles' (Reilly 1990:22). Of course in this study there is a certain comparative dimension which enhances the relevance of the data and makes it more evaluative. Ironically, one of the only problems envisaged with the use of this question in this research is that there may be too much of a comparative element present and that respondents are answering in a truly comparative way and not evaluating each destination on its own merits. Other potential problems mainly relate to respondent's potential lack of ability to choose three words to represent a city.

Question 6 is intrinsically linked to the subsequent question (7), in that it performs the basis for what has been termed importance-performance analysis. This technique, used in tourism research, provides an evaluative dimension to the rating of a destination's attributes. This was achieved not just by revealing the way in which people perceive a city to perform on the basis of certain attributes, but also through the analysis of how important those attributes are perceived to be in the destination selection process. One of the first

exponents of this sort of technique was Crompton (1979) who asserted that 'the descriptive data without inclusion of the evaluative dimension is of limited value for it gives no indication of the relative importance which respondent's attach to particular attributes of destination image when making a destination decision' (Crompton 1979:19). This sort of theorising has been capitalised on by other researchers, including Oppermann (1996), who have used what has become known as importance-performance analysis to accurately measure people's attitudes towards certain destinations.

Therefore the purpose of Question 6 to determine the importance of various aspects of urban tourism so that the three cities performance on those attributes can be evaluated more thoroughly. The most important aspect to remember about this part of the questionnaire is that it was in no way trying to reconstruct the nature and form of city images through the scaling of the most important destination attributes. The factors which were chosen do not purport to represent a comprehensive illustration of the different urban tourism products offered. The aim of this question was to explore certain key issues and the way in which potential tourists react to those issues. Therefore, when deciding what aspects of a city to measure, these aspects are not meant to add up to the total urban tourism product. This research is concerned with the way in which certain reimagining strategies are received by the population. The intention here to explore this issue, not the whole issue of what attracts a person to a city and exploring the travel-to decision process. Of course, the research has a specific focus on sport reimagining strategies and so it is envisaged that this should be at the centre of the factors measured, but that these sporting elements should be placed into a more general reimagining context. The best way in which to choose the aspects of the city that are to be measured was through a comprehensive review of the latest marketing, publicity and promotional material produced for each of the three cities (BCVB 1998, Marketing Manchester 1998, Destination Sheffield 1998). As has been previously stated in this paper, the research is primarily concerned with the reimagining of cities as weekend leisure break destinations and so in our review of marketing material, it is that material concerned with such breaks that has been assessed. Through this review the aspects that the cities are placing most emphasis on in terms of their image have been assessed and reduced into an attribute list which is then be used in the questionnaire. Without wanting to go into too much detail here, this review chose ten aspects of a city that were prominent parts of city's marketing and promotional campaigns, but which involved deliberate and recent attempts to deliberately enhance the images of

those cities. Of these ten, six were physical features of the urban landscape and four involved the staging of different categories of events.

Once these 'products' had been selected, the challenge was to develop a scaling system to substantiate the relative importance of these factors in the decision making process. To try and reflect the consistency of the previous questions, this question retained the same layout, with the respondent asked to assess each aspect of the city against an annotated likert scale. As in previous questions a don't know response category was used to prevent any confusion between a neutral or apathetic response and the don't know category, but also so as not to enforce answers which would jeopardise the validity of the information obtained. The problematic aspect of this question was the labelling of the likert-scales. A likert scale was used to retain consistency, comprising four importance response options, alongside the 'don't know' option. These range from 'of great importance' to 'of no importance'. Unlike previous scales, it was impossible to balance this scale in the orthodox manner (positive, through neutral, to negative response categories). There is no real neutral response because it is very hard for something to be neither important nor unimportant. The options 'Of no importance' and 'of great importance' were included as the two extreme responses which were then supplemented with less extreme response categories. These were 'of some importance' - implying that there is a certain degree of importance attached to that factor and 'of little importance', implying that although that factor maybe considered, it is of very little relevance and plays a minimal role in the decision whether or not to visit a certain location.

Question 7 takes the form of what has become the orthodox means of image measurement in the field of tourism research - attribute scaling. However, unlike previous research, this use of attribute scaling does not purport to cover all aspects of destination image or to present a holistic and complete picture of those images. The intention here is to explore people's attitudes towards certain deliberately contrived features of contemporary Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield in order to establish the awareness of, acceptance of and attitude towards reimagining developments that have taken place in all three of these cities.

In this part of the questionnaire perceptions of the provision of urban tourism products in the three cities are evaluated. From this information, the effectiveness of reimagining strategies concerned with these products can be ascertained. The results can also be related to the importance of those different urban products to tourists' decision to visit the city in question. So what is elicited is an assessment of the effect the reimagining strategies have had on potential tourists and whether those strategies may prompt an individual to visit that destination.

The specific design of this question presented a number of problems. The instructions were inevitably fairly complex, but they were simplified as far as is possible. The format of the question is greatly influenced by the detailed research of Driscoll et al (1994). This research into the differing effects of different ways of designing and formatting image elicitation questions has provided some valuable implications for the present study. As Driscoll et al (1994) point out, typically destination image studies have employed semantic differential scales, likert scales and graphic positioning scales to indicate the images present. The most common form of presenting these scales requires respondents to separately rate each destination on the basis of a set of benefit generating attributes (e.g. Hunt 1975 and see below).

PARIS Attractive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unattractive

According to Driscoll et al (1994) an alternative is to present a battery of scales for evaluation in a grid type format. This is the type of format used in Question 7. Empirical research by the authors concluded that this grid format gives the opportunity for scoring with direct reference to other destinations and results in more evaluated responses. This research proved that the grid focuses attention on the attribute or factor in question by inviting direct comparison of destinations on the basis of that attribute. With a scaled question, the focus is always on the destination with less emphasis on how that particular destination performs on the basis of a specific attribute. With a grid format, Driscoll noted that people work across, placing emphasis on the rating of that destination on the basis of that attribute. This is in contrast to more orthodox methods which ask respondents to rate a particular destination on the basis of various attributes in a more vertical sense. This means that the respondent is not always answering with direct reference to that attribute but reflecting their general impression of the destination as a whole. Driscoll et al's (1994)

conclusion was that the two approaches are essentially dealing with different constructs, with the emphasis on attributes in the case of the grid and destinations in the case of the scaled questionnaire.

The research therefore utilised the grid format. The purpose of this question was to investigate individual factors and assess their perceived provision in various cities. It was not to reflect the overall image of a destination. It was therefore more appropriate to use a grid format which has been proven to generate more evaluated responses and responses geared more towards the careful consideration of individual factors and issues and less on people's more general impressions of a destination.

The exact design of the grid format was carefully considered. The factors used in the left hand column had to be those used in the previous question. One deliberation was whether these attributes should be reordered to ensure that each was given a similar degree of consideration by a respondent who may be filling the questionnaire relatively quickly. Driscoll et al (1994) perceive that any results obtained may well indicate some kind of order effect where the placement of a factor or destination first on the form makes it act as a benchmark. However, it was decided that in this research the minimal amount of destinations measured (three), and the relatively small amount of factors analysed (ten) means that any randomisation of factors and destinations would probably be a futile exercise. It was decided that any minor methodological benefits gained from such randomisation would be far outweighed by the negative impact which would accrue from the confusion of the respondent because of the lack of standardisation.

The order used in the previous question was therefore retained alongside the consistent ordering of the destinations involved in the research. It then had to be decided how the destinations would be rated. The most common way of doing this and a method that has proved successful in a number of pieces of research is the technique giving each destination a numerate score (Grabler 1997, Oppermann 1996a, Goodrich 1978, Hunt 1975, Crompton 1979). However there are two separate ways of doing this. First, by providing two semantic extremes with associated disparate numbers and asking respondents to rate the destination on that scale (Hunt 1975, Goodrich 1978, Oppermann 1996a, Grabler 1997). The second method is to provide a numerate scale where each number is given an associated attitude or response so that respondents have more idea as to

what the number they are providing actually represents. It was decided that the open scaling technique used in almost every example of attribute scaling is too arbitrary with respondents answering without consideration or knowledge as to what number represents what sort of attitude or impression. Therefore it was decided that each respondent should be instructed what each number on the scale represented. There has also been a variation in image studies in terms of the size of the scale offered. Some studies (e.g. Oppermann 1996a, Goodrich 1978, Crompton 1979) have tended to use a seven point scale, while others (Grabler 1997, Echtner and Ritchie 1993) have developed six point scales. The overriding aim in this already complicated question was to keep the instructions to the respondent as simple as possible. With this in mind and because of the observation that a seven point or six point scale was inappropriate for a study which is dealing with some vague and naive images, a five point likert scale was used.

To validate subsequent quantitative analysis, this five point scale had to be balanced in terms of providing two graduated extremes of impressions surrounding a neutral response. The question asks how well each city provides the following facilities and therefore it was decided that the five point scale should be labelled very poor provision, poor provision, average provision, good provision and very good provision. For the purposes of simplification it was decided that these should be abbreviated into very poor, poor, average, good, very good which provided a simple and perfectly balanced scale from which to analyse the performance of the destinations on the basis of the ten factors. It was decided that that this scale and the numbers it refers to should be emphasised strongly in the question to avoid people mixing up the extremes of the scale. Therefore as well as the scale being spelt out clearly and boldly in its entirety, the two extremes of the scale and the numbers of on the scale they relate to were also repeated.

Respondents were therefore asked to provide a number between one and five to indicate the extent to which they thought each city provided a certain reimagining factor. Alongside this five point scale, respondents were given a don't know option so that people would not be forced to guess if they really did have no idea whatsoever. Any such guesses would have undermined the validity of the data obtained. However, as in previous questions, naive impressions and vague images are considered by this research to be important and therefore the research design shouldn't put off these people from attempting to respond. Respondents were therefore invited to rate the destinations even if they did not know the

cities very well. This idea is developed from Grabler's (1997) work which used this sort of reassuring prompting. This approach, prompted people to answer, but did not force people to respond. Unfortunately, this made the wording of the question quite long. Rather than including the don't know option as a specific number on the scale, the scale was kept as simple as possible and respondents were instructed that 'don't know' responses should be indicated with 'DK'. People who had no idea used this option, but because it is a separate response type, it may not be used as frequently as a numerate response. This may encourage those with vague impressions to attempt the question.

The specific wording of the question was important to explain this relatively complicated task. The emphasis was put on the fact that each respondent was to answer with reference to **each** of the cities and **each** of the factors. This point is reinforced by the use of the phrases, 'Please fill in all the boxes' and 'Please do not leave any blank spaces'. This firm reminder was needed because valid responses required every box of the grid filled with either a number or 'don't know'.

Questions 6 and 7 subtly introduced the respondents to the concept of sport as urban tourism product, but within the overall context of urban tourism and different urban reimagining strategies. However, from **Question 8** onwards the connection between sport and the city is explored further and in a much more explicit sense. Question 8 deals with the links between specific cities and sport. Several cities, including the three dealt with in this research, but also Newcastle, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Glasgow, Liverpool, Nottingham and Leeds - cities that have all tried to heighten their city's sporting connections. Question 8 aims to establish which cities in Britain are considered by potential tourists to be most closely associated with sport. In this question, London is omitted because it is presumed that because it is the capital city it stages most of the UK's major sporting occasions. As many authors have pointed out, London is competing in a different league of inter-city competition than its provincial British counterparts (Law 1994). London competes with other global cities as an established and recognised international centre. The aim of the other cities is to establish themselves as important national and regional centres and to further their ambitions in terms of developing international status. As Law (1994) states, Manchester's Olympic bid was part of a project to see that Manchester regains its international status. Law (1994) goes on to state that in Europe there are three or four great

cities (including London) while the rest of the cities in Europe compete to be the dozen or so other influential cities.

Therefore what is being dealt with here is this second tier of cities. The list given to respondents therefore comprised Britain's most influential cities outside London. Some of these cities have vigorously promoted themselves as centres of sport, while others have not. The aim of the question was to substantiate if these attempts had been successful by establishing which cities are considered to be closely associated with sport. The justifications for these choices were investigated in subsequent questions. Sixteen cities were chosen in all because of their sporting links, their individual identities and their size. Almost every large city in Britain was included. Those which were left out were done so simply because of space limitations and so that respondents weren't faced with too arduous a task in trawling through an exhausting list of every conceivable urban centre.

Respondents were asked to pick three cities. This allowed individual preferences and sentiments to be supplemented with other more general evaluations. The choice of three enables general patterns and correlations to be identified amongst a larger data set. The wording of the question tried to emphasise the fact that respondents had to choose three cities. A previous draft of the questionnaire had asked respondents to rank their chosen cities, but because of the already complicated nature of the questionnaire, it was decided that a simple choice would be preferable. The cities were placed in alphabetical order in two columns to make the list appear less daunting and less complicated to the respondent.

Question 9 is an immediate follow up to question 8 and attempted to justify the reasons why cities were chosen as being closely associated with sport. This is a fundamental question as cities have developed extensive construction, marketing and events strategies to try and become recognised as sporting capitals. The question therefore asked people to justify their choices by choosing three reasons (or providing their own reason) why they chose their three sporting cities in question 8. The wording of the question immediately reminded respondents that they should refer to their answers to the previous question. Again the instructions were clear and brief. Respondents were asked to choose three factors by ticking three relevant boxes. The list of factors was compiled through a review of sport reimagining strategies and through a consideration of more general reasons why people may associate a city with sport. Therefore historical factors and the presence of major sporting teams was listed alongside more contemporary factors such as recent

sporting developments, the staging of events and Olympic Games bids. This comprehensive list of factors covered most of the possible justifications in a brief and uncomplicated manner which doesn't deter the respondent from answering because of the sheer scale of the list provided. However an 'other.. please state' option has been included in case there were any other factors considered to be salient to the respondent which may have been inadvertently omitted. In the list, major football teams were isolated from major sporting teams because it is felt that the dominance of the sport in Britain and its close connections to the British city means that it has to be separated from these other sports to allow meaningful analysis.

Question 10 dealt with people's awareness of sporting facilities in the three case study cities and in several other British cities. Sport reimagining cannot be effective if potential urban tourists are not aware of the existence of the strategies implemented. Therefore in this simple question respondents were asked to tick any of the facilities listed that they had heard of. This list was carefully developed to provide a comparison between the cities of Manchester, Birmingham and Sheffield, while placing the facilities in these cities into a broader context. To compile the list, a careful review of the sports products offered in the three case study cities was undertaken. Through this review it was realised that there were many similarities in the sport tourism products offered and in the sport tourism products recently developed in order to enhance the city's image and profile. For example each city has constructed an indoor arena in the past ten years. Each city also contains at least one Premiership football ground. Other facilities are present which feature in two of the three cities emphasised in this research. For example, Manchester and Birmingham both have test cricket grounds and Sheffield and Birmingham both have major athletics tracks which stage high profile meetings. Individual features and facilities have also been developed such as Sheffield's Ski Village and Ponds Forge International Sports Centre and Manchester's Velodrome. Therefore in compiling the final list, all the major facilities located in each of the three cities were included as well as individual facilities considered important as part of a sports reimagining strategy. Alongside these facilities, others belonging to different UK cities were included to provide some sort of control and to put the data obtained about Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield into a wider context. Therefore, Wembley Stadium, Gateshead International Stadium, Newcastle Arena and Nottingham Watersports Centre were included as being examples of a major football ground, major athletics stadium, major indoor arena and individual flagship sporting

facility available for public use. The results for these facilities can be compared to those for comparable facilities in the three case study cities to provide a useful evaluative analysis of people's awareness of different facilities. Alongside these extra facilities included for comparative analysis is a fictitious facility - Mersey Skydome - which is included to see if people are really telling the truth about whether they have heard of the various facilities. This question relies on the honesty of the responses and by providing this decoy it was possible to see what proportion of people were not being entirely truthful (or accurate) when asked about their awareness of the facilities. In all, twenty facilities were listed. These included five from each of the three cities at the centre of this research and five from other parts of the country, including the fictitious Mersey Skydome. This even distribution between cities allowed a meaningful and legitimate comparison to be made once the information had been obtained. This sort of question has been used previously by Ritchie and Smith (1991) who were trying to assess the extent to which the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympic Games enhanced the profile and awareness of the city. This research successfully employed such a technique to identify awareness levels of Canadian cities, Canadian provinces and previous Olympic Games sites.

Question 11 aimed to establish the importance and significance of specific events/event bids in the three case study cities to enable the research to go on to substantiate how important event-related strategies are to the whole process of city image enhancement. Rather than complicating the issue by providing a long list of past events, this question asked respondents to note their awareness of specific flagship events. Despite a whole plethora of events programmes being developed in each of the three case study cities, it is significant to note that the reimagining of the city using sport has been based primarily on specific high profile events. The sport reimagining of Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield has been intrinsically related to, and driven by, the bidding for and staging of mega events. Birmingham constructed its indoor arena and based its sport reimagining on its 1992 Olympic bid. Similarly, though in a much more deliberate sense, Manchester's indoor arena, velodrome and proposed stadium complex were conceived during its attempts to attract the 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games. Sheffield's various sports facilities and subsequent events programmes result from the legacy of the city's staging of the 1991 World Student Games. Therefore this question attempts to substantiate the long term awareness of these events and to analyse whether people are aware of another major event being staged in the future - the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester. Ritchie and

Smith assert that after staging or bidding for a mega sport event, 'it would seem evident that municipal/tourism managers must anticipate a certain (and as yet unknown) rate of awareness decay and take steps to counter it if they wish to remain competitive in the international marketplace' (Ritchie and Smith 1991:9). The purpose of this question is to ascertain if this decay has occurred in the three cities, so that further analysis can substantiate if steps have been taken to counter it and how successful those steps have been. The wording is simple and asks respondents to answer yes or no by placing a tick in the relevant box. Again to identify inaccurate or untruthful responses, a fictitious event was included (Birmingham 2001).

Question 12 is a very simple question which asks respondents to indicate what effect the development of sport facilities and the staging of events may have on their likelihood of visiting a city in the near future. The question aims to provide a general indication as to the attractiveness of sport tourism products and further link the concept of image and awareness to actual visitation. A balanced scale has been developed for this question so that the answers can be quantitatively analysed against other data obtained. The scale ranges from 'much more likely to visit' to 'much less likely to visit' with the neutral response being 'no more likely nor less likely'. To avoid confusion of this response with those of people who don't know, a don't know option has been provided. The wording of the question differs from others in the questionnaire in that the respondent is asked to finish of the sentence in the question with their individual response. However, this should not confuse the respondent because of the simplicity of the task and simplicity of the question.

Question 13 is important to the study because one of the central aims of the research is to establish whether sport reimagining can have a general impact on the overall image of the city or whether its reimagining success is confined to enhancing the image of the city as a sporting venue in the eyes of sport tourists. To investigate this issue it is necessary to establish the extent to which the respondent attends sport events. If people are attracted by the sport reimagining and include sport as part of their image of the city then the sport reimagining may be said to be having a more general impact on the image of the city. However, if it is only the sport tourists who have heard of the facilities and who include sport as a part of their image of the city, who rate sport tourism products as important and are who are aware of sporting improvements to the city, then the sport reimagining may be

said to be having only a limited impact involving this specific market sector. If this can be substantiated then important marketing implications may be provided as well as more general indications as to the potential success of, and future for, sport reimagining in Britain.

The question was worded in a very similar way to the previous question so as to provide consistency, standardisation and ease of understanding for the respondent. The respondent is asked to complete the sentence by choosing one of the five alternatives listed. These alternatives range from regularly attending sport events, to never attending sport events. The intermediary response categories consisted of 'often attend', 'sometimes attend', and 'hardly ever attend'. These response categories represented evenly graded responses which cover comprehensively all possible behavioural group categories in a way that is simple, hopefully allowing the respondent to respond quickly and without too much complication. A 'don't know' option is also provided so that people with no idea what category they fall into are provided with a means of preventing the contamination of the data.

To assist the generation of a representative sample the questionnaire was concluded with a section where respondents were asked to provide personal details, including their gender, age and occupation (head of household). This had often already been ascertained before the questionnaires were distributed, but the inclusion of this information allowed for confirmation and enabled more efficient subsequent recording and analysis of information. The answers to these questions allowed quotas to be filled, which were determined by the 1991 census information regarding the characteristics of the English population. The research needed to know the occupation of the head of the household. However it was also necessary to discover whether the head of the household has worked in the past ten years. If this was the case then they could be prescribed a social class. If not they needed to be categorised as either retired or economically inactive. The questions placed at the end of the questionnaire enabled this information to be determined or reconfirmed.

Amendments of the questionnaire for the sport sample

The design of the questionnaire distributed to the sport sample (n=75) is identical to the one distributed to the representative sample (n=180), apart from a few modifications. The most important of these was the inclusion of two different questions. These questions were

designed specifically for the sport tourists and specifically referred to the opinions about which cities in the UK boast the best sport tourism facilities and programme of events. These questions were not considered to be appropriate for the general, representative sample as it was presumed that a large proportion of these respondents would have little or no knowledge about such matters. Instead the representative sample were merely asked to name the city which they most closely associated with sport in general. The design of the two additional questions mirrored the design of question 8 (described above). Respondents were asked to name the three cities which offer most in terms of the provision of a) spectator sport stadia and b) staging major sporting events. The intention here was to examine in detail the attribute-based images of sport tourists, to identify which cities have the most impressive sporting reputations according to this informed group of potential sport tourists. For justifications for the specific design of this question please refer to the section regarding question 8 (above). The only other change made to the sport spectator questionnaire is in the 'Other Details' section, which asks respondents to state their hometown. This information was obviously not needed when questionnaires were distributed to target addresses. However as these questionnaires are being distributed away from the place of residence it is important to record where the person lives as this may significantly affect the image they hold of the city. In every other respect, the design of the final questionnaire was identical to that distributed to the sample sites in Darlington, Bristol and Fenland.

The Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Opening statement

Hello, thank you for agreeing to take part in this short interview. I am a researcher currently working on people's opinions of different British cities. I am going to ask you a few questions on this subject. Please feel free to answer the questions in as much detail as you wish. The information given will be treated in strict confidence.

Schedule

PART 1 Birmingham

1) What comes to mind when you think of the city of Birmingham?

Probes

Why do you say that?

What do you think that impression is based on?

2) Do you have a picture of Birmingham in your mind?

Probes

(If no) Nothing at all?

(If yes) Can you describe it to me?

Why do you think that particular picture exists in your mind?

What do you think that picture is based on?

3) Can you name any features or aspects of the city of Birmingham?

Probes

(If no) None at all?

(If yes) Why did you choose those particular features or aspects?

4) What is your impression of Birmingham as a place to visit?

Probes

Why do you say that?

What do you think that impression is based on?

5) Would you like to visit Birmingham for a weekend leisure break?

Probes

(If no) Why not?

(If yes) Why?

What would you like to do while you were there?

6) Do you think Birmingham has become a more or less attractive place to visit over the past ten years?

Probe - Why do you say that?

PART 2 Sheffield

7) What comes to mind when you think of the city of Sheffield?

Probes

Why do you say that?

What do you think that impression is based on?

8) Do you have a picture of Sheffield in your mind?

Probes

(If no) Nothing at all?

(If yes) Can you describe it to me?

Why do you think that particular picture exists in your mind?

What do you think that picture is based on?

9) Can you name any features or aspects of the city of Sheffield?

Probes

(If no) None at all?

(If yes) Why did you choose those particular features or aspects?

10) What is your impression of Sheffield as a place to visit?

Probes

Why do you say that?

What do you think that impression is based on?

11) Would you like to visit Sheffield for a weekend leisure break?

Probes

(If no) Why not?

(If yes) Why, what would you like to do while you were there?

12) Do you think Sheffield has become a more or less attractive place to visit over the past ten years?

Probe

Why do you say that?

PART 3 Manchester

13) What comes to mind when you think of the city of Manchester?

Probes

Why do you say that?

What do you think that impression is based on?

14) Do you have a picture of Manchester in your mind?

Probes

(If no) Nothing at all?

(If yes) Can you describe it to me?

Why do you think that particular picture exists in your mind?

What do you think that picture is based on?

15) Can you name any features or aspects of the city of Manchester?

Probes

(If no) None at all?

(If yes) Why did you choose those particular features or aspects?

16) What is your impression of Manchester as a place to visit?

Probes

Why do you say that?

What do you think that impression is based on?

17) Would you like to visit Manchester for a weekend leisure break?

Probes

(If no) Why not?

(If yes) Why?

What would you like to do while you were there?

18) Do you think Manchester has become a more or less attractive place to visit over the past ten years?

Probe

Why do you say that?

PART 4 Sport

19) Do you think there are strong links between Birmingham and sport?

Probes

Why do you say that?

Do you think these links have become stronger or weaker over the past ten years?

Why do you say that?

20) Do you think there are strong links between Manchester and sport?

Probes

Why do you say that?

Do you think these links have become stronger or weaker over the past ten years?

Why do you say that?

21) Do you think there are strong links between Sheffield and sport?

Probes

Why do you say that?

Do you think these links have become stronger or weaker over the past ten years?

Why do you say that?

22) Can you name any major sports stadia or facilities that have been built over the past ten years in Birmingham, Manchester or Sheffield?

Probes

Why did you choose those particular facilities?

How did you hear about them?

23) Can you name any major sport events that have been bid for by or staged in Birmingham, Manchester or Sheffield over the past ten years?

Probes

Why did you choose that event?

How did you know about the events/bids?

24) Which UK city outside London do you most closely associate with sport?

Probe

Why Do You Say That?

25) Do you think that strong sporting associations are a positive or negative aspect of cities?

Probe

Why Do You Say That?

26) Do you think that staging major sport events and constructing prestige sport facilities in a city affects the way in which you view that city as a whole?

Probe

Why Do You Say That?

27) How would the fact that a city has developed high quality sports facilities and stadia affect the chances of you visiting it in the near future?

Probe

Why do you say that?

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Question 1 (+ 6 & 11) deals with people's unfettered and uncontaminated images of the city. This question was placed first in the schedule, as it aimed to establish general images of the city. The purpose of the first question was to allow respondents to explain in their own words, and on their own terms, their personal images of the city without prompting or contaminating influences. It is obviously very hard to elicit completely unfettered questions as any emphasis in the wording will immediately affect the response given. Therefore the wording of this question has been specifically designed to reduce the effects of this suggestive wording problem. The exact wording chosen has been strongly influenced by the work of Echtner and Ritchie (1993). In this research, the authors included the question 'What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of XXX as a vacation destination?' in their development of a series of open-ended questions (Echtner and Ritchie 1993:5). This wording does have serious deficiencies in terms of attempting to elicit unfettered images. The use of the term 'images or characteristics' immediately guides the respondent to answer in a certain way. People's images or impressions may not coincide with what the respondent thinks of as 'images or characteristics' and so the respondent may refrain from revealing certain aspects of their images, while emphasising others. This is one limitation of Echtner and Ritchie's wording, but there is another which refers to their use of the term 'as a vacation destination'. This research deals with an urban tourism product that is not usually considered to be a conventional part of the tourism or vacation 'industry'. Though millions of people travel to watch sport in a variety of locations every week, tourism is more associated with visiting conventional tourist attractions and going on holidays to distant locations. Therefore the immediate inclusion of the 'as a vacation destination' part of Echtner and Ritchie's question may prove to be a little misleading.

In this research, the design of this opening question was kept as simple as possible to encourage the respondent to talk about their impressions of the city in their own words and on their own terms. The research deals with a product that is not usually associated with tourism and three cities which have only recently attempted to develop a significant tourism 'industry'. Therefore respondents were not asked about their images of Manchester, Birmingham and Sheffield as tourism destinations, but simply as cities. In this sense the research design reflects the aim of this question to

reveal general images of cities and not necessarily images of those cities as conventional tourist destinations. Subsequent questions in this schedule ask about impressions of the cities as 'weekend leisure break' destinations and so there is no need to address this specific issue here. If the respondent immediately referred to the city as a place for a visit, this may say a lot about the changing image of the city. If the emphasis is on other functions or features of the urban environment then this may also tell us a lot about the way in which the city is generally perceived. In this sense we are finding more about the form and nature of city images by not immediately referring to tourism.

The only problem with this approach is that because the research deals with three cities in turn, the tourism element will have already been mentioned in the analysis of the first city before the general images of the other two are elicited. However, it is felt that the wording of the question means that respondents are asked to refer to the impressions and images which are most relevant to them in a general sense. By asking respondents 'what comes to mind' it is hoped that respondents will reveal exactly what does come to mind and not be influenced by preceding questions. Even if contamination does take place, this is not necessarily a problem. The central focus of the research is sport and the fact that sport is not mentioned until the final section means that information about the most important issues will be obtained that will be entirely free from any possible contamination.

As has been recognised above, any design of the wording in the question will influence the response, but it is felt that this prompting is kept to a minimum in this particular design. The wording of the question also attempts to avoid jargon, such as the term 'image' itself. The final wording therefore reads, 'what comes to mind when you think of the city of X'. The aim of the question is to try and get people to explain exactly what is in their minds when they think of a particular city. Although the question was designed to be as unstructured and unbiased as possible, it is hoped that this has not resulted in a question which is too vague. The danger with too vague a question is that the respondent may not know where to start answering and may feel a little intimidated by the emphasis which is immediately placed on them to come up with a suitable answer.

As well as this direct question the respondent was probed to reveal why they think they have that impression of the city and what they think their city images are based on. This means trying to establish whether personal experience or influences from the media have been more important in the formation of that image. Of course this information may be volunteered anyway by the respondent in answering the question itself, but if not it is envisaged that the respondent should be probed to explain why they think that view is held.

Question 2 (+ 7 & 12) was meant to follow on from the preceding question's attempt to examine the exact content and nature of city images. However, whereas question 1 invited people to note the nature and content of their city images, this question specifically asks potential tourists about the form their image takes. This question deals with one dimension of this form - that of pictorial or 'analogue' representations. Research in the field of environmental psychology (Bell et al. 1996, Cassidy 1997) suggests that humans have two main methods of retaining information about different places. Firstly, there is a storage of propositional material which involves certain associations and concepts being connected to a place. Secondly, it is proposed that humans have the capacity to form mental pictures of the environment that can be stored and recalled as 'analogue' representations (Bell et al 1996). This question aims to assess the relevance of this theoretical model to the study of potential tourist's images of cities. The aim is to assess the extent to which people hold mental impressions of the city in question and if so, what these pictures may consist of. The specific question asks whether potential tourists have a picture of the city in their mind. If the answer is positive, then respondents are asked to describe the picture. The question should therefore firstly establish if mental pictures of the city are held by potential tourist's and secondly, if that is the case, what these pictures consist of. This part of the research deals with the form of images, and aims to assess whether specific components and dimensions are present. The question only asks about one proposed dimension, but it is hoped that once the other questions are answered it will be possible to provide a good indication as to the general components, dimensions and form of city images held by potential tourist's. Once it has been established what form city images take, it will then enable the research to consider the reasons why sport may have the potential into influence the form of these images.

Question 3 (+ 8 & 13) is also concerned with the nature and form of images in that it attempts to assess the degree to which certain elements of the urban environment are present in the images of potential tourists. This question also complements the structured questionnaire, which attempted to measure people's awareness of certain attractions in the city. The difference here is that the potential tourist was asked to name any features or aspects of the city without prompting. This will be useful for the research because it showed which attractions, facilities and features people were directly aware of. These facilities, features and aspects of the city are those which are immediately recollectable by the respondent and therefore are the most important in terms of providing people with an impression of the city as a tourism destination. It was interesting to note whether sporting elements feature strongly as a common aspect of a city that people can readily recall. Specific developments have been implemented in cities which have been designed as 'flagship' projects, aimed at enhancing the image of the city as a whole. It is therefore be interesting to note if these elements were commonly mentioned by potential tourist's as features of that city. The answers to this question may tell us something about the 'imageability' of certain elements within the urban environment. Imageability is described by Lynch (1960) as something that evokes a strong image in the mind of the observer. It was interesting to note the most imageable aspects of the cities here or whether there exists a general lack of ability to recall elements of specific urban environments. This may reflect the lack of distinguishing landmarks and attractions in an urban area which can make a city distinctive from its competitors.

Questions 4 and 5 (+ 9/10 & 14/15) involve the first overt mention of tourism, and invite respondents to indicate their tourist images of the three cities and whether they would like to visit the cities for a weekend leisure break. It is with this form of urban tourism that this research is inherently concerned and so for the sake of consistency with the structured questionnaire, the phrase 'for a weekend leisure break' is included here. As well as establishing whether people would like to visit the city, respondents were asked to justify their answers, as well as being required to indicate what they would envisage doing in the city if they did decide to go. This question further

explores the images held of the city, but this time in an explicitly tourism context. The value of question 5 is that it links images of destinations with people's actual propensity to want to visit them. Therefore this question attempted to explore if there were strong links between the reasons potential tourists wanted to visit and what they may want to do when they get there, and peoples' images of the cities in general. It is important for image research in tourism to try and develop these links in order to assess the impact of reimagining not only on the images of potential tourists, but on the propensity of these tourists to want to visit.

Question 6 (+12 & 18) is another question that is asked in the structured questionnaire and one that can be explored in further depth here. The intention was to analyse people's awareness of, appreciation of, and evaluation of, improvements that have been made to these cities over the past ten years. Many of these improvements have been intrinsically associated with reimagining strategies which provide the basis for this study. This question puts this reimagining into a tourism context and asked people to indicate whether they thought significant improvements had been made to the urban tourism product. The aim of the question was to first establish if people think the cities have improved as urban tourism destinations and secondly to establish why these views are held. It is in this second part that the impact of the reimagining may be assessed. The question does not refer explicitly to any particular strategies and so it is left to the respondent as to whether they include these strategies as examples of how sporting and other reimagining strategies may have influenced their perception of how the city has changed in recent years.

Questions 20, 21 and 22 are questions that deal explicitly with the links between sport and the different case study cities. That is not to say sport will not form a significant part of the answers to previous questions, but it is here that the issue of sport will be dealt with directly. This question has been deliberately placed after general image questions in order to avoid the contamination of previous answers by mentioning this present study's preoccupation with sport too early in the schedule. By sequencing the questions in this manner, the inclusion of sport as a part of previous answers can be adjudged to accurately reflect the relative role of sport in general city images. However, the focus of the present study is these sporting elements and so it is

necessary to try and explore the links between sport and the city in more detail. The purpose of these questions is to try and elicit sporting attribute based images in an unstructured manner which will further indicate if and why sport may be a part of people's images of the contemporary city. The purpose here as to allow people to state in their own words, the way in which they associate sport with certain cities. The value of the question is heightened by the fact that people are asked to justify their answers (prompt: why do you say that) and give examples to illustrate their answers. Respondents are also required to indicate whether they think the sporting reputation of a particular city has changed through the researchers use of the prompt 'do you think these links have become stronger or weaker over the past ten years'. This enables important information regarding the links between sport and the city to be elicited. This information can then be used in conjunction with the structured responses to provide indications as to the way in which people interpret links between sport and the city and whether deliberate attempts to reinforce these links are proving successful or have the potential to prove to be successful in the future.

Questions 22 and 23 measure the extent to which potential respondents are aware of the sport reimagining introduced by Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. This question provides the unprompted analysis that will complement the prompted recall of events/facilities that was included in the structured questionnaire. If any answers are received the respondent is also to be asked to indicate how they heard of the recalled events or facilities

Like the previous questions, **Question 24** attempted to gauge the attribute-based images of the three cities as sporting venues. All three cities have attempted to develop reputation as sporting cities and this question aimed to test whether the idea of a sporting city was something that the respondents would understand and identify with. The question also aimed to establish which cities (if any) participants associated with sport. This helped to determine whether cities has been successful in their quests to gain such a reputation. Participants were asked to consider UK cities apart from London as it is felt that the cities in this research are not aiming to compete with comparable 'second tier' cities (Law 1994). London obviously attracts the most prestigious events and boasts some of the finest facilities. It was therefore felt that including London would have restricted the analysis of competitive second tier cities.

Importantly respondents were asked to justify their answers. These justifications provided interesting insights into the ways in which cities can attempt to develop sporting reputations. The answers to this question have been used in conjunction with Question 8 on the structured questionnaire which is a structured version of the same question. Therefore the justifications and observation recorded in his open-ended discussion may also help to explain and illuminate answers to that particular question also.

Questions 25 and 26 are very important questions in this schedule. The respondent should now be used to talking about both sport and city images. The intention in these questions is to explore explicitly the meanings and associations generated by the combination of these two concepts. The research has hypothesised (see conceptual framework) that sport may have the potential to influence the holistic image of a city through the connotations (positive and negative) that are associated with this concept. These connotations may be a product of individual motives and beliefs as well as societal values. The idea here was to first explore whether potential tourists think sport is a positive or negative concept in an urban context. More importantly the respondent was asked to state why they held that particular view. Once these basic beliefs had been ascertained, a more focused question was posed. This asked respondents to consider whether their attitudes towards cities had been, or could be, changed by building new sport facilities or staging mega events. Again, importantly respondents were asked to justify their answer. It was envisaged that this would be a very challenging task for respondents and in the research this proved to be correct. However, after restating the question and giving respondents time to think, the vast majority of respondents were able to provide a relevant answer which showed that they understood the question posed. This question provided some of the most interesting insights of all those asked.

Questions 27 attempted to bring all the ideas introduced in the interview schedule together. The concepts of tourism, sport, city image, new facilities, staging events should all have been discussed. The aim here was to get the respondents to put these ideas together and indicate whether they would be more likely to visit a city that has developed a sport reimagining strategy. The participants were asked about future behaviour and this should put into perspective a lot of the ideas already talked about.

As usual, the respondent was prompted to justify their answer if they did not automatically do so.

Piloting the structured questionnaire

A pilot was carried out to trial both the design of the questionnaire and the process by which it was to be distributed/collected. The objective of the pilot study was to collect 20 responses from a representative sample of potential tourist in just one ward in one of the selected electoral district. The electoral district used in the pilot study (Darlington) was chosen at random from the three under consideration. The full research process involved three different wards which were selected because of their differing socio-economic characteristics¹. Obviously with only one ward under consideration, it would have been inappropriate to select one of the wards that would actually be used in the final research, because this would have made it difficult to obtain a representative sample. Therefore it was decided that the ward which most closely resembled the nation's socio-economic distribution would be used for the pilot study. To ascertain the Darlington ward that exhibited such characteristics, Spearman's rank, Pearson's and Kendall's correlation tests were undertaken. From these tests it became apparent that the electoral ward named College was the one that most closely matched the national proportions of socio-economic categories.

The procedures already outlined above were employed to distribute the questionnaire. In completing the pilot study, the researcher was particularly interested in the ability of respondents to understand the tasks set, the success of the distribution/collection system and the ease with which a representative sample could be obtained.

Methodological suggestions resulting from the pilot study

The distribution/collection system

1. More time was needed to enable the retrieval of questionnaires. This extra time will also aid the quota sampling in that it will enable the target respondent's characteristics to be analysed in depth before the quota sampling is undertaken and this will assist the research in meeting quota requirements.

¹ Wards were selected than contained a over-representation of a particular social class.

2. Reminder notes need to be produced preventing wasted trips back to collect questionnaires from households where no one is at home. These notes will remind respondents to fill in the questionnaire and assure them that the researcher will be returning at a specific time.

Interest in, length of and comprehension of the questionnaire

At the end of the questionnaire, three questions were included that were not intended to be part of the final draft of the research instrument. These questions related to the degree to which the participants found the questionnaire interesting, the ease with which they understood the questions asked and their feelings concerning the length of the questionnaire. The results of this analysis were reassuring in that 80% of the respondents stated that the length of the questionnaire was 'about right', 85% thought that the questionnaire was either 'easy' or 'very easy' to understand and 60% of the respondents found the questionnaire to be 'interesting' or 'very interesting'. As a result of these findings it was decided that no changes needed to be made to the length of the questionnaire and although minor modifications regarding questionnaire design are suggested below, there was no need to alter significantly the nature of the research instrument. It is reassuring to note the general interest in the research, particularly as the focus is on sport, a subject which may be of little interest to some participants.

Suggested alterations to individual question design

1. In terms of the questions relating to experience, the relative lack of experience by respondents meant that it was necessary to alter the design of the first two questions. A large proportion of respondents had never visited the three cities and a significant number selected the option indicating that they had visited '1-4 times'. A category of 1-2 times was therefore added to the questionnaire.
2. The question that asked respondents to write down three words that best represent the cities was also amended after the pilot study. Many respondents had left gaps and it was not clear how this non-response should be interpreted. This also occurred with

respect to question 7. Therefore in the final questionnaire, respondents were required to clearly state DK (Don't know) if they could not think of an answer. Respondents were also asked not to leave any blank spaces. This removed the problems caused by the ambiguity of non responses.

3. In the pilot study respondents were much less likely to respond in reference to the city of Sheffield. This may be an indication of the lack of city's lack of an image, but it was felt that it may be a function of the fact that this city was placed last in the list and therefore the non response may have been more to do with respondents running out of motivation/inspiration by the time they considered Sheffield. As a result, in the final questionnaire, the cities were systematically rotated in different questionnaires for all questions, to prevent any bias resulting from the design of the questionnaire.
4. Question 6 was left blank by three respondents. The 17 other responses were filled in perfectly, so it was assumed that in this instance, the failure to complete this question was not due to lack of comprehension, but rather the onerous nature of the task set. Therefore in the final questionnaire, this question and the similarly onerous subsequent question have been shortened slightly by removing one or two factors from the list. It is also proposed that these two questions be separated over two pages, rather than including them on the same page which makes the task appear a little less daunting.

The pilot study was therefore very useful in terms of the development of the research instrument and in confirming that the process through which the questionnaire was to be administered was generally sound. However it was also necessary to pilot the research instrument again, as the research intended to distribute the instrument (with minor modifications) in a completely different manner to gather information from sport spectators.

Piloting the structured questionnaire for sport spectators

Pilot Study Nottingham 17/5/98

The pilot study for the sport tourist sample was carried out in Nottingham on Sunday 17th May 1998 at Trent Bridge Cricket Ground during the AXA League game between Nottinghamshire and Sussex. The aims of this pilot study were:

1. To evaluate the appropriateness of the questionnaire and the distribution technique developed for administration in this type of environment.
2. To evaluate the structure, content and format of the questionnaire and the ease with which the questions could be understood and completed.

Administering the Questionnaire

The questionnaires were distributed for self-completion and were collected about 60 minutes later. A basic sampling method was used involving the selection of the first person on the first row of each segment of the stand. If that person was under 18 the person next to them was chosen. During the day approximately twenty people were approached to participate in the research and seven refused to do so. Six of these stated that they did not want to participate because they couldn't be bothered, while one elderly lady did not have her glasses with her. If a refusal was encountered the researcher moved on to the next segment of the stand. The questionnaires were distributed with attached pen and clipboard. Five clipboards were used in all, so only five questionnaires could be completed at any one time. This obviously increased the amount of time needed to complete the research process. Once the questionnaires were left with the respondent they were given approximately thirty minutes to fill them in before the researcher returned to collect them. The questionnaires were distributed at different times during the day to discover which times would be most suitable for the research to be carried out. From this analysis it was concluded that questionnaires should be distributed only during convenient breaks in the sporting action. It was noted that if more clipboards had been available, even more questionnaires could have been distributed at these times.

However, it was noted that the research was to be undertaken at a variety of sport events not just those involving cricket. A cricket match is an ideal opportunity to distribute questionnaires because of the length of the match, the regular intervals, the ease of access to different parts of the stadia and the relaxed atmosphere. However, despite these significant advantages the pilot study research provided no evidence to suggest that it would not be possible to conduct the research at other sporting occasions, as long as more clipboards were used to enable more questionnaires to be completed simultaneously.

Recommendations and conclusions regarding the administration of the questionnaire

1. The self-completion of questionnaires during sport events is an appropriate and effective means of obtaining information from sport tourists.
2. Questionnaires should be distributed before the start of the event itself and at convenient intervals in the action.
3. Ten rather than five clipboards should be used to increase the chances of completing the research at ideal times.
4. Respondents should be given at least half an hour to complete the questionnaire before they are approached to return it.
5. Fifteen questionnaires per event is a realistic target which can be realistically achieved.

The pilot study also aimed to establish the extent to which the respondents could understand and complete the questionnaires that were distributed. A brief summary is given below of the main observations from this pilot study, including recommendations for changes to be made in the final instrument.

The results from the questionnaire evaluation enquiry, which was included as an appendix to the questionnaire appear to be very promising. According to the majority of the respondents the questionnaire was easy to understand, interesting and about the right length. It was reassuring to note that 11 of 13 respondents found the questionnaire interesting or very interesting and 11 of 13 found the questionnaire to be easy or very easy to understand. Not one of the thirteen respondents found the questionnaire to be either difficult or very difficult to understand.

However, improvements were made which enhanced the final draft of the questionnaire. The suggestions for improvement derived from this particular pilot study are noted below.

Questionnaire design

1. It was noted in the analysis of question 5 that people may use three combined words to sum up their impressions of a city. In the final questionnaire the word 'separate' was added to the question to resolve this problem. The question therefore read, 'For each city listed below, please choose three *separate* words which you think best represent it by writing them in the spaces provided.'
2. It was also noted in the evaluation of question 5 that a potential problem may be the tendency of people to leave boxes blank and thus create a problem over missing data. It is suggested that the instruction to fill in all the boxes should be further emphasised.
3. In question 5 a potential problem was identified that people may be going back to this question after completing the rest of the questionnaire. In the initial instructions for the final questionnaire, respondents are asked to complete the questions in the order they appear in the questionnaire.
4. It was also noted that more DK's were recorded for Sheffield than for any other city in question 5 and concern was expressed as to whether this had anything to do with its position as the last city to consider. Therefore in the final questionnaires, the cities were placed in different sequences in different questionnaires, thus negating the problem.
5. It was noted in the analysis of the pilot data that one respondent had failed to complete page 3 despite successfully attempting the rest of the questionnaire. It was felt that this page of the questionnaire was too cluttered which discouraged participants from responding. Questionnaire design theory (Robson 1993) states the overcrowding of self completion questionnaire pages should be avoided. Therefore in the final questionnaire these questions were separated onto different pages.

6. In the pilot analysis one respondent stated their occupation as retired, despite instructions that they should state their previous employment. Therefore these instructions on the final questionnaire were communicated with greater clarity and more forcefully.

These are minor changes to what proved to be a successful research instrument in the field. These changes plus other indicators from the more general pilot study ensured that the questionnaire was an effective, comprehensive and user-friendly research instrument when used to elicit responses from sport tourists in the research proper.

Piloting the semi-structured interviews

The Pilot Study

The pilot study for this part of the research was carried out in Darlington, in the electoral ward of College (for justification of this site please see appendix f). Four interviews were conducted with the aim of trialling the interview schedule and to ascertain whether people would participate in such an exercise. Several observations were made during this piloting exercise.

1. It was more difficult to persuade target respondents to participate in this exercise than the self-complete questionnaire. The interviews required the researcher to enter someone's house and this was not always welcomed.
2. The interviews were a lot shorter than anticipated. The interviewees seemed to have little knowledge of the three cities and this foreshortened the exercise. It was difficult to get people to talk about very vague impressions, as they felt a little embarrassed about their perceived ignorance.
3. Due to the apparent reticence of respondents to talk about cities about which they knew very little, some interviews have more in common with structured interviews than semi-structured interviews. This may have been partly the inexperience of the researcher, but respondents appeared to be unwilling or unable to detail at length their images and thought about the cities under consideration. Questions were therefore answered, but the interview was more of a question and answer session than the more discursive style that the researcher sought.

The selection of sample sites

An explicit objective of this research was to examine the images of people who had not necessarily been to the case study cities, and who lived in areas of the country where a short break to the cities was a realistic option. This meant choosing sites a significant distance from the cities as those living nearby to one of the cities would presumably be unlikely to stay in a city which was easily accessible. However, the sites chosen had not to be too far away so as to make a short break unlikely. Therefore circular 'exclusion zones' of a standardised distance were created around each of the three cities inside which, and beyond which, sample sites would not be chosen. The sample sites were identified on the edges of where these circular exclusion zones met. These sites were at an optimum distance from the case study cities according to statistics available for the typical distances travelled by short break tourists.

A standardised distance was set outside all three cities that would identify locations near to the typical distance travelled by short break tourists. Research published by the ETB reveals that a significant proportion of short break tourists (75%) travel between 76 and 200 miles to their short break destination (ETB Lets Go c.f Bailey 1989 see Table I). The average distance travelled by short break tourists according to this piece of research is 129 miles, with 80% travelling less than 200 miles (ETB Lets Go c.f Bailey 1989 see Table I). The largest proportion of visits (22%) are between 76 and 100 miles (ETB Lets Go c.f Bailey 1989 see Table I). The statistics are backed up by research which suggests that the market for short breaks come from within 150 miles and 1.5 hours travelling time (Warner Holidays c.f. Beioley 1991). Therefore, ideally it was preferable to include locations which were 76-200 miles for all three of the cities in our study. By setting the standardised exclusion zone radius at 76 miles, it meant that the sample sites selected were at least 76 miles from the nearest city, but that the cities further afield were no more than 200 miles away. The exact sites were chosen where the circumferences of these exclusions zones met (see fig 4.5.1). The most common distance travelled is 76-100 miles and because each sample site is 76 miles from *two* of the three cities, this means that people residing at this location are the optimum distance from two thirds of the cities in the research in terms of short break travel, while still within a distance from the third city that corresponds to a distance commonly travelled by short break tourists. Though the third city from each sample site is obviously further away, the setting of the exclusion radius at

76 miles means that it cannot be more than 200 miles away which makes that city still very accessible to them at least in relation to the statistics for short break holidays (see table I below).

Distance travelled to domestic short break destinations	
Miles	Percent
0-50	7
51-75	11
76-100	22
101-125	12
126-150	12
151-200	16
201-250	10
250+	5
Average distance travelled 129 miles	

Table I Distances travelled from home to short break stay of 1-3 nights (miles) Lets Go Research (1986 c.f. Bailey 1989)

There was, however, one problem with this technique. The conjunction point of the circular exclusion zones set for Birmingham and Manchester falls in a remote part of the Welsh countryside. It was felt that a multi-national dimension may distort the findings somewhat and it would be better if the research was kept within the confines of one specific country (England). It was therefore decided that a point near to the actual zonal conjunction point which was in England should be chosen. This meant an area near Bristol. The advantage of this location was that it provided a useful urban centre which could be compared to the other points of conjunction, which were in rural and less urbanised locations. The conjunction points identified were therefore; a point just outside Bristol, one just outside Darlington and a point in the Fenland district, east of Peterborough.

The creation of exclusion zones therefore generated the three locations in England outlined above. The next stage of the sampling process was to identify the electoral districts in which these three locations were situated - the Fenland district in Cambridgeshire, the Darlington district in Durham, and the Bristol district located in Avon. Once these districts had been identified, specific wards were selected that could be rigorously sampled to identify individuals who would participate in the study.

Selecting the wards

The overriding aim in selecting wards was to provide a representative sample, and therefore it was important to analyse people from areas which had differing socio-economic characteristics. Not only would this add to the legitimacy of the findings, but it would also make obtaining a representative sample more straightforward. Members of certain socio-economic groups were needed to fill quotas and the process of obtaining such participants would be made more efficient if it were known that a certain area had a larger than average proportion of these groups. Therefore, rather than selecting the wards closest to the points identified by the creation of the exclusion zones, all the wards within the selected electoral district were considered, with specific wards being selected using a standardised and rigorous sampling technique. This technique is identified below.

Using the latest Census information, the breakdown of socio-economic groups for each of the electoral wards in the three electoral districts was obtained. Three wards were to be chosen from each district, as this allowed a variety of different areas to be analysed while providing a feasible number in terms of moving between them to collect data and information. A system was then formulated which allowed three wards to be chosen which were sufficiently different in their socio-economic characteristics and which would allow the collection of a sample of people who were representative of the nation as a whole in terms of their social class. This involved analysing the socio-economic characteristics of each of the wards in each of the electoral districts. The nature of this process is detailed below.

First, the number of households in each socio-economic category was calculated. The basis for this calculation was the English Local Area statistics regarding social class (Census 1991 see table II). This classification system is based on the occupation of the

head of the household and is derived from a 10% sample of the English population. The Census data divides the population according to socio-economic status using the following classifications:

Class	Description
1	Professional
2	Managerial
3 (N)	Skilled Non manual workers
3(NM)	Skilled manual workers
4	Partly skilled workers
5	Unskilled workers
Unclassed	Armed Forces
Unclassed	On a Government Training Scheme
Unclassed	Occupation Inadequately described
Unclassed	Retired
Unclassed	Other inactive

Table II *The socio-economic classifications employed by the present study*

The categories of ‘armed forces’, ‘on a government training scheme’ and ‘occupation inadequately described’ are difficult to deal with as they are not prescribed a social class within the census data. These groups over-complicate the categories and only make up a minute proportion of the national statistics. The failure of the census data to distinguish between the social class of the retired and other economically inactive groups also makes it difficult to adjudge the socio-economic characteristics of particular areas. Therefore, to avoid confusion, groups that were not given a social classification, either because they had been retired for over ten years, or had not had a job for ten years were not used to select electoral wards. This left the six most commonly used social classifications, often referred to as A, B, C1, C2, D and E. To simplify these categories further and to enable the selection of three specific wards with different characteristics these categories were amalgamated to produce three categories a) Professionals and managerial workers, b) Skilled manual and non-manual workers and c) Partly skilled and unskilled workers.

Social class, within the Census research instrument is based upon the occupation of the head of the household, and therefore rather than calculating the numbers of people who were of a specific social class, the number of households within each classification was used. Therefore, the number of households who fitted into each of these categories was calculated for each electoral ward in the three chosen electoral districts. For each ward, the proportion of households in each of the three groups was calculated against the total number of households in the ward who had been given a designated social class by the 1991 Census. These figures were expressed as percentages of the total number of households which had been prescribed a social class. These percentages were then compared to the percentages for each social classification for the whole of the English population. Again the percentages for England as a whole were calculated by dividing the number of households in each social class group (a, b or c) by the total number of households which were prescribed a social class by the 1991 census. These key percentages for the nation as the whole were then allocated an index of 100 enabling them to be compared to those for the individual wards. The aim was to select three wards which had a larger proportion than the average (index = 100) of each social group (a, b and c). Ideally wards with extreme concentrations of a particular social class were not wanted, but rather those which included a significantly higher allocation of the different social groups than the national average. After considering the different permutations it was decided that the ward would be chosen that was nearest to having 1.25 times the proportion of one of the different socio-economic groups. This figure of 1.25 was decided upon by analysing the different concentrations of each social classification in all the wards in the three electoral districts. The 1.25 figure meant that those wards which possessed a high concentration of certain classifications were selected, but these wards were not necessarily those which had the highest concentrations. However, despite not resulting in the selection of the most extreme examples, the utilisation of the figure 1.25 times the percentage of the total classified households meant that the areas selected did have a significantly different socio-economic profile to the national picture. Therefore for each electoral district a ward was chosen which had the closest index to 1.25 for each of the three specified social groups. This resulted in the selection of three wards which had 1.25 times larger proportions of one of the social classifications than the national average. This process is illustrated below using the example of the electoral district of Bristol (see tables III and IV), from which three wards were chosen due to the fact that they had concentrations of

approximately 1.25 times the normal proportion of households of social classification a, b or c.

England	Households	Percent of Total Classified	1.25X
Group 1	4317790	39	49.29
Group 2	4578390	42	52.26
Group 3	205384	19	23.45

Table III *The proportion of the English population in each of the designated categories*

Bristol	Households	Percent of Total Classified	1.25X England statistics
Group 1(Ashley)	1210	45.66	49.29
Group 2(St.George East)	1500	51.90	52.26
Group 3(Brislington East)	640	23.79	23.45

Table IV *The Bristolian wards selected because of their similarities to the proportions noted in table III*

As can be seen from tables III and IV, three wards were chosen in the Bristol district because they contained approximately 1.25 times the proportion of a certain social classification. Ashley was chosen because it was the ward that had as near to 1.25 times the number of professionals and managers as the national average, St. George East was chosen because it was the ward which was nearest to having 1.25 times the number of skilled workers and Brislington East was chosen because it was the ward which was nearest to having 1.25 the national average of partly skilled and unskilled workers. These three wards were therefore chosen as areas from which individual respondents could be selected. This process was repeated with regard to the electoral districts of Fenland and Darlington.

After the selection process outlined above was completed, nine electoral wards in three different electoral districts had been selected. These are listed in table V below

	Ward	District
1	Ashley	Bristol
2	St George East	Bristol
3	Brislington East	Bristol
4	Harrowgate Hill	Darlington
5	Lingfield	Darlington
6	Middleton St George	Darlington
7	Chatteris South	Fenland
8	Whittlesey Bassenhally	Fenland
9	Whittlesey East	Fenland

Table V *The wards from which respondents and participants were selected*

Selecting individual participants within each ward

To generate individual participants for the research, electoral registers were obtained for the wards listed. Initially, for the purposes of this research, twenty people were selected for each ward to complete the structured questionnaire and six from each ward to respond to a semi-structured interview schedule. The size of the sample has been restricted by time and resources and by the fact that the aim is to generate representative sample. The use of quotas meant that it was difficult in the time available at the sample sites to produce a sample that was not only representative, but very large. After considering the sample sizes of previous research (see above) and the experiences while piloting the research (see above) a decision was made that the aim would be to generate representative sample of 180 respondents from the nine wards. The size of the sample was not considered to be as important as gaining a sample that was representative of the English population. As May (1997:86) asserts, 'A large, poor quality sample, which does not reflect the population characteristics, will be less accurate than a smaller one that does'.

It is important to outline how the twenty respondents to the structured questionnaire and the six interviewees were selected. Every n th respondent was selected from the electoral register for the ward under consideration. The value n was determined by dividing the number of registered electors by 20 (for the structured questionnaire) and 6 (for the semi-structured interviews). This method allowed respondents to be chosen in different locations and different housing types around the electoral ward. This is because electoral registers are usually arranged alphabetically by street name. Selecting every n th respondent when n is related to the number of people in the ward means that a good spread of people from different streets in the area can be obtained. Of course this did not mean that these chosen people would necessarily form the final sample, but the intention was that these people were the ones that the researcher would approach initially.

Due to absence, refusal to participate and the required formation of a representative sample, all of these respondents targeted did not all participate in the research. To cope with the anticipated problems caused by absences and refusals, substitutes were identified. These substitutes were selected by picking the next person on the electoral register after the intended respondent, who did not live at the same address. This rule was applied because it was felt that if the intended respondent was unwilling or unable to take part in the

research because of absence or refusal, it was likely that other members of that household would also have a high chance of being unavailable or unwilling to participate. In an instance of absence the substitute was only employed after four visits had failed to contact the intended respondent. However, if a refusal was encountered, the researcher immediately employed the substitute respondent. If the substitute was unwilling/unable to take part in the research then the same procedure was followed in picking another substitute from the register.

In this way questionnaire respondents and interviewees were approached and asked to participate in the research. Successful responses were analysed to reveal the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. These were then compared to the quotas that had been designed to reflect the national picture. These quotas were based on age, gender and social class. The aim was to generate a set of participants who matched the English population according to the 1991 Census data.

The aim was to generate a sample of 60 respondents from each electoral district which matched the characteristics of the adult English populations as closely as possible. This was ultimately achieved by quota sampling - asking households about their occupation/age/gender composition before they were asked to participate in the research. Once one particular category had been filled no further respondents were accepted who exhibited characteristics matched by the full quotas - even if they originally were a target respondent of the research. Any categories of age/gender/social classification which remained unfilled after the initial procedure involving electoral registers were then addressed. This was achieved by returning to the field where households were approached at random to try and find respondents who fitted the characteristics needed to fill the designated quotas. Obviously if certain numbers of people from certain social classification were needed to fill up the quotas, it was most appropriate to return to the ward which had the largest concentration of that particular social class.

The selection of sport spectators

Five events were selected, at which a total of 75 (5x15) questionnaires were distributed. The aim was to gather information from potential sport tourists who were visiting sport events that could alternatively be experienced in the cities of Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield. Sport events were therefore chosen because comparable events were also staged in at least two of the case study cities. The location of the events was also an important consideration. Three of the sites chosen were in towns near to the sample sites which generated the representative sample. Two others were selected as the research wanted to address a number of sports, some of which were not offered in these locations. It was therefore decided that sample sites should be choosing major sport venues which were located outside the 'exclusion zones' created for the previous research. This left few options except from Newcastle and London and so these sites were also included in the sample. The advantages of the chosen locations are that two of the sports used in the research (basketball and football) are available in all three cities, while the other three (ice hockey, cricket and athletics) are available in two of the three cities. As can be seen from table VI below this produces an unbiased sample because in each of the case study cities, four of the five sports included in the research are important sport tourism products.

Sport	Location	Birmingham	Manchester	Sheffield
Basketball	Newcastle	✓	✓	✓
Cricket	London	✓	✓	
Football	Bristol	✓	✓	✓
Ice Hockey	Peterborough		✓	✓
Athletics	Gateshead	✓		✓

Table VI *The different sports used to generate the sport spectator sample and their provision in Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield*

The sampling process concerning the group of sport spectators was more straightforward, as there was no specific intention to generate a representative sample. For each different event, once the layout of the stadia had been ascertained, a systematic sampling procedure was undertaken. This usually involved asking the first person on the first row of each section of each stand who was sitting next to the aisle. This has the advantage of

preventing the disturbance of other spectators. However, it should be noted that many refusals were experienced, mainly because people understandably wanted to concentrate on the sporting event they has paid to come and see.

Distr	No.	Gender	Age	Occup	Address	Ward
Bristol	1.	M	3	4	Speedwell Rd,	Brislington
	2.	M	1	2	West Town Lane.	Brislington
	3.	F	3	7	The Rock	Brislington
	4.	M	1	5	Eastwood	Brislington
	5.	M	3	2	First Avenue,	Brislington
	6.	F	4	7	Regency Drive	Brislington
	7.	F	2	3	Wick Rd,	Brislington
	8.	M	4	7	Kingsway,	St G East
	9.	M	4	7	Fuber Vale	St G East
	10.	M	3	7	Kingsway	St G East
	11.	F	1	6	The gables Lodge Rd	St G East
	12.	F	2	4	Firtree Lane,	St G East
	13.	F	1	8	Victoria Park	St G East
	14.	F	3	2	Maurice Rd	Ashley
	15.	F	2	3	St Andrew's Rd, Montpellier	Ashley
	16.	M	2	1	Chesterfield Rd,	Ashley
	17.	M	2	8	Richmond Rd, Montpellier,	Ashley
	18.	F	2	4	Walsingham Rd	Ashley
Fenland	19.	M	2	3	Drybread Road	Whittlesea
	20.	M	1	4	Pinewood Avenue,	Whittlesea
	21.	M	2	2	Commons Rd,	Whittlesea
	22.	F	2	3	Stonald Rd,	Whittlesea
	23.	F	2	4	Bassenhally Rd	Whittlesea
	24.	M	3	2	Headland's Way,	Whittlesea
	25.	M	4	7	Springfields,	Coates
	26.	F	2	3	Coates Rd	Coates
	27.	F	2	4	Mayfield Rd	Coates
	28.	M	4	7	Grounds Way,	Coates
	29.	F	1	8	North Green,	Coates
	30.	F	3	7	Eastwood	Coates
	31.	M	3	7	London Rd,	Chatteris
	32.	F	3	6	Wenny Estate, ,	Chatteris
	33.	F	1	5	Victoria Street,	Chatteris
	34.	M	3	1	Wood Street,	Chatteris
	35.	F	4	7	Eastbourne Rd	Chatteris
	36.	F	1	8	Tithe Rd	Chatteris
Darlington	37.	M	3	4	Middleham Rd,	Harrowgate Hill
	38.	F	2	4	Princess Rd,	Harrowgate Hill,
	39.	F	4	7	Longfield Rd,	Harrowgate Hill,
	40.	F	4	7	Bowman Rd,	Harrowgate Hill
	41.	M	1	8	Washbrook Drive,	Harrowgate Hill
	42.	M	1	2	Verity Rise,	Harrowgate Hill
	43.	F	2	3	Coatham Crescent	Harrowgate Hill
	44.	M	1	8	Middleton Row	MSG
	45.	F	3	1	The Front,	MSG
	46.	F	2	5	Harlow's Toe	MSG
	47.	F	3	4	Archer Rd	MSG
	48.	M	2	2	The Front,	MSG
	49.	M	1	3	Station Rd, Dinsdale	MSG
	50.	M	3	7	The Paddock	MSG
	51.	F	3	7	The Mead	Lingfield
	52.	M	2	2	The Broadway	Lingfield
	53.	M	4	7	Hundens Lane	Lingfield
	54.	F	2	6	Lingfield Close	Lingfield

Table VII The details of the semi-structured interviewees

Methodological rules of the research administration

Structured questionnaires (to be completed in each of the three zones)

- Every nth person on the electoral register will be selected, until sixty respondents have been chosen.
- These people will be approached to answer the questionnaire.
- If they refuse to participate, their reserve will be approached instead.
- Reserves will be selected as the next person on the electoral register who does not live at the same address, second and third reserves will also be identified.
- If no-one in the household is in, the researcher will try again on three more occasions and if there is still no answer the researcher will revert to the reserve participant.
- If the named person is not in but other members of the household are, the researcher will ask when the respondent will be returning. If it is the same day, the questionnaire will be left with the respondent, with strict instructions that only the named person should fill it in and that the researcher will be returning at a specified time to return the questionnaire. If the respondent will not be returning to the household until a later date, the researcher will move on to a reserve participant.
- For each questionnaire distributed the researcher will return as many times as is feasibly possible in order to retrieve it.
- Once the questionnaire has been distributed, the researcher will only replace a respondent with a reserve if the participant makes it clear that they no longer intend to participate in the research.

- The aim is to gather questionnaires which form a representative sample of Englands' population as a whole. Quotas have been formulated, with specific numbers of each socio-economic class, age group and gender to be obtained. Once quotas have been filled, no other questionnaires exhibiting those characteristics will be included in the sample. As the socio-economic quotas will not be met by the initial research procedures, the researcher will return into the field and aim to fill the relevant quotas by asking members of random households in the same ED who have not already been approached whether they fit the socio-economic criteria need to meet the quotas. If they do then they will be asked to participate in the research. If they don't the questionnaire will not be handed to them. There is no specific requirement to gain an equal distribution of participants in each ward, but there is a requirement to gain the equal amount of participants in each of the three electoral districts.

B) Semi-structured interviews (to be completed in each of the three zones)

- Every nth household picked from the electoral list to participate in the structured research (as above), instead of being asked to complete the questionnaire survey, will be asked if they are prepared to be interviewed on their impressions of different British cities.
- If the answer is positive, and the potential participant is required to fill relevant quotas, the interview will be conducted.
- If the answer is negative, the researcher will turn to the first reserve.
- If there is no answer at all, the procedure for no answer will be followed as above.
- If someone is at home, but not the named person, the householders will be asked when the named person is likely to be at home. If it is within the next 24 hours then the researcher will return to approach the respondent at this time. If the

named respondent is still not there, two more attempts will be made to approach them. If this is unsuccessful the researcher will move on to the reserve.

- The same quota sample system will be utilised as above, with the socio-economic characteristics of characteristics being ascertained before interview if some quotas are already full, or afterwards, if all quota categories still remain unfilled. There is no specific requirement to gain an equal distribution of participants in each ward, but there is a requirement to gain the equal amount of participants in each of the three electoral districts.

C) The sport sample (to be completed at five different sport events)

- The context of the research in terms of it being conducted at a live event, means that this will be a much more crude sampling frame. Each environment to be sampled will be different, but the aim is to approach the first person in each block of seats, or along an aisle or a walkway and then every nth person along that aisle or walkway until fifteen questionnaires have been distributed. Should target participants subsequently fail to complete the questionnaire, substitutes will be sought. This rudimentary process should provide a sample of the typical sport tourists present at those events.

The information required by the structured questionnaire

Information ascertained	Why this information was required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of the cities • Whether people would like to visit the three cities • Perceptions of improvements over the past ten years • Basic holistic images and associations • Importance of certain aspects of a city in decision to visit • Attribute-based images of cities based on provision of certain key urban tourism products • Links between cities and sport • Prompted awareness of different components of sport-led reimagining strategies • Links between sporting associations and propensity to visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed key variable in the image formation process • To establish the conative image of the city held by potential tourists • To establish the extent of image change over the past ten years - this can then be linked with awareness of sport-led reimagining strategies developed over the same period of time. • To support qualitative techniques used to elicit holistic images and to provide metonymic evidence • To establish importance of attribute-based images in terms of actual tourist behaviour and to allow market segments to be analysed to establish whether sport-led reimagining can be promoted alongside other reimagining strategies or whether it appeals to a specific market segment. • To evaluate the extent to which cities are perceived as sporting cities • To evaluate the extent to which cities are perceived as sporting cities • To evaluate the extent to which participants are aware of initiatives • To investigate if a direct links exists between sport-led strategies and urban tourism

Table VIII Justifications for the content of the structured questionnaire

The information required by the semi-structured interviews

Information ascertained	Why this information was needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfettered impressions, ideas and feelings about the three cities • Cognitive image component (the identification of known attributes of the city) • Evaluative image component (the likeability of the city) • Conative image component (the image that relates to and affects behaviour) • Visual image component (mental pictures of a place) • Perception of image change • Evaluation of sporting image of the city • Investigation into meanings and connotations generated by sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To evaluate extent to which sport is used as an iconic component of holistic images • To evaluate extent to which sport is used as an iconic component of holistic images • To evaluate extent to which sport is used as an iconic component of holistic images • To contextualise the importance of effects images • To evaluate extent to which sport is used as an iconic component of holistic images • To substantiate the degree to which sport initiatives have influenced holistic images • Used to supplement attribute-based investigations • Used to evaluate the symbolic effects of sport-related imaging

Table IX Justifications for the content of the semi-structured interview schedule

Dear

Research on opinions of British cities.

A programme of research is being carried out to establish people's opinions of selected British cities. This research will help these cities in their work to ensure that they become more attractive places to live, work in, and to visit.

Enclosed is a short questionnaire for you to complete which asks a number of questions about your opinions of three British cities. Even if you have never visited the cities which are mentioned or do not know them very well, your impressions of them are still of considerable value for the research.

All replies will be dealt with confidentially. I will come round to collect your completed questionnaire, but if I miss you then please, leave it outside your front door and it will be collected without disturbing you.

Your contribution to this research is greatly appreciated.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Smith, Researcher

Dr Bill Bramwell, Supervisor

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently studying for a PhD at Sheffield Hallam University/Sheffield University which concerns the use of sport as a means of city image enhancement. As part of this research project I need sport spectators to answer a short questionnaire asking them about their impressions of different cities as places to visit and as sporting venues. I am therefore writing to you to ask permission to undertake questionnaires aton the day of the..... I would be really grateful for your co-operation. Please let me know if there are any problems with this, or if you require any further information regarding the research.

Yours Sincerely

Andrew Smith (research student)

Research Into Opinions About British Cities

I came round to collect your completed questionnaire but you weren't in. However, I will be coming around again tomorrow evening at to try again. Thank you very much for your help with this research project.

Andrew Smith (Research student)

The characteristics of the representative sample

Gender

	Characteristics of the English adult population			No. of participants included in the sample		
Gender	Total (10%)	%	Prop of 60	Bristol	Darlington	Fenland
Males	17376214	47.68	28.61 (29)	29	29	29
Females	19066056	52.32	31.39 (31)	31	31	31
		100	60	60	60	60

Table X The gender characteristics of the respondents to the structured questionnaire as compared to the characteristics of the English adult population.

Age

	Characteristics of the English adult population			No. of participants included in the sample		
Age	Total (10%)	%	Prop of 60	Bristol	Darlington	Fenland
18-29	8592747	23.98	14.39 (14)	14	14	14
30-49	12314549	34.36	20.62 (21)	21	21	21
50-69	9714854	27.10	16.26 (16)	16	16	16
70+	5220120	14.56	8.74 (9)	9	9	9
		100	60	60	60	60

Table XI The age characteristics of the respondents to the structured questionnaire as compared to the characteristics of the English adult population

Socio-economic characteristics

Occupation	Characteristics of the English adult population			No. of participants included in the sample		
	Total (10%)	%	Prop of 60	Bristol	Darlington	Fenland
Professionals	77387	4.33	2.60 (3)	3	3	3
Managers	354392	19.84	11.90 (12)	13	12	12
Skilled NM	155981	8.73	5.24 (5)	5	5	5
Skilled M	301858	16.89	10.13 (10)	10	13	10
Part -Skilled	153712	8.60	5.16 (5)	6	5	5
Unskilled	51672	2.89	1.73 (2)	2	2	3
Retired	477166	26.71	16.03 (16)	15	14	16
Inactive	214509	12.01	7.21 (7)	6	6	6
		100	60	60	60	60

Table XII *The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents to the structured questionnaire as compared to the characteristics of the English adult population*

The characteristics of the sport spectator sample

GENDER	Frequency	Percent
Male	56	74.7
Female	19	25.3
Total	75	100.0

Table XIII *The gender characteristics of the sport spectators who completed the semi-structured questionnaire*

AGE	Frequency	Percent
18-29	20	26.7
30-49	36	48.0
50-69	15	20.0
70+	4	5.3
Total	75	100

Table XIV *The age characteristics of the sport spectators who completed the semi-structured questionnaire*

OCCUPATION	Frequency	Percent
Professionals	6	8.0
Managers	33	44.0
Skilled (NM)	11	14.7
Skilled (M)	9	12.0
Partly Skilled	4	5.3
Unskilled	7	9.3
Retired	5	6.7
Other Inactive	0	0
Total	75	100.0

Table XV *The socio-economic characteristics of the sport spectators who completed the semi-structured questionnaire*

The characteristics of the semi-structured interviewees

	Characteristics of the English adult population			No. of participants included in the sample		
Gender	Total	%	Prop of 18	Bristol	Darlington	Fenland
Males	17376214	47.68	8.58	9	9	8
Females	19066056	52.32	9.42	9	9	10

Table XVI *The gender characteristics of semi-structured interview participants compared to the characteristics of the English adult population.*

	Characteristics of the English adult population			No. of participants included in the sample		
Age	Total (10%)	%	Prop of 18	Bristol	Darlington	Fenland
18-29	8592747	23.98	4.3164 (4)	4	4	4
30-49	12314549	34.36	6.1848 (6)	6	6	6
50-69	9714854	27.10	4.878 (5)	5	5	5
70+	5220120	14.56	2.6208 (3)	3	3	3

Table XVII *The age characteristics of semi-structured interview participants compared to the characteristics of the English adult population*

	Characteristics of the English adult population			No. of participants included in the sample		
Occupation	Total (10%)	%	Prop of 18	Bristol	Darl	Fenland
Professionals	77387	4.33	0.78 (1)	1	1	1
Managers	354392	19.84	3.57 (3)	3	3	2
Skilled NM	155981	8.73	1.57 (2)	2	2	3
Skilled M	301858	16.89	3.04 (3)	3	3	3
Part Skilled	153712	8.60	1.55 (1)	1	1	1
Unskilled	51672	2.89	0.52 (1)	1	1	1
Retired	477166	26.71	4.80 (5)	5	5	5
Inactive	214509	12.01	2.16 (2)	2	2	2

Table XVIII *The socio-economic characteristics of semi-structured interview participants compared to the characteristics of the English adult population*

The sport events chosen for the study

Sport	Location	Event	Date
Basketball	Newcastle	Newcastle Eagles vs London Towers	12th September 1998
Cricket	London	Surrey vs Leicestershire	18th September 1998
Football	Bristol	Bristol Rovers vs Bolton Wanderers	24th October 1998
Ice Hockey	Peterborough	Peterborough Pirates vs Fife Flyers	22nd November 1998
Athletics	Gateshead	Athletics Grand Prix	9th July 1998

Table XIX *The sport events used to generate the sample of sport spectators*

The following questions were used to ascertain whether a potential respondent should participate in the research i.e. whether they were needed to fill relevant quotas.

Male ☐ Female ☐

Questions

Which of these age groups do you fit into [show card]?

18-29 ☐ 30-49 ☐ 50-69 ☐ 70 and over ☐

Has the head of the household been in paid employment over the past ten years?

Yes ☐ Go to Question A below

No ☐ Go to Question B below

A) Please tell me the most recent occupation of the head of the household.

.....

B) Is the head of the household retired?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Eastlands and Manchester's Sportcity

Through the construction of the Victoria Arena, the Olympic bids have had a physical impact on Manchester's City Centre. However, the bids have also resulted in the redevelopment of a section of East Manchester. MCC in their publication, 'Manchester - Making it Happen' state that;

As a direct result of Manchester's Olympic Bid, the strong partnership formed between the City Council, Central Government and the private sector has resulted in massive urban regeneration of this former wasteland.

MCC 1996

This 'former wasteland' comprises 150 acres of land that has remained derelict for ten years, following the closure of a gasworks, steel and wire factory, engineering plant and a colliery. The city council and its development partners, AMEC Plc, have recently announced that this land will house what they have termed 'Sportcity'. Using funds from the New Deal for Communities' project and the SRB, the Council aims to regenerate this part of East Manchester. Sportcity will consist of a 45,000-seat stadium, plus a Sports Institute, dedicated to nurturing sporting talent throughout the north-west. This institute will include the only part of Sportcity operating at the time of the fieldwork for this study - The National Cycling Centre - as well as the facilities listed below. Sportcity will constitute a £103 million investment in new sport facilities, which the City Council envisages will 'establish Sportcity at Eastlands as a world class sporting and entertainment destination' (Manchester City Council 1999).

Sportcity Sports Institute
Indoor Athletics Sprint track and field event facilities
Multi-purpose sports hall
Floodlit all weather athletics track
Squash Courts (6)
Tennis Centre (8 indoor courts and 6 outdoor courts)
Health and fitness centre
Sport science and coaching facilities

Table XX The proposed elements of the SportCity Sport Institute

The centrepiece of Sportcity will be the Millennium Stadium. This large development is being constructed to accommodate the athletics events at the 2002 Commonwealth Games (see below). It will be adapted for football purposes after the Games have finished, providing a new home for Manchester City Football Club. The stadium will cost £90 million, of which £77 million will come from National Lottery funding, with the remaining £13 million provided by the City Council and MCFC (Shaw WSC 1999:30/1). Initially the intention was to develop a stadium with a seating capacity of 80,000 (CG Bid document 10/95). However, a number of factors, including the recent announcement that Wembley will host the new National Stadium have resulted in the reduction of this proposed capacity. The Millennium Stadium will therefore accommodate 48,000 spectators (Shaw WSC 1999:30).

There is evidence that Manchester expects the Sportcity projects to have an important effect on Manchester's attribute-based and holistic image. For example, Manchester 2002 Ltd (1999) believe that 'The visionary plans for Sportcity will ensure that the sports complex will earn an international reputation which is second to none.' This is an example of the city attempting to manufacture deliberately an image of the city as an important sporting destination. Indeed, the City Council state explicitly that they want to 'establish Sportcity at Eastlands as a world class sporting and entertainment destination.' Therefore alongside their contribution to physical regeneration, Manchester has adopted

these sporting initiatives as a means of changing the way in which people think about the city.

The Commonwealth Games

Alongside the Sportcity initiatives already outlined, the Games will utilise the recently developed Arena and the Greater Manchester Exhibition and Event Centre (G-Mex). However, work is underway on the construction of what will be the first major new sport facility built explicitly for the Commonwealth Games, the Manchester Swimming Complex. The complex is being built by a partnership comprising Manchester City Council, The University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and UMIST. This major new sport facility will cost £32.2 million, with a large proportion of this money coming from Sport England (£21.9 million). MCC and the three Universities will provide the balance (Manchester 2002 Ltd 1998). The plans include a 50m eight lane pool, a 50m four lane training pool, a diving pool with platforms and springboards and a leisure pool (Manchester 2002 Ltd 1998).

In all the total cost of the facilities required for the 2002 Commonwealth Games is estimated at £135 million, including the cost of the Millennium stadium and the Swimming Pool Complex (Manchester 2002 Ltd 1999). This is in addition to the estimated £56 million expenditure required to stage the Games and the investment in new sport facilities at Sportcity¹. This expenditure is in addition to the cost of the strategies that have already been implemented. Therefore Manchester has devoted considerable resources to developing new sport initiatives in the city. However, in the present study it is only possible to analyse the effects of facilities that have been constructed and initiatives that have been adopted by summer 1998. Therefore the intention is to look at the effects of Manchester's successful bid, rather than the effects of the Games itself. The formal bidding process is over, so it should be possible to analyse the influence exerted by the forthcoming Games on Manchester's image.

¹ The Sportcity document produced by MCC (Undated) estimates these will cost £103million, though it is unclear whether this figure included the stadium and NCC projects.

Manchester's bid for the Olympics

from:

http://baetzler.de/humor/manchester_olympics.html

Author unknown

In an attempt to influence the members of the international Olympic committee on their choice of venue for the games in the year 2004, the organizers of Manchester's bid have already drawn up an itinerary and schedule of events. A copy has been leaked and is reproduced below.

Opening Ceremony

The Olympic flame will be ignited by a petrol bomb thrown by a native of the city (preferably from the Moss side area), wearing the traditional balaclava. The flame will be contained in a large chip van situated on the roof of the stadium.

The Events

In previous Olympic games, Manchester's competitors have not been particularly successful. In order to redress the balance, some of the events have been altered slightly to the advantage of local 'Manchester' athletes.

100 Metres Sprint

Competitors will have to hold a video recorder and microwave oven (one in each arm) and on the sound of the starting pistol, a police dog will be released from a cage 10 yards behind the athletes.

100 Metres Hurdles

As above but with added obstacles (i.e. car bonnets, hedges, gardens, fences walls etc.)

Hammer

Competitors in this event may choose the type of hammer they wish to use (claw, sledge etc) the winner will be the one who can cause the most grievous bodily harm to members of the public within the time allowed.

Fencing

Entrants will be asked to dispose of as much stolen silver and jewelry as possible in 5 minutes.

Shooting

A strong challenge is expected from the local men in this event. The first target will be a moving police van. In the second round, competitors will aim at a post office clerk bank teller or Securicor-style wages delivery man.

Boxing

Entry to the boxing will be restricted to husband and wife teams, and will take place on a Friday night. The husband will be given 15 pints of lager while the wife will be told not to make him any tea when he gets home. The bout will then commence.

Cycling Time Trials

Competitors will be asked to break into the University bike shed and take an expensive mountain bike owned by some mummy's boy from the country on his first trip away from home. All against the clock.

Cycling Pursuit

As above but the bike will be owned by a visiting member of the Australian rugby team, who will witness the theft.

Modern Pentathlon

Amended to include mugging, breaking and entering, flashing, joy riding and arson.

The Marathon

A safe route has yet to be decided, but the competitors will be issued with sharp sticks and bags with which to pick up litter on their way round the course.

Swimming

Competitors will be thrown off the bridge over the Manchester Ship Canal. The first three survivors back, will decide the medals

Mens 50km Walk

Unfortunately this will have to be cancelled as the police cannot guarantee the safety of anyone walking the streets of Manchester.

The Closing Ceremony

Entertainment will include formation rave dancing by members of the Coronation Street Health in the Community anti-drug campaigners, synchronized rock throwing and music by the Manchester Community Choir.

The Olympic flame will be extinguished by someone dropping an old washing machine onto it from the top floor of the block of flats next to the stadium. The stadium will be then boarded up before the local athletes break into it and remove all the copper piping and the central heating boiler

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