Jason O'Donnell

SPORT AS A CHANNEL FOR CULTURAL IDENTITY: AN EXAMINATION OF AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- A CASE STUDY OF THE GAELIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (GAA) IN IRELAND FROM THE MID 19th CENTURY TO THE MODERN ERA

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Department of Sport Sciences/Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences

JASON O'DONNELL: Sport as a channel for cultural identity: An examination of amateur and professional activities.

 – A case study of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) in Ireland from the mid 19th century to the modern era.

Master's Thesis, 69 pages

Social Sciences of Sport

Spring 2011

ABSTRACT

Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) sports are under the threat of global and more commercially viable sports. This thesis examines the relationship between the GAA and the communities it is involved with. The research has shown a research gap relating to the significance of the GAA in the lives of Irish people, while also examining this organisation through amateur and professional perspectives throughout this research.

The impact of this study is of a significant importance in the relationship that exists between Irish people and the GAA. The main research task evaluates the relationship between the GAA as an organisation and the people who participate in the sports.

The method of research used is based on the thematic interpretation of the reading materials. This method is a form of content analysis under the name thematic content analysis, which utilises qualitative reading methods, in examining books, articles and media outlets such as Irish national newspapers.

The results illustrate the relationship between the GAA and the Irish people and that the GAA has been an integral part to Irish people both historically and in the modern era, while also having significant growth in the face of challenges from professional sports.

Keywords: Amateur, Professional, Gaelic Athletic Association, Identity, Sports Culture

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to show my acknowledgements to those that have made it possible for me to fulfil this opportunity of completing both my Master's Thesis and also my Master's Degree. For those who have helped make this possible, both academically and socially, it has been a long journey one of up's and down's and most importantly forever to be remembered positively.

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors Dr. Hanna Vehmas and Dr. Kalervo Ilmanen. I would also sincerely wish to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Hanna Vehmas for her guidance and patience over the last two years, when things were not always the clearest, you were there to advise and give direction and for this I express my gratitude, as for without your guidance, this would not be possible.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to my family, who have supported me on this journey and who were always on hand when I needed to speak about my work, even at times when to air my frustrations. I would sincerely like to thank my wife Anni, for her being there and giving reassurance during those times that were not always the most positive on this long journey.

All in all, without all these individuals, this work would not be what it is today. In essence, there is a bit of all of you in this work also. It is not just my work that has made this possible, but all who have been mentioned have been inspirational and have had a positive effect on this research.

Jason O'Donnell

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Image 1. Hurling from times gone past

Image 2. On the right is Gaelic football from the modern day game

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Gaelic Athletic Association in Ireland

Examination of the GAA activities since its origination explains in someway the involvement of the sport in the lives of people. In Ireland, GAA sports are not just about physical activity, but rather it is about life, which has been passed over and has transcended into other cultures, similar to a cultural saturation with other similar culture backgrounds in both Europe and elsewhere. It is a sense of belonging, a community and a feeling of being not just part of a team, but a family overall, the GAA family. A sense of 'Irishness' for people when abroad and the opportunity to connect with other Irish is part of the reason to join the GAA community and clubs abroad, while also including the local communities such as many countries in Europe and elsewhere. It is not necessarily a position of us against them mentality, rather than a feeling of inclusion and sport that is open to all in this regard. Many times, non-Irish find the sports a novelty and upon hearing that hurling is the fastest field sport in the world are intrigued to learn more about the sport and the GAA. Dunning and Sheard (2005, 132) referred to the amateur ethos similar to the GAA in, *"According to this ethos, sports had as their ideal aim the production of pleasure, i.e. an immediate emotional state rather than some ulterior end, whether of a material or other kind"*. The GAA has had to maintain its tradition from the beginning up to now, based on the perspectives internally, but over the years has had to expand their interests to abroad, due to the significant number of GAA clubs that began to appear over the last number of decades. See the Gaelic Athletic Association website for more details.

The GAA cannot be disassembled from its Irish connections and origination. The GAA as previously mentioned had been developed as a platform to develop and promote traditional Gaelic games, language and culture from the year of the organisations origin in 1884. As reflected by Reilly and Collins (2008), the GAA's organisation is linked from the organised origin to national, political and cultural revival, for their support of attempts to free Ireland from the British stronghold. Since the organisations origination, there has been a close relationship between popularity and the system structure, by which each club is affiliated to their local parish. Each parish is a dissection of the various dioceses of the Catholic Church in Ireland. These parishes play a significant

role in the identity of a community to which an individual can relate to. Pawlucki (2003, 59) typifies the Irish context in, *"Sport has a sociological and psychological dimension of identity building. When people are playing, they form social patterns expressing whom "we" are. Identity develops by nostrification, saying by personal action: "This is us"*.

While globalisation has enhanced some areas of society it can inhibit other areas. Pawlucki (2003, 31) noted that, *"Globalisation seen from a wider perspective represents a "disorganised process" and "unintended consequences for a shared environment of 'late modern' production and consumption practices"*. Globalisation has come to local society in the attempt to commercialise everything in people's lives to make money. The association between the GAA and nationalism has always been connected through a sense of identity to the Irish people. Associated national behaviour from the beginning of the organisation has continued with regards to national identity of a different variation of the Irish people. What had originated as an example of nationalist pride and hatred towards England is now exemplified by how the GAA is seen as a replacement identity from nationalistic politics to a less controversial national identity. Pawlucki (2003, 31-32) remarked that, *"From the historical and ethnological point of view it seems obvious that all peoples of the world produced original and peculiar forms of playful and physical activity"*. This has continued even as those leave Ireland and go abroad. Whether one is abroad or at home in Ireland, one associates the GAA with Ireland, thus it is seen as a home away from home, when abroad, and it shall be discussed further in relation to the Irish in New York.

The GAA in a sense had a monopoly of the sporting games and had been in place prior to 1971, was a ban on GAA players from playing other sports. Reilly and Collins (2008) have noted that up until 1971, there had been a ban on dual players in different sporting codes from playing in the GAA. Such is the case that members were banned if they were found to be playing another sport other than Gaelic Games prior to 1971. After this time several notable GAA players had professional sports careers in association football (soccer) and rugby. Pawlucki (2003, 31) observed that, *"It is becoming increasingly obvious that the western political-economic principles of unfettered economic growth, the free market, and the sovereignty of the consumer are producing awesome problems for the global environment"*. An example of this can be

examined by the introduction of Kevin Moran from Gaelic football with his native county of Dublin, before fully exchanging sporting codes for success and financial gain with Manchester United in the early 1990's. Such is the cause for the GAA, that even today, local GAA clubs try to 'persuade' the players to put forward their first allegiance to GAA and second to all other 'foreign' sports.

1.2. The area for research

This research examines an area that had been left empty in many academic topics. The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) in general is perceived by the outside world as a unique phenomenon. The emergence of global sports has led to the decline of many traditional sports across the world. Globalisation has been able to take place at all aspects of our lives. Some things that were once available in only one area of the globe can now be found in many areas of the world today, such as fruit from South America can be found in local shops in Europe. But this has not just been an exchange of products and merchandise, but an exchange of cultures and in this case sports. The growth of globalised sport, for example football or basketball has surged over the last number of decades and children and adults alike can be found around the world playing these sports. While this type of globalisation can be envisaged on many fronts as a good aspect of globalisation, it can also have its knock on effects of the decline of traditional sports. This is where the case of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) comes to fruition as a prime example of the growth and increase of a traditional sport in spite of the increase participation of global sports.

The work of the GAA in the face of opposition for participants from many global sports in Ireland has fended off these and increased not only in the number of participants but also increases in revenue throughout the decades. While the ethos of the GAA has remained, the professionalization of the organisation has improved significantly while keeping intact the amateur ethos and founding beliefs. This has enabled the organisation to acquire revenues in the multi-million Euro figures in the sports sector annually, while maintaining the amateur status of the sports. The significance of the GAA is that it is part of growing up within Ireland and it has continuously maintained its social links in the community, while also creating an identity for those Irish abroad, which are able to establish a connection in the Irish Diaspora with the GAA

communities that can also be found abroad. The GAA has expanded its areas from its origin in 1884, to find itself as a growing business within the sports sector. Similarly as football clubs were set up in England during the industrial revolution, the GAA had been set up as social community for the growth and sustainability of Irish traditions, culture and language in spite of British rule in the late 19th Century. Having this as a foundation has enabled the GAA to have a close relationship with the Irish people from its beginning in the late 19th Century, throughout the 20th Century and into the 21st Century. This close relationship can still be found today in many areas of the world, where GAA clubs across the Diaspora are seen as an outlet for both Irish culture and society when away from Ireland.

1.3. The purpose of this study

This study examines sport and its utilisations, as to how it enables societies to relate to identities, thus in this example of the Irish sporting history of the Gaelic Athletic Association from a historical sociological perspective. The significance of this study relates to the importance of traditional sports, which have wide varying obstacles that can both inhibit or possibly send sports into decline. Such that, GAA sports are activities in themselves but also have wide varying indirect effects in relation to the traditions and culture of the Irish people. The effect of commercialism, global sports and even professionalization of various sports can act as inhibitors to the success or growth of traditional sports by more globalised sports, such as soccer or rugby. These indirect events when examined from a more sociological perspective rather than at face value, underlines the essential aspects as to why the GAA was originally created. The GAA which is based on traditional Irish folk games paves the way for international progression via the Irish Diaspora, which in itself is unique in an international context. The main emphasis of the research is based on the significance of the unique situation that the GAA finds itself in, such that it is based on Irish traditional sport, linked to people who also play the sport abroad, but also the knock on various challenges and obstacles that reflect upon Irish society at home and abroad.

Research that has been undertaken in relation to the origination, success and future development of Cumann Luthcleas Gael also known as the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), in the examining of Irish cultural/social identity. The GAA is the organisational

body of Gaelic games such as 'hurling' and Gaelic football. The year 2009 was the GAA's 125th Year anniversary since their origination and it is a tribute to an amateur organisation who has survived all of the troubles in Ireland, from under English control to the civil war. The Gaelic Athletic Association is an open for all organisation, which is not biased based on any social, cultural or religious grounds, which was the basis for origination of the organisation in promoting the Irish language, culture and festivities.

The GAA itself prides itself on the community that it is based upon, such that today, the GAA would not exist without these community relationships. The GAA while having its basis in Irish society is also a money making business, but the GAA would not be able to maintain its stature or growth in Irish history without the community. The communities in Ireland are the GAA and the GAA is these communities. Without the volunteers who make themselves available for GAA clubs, local level GAA would be in decline, as the money to maintain these facilities and clubs would not be there. Without these volunteers, the GAA would not exist and this is the realisation and ideology behind this research. The unique aspect of this research, is that the GAA is a money making business, that re-invests its profits back in to the various regional GAA councils, so that new developments in training of young players can be passed on to the local committees all the way to the bottom. This research looks into the aspects of how professional sports have adopted these methods and how amateur sports have been able to use these methods for their own success at micro level. Money is what keeps businesses going and just like businesses; sports need to be run as a business in many aspects to maintain steady growth without external funding from outside sources. This is why the GAA finds itself in a unique position of having the 'best' of both aspects. They have a money making business that can return profits into the maintaining and growth of the structure it has been founded upon, while keeping its amateur ethos and its founding principles.

This study is based upon four time periods, from before 1884 and up to the origination of the Gaelic Athletic Association towards the modern era. The first period chosen is referred to as the pre 1884 to 1900 era, as this time line was chosen to show the sociological perspective of society at this time in Ireland and the reasoning behind the creation of the Gaelic Athletic Association. The second period relates to the turbulent political era in Irish history between 1916 and 1929, whereby politics and the GAA

were associated and this era was chosen to examine and represent this connection. The next chosen era is set from the 1930 up until 1980 and as such is to show the growth that has taken place within the organisation and also its facilities and to examine how important these premises played in society. The final era relates to 1981 up until 2010 and this was chosen as an example of the growth and success of what the GAA has become both financially and also morally. These are significant time lines that are part of the history of what makes the GAA what it is.

1.4. The structure of the thesis

The research examines previous research and data information from the beginning of the organisation, towards its success domestically and it's pursuit for continued success abroad. The future development for their success is based on their proposed new development plans that are being implemented both domestically and internationally. The examination of previous research in this area shows a short coming in respect to the nature of what typifies the GAA. The uniqueness of the position that the GAA finds itself in has not been expressed in many published academic research to date. There has been research on the benefits of playing GAA sports, medical research in to the success in overall mobility control and fitness training that people can benefit from participating in the sport. The lack of research in this area has revolved around the basis of the GAA from a sociological perspective from its origination to modern day. This is the area that this research tackles and explores the various aspects of the GAA over the past 126 years since its origination. Examining the social aspects of the sport, its maintaining and increasing number of participants, not only on a micro level involving Ireland, but I will also reflect on the macro level and the GAA in relation to it.

The second part of the research revolves on the examination of the GAA, how it has progressed since its origination and reviewing the organisations activities under various themes. These are four sub-themes under each of the two main themes. These two themes will reflect on the amateur and professional characteristics associated in sport. The sub-sections then review these sections under micro and macro levels, which in turn provide the basis for this research. The importance of this research can be acknowledged from the lack of research that has been published academically in

relation to the GAA in Ireland. As has been mentioned previously, research has been conducted on certain aspect s of the GAA, particularly in medical fields; there is a lack of research in relation to the GAA and its role with Irish society.

General historical research has been conducted and this should give an insight into the birth, growth and progress of the GAA in a 'calendar' style structure. The structure will give a flowing review and examination of the GAA from the basis of its origination up until modern day, while having reflected upon under the themes previously mentioned. The GAA has a significant importance in relation to Irish culture, but can also be an example to other traditional sports around the globe, that success is not based on the growth or decline of other global sports in a country, but what the organisation can make of the sport. The basis for all sports is that of a bottom up pyramid structure. The need for a wide base, while having elite entertaining and progressive sports athletes at the top of the pyramid, without that base being continuously supported from the top down, that top cannot have a social, financial or source of athlete's in the long term future of the sport.

The forthcoming chapters from chapter two until chapter ten will be outlined briefly in this paragraph. Chapters two and three are based on the themes that are used throughout this research and are the basis for this thesis. They will reflect upon various themes related to the GAA and sport and touch on some of the issues that will be discussed in later chapters. Chapter four is in relation to the methodology and research methods that were used to formulate and conduct this thesis and are essential to this work. Chapter's five until eight are the results chapters and are discussed in a time line structure from the pre 1884 to the 1900 era in chapter five until the modern era in chapter eight and will attempt to answer the questions asked in chapter four. Chapter nine will briefly look at the possibilities and challenges ahead for the GAA, with the final chapter ten completing with conclusions, suggestions and an evaluation of the work.

2. THE CONTRASTS OF AMATEURISM AND PROFESSIONALISM ON SPORT: A REVIEW

Amateur and professional sports play significant roles in the everyday lives of individuals both on macro (global) level and also on a micro (local) level. The macro level of sport refers to the global stage at which individuals can watch sport or participate in sports that are played globally, where as those sports that are played only in a more cultural or local context are played on a micro level can be of significant importance to many individuals as a sense of identity. Without grass-root beginnings for sport, there would be no professional aspect to many of the sports being possible. Gruneau (2006, 573) defines sport participants into two perspective groups, *"An amateur is one who devotes himself to sport for sport's sake without deriving from it, directly or indirectly, the means of existence. A professional is one who derives the means of existence entirely or partly from sport."* The significance of this is such that in life, many things that are in conjunction with each other can exist one without the other, although without amateur sport to begin with in this perspective, there would have been little chance for professionalization of many sports through the decades. In the following two sections, amateur and professional will be overviewed under various themes varying essentially from the micro level with amateur to macro level with professional aspects of sport.

Karl Marx defined sociology as the science used to examine the interpretive understanding of social actions and human behaviour. The basis for studying these actions are to find answers to certain events and try to explain what effects they have had either during or after an event. These actions relate to all human behaviour dependent on possible subjective meaning to it. Action in this case can be referred to as social insofar as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals); it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course.

The main areas for sociology that I will be examining will relate to historical sociology and sport sociology. Historical sociology is a sub-branch of sociology, whereby it focuses on how a society has developed through history and aims to help explain these circumstances involved. It examines what one may suspect as natural

occurrence in society, may actually be heavily influenced and shaped by societies processes. Wilson (2007, 460) remarks that, *"It is appropriate to return here to Harvey and Houle's (1994) interpretation of reactions to cultural imperialism, reactions they saw to be both resistant to and a contributor to an increasingly fragmented global culture."* Considering the perspective that global manoeuvres can alter a local context, the sociological order has been altered, as mentioned in the example above. Resistance and contribution to the altering of a culture can be taken into account in relation to historical sociology, whereby a culture has had to change or adapt due to interference to the natural sociological path.

Therefore, it is the process that helps to shape the society rather than naturally occurred without subjectivity. These non-natural occurrences in turn shape the institutions and organizations, which in turn affects the society. Sports sociology is an area of sociology that will be looked at also, as it is part of sporting society that this research follows. This in turn will focus on sport in relation to social and cultural structures, patterns, and organisations or groups engaged in sport.

2.1. Contrasting themes related to the GAA

2.1.1. Nationalism and the GAA

There has always been a link between nationalism and sport in many regions of the world and the GAA and Ireland are no different. The issue of nationalism and the GAA go hand in hand as they have been connected in the modern day since the creation of the GAA organisation in 1884. Nationalism will always be associated with the Irish and the GAA such that it is an unbreakable affiliation between the Irish people and the sports. GAA headquarters at Croke Park, Dublin, is and always will be a part of nationalist history. As Reilly and Collins (2008) have concluded, that such is the statement of nationalist association with the GAA, that one end of Croke Park is known as Hill 16, in remembrance of the Easter Rising of Irish rebels in 1916, against the control of English power and autonomy. Hill 16 had been constructed from the rubble in the city, from the resulting Easter Rising in 1916. Originally developed as a mound of rubble, it had been later further developed as a terrace for GAA supporters. As noted

by Fulton and Bairner (2007), the link between the State and the GAA are very closely entwined, where by the President and the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) always attend the GAA finals.

Nationalistic history was not only brought to the stadium via the rubble of Hill 16, but it was also created there. A second event of nationalistic history to be associated with Croke Park, occurred in the stadium in 1920, where by the never to be forgotten, Bloody Sunday event took place in which fourteen players and spectators were murdered by the British Army, as a retaliation for IRA murders of British soldiers, as has been noted by Fulton and Bairner (2007). As a result up until recently the idea of national identity and Croke Park have been seen as one, such that, people in Ireland did not want to see an English team to grace the 'hollowed' field of Croke Park. Thus with Rule 42 and Rule 21 in place, there would be no opportunity, for what nationalists saw, as the 'English', soiling our land once again. Under the next sub- heading the introduction of the associated nationalistic forms with Croke Park will be named and explained will be introduced. In the preceding paragraphs the basis for the rules of the GAA's rules 42 and 21 will be reflected on.

2.1.2. Nationalist names with regards the G.A.A

There has been a long tradition between nationalists and the GAA, particularly when one examines the names of local GAA clubs, stadiums and the various sections of Croke Park. Many of the local clubs gather their names from nationalists and nationalist ideology from times gone by. Such as the case of Wolfe Tones na Sionna, a local GAA club in Shannon, County Clare as an example. Such a name as Wolfe Tones is named after a former nationalist rebellion leader in Ireland from the 18th Century. Another example of the naming of GAA clubs revolve around the ideology of a new country, such as Éire Óg, which in English mean young Ireland. There are various names as such of local clubs in Ireland where clubs names are associated with an Irish nationalist or Irish nationalist ideology.

Everything within the context of the GAA is also in Irish, such as the names of GAA clubs, counties and stadiums. For example it is not only clubs that have reference to nationalists; some stadiums names also have a connection to the nationalist movements.

Two examples of this can be found in Pearse Park, in Galway, named after Pádraig Pearse, who was part of the Easter Rising 1916, or Markievicz Park in Roscommon, home to one of the most known female nationalists. With regards to the main stadium, Croke Park, there are five sections; each section of the stadium has a name that relates to the history of the GAA in one way or another. Fulton and Bairner (2007) have noted that Croke Park is the physical embodiment of nationalist politics. Examples of these can be noted below:

- Croke Park itself is named after the Archbishop Thomas Croke who played a central role in nationalist politics and was the GAA's first patron.
- The Hogan stand in Croke Park is named after the former Tipperary captain, after he was murdered during a Gaelic football match in Croke Park, by British soldiers, who had driven through the main gates of Croke Park and on to the field before beginning to shoot people.
- The Cusack stand is named after one of the founders of the GAA, Michael Cusack.
- The Davin Stand is named after Maurice Davin, the former first President of the GAA.
- The Nally stand is named after Pat Nally, who was a leading Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) leader and founder of the land league in Ireland.
- Hill 16 refers to the Easter Rising Rebellion of 1916. The rubble from the rebellion was used to create a mound for people to watch matches from.

2.1.3. Religion - Catholic Church

Since the organisations origination, there has been a close relationship between popularity and the system structure, by which each club is affiliated to their local parish. Each parish is a dissection of the various dioceses of the Catholic Church in Ireland. These parishes play a significant role in the identity of a community to which an individual can relate to. The role of the Catholic Church is a significant aspect in GAA history and cannot be hidden. The aspects that relate to the Catholic Church in the

modern GAA have drifted away from much of what it had been associated with in the past. The Catholic Church has been pivotal to the successful growth of GAA in schools and clubs and while it may seem as though it has always been a one way street for the GAA, they showed a reciprocation of the relationship from their part in events organised by the Catholic Church in early to mid 20th Century.

The significance of the relationship between the GAA can be shown in how the priests and bishops from the church would be significant members within the GAA and important in its games. Cronin et al. (2009, 243) noted that, bishops who had been awarded the opportunity to throw in the ball at All-Ireland Sundays showed the strong relationship amongst the church and that of the GAA. This relationship had developed after the partition of Ireland and the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. The Catholic Church was a significant part of both the social and sporting sides of Irish history. Not only were the Catholic Church involved in the GAA in running, organising and overall position of the GAA, but the GAA itself had been associated with significant aspects of historical times in the Catholic Church in Ireland. As Cronin et al. (2009, 246) remarked that the GAA had played a pivotal position in the organisation of the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in 1932. This had been one of the most significant and most public display of the source of Catholicism in Ireland to which could not have been organised without the help of the GAA. The GAA had agreed not to hold any important games during the Eucharistic Congress, while also making available Croke Park as a facility for one of the ceremonies and also providing 3,000 stewards for the public masses, which were held in Phoenix Park, Dublin.

The association between the GAA and the Catholic Church was not a one off event, but rather a continuous and important grouping in Irish culture at the time. The relationship between the Catholic Church and that of the GAA continued for decades with a succession of bishops from the archdiocese of Cashel and Emly being invited to become patrons of the GAA. These were more public displays of a mutual relationship at a higher level, but the links between the GAA and the Catholic Church were at all levels of Irish society since the GAA's origination. At a local level the example of the relationship between the Catholic Church and that of the GAA can be identified through the one parish one club policy maintained by the GAA. Across Ireland the schools that tended to dominate the sports of hurling and Gaelic football were those that were run by the Catholic Church. The schools that had been run by the Christian

Brothers had been devoted to the GAA. In saying this relationship had been mutually beneficial, over the last number of decades there have been a significant decrease in the involvement of the Catholic Church and its clergy in association with the GAA and this has diminished in the modern era, while certain parts of its past still live on, such as the one parish one club system.

2.1.4. Women in the GAA

The issue of women in sport has always been one of interest and debate. While many women play at the top levels of sport across the globe in the modern era, it was not always the case for women to have this possibility. Cronin et al. (2009, 319) observed that when the GAA had originally established, Michael Cusack one of the founders of the GAA had asserted that the GAA shall be open to men of all classes, but in doing do he neglected the possibility of women joining in on the sport. At the time of origination and development of the GAA, it had been envisaged that women role would be part of the scenery at GAA games rather than that of participants. During the 1880's there had been vast amounts of women showing up to hurling and football matches and on this point; it had been assumed that they would be part of the sport as spectators, but nothing more. In the origination of the GAA's promise to have an organisation open to all men of all classes, the GAA reneged on the importance of women and their participation in sport, through neglect rather than ignorance. It is important to acknowledge that at this era, women were seen to be more representative of mothers and wives with a 'fixed' amount of energy and to allow them to participate in sport would be to neglect the offspring. Cronin et al. (2009, 320) noted that in 1887, the Chairman of the British Medical Association said, *"In the interests of social progress, national efficiency and the progressive improvement of the human race, women should be denied education and other activities which would cause constitutional overstrain and inability to produce healthy offspring."*

In 1903, a group of women in Dublin who had travelled from all over Ireland to work in Dublin, took it upon themselves to learn and play the game of hurling. The group devised a code of rules and amended the regulated hurleys and sliotars to be shorter and lighter to be more suitable for the game for women, rather than those utilised by men, while also shortening the dimensions of the pitches for the female game. The games as such that used these codes of hurling and played by females was in turn named as

camogie. The growth of camogie in Dublin was so successful at the time that by the end of 1904 there had been five teams established who played in an organised league in the city. This growth continued with the introduction of more teams to compete in the city league along with the establishment of the college teams for camogie to be played, under the establishment of a new dedicated camogie board, An Cumann Camógaíochta in Dublin.

It had not been an easy establishment for those ladies who wanted to participate in camogie and there had been chronic issues within the organisation ranging from lack of funding to other internal disputes. It was in 1932 when camogie started to take off again under a new organisation Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael and within the same year the first All-Ireland championship had begun, although the final had not been played until 1933. Cronin et al. (2009, 328) observed that "camogie was being played by 10,000 players, 423 teams in 28 counties." This is a vastly significant number of ladies playing 'hurling', which had always been earmarked as a male orientated sport from the beginning. Throughout the generations the game has advanced and grown in success. Cronin et al. (2009, 329) remark that this successful growth has been aided by significant financial investment, along with working hard and coaching with clubs and in schools, which has led to the successful growth of the game in many areas around the country where the game had not been played. These significant growths in both the movements of camogie and ladies football have been hugely successful and the more traditional elements in the GAA began to accept this. While the games have developed and enable ladies to participate in GAA sports also, the spectatorship at the ladies events are significantly lower than those of the male events. Such as All-Ireland finals in Croke Park for the men's matches are sold out every year, where as the ladies All-Ireland finals are played in Croke Park with around 40,000 seats empty according to Cronin et al. (2009, 336).

2.2. The amateur side of sport

2.2.1. A cultural identity

All sports began at one stage or another at a local (micro) level, before taking on a more international (macro) level. Gruneau (2006, 562) has noted that the emergence of

modern sporting games arose from the traditional and folk games of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Most games had been organised periodically, with a minute amount of organisation. These gatherings were essentially based on community social merging and a basis for social interaction, rather than that of a competitive nature. In many sporting environments, it was normal occurrence to observe the upper middle class (aristocrats) to be participating in sport along side manual labourers and tradesmen that worked for them or their families.

A common argument that arises about the original emergence of amateurism can be relayed back to the time of ancient Greece. It has been argued that the ancient Greeks, created competitive athletics 'out of a deep, genuine love of sport for sport's sake, as an activity for praising their gods'. On the other-hand, the 'modern' Olympics in 1896, has been considered to have played the greatest role in establishing this link between amateurism and antiquity. Although in more recent time the theory of the Greeks has been dispelled by historians, who have found gambling, cheating violence and regional chauvinism to have been a significant part of ancient Greek life related to sport.

Sport at all levels can encompass various levels of competitiveness. Gruneau (2006, 568) commented, *"When an Irish working-class lacrosse team challenged a team of clerks and professionals of English origin, the results mattered to the communities in question."* In other words, these groups represented their communities, particularly in North America and symbolised the very aspect of amateur sport, but competitively. What began as an upper-class arrangement of social gatherings for those of the 'elite' class, overtime transcended the social class structures that had been created as a defining point for those who could and could not participate in 'gentlemanly' sport. Thus, allowing for these boundaries over an extended period to be transcended, such that, the working class and other classes could participate in these sporting ventures which can be defined as social settings with in sport.

While the Olympics became known for its staunch position in relation to amateurism in relation to its organisation, these amateur sports made it possible to use these events as national aspects positioned into an international setting. This enabled the defining of one's nationality and the possibility to put their support to that of their nation on a much larger scale than had been previously possible. The general perception of sport

had been closely related to socially based communities organising sports in their locality or against those of their neighbouring village, town or even city.

2.2.2. The relationship between volunteerism and sport

Significantly in both professional and amateur organisations the need for volunteers to play their part is a high priority at various levels. The organisations based on amateurism are aided by the many volunteers that are the basis and foundation to many of these organisations. Without these volunteers, their help and guidance, many of the amateur organisations would cease to exist as they would not be financially viable. As Sue Inglis (1997, 160) had pointed, most of these sports organisations, whether they are amateur or professional, they rely on the significant knowledge and help that volunteers give and also the experience that these people bring with them to board level. In Sue Inglis's work (1997, 161), other researchers have noted that there can be a line of defiance between those who are paid staff and those who are volunteers, whereby the transparency line of where the volunteers work and the paid staff's views on how things are done are on two different levels in some organisations. Many volunteers have years of experience but it is felt by the paid staff, that the duties of the volunteers should remain that of support staff and not interfere with that of the planning and organisations.

2.2.3. Representation of the local

The significance of local level sport relates to the representation of ones community or identity. Gruneau (2006, 568) noted, *"When an Irish working-class lacrosse team challenged a team of clerks and professionals of English origin, the results mattered to the communities in question."* In other words, these groups represented their communities, particularly in North America and symbolised the very aspect of amateur sport, but competitively. This is related to the view upon groups that resided in countries other than their own. This gave the possibility for those in 'national' communities to represent themselves on a local scale, as the example above shows, the Irish against the English, but in a local perspective. The spirit of neighbourhood sports at its best. These people can be neighbours and this is what makes sporting rivalry passionate. While these maybe people that we work with; live near or even possibly

family, while the sporting event takes place, they are the rivalry. While rivalry can be envisaged as a bad thing, it is what makes sport great and when in a healthy dose it can be what brings out the best in players in a competitive atmosphere.

2.2.4. Sport within rural society

The significance of amateur sport in rural society is that it is based on the communities. The basis for amateur sport in relation to communities is that it can create a social outlet for many individuals who would not usually have an outlet outside of the home or workplace. As Mick Green (2006, 218) expressed in his writings, the charter that was introduced by the Council of Europe in relation to Sport for All, had been implemented with the view that sport is a right for all and not just for the few. The significance of this charter goes back to the original point of sport, which was community based and also used as a social outlet for those in communities. Green noted that the charter organised by the Council of Europe saw the significance of sport in many positive perspectives, such as, education, health and social services. This to the point is what the basis of the origination of sports clubs in many aspects throughout the nineteenth century in Britain stood for. While the beginning of sport was the means of a social outlet while maintaining physical fitness and enjoyment, the non-direct links of better health and education have been highlighted in more modern times.

Traditions in rural areas play a significant part to the participation of individuals in certain sporting activities. The movement of sport to a global stage has seen the introduction of sports into other countries other than the originating country. An example of this is baseball and its progress in countries such as Japan and China from its original home of America. While global sports are significant on a large scale, those sports that are played in rural areas are significant to these people and help to identify these people of who they are. Therefore in more rural areas, there is a higher chance of having sports clubs linked to folk or traditional games of that area or nation, in this case Ireland in relation to the GAA.

Image 3. Croke Park from the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh

2.3 The professional side of sport

2.3.1. The economic impact of international sport

Professional sport at a macro level is significant of the extraordinary economics that have embraced sport. Eisenberg (2003) noted, soccer is one of the most significant sports in the world in terms of sports audience and participation, with fans transcending country borders to a fan base of approximately 1.25 billion. The significant factor for international sports is that many are financially backed. Financing of sports to a global stage have increased the revenues significantly for organisations such as the English Premier League and the NBA as two examples. These sports organisations are globally watched due to the increase in media attention. With the increase in media transcending physical boundaries via satellite television and internet access, these organisations are just two of a few who have taken advantage of the advantageous circumstances that they have found themselves in.

Such sports as soccer, basketball and tennis are global sports that transcend all boundaries, but all are heavily financially backed and players are enticed by huge

incentives such as million dollar/ pound contracts. Köenigstorfar et al. (2010, 128) noted, that the English Premier League generates the most money in the world than any other league, with €2.5 billion in the 2008/2009 season alone. This shows the vast amount of money that is involved in professional sports and while this is an example of only one, even if it is at the rather top scale involving finances generated in sport, there are other sports generating significant incomes in the billions of Euro in many other sports that are professionally played.

Passion and pride have taken a major part to competitive sport, since the introduction of competitive sport. What used to be sports based on team spirit and cohesion in playing for the jersey you wore has now become more importantly known for the money that it generates. Turner and Shilbury (2010, 13) take notice of changes in sports, "*Relationships between the sport industry and the mass media industry are not simply matters of mutual interest and dependency among advertisers, media organizations, sport organizations and the public* (Kinkema & Harris, 1998)." The relationships that have pre-existed the new technological advancements would be considered only a small part to the overall income. The significant changes in media that have arisen over the last two decades in particularly have seen huge increases in the economic benefits for sports teams through new marketing techniques, such as digital media sponsoring and stadium naming rights as two examples.

2.3.2. A global prospect to the urban communities

Köenigstorfar et al. (2010, 128) reflected, that in the 2008/2009 football season in England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, that over 54 million spectators attended matches. Sport has increased significantly in the numbers that attend games over the decades. As the facilities and stadiums increase in their capacities, this increases the number of individuals that can attend games or events. Many sports have come full circle, from starting out as a channel for social interaction with no money to an entertainment event that is bound in riches. Köenigstorfar et al. (2010, 130), have referred to the four perceptions of soccer in stadium atmosphere, perceived competitive balance of the league, perceived uniqueness of a club and perceived success of the club internationally. These perceptions can be based from the views and status of soccer clubs as an example. Looking at the perception of stadium atmosphere, this can be

observed globally through the various global mediums, including television and the internet as two examples. This has global significance, such that the atmosphere inside a venue can be viewed and observed anywhere in the world via the two previously mentioned mediums, opening up the stadiums to the world.

Globalisation has enabled the introduction of sports to far flung areas of the earth to new urban venues across the globe. The example of soccer shows the growth of the sport from over a century ago and being based in a few countries to being a sport played in leagues in almost every country in the world. Globalisation has brought what used to be in America to other cities around the globe, in the form of basketball. The NBA has lifted its status since its origination in the U.S.A to find itself branching out to other locations such as China and towards Europe in the hope of further expansion and further financial success.

3. THE PROFESSIONAL NATURE OF SPORT

3.1. International Professional Sport

Professional sports encompass various aspects of the world of sport. There are similarities between sports of both professional and amateur statuses. Sport can be determined under various themes in relation to social and cultural aspects. This section is based in relation to the previous section, whereby the examples of such themes are described and throughout this section, under the guise of professional themes, as an opposite of the previously mention amateur themes, for which this study is based upon.

Tarasti (2007) has reflected upon the circumstances that relate to the international aspects related to sport. In early 2007 there had been discussions in the Finnish basketball association with regards to the number of foreigners that grace the courts of the Finnish basketball league. Finnish basketball was having a debate as to how many foreign players should be allowed to play in a club team. this process is similar to that of linking the players to a work permit system, whereby if they were Finnish players they could continue to portray their talents, however if they were foreign, they were restricted in what teams they could play for, hence making it more difficult for foreign players to get into Finnish basketball. The basis for such a decision resided on the concern about amount of playing time and developmental opportunities young Finnish players were able to achieve, and how this affects the national team's chances of success in major international competitions. The reality of such events is that the players at a young age, are not getting the benefit of playing in their own country, based on the perception, that foreign influx of players are hampering the development of many young Finn's careers and in turn producing a sub-standard level of player for national teams, in comparison to players who are playing regularly for their clubs.

Finnish basketball is not the only organisation to speak about the varying levels of foreign players playing in other countries domestic leagues. There are many reasons as to why these players access to other countries professional leagues. A few of the reasons can be based around monetary return, hence moving from one club in one country to another club in another country, as the future club will pay significantly higher wages than the previous club. A second perspective for many professional sports

athletes is the consideration of moving from one countries league into another countries league on the basis of the standard of the league that is available currently to the player. The basis for movements such as these are based on the future of an athletes career, rather than the monetary value at that stage, or can be a combination of both better salary and a higher level of competition. Another example can be related to the aspect of many players, that find they are not of a good enough standard to play in their own country and many make a move to another country so that they can continue to play that sport at a professional level while being paid. These are a few of the reasons that are used for the basis of foreign movement. The standard of play and future income perspectives can lead for many players to move to a domestic league, before moving on to another league for higher monetary reward.

The basis of these kind of transfers can be seen in examples where foreign soccer players move to leagues such as the Scottish Premier League teams in the hope that if they progress and play well, those teams in England may transfer them. Although this is not always the case, it is a case for many of the foreign players who see the Scottish league as an opportunity to display their skills at a much closer level to other British clubs, particularly English clubs, who have money. It is seen as a stepping stone for many players, such that there are two options for many of these who enter Scottish soccer, one option is that they are picked up by one of the top two teams in Scotland, Glasgow Celtic or Glasgow Rangers, who can pay substantially more than the other teams based in Scotland, or many have the preferable destination to England for a higher standard of play along with a higher monetary return for their skills. From what once was a successful league in past decades has seen the standard of play drop significantly, as money has been injected to other soccer leagues in other areas, particularly that of the English leagues.

Monetary value in terms of international professionalism is a serious part of what makes up the sport industry. However there are other aspects as previously mentioned that are important to professionals, such as level of competition along with various levels of silverware. The aspects of using winning as a factor for selecting movements can be as influential as it is for those who are looking to earn significant amounts of money. Regardless of the varying sports in the world, all professional athletes, particularly those in team sports have an underlying ambition to win and also play at

the top of their sport. There are various aspects as to how the structures of many of these characters operate, but there is an underlying ambition by those who play at top level, that as they come closer to the end of their careers, the ambition to win something before they retire arouses strong ambitions that out succeed anything of a monetary value. For these individuals many feel that they have earned significant amounts of money during their careers and that the most important ambition in their life, is to win the top silverware that is related to their sport. While this is all important to these individuals, two main aspect of sport lay missing with many professionals and they are passion and pride. Many of these professional athletes have gone in to the sport playing for passion, but a long their career journey have lost the passion and consider their professionalism as a job that is a pay cheque, rather than playing for the game itself. That heart, pride and passion that these supporters of their club ooze and give one hundred percent, has been lost on many professionals. This is an aspect that has come into many sports, they do all there talking to the media in the right manner about the clubs, but only do so as it is their pay cheque. This is the aspect that many foreign players who come to teams, knowing nothing about their club and come for payments. Those who have a genuine affiliation to the clubs are taken in by the fans, where as those who are there for money only, get found out.

3.2. Economic Competitive Advantage in Sport

Sport in general is an economic business in itself, with many aspects. The successfulness of sport as an economic business is not something that can be fairly shared across all genres of sport. The success of certain sports such as basketball, soccer, ice hockey, motorsport and American sports such as baseball and American football, show that the success of sports can be reliant on the areas from where they progress. Sport in general is a serious economic sector in America, while in other countries sport is seen as a recreation or even a social aspect of life. America has made sports into profit making business that it is now known today as a sports sector with many businesses direct and in-direct association with sports. While many other countries have used sport for social gathering, integration and unification of communities, America took its opportunity to make money and profit from an area primarily regulated by local rules and regulations to organise systematic centralised governing committees and boards, which centrally regulated the rules and regulations

to oversee progress. The version that is examined at a closer range here relates to the sport of soccer.

The example to be reflected upon in this section relates to the sport of soccer in two main countries. These two countries up for discussion relate specifically to the top level playing of soccer in England and Germany. There are vast numbers of professional soccer leagues alone in Europe, never mind globally, but these two countries have similar levels of competitiveness in relation to soccer at its highest level. While the levels of soccer can be comparable by teams from both countries playing against each other with eleven players each, however this is where things on an equal basis end. The English Premier League is by far one of the most lucrative soccer leagues in the world, in term so generating money. The English Premier League generates the highest revenues of any football league in the world, around €2.5 billion in the 2008/2009 season (Ernst & Young, 2008). The league itself had started out like most other leagues, but due to the changes in ownerships, vast wealth injections, clubs at the top level in England have grown in success over the last two decades. Soccer in England has attracted many top players for both the standard of play along with the significant high wages that the clubs were able to pay players over clubs in other countries.

While the English game has grown from success both on and off the field in relation to monetary injections, other countries are also progressing, although not at such a high rate as had been done in England. The German Bundesliga generated only around 60% of the revenues of the Premier League in the last three seasons, including €1.5 billion in the 2008/2009 season (Deloitte, 2007, 2008a; Ernst & Young, 2008). The importance of generating money in professional sports cannot be under-estimated. The more money that a club can generate either through, sponsors increased attendances, cash injections from owners enables them to purchase better quality of players while also being able to pay significantly high wages that would be out of the clubs ability without these cash injections. The ability to make money and significant amounts of it helps maintain the kind of business and help create success on the field; however it must be clearly noted, that regardless of vast amounts of money in a football club, this does not guarantee success. In the 2006/2007 season, the winner of the Bundesliga received approximately €26.18 million and the club placed last received around €12.45 million, a ratio of 2.1 to 1. In the Premier League, the top club received approximately £32.05 million and the

bottom club around £16.72 million, a ratio of 1.9 to 1 (Deloitte, 2007; Ernst & Young, 2007) Koenigstorfer et al. (2010, 137) observed that the club in last position in the Premier League and relegated, received more income from television broadcasting fees than the club that wins the Bundesliga.

Forrest and Simmons (2002, 229) define competitive balance as a league structure which contains an equal playing strength between the leagues clubs. Uncertainty of outcome is meant with regards to situation an event within a league structure which contains a degree of unpredictability about the outcome of the match, such that the league competition as a whole does not have a predetermined winner at the at the beginning of the competition. A recent study by Groot (2008) shows that the competitive imbalance between winning clubs and bottom clubs in the leagues creates a distance between the two types of clubs that has been increasing over time in these leagues. It can be envisaged as a vicious circle, whereby the rich clubs who are able to use their vast monetary influence to get richer, while those teams with small amounts of income tend to get poorer. In the case of European football leagues, the equal distribution of ability between teams would be nearly impossible to comprehend. Discrepancies exist between clubs in both national leagues and international competitions, such as the Champions League. There is no way to create a series of competitive balance throughout the European soccer competition as each individual country produces vastly different amounts of money in relation to their leagues. Clubs in countries like Ireland and Finland could not contemplate spending €700,000 on a player, never mind spending ten times or one hundred times that amount. The €700,000 would be close to the running budget costs of the whole club and while sponsorship money and broadcasting money can not be mentioned in the same brackets as what can be achieved in more markets in popular soccer countries.

Although individual clubs may contribute to an entire league's attractiveness, research shows that leagues can only exist if clubs are both co-operative and competitive with each other. Koenigstorfer et al. (2010, 133) noted that, competitive balance makes games results uncertain and increases the interest of the spectator, while other fans excite at the prospect of their teams playing superior teams in upcoming games. There are numerous proposals that are used worldwide in varying sports for the inclusion of competitive balance. Some of these measures are maximum wages for individual

players, which had been in place in English soccer during the 1960's, pay-roll caps for clubs, which as found in both American sports such as basketball, American Football and rugby union in Britain. Other motions passed have related to entrance of new players in to the market, via the draft system that is in place in American sports. This system enables teams with a low budget and low success to be able to recruit players of high potential of both skill and success at reasonable prices, unlike a system whereby a player could attach to an agreement with the highest bidding club.

3.3. Global Sport Finance

Over the past numerous decades the popularity of televised events has continue to grow with popularity. Of these televised events, there has been a surge in the number of sporting events that have been brought to the format of television, internet and now even on mobile phones. Cave and Crandall (2001, F4) noticed that there was an increasing popularity of televised sports events in the United States and Europe and that they have had significant effects on the broadcasting sectors and sports leagues on both sides of the Atlantic. As a result, broadcasting tight holders have been examining broadcast rights and how they have progressed over the last two decades on both continents. American broadcasting has examined the broadcasting of professional and amateur (intercollegiate) leagues, while European broadcasting has focused on the broadcastings rights of popular soccer leagues across Europe and the ability and need to broadcast these outside of their own territories. The growth of television has enabled to effect of globalisation and transmitting a popular event or series of events from one location to a vast number of locations across the globe via various mediums and in the current transition through various digital mediums such as television, pay per view television, internet and 3g networks for mobile phones. The growth of the industry has surpassed any anticipation and has gone from strength to strength.

In the modern day the significant input of global broadcasting has enabled many sports to take advantage of the economic benefits of having such facilities available to them. The development of new media has enabled the clubs to make profits beyond their wildest dreams. While many sports start out on free-to-air television or commonly known as terrestrial television, the amount of money that is produced via broadcasting is generally very little and income from broadcasting was related to how successful the

sport had come across to viewers on television. As new media outlets were created, the more popular sports realised that they could make more money off there events by auctioning off their broadcasting rights to the highest bidder. The example of soccer in England can be looked at here, where originally terrestrial television showed top level soccer in England, until the development of a new top tier known as the English Premier League had been developed. When this had been developed, the league decided to sell the broadcasting rights to the highest bidder, who at the time was Sky television in Britain. From this moment on broadcasting of soccer matches in Britain had gone from growth to growth and the packages that Sky had developed were created under sports packages at an extra subscription, if people wanted to follow soccer. The growth of this sector by Sky in Britain has sufficed to say, sent broadcasting rights for the English Premier League out of control into a multi-billion Euro broadcasting deal today. While two decades ago the monetary value of broadcasting rights for the Premier League were of modest value in comparison to today's value.

The effect of the surge in interest through broadcasting has enabled the English Premier league to be able to arouse interest in far off destinations where it is now available to watch. The origination of many deals such as these had been created for their own territories, while the expansion of television events globally has gathered interest of many other kinds, in spectators, sponsors and even investors. As Cave and Crandall (2001, F7) pointed out, this had enabled bigger clubs to get more control, and particularly to control directly the sale of Premier League broadcast rights and then the distribution of associated revenues. Within seven years following the creation of the Premier League, 10 out of 20 of the Premier League clubs had floated on the stock market. The values of these clubs have grown immensely through their popular demand and need for further expansion, where other investors have come in and purchased shares or the clubs over the last two decades. The significance of this has been the movement of English owned football clubs into foreign ownership. The vast majority of soccer clubs in the England Premier league are now in foreign ownership, while some have rich oligarchs or sheikhs who are owners and inject huge amounts of money into the clubs, with no regard for any of that money coming back to them. This is an example of the huge global growth in this sector in the last two decades in particular.

3.4. Supporters

Forrest and Simmons (2002, 230) noted that member clubs in a league have access to markets that can vary greatly in size dependent on either different population size in the cities that they serve or the varying degrees of interest that these cities have in regard to the particular sport that they offer. The significance of urban living can entail easier access to sporting events, such that these events such as soccer matches are occurring in the city. The ease access to these matches can benefit the attendees but is not always a major focus for those who attend these matches. The idea of local loyalty to ones team is paramount to the origination of many soccer clubs in England. While saying this, these criteria now transcend boundaries, such that people support teams in various countries, including teams in many countries a person has not even visited before. Transcending boundaries is important in global sports, but still the urban environment is of severe importance for soccer clubs. Supporters abroad can buy merchandise and even visit the soccer club for matches, although, without the regular attendees who live around the area of the stadium and even the region the club is based, the soccer clubs would not only be playing in relatively empty stadiums but also missing the passionate individuals who have made these clubs what they are today.

Soccer clubs have the foundations of their support coming from their local areas. The larger the population size within an urban area, the larger the market pool size for the clubs to tap in to. Although in saying this, the significance of local supporters, while they are very important at top level soccer, the importance as you go further down the scale in regards to success, the sheer importance of local support is without doubt one of the major cash injection areas for many teams. These teams that play professionally, but are based in the lower leagues of football, generally have a larger need to have local support. The reason behind this is such that the marketing value of the clubs at the lower levels of professional football is non existent in comparison to the monetary levels associated with higher levels of football. Such is the significance in difference can be seen in the capacity size of the stadiums, the attendance levels at matches, sponsorships are from more local or regional sponsors generally and the players wages are minute in comparison to higher league levels. The importance of these fan bases is such that these are the regular cash injections that many clubs at the bottom level of professional football need just to keep the clubs running weekly. While there are vast

differences that can be noted from the various aspects of the daily running of football clubs at top level and bottom of the barrel football, the similarities are also there to be seen. All soccer clubs have started out at a similar basis in their origination, although some have grown due to success over many years and decades and have a strong history within the club. The basis for change of many clubs has been based on the level of football that they have been continuously playing, while those who succeeded in moving up to top level football have been able to reap the rewards, it has not been the same significant move in history for all levels of teams. Therefore the reliance on local supporters is a significant aspect for many of these low monetary value clubs in lower English soccer leagues.

Attendances can be affected by the environment that a team is from. From such circumstances, the population of an area can play a significant part to the size of attendance at events. The position and status of Premier League soccer clubs perform on a whole different level of system of attendance, than the standard set of guidelines for sports events in a specific area. The vast stadium capacities that these soccer clubs have, is not necessarily related to the specific population of the soccer clubs environment, such that the attendance is not restricted to just the region of the soccer club, but also international spectators who make their journey for events is a significant aspect. These external spectators generally come from other areas of Britain or indeed even Ireland, but there are also many who travel from around the world, specifically to observe 'their' team participate, whether these are matches at league level, cup level or international competition level, such as the Europe League or the Champions League. Decline in the numbers of 'locals' attending the games can be linked to varying reasons such as money restraints or the possibility of the game being shown on television have been associated with the decline of some attendances at Premier League games over the last number of years.

4. RESEARCH TASK AND METHOD

4.1. Research task

The context of this study reflects on the about challenges and obstacles that have faced the GAA since its origination. The purpose of the research is to review, examine and explain the various aspects of the GAA from a sociological perspective, while also looking at the aspects that make up the GAA on various levels, from professionalism in the organisation to the amateur status of the sport and the athletes. This main task is divided into three sub-tasks. The three areas that I pursue in this research are:

1. How does the Gaelic Athletic Association illustrate social and cultural identity through sport?
2. Why are both the community and the Gaelic Athletic Association important to each other?
3. To what extent does the GAA illustrate amateur sport on a local level and how much will the GAA have to face in challenges or pressure from global professional sport business?

4.2. Data collection

The data collection involved the use of both physical and electronic materials in the research. The research material from the Gaelic Athletic Association is generally electronically accessed via websites involving the GAA. There are various numbers of websites including that of the GAA along with other documents that the GAA have an association with, while also using media articles that have been released in Ireland by national press, such as the Irish Independent and RTÉ the national broadcaster in Ireland as examples. Other materials in relation to the GAA that have been found are very limited and generally are from articles in relation to other topics, but have mentioned the GAA as part of the topic within the research. Much of the information from books that have been found, share a very limited mention of the GAA, while one of the main books in relation to the GAA part of the research is called 'The GAA: A People's History', which is based on the research conducted by Boston College and

reflects on the various cultural aspects of the GAA. The data from this book had been collected through research and interviews.

Other materials that have been researched with regard to professional and amateur sports have been gathered from academic articles and sports articles. Various sociological perspectives have been examined in reviewing much of the documents in relation to sport, using the themes that have been mentioned in the previous sections. The uses of these documents are essential towards gathering and examining information on the Gaelic Athletic Association. The Gaelic Athletic Association is very limited in the number or academic studies that have been published, such that the documents that are available through the GAA website and the books that are based on the GAA give a fuller understanding towards the organisation. The list of data is based on the documents detailing the GAA along with other sociological research to enable a deep analysis of the documents mentioned. This list includes newspaper articles from Irish newspapers, information from the GAA and its affiliate websites, books detailing the history of the GAA, articles based on the sociology of sport, amateur and professional sports and historical sociology. Examples of the data list can be found in the table below.

Table 1. Data Table

Area of Research	Title	Author/s	Paper/Electronic Format
History of the GAA	The GAA: A People's History	Mike Cronin, Mark Duncan and Paul Rouse	Paper
	The Role of Gaelic Games in the lives of the Irish Diaspora in Europe, Sport in Society	David Hassan	Electronic
Discourse Analysis	Discourse Analysis	Gillian Brown and George Yule	Paper
	Discourse Analysis: An Introduction	Alexandra Georgakopoulou	Paper

		and Dionysis Goutsos	
Sport Sociology	Sport and the Repudiation of the Global	David Rowe	Electronic
	Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation.	David Mayall (Editor); Michael Cronin (Editor); A.Mangan,	Paper
Themes of Sport	Postmodernity and Olympism	Andrzej Pawlucki. (Ed)	Paper
	Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A sociological study of the development of rugby football	Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard	Paper

4.3 The method for analysis

4.3.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research based technique that focuses on the content of the subject's involved. These subjects can relate to various media outlets such as newspapers, television, radio and other modern day introductions such as the internet. Not only is it media outlets that can come under the scrutinising eyes of content analysis, but also scholarly research and articles along with other historical manuscripts, such as the bible as another example. Content Analysis is used to verify or determine the neutrality of the writer to deem whether what has been written, has been done so in an objective manner and that a person is not portraying their own opinions and assumptions rather than the correct neutral and fact based structure. This type of analysis helps to determine the possibility of the writer being subjective, possibly by internal views or external influences.

The content analysis procedures involve the taking of a text from a various number of mediums, with the text being broken down, into manageable categories at various levels incorporating, word, word sense, phrase, sentence, or theme. Conceptual or relational analyses are two of the method's that can be used to attempt to categorize the various scenarios. Content analysis has been known to be used in various fields, ranging from marketing and media studies, literature, ethnography and cultural studies, gender and age issues, sociology and political science, psychology and cognitive science. Miller and Brewer (2003, 44) note that, *"The text can be written forms, such as newspaper articles, official and personal documents, books, pamphlets, tracts and the like, or the accounts people proffer in interview and later transcribed in written form."*

Content analysis looks directly at social communication through texts or transcripts therefore get directly to social interaction. It can aid the historical or cultural insights and the various changes that have taken place over time, via the analysis of texts, while being easily applicable through quantitative or qualitative procedures. It enables the analysis of people without interfering with people's natural states. Miller and Brewer (2003, 44) note that, *"content analysis involves the description and analysis of text in order to represent its content."* This research will be using a sub-section of content analysis in the form or thematic content analysis for the basis for this research.

4.3.2 Thematic Content Analysis

This involves going through the data, while using thematic content analysis and creating a thematic structure from the material. As such, it is important to read repeatedly the material to connect the various materials to the similar thematic analysis that has been created form the other material data. Such that themes may arise from different eras and societies, but they can have similarities within the themes and therefore can be connected using thematic content analysis. Marks and Yardley (2004, 56) noted that, *"Thematic analysis is similar to content analysis, but pays greater attention to the qualitative aspects of the material analysed."*

The use of themes as method of research can enable one to separate the important parts of information inn any given data material, for use in a particular research. Marks and Yardley (2004, 57) remarked that, *"Thematic analyses often draw on both types of theme, and even when the manifest theme is the focus, the aim is to understand the latent meaning of the manifest themes observable within the data, which requires interpretation."* The use of thematic analysis is very similar to that of the process of content analysis, but also incorporates the analysis of the meaning of the data within its subjected area. The meaning of the contents of the material can be specific dependent on the themes involved. The use of themes is important for gathering overall categories for research, rather than the general text specific research.

A theme can have a referral to specific patterns that are found within the data in which one is examining a certain subjective matter. Marks and Yardley (2004, 57) observed an example of this, *"In thematic and content analysis, a theme of a coding category can refer to the manifest content of the data, that is, something directly observable, such as mention of the term 'stigma' in a series of transcripts."* The use of these types of observation methods allows the researcher to examine large amounts of material, while categorising the intended subject matter in to categories based on themes and as such incorporate the relevant information in to the research, while passing on the irrelevant information in the material that is not related to the research topic. This enables the researcher to use themes as an understandable structure to the material.

5. PRE 1884 – 1900 ORIGINATION AND GROWTH

At the turn of the 19th century, Ireland was suffering under great poverty due to the suppression of its people under the British control. The suppression of the Irish people had arisen, due to the difficulties the British had faced by the Irish people who had contemplated and created many a rebellion such as that of 1798, during the previous 700 years of British colonisation in Ireland. During the early 19th Century towards the middle of the century, there had been a growth in population and family sizes for many tenant farmers and labourers in rural Ireland. McDonnell (2009, 6) remarked that there had been a decline in the number of participants in hurling and football games, due to the rebellion of 1798, whereby during this rebellion many of the players had joined with the United Irishmen who attempted to free Ireland, from British control. As a result of many of those who took part in the rebellion, being tenant farmers and labourer's, landlords ceased to organise hurling and football matches between their estates and those of other estate landlords. There was a fear amongst landlord that such events could create an organised area for those with rebellious intentions to gather and further stir the opportunities of future rebellions.

Ireland was in a situation whereby land that had been owned by Irish people was taken from them under British policy and they had to rent land from British landlords as to survive off the land. The land at this time was inevitably given back at high rents for Irish people to pay, while the growth of families meant that there were increasing numbers of mouths to feed, but the same small plots of land to which they had to farm. This led to an increase in the number of tenant farmers, farming the land, while growing crops to sell, so that they could feed their families with what was very little left over. The continuation of this policy in turn lead to resentment amongst the Irish people over the past hundreds of years and arose rebellious sentiments through the centuries. In 1845, the famine began in Ireland, whereby the year 1848, an estimated one million or more Irish people died or emigrated from Ireland. Gaelic games remained as part of the Irish passion, but had died out in some areas, until the resurrection of the sport with new rules and regulations by the GAA in 1884.

5.1. From Mythology to Reality

At 3pm on Saturday 1 November 1884, the GAA was founded in the billiards room of Lizzie Hayes' Hotel in Thurles, County Tipperary, which had been arranged by Michael Cusack and Maurice Davin. Three significant people were selected as patrons of the GAA on this day, these included Michael Davitt of the Land League, Charles Stuart Parnell, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party and Archbishop Thomas Croke of Cashel. Cronin et al. (2009, 3-4) remarked that, *"To emphasise the political context of the establishment of the GAA, the men who attended the first meeting included several members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), a secret revolutionary organisation dedicated to the overthrow of British rule in Ireland."* These men as above mentioned were part of the land movement to regain rights for tenant farmers, a political leader and a Catholic Archbishop, three influential people in Ireland at a time, when Irish people had little power or persuasion in any respects. The link between these three sections of society along with the other founding members of the GAA, linked with the republican movement showed a clear connection between the GAA and this movement.

The GAA was at the beginning of a move forward for the future of Irish people. Around the same time of the GAA being set up, other groups such as the Land League, which had been created by Michael Davitt, to fight for rights for Irish tenant farmers. At this time there was also a growth in the interest amongst the Irish people in Irish traditions and language, that the Gaelic league had been founded to help revive the Irish language. This was a time of movement and ill feeling towards Britain, but also a move towards a more sense of Irishness and was an ideal time for the GAA to be founded along the lines of the other groups, considering the direct cause for all three groups was the increase and preservation of all things Irish, including language, traditions and culture. A significant moment in 1886 had shown that the importance of the GAA in Irish life had progressed since its origination, when a game was played in Tralee, County Kerry and a crowd of over 15,000 people attended. The significance of this match, is such that the attendance was a positive support to what the GAA had been planning, at a time without transport or motor vehicles, the significance of this attendance is important. Cronin et al. (2009, 42) acknowledge that the basic development plan of the GAA, with having a county championship and internal county

championships, helped create its own survival and success. If it were not for this basis of organisation from an early stage, it may have caused the break up of the organisation early on. Once this regulation was put in place, it meant that those who wanted to play Gaelic games in their local areas would have to follow suit and along the lines the GAA had set out. It meant that it enabled growth within the community and opportunity for all classes of people to play Gaelic games in their community, without having to travel far distances to participate in the long term.

Cronin et al. (2009, 21) noted that the ancient literature of Ireland positions hurling as a sport of legends such as Cú Chulainn and mythology, while metaphorically suggesting it as a bravery and ability of Ireland of old. This association between what Ireland used to be and the relation between what hurling stood for, was part of the urgency for building a strong movement that would represent the Irish people again, rather than what had occurred under British control and suppression. Cronin et al. (2009, 43) noted that, while Gaelic sports maintained its physical approach, while also making improvements to allow skilful play, attracted many spectators, who followed their teams to watch their matches. Maintaining this physical approach had been based on the perspective of the legend, that bravery and ability was what was needed at this time in Ireland; however the GAA formatted the rules to allow more skilful play, which in turn produced a more entertaining game, rather than a barbaric one. It was important for the game to spread nationally that it could be enjoyed in play as well as spectator.
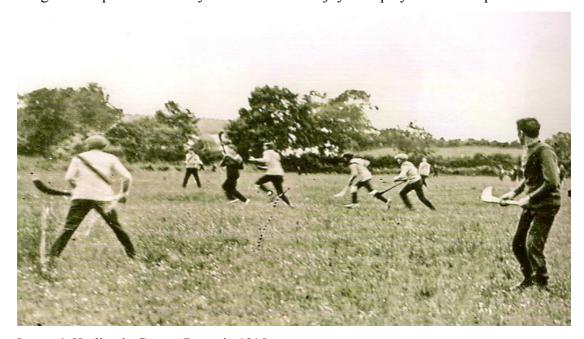

Image 4. Hurling in County Down in 1915

5.2. In search of a new vision

At this time, the importance for the GAA had been to be a positive forum for the re-introduction of Irish sports, to be played in an organised manner at regular events, while attempting to keep politics out of the sports context. While this had been the plan, there were political groups such as the Irish Parliamentary Party and nationalist groups such as the Fenian's and Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), attempting to push their motivations in to the GAA. These organisations, while seeking the similar goals of Ireland receiving more power from Britain had very different techniques. The Irish Parliamentary Party had been trying through political movements to establish a Home Rule parliament for Ireland in Dublin, where as the Fenian's and the IRB had been examining the possibilities of removing Ireland from British control and making Ireland free through physical means. During this era, the GAA had gathered many supporters of their movement, but it had also received opposition, particularly from those who were part of the athletic movement that had been organised under Britain, who were under the Amateur Athletic Association. Under this increase in support, by the time the GAA had been three years old, the organisation had 600 clubs within its organisation.

Four years after the inauguration of the GAA to society, in 1888 the GAA sent over players to America, with Maurice Davin in lead, to help raise funds. They left Cobh in County Cork, before arriving in New York nine days later. They played exhibition games for those who wanted to watch hurling in practice. While there was also a need to spread the word of the GAA abroad, it was ideal to make the journey to America, who had always had a close relationship with Ireland, since before the famine. But this was not the first mention of hurling in America with reports mentioning hurling as far back as the 1780's in New York. The reality of the movement has seen the sport grow from this moment onwards, with GAA clubs being set up across America, in many instances using the name of the counties or towns that people had arrived in America from. Also, those clubs at the time that did not take the name of where people had come from in Ireland, generally took the name of popular nationalist historical personalities or organisations.

5.3. Division of social class with regard to sport in Ireland

During this era in Irish history there were very few recreational activities in the way of sports for the people outside of the Dublin region. McDonnell (2009, 8) remarked that poor people in Ireland could not participate in athletics under Amateur Athletic Association (England) regulations, as it was seen as sport of gentlemen. The ability to participate in many sports had been taken away from the Irish people by the British powers in government. They were taken away as the majority of Irish people were not of a wealthy enough background to be suitable to participate in these games, as it had been envisioned by the British that those who participate should be of a gentleman standard. Along these lines with a lack of opportunities for recreational sport, Ireland had its own games of GAA, but before the GAA had been founded, the Gaelic games being played had been reduced by the lack of players at local level.

What had began as a necessity for those Irish, who wanted to participate in sport, as they could not under English control, had been impacted by emigration. Cronin et al. (2009, 25) referred to the shortage of players to play GAA games due to the mass emigration of people to various countries around the world, such as America, Australia and Britain. Thus having a significant effect on an already dying sport, that when the players had to emigrate during the famine and oncoming decades, the result was a reduction in playing staff. What took place on a local level was heavily affected by the local level immigration, such that as these players left, there were not enough individuals to replace the departed.

5.4. Regulation

The problem as previously mentioned above with regards to the lack of players available to play Gaelic games had an effect on those who remained. Those who remained in Ireland and wanted to participate in Gaelic games had to adopt the GAA's rules and regulations, while dropping the local rules that had been used for generations in each local region. Cronin et al. (2009, 38) refer to the successful growth of the GAA, and those who did not accept the rules, were left without teams to play. The reality at the time was that for any future of the games, changes needed to be adapted to the rules for general platform. Facilities in the beginning were an issue for all those involved in

the sport, but the passion and heart to play were there to be seen. The structure that the GAA had organised had made it ideal for those in rural areas. While many of the English games were played on a Saturday, it had always been tradition to play on the Sunday, the workers day off. Arranging the rules to suit Irish traditions and standards, while organising the clubs into parish regions, enabled the GAA to establish the clubs along parish lines, which brought about the community to the club. Cronin et al. (2009, 40) commented that the proposition of one parish, one club became the trademark of the GAA, while Gaelic games were defined by passion for place. This is one of the most significant aspects that helped the GAA to succeed that is still in place in the modern day.

In the year of 1887 the GAA projected that its basic rule of operation for development of GAA, was one club per parish. While this was their objective, at an early stage this objective was important, but with very little teams throughout the country, there rules were relaxed. Over periods of time, this objective came back in to force and is how the organisation is run today. The main stressing point, which has led to the success of the GAA development plan, can be laid at the foot of locality. Local clubs for local people was the stressing point. Each parish having one club, meant that each parish could have enough of a pool of players to choose from, while also bringing a community together in support of their local team. Stressing their local team is the key point. GAA clubs were sporting clubs but in essence were community and social clubs for the people of each parish. The second initiative to the success of the GAA related to the creation of internal county based competitions. These internal competitions not only enable the clubs to play sport on a more regular basis but it also helped create a sense of team unity. No longer would it be the importance of individual performances, rather the creation of rivalries against other parishes in the county, enabled a lot more passion and pride to be part of these events, rather than the typical winning and losing team. In essence, these events particularly when involving those of what would be known in other sporting terms as derbies would relay to the bragging rights for the parish of the winning team. This brought about the emphasis, that not only are you playing for yourself and your team, you are playing for everyone in your community and represented the important sentiments that had been placed on sport, particularly in this case, GAA.

6. 1916 – 1929 WARRIORS BOTH ON AND OFF THE FIELD OF PLAY

The events that took place in 1916 have been taken into Irish history for many reasons. The year 1916 was significant in not only the history of Ireland, but also that of the GAA. Many of those nationalists that had been following the GAA had been involved in what is now known as the Easter Rising of 1916. The events that took place in Dublin witnessed an increase in the following of nationalism, when republican fighters based at the General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin, were fired upon by British soldiers on April 24, 1916. Prior to this event, numerous nationalist movements had joined together in taking control of stronghold areas under British control in Dublin. This was not the only event to have involved nationalists associated with the GAA, after this event there had been unrest in Ireland, in what is now known as the War of Independence. This war was undertaken using guerrilla warfare methods and the group involved, were later to be known as the Irish Republican Army (IRA), who had the support of the political party, Sinn Féin, who in return had members and supporters with in the GAA. Between the years of 1922 and 1923 there had been civil war taking place in Ireland, despite this, the Gaelic games continued and the All Ireland championships were not halted.

The connection with the GAA and nationalism had always been in place, but on Sunday 21 November 1920, this connection grew closer. On this day, All Ireland final day in Croke Park, the headquarters of the GAA, the British soldiers, known as the Black and Tan's and Auxies, had entered Croke Park in vehicles and drove onto the playing field while the game was in play. The prior hours to this event are as important to the day as what occurred in Croke Park that day. The guerrilla warfare that had been taking place under the IRA, under the orders of their Leader Michael Collins, killed over a dozen British spies in Dublin. As a result of this 'mission', the British soldiers entered Croke Park knowing that this event was taking place and started to open fire in the stadium. As McDonnell (2009, 14) noted, *"British armed forces in Ireland, burst into Croke Park, opened fire on the players and crowd and killed 14 people."* Among the people murdered on that day, it included Michael Hogan of Tipperary who was one of players playing in the All Ireland final against Dublin. From that day on, this event has been remembered as 'Bloody Sunday'.

6.1. Transparent Identities

The Easter Rising 1916 was one of the most significant aspects of not only Irish history but also that of the GAA. As mentioned in the previous era, the connection between the Irish republican movement and that of the GAA were synonymous in some regards to the strength behind the Irish cause for freedom. Cronin et al. (2009, 151) estimated the number of GAA members involved in the Easter Rising ran to about 350, while five of the fifteen men executed, had strong links to the GAA, most notably Patrick Pearse. This is a clear example of the link between the GAA and republicanism. While at the original foundation of the GAA it had been stated that they wanted no connection with politics, but in saying this with several members at the founding meeting of the GAA with connections to the Irish Republican Brotherhood, it is hard to ignore the association that involved both organisations. At this time, it would be rather easy to suggest coincidence, but as the fighting during Easter 1916, showed, that connection was still close to the organisations being.

During the war for independence there were constant links between the GAA and republicans, which the British government picked up on. This is where British intelligence in Dublin Castle headquarters established there were links between the two organisations, but there was no firm evidence to prove this. As noted by Cronin et al. (2009, 152), that while the British government tried to ease unrest by suppression of Irish individuals meeting, the GAA defied their orders and organised mass protest across the country on Sunday 4 August. This was as a result of the developments that British government suspected between the links of the GAA and republican rebellion and as such tried to prevent future unrest arising. As soon as the order had been sent out, the GAA defied the order by immediately arranging games to be made for Sunday 4 August for Gaelic games to be played in a fight back in defiance, that they were not willing to be suppressed by British policies any longer. Cronin et al. (2009, 154), examined that the massacre on Bloody Sunday, had produced what was once a playing field, would forever more be a memorial to the events on that day. This was no longer a fight for republicans, but it brought about the interest among other Irish people who were not previously linked with the movement, as a result of what had occurred in Croke Park. Bloody Sunday November 21. 1920 is a day that will remain in Irish and GAA history forever. It was at this point there was no turning back after British soldiers

had arrived in to Croke Park on All Ireland final Sunday and started shooting. They murdered 14 people including a midfielder for Tipperary in the name of Michael Hogan. In the eyes of the Irish people, this signalled no longer could they take this suppression, abuse and murder. This continued until 1921, when Ireland was given independence.

6.2. Cultural Growth

Volunteering in the GAA has been synonymous to group from the beginning. Volunteers had been organised at all levels of the GAA to help build and develop Irish traditions back to what they originally were. Under British rule many of these traditions, language and sports had been hindered. Under the GAA regime, they had organised with other groups such as the Gaelic League for the support and growth of the Irish language and traditions. Everyone in the GAA at this stage from its foundations was a volunteer. No one was making money from the GAA and it was important for GAA members to support all things Irish. Cronin et al. (2009, 154) remarked that the Tailteann games of 1924, was the largest sporting event held in the world that year, surpassing even the Paris Olympics, while being organised by the Free State to celebrate national independence. The importance of such an event in the youth of free Irish nationalism was a significant importance for all. The Tailteann games were organised by the GAA and held in venues around Dublin with the main staging in Croke Park. If it were not for the GAA members volunteering and showing their support for Ireland, this event could never have been organised. It was a significant success in such early Irish history of the modern Free State and was also arranged to show Ireland can stand on its own and this is us as a country.

6.3. Alliances

The GAA has always been associated with all parts of Irish life and in the early days of the War of Independence, they always gathered support and raised money for what was observed to be a good cause. Cronin et al. (2009, 151), noted that the GAA supported Sinn Féin and republicanism by arranging tournaments to raise money for republican prisoners, while when Clare reached the 1917 All Ireland football final, the team paraded before every championship match behind the banner 'Up de Valera'."

Republicanism again was being supported from the local fundraising events that the GAA organised and as such was clear in their support for republicanism and represented again their links to politics in the organisation. When the GAA wanted to arrange their plans they always went to the heart of the community, the local areas to gain support and use the locals to help the cause. During the War of Independence when the British government had attempted to disband meetings involving Irish people, the GAA arranged for events around the country to be planned on Sunday 4 August. County boards across the country complied and set matches for 3pm starting time. When camogie players attempted to access Croke Park, police and army prevented them access, so they played the game outside on the road there instead. It was a springboard for the resumption of widespread activity by the GAA countrywide.

6.4. Politicisation

In 1921, the political party known as Sinn Féin, had members and supporters within the GAA movement. While Sinn Féin at this time was the largest political party in Ireland, they signed an agreement with the British government for the release of twenty-six of the thirty-two Irish counties under a treaty to be known as the Irish Free State. While this was a significant time in Irish history, many of those who had been involved in the Irish War of Independence did not agree with this treaty and had wanted all of the counties returned to Ireland. The issue in relation to this involved the GAA, as GAA supporters who had fought together for a united Ireland, were now on opposite sides during this civil war. While this war continued until 1923, the ill-feeling amongst these supporters on opposite sides, meant the GAA had to help mediate these feelings. The GAA was at the heart of bringing these people back together and attempting to make past, part of history. The GAA used Gaelic games as a way of bringing back communities and families together and end the oppositions that people had turned to during the civil war. McDonnell (2009, 15), remarked that participants took pride in their parish over everything else. This is what the GAA wanted to instil in to the communities that we are all Irish, we are all one, put aside all ill feelings and celebrate once more.

7. 1930 – 1980 AN ERA OF EXPANSION

7.1. Establishing 'Us' and 'Them'

The GAA while being at the heart and soul of all things Irish at this time, had to endure further problems in the future. In 1935, the GAA had issues involving County Kerry, when they withdrew from the All Ireland Championship, due to the treatment of Irish prisoners at the hands of the Irish government. With its problems in Ireland, the GAA had other issues in relation to Northern Ireland, whereby there had been strong opposition from Protestant and Loyalist government. In spite of opposition from these establishments, the GAA was able to establish itself and has grown from strength to strength in the province of Ulster (which Northern Ireland is within). The motivations of the GAA can be envisaged while they supported republicanism throughout the battle for freedom from Ireland, once this freedom had been achieved, politics was no longer welcome inside that of the GAA.

While the GAA has its positive markings, it has also had some negative aspects in relation to the organisation. The term 'foreign' is used to distinguish between sports that are Irish and those that had been brought into Ireland, by Britain, such as soccer, cricket and rugby. From an early age the GAA had established a rule known as Rule 27, stating that no member of its organisation could participate or attend foreign games. This had been done so, to help establish GAA games with a strong foothold when the organisation had been founded. While this had been in place for numerous decades, Douglas Hyde, who had been a patron for the GAA and also the President of Ireland in 1938, had to attend a 'foreign' game. McDonnell (2009, 16), established that in 1938, President Douglas Hyde due to his duties, broke Rules 27, hereby losing his position as patron of the GAA. This had been a rule in place to protect the status of the organisation and to inhibit players and spectators attending other sporting games. This rule had not only been in place for a considerable duration, but it continued to stay in position until 1971, when a GAA congress meeting in Belfast decided to not only overturn the rule but to abolish it completely.

7.2. Building New Ground

Grounds began to be developed across the country through initiatives undertaken through the GAA by local groups. The establishment of numerous GAA clubs with their own permanent facilities was something that the GAA had wanted for a long time. The GAA in its beginning had no facilities to permanently position clubs in, so they played matches where they could in the local areas and where needed many clubs had to rent land from landlords to use the fields. This money had to be collected locally and paid to the landlord. The GAA wanted to turn away from this type of 'residency' as they wanted clubs to have permanent places within the communities and they helped with fundraising and made available money from the GAA to support the initiatives. Cronin et al. (2009, 126), acknowledged that the majority of money used to purchase grounds, were collected locally, with some money available as a grant from the GAA. Collection of money from fundraising could only go so far in the short term, but if there was to be permanent residences for GAA clubs in the communities it was this aid from the GAA that made it possible.

The GAA and its members were also there for their communities when they needed them. It was not a one way street for these people who got support and money from locals when they needed fundraising. When the GAA heard that rural farmers were in hard times, they gave the support that was needed through its members. Cronin et al. (2009, 228) noted that in 1946 after a summer of bad weather and crop production, the country went to the aid of rural food producers where volunteers helped and backed by the GAA. It was a way of the GAA supporting those who had supported them through the years and was a way of showing, the GAA is here for you and we are part of your community.

7.3. Charity Begins at Home

Local was the essential for what the GAA had been based upon. The development plan from the beginning involved every club in ever parish and this was the plan that they kept to task at all times and when they could help they did. An example of the GAA's importance in relation to the local communities could be seen in the example in reference to Fethard GAA club in County Tipperary. Cronin et al. (2009, 128)

remarked that Fethard had made attempts to purchase land for a permanent residence for their club and fundraised locally, while finally sealing the purchase in 1957. The importance of this for Fethard at the time related to a permanent residence and playing field for the local peoples GAA club. They had been for a long time in temporary locations, but wanted a place to permanently establish Fethard GAA in the community. Fethard were not the only parish that were attempting to finally achieve their permanent playing fields after so long of renting. Cronin et al. (2009, 128) reflected on how many clubs and counties had to show development and sustainable plans, so as to gain grants from the GAA to aid purchase of lands for Gaelic sports. The main basis for the grant from the GAA had to be shown on plans by the local GAA clubs as to how they planned to develop the lands and show how they intended to sustain there use long term. Without these grants, many of the local clubs could not have afforded to have their playing fields.

Image 5. Camogie in Croke Park in the 1930's

7.4. The Community

During the 1960's and 1970's as many people emigrated from rural societies to a more urban living, many villages grew to the size of towns and many towns grew to the size of cities. To combat this decline, the GAA helped to development a closer relationship along the lines with social integration both in rural and urban areas. The basis of this project, enabled those who had left rural areas for work in the urban areas, could

integrate easier into city life, while being a part of not only a sports club, but a combined sports and social club, which had been similarly done in rural areas. The opposite of this effect for rural areas, was that the plan had been developed to create a more community social based gathering for all people to meet, rather than just for sports events. This enabled the creation of recreation facilities that provided meeting rooms, cards and billiards facilities along with facilities for ballad sessions, parties and other social gatherings. Cronin et al. (2009, 232) remarked that grants had been given to help clubs fund major physical infrastructure, such as, dressing rooms, functions rooms, catering and bar facilities while voluntary labour helped keep costs down. These facilities became part of the community facilities for the people of the villages and towns, whereby without these facilities made available by the GAA, they would not have had the facilities for socialising in the community in general.
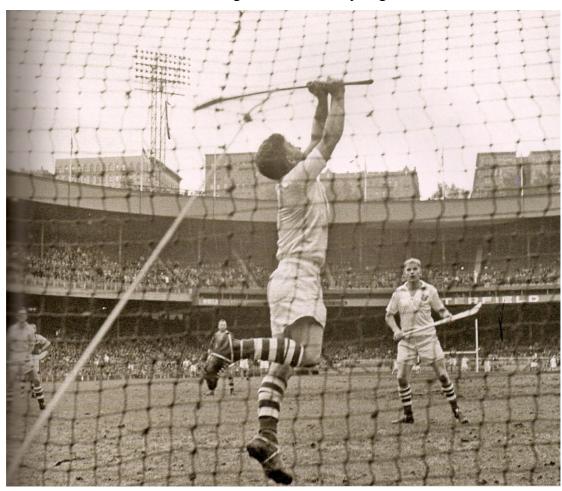

Image 6. Hurling in the Polo Grounds, New York in 1954

8. 1981 – 2010 A MODERN ERA OF STABILITY

8.1. Breaking with Tradition

From a national perspective, there are many positive things that the GAA has done in its contribution to Irish life. Although a criticism to be made of the GAA refers to another one of its rules which is known as Rule 21. This rule forbids any members of the British Army, Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) the police force of Northern Ireland, who is now known today as the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI), from participating in GAA games. Unfortunately, this event did not take place until November 2001, three years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. While this rule was long overdue to be abolished, there were historical reasons as to why it was kept in place until the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. In the hearts and souls of many Irish people, they never could forget what British soldiers had done in Croke Park on Bloody Sunday 1920. In a more positive aspect the GAA had continued to grow throughout the country since its original foundation and as of the year 2000, there were around 2,000 GAA clubs to be found throughout the country. McDonnell (2009, 17), noted that most of these clubs have top facilities, while having the local support of their community and usually attract great numbers of spectators.

While positive moves have been generated over the last number of decades by the GAA, the underlying aspects of amateurism at one stage or another would appear. During the late 1980's towards the 1990's the GAA had been increasing the money it had been making through having amateur players, that were the entertainment, but were not paid. In the 1990's towards the end of the decade, it had been an open secret that county team managers were being paid under the table payments. This was against the policy of what the GAA based itself up on, but it continued with little else other than being frowned upon. This aspect is very clear, payment for playing means professionalism. This is one matter the GAA would not move on. The significance of these under- hand payments led to the players asking for financial rewards for participation at county level. The GAA slammed the door on this topic and stated that under no circumstances would we make hurling or Gaelic football professional, as it goes against everything that we were established upon. The players decided that in 1999 that they wanted representation and established the Gaelic Players Association (GPA). This was the setting for many of these inter-county level players to state that

they wanted monetary return for playing and even threatening strike action. This
resulted in ill-feeling between the GAA and the GPA, whereby the GAA denounced the
organisation. After pro-longed negotiations, the GAA accepted the organisation on the
merit, that under no circumstances could the GAA be forced to do pay for play deals.
While the negative aspects to what the players union had erupted, in turn created a
much better position for the players where by more money was invested by the GAA in
player welfare and they also loosened the rules to allow players to make monetary
value from commercial sponsorships within their sport.

8.2. Embracing Others

Further challenges were to be faced by the GAA to their main ethos. The aspect of
volunteerism is not something that had just erupted in Ireland during social movements,
but had always been part of Irish life. The challenge to face the GAA in the 1990's and
at the turn of the new millennium, positioned the GAA in the middle of the Celtic Tiger
success and consumerism. The fight for the GAA at this time was to maintain its
foundations based on amateurism and volunteerism. While the disposable incomes of
many Irish families increased, there is no doubt that with more money, peoples time
also came at an increased value. The ideology that one works hard and gets paid well, is
a distinct aspect of what Irish life had become, during the Celtic Tiger, but fortunately
for the GAA this aspect did not follow through to all other aspects of Irish life. A
published report in 2005 showed that, 42 per cent of all those who volunteered in
Ireland, did so for the GAA. While the overall growth of the GAA has continued
beyond any believable perspective that they could have dreamed for at that founding
meeting, the GAA has had to turn certain aspects of the organisation towards
professionalization. Much of the administrative work that occurred in Dublin at Croke
Park had to be given full time employees with salaries. This practical move has enabled
the GAA to have full time workers fulfilling duties at both at national level, regional
and county level of GAA board levels. But it is at local level, where voluntary work
still is the most significant aspect for the GAA. Without these individuals, the GAA
could not exist.

As of, April 16 2005, Rule 42 had been temporarily suspended to allow both the Irish
rugby and soccer teams to play at Croke Park, while Lansdowne Road, now known as

the Aviva stadium was being completed. This rule had been in place to prevent 'foreign' games from being played at Croke Park. While this had been the case, it seemed that this rule was only based on soccer and rugby, as American Football, major boxing fights and concerts had been held in the stadium for numerous years. This was a decision undertaken by the GAA voluntarily to remove Rule 42 temporarily, although highly significant in overall matters, there were advantageous reasons behind the temporary removal of the ban. For every game that the Irish national football and rugby teams played at Croke Park, the GAA were making almost €2 million per game. Some would say voluntary objectives at a price.

8.3. Community Spirit

Volunteers are the back bone to the basis and also to the success of what the GAA has become. It is the dedication of these individuals who go beyond and self interest to put the success of the GAA and their progress at its centre piece. Volunteers have been an asset and always essential to the Association, so much that the organisation could not have survived and later thrived in parishes, villages, towns and suburbs across the country without these people. Cronin et al. (2009, 133), remarked that local fundraising by the GAA had success through local lottery, race nights (for camels, horses or dogs), mock weddings, elections and fashion shows. Fundraising is a significant part of helping to run the GAA clubs locally and these types of fundraising methods have helped to pay the overall running costs associated with these clubs.

The GAA acts not only as a sports club, but also as a social club for many in parishes. It was the centre of the community, where matches became a social gathering for those who wanted a break from the realities of tough daily life and offered a platform for those to integrate. While the main objective of GAA clubs was for sporting matters, the clubs activities went beyond the sporting environment. The GAA clubs acted as social hubs, as the GAA opened its venues and organised off-field activities such as running formal functions, annual balls, fund-raising dances and celebrations. These actions enabled the GAA to reach out to those who would not necessarily participate in GAA and bring them into the community through these initiatives, helping in the growth of the GAA. The basis for this success was based on the openness for all classes of people, to be involved. This had been insisted upon originally by Maurice Davin at the founding meeting of the Association, whereby he insisted that the organisation was

there for those who wanted recreation and had been shunned by other codes of sport, such as athletics, soccer and rugby. As it was in the beginning, the same emphasis is on the integration of new communities that are able to participate freely in sport and other movements off the field.

In the early beginnings of the organisation, they had requirements that must be met, to become and remain members of the GAA. Cronin et al. (2009, 220) commented that there were no regulations preventing membership in the GAA except participants of 'foreign games'. Thankfully as times have progressed and new changes have been made to allow further participation in others sports, without the fear of expulsion from the GAA.

8.4. Challenges to re-growth

Through the 1980's as the recession took its mark on Irish society, there was mass emigration from areas around Ireland. The west coast of Ireland was mainly to be affected by the movement of people from these areas to the east coast of the country or to further a field. From this mass emigration in the 1980's, the turn of the 1990's and on brought new challenges for the GAA. The reality of losing so many people in clubs during the 1980's had evened out by the turn of the 1990's, however there were new communities that started to immigrate to Ireland, that the GAA had been faced with a new challenge to entice these new individuals into their community. This had been aided by the assimilation of children from abroad into Irish schools and their participation in GAA games within the schools.

The importance of the GAA is found through the appeal of its games and the strength of the local allegiances which are made up by parishes, villages, towns, cities and counties. The way the GAA has organised itself, is such that it is locally based within the communities and there is not a village, town or city that does not have a GAA club for those locals to show there allegiances to. McDonnell (2009, 19) reported that the GAA is the passion in communities and passion and pride that a match between children from rival parishes can be similar to rival supporters in Croke Park on All Ireland final Sunday. The GAA is what the passion for sport is about. One can support teams that are in other cities and even countries, but the pride of seeing your

neighbours, family and friends playing for their jersey and community, is second to none. This is at all levels of the GAA. The pride to wear your clubs jersey and play the best you can for your team, not for your individual adulation is what makes the GAA part of the community.

New challenges have come face to face with GAA clubs and their lands, whereby property developers have been attempting to purchase and in some cases have purchased the GAA clubs facilities. Cronin et al. (2009, 133) examined that, *"Soaring values of land meant that some GAA clubs were made offers by developers for their grounds. In towns across the country, clubs relocated to reap the benefit of new and larger purpose built facilities, even if they lost something of their past by leaving their own grounds."* Where these purchases have taken place, the GAA clubs have in turn replaced these facilities with new first class facilities that they otherwise could not have afforded without a purchase of their lands. These have meant clubs moving but not far away from their existing locations, making it a good deal for some of the GAA clubs locally.

Image 7. The New GAA: Ashbourne GAA Club in County Meath

9. POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE G.A.A IN THE FUTURE

9.1. Financial Position

The Gaelic Athletic Association has had a very prosperous economic boost in the last number of years during the development of the old Lansdowne Road, home to both national teams in soccer and rugby. During this time, the GAA were being rewarded with significant revenues in rental fees for the use of Croke Park as a venue for the national team home games in both codes of sport. The significance of this money related to an income of over €2 million as a result of each game that took place there. This money made a significant increase in to the coffers of the GAA beyond previous years of income, even considering the income from music concerts and sports events such as boxing in the previous years. The annual report for 2010 by the GAA shows that in both of the previous two years, gate receipts alone had brought in an income of over €25 million. This is significantly large money by any amateur association's standards and is only in relation to the gate receipts for games. Commercial income alone for those two years were almost €17 million in 2008 and in 2009 almost €20 million. The GAA has the financial muscle to maintain its significant structures for years to come. While in saying this, the income generated by the GAA is always put back into the GAA, so in its basic sense, the GAA as a business operation re-invests its profit margins into its system after all costs are taken care of.

9.2. The Economic Impact of GAA in Sport

The Gaelic Athletic Association in Ireland is the most profitable amateur organisation in the country and also one of the most profitable overall sports including professional sports played in Ireland. As mentioned previously, the GAA has significant incomes from the supporters who attend the games, buy merchandise and the other commercial incomes from sponsorship and media coverage. The significance of this income is such that this enables the GAA to fund its operation to all levels right to the base of its operation at local level with GAA clubs. This funding can come from grants that make it possible for local clubs and county boards to get extra needed funding other than those self raised locally to help maintain or upgrade facilities for the GAA communities across the country. The result of this income enables the GAA to maintain large

stadiums across the country whereby the top ten stadiums in capacity size have a minimum of 30,000 capacity while the top thirty stadiums in the country owned by the GAA have at least 15,000 and above in capacity. While the GAA is an amateur organisation, it is now organised in to a professional structure, which has helped to keep the finances on the organisation in a healthy profit, which is re-distributed to clubs and councils with the GAA games nationally.

9.3. What is ahead for the future of the GAA?

The future of the Gaelic Athletic Association is bright both domestically and on the rise internationally. While the GAA has its main purpose domestically, with the rising number of GAA clubs evolving abroad, the GAA is growing in demand and expanding. The GAA is in a situation whereby they have a domestic committee which take care of the issues in Ireland, but they also must have international committee boards while, still under the watchful eyes of the main GAA headquarters in Croke Park, they control areas abroad. Two of the main boards abroad responsible for GAA are the European and the North American boards. These international boards follow the guidelines set by the GAA and follow the strict development plan set out by the GAA on international expansion and development of the sport.

The GAA conducts international events such as the All Star games, whereby the top players of the previous two years that have been selected, play demonstration games abroad and have done so in places such as Argentina, Australia, the United States, Singapore and even Hong Kong. The GAA also maintains a regular event along with the Australian Rules football of the Australian Football League whereby the two organisations play a game of compromised rules from the two sports of Aussie Rules and Gaelic football and has been taking place regularly for the last decade or so. This helps to create interest of Gaelic games in Australia while attracting those from the Aussie Rules game to come and watch the events whether in Ireland or Australia. These events are a significant marketing tool for that of the GAA.

Image 8. Modern-day Croke Park

10. CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND EVALUATION

10.1. Conclusions

The GAA is a significant part of both Irish community and culture. It has played a role in the country both during the good economic and miserable economic times and has been a reliable source of positivity in the sporting world of Ireland. The GAA plays a role whereby everyone is welcome either as a participant or those who rather just socialise, but the significance for the GAA and its importance is that it is a community and also a lifeline for many away either at home or away from home.

As many sports in the modern era produce significant income from their events they organise, it is positive to see that the GAA sticks to its roots and maintains its approach along the lines of the community. Without these communities the GAA would never have grown as immense as it has in Ireland, nor would it be in such a positive position that it finds itself today, financially.

To examine the roots of the GAA is to examine what makes the heart of the GAA beat. Underneath all that modern exterior of new stadia and facilities, there are two constants that has never changed, the communities who are the heart and soul of what the GAA is about, with those volunteers from these communities as the people who maintain the heartbeat of the GAA.

10.2. Suggestions

The GAA has made significant moves towards improving the systems that operate within the GAA and also in helping those who play the sport, particularly at the top level. While there has been a constant argument towards players receiving payments for playing, the GAA has rejected these propositions and are correct in doing so, as if they were to allow payments, it would tear the soul out of a community and national sport and make it soulless and passionless like may other sports where the participants are more concerned with making money than playing for those who they represent and share a community with.

In saying this, the GAA still needs to maintain its roots within the communities and it is important that they do not marginalise these communities with some of their decision making. Payments to staff are a significant cost towards the administration of the GAA and it is important that they maintain these structures at Croke Park, but in saying that, these payment structures should not come down the level to players or even volunteers at county and regional board levels. The foundations of the GAA are based on volunteers and not workers and it is pivotal for the GAA to maintain this position, as not to damage the structures in place since its origination.

10.3. Evaluation of the study

The study had been conducted to examine the role of the GAA in Ireland. There is no doubting the role of the GAA in the community both locally and nationally. This research was aimed at showing the link between the GAA and its communities and evaluating the GAA's position it holds in Irish culture. While the research has been based on a more theoretical platform, it would have done more justice in being more hands on and practical in Ireland in conducting interviews, focus groups and questionnaires, although in the time scale involved in comparison to that of doctoral studies, the study could not have gone into such detail.

The importance of this research is such that it can be a foundation for further research in this area while examining the structure of the GAA at more detailed level in the future. With the possibilities of taking this area of research to doctoral level, the research can become more dedicated and detailed through various interview processes both in the communities in Ireland and in the GAA organisation. In doing this it would enable a further detailed examination of the sociology that is involved between communities and the GAA as a sporting body. This could enable an interesting evaluation of what sport means to a society, while opening the opportunity for the examination of the sociology of those supporters in both an amateur and that of a professional sport context.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Bradley, Joseph M. (2007). 'Gaelic Sport, Soccer and Irishness in Scotland', Sport in Society, 10(3), pp. 439 — 456. Retrieved from Sport Discus.

Brown, G. Yule, G. (1984). Discourse Analysis (2nd Ed), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Cronin, Mike. Mark Duncan and Paul Rouse, (2009). The GAA: A People's History, Cork, The Collins Press.

Darby. Paul, (2007). 'Gaelic Games, Ethnic Identity and Irish Nationalism in New York City c.1880-1917', Sport in Society, 10 (3), pp347 - 367. Retrieved from Sport Discus Devine. Adrian, Devine. Frances (2006), 'Sports Tourism: Marketing Ireland's Best Kept Secret' – The Gaelic Athletic Association, Irish Journal of Management, 7-32.

Dunning. Eric, Kenneth Sheard (2005). Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A sociological study of the development of rugby football, Routledge, London.

Eisenberg, D. (2003). The NBA's global game plan: as the best hoopsters flock to the U.S., the sport grows more popular - and profitable - worldwide. Time, 161 (11), 45-46; 49.

Fulton, Gareth and Bairner, Alan (2007). Sport, Space and National Identity in Ireland: The GAA, Croke Park and Rule 42', Space and Polity, 11(1), pp55 — 74. Retrieved from Sport Discus.

Georgakopoulou. Alexandra, Dionysis Goutsos (1997). Discourse Analysis: An Introduction, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Green. Mick (2006). From 'Sport for All' to Not About'Sport' at All?: Interrogating Sport Policy Interventions in the United Kingdom, European Sport Management Quarterly, Vol. 6, No. 3, 217-238, September

Gruneau. Richard (2006).'Amateurism' as a Sociological Problem: Some Reflections Inspired by Eric Dunning, Sport in Society, Vol. 9, No. 4, October, pp. 559–582.

Hassan. David, (2007). The Role of Gaelic Games in the lives of the Irish Diaspora in Europe, Sport in Society, 10 (3), pp. 385–401. Retrieved from Sport Discus

Hekman, Susan. J, (1986). Hermeneutic's and the Sociology of Knowledge, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Inglis. Sue (1997). Roles of the Board in Amateur Sport Organizations, Journal of Sport Management, 11, 160- 176, Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc.

Koenigstorfer, Joerg, Groeppel-Klein, Andrea and Kunkel, Thilo (2010). 'The Attractiveness of National and International Football Leagues: Perspectives of Fans of "Star Clubs" and "Underdogs"', European Sport Management Quarterly, 10: 2, 127 — 163.

Marks, David F. & Yardley, Lucy (2004). Research Methods for Clinical and Health Psychology, Sage Publications, London

Mayall, David (Editor); Cronin, Michael (Editor); Mangan, J. A. (Contributor) (1998). Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation. Frank Cass Publishers, London.

McAnallen, Dónal, Mossey, Peter & Moore. Stephen (2007). Sport in Society, 10 (3), May 2007, 402– 424. Retrieved from Sport Discus.

McDonnell, Vincent (2009). The Story of the GAA, The Collins Press, Cork

McManus, Darragh (2007). GAA Confidential, Hodder Headline, Dublin

Miller, Robert L. & Brewer, John D (2003). The A-Z of Social Research, London

Paltridge, B. (2007), Discourse Analysis (2nd Ed). London, Continuum

Pawlucki. Andrzej (Ed) (2003). Postmodernity and Olympism, Academy of Physical Education and Sport, Gdansk

Reilly. Thomas and Collins. Kieran. (2008). 'Science and the Gaelic sports: Gaelic football and hurling', European Journal of Sport Science, 8(5), 31 - 240. Retrieved from Sport Discus.

Rowe. David, (2003), Sport and the Repudiation of the Global, International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 38(3), pp. 281–294. Retrieved from Sport Discus

Turner. Paul & Shilbury, David (2010). The Impact of Emerging Technology in Sport Broadcasting on the Preconditions for Interorganizational Relationship (IOR) Formation in Professional Football, Journal of Sport Management, 24, 10-44.

Weber. Robert P. (1985). Basic Content Analysis, Series: Quantitative Application's in the Social Science's, Sage Publication's, London.

Wilson, Brian (2007). New Media, Social Movements, and Global Sport Studies: A Revolutionary Moment and the Sociology of Sport, Sociology of Sport Journal, 24, 457-477.

WEBSITES BIBLIOGRAPHY

Computing in the humanities and the social sciences – University of Toronto, Canada
http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/iih/AboutHermeneutics.htm

School of Information at the University of Texas, USA – Content Analysis
http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~palmquis/courses/content.html

The School of Information at the University of Texas, USA – Discourse Analysis
http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~palmquis/courses/discourse.htm

General History of the GAA
http://www.gaa.ie/page/the_birth_of_cumann_luthcleas_gael.html

General Information on the GAA
http://www.gaa.ie Retrieved on March 14, 2009
Retrieved on March 14, 2009

GAA Website – GAA Abroad.
http://www.gaa.ie/page/gaa_abroad.html Retrieved on March 16, 2009

List of further websites in relation to the GAA research and are from the GAA.
http://asap.gaa.ie/
http://www.crokepark.ie/
http://www.sportsfile.com/photo-essays/gaa/
http://www.visitdublin.com/mp3/iwalk12_Croke_Park.mp3
http://www.gaa.ie/page/125_video.html
http://www.gaa.ie/page/official_guides.html
http://www.gaahistory.com/
http://www.gaa.ie/page/gaa_websites.html
http://www.cul4kidz.com/
http://www.gaa.ie/page/communication_to_clubs.html
http://www.medicalwelfare.gaa.ie/
http://www.gaa.ie/page/gaa_injury_scheme.html

IMAGE REFERENCES

Kenny's – Image 1
www.kennys.ie

The Gaelic Athletic Association – Image 2
www.gaachannel.com

Croke Park from the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh – Image 3 Page
http://www.iiofpitt.org/UserFiles/File/Common%20Ground%20February%202007/Common%20Ground%20February%202007.htm

The GAA: A People's History (2009), Cork, The Collins Press
Image 4 – Page 380
Image 5 – Page 122
Image 6 – Page 101
Image 7 – Page 236

Croke Park – Image 8
http://www.paschaldonohoe.ie/?p=2714