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The 'Me' Arena: Examples of Capitalism within the National Hockey League and National Basketball Association, 1950-1989

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Abstract

Background: During the decades after World War II major North American professional sport leagues, including the National Basketball Association and National Hockey League expanded across the United States and Canada. This expansion necessitated the construction of new multipurpose sport facilities. While facility construction history is present in sport management, little attention has been given to sport facility construction as an intentional product of capitalism.

Purpose: An understanding of Western history, along with present and future conditions, requires an acknowledgment and appreciation of consumerism and capitalism. The purpose of this study was to examine multipurpose sport facilities from a previous era and capitalist perspective to better understand current venue shapes, designs, and likely future forms.

Methods: The present study utilized Seifried's (2010a, 2017) historical methodology for sport management. Primary and secondary sources were secured using searchable academic databases and archival web sites. External and internal credibility checks were employed to determine the reliability and validity of sources. The authors organized and analyzed sources, triangulated data, developed themes, and minimized researcher, methodological, or theoretical bias. The source analysis and subsequent establishment of themes was informed by capitalism.

Results: Between 1950 and 1989, 36 multipurpose arenas were built in the United States and Canada to accommodate National Hockey League and National Basketball Association teams. The construction and design of these facilities focused on the individual needs of consumers, as well as demonstrating responses to economic changes and realities by sport managers and politicians. Notably, public financing of construction was a distinguishing feature of this period.

Conclusions: Managerial agency and appreciation for history and political, economic, and social realities is important. Increased wealth offered more opportunities to pursue leisure activities in increasingly service-conscious venues that offered multiple consumption options. These facilities helped transform the fan experience and expectations toward the current era we enjoy today from prompts via capitalism.

Keywords: **facilities, basketball, hockey, capitalism**

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1. Introduction

One decade after the conclusion of World War II, the National Hockey League (NHL) and National Basketball Association (NBA) supported a small stable membership of six and eight franchises respectively. However, with such a small number of franchises, the NHL and NBA eventually faced ownership, revenue, and player issues during the 1950s and 1960s, as the United States (U.S.) and Canadian economies improved and markets subsequently jockeyed for attention, legitimacy, and respect on national stages through support of sport properties (Ross, 2008). For the NHL and NBA, these conditions prompted each league to develop strategies of retrenchment, relocation, and expansion (Brewitt, 1975; Koppett, 1999; Ross, 2008). Thus, by the end of the 1970s, the NHL and NBA increased to 21 and 22 total franchises over the U.S. and Canada. Regarding expansion, the growth of each league also included the absorption of some franchises from the World Hockey Association (WHA) and American Basketball Association (ABA) whose declines were mainly attributed to their use of small arenas that produced insufficient revenues to sustain operations (Koppett, 1999; McKinely, 2006; Pluto, 1990).

Within this era of relocation and expansion, municipally elected politicians notably and frequently combined their resources to build new, modern facilities for major professional sports leagues (Seifried & Pastore, 2009). As one example, in Milwaukee, WI, civic leaders famously utilized municipal funds to construct new venues that were capable of attracting major professional teams (e.g., Boston Braves and Tri-Cities Blackhawks) to the city, thus, creating the Milwaukee Model of facility construction many cities followed (Seifried & Pastore, 2009; Sullivan, 1987). With respect to basketball and hockey, the Milwaukee city council approved the construction of a sports arena in 1946 ("Milwaukee Plans Arena," 1946). Costing approximately $6 million ($72,860,373.44 in 2022) when it opened in 1950 ("Six Clubs Accepted," 1950), the 11,046-seat Milwaukee Arena hosted the NBA's Milwaukee Hawks (i.e., now Atlanta) after the owners of the Tri-Cities Blackhawks of Moline, IL, Rock Island, IL, and Davenport, IA decided to move from their smaller markets and venue (e.g., 6,000-seat Wharton Field House) (Jozsa, 2010).

Interestingly, the extant literature on the evolution of sport facilities provides important commentary on and criticism of the management of professional sport teams in the U.S. and Canada from the nineteenth century to present (e.g., Scherer et al., 2019; Shubert, 2011, 2016; Siegfried & Zimbalist, 2000; Swindell & Rosentraub, 1998). Yet, additional reviews of the literature show that while some scholars studied professional sport teams, there is little attention given to facilities as intentional products of capitalism (Downs & Seifried, 2021a; Seifried & de Wilde, 2014).

The available reviews of leagues, franchises, facilities, and cities (e.g., Shubert, 2016) primarily focus on the political-economic factors that led to construction of a facility and less on the capitalist ambitions and/or consumer perspectives, which impacted that generation of venues. This is interesting because the central tenants of capitalism include considerations such as capital accumulation, the development of competitive markets, the establishment of pricing systems for various consumer groups, the creation of property rights and recognition of duties (e.g., lease agreements), and pursuit or enhancement of revenue sources (Levy, 2021).

Related to the present study, Cook and Glickman (2008) and Levy (2021) also noted that an understanding of U.S. history and subsequently present conditions requires an understanding of consumerism and capitalism. Professional sport organizations are profit-seeking entities and regularly look to improve their bottom-line through offering better products and services via facilities. Further, owners of capitalist-based businesses are often found to utilize market information to motivate purchases of different consumer-based developed products and services and their sale at multiple price points (Gregory & Stuart, 2013). Collectively, this may be why Chen (2022) urged sport management scholars to examine the field's relationship with capitalism and to better understand and recognize its connection to and impact on class struggle.

Lastly, the present study claims it is appropriate to examine major professional hockey and basketball arenas from a previous era and capitalist perspective to better understand current venue shapes, designs, and likely future forms. Moreover, the large public investment and professional sport team interest in multipurpose arenas during the era of expansion raises several questions for the present study. For instance, we are interested to know:

1. What capitalist-related factors contributed to the expansion of major professional hockey and basketball following the Milwaukee Model?
2. What capitalist-related features of multipurpose arenas built between the 1950 and 1989 were required for participation and survival of NHL and NBA organizations?
3. How do the facilities emerging during the era of expansion impact more modern venues offered in recent years and compare to their predecessors in the Golden Age of arena construction in the 1920s?

Of note, understanding and contextualizing the advantages of expansion era arenas over Golden Age (i.e., 1920s) venues can show how the expansion era not only prompted the new structures that exist today but how they initiated items like the establishment of state-of-the-art clauses and various building codes to guide subsequent renovation or new constructions (Foster et al., 2015).

To facilitate the answering of these questions, the current study uses the historical research approach to collect data and examine the construction and design of all expansion era multipurpose arenas used by the NHL and NBA. The present research begins in 1950 with the construction of Milwaukee Arena, the first multipurpose arena built after World War II, and ends in 1989 with the completion of the Orlando Arena, the last of the recognized expansion-era venues (Downs & Seifried, 2021a).

2. Literature Review

The growth of major professional sport in North America has drawn attention from academicians interested in understanding the social, political, economic, and financial implications of professional sport for both individuals and society. Shubert (2016) suggested that sport facility studies are primarily the target of sport historians, urban studies scholars, and cultural anthropologists. Still, political and economic scholars have also contributed centrally to the body of sport-facility knowledge and the implications of facility construction for citizens and communities alike (Lubrano, 2005; Thornley, 2002). Noticeably, there is a paucity of an interdisciplinary sport management-history consideration regarding the evolution of professional hockey and basketball facilities as a product or contributor to capitalism. The proceeding review of literature examines interdisciplinary sport management facility literature, with specific consideration given to (a) examinations of multipurpose sport facilities; (b) financial and economic impact studies of multipurpose sport facilities; (c) sport franchise history and franchises as a common good; (d) contextualizing capitalism.

Sport Facilities and Sport as Business

With respect to capitalism, Shubert (2016) produced the most comprehensive historical accounting of multipurpose arenas in the U.S. and Canada tracing the evolution of hockey facilities from their beginning as open air, natural surface spaces. Shubert further presented the architectural changes to these facilities as occurring over six stages; moreover, he incorporated elements of cultural history (e.g., rise of capitalism) to conclude that the troublesome state of multipurpose arenas (i.e., profit-centered, large consumers of energy, displays of class differences) in North America resulted from the perversion of U.S. capitalism. Beyond Shubert's (2016) study of professional hockey arenas, attempts at comprehensive understanding of the multipurpose sport facility are scant but some contributions have occurred. Downs and Seifried (2021a, 2021b) employed modernization theory to describe the development of hockey and basketball arenas from the sport studies and management perspectives respectively. Within, Downs and Seifried (2021b) profiled the construction of multipurpose arenas in response to economic development following World War I (i.e., Golden Age facilities) as being important to the success of the NHL. Relatedly, Downs and Seifried (2021a) proposed future design elements and trends of facility construction in the era of globalization. Still, neither work featured the importance of the expansion era or studied the impact of capitalism.

Other works focused on the development of professional hockey and basketball leagues also provide some detail of the business realities facing the leagues, as well as descriptions of some of the facilities wherein the sports are showcased. For instance, an examination of the histories of the NBA (e.g., Koppett, 1999; Peterson, 1990; Surdam, 2012), (e.g., Bass, 2011; McKinley, 2006), and ABA and WHA (e.g., Pluto, 1990; Willes, 2004) appear to contextualize the evolutions of the often-improvised facilities used by teams following financial difficulties, storms, fires, and natural disasters. Furthermore, some historical surveys of sport facility use within a specific city location provide additional details regarding the general histories of sport and facilities. As an example, Trumpbour (2007), Seifried and de Wilde (2014), and Weiner (2000) produced works that evaluated how facility financing deals were arranged for specific facilities, while Elzey and Wiggins (2015), Foulds (2005), and Swanson and Wiggins (2016), presented the evolution of sport and venues within Washington, D.C., Boston, and Philadelphia.

Still, these works similarly offer minimal insights into modernization of sport facilities or feature the impact of capitalism on those venues.

Financial and Economic Focused Studies

Interestingly, other studies on sport franchises, particularly those within the NHL and NBA, suggest they relocated in pursuit of profit. During the time period being considered for this project, individual ownership of an NHL franchise was particularly appealing because the league continued to enjoy over 90% average capacity attendance through the mid-1970s, thus, suggesting ownership in the NHL would likely provide a positive return on investment (El Hodiri & Quirk, 1974; Horvitz & Hoffman, 1976). Beyond return on investment, ownership of a major professional sport franchise also provided a tax shelter for owners where they could delay and reduce their tax obligations (Horvitz & Hoffman, 1976; Koch, 1974). More specifically, savvy team owners could establish ownership of the team as an S-corporation so that they could deduct any of their team's financial losses from their personal income tax obligations (Koch, 1974).

The unanimity with which scholars repudiate the positive economic benefits (e.g., per capita income, jobs, sales) of professional sport facilities overall is also noteworthy. Within the context of sport facility construction, economic impact scholars routinely focused on topics like the (a) Substitution Effect; (b) Leakage; (c) Government budget shortfalls; and (d) per capita income (e.g., Baade & Dye, 1988; Noll & Zimbalist, 1997; Prophetter, 2012; Siegfried & Zimbalist, 2000; Swindell & Rosentraub, 1998). Siegfried and Zimbalist (2000) explained the substitution effect as the finite net spending allotment of individuals and groups within a specific area, while leakage or the multiplier effect, is often described as 'how and for how long' sport teams and employees spend money in the local area. Regarding budget shortfalls and per capita income, it was found that little or no tax revenue is generated by the facilities; moreover, per capita income did not increase with the development of new venues.

Lastly, facility funding, at least in the U.S., has also been featured as part of sport venue studies and shown to evolve throughout the 20th century as the result of federal tax legislation. For instance, Williams and Seifried (2013) outlined the three legislative changes to the U.S. tax code and how the changes affect facility financing. Most recently, the Tax Reform Act of 1986 altered the impact of the Revenue Expenditure and Control Act of 1968 (RECA). Of particular importance to this project, RECA extended tax exemptions from the Revenue Act of 1913 to bonds for sports facilities where at least 25% of their services were used by a private tenant and at least 25% of the revenues from the facility were used to service debt. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 ended the sport exemption and restricted bond interest exemptions to public facilities with no more than 10% nongovernment use, resulting in the contemporary debt financing arrangement between governments and private sports teams. One goal with the Tax Reform Act of 1986 was to reduce the benefits sport franchise owners receive at the expense of the public.

Franchise History and Public Good

During the latter part of the 20th century, professional sport franchises became increasingly adept at leveraging their history and ability to relocate as a way to negotiate advantageous new construction or renovation agreements with their host cities. Fisher (1993) acknowledged that team owners' loyalty was to profits and not necessarily cities. For this reason, relocation became accepted practice across the NBA and NHL during the expansion era. Yet, as leagues stabilized in size by the end of the 20th century, teams within cities became increasingly important symbols of those municipalities and states (Danielson, 1997). Danielson, as well as Shubert (1998) suggested that teams have capitalized on their symbolic status by strategically threatening to move, not only enhancing their status and revenue position, but that of their leagues as well.

Johnson et al. (2001) and Prophetter (2012) demonstrated that teams do provide limited public goods to cities, however, those benefits do not appear to justify large-scale public financing or subsidies given their relatively low return on investment. With respect to benefits, several scholars discussed a rationale to accept social and/or psychological outcomes related to civic pride and psychic income (Crompton, 2004; Groothuis et al., 2004; Groothuis & Rotthoff, 2016; Johnson et al., 2001; Lubrano, 2005; Schwester, 2007; Seifried & Clopton, 2013), revitalization of dilapidated areas, and improved land usage were also recognized as intangible outcomes (Lubrano, 2005; Seifried & Clopton, 2013; Swindell & Rosentraub, 1998). Still, the claims of sport teams and their stakeholders that teams provide some worthy intangible goods (Danielson, 1997; Swindell & Rosentraub, 1998; Trumpbour, 2007) are dismissed. Siegfried and Zimbalist (2000) and Prophetter (2012) both directly or indirectly indicate there is no meaningful evidence that arenas, even as part of a larger development plan, will result in any substantial changes for neighborhoods or cities. The collective authorship is also equally critical of the idea of sports franchises and events elevating the status of a city; again, they found no meaningful evidence that tourism, for example, improved because of a sports franchise or facility.

Contextualizing Capitalism

Capitalism, to varying degrees, has been viewed in the scholarly community with a sense of pessimism (Heilbroner, 1993). For Heilbroner, the pessimism surrounding capitalism rests on the belief that the system will destabilize as capital accumulation, conflict between the public and private sectors, and failed market responses cause the system to break down. The concern over capital accumulation, accompanied by corruption in pursuit of capital was the chief concern of several scholars (i.e., Chen, 2022; Dart, 2014; Gammelsaeter, 2021; Newman, 2014). Furthermore, Kocka (2016) suggested capitalism is often misunderstood by academics and laypersons alike. For Kocka, capitalism is a term and system utilized to "make stark contrasts to what is new or modern" (p. 6). Levy (2021) noted that capitalism is a system that emphasizes capital accumulation, the development of competitive markets, the establishment of pricing systems for various consumer groups, the creation of property rights and recognition of duties, and pursuit or enhancement of revenue sources.

Capitalism is also not a monolith. Rather, there are different types of capitalism that exist throughout the world. Baumol et al. (2007) identified four different distinct types of capitalism: (a) state-guided; (b) oligarchic; (c) big-firm; (d) entrepreneurial. Of these, the U.S. exists as a hybrid of big-firm and entrepreneurial capitalism. In the decades following World War II, Kocka (2016) identified managerial capitalism, as an important development in capitalism because it streamlined business operations by removing capital (owners) from day-to-day business operations in favor of entrepreneurs (managers). This arrangement allows employees to exercise fiduciary responsibility in the operation of organizations (Thompson, 2012). Location and degree of economic development is also important. Hall and Soskice (2001) suggested two distinct varieties of capitalism exist in the developed economic world. First, there are Liberal Market Economies (e.g., Canada and U.S.) where "firms coordinate their activities primarily via hierarchies and competitive market arrangements" and second there are Coordinated Market Economies (e.g., Germany and Sweden) where "firms depend more heavily on non-market relationships to coordinate their endeavors with other actors and to construct their core competencies" (p. 8). Critical to Hall and Soskice's (2001) approach is the extent to which a business entity can manage conflicts with parties on which it relies. The authors identified five spheres of concern for capitalist firms, (a) industrial relations (i.e., wages and productivity); (b) vocational training and education (i.e., worker skill and training); (c) corporate governance (i.e., financial investment); (d) inter-firm relations (i.e., supply chains);

and (e) employees (i.e., motivation). Within the context of Liberal Market Economies, such as that of the U.S., industrial relations often manifest as a response to national economic conditions, while vocational training and general education are provided by educational institutions. Concurrently, the position of the government and organizational structure of businesses promote profit maximization. Similarly, inter-firm relationships are controlled by government policy and/or contractual obligations.

Of importance to this project is the relationship between capitalism and major professional sport in the U.S., and to a lesser extent, the Canadian context. While the capitalism of the last two decades shifted to greater financialization as neoliberal policies took hold (Andersen, 2020; Downs & Seifried, 2021a; Kocka, 2016), identifying specific elements of capitalism and how the system is operationalized by sport managers operating in the Liberal Market Economy (Hall and Soskice, 2001) is necessary. This is particularly so as most scholars and practitioners are increasingly likely to work in sport, rather than own sport organizations.

Overall, scholarly examinations of basketball and hockey arenas in the U.S. and Canada presented how facilities were designed and developed. Moreover, venues and teams or leagues were explored regarding their social and economic benefits. Still, previous studies do not offer why arenas were designed and built in the specific ways with respect to capitalism. To say that professional sport facilities were built to maximize profits is simplistic and reductive. A nuanced understanding of intentionality in facility design to meet consumer expectations, as well as those of the increasing presence of formalized governing bodies, media, and ownership ambition should provide insight into why facilities are constructed during the expansion era and today. Further, such an examination would provide context for the expansion of professional sport facilities in the U.S. and Canada, while indicating the importance for sport managers to understand context, social factors, and consumerism within any region so that facility construction or renovation can be developed successfully.

3. Methodology

The historical methodology is a distinct type of research within sport management scholarship that has experienced increased use within recent years (Andrew et al., 2011; Downs & Seifried, 2021a; Girginov & Sandanski, 2008; Seifried & Katz, 2015; Seifried et al., 2017; Walker et al., 2018). The present study employed Seifried's (2010a, 2017) steps for sport management-based historical research. To begin, the current research relied on the collection and analysis of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are the preferred data type because they are produced by individuals directly involved with a phenomenon or who have a contemporaneous recollection of an event (Seifried, 2010a). Primary sources, such as political speeches, financial statements, and facility designs are key to the production of secondary sources of data which ensure the authenticity and credibility of historical research (Seifried, 2010a, 2017). The present study accumulated primary and secondary sources (e.g., scholarly journal articles and books) via searches of academic databases including HathiTrust Digital, JSTOR, Lexis-Nexis, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, and Google Scholar. This project also searched the archival newspaper web sites newspapers.com and newspaperarchive.com to accumulate contemporary newspaper coverage of sport facility design and construction. Newspapers serve a critical role in historical research because they are seen as generally accurate in reporting social information (Starc, 2007).

Second, data from primary and secondary sources underwent a source criticism (Seifried 2010a, 2017). The process of source criticism allows historical researchers to determine the validity and reliability of the data (Berg & Lune, 2012). Specifically, external and internal credibility checks were employed to determine the reliability and validity of sources. The external criticism check for authenticity involved verification that data came from established archival collections (i.e., reliability) or credible authors (Seifried, 2010a). The internal source criticism was completed to determine the validity of the data used and produced and realized through the effort to examine documents in their entirety (Decker, 2013; Donnelly & Norton, 2011; Kippling et al., 2014).

Following the completion of the external and internal source criticism, the authors organized and analyzed the sources, triangulated data, developed themes, and minimized researcher, methodological, or theoretical bias (Seifried, 2010a). To assist, the researchers recorded multipurpose facility data for municipalities that supported NHL and/or NBA franchises between 1950 and 1989 into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. The spreadsheets allowed the researchers to track notable instances and figures related to facility design, construction, cost and capitalist-related amenities to enhance the presentation of findings and themes (Booth, 2005). The source analysis and subsequent establishment of themes was informed by capitalism.

Data Analysis

Starting with the emergence of industrialization, the population and economy of the U.S. and Canada transitioned from a community-oriented/rural co-existence, to one that increasingly emphasized the needs and wants of the individual in urban city conditions (Grabb et al., 1999). By the end of the 1920s, continued growth of cities and that trend toward individual desires spawned a distinct consumer culture in North America and a model of Western capitalism (Shindo, 2010). To deal with the challenges imposed by the Great Depression, various New Deal programs (i.e., Sphere of Corporate Governance) were established in the U.S., ultimately expanding the role of the government in enhancing the lives of citizens, not just their survival but also meeting their increasing need to live in greater comfort (Harvey, 2005).

Following World War II, the economy in North America surged, in part, because the industry and infrastructure of the continental U.S. and Canada remained intact throughout World War II (Hendricks, 2019; Slater, 1997). By the close of the 1950s, the U.S. workforce shifted for the first time to one where the population of the professional managerial class (i.e., Sphere of Vocational Training and Education; Sphere of Employees) exceeded the population of skilled and unskilled laborers as the economy evolved from manufacturing to service industries (Young & Young, 2004). Importantly, the growing management class accompanied new prosperity as median family income rose, in the U.S. for example, from $3,319 in 1950 to $5,620 by 1960 (i.e., Sphere of Industrial Relations). When adjusted for inflation, median family income rose by more than $15,000 from $40,303.93 to $55,565.06 over the decade (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). As a result, the typical U.S. consumer had sufficient disposable income by 1960 to spend on leisure activities and entertainment, a trend that would continue for most of the rest of the century (Hendricks, 2019; Young & Young, 2004).

Perhaps the most important consumer product of the 1950s, or at least the product that would have the most significant impact on professional sport was the television (Hendricks, 2019; Grundy & Rader, 2016; Young & Young, 2004). While the ubiquity of the automobile in in the second half of the 20th century would ultimately result in an increased facility footprint via parking lots for stadiums and ballparks, television viewers and the advertising dollars television broadcasts generated gradually helped to position the remote spectator as on par if not more important than the in-stadium fan (Grundy & Rader, 2016; Seifried & Pastore, 2009). Grundy and Rader support the public attraction to television by identifying 75% of U.S. homes had a television by the late 1950s. Moreover, by 1960, 13% of U.S. homes had more than one television, thus presenting even more incentive to stay home (Young & Young, 2004).

In addition to rising wages and opportunities to engage in leisure spending that was increasingly common in the U.S., the population steadily rose in the decades after World War II, first through the Baby Boom and then as a result of economic prosperity. To illustrate this point, Young and Young (2004) suggested that because families had more disposable income (i.e., Sphere of Industrial Relations) the nuclear family grew to include three or four children. In addition to population growth, the concentration of population in the U.S. shifted from the Northeast and Midwest to the South and West Coast as moving away from one's hometown became normal following World War II deployments (Hendricks, 2019) and industrial expansion into less developed regions, such as the U.S. South (i.e., Sphere of Corporate Governance) (Lewis, 2007). Concurrently, an increased emphasis on the desires of individual freedoms and expression during the 1960s created an expectation that individual material desires should be prioritized in the U.S. and Canada (Andersen, 2020; Slater, 1997).

The spread of U.S. and also the Canadian population westward is of critical importance to understanding the expansion of facility construction in North America as, for example, the Pacific states realized 40% population growth each decade between 1950 and 1970 while the Southern and Mountain states experienced 20% population growth (Seifried & Pastore, 2009). Overall, as the U.S. and Canadian population expanded and incomes increased, new viable markets for professional sport emerged (Table 1).

The NHL of the Mid-to-Late 20th Century

As noted above, shifting populations and growing prosperity helped transform cities of the U.S. and Canadian West and American South into viable markets for professional sport. Additionally, the presence of television, as well as other broadcast mediums enabled sporting events and results to be broadcast nationwide, helping to create national rather than just regional fanbases (Hendricks, 2019). Technologically, the advent of the commercial jet airplane also decreased the time and expense of cross-country travel, making national, rather than regional leagues possible across both Canada and the U.S. (Young & Young, 2004).

The demographic forces and economic realities of the U.S. and Canada contributed to the NHL looking south and west for expansion. While the NHL had a stable and consistent source of revenue in terms of ticket sales, few options to generate further revenue existed unless new arenas were built or the league expanded (i.e., Sphere of Inter-firm Relations) (Bass, 2011). As one example, the growth of television cannot be understated regarding NHL expansion. In 1952, 10% of Canadian homes had a television set (McKinley, 2006). By comparison, in 1952, approximately 34% of U.S. homes also had televisions, a figure greater than the entire population of Canada in 1951. ("Number of TV Households," n.d.). By 1971, the number or U.S. homes with televisions grew to just under 61 million, while Canada's national population reached just below 22 million ("Number of TV households

Table 1

U.S. and Canadian populations and median family income by decade: 1950/51 to 1980/81

Country	Census Year	Population	Median Family Income	Income Adjusted for Inflation
United States	1950	151,325,798	$3,319	$40,303.93
Canada	1951	14,009,429	$3,821.69	$43,016.92
United States	1960	179,323,175	$5,620	$55,565.06
Canada	1961	18,238,247	$5,836.39	$57,125.54
United States	1970	203,302,031	$9,876	$74,491.47
Canada	1971	21,568,310	$11,543.30	$83,412.69
United States	1980	226,542,199	$21,023	$74,666.31
Canada	1981	24,343,180	$32,336.30	$104,107.89

Note. The population data for the United States are from History, by the U.S. Census Bureau, n.d. (https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/fast_facts/). Last revised December 5, 2022 by U.S. Census Bureau. The population data for Canada are from 1981 Census of Canada: Population: Age, sex and marital status, by Statistics Canada, 1982 (https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/statcan/CS92-901-1981.pdf). Copyright 1982 by Minister of Supply and Services Canada. The Median Family Income data are from National Center for Education Statistics, by the U.S. Department of Education, n.d. (https://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/yi/yi16.pdf). U.S. Department of Education. The Average Family Income data are from Statistics, by Canadian Council on Social Development n.d. (http://www.ccsd.ca/factsheets/fs_avgin.html). Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics. Inflation calculated using CPI Inflation Calculator, by Official Data Foundation, n.d. (https://www.officialdata.org/). Official Data Foundation.

,” n.d.). With such burgeoning populations and media markets, the NHL faced the possibility of a rival emerging to control various new markets (Bass, 2011).

The NHL formally expanded in 1967 when six new franchises (i.e., California Seals, Los Angeles Kings, Minnesota North Stars, Philadelphia Flyers, Pittsburgh Penguins, and St. Louis Blues) joined the league. The first wave of NHL expansion was notably targeted and noticeably non-Canadian. Overall, 15 bids from 10 cities (i.e., Baltimore, Bay Area, Buffalo, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Twin Cities, and Vancouver) were considered (Brewitt, 1975). In an example of the Sphere of Corporate Governance and Sphere of Inter-firm Relations, the primary factor in determining locations for expansion was heavily influenced by their projected television revenue (Brewitt, 1975; Carroll, 1966). Los Angeles and San Francisco were assured franchises as the league signaled that it was more focused on its finances than on maintaining Canadian cultural connections with the sport (Brewitt, 1975).

Of note, new franchises were required (e.g., Sphere of Inter-firm Relations) to provide a facility with a capacity of 12,500 seats with a renewable 10-year lease (Brewitt, 1975; Ross, 2008). The result of this requirement was that a professional league bureaucracy imposed size specifications and an added layer of intentionality on new facility construction. For instance, as a condition of joining the league, prospective franchises were required to submit a non-refundable $10,000 application fee, as well as a $2 million entrance fee, if selected, to join the league. Moreover, each franchise was required to demonstrate they could provide compensation to the existing teams for their 20-player expansion rosters ("NHL Bidders Slow," 1965).

Following the six-team expansion of 1967, the NHL continued its expansion efforts, first by adding two teams in 1970, 1972, and 1974, as well as one team in 1976. This expansion allowed the NHL to further penetrate into southern and western markets as it tripled in size over a decade to 18 teams. Despite the growth of the NHL, the desire of prospective owners and markets to achieve major league status outpaced league growth (McKinley, 2006). The attraction of major franchise ownership, as well as open markets, contributed to the creation of the WHA in 1972. In order to legitimize the WHA and compete with the NHL, WHA owners offered players significantly more money than NHL owners were willing to pay (i.e., Sphere of Industrial Relations; Sphere of Vocational Training and Education) (Alyluia, 1973; Willes, 2004). As one example, the Chicago Blackhawks offered Bobby Hull a $250,000 salary for the 1972-1973 season while the Winnipeg Jets of the WHA offered Hull an annual salary of $250,000 per year for 10 years, plus a $1,000,000 signing bonus (Mitchell, 2015). The WHA also recruited European players, a practice generally ignored by the NHL, thus introducing a more open and commercially attractive style of play and inviting overseas fans of those foreign players to engage with a new sport product in North America (McKinley, 2006).

Overall, the WHA blueprint to compete with the NHL involved placing franchises in undervalued markets and offering more lucrative player contracts than NHL owners were willing to extend. However, the WHA model proved unsustainable as franchises were unable to generate sufficient interest and gate receipts to cover the increasing costs of player salaries and team operations (e.g., Sphere of Corporate Governance) (McKinley, 2006). The teams played in small markets and in smaller, outdated facilities than NHL teams. During its first year of operations, the average WHA facility accommodated 9,786 fans (See Table 2). Furthermore, during the 1973-1974 season WHA league-wide attendance averaged 5,200 spectators per game, compared to the NHL average of 14,200 per game that same year (El Hodiri & Quirk, 1974). Even teams like the New York Raiders, in viable sports markets with state-of-the-art arenas, struggled to attract fans and generate revenue as their NHL landlord, the New York Rangers, charged operating fees that guaranteed the team would lose money on home games (Willes, 2004)

Despite its financial issues, the WHA demonstrated viable markets for professional hockey existed in cities ignored by the NHL. Eventually, four WHA franchises (i.e., Edmonton Oilers, Hartford Whalers, Quebec Nordiques, and Winnipeg Jets) were admitted to the NHL as expansion teams prior to the 1979 season. The merger of the WHA and NHL could best be described as retributive.

Table 2

WHA season one facilities

Team	Facility	Capacity	Date Opened
Alberta Oilers*	Edmonton Gardens	5,200	1913
Chicago Cougars	International Amphitheatre	9,000	1934
Cleveland Crusaders	Cleveland Arena	9,900	1937
Houston Aeros	Sam Houston Coliseum	9,217	1937
Lost Angeles Sharks	Los Angeles Sports Arena	14,546	1959
Minnesota Fighting Saints	St. Paul Auditorium	7,000	1932
New England Whalers*	Boston Arena	4,666	1921
New York Raiders	Madison Square Garden IV	17,843	1968
Ottawa Nationals	Ottawa Civic Centre	9,300	1967
Philadelphia Blazers	Philadelphia Civic Center	9,100	1931
Quebec Nordiques*	Colisee de Quebec	12,000	1949
Winnipeg Jets*	Winnipeg Arena	9,671	1955
Average		9,786	

Note. * indicates team joined NHL.

With the exception of two goalies and two other rostered players, all WHA players could be claimed and reassigned to the NHL team that previously controlled their rights without compensation to the newly-admitted teams (i.e., Sphere of Industrial Relations). The former WHA squads were also assigned the last four picks in each round and assessed a $125,000 fee per player selected in the expansion draft (McKinley, 2006). Of note, the NHL also imposed facility capacity requirements on its newest members, mandating the arenas accommodate 15,000 spectators. The result of this requirement ultimately prompted the Winnipeg Arena to undergo a $5,000,000 ($20,155,360.42 in 2022) renovation ("Jets Waiting," 1979) while the Colisee de Quebec received $15,000,000 ($60,466,081.27 in 2022) in renovations ("Money for Arena," 1979) to meet NHL standards (i.e., Sphere of Inter-firm Relations).

The NBA of the Mid-to-Late 20th Century

During the 1950s and into the 1960s, membership in the NBA fluctuated as the league faced logistical and image challenges. In order to overcome long and expensive travel to remote destinations, the league adopted an irregular schedule where teams would play home, away, and neutral site games in an unbalanced schedule as some teams played a majority of their games at home, while others played away from home for most of the season (i.e., Sphere of Inter-firm Relations) (Surdam, 2012). Beyond helping to alleviate some travel disparities, neutral site games were also used to promote double-headers and improve gate receipts for home teams, though this practice had little practical benefit for teams in small arenas because they had so few seats to sell (Koppett, 1999; Surdam, 2012).

Fortunately, between 1956 and 1960 a series of elite collegiate players including Bill Russell, Wilt Chamberlain, and Oscar Robertson entered the professional ranks and spurred growing interest in the NBA (i.e., Sphere of Vocational Training and Education) (Surdam, 2012). The emergence of a new generation of stars coincided with rule changes designed to attract the attention of national television audiences such as the 24-second shot clock (Koppett, 1999; Surdam, 2012). Growing populations and facilities of increasing size also became attractive destinations for small market teams and expansion franchises so that by the late 1960s the league embraced a pattern of growth it would follow into the 21st century (i.e., approve new franchises in markets capable of providing financial rewards).

Similar to its professional counterpart, the NHL, the NBA of the early 1960s existed as a mostly regional league, with franchises concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest U.S. The eight-team league added one franchise in 1961 and another in 1966 before adding two teams in 1967 and 1968, three more in 1970, and a single franchise in 1974 (i.e., Sphere of Corporate Governance). NBA expansion, as well as franchise relocation during this time, established the league in western and southern markets. The expansion of the NBA during the 1960s and 1970s is noteworthy because the league did not initially view expansion as an urgent or necessary matter until the late 1960s (Koppett, 1999). Furthermore, the expansion of the NBA occurred in direct response to the creation of the rival ABA.

The ABA formed in 1967 with one purpose, to force a merger with the NBA in a manner similar to that of American Football League-National Football League collaboration that created the Super Bowl (i.e., Sphere of Inter-firm Relations) (Pluto, 1990). Specifically, some ABA owners/investors believed that if they could successfully force a merger with the NBA, they could increase the value of their franchises by a factor of 10, ensuring a robust return on investment (i.e., Sphere of Corporate Governance) (Horvitz & Hoffman, 1976; Koch, 1974). Yet, league leadership lacked formal understanding of how to actually start or run a league to prompt a merger with the NBA. As some examples, the ABA lacked formal structure, facility planning, and funding (Koppett, 1999; Pluto, 1990). To further illustrate this point, Pluto noted that by 1966, the NBA required expansion franchises pay a fee of $1,500,000 while the ABA asked prospective owners to pay between $5,000 to $25,000 to secure a franchise.

Another chief concern of the ABA and owners involved player acquisition (i.e., Sphere of Vocational Training and Education). In its early years, the league had no set policy or procedure to draft or claim players (Pluto, 1990). However, the emergence of the ABA presented a labor alternative to the NBA, which helped to create a bidding war for players emerging from the college ranks (i.e., Sphere of Industrial Relations) (Koppett, 1999; Pluto, 1990). The means ABA teams used to sign players to lucrative contracts represented rare business acumen on the part of the league. The ABA offered many of its players deferred contracts and annuity payments. The practice allowed teams to offer talented players large contracts while keeping adequate cash on hand to operate the team on a daily basis (Koch, 1974). Additionally, if the ABA merged with the NBA, the ABA teams would likely be sold quickly, ensuring that current owners would not be responsible for paying out the deferred money (Koch, 1974).

Similar to the issues the WHA encountered during its existence, the ABA struggled to generate revenue due to its smaller arenas, as well the inability to secure a television contract (i.e., Sphere of Corporate Governance) (Koppett, 1999). Relying almost exclusively on gate receipts and playing in small facilities (i.e., average capacity of 9,190), the league was generally unable to secure adequate ticket revenue with average league attendance hovering below 3,000 spectators per game in its first season (See Table 3) (Pluto, 1990). By its seventh season no ABA franchise averaged more than 9,000 fans per game while seven NBA franchises exceeded that mark (El Hodiri & Quirk, 1974). After accumulating nearly $50 million in losses since its creation, the ABA folded in 1976, but not before four franchises (i.e., Indiana Pacers, New York Nets, San Antonio Spurs, and Denver Nuggets) joined the NBA for an expansion fee of $3.2 million (i.e., Sphere of Inter-firm Relations) (Pluto, 1990).

Table 3

ABA season one facilities

Team	Facility	Capacity	Date Opened
Anaheim Amigos	Anaheim Convention Center	9,100	1967
Dallas Chaparrals*	Moody Coliseum	9,305	1956
Houston Mavericks	Sam Houston Coliseum	9,200	1937
Indiana Pacers*	Indiana State Fairgrounds Coliseum	8,200	1939
Denver Larks*	Denver Auditorium Arena	6,841	1909
Kentucky Colonels	Louisville Gardens	6,000	1905
Minnesota Muskies	Met Center	15,500	1966
New Orleans Buccaneers	Loyola Field House	6,500	1954
New York Americans*	Teaneck Armory	3,500	1936
Oakland Oaks	Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum Arena	13,502	1966
Pittsburgh Pipers	Pittsburgh Civic Arena	13,449	1961
Average		9,190	

Note. * indicates team later joined NBA.

4. Results

The present study identified 36 facilities as new arena constructions for either a primary hockey or basketball tenant (See Table 4 and Table 5), with an average cost between $24,506,667 and $31,350,000 (between $140,167,781.43 and $153,603,374.86 in 2022). This price range marked a notable increase from the $3,371,428.57 ($63,084,721.87 in 2022) average construction costs for the seven Golden Age facilities (Downs & Seifried, 2021b). Furthermore, this examination noted that new arenas, as well as Golden Age facilities, were not static after completion. Eight facilities were identified as undergoing rehabilitation treatments that adapted existing structures to meet consumer expectations and market competition for luxury suites. The average cost of the luxury rehabilitations reached $6,433,333.33 ($35,201,166.49 in 2022) and when adjusting for inflation ranged between $2,473,844.74 and $79,891,678.64. Ultimately, several themes emerged regarding various services and amenities offered by the 'Me' Arena.

The 'Me' Arena and Emergence of Service-Oriented Facilities

The socio-economic realities within the U.S. and Canada following World War II created a situation where sport facilities could be publicly funded, while increasingly serving individual customer expectations. Further, the convergence of New Deal government expansion in the U.S. to promote a basic standard of living for all citizens with a growing consumer culture manifested in an expectation within the U.S. of the importance of fulfilling individual desires (Andersen, 2020; Grabb et al., 1999; Harvey, 2005). The broad expectation of individuals to engage in activities that suited their personal or private interests, outside of the greater community, led New York Magazine author Tom Wolfe to describe people in the 1960s and 1970s era of arena and league expansion as members of the "Me Decade" (Wolfe, 1976, para. 36).

The 'Me' Arena represents a unique period in sport, as well as municipal history that has great influence on today's even more modern venues. The construction of mid-20th century expansion and relocation facilities that housed the NHL and NBA accommodated two sports away from the city core, while also taking into consideration in-facility and remote customer needs by providing ample parking and amenities (e.g., concessions), improved sightlines, enhanced circulation opportunities (e.g., horizontal and vertical), and dedicated space for television cameras. The 'Me' Arena facility is unique because it represents an ideal-type of facility construction that relied on public money to build a facility to the specification of private businesses to help enhance the community and meet the desires of its customers.

Public financing is a key identifier of the 'Me' Arena. While it was uncommon for a single individual to personally finance a facility in the Golden Age era (i.e., 1920s), the ownership of the facility generally remained in the control of private citizens through arena stock purchases (Seifried, 2010b). However, by the mid-20th century, municipalities were willing to fund the construction of major multipurpose indoor arenas (i.e., Capital Accumulation; Development of Competitive Markets) in the U.S. and Canada. Milwaukee's initial commitment of $2.6 million in public financing was identified as the first attempt by a city to build an arena to position itself as a major market. The use of public financing for facilities became common during the 1950s and beyond. The justification for such expenditures is a familiar, though misleading trope in sport management (Baade & Dye, 1988; Johnson et al., 2012; Noll & Zimbalist, 1997; Prophetter, 2012; Siegfried & Zimbalist, 2000; Swindell & Rosentraub, 1998): If a city finances the construction of a new facility for a professional sport team, the facility would improve the city’s image and spur economic activity (Delaney & Eckstein, 2003; Seifried & Pastore, 2009; Shubert, 2016; Trump our, 2007). Absent, or ignorant of, evidence of the likelihood that a sport facility would spur economic growth, municipalities throughout the U.S. financed multipurpose sport facilities to promote and improve their image.

The present study found the ‘Me’ Arena facility construction noticeably accommodated automobile commuter culture. In addition to the increased presence of televisions in U.S. and Canadian homes, automobiles became an identifiable marker of modernity, as well as a means to engage in and access leisure activities (Hendricks, 2019; Young & Young, 2004). By the dawn of the 1960s, approximately 70% of American families owned an automobile (Young & Young, 2004). The surge in automobile ownership, along with state and federal investment in highways and the interstate system helped grow automobile culture and the idea of convenience travel and commuting (Hendricks, 2019; Seifried & Pastore, 2009; Young & Young, 2004). Just as “cookie cutter” or concrete donut baseball/football stadiums of this time were built in large open areas outside of the city (e.g., Seifried & Pastore, 2009), so too were multipurpose indoor sport facilities (Shubert, 2016). In many cases, ‘Me’ Arena facilities were built near other suburban facilities as part of a larger sport complex (e.g., Oakland Alameda County Coliseum Complex, Twin Cities Sports Complex). Resultantly, ‘Me’ Arena facilities had ample parking, such as was the case with the Philadelphia, PA Spectrum, a 14,646-seat arena with a 12,000-space parking lot. Overall, the current research found the ‘Me’ Arena facility averaged 5,969 parking spaces (i.e., Development of Competitive Markets; Enhancement of Revenue Sources).

In addition to offering numerous parking spaces, the location of ‘Me’ Arena facilities afforded architects the opportunity to design facilities without regard for surrounding structures (Shubert, 2016). Furthermore, advances in construction technology improved so that lighter and stronger materials that did not require expensive internal support could be used to create cable-supported or domed-roof structures (Shubert, 2016). The technical aspects of the new roof technology are impressive (Curran, 1968). As an example, the Oakland Coliseum Arena used 96 steel cables to support its 6,500,000-pound, 420-foot diameter roof (“A Roof That Hangs,” 1966). Less restrictive construction space and improved construction technology also resulted in facilities being built to a size and scope not previously seen in multipurpose arenas (i.e., Capital Accumulation). Based on available data, the average surface area of the Golden Age facility was 3.12 acres. Conversely, the average surface are of the ‘Me’ Arena, facility more than doubled its predecessor at 8.70 acres (See Table 6).

Importantly, the ‘Me’ Arena facility was free of view-obstructing support poles because of the use of cable-supported and domed roofs (Curran, 1968; Shubert, 2016). The ability to design and construct larger facilities also modified the appearance of the grandstands. ‘Me’ Arena facilities possessed what Shubert called the “sawtooth” grandstand (p. 153). Though partly practical due to roof design, the sawtooth shape maximized the number

Table 4

'Me' Arena multipurpose urban facility (primary hockey)

Facility	Year Opened	Cost	Cost Adjusted	Capacity	Parking
Winnipeg Arena	1955	$2,500,000	$27,299,984.45	9,671	2,000
LA Sports Arena	1959	$6,000,000	$60,341,408.93	14,546	7,000
Civic Arena	1961	$22,000,000	$215,332,051.28	10,732	5,000
Long Beach Convention Center	1962	$8,000,000	$77,524,724.06	15,000	5,000
Oakland Arena*	1966	$25,500,000*	$230,330,979.94	13,061	9,600
The Forum**	1967	$16,000,000	$140,194,411.18	16,005	3,500
Met Center**	1967	$5,800,000	$50,820,474.05	14,600	X
Spectrum**	1967	$12,000,000	$105,145,808.38	14,646	12,000
Pacific Coliseum	1968	$6,000,000	$50,457,902.30	15,570	3,500
Nassau Coliseum	1972	$31,300,000	$219,141,808.21	14,665	6,000
Capital Center	1973	$18,000,000	$118,644,256.76	18,130	4,300
Kemper Arena	1974	$23,000,000	$136,533,147.40	16,000	4,000
Northlands Coliseum	1974	$12,000,000	$71,234,685.60	15,248	1,100
Hartford Civic Center*	1975	$30,000,000	$163,190,985.13	7,627	X
Joe Louis Arena	1979	$57,000,000	$229,771,108.82	19,275	3,200
Saddledome	1983	$118,000,000	$346,720,766.40	16,605	X
Average		$24,506,667	$140,167,781.43	14,461	

Note. *indicates facility was part of a larger development project; ** indicates facility was privately financed.

Table 5

‘Me’ Arena multipurpose urban facility (primary basketball)

Facility	Year Opened	Cost	Cost Adjusted	Capacity	Parking
Milwaukee Arena	1950	$6,000,000	$72,860,373.44	10,500	X
Portland Memorial Coliseum	1960	$8,000,000	$79,096,171.17	12,666	X
Cobo Arena*	1961	$56,000,000	$548,117,948.72	12,191	X
Seattle Center Coliseum	1962	$7,000,000	$67,834,133.55	14,098	650
Arizona Memorial Coliseum	1965	$7,000,000	$65,034,629.63	12,371	6,500
San Diego Arena	1966	$6,500,000	$58,711,818.42	14,500	4,500
HemisFair Arena	1968	$13,000,000	$109,325,454.98	10,070	6,000
MSG IV**	1968	$43,000,000	$361,614,966.48	18,596	X
Salt Palace	1969	$17,000,000	$135,562,647.59	13,200	X
The Omni	1972	$17,000,000	$119,022,707.35	16,181	X
Market Square Arena*	1974	$23,000,000	$136,533,147.40	16,530	1,275
Richfield Coliseum	1974	$36,000,000	$213,704,056.80	20,900	6,200
McNichols Sports Arena	1975	$10,000,000	$54,396,955.04	16,660	5,500
The Summit	1975	$13,000,000	$70,716,093.56	15,676	6,000
Reunion Arena	1980	$25,000,000	$88,791,211.57	17,007	6,200
Brendan Byrne Arena	1981	$85,000,000	$273,660,570.22	20,149	24,800
Miami Arena	1988	$52,500,000	$129,876,849.11	16,640	4,500
Charlotte Coliseum	1988	$52,000,000	$128,639,926.74	24,042	8,000
ARCO Arena II	1988	$40,000,000	$98,953,789.80	16,517	11,000
Orlando Arena	1989	$110,000,000	$259,614,045.70	15,077	3,830
Average		$31,350,000	$153,603,374.86	15,679	

Note. * indicates facility was part of a larger development project; ** indicates facility was privately financed.

Table 6

Golden Age and 'Me' Arena facilities comparison of surface areas

Golden Age Facility	Surface Area in Acres	Stage Five Facility	Surface Area in Acres
Montreal Forum	3.87	LA Sports Arena	7.27
Detroit Olympia	1.78	Portland Memorial Coliseum	3.1
Boston Garden	2.02	Civic Arena	2.8
Chicago Stadium	3.32	Seattle Center Coliseum	9.18
Saint Louis Arena	3.02	MSG IV	18.82
Maple Leaf Gardens	4.70	Spectrum	8.03
		Nassau Coliseum	9.41
		Kemper Arena	2.97
		Northlands Coliseum	11.02
		The Summit	13.91
		Reunion Arena	7.23
		Charlotte Coliseum	10.67
Average	3.12		8.70

of seats along the sidelines of the basketball and hockey playing surfaces. Additionally, the increased size of 'Me' Arenas welcomed more seating (i.e., Establishment of Pricing Systems; Enhancement of Revenue Sources). Though the NHL mandated future facilities seat at least 12,500 hockey spectators by 1967, the 'Me' Arena facility exceeded that requirement, seating between 14,317 and 15,679 customers.

The internal structure of the 'Me' Arena facility also incorporated enhanced amenities to improve fan comfort (i.e., Enhancement of Revenue Sources). 'Me' Arena facilities offered broad concourses that allowed fans to comfortably and expeditiously enter, exit, and walk around the facility (Shubert, 2016). The increased space in the 'Me' Arena facility also accommodated more restroom space and concessions points of sale. Notably, during the first half of the 20th century, sport facilities did not offer consistent, accessible in-house concessions (Seifried & Pastore, 2009). The current project identified that 'Me' Arena facilities featured approximately 12 restrooms, as well as between four and 14 permanent concessions stands. The 'Me' Arena facility also offered a variety of food and beverage options (i.e., Establishment of Pricing Systems; Enhancement of Revenue Sources). As one example, Pittsburgh Civic Arena attendees during the 1970s had multiple options for food and beverage purchases, such as a roast beef sandwich ($1.00 or $5.94 in 2022), Polish sausage sandwich ($0.95 or 5.64 in 2022), foot-long hotdog and 16-ounce beer ($0.75 or $4.45 in 2022) hamburgers ($0.55 or $3.26 in 2022), hot dogs ($0.45 or $2.67 in 2022), candy and pizza ($0.40 or $2.37 in 2022), and cotton candy, popcorn, coffee, and soda pop for ($0.25 or $1.48 in 2022) (Hritz, 1974).

The remote viewer was also accommodated through the inclusion of several purpose-built television camera locations (i.e., Development of Competitive Markets). For instance, the Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena included television and lighting platforms as part of the catwalk above the facility (Kendall, 1959). We found several other facilities followed suit as the Portland Veterans Memorial Coliseum and Oakland Coliseum Arena similarly hung television camera stands from their ceilings and addition to high intensity lighting directed at the playing surface to enhance the visibility of contests for cameras and remote spectators ("New Metropolitan Sports Center," n.d.). Lastly, video projection screens and television monitors in concourses included in the design brought the television viewing experience into the arena. In this, fans enjoyed the opportunity to view game action and replays while franchises also notably received an opportunity to increase revenues through the selling of advertising or commercial messaging in the facility ("TV Screens Hamper Scorers," 1975).

Incorporating Suites

The present study also discovered evidence that facility management responses to the service economy shifted in the mid-20th century to cater the business class. By the 1960s, the motivation of facility and franchise owners remained true to this idea. NHL Commissioner Clarence Campbell declared that while team and facility owners were interested in sport, "they are also primarily interested in the entertainment business, and this will motivate a large portion of the decisions and attitudes which they have to take from time to time" (Campbell, 1963, para. 10). While mid-century venues generally catered to the growing middle class, facility design increasingly evolved over the expansion era to include a limited number of private suites to service needs of upper class or corporate customers (i.e., Establishment of Pricing Systems; Enhancement of Revenue Sources).

The present study identified 16 facilities as including a small number of private suites in the design of the facility or as part of facility rehabilitation treatments (See Table 7). The location and level of sophistication of private seats varied. For instance, the Metropolitan Sports Center in Bloomington, MN offered 14-person ice-level box seats (Alyluia, 1973). Meanwhile, the Kemper Arena situated 25 private suites around the facility at the top of the lower seating bowl. The Kemper Arena suites could best be described as minimalist in nature with dropped ceilings, optional carpeting for the floor, plastic chairs, and a plexiglass partition separating the suite from the grandstand (Rosin, 2016)

Finally, the Capital Centre in Landover, MD provided the first large scale commitment to building private suites in a multipurpose indoor facility. Specifically, the Capital Centre included 40 private suites situated above the second level of the facility as part of 78 total luxury boxes (Berlet, 1982). The suites carried an annual cost of $25,000 to $35,000 per year ($164,783.69 to $230,697.17 in 2022) and guaranteed access to hockey and basketball games, as well as 15 tickets to every Capital Centre event (i.e., Creation of Property Rights; Establishment of Pricing Systems) (Beard, 1973). In addition to 15 tickets to every Capital Centre event, the suite spectators had access private elevators that delivered individuals to the suites

Table 7

'Me' Arena facilities with private suites

Facility	Year	Construction Type	Cost	Private Suites/Boxes
Olympia Stadium	1966	Rehabilitation	$2,000,000	9
Montreal Forum	1968	Rehabilitation	$9,500,000	10
Buffalo Memorial Auditorium	1971	Rehabilitation	$8,700,000	16
MSG IV	1973	Rehabilitation	X	29
Capital Centre	1973	New Construction	$18,000,000	78
Kemper Arena	1974	New Construction	$23,000,000	25
Richfield Coliseum	1974	New Construction	$36,000,000	96
Joe Louis Arena	1979	New Construction	$57,000,000	61
Brendan Byrne Arena	1981	New Construction	$85,000,000	29
Boston Garden	1983	Rehabilitation	X	36
Pacific Coliseum	1983	Rehabilitation	$5,400,000	14
McNichols Sports Arena	1986	Rehabilitation	$12,000,000	27
Olympic Saddle-Dome	1988	Rehabilitation	$1,000,000	31
Miami Arena	1988	New Construction	$52,500,000	16
Charlotte Coliseum	1988	New Construction	$52,000,000	12
Orlando Arena	1989	New Construction	$110,000,000	26

which contained a "reception area, wet bar, wall-to-wall carpeting, private powder room, closed circuit and commercial television and a panoramic view of the arena floor" (Gross, 1973, p. 18). Gross also noted the Capital Centre featured a 125-seat private club and restaurant (i.e., Enhancement of Revenue Sources). In the end, while 'Me' Arena facilities adopted various versions of private suite seating, the Capital Centre model of expensive suites above the upper deck emerged as an early precursor for the next stage of multipurpose arena construction.

5. Conclusion/Discussion

Following World War II, the U.S. and Canada experienced surges in economic and population growth. The new political and economic reality in the post-war West created observable challenges (i.e., Spheres of Concern) (Hall and Soskice, 2001). Sport managers, operating within that reality made decisions to benefit their organizations (Thompson, 2012; Levy, 2021). From a capitalist perspective, the expanded role of the government first introduced during the Great Depression created an expectation for the government to enhance the daily comfort of individuals. Ultimately, governments collaborated with private businesses to create conditions to spur economic growth that could also enhance public goods and satisfy individual desires (Sphere of Corporate Governance; Capital Accumulation). Subsequently, economic as well as technological improvement provided an increasingly white-collar middle class with greater amounts of discretionary income to spend on suburban homes, automobiles, and televisions (i.e., Sphere of Industrial Relations; Sphere of Vocational Training and Education; Development of Competitive Markets; Enhancement of Revenue Sources).

Expanded wealth also offered more opportunities to pursue leisure activities in increasingly service-conscious venues that offered multiple consumption options (i.e., Sphere of Industrial Relations; Establishment of Pricing Systems; Enhancement of Revenue Sources). Further, these societal changes created opportunities for professional sport leagues to expand or relocate franchises in western, and to a lesser degree, southern locations that modernized (i.e., Sphere of Interfirm Relations; Development of Competitive Markets; Recognition of Duty). Featured in the present story was the emergence of the municipally-funded sport venue inspired by community leaders' interests in legitimizing or revitalizing themselves through funding and constructing new, service-oriented and multipurpose sport facilities (i.e., Sphere of Corporate Governance; Development of Competitive Markets (i.e., 'Me' Arena).

The 'Me' Arena helped transform the fan experience and expectations toward the current era we enjoy today from prompts via capitalism. First, we can see the 'Me' Arena emerged as a highly technological structure designed to meet the service expectations of developing sport consumer groups (i.e., Sphere of Industrial Relations; Enhancement of Revenue Sources; Establishing Pricing Systems) such as the middle and business classes. Within this point, 'Me' facilities were larger and generally built near target populations to accommodate their parking interests within a commuter culture (i.e., Development of Competitive Markets). Second, the 'Me" Arena was internally distinguishable from its predecessor because it offered increased capacity and unobstructed views both of which could increase revenues through increased prices and by sheer volume of sales (i.e., Establishment of Pricing Systems; Enhancement of Revenue Sources). The 'Me' Arena also made consumption easier in other ways still impacting contemporary and likely future venues. For instance, it featured more restrooms and expanded concourses with greater space and more concessions. Easier movement up, down, and around venues in conjunction with the offering of various price ranges and products for middle class adults, children, and corporate customers hosting clients combined to produce added to profits. Within this point, we further suggest owners of capitalist-based businesses are often found to utilize market information to motivate purchases of different consumer-based developed products and services for sale at multiple price points (Gregory & Stuart, 2013).

New revenue streams, common today, also emerged with the 'Me' Arena via the introduction of private suites, clubs, and restaurants that were established for wealthy citizens and corporations (i.e., Sphere of Corporate Governance; Establishing Pricing Systems; Recognition of Duties; Enhancement of Revenue Sources). These advances and additions are important to acknowledge because they eventually created new job fields and services that provided tailored event experiences due to their value in revenue generation (i.e., Sphere of Industrial Relations; Sphere of Worker Skill and Training; Sphere of Employees). Television also became an important source of revenue for franchises and leagues during this era that required accommodation in sport facilities. Demonstrating management's understanding of the potential future earnings, the 'Me' Arena reflected commitment to television through the establishment of camera platforms and improved lighting systems within buildings. Moreover, 'Me' Arenas provided televisions within the venue to produce more advertising revenue and to assure consumers they would not miss the 'television experience' at the venue. Next, the NHL and NBA participated in capitalism by targeting expansion and supporting relocation to cities with large media markets or growing television potential (i.e., Development of Competitive Markets; Enhancement of Revenue Sources).

Lastly, the NHL and NBA engaged in capitalist practices by establishing franchises in growing media markets to secure future revenue from franchise fees and to limit the emergence of rival leagues (i.e., Sphere of Corporate Governance; Sphere of Industrial Relations; Sphere of Vocational Training and Education; Sphere of Inter-firm Relations; Capital Accumulation; Development of Competitive Markets; Recognition of Duties). In the present study, the NHL and NBA demonstrated capitalism through efforts to incorporate their competition (i.e., ABA and WHA) and by adjusting schedules and travel options to help organizational survival while expenses increased. Furthermore, the NHL and NBA established industry standards regarding facility capability (e.g., capacity) to guard against the prospects of weak organizations or ownership from entering and diminishing their collective financial returns (i.e., Sphere of Inter-firm Relations; Recognition of Duties). In the end, the 'Me' Arena cost more than predecessor venues, setting the foundation for future arena construction (i.e., Sphere of Inter-firm Relations). Further, as professional sport facilities approached the 21st century, Boston Globe journalist John S. Driscoll provided an astute observation about these facilities that echoes into today: "The game was secondary. It wasn't a sport event; it was a social event" (1977, p. 42). Practicing sport managers should keep this in mind as much as supporting the sport itself in venue construction.

Previous research suggested that sport managers consider the ongoing changes to the population and economy as they consider new markets for expansion (Downs & Seifried, 2021a). Extending this, the analysis of the 'Me' Arena highlights the importance for sport managers to not only recognize political and public policy trends, but to leverage their status within the community to enhance their position as a private business (Scherer et al., 2019). Awareness of political, economic, and social realities and history is critical in a management setting as current and future managers will need to understand and respond to internal and external challenges to their organization (Hall & Soskice, 2001). Furthermore, the importance of the individual in assessing contemporary issues and making decisions in the best interest of the company cannot be understated (i.e., Sphere of Vocational Skill and Education) (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Seifried & Novicevic, 2017; Thompson, 2012).

Resistance to recent efforts to replace 'Me' Arenas in cities such as Calgary, AB suggest that the major league city argument is waning in value with constituents, particularly as the social contract established with New Deal-type programs has eroded in the era of neoliberalism and globalism (i.e., Sphere of Corporate Governance) (Andersen, 2020). To enhance goodwill, sport managers should strategically position and promote their organizations as community assets and public goods so that they can later leverage their position to their financial advantage (i.e., Capital Accumulation; Enhancement of Revenue Sources) (Sheth & Babiak, 2010).

In consideration of this point, 'Me' Arenas can inform future construction and renovation by serving as examples of economically accessible facilities (i.e., Establishing Pricing Systems). While profit and catering to upper class clientele predates the NHL and NBA, 'Me' Arenas offered in-venue and remote experiences that were accessible to broad sections of society (i.e., Development of Competitive Markets). The various price points for concessions offered in the Pittsburgh Civic Arena exemplify this. Since the 1990s, arenas have emphasized upper class and corporate clientele, outpricing many fans (Rader, 2009). As was shown during the economic downturn of the late 2000s, luxury suite customers will cancel their contracts to limit corporate waste or risk negative public relations (Titlebaum & Lawrence, 2011). In order to grow public support, as well as a customer base, new facilities should develop ways to promote profitability without risking alienation of the current and future fan base (i.e., Capital Accumulation). To that end, digital production capacity and platform offerings as part of game presentation must be emphasized in a manner similar to television in 'Me" Arenas as well in order to capture new generations of remote viewers less tethered to cable and network television broadcasts (i.e., Development of Competitive Markets; Enhancement of Revenue Sources).

Furthermore, the facilities examined in this era suggest that while demographic and economic shifts may contribute to the desirability of a city as a location for relocation or expansion, any such effort should be pursued with caution (i.e., Development of Competitive Markets). Sport managers would be wise to consider industry standards (Galvan, 2006) related to decisions to renovate an existing facility or build a new facility (i.e., Recognition of Duties). Pfleegor and Seifried (2014) urged their colleagues to contemplate the history and heritage of a sport facility when considering renovation treatments, lest the facility lose meaning after renovation is completed. Sport facilities have been acknowledged as locations of cultural heritage, specifically tangible, immovable heritage (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2017). While many of the 'Me' Arena facilities have since been replaced, the legacies of those facilities and the events that transpired within them remains. Facility managers should work to acknowledge that heritage within new or replacement facilities to maintain that cultural heritage (Downs & Seifried, 2021a). This can be useful, particularly from a tourism perspective as sport facilities can be marketed as heritage locations for tourists (i.e., Enhancement of Revenue Sources).

Lastly, considering the history of facility construction and persistence of the NHL and NBA, the impact of a new facility on the valuation of franchises and the impact of new construction on league success may be a worthy avenue to assess (i.e., Capital Accumulation). Examination of individual facilities has received some scholarly attention (e.g., Field, 2002; Shubert, 2011) but more could be done to better understand what mechanisms in new facilities increase the value of franchises. Finally, the processes and political mechanisms involved in approving the financing of specific facilities could be particularly useful to sport managers and the general population seeking insight into how public policy is made regarding sport arenas.

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