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Wise, NA and Kirby, SI (2018) A 'home away from home': The (London) Jaguars and the NFL's established international presence—a semi-deterritorialization approach. *Sport in Society*. ISSN 1743-0437

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A 'home away from home': The (London) Jaguars and the NFL's established international presence—a *semi-deterritorialization* approach

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Abstract

In 2012, the Jacksonville Jaguars announced they established a partnership with the city of London to play one home game each year. This paper frames the Jaguars 'home away from home' to the London Jaguars amidst American sports expansion. As addressed above, critical and conceptual discussions and reflections will be linked to sport, geography, neoliberalism and deterritorialization. The paper contributes to the literature on sports geography as it ascribes and applies the notion of semi-deterritorialization: given the Jaguars have their base in Jacksonville, Florida and have an agreement with London to play one home game each year there—making them the ephemeral quasi-London home team. Methodologically, the paper employs a qualitative media content analysis. To analyse discussions and representations concerning the Jacksonville Jaguars in London, this work seeks out and evaluates meanings presented through online media to interpret the place and presence of the Jaguars in London. In line with the contribution of this paper, interpreting meanings of territorialization in this case lead to new permutations of semi-deterritorialization based on the Jaguars temporary (but emerging) presence.

Keywords

American Football, London, Sports Expansion, Deterritorialization, Semi-deterritorialization, Content Analysis

Introduction

"Ladies and gentleman, please welcome to the field your...London Jaguars"
(Independent 2013).

"When the Jacksonville Jaguars play the Baltimore Ravens in Week 3, it will be the fifth consecutive season that features a Jaguars home game at Wembley Stadium in London. The Jaguars will play a game in Wembley Stadium in each of the next three seasons, too" (SBNation 2017).

"The Union Jax is the Jacksonville Jaguars UK fan club which is FREE to join. The Jaguars have the fastest growing fan base of all the NFL teams in the UK" (Jaguars 2018a).

In 2012, the Jacksonville Jaguars announced they established a partnership with the city of London to play one home game each year for four seasons—this has since been extended to 2020 (News4Jax 2015). This move to London for one game a year raised several questions of geography, as the notion of being a ‘home team’ is to celebrate presence and sense of identity with home fans. American Football is a distinctly American sport with 32 professional National Football League (NFL) teams. Each team plays eight home games a year, so relocating to another city each year means that local fans in Jacksonville miss out on the opportunity to see their team in action, unless they want to (or can) make the journey to London. Geographical issues arise linked to home teams possessing an established sense of identity and local fan base, but we also need to understand the international expansion endeavours of the NFL wanting to expand into new markets for commercial gain. While this point on expansion is associated more to the economic impact of sport, and to the neoliberalization of American Football, the relocation of teams (or in this case, partial relocation) can have social implications for local supporters who identify with their local team—and this can impact on fan loyalty. Discussions of deterritorialization add conceptual geographically informed insights which recognise the issue of the ‘London’ Jaguars, as it transcends fan base attachment, loyalty and allegiance. At the same time, this supplements the debate over ideas of place because the team is not called the Jacksonville/London Jaguars. In this sense whilst the Jaguars have not physically relocated to London (although rumours do suggest that the NFL is considering establishing or relocating a professional franchise to London), it is still important that we consider how the media discusses the Jaguars ‘second home’ base to offer an interpretation of a distinctly American sport entering a different market with its own code of ‘football.’

This paper frames the Jacksonville Jaguars ‘home away from home’ to the London Jaguars amidst American sports expansion. As addressed above, critical and conceptual discussions and reflections will be linked to sport, geography, neoliberalism and deterritorialization. The paper contributes to the literature on sports geography as it ascribes and applies the notion of *semi-deterritorialization*: given the Jaguars have their base in Jacksonville, Florida and have an agreement with London to play one home game each year there—making them the ephemeral quasi-London home team. This paper begins by determining the state of American sports expansion before reviewing scholarship on sports geography; sport, and neoliberalism; territorialization, deterritorialization and semi-deterritorialization. A note on method establishes the media content analysis conducted. This leads into the analysis of newspaper content organised around discussions of neoliberalism and territorialization. Concluding remarks and future research offers a clarion call for empirically driven research on the proliferation and internationalization of American football (and other American sports).

Research Framework and Critical Conceptualizations

Directions in Sports Geography

The area of sports geography has experienced much growth in the past few years, with research engaging with a range of topical and critical debates concerning sport and geography independently, or sports geography interdependently (see Andrews 2017; Conner 2014; Cook et al. 2016; Gaffney 2014; Koch 2017; Koch and Valiyev 2015; Lawrence 2016; Waite and Smith 2017; Wise 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2016, 2017; Wise and Hall 2017; Wise and Harris 2014, 2016). Earlier work, and also recent work, has focused on movement and (temporary) migration (Bale 2003; Bale and Maguire 1994; Waite and Smith 2017; Wise and Harris 2014)

and sport and landscapes (Bale 1994; Gaffney 2008; Raitz 1995; Wise 2014). Whilst the early work contributed considerably to the foundational thought of sports geography, or sport and geography, related to this paper, there has been further critical development of work in this area focusing on sport and social/cultural geography (e.g. Gaffney 2008; Wise 2014, 2015b) and geographies of place and identity (e.g. Lawrence 2016; Shobe 2008). In line with the conceptual focus and arguments presented in this paper, it is vital to recognise the range of work concerning sports geography. To advance the field of sports geography one theme which needs to be addressed relates to understanding the positioning of American sports expansion with critical notions of neoliberalism and deterritorialization (and semi-deterritorialization).

Sport, Expansion and Neoliberalism

International sports expansion has been explored in the academic domain (e.g. Bairner 2001; Klein 2006; Kelly 2007; Maguire 2011, 2015; Wise 2011, 2017). However, the only sport considered truly global is association football (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009). The United States (US) calls association football soccer and is not the only country to have their own code of football, for instance: Canadian Football, Aussie Rules Football and Gaelic football. Similar to the US, football in Canada, Australia and Ireland signify difference—distinguishing themselves from British imperialism and British sporting influence. In recent years, ‘American’ football is gaining traction as a viable alternative in the global consumer marketplace (see Bairner 2001; Maguire 2011; Wise 2016). When we consider American sports expansion, baseball and basketball stand out. But American football has not always been embraced, and has an unstable international history starting with the NFL’s financing of the World League of American Football—which commenced in 1991 with ten teams scattered across the US, Canada and Europe. The league folded in 1993. In 1995, the NFL re-established a league in Europe (NFL Europe), but lacked promotion (Wise 2011). NFL Europe exposed the game to Europeans, but it was an amateur competition of six teams located in: England (London), Germany (Düsseldorf and Frankfurt), the Netherlands (Amsterdam), Scotland (Edinburgh) and Spain (Barcelona). Britain’s teams struggled, so the England Monarchs began also playing games in Birmingham and Bristol, and the Scotland Claymores alternated between Edinburgh and Glasgow (Wise 2011).

Strategies to promote American football in the UK go back to the 1980s through the NFL’s links to sponsors and commercial enterprises (e.g. Maguire 1990). Then efforts were similar to what we see today, based on merchandizing, sponsorship, and endorsement. However, these initial attempts did not stem the declining interest and influence as the sport was not founded on traditional British sporting culture such as association football, rugby or cricket (Maguire 1990). This can also be demonstrated by the UK’s Channel 4 television station scrapping the NFL coverage in the late 1990s due to dwindling audience viewers. There was, however, success in Germany, resulting in the England Monarchs transferring to Berlin, followed by teams in Spain and Scotland moving to Cologne and Hamburg, respectively (Wise 2011). It has been noted success in Germany was because of proximate US military bases (Wise 2011). Overall declining interest saw NFL Europe cancelled in early-2007. But the wave of globalization and the internationalization of sport since has led to a new demand in the international sporting consumer marketplace. With pressure to broaden their appeal to new markets, the NFL has held regular season games (known as International Series games) in London’s Wembley Stadium (and as of 2016 Twickenham Stadium as well) since late-2007 (Maguire 2011; Wise 2011). Aligned with conceptual developments, drawing from a

neoliberal perspective, Smith (2012: 28) notes that “neoliberalism is supposed to encourage innovation and progress through healthy competition.” But American football is not a regular international competition like soccer, rugby or baseball—hindering its ability to attract audiences outside the US. American football is inherently rooted in American popular sporting culture (and identity) from youth through to professional competition (Paolantonio 2008).

In line with the above points, successful expansion requires offering something different and novel in an increasingly competitive global marketplace (Maguire 2011). This is enhanced by the commercialization of major events as spectacles (Gaffney 2014). As such, academics have looked critically at these issues from neoliberal perspectives (Harvey 2005; Peck 2013) to geographical scales impacting/influencing market distribution (Gaffney 2010; Harris and Wise 2011; Silk 2014; Wise 2017). Similarly, sports expansion, popular cultures and aspects of sporting identity are staged and performed in new settings (Giardina 2005; Wise 2015a), each assisting production, promotion and marketing. Earlier expansion attempts of American Football in the UK and Europe were based on amateur competition. Whilst this did not grow the sports influence, the more recent International Series brought the professional players to the UK and thus allowed the local audience to see the top athletes in the sport perform. This focus on performance and expansion, with the influence and promotion of sporting culture(s), alongside intentions to market sports as consumer products, conforms to neoliberal agendas, as discussed by sports scholars (see Andrews and Silk 2012; Anholt 2010; Dubal 2010; Giardina 2005).

Undoubtedly, American football and the NFL franchise has pursued tactics to assert more effective penetration of key consumer target markets and demographics, where they feel they have the greatest chance to attract followers, establish new media contacts and sell merchandise (Maguire 1990; 2011; Wise 2011). Each are aligned with nascent neoliberal agendas pertinent to generating capital, branding and creating sporting spectacles (Giardina 2005; Anholt 2010; Smith 2012; Gaffney 2014; Silk 2014). American football was required to forge a presence in Wembley Stadium because the venue is a semblance of English sporting identity. But by contesting space and promoting something different (or unusual), interpreted through the lens of neoliberal expansion, commercial power and branding can garner a presence. Wise (2014) suggested this is a form of layering identities. This refers to when a different sport is introduced to the same space which transcends its use beyond what is familiar, which can result in spatial contestation. What Wise’s (2014) work did not fully address, however, was the (nascent) market expansion—that are key to contextualising the commonalities between sport and neoliberalism.

Territorialization, Deterritorialization and Semi-deterritorialization

Territory is how we determine and recognise spaces, boundaries, belongings and associations. Scholars have taken this notion further to conceptualise territoriality or territorialization to refer to organisation or social, cultural or political agents at play to distinguish places based on power or representation, often referring to various degrees and scales of community, identity and nationalism (see Dansero et al. 2015; Flint 2012; Poli 2007; Storey 2012). Deterritorialization is a geographical concept to mean the severance of any practice (social, cultural or political) from a native place or population (Mitchell 2000). In geography, deterritorialization is grounded in the work of political geographers. But this understanding impacts people socially and culturally concerning freedom of movement or the exchange of ideas across boundaries based on mutual agreements or displays of power (Flint 2012). This is common when we consider a country resisting change, a particular migration

flow, or in this case temporary relocation of a sports team. However, and more often, sports team relocations are permanent—which provides fertile ground for contest from local populations and challenges place identity (see Potter 2014). Potter (2014) engages with the notion of deterritorialization to understand a team relocation from the London borough of Merton to Milton Keynes. While team relocations are more common in the US (see Bale 2003), in England local football teams are rooted in the fabric of the community, representing a semblance of place identity. The emphasis on belonging is key when conceptualising deterritorialization in human geography because of cultural flows and social reproductions (Poli 2007; Potter 2014).

While geographers have presented perspectives of territorialization, deterritorialization or reterritorialization, the content and context of this paper does not necessarily align with either of these exactly, so it is worthy of instigating the premise of semi-deterritorialization to make sense of the Jacksonville Jaguars home away from home. Prior work has adopted the phrasing of semi- to redefine meaning, place and position in geographical hindsight. Wallerstein (1974), focusing on world systems theory, discussed the notion of global ‘cores’ and ‘peripheries’, but also argued that we need to also consider the semi-periphery because there is context for understanding the middle-ground. Harris and Wise (2011) and Wise (2017) emphasised this idea of the semi-periphery to interpret the presence of countries in international rugby union based on existing power relations and qualification into international competitions. Using the newly developed concept of semi-deterritorialization, this paper argues that the Jacksonville Jaguars place in London each year can be considered ‘semi-deterritorialization’ because the team has not completely relocated. But there is a desire to base a team in London, so the NFL has found a temporary solution in the ‘London’ Jaguars for one game each year. This paper will now outline the media content analysis approach.

Note on Method: Media Content Analysis

Methodologically, the paper employs a qualitative media content analysis. To analyse discussions and representations concerning the Jacksonville Jaguars in London, this work seeks out and evaluates meanings presented through online media to interpret the place and presence of the Jaguars in London. Interpretations of teams, individuals, places and identities are strongly emphasised through media discourses, and expressions presented through various outlets create, ground and shape our geographical perceptions (Cloke et al. 2004). A broad search across numerous media sources allows researchers to seek the multiple interpretations of the content being communicated; as sources of discourse, online media sources are dispersions that need to be captured, linked and critically analysed (Wise and Harris 2010). Bale (2003, 166) supports this methodology by suggesting how “imaginative sports geographies are worlds constructed by texts of various kinds, including writing, photography, movies and art”.

Media sources available online were sought for this content analysis. The search terms: ‘Jacksonville Jaguars in London’ and ‘Jacksonville Jaguars and London’ were used to select and identify content. In total, 25 articles met the search criteria (see Appendix 1). There were many articles from the search terms that just made general reference to the Jaguars playing in London or were game highlights, and such sources offered little to no insight necessary for the subsequent analysis. Game review highlights were excluded from the analysis, due to the limited geographical or sociological knowledge that can be obtained from such sources. Instead papers and online sources including and engaging with discussions of the Jacksonville

Jaguars existence in London offering in-depth narratives of the Jaguars (and the NFL's) established presence in London are used in the subsequent analysis sections. Appropriate sources help relay and explain notions of sport and neoliberalism and deterritorialization. The Internet has transformed how stories, facts and subjective content is delivered and consumed. Such insight gained generates impressions of, related to this study, sports teams and international expansion endeavours. Increasingly websites and online content inform our understandings and perceptions of the world (Balabantaray 2013). When analysing online content in search engines it is important to review through the pages of results, but when consumers seek information using search engines oftentimes only the top showing results are considered rather than negotiating further results (Balabantaray 2013).

This paper analyses online media content by systematically classifying and coding narratives and stories of the Jacksonville Jaguars presence in London in relation to the NFL's desires to enter and promote the sport outside the US. Qualitative content analyses go beyond counting/identifying objective text, common in quantitative studies. Instead researchers attempt to seek meanings and determine themes extracted from texts and/or relate content to new conceptual understandings (Lehtonen 2000). Qualitative content analyses are concerned with producing descriptions/typologies, highlighting the issues and narratives embedded in the texts (Lehtonen 2000). To organise/code the online content data included in this research, Nvivo10 was utilised. Although the use of computer-aided qualitative data analysis software such as Nvivo cannot assist with the actual decision about how codes should be assigned, or findings interpreted, it significantly reduces the time implications and complexity associated with manual coding. Using Nvivo software, it was possible to develop coding frames that allowed for the clear identification of prominent themes, and then group them and relate to any guiding conceptual understandings being considered in the study.

Expansion and Neoliberalism—towards an interpretation of *semi-deterritorialization*

The analysis is organised into two sections based on content concerning neoliberalism and territorialization. Discussions concerning neoliberalism were interpreted based on who gains from presence (and permanence) in London when it comes to expanding the Jaguars and/or the NFL market share as well as branding opportunities. This section is positioned among discussions prevalent to economic geographers, whereas the second analysis section is attributed more toward social geographical understandings. In line with the contribution of this paper, interpreting meanings of territorialization in this case lead to new permutations of *semi-deterritorialization* based on the Jaguars temporary (but emerging) presence.

Presence (and Permanence) in London

Expanding into untapped markets to attract a new consumer base defines neoliberalism, a form of economic liberalism (see Mudge 2008). The London series concentrated on achieving just this, as matches are clearly aimed at the British audience (Guardian 2017) as an important consumer market. NFL commissioner Roger Goodell stated:

“The NFL is prepared to play the long game. We’re trying to globalise our game but we’re not trying to tackle the globe [all] at once. Our game isn’t played on a global basis, unlike basketball, or soccer. That’s why we have to do things differently” (Independent 2013).

While the focus of this paper is on London and the Jaguars, discussions surrounding neoliberal expansions distract from the insights offered in the next section, given the economic importance of corporate endeavours. The Jaguars are placed at the centre of expansion debates in London, but the NFL also has ambitions to play games in Germany and Mexico (News4Jax 2015). Such news was pressing in Jacksonville's local news station News4Jax. When recognising this as popular expansion mechanism, London is a proven market and it attracts fans to fill stadiums through the sale of venue matchday tickets, which has now seen over one millions fans in attendance since 2007 and figures suggest the UK fan base exceeds 13 million (News4Jax 2015). Previously Germany was a key market, although this was largely a result of the US military presence (Wise 2011), which does not necessarily feature as part of the NFL's current expansion agenda. For the Jaguars as a team, as more-and-more games have been hosted, this helps them establish their brand so to attract a new fan base in London. CityA.M. (2016) reports that the infrastructure is in place and Naqi notes: "London is a critical element of our business" (CityA.M. 2016). While this is "good for the Jaguar brand, tight end Marcedes Lewis said 'it's exciting to go over there and put ourselves on the map worldwide'" (ESPN 2012), such augmentation is not aligned solely with the business of football, but subsequent investment opportunities as ESPN (2012) reported:

'If somebody builds a container port, if somebody makes an investment out of Germany or England or Netherlands and they chose Jacksonville, that would be a huge return from my viewpoint,' [Shad] Khan [Jaguars owner] said. 'You could have people come here – we've got beautiful golf, weather -- instead of vacationing in Miami or some place and they come up here and watch a game or two. That would be a huge return for me' (ESPN 2012).

Commitment is a phrase that is alluded to in several of the sources analysed.

"The NFL's Vice President of International Mark Waller said today at the announcement, 'We are very appreciative of the Jaguars extending their commitment to the UK market, which emphasizes the club's and league's strong ambition to continue to grow the fan base for NFL football beyond the borders of the US' [because] when you're in London for the game, you see a lot of Jaguars gear on fans and for sale" (News4Jax 2015).

Nonetheless, is this a commitment to benefit the Jaguars as a team, or the NFL as a growing international brand? Using the Jaguars as their poster franchise? There are discussions that there is an abundance of Jaguars merchandise on sale, but they play one game in London each year. The other games played in London (when the Jaguars are not present) are just general matches, and souvenirs from all teams, with jerseys of every franchise are worn at London games if readily available (see DailyMail 2018). Memorabilia is sold under the NFL brand and this seems to take away from sociological notions of fandom and a team's home game presence when playing in London, due to there being such a hodgepodge of jerseys worn during matches - which ultimately does not suggest and correlate with a commitment to a team. On the other hand, overall interest is increasing in line with the NFL's ambitions: the American football offers a unique experience in the UK sporting consumer marketplace. Furthermore, the NFL is committed to forging a deeper propensity of the sport over that of a team, despite the Jaguars similar motivations.

However, commitments are interpreted as being aligned directly with expansion agendas. Insight offered in the media sources address branding and subsequent income generation, concerning the economic geography of a new market shed in London (and across the UK). But the Jaguars were not merely selected 'at random' to make headway in London, the team's ownership has wider business ambitions and incentives there. Khan has a stake in the English football club Fulham, as the Daily Star (2017) notes:

"Khan is keen to strengthen the working relationship between his gridiron team and Fulham. They already share a sponsor in Visit Florida, whose signage adorns the roof of one of the stands at the football club's Craven Cottage home and is visible from flights bound for Heathrow" (CityA.M. 2016).

This is where the Jaguars ownership may potentially reap the rewards of a market advantage and use of the NFL's endeavours to leverage their presence, albeit their wider economic interests in London. They know where the growth markets are, as Khan mentioned in (ESPN 2012):

"We've got to go where we can leverage and take advantage of some of those things. You've got to fish in ponds where you've got fish in there. We're going to a pond where there are no fishermen."

But the NFL is already fishing, using the leagues brand that has the power to out negotiate a franchise. Because the Jaguars are dependent on the NFL and the commissioner's decisions, they must adhere to the NFL's strategy, not necessarily their own goals and strategies. Despite the interpretations and representations of who benefits, be that the NFL or the Jaguars, the team is gaining traction since they have played regularly in London since 2013:

"There was a predominance of Jaguars fans whereas many of the other games tended to be a great mixture of NFL fans. Our game was dominated by Jaguars fans and I anticipate Sunday being no different" (CityA.M. 2017a).

"The Union Jax is the Jacksonville Jaguars UK fan club which was created in March 2013. By the end of the 2016 season, the fan club had 50,000 members and it is growing daily. The Jaguars have the fastest growing fan base of all the NFL teams in the UK" (Jaguars 2018b).

In many ways the Jaguars are a team that needed to seek creative expansion efforts to increase their overall visibility:

"When Jacksonville Jaguars committed to playing at least one regular season game a year in London, the successful sell of the NFL to a loyal UK audience was already a given. Just as well. The franchise from the smallest media market in the league wasn't going to coax a passionate 'home' audience to Wembley on their own" (Daily Mail 2018).

"There's also the added bonus that the partnership in London allows Jacksonville to market its brand internationally and sell commercially in the United Kingdom.

That's something no other NFL team has and a valuable asset to a franchise that is consistently polled as last in popularity" (SBNation 2017).

The London game has proved a huge success for the Jaguars. It is designated a home fixture in the NFL season but generates far more revenue than their Florida matches" (CityA.M. 2017b).

"London plays a critical, critical element in our local revenue' [...] 'The fact we've had commercial success in London, the fact that we've had on-pitch success in London, all goes to bolster the on-field strength and health of the franchise'" — Blake Bortles (Jaguars quarterback) (CityA.M. 2018).

Conceptually considering these points, Dubal (2010) argues mass commercialization has resulted in 'neoliberal flows' taking away from more common displays fandom and identity brought about by the increased pressures of globalization (see also, Giulianotti and Robertson 2009; Kelly 2007; Maguire 2015). With London being the largest market in the UK and one of the largest in Europe, this flow of consumption will likely continue in such large markets where they can ensure future success.

While the Jaguars are interested in gaining their share of the London market value, the dispersion of discussions often take the perspective of the Jaguars and its owners, given "the UK and London has 'amazing market potential' for an NFL team" (SkySports 2018). This puts critical emphasis on income generation that can be derived from London, as opposed to focusing on a permanent fan base rooted on a team's identity. But wider discussions continually refer back to the NFL's ambitions:

"Events like announcing the draft picks from London are all part of the groundwork for a side looking to grow its market in the UK [...] 'We're the fastest growing sport in terms of popularity in the UK and there's no signs of that abetting'" (Daily Star 2017).

"A cash bar and an American-style food menu will be available and fans can then watch the remaining rounds of the NFL Draft including the first-ever draft picks announced live from London" (NFL-UK 2014).

In relating neoliberal understandings to sport from a geographical standpoint, Harvey (2005) argues power is exerted by the dominant culture in an attempt to influence and force those to accept and conform to new practices and ideals. Ironically, American football represents something different to British sporting culture—being a distinctly American code of football. Now in this contemporary neoliberal era reflected in market expansions and cultural commodification, American football in the UK represents something different, sold and performed in target markets to sell and showcase American sporting culture (Maguire 2011). While we have assessed the presence of a new consumer market in London, to segue into the next section on the concept of territorialization. As the Independent (2013) highlights, the "Jaguars need to feel at home in London," and this leads into how home relates to territorialization.

Semi-deterritorialization: Home away from home

The Jaguars for the greater part of the last decade were a struggling franchise (as alluded to above in some of the sources presented). Creating a new market base in London thus represents a chance to amplify the team's brand in a targeted (and much larger) market. Therefore, challenges emerge, and scholars are challenged to interpret and consider how notions of 'home' and being at home whilst away are complex. Home is a base, it refers to establishment or permanence, but many people engage in activities where they might temporarily relocate (for instance vacationing in a holiday home). In relation to sports expansion endeavours, when a team's identity is fixed to a (particular) place, forging a presence and demand elsewhere without physically relocating permanently, calls for a new understanding. This challenges scholars to reconsider nascent critical interpretations based on perceiving home as being one place, when it can also be another place. Here we see the Jaguars seemingly caught between their permanent home and their temporary base, who want to retain commitments to both: "Located in sunny northern Florida, the Jacksonville Jaguars are no longer just a team to see in London once a year" (Touchdown Trips 2018). This article clearly places the focus on Jacksonville to shift the emphasis to their real home.

There were several narrative shifts (in the more recent articles) given the Jaguars' success in 2017. Earlier discussions highlighted how London was a way to expand the market when the team's performance was low, suggesting a successful team helps reinforce place pride. With the Jaguars struggling in previous years, playing regularly in London allowed them to gain some different exposure. The Jaguars saw renewed success in 2017, and while they expect revitalised interest among home fans in Jacksonville, "[Jaguars president Mark] Lamping adds: 'Even if we sell out every home game, which is our hope next season, that doesn't change the importance of London'" (CityA.M. 2018). Discussions of moving or relocating do not come without some contestation as renewed interest in a successful team puts them at the forefront of discussion when we observe: "Welcome to Jax" (with the title caption: "Home of the Jaguars") (Touchdown Trips 2018) just to reinforce where the team is (permanently) located.

But the Jaguars and their ownership possess clear intentions and determinations given they will "play in London through 2020" (News4Jax 2015). The same source adds:

"It's certainly no surprise that the Jaguars have extended their agreement to play one home game a year in London through 2020. It's only a bit surprising that the new deal is not for longer [...] Khan was interested in extending the deal through 2030 but instead; it's an arrangement to continue to play at Wembley Stadium through 2020 with an opportunity to extend the deal into 2025" (News4Jax 2015).

ESPN (2012) reported: "the NFL and the Jaguars announced Tuesday that the small-market franchise will play one home game in London for four consecutive seasons beginning in 2013, a step the team believes will broaden its fan base and take some pressure off locals who have mostly failed to fill the stands in recent years" (ESPN 2012). This was emphasised further by Khan, who states: a "'sustainable franchise in Jacksonville is only helped by playing a game in London.' [...] and] 'This is great news for the Jaguars and the stability of the team in Jacksonville, which has come to embrace London as our home away from home'" (News4Jax 2015; SBNation 2017). The vast majority of articles noted the Jaguars as London's home team, and SBNation (2017) adds this is ideal for the team's stability. These comments link neoliberal expansion acknowledging the semi-deterritorialization approach. This is inferred because emphasis is on seeking to make the team profitable, but a temporary relocation to increase

the team's exposure in a new market means creating some presence. The UPI (2016) headline suggests this, repeated from the end of the previous section: "Jacksonville Jaguars at home in London" (UPI 2016), which was stated to mark their continued presence during the 2016 season. But being London's "unofficial NFL franchise" (CityA.M. 2016) and not the city's official franchise suggests that the Jaguars presence is what can be prescribed geographically as semi-deterritorialization.

The previous section highlighted the commitment to London, and this was further discussed at the start of this section with the Jaguars playing in London through to at least 2020, and likely to remain until 2025. From a territorial standpoint, the team is increasingly establishing a stronghold in the city. Whilst commitment leads to presence, the later parts of this section posit that this presence is a move towards permanence that establishes opportunities for and with the community. A headline mentioned: "Jacksonville Jaguars plan to increase London presence by building training base in Wembley" (CityA.M. 2017b). There were several discussions in articles that the Jaguars are working to establish their presence through a more permanent base:

"The Jaguars are seriously looking into the possibility of opening a training facility in London. The Jags are keen to set up a training facility near Wembley to make it easier for players and staff to prepare when they come to the city for their annual fixture at the national stadium. Officials from the Florida-based team say they have held informal discussions with Brent Council about the proposals, which include provision for community use of the facility when the NFL is not in town" (USA Today 2017).

"Jacksonville Jaguars are exploring plans to build a permanent facility in London, in a move that would underline their commitment to establishing themselves as the capital's NFL team. The Jags are keen to set up a training facility near Wembley to make it easier for players and staff to prepare when they come to the city for their annual fixture at the national stadium" (CityA.M. 2017b).

It can be argued that new facilities indicate a sustained presence—moving towards permanence. There have also created the JAGUARS SE7ENS CUP (Union Jax 2018b) as an intervention to utilise the spaces more frequently. But several articles discussed the Jaguars are just looking "to make life easier for themselves when they do make those on-off trips to England's capital" (USA Today 2017). In addition, there are stories of players and fans creating bonds and shifting towards a heightened sense of identity and new place connection:

"Jags hope for London advantage" [...] "'We already feel like London is our home. We treat our preparation the same way [as we would in Jacksonville], and we love the city"—Denard Robinson [Jaguars running back in 2016] (Sky Sports 2016).

"I think it's good to go over there and experience something different and give the people there a chance to see American football"—Marqise Lee (Jaguars receiver) [...] "Jaguars' players say while the experience is good and the atmosphere with foreign fans is most supportive" (UPI 2016).

It is clear the Jaguars have a bond with London: “we very much view ourselves with London’s team and, the way we have been embraced by Londoners, we think that that is a reciprocal view. We are very much viewed as London’s team” (CityA.M. 2016), or England’s team according to (ESPN 2012), and CityA.M. (2017a) adds:

“Jacksonville Jaguars have won over UK fans says NFL franchise’s man in London [...] Playing at Wembley has now become a ‘home’ game”.

While there is ongoing speculation surrounding the increased presence of the club, some articles discuss how the Jaguars are increasing their involvement in the community off the field of play. Such insight could be interpreted as permanence, which scholars would suggest is reterritorialization:

“The Gridiron Grant is a first of its kind sports scholarship programme in the UK, offering a university scholarship to two students graduating from the specialist Jaguars JagTag programme, or who are involved in American football in their community [...] demonstrating the partnership between American football and the thriving community of young people playing it in the UK” (British American Football 2018).

With the Jaguars reaching out into the community they are getting involved by promoting American football at a grassroots level. Whilst many are experiencing American football in the UK, the Jaguars are likening their team brand to local American football clubs—so they are fostering the association with the sport, and also London’s (and the UK’s) team. What can be interpreted as Corporate Social Responsibility using sport and social activity to promote inclusion and awareness (e.g. Giulianotti, 2015), the above points suggest that the Jaguars are establishing presence leading towards permanence. Alongside playing in London once each year, such community links support this notion of semi-deterritorialization. On the contrary it could be argued that working directly in a community is a step towards establishing permanence, which is reterritorialization. Further evidence is based on the Jaguars already establishing an academy: “Jags in the Community [is] an all-year-round community programme supporting events across the UK [and] the Junior Roar Academy for girls aged 8-16 to learn how to cheerlead” (Union Jax 2018a) as well as numerous “community projects helping them emerge as London’s team” (ESPN 2018) in an attempt to fully establish the team and integrate with the city of London. From here it can be assumed that a fan base can be developed and aligned with other community programmes. Also, with such CSR imperatives there is power that accrues from the ability of the sports organisation to synergise its presence with the existing structures of local communities (e.g., their sport and outlets of education). This is also based on an assumption that these communities want and need the intervention of this large clubs and organisations. Essentially, the Jaguars alignment normalises a corporate presence within local communities that masques effectively as altruistic sport for development. This is observed through the “Union Jax” (Jaguars 2017), fusing elements of British identity to create a unique association with the club. The Jaguars are now a team that flow across boundaries, so when we encounter the production of identity through the Union Jax (Jacksonville Jaguars UK fan club) a new sense of belonging is created. Moreover, London fans are different from Jacksonville fans because their presence is not united, they are separated socially and geographically. The identity of the team may be the

same imaginatively, but this adds complexities to fans from two different cities who each claim a team as their own.

Concluding Remarks and Future Research

CBS Sports (2013) remarked on the commonality between the Jaguars and Fulham because Khan owns both clubs in the NFL and English Professional Football, respectively (CBSSports 2013). Such a direct connection through the team's owner reinforces both points of interpretation in this study. While there have been a few studies conducted on American football and the sport's expansion (e.g. Maguire 1990; Maguire 2011; Wise 2016), the Jacksonville (and London) Jaguars represent an interesting and highly pertinent case in professional sports, especially concerning research on sports expansion going forward. The team challenges the notion of being a truly home team given they give up one home game each year which impacts the fans and the city of Jacksonville in a sport with only eight regular season games each year. But when we look at this phenomena through the lens of NFL expansion and neoliberalism we are reminded of the power of major corporate brands (such as the NFL) and how they use a different sport (American football) to influence consumerism in new and emerging markets (the UK). The second topical debate concerns deterritorialization, or semi-deterritorialization. As this paper argues, we have not before seen a team based in one city temporarily become associated with another city. A team represents a city, and a city supports that team. But in the Jaguars case they are trying to manage their permanent home, whilst at the same time entering another market—so to become London's (home) team and capture a broader fan base. Evident from the content analysis were programs initiated by the Jaguars to further establish their presence, founding opportunities for the community in a similar way that a team would do in their 'home' city.

Whether or not the Jacksonville Jaguars are any closer towards London having a team of their own will be based on the continuation of the agreement, and at the discretion of the NFL who have the decision-making authority. It could be that the NFL decides to establish a new expansion franchise altogether, which is what the Jacksonville Jaguars were when they entered the league in 1995. Future research intends to build on this notion of semi-deterritorialization joined with neoliberal expansion techniques concerning American sports. Articles made clear that the Jaguars reside in a smaller U.S. market (see USA Today 2017) and having a base in London is ideal to promote the team, its brand, American football and the NFL. However, while many discussions are at this point speculation, looking ahead into the future, a London franchise presents numerous obstacles making any such permanent transfer highly unlikely. These challenges include: (1) Place additional strains on the transportation network and access and travel to and from games could be problematic for attendees and locals; (2) Games in London have a novelty factor; (3) There could be legal issues with an international franchised team; and (4) EverBank Field is difficult to leave (SBNation 2017). Each point goes beyond conceptualising the NFL's presence in London, and issues concerning numerous legality and operational concerns that would first need to be addressed, such as immigration and controls, salary caps, taxes, UK (and EU) sporting laws, stadium leases and scheduling, and sponsorship. Moreover, it is perhaps the sentimental value of American football in the international marketplace, and the Jacksonville Jaguars are an important part of this narrative. But when we reflect on the bigger picture, the commodification and commercialisation of these brands are integral to capitalising on these market gaps. We are no longer seeking to define different as separation, but different is used to sell a distinctly unique product in a contemporary, ever changing and competitive sporting consumer market.

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Appendix 1: List of websites used in the analysis

In-text citation	URL
Touchdown Trips 2018	http://touchdowntrips.com/teams-and-cities/jacksonville-jaguars/
News4Jax 2015	https://www.news4jax.com/news/local/jacksonville/jaguars-to-play-in-london-through-2020_20151107021015274
USA Today 2017	https://ftw.usatoday.com/2017/03/jacksonville-jaguars-london-move-wembley-game-open-training-facility
UPI 2016	https://www.upi.com/Sports_News/2016/09/29/Jacksonville-Jaguars-at-home-in-London-focused-on-first-win-of-16/4391475124026/
Sky Sports 2016	http://www.skysports.com/nfl/news/12118/10509573/home-games-in-london-help-the-jacksonville-jaguars-denard-robinson-said
Independent 2013	https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/general/others/american-football-jaguars-need-to-feel-at-home-in-london-8906512.html
British American Football 2018	http://www.britishamericanfootball.org/news/jacksonville-jaguars-announce-gridiron-grant#.Ws4wabpFyUk
SkySports 2018	http://www.skysports.com/nfl/news/12118/11210972/jacksonville-jaguars-chief-says-london-on-right-track-for-nfl-team
Daily Star 2017	https://www.dailystar.co.uk/sport/other-sports/613213/Jacksonville-Jaguars-to-London-NFL
CityA.M. 2016	http://www.cityam.com/250306/jacksonville-jaguars-londons-unofficial-nfl-franchise-their
ESPN 2012	http://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/8289496/jacksonville-jaguars-play-four-home-games-london
CityA.M. 2017b	http://www.cityam.com/261493/jacksonville-jaguars-plan-increase-london-presence-building
Daily Mail 2018	http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/nfl/article-5292249/Jacksonville-Jaguars-one-game-away-Super-Bowl.html
CBSSports 2013	https://www.cbssports.com/nfl/news/shad-khan-jaguars-are-the-home-team-for-london/
Union Jax 2018a	https://www.jagscampandacademy.com/playing-academy
Jaguars 2018a	http://www.jaguars.com/uk/index.html
Guardian 2017	https://www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2017/sep/22/nfl-london-team-wembley-ravens-jaguars
SBNation 2017	https://www.sbnation.com/2017/9/22/16345454/jacksonville-jaguars-nfl-london-international-england-uk
Jaguars 2018b	http://www.jaguars.com/uk/about-union-jax-fan-club.html
NFL-UK 2014	http://www.nfluk.com/events/union-jax-fan-party.html
ESPN 2018	http://www.espn.co.uk/nfl/story/_/id/22153383/hussain-naqi-jacksonville-jaguars-want-stay-london-current-2020-deal
CityA.M. 2017a	http://www.cityam.com/272479/jacksonville-jaguars-have-won-over-uk-fans-says-nfl
Jaguars 2017	http://www.jaguars.com/uk/international-series-games.html
Union Jax 2018b	https://www.jagscampandacademy.com/tournament
CityA.M. 2018	http://www.cityam.com/279038/london-helped-jaguars-reach-shoot-out-super-bowl-against

All sources last assessed 8 August 2018